Royal administration and the keeping of the seas, 1422-1485

C.F. Richmond

Thesis (D.Phil.)--University of Oxford, 1963

Contents

Abstract	[6]
Title (with quotation from Sir N.H. Nicholas)	[1]
Introduction	1 - 25
Chapter 1 : The King's ships, 1422-1461	26 - 92
Chapter 2 : Piracy and disorder at sea, 1422-1461	93 - 166
Folded chart : Piracy cases, taken from the Calendars of Patent and Close Rous, 1399-1485	[1]
Chapter 3 : The Government's response, 1422-1456	167 - 255
Chapter 4 : The Earl of Warwick, 1456-1461	256 - 289
Chapter 5 : The pattern of naval activity 1461-1483	290 - 371
Chapter 6 : Naval administration 1461-1483	372 - 445
Chapter 7 : The King's ships 1461-1483	446 - 489
Folded chart : Royal ownership of ships 1461-1509	[1]
Chapter 8 : The reign of Richard III	490 - 546
Bibliography	547 - 566

LIBRARY OXFORD
BRANCH
24. IV. 63

Royal Administration and the Keeping of the Seas, 1422-1485.

This work is concerned with naval activity between 1422 and 1485 in which the English government was involved, chiefly with that initiated or undertaken by the administration, and with the organisation of any such activity.

The Introduction deals with the nature of the evidence used - this being particularly the records of the central government (notably of the Exchequer), certain local records, for instance of King's Lynn and Sandwich, and the various printed sources, such as the Howard Household accounts, the Paston Letters, the chronicles of the period, and the other narratives, correspondence and treatises in which the time is comparatively rich - with what was meant in the 15th century by the term 'the keeping of the sea', both by the men who used it or had reason to comment on it, and in practice, and (arising from this) what might be called naval strategy.

The first chapter relates the story of the decay of

the king's own navy from 1422 to 1452: the size and power of Henry V's fleet and naval establishment, created for the requirements of war, the sale of much of this in the years 1422-1425, and the gradual wasting away of the unused remnant between about 1430 and 1450, as recounted in the accounts of the Clerks of the King's Ships. It deals also with the three vessels of the king's that were active after 1430, namely the two balingers, Little Jesus and Jacquet, in the later 1430's, and John Taverner's Grace Dieu in the 1440's and 1450's, and with the two Clerks of the period, William Soper and Richard Clevedon.

Chapter two concerns piracy and the general disorder at sea that was characteristic of the years c. 1430-1460. The nature and the various manifestations of English piracy are discussed, principally its resurgence and the reprisals against foreigners in the 1430's, and the more purposeful, and less accidental, a business it became in the 1440's and 1450's in two areas, the Thames estuary and the South West of England. For the latter region one notorious and well-documented case had been taken as a starting point, and the other piratical activities of those involved described, to show the far-reaching

organisation of piracy, receiving and maintenance in that area, where Henry VI's government was unable to ensure the proper working of justice. There is also a tentative paragraph or two on the connection between trade and piracy, and their probable interdependence. An appendix graphs piracy cases - taken from the Calendars of Patent and Close Rolls - for the period 1399-1485.

Chapter three shows how the government of Henry VI, between 1422 and 1456, coped with this disorder and the more usual demands of war against the enemy. Two methods of seakeeping were employed: the uncommon one of granting licences to individual shipowners or merchants to keep the sea (together or singly) at their own cost, and the normal one of indentured commanders leading expeditions financed by the crown. The organisation of this activity is dealt with in detail where possible, and its consequences considered where they are known; particularly the involvement of certain members of the government in piracy is examined in the light of Winnington's capture of the Bay fleet in 1449. There is an appendix of noble shipowners, 1422-1485.

The fourth chapter is a narrative of the Earl of Warwick's career between 1456 and 1461, emphasising his grasp of the importance of a fleet, the uses to which he put it, and its relevance as an instrument to win him political power in a time when the Lancastrian government was unable to match it with any similar weapon. This chapter, therefore, points the difference between the reigns of Henry VI and the Yorkists, in this respect of the value of a royal (that is personal) fleet.

The fifth chapter is an account of the naval activity of Edward IV's reign, briefly as regards piracy, and the protection of woolfleets and East Anglian fishermen (new features of naval operations), but primarily as regards war at sea- from the first improvised moves against the enemies of the regime in the early 1460's, when Edward had hardly any ships of his own and was dependant on Warwick and the co-operation of his supporters for the composition of his naval forces, through the complicated period between 1469 and 1471, when naval affairs were once again a matter of direct political importance, to the well organised and planned operations of 1475 and 1481-82, when the king's ships

were employed and his newly developed (and growing) naval administration was to the forefront.

Chapter six examines this administration; firstly Warwick's position in the 1460's, and Sir John Howard's contribution, especially in the years 1468-1472 when the king still lacked any but two, three, or four vessels, and then the new establishment that developed around the increasing number of royal ships in the later 1470's and early 1480's, culminating in the appointment of Thomas Rogers as Clerk of the King's Ships in 1480. A number of the careers and contributions of the men concerned in this activity are set down: John Cole, William Fetherston, Avery Cornborough and Edward Brampton; and some evaluation of the importance of this recreated administration is made.

Chapter seven is chiefly a description of each of the ships that Edward owned during the reign - their cost, from whom purchased (when these are known) and their service in the king's employ. There is also a general discussion on English shipping at this time, and some comments on Edward's help to that shipping in the way of bounties, trading licences and so on.

The eighth chapter is on the brief, but important, reign of Richard III. It is divided into three sections: operations undertaken at sea against pirates and the enemy, and to protect English commerce, the administration - at first perhaps slightly disorganised, but then fully recovered with Rogers, as Clerk, at the head of affairs - and the king's ships. Richard's probable personal interest in, and direction of, naval affairs is shewn, the careers of Christopher Collins and Thomas Greyson, and of Thomas Rogers are examined as regards their part in the administration, and the continued maintenance of the royal navy is emphasised.

The Conclusion shortly summarizes what has been brought out in the body of the work. It stresses the continuity in the method and manner of seakeeping, and that naval administration was a response (or lack of response) to present needs, not a permanent construction for the convenience of future sovereigns.

Royal Administration and The Keeping of The Seas, 1422 - 1485.

'... and this subject is of such peculiar interest in the history of a great naval country, though it has been singularly neglected, that it ought not to be passed over in silence, more especially as it has been said that little, if anything, worthy of notice can be traced respecting the state and progress of the navy from the reign of Richard the Second to that of Richard the Third.'

Sir, N.H. Nicolas, Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, vol. 5, 1835, preface, page CXXVII.

Introduction.

Most divisions of time are, in some sense, arbitary and misleading. Nevertheless it is convenient to take 1422 - 1485 as one period, with 1461 as the foremost year of division. Apart from the many other good reasons for this, the nature of the evidence recommends it.

First, with the increase in naval activity by government after 1461 there comes a greater volume of evidence. Before this date, and especially before 1456, naval action on the part of the crown was infrequent, and on a smaller scale. The years 1422 to 1435, being a time of successful and relatively peaceful English dominion in North France, are virtually empty of officially sponsored action at sea, and the period 1443 to 1448, which included years of truce with France, also saw no naval expeditions of any note. For one reason and another - the others being discussed in the body of the work - there was less seakeeping by the government of Henry VI than by that of Edward IV and Richard III. But also the records themselves for the earlier period are less informative. There are only two Tellers Rolls (E405) surviving before 1462, as against 35 for the period 1462 - 1485, and these two - for Easter 1425 and Easter 1438 - have nothing relevant to our

subject; considering the valuable information that this class provides for the reigns of the two Yorkists, the deficiency is a notable one. For Henry VI's reign, however, there are the Council abd Privy Seal Warrants (E28) - some 50 files as against 4 for Edward IV's reign - and these are supplemented by Nicolas's Proceedings of the Privy Council; but these do not give the details of administration as do the Tellers Rolls. There are many Issue Rolls (E403) for both periods, but during Henry VI's reign they are singularly uninformative about naval administration (apart from the years 1435 - 1437), and their usefulness, compared with that in the later period, is not great. Staple sources throughout are the Warrants for Issue (E404) and the printed Calendars of Patent Rolls and, less important, Close Rolls, supplemented by items in the Various Accounts (E101) and Foriegn Accounts (E364) - the latter containing the accounts of the Clerks of the King's Ships, from 1422 to 1452. Other classes of government documents - Signet Warrants (C81), Privy Seal Warrants (PSO.1), Memoranda Rolls (E159), Diplomatic Cocuments (E30), Treaty Rolls (C76), especially - are, though enlightening and very important, only secondary as regards abundance of information. The exception is the class of Early Chancery Proceedings (C1); but this, although giving much incidental illustration in particular instances and for a general understanding of men

and manners in the age, is specifically relevant for piracy not for naval administration.

Also there is a greater bulk of general evidence for the years after about 1450; for example, surviving Treasurers Accounts at Sandwich are all for years after 1450, The Paston Letters and The Cely Papers cover the later years, and there is the happy survival of the Howard household accounts and British Museum Harleian Manuscript 433. Some of these are directly relevant and of great importance, others help in placing events in time and space, or throw a dim light on motive and result. Such aids are more or less unavailable for the years before about 1450.

But it is the documents of government on which this work rests, and here it is primarily a question, not of survival (save in the case of the Tellers Rolls), but of the information that the same class of documents, for example the Issue Rolls, include from one year to the next, or rather from one reign (that of Henry VI) to the next (that of Edward IV). After 1461 there is more detail about the fitting out of naval forces: the administration can be seen at work. We do not have this in the earlier period. The chief reason for this lies in the manner of the crown's participation in seakeeping. The method of keeping the sea does not alter greatly; apart from the expedient, in the 1430's and 1440's, of individual

ships keeping the sea under licence from the king, the usual way for a force to be organised was by indenture and arrest: the crown would indent with a commander to serve with a number of men for a certain time; he would receive a sum of money for the wages and food of the soldiers, and the ships would be arrested by the king's officials and their masters would sail them to the port of embarkation. But the important difference between say 1440 and 1480 lies in this, that the vessels arrested, although being paid for by the government - sometimes, however, this was the commander's responsibility - were, in the earlier period, simply commissioned, their masters paid and sent on their way, whilst in Edward's reign they were often (the king's ships of course, always) fitted out individually by the government. Whereas in Henry's reign the crown initiated activity but then had little further intimate connection with it, in Edward's reign, and in Richard's, the government was concerned with the whole process of setting ships to sea. And it is this that is shewn in the documents, and makes 1461 the best year of division. It is the nature of the crown's part in naval activity that changes, not the records themselves that alter: the difference is real, not accidental. Thus, whilst there is less information for the reign of Henry VI, it is not primarily because the records are fewer, but because much of the business of naval activity that previously and afterwards

lay within their scope, then lay outside it.

If the evidence does not allow us to speak with some certainty about the methods, manner and organisation of seakeeping, it does not tell us very much of what men thought about the subject. The term - the safe keeping of the sea, 'custodia maris','le saufgarde de la mer' - was used in a wide and general sense. The Commons voted grants of tonnage and poundage for the defence of the realm, or for the defence of the realm and the keeping of the sea, or sometimes only for the safe keeping of the sea[1]; this was a matter of form, but the Commons did not separate defence of the kingdom from seakeeping, both were not merely parts of the same, but the same. It is in this sense that Suffolk was condemned - 'and so the defence of this youre Reame, and the sauf kepyng of the See, not hadde nor kept, to over grete empoverishyng, and hurt of this youre Reame'[2]. The Earl of Warwick put the matter rather more precisely in his manifesto of July 1469:

> 'Also that the revenuss of Tounage and Poundage may be employed in the kepyng of the see as it was graunted, and too non other use, for the safetie of entrecourse of merchaundizes to gret

---

1. Rotuli Parliamentorum, 1767, IV, p. 173, 318, 369, 503, for example.
2. Rot. Parl., V,p.180.

> enrichyng of this lond, and also for the defence of the enemyes.'[1]

This emphasises the two essential functions of seakeeping: protection of merchant shipping, and defence (or attack) against the enemy. Capgrave in the 1440's had said much the same, though slightly extending the definition:

> '...if the sea were kept by our navy many good results would follow - it would give a safe conduct to merchants, secure access to fishers, the quiet of peace to the inhabitants of the kingdom, to our king himself a large measure of glory.' [2]

The benefits of seakeeping were clear in men's minds. But this is generalised thinking, what ought to happen; it meant little more than saying that there should be good government in the kingdom, that the defence of the realm and seakeeping were vital to good government.

Here it is necessary to remember that this was an age of self-help, the government was not what it has now become - a sort of proprietary drug to cure all ills. When the Commons complained of evils at sea (as they did in the 1430's), they

---

1. John Warkworth, Chronicle, ed. J.O. Halliwell, Camden Society, 1839, notes, p.51.
2. Liber de Illustribus Henricis, ed. F.C. Hingeston, Rolls Series, 1858, p.134.

did not ask in the first place for government action, but for greater power for themselves (as merchants and shipowners) for protection and retaliation. It was not until the 1470's that wool fleets going to Calais were escorted by armed vessels fitted out by the crown, and then this was only an agreed way by which Edward IV was to repay his debts to the Merchants of the Staple. Only in the 1480's were fishermen given protection by ships and men raised by the crown. Before this time the Staplers, the Bordeaux merchants and others had to make their own arrangements for their ships' safety; they, and shipowners hired soldiers to serve on shipboard, or had their vessels sail in fleets, and trusted to God and a safeconduct - both of which failed them often. But there was of course no clean division between victims and oppressors; lack of law enforcement on land and lack of seakeeping worked both ways - self-help meant that the stronger preyed upon the weaker, and many shipowners and merchants were not nice in how they helped themselves. As we can see in the 1430's the Commons wanted two things, more efficient seakeeping but also more freedom for themselves at sea; this was not casuistry on their part; they knew from experience that the government could not do the impossible - that is, keep the sea at all completely - therefore they had to strengthen their own arm against all comers. It was useless for the English government

to try to ensure the good behaviour of its own subjects, if other governments were turning a blind eye to their subjects' illegal activities; with international law weak and ineffective, it was every man for himself.

But there was perhaps a limit, in the sense that when Englishmen were losing more thah they gained, or that the enemy were felt to be really threatening the security of the realm - particularly this - then seakeeping became an urgent, rather than a general, issue. For lack of evidence it is difficult for us to know what men felt when danger was great, or losses from piracy were heavy. Piracy flourished in the middle years of the century but men were hardly more articulate about it than at other times. The sack of Sandwich by the French in 1457 was a great blow at English prestige, and the chroniclers saw it in this light; but the weight of shame was somewhat lightened by Warwick's successes in the channel in the following year, and finally lifted by Neville's expedition to the Breton coast in 1462. Much depended on the readiness of the government to respond; thus, the sea war with the Hanse, although not energetically pursued by the government in 1468-69 (there were other more pressing matters), was fought most successfully in 1472, so that peace negotiations were quickly opened in earnest by the Hanse.

Similarly in the years 1481-82, the expedition of Lord Howard to Scotland in the summer of 1481 and the general watchfulness of the government at sea in that and the following year, must have silenced any criticism. But when the government was lax, when men saw it doing nothing, or taking only slipshod half-measures, then comment was forthcoming. So, in 1446 - 1447 Capgrave could write that 'our enemies laugh at us', and that the sea was no longer 'the wall of England' that it had been[1], and so also, in 1460-61 the chroniclers could write scornfully about the ill-organised naval operations against Warwick.

More important than these omissions of duty was the loss of Northern France. In 1472 or 1474 this point, of the naval advantages to be gained from the possession of Normandy, was put in a speech of the Speaker of the House of Commons:

> 'The Kyng also shall not than nede to purveie att his so grete charge as he doth now for the kepyng of the see, whereunto neyther the subside, ne tonnage nor pondage can suffice and it were moche more then it is ...'[2].

English control of the channel had been firm in the 1420's simply because Northern France was in English hands. And it

---

1. Op.cit., p.135.
2. Liberae Cantuarienses... ed.J.B. Sheppard, Rolls Series, Vol. 3 (1889), p.282.

was the question of Normandy in the middle 1430's that brought forth the Libelle of Englyshe Polycye[1] and Sir John Fastolf's memorandum of September 1435[2]. Here was a matter of crucial importance: how was Normandy to be best defended?

It was primarily a question of priorities, as Mr. Holmes has recently shewn[3]. Either the council could keep the sea with a powerful force to protect merchant shipping and safeguard Calais against the Burgundians, or they could send reinforcements to Normandy to stop the rot there. They could not do both, for there was not the money, indeed there was not the money to do either properly. In the event the council chose the latter course, and sent York to Normandy; this was successful and France was not lost, nor was Calais, though this was due chiefly to the inability of the Burgundian besiegers.

Fastolf, amongst other recommendations, stated the need for vigorous seakeeping:

> 'Item, that seing that the kinge hathe his portis and haven tounes and his lordis on eithere side of the see, that it may be ordeined ... that the see may be kepte myghtelie aswelle for the kinges

---

1. Edited by Sir George Warner, 1926.
2. Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry VI., ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, vol.2, part 2(1864) p.582-583.
3. 'The Libel of English Policy', English Historical Review, 1961, p.193.

worshipe and the reaumes as for the salvacion of the merchaundise and of the navy of Englonde and of Normandie; and that everie towne of Englonde and of Normandie set therto hand and helpe forthe. Now considering how thei have be faren with, fouled and distroid long tyme herebefore be thennemies upon the see; and that the said navye make sharpe warre and kepe the cours of marchaundise as moche as thei can or may fro Scluse, under soche provision of admiralles of bothe landis that thei be not suffred to take nere robbe the kingis verray trew frendis and auncien allies instede of thennemies'.

And the Libelle was insistent in its argument for a strong policy at sea. Fastolf's ideas were more limited than those of the Libelle: a fleet was to set to the narrow sea and make war on enemy shipping 'as moche as thei can or may', and this was to be done under leaders, who were to see that their ships did not do more damage to friends than hurt to enemies. Fastolf was certainly not ingenuous. The government did send vessels to sea in 1436, but under licence at their owners' cost - though there were some ships out at the crown's expense - and these were under two admirals, whom the shipowners and merchants themselves appointed, and the king recognised. This was perhaps

all that could be done, considering the poverty of the Exchequer and the decision to concentrate on the land war in Normandy. But it is unlikely that those merchants and shipowners at sea in 1436 were as well behaved as Fastolf wished them to be; 'the salvacion of the merchaundise' did not lie in sending men to keep the sea at their own cost, with no control over them. But with no more than two ships of its own, with no proper naval organisation since about 1430 (at the latest), and with neither the money nor the initiative to start again from scratch, it is not surprising that the council decided to continue to concentrate on the war on land.

The course that was suggested in the Libelle, which was written between late 1436 and early 1438, is a much grander one than that put forward by Fastolf. The argument - as it refers to seakeeping - is that the straits should be strictly kept, enemy shipping destroyed and Burgundian commerce ruined:

'Thus muste Flaundres for nede have unite
And pease wyth us, it woll none other bee,
Wythine shorte while, and ambassiatours
Wolde bene here sone to trete for ther socours'.[1]

And not only this; for seakeeping would bring about a general peace and universal brotherhood[2]. It is difficult to

---

1. Lines 1084 - 1087.
2. Lines 1098 - 1105.

see how a poverty stricken Flanders would be reconciled to a peace imposed by English might, and even more difficult to see the other maritime countries agreeing, 'Wythouten striffe, debate and variaunce', to the keeping of the sea by the English. Mr. Holmes has called the Libelle 'not merely an early example of fanciful geopolitics', but 'a real political programme'.[1] This can be true only of its recommendation of a policy of efficient seakeeping and the safeguard of Calais - in which sense Mr. Holmes examines it. But no one would really have quarrelled with this, it was obvious to all. True the council decided on the other course of saving Normandy, but they did not ignore Calais and the sea. They realised that it was essential to hold Northern France, for its retention made the sea and Calais so much easier to keep (as Edward IV and the Speaker knew). If the French channel coast was held, the channel became the second line of defence; it was not until after 1450 that England itself was ever threatened, though English supremacy at sea had been lost years before. The council might well have argued that the security of England, and even of the sea, rested on the defence of Rouen.

That they did not do enough at sea against the Burgundians is true, and the Libelle's piteous complaints, like Capgrave's

---

1. Op. cit., p.194.

later, were legitimate enough. This was a natural reaction, for they had known the glory that had been England's when Henry V had ruled, and the Libelle in no uncertain terms stated what that monarch would have done [1]; the battle of Harfleur was still a potent memory[2], and Henry's great ships - in the 1430's rotting in the mud - nostalgically recalled[3]. But this was all in the past. What mattered now, was to hang on to what it had taken Henry V so much effort to win; to retain Northern France was the first priority, and this the council did.

As for the wider ramifications of the Libelle's seakeeping policy, the predicted results, these surely lie beyond the definition 'a real political programme'. If commerce with Burgundy was discontinued, if Englishmen no longer went to the markets of Flanders[4], then the one great outlet for English wool (to be worked) and cloth (to be sold) would no longer exist: the English would have killed the goose that laid the golden egg. Certainly the Burgundians would suffer, but so would the English merchants, exporters and farmers. In 1435 - 36, when the war was on and trade did falter, both English and Burgundian commercial communities felt the effects. It was therefore fanciful for the writer of the Libelle to believe

---

1. Lines 1058 - 1063.
2. Lines 1020 - 1029.
3. Lines 1010 - 1015.
4. Lines 512 - 541.

that the one could suffer without the other, and that those of the Low Countries would come to the king of England and sue for peace:

'And so wee shulde of oure cruell enmysse
Maken oure frendes for fere of marchaundysse
Yff they were not suffred for to passe
Into Flaundres...'[1]

As to this blossoming of universal peace out of the high-handed tactics of one country - that was not likely. The Libelle does put forward a feasible policy, but it is contained within a wider thesis that is no more a real political programme than say the Communist Manifesto or the Declaration of Independence are real political programmes. The false reasoning - because incomplete - upon which these documents are based has its counterpart in the famous Debate of the Heralds of England and France[2], written about 1460. Here is the same thought concerning the destruction of the enemy's trade and shipping; the French herald says that as France has all the wine and salt, and England has none, if the French government refused safeconducts to all English vessels of 100 tons and more that went to Brittany and Guienne for those commodities, then:

'...your great shipping must necessarily rot in

---

1. Lines 576 - 579.
2. Edited by Henry Pyne, 1870.

> the mire for want of employment and wages to the seamen.'[1]

Here is the same improbable ideal as that in the Libelle; but if English resources of shipping were to decay for lack of cargo, then equally the prosperity of parts of France would have been upset: the interdependence of vendor, carrier and purchaser is overlooked. Nor would the English have stood by and looked on inactive; similar restrictions would have been placed on French shipping. No more would the Burgundians have calmly watched the English destroy their ships and commerce.

Besides this it is doubtful whether such constant and vigilant seakeeping, as would have been necessary for the disruption of trade, was at all possible in the fifteenth century. Although the French herald said that it was the English idea of naval warfare to plunder the ships that went to and fro in the channel and 'in fact you destruct the utility of commerce everywhere'[2], this was an exaggerated complaint not a full statement of fact. The English were no more consistent pirates than the French or Scots, Dutch or Danes. Nor were they more capable of efficiently keeping the sea.

That term - the keeping of the sea - is misleading, as

---

1. The French herald's third point.
2. Page 47ff.

for us it implies more than it ever meant to someone in the fifteenth century, when it was used so readily; then it was used, as we have seen, as a generic term, and lacked real precision. There are, however, one or two contemporary definitions, or partial definitions. In 1454 one of the Articles presented by the Duke of York in parliament was that provision should be made for the keeping of the sea:

> '...to th'entent that all your Navire bee redye togedirs, and of power for to assemble in such place as is most convenable for th'assemblyng of thaim, for to breke the puissance of the Navire of the seid Adversarie, before thaire assemblyng, so that your subjects may have fre passage to and fro the seid toun and Castel of Caleis, for th'aide and rescows therof.'[1]

There are two things to notice here; first, that a fleet should be got together and the enemy prevented from doing the same, and second, that the route to Calais should be kept open. This last point was obvious enough - it is that which the Libelle makes, and in September 1483 Lord Dinham, Lieutenant of Calais, wrote to the same effect to the Lord Chancellor;

> '... the king shuld have a navie upon the see, to shewe him selff as a king to rule and kepe his

---

1. Rot. Parl., V.p. 254-5 ~~59—60~~. ×

stremes betwixt this (Calais) and Dover...'[1]

To protect Calais by a patrolling force in the narrow seas was a care of most governments; the merchants and shipowners out in 1436 were probably on this duty, and it was Warwick - in a way as a response to the 1454 Article - who saw to the safeguard of Calais, and who kept the sea between there and Dover in 1456 - 1461, whilst Richard III certainly fulfilled the desire of his Lieutenant, as his ships were regularly out in the Straits in 1483 - 1485. Not always, however, was the passage kept open, for we know that wool fleets going to the Staple had first to turn back to London because of enemies (and this was in September 1483), and that messengers going across had often to wait for weeks before they could set to sea, or were forced to return once they had set off, whilst others were taken, robbed and imprisoned. In fact the Straits were never entirely under English control unless there was a strong force there - in 1475 and 1481, and perhaps between 1458 and 1461 when Warwick's ships were abroad. Henry VI's government, for years together never sent ships to sea for this purpose, though if Calais itself was directly threatened then usually some effort was made, in 1436 or 1450 - 2 for instance. At least everyone knew that Calais ought to be protected, and access to it kept open; this was one aspect of seakeeping that men were sure of. But they were aware

---

1. Letters and Papers illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII Rolls Series, ed.by James Gairdner,vol.2.(1863)

that an overall security at sea could not be achieved.

Here York's first point is relevant. Although a fleet could not be everywhere, it could not protect all English ships, destroy the enemy's and prevent general piracy, it could deter action by the enemy on a large scale, and it could hinder him gathering together and concentrating a strong naval force. There is no doubt that an expedition at sea did do this; the English in 1475, for example, had a fleet at sea which deterred the French from attacking the invasion force during its prolonged crossing. This was to become a major part of naval strategy down to the 20th century: the fleet, which by its very presence prevented any enemy activity. In this, the crossing of the 1475 army was like that of the B.E.F. in 1914. In the 15th century the effect of having a force at sea was even greater than in later centuries, for by the very fact of organising before the enemy (as York stated) the superiority was yours, for that one reason. If the enemy had a fleet in the channel before you, then your first care was not to raise another to oppose it, but to prepare your own coastal defences against its possible attack. Because of the time it took to collect and fit out a naval expedition - particularly if there was no royal navy - , if the government was caught unprepared in May or June by the enemy's fleet at sea, all that could be done

was to look to home defence; this is why the preparations for serious summer expeditions began in February or March. Thus, it was usually enough for a temporary superiority - all that could be achieved - to put a fleet of goodly proportions, well-led and disciplined, to sea early in the summer before the enemy was aware of your intention, and before he could do likewise. For in these days of inaccurate information, poor communications and inefficient reporting the enemy could know neither the strength, nor the position of your fleet, and he could not, therefore, move against it, nor know if, and when it would move against him. It was difficult to find your enemy in the 15th century; only if he was static - at a siege or blockade for instance - could you do that. Thus, you could only prepare and wait, and hope that he would soon leave the sea with nothing (other than supremacy) achieved. Seasonal superiority at sea was not wrestled for in the 15th century, it was not a prize (for what it was worth) to be grappled for, it lay waiting for the first comer, for the first to fill the vacuum. This is why merely to keep the sea was so important.

But there was the other side to this: great battles at sea were seldom fought. The enemy could be defeated, but never destroyed. When the merchant ship was also a warship - with little or no conversion - the enemy's resources of

shipping were virtually inexhaustible. He did not have one navy that could be hunted down and broken in one or two engagements; although if the enemy's main fleet could be caught and defeated, then his power of retaliation was certainly blunted for some little time. This is what happened when the English - in the only two important naval battles of the 15th century - defeated the French and their Genoese and Castillian allies in 1416 and 1417. But then the enemy was concentrated, and this was unusual; just because the enemy's total resources were not usually concentrated he could not be decisively beaten, and a general security could not be obtained. We are used to fleets that can remain at sea for long periods, far from any shore base; in the 15th century this was not possible. Ships were small, being of wood they were in continual need of minor repairs and overhaul, and, whilst on duty carried a large complement of soldiers and provisions; for these reasons most operations took place within easy reach of land, and most squadrons, even if raised for three months, were usually at sea for only 6, 8 or 10 weeks, and even then probably not continually. These limitations were thus both a weakness and a strength. A naval commander could not hope for glorious victories, but he did not expect catastrophic defeats. The manner in which the news of the victory at the battle of the Seine in 1416 was

received, would suggest that it was a rare and notable event - another Agincourt in fact.

The keeping of the sea consisted, therefore, of defensive watchfulness interspersed with attacks on the enemy's coastline. Forces were sent out to sail the seas, to hurt enemy shipping and to protect subjects and friends where they could. This patrolling would probably be in a certain area, off East Anglia, in the straits or the Western channel. In Edward IV's reign these destinations became more precise, and the arrangements more sophisticated; in the summer of 1475, for instance, one squadron was in the vicinity of the invasion force, and another in the Western channel; whilst when Howard sailed to Scotland in 1481, there was a covering fleet in the straits, ready for any French action. The common method of attack was to send an expedition against the enemy's coast: Neville to Brittany in 1462, Howard to Scotland in 1481; and in this Shrewsbury's recovery of Bordeaux in 1452 was no more than a large scale raid, welcomed by the local population. This type of offensive was the only way in which the enemy could be hurt visibly and effectively, which was what appealed to the commanders, not least because they had a large share of all plunder. What happened was that the government fitted out a force, and then sent it out on a roving commission to do what harm it could; if it was strong enough it attacked

enemy strong points, if it was not strong enough it merely sailed the seas - so in 1457 the French fleet under de Brézé plundered Sandwich, but the expedition led by Lords Scales and Mountjoy in 1468 did nothing. Between the French and the English this raiding was the accepted way by which the stronger party demonstrated its superiority to the weaker: the French and Castillian attacks on the South coast of England in the 1360's and 1370's were a similar though much less rewarding demonstration to the English chevauchées in the heart of France in the 1350's. They did do great harm, but like the bombing of civilian targets in the Second World War they did not alter the course of events.

What naval forces in fact achieved was much less than what the Libelle claimed seakeeping forces could do. The difference between what was ever actually done, and what was thought could be done was great indeed. But although it was impossible for any government to keep sufficient ships at sea for the length of time necessary for them to destroy completely the enemy's shipping and commerce, and that enemy's power of resistance, it was possible for it to do enough at sea to increase the security of its own merchant ships, and to decrease the enemy's ability to damage them. This is perhaps the gist of the Libelle's message. Henry V, by sending out patrols for many months in each year from 1416

to 1420, was able to win, and keep a large measure of dominion in the channel for these years, and even for a few years after that. This is perhaps what the Writer of the Libelle remembered in 1436. Such regular watchfulness had its rewards, but it cost money and required organisation, neither of which the government of Henry VI had; besides this, the Burgundians were not enemies in Henry V's reign: he had only to fight, as it were, on one front.

Perhaps all that it amounts to is this, that when men said the sea should be kept, they meant that the king should show himself active in protecting Calais, and those of his subjects whose business was on the sea, and possibly that English forces should raid the enemy's coast; namely, that the king should always have the initiative, the realm be defended and the enemy discouraged. When Cade said '...marchandyse is lost...the see is lost, France is lost...'[1], he was surely correct only as regards France; but what he implied was that the government had not carried out its obligations, and as a consequence there had been not only military disaster and economic decline, but also failure by sea. The argument of the Libelle, and of Fastolf for that matter, was not about how to keep the sea, but only that the

---

1. Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, e.d. James Gairdner, Camden Society, 1880, p.96.

sea ought to be kept, that the government should do something. It was the duty of the government, its natural function, to exhibit its strength in all places, including at sea. The problem of seakeeping was not an isolated one, it was part of the general issue as to good government. All that the king had to do was to set ships to sea frequently in time of war, under good leaders and with a clear intent; this was within the power of a strong king, but it was beyond the ability of a king whose mind was on other things than the real tasks of kingship. Royal administration and the keeping of the sea are but part of that wider question, which lies at the root of this work.

Chapter I.

The King's Ships, 1422 - 1461.

Henry V's own fleet of ships was the finest royal task force ever seen in England before the reign of Henry VIII. The chief and obvious reason for this was the war; English command of the channel was essential during the years 1415 - 1420 if the war effort in France was to be maintained. On 15 August 1416 the Duke of Bedford gained a notable victory off Harfleur in the battle of the Seine; there was no mistaking the result, despite French claims and heavy English casualties, for Harfleur was relieved, the siege raised and the military situation in Normandy turned again in England's favour. From the naval standpoint, however, the battle of the Seine was not a decisive victory, decisive that is in the way we have since come to use that word with reference to sea battles. An outstanding victory, yes; for its wide mention in English chronicles[1] and Henry V's great relief afterwards[2]

---

1. An English Chronicle ed.J.S. Davies, Camden Society, p.43; Gregory's Chronicle in Collections of a London Citizen, ed. J.Gairdner, Camden Society 1876, p. 114; Walsingham, Ypodigma Neustriae, Rolls Series, 1876, p.470; The Great Chronicle of London, ed. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, 1938, p.95; Robert Fabyan, The New Chronicles of England and France, ed. Henry Ellis, 1811, p.581; The Chronicles of London, ed. C.L. Kingsford, 1905, p.71.
2. The Reign of Henry V, Vol. 2, 1919, J.H. Wylie, p. 365.

clearly reflect the reaction of Englishmen to Bedford's achievement, the success of which was demonstrated to the public eye by the capture of three Genoese carracks, a proud addition to the English navy[1]. But supremacy in the channel could not be won in a day; the enemy's power of retaliation and recovery was not destroyed in a single engagement, for his resources were too great when any merchant vessel was a potential, and with simple adjustment, an actual warship[2]. Certainly for the remaining months of 1416 Henry had control of the narrow seas, and the ships that the king of Castille had lent the French, having avoided the English at Harfleur, were for a time no danger; but the Genoese carracks and galleys were still in the French employ and capable of much harm.

By the summer of 1417, in order that the invasion force might cross in safety, another battle had to be fought. On the 29 June the Earl of Huntingdon defeated a Genoese fleet near the mouth of the Seine; this was another English triumph and four carracks were taken[3]. What Bedford had achieved in 1416

---

1. For descriptions of the battle see Wylie, op.cit.p.346-368; The Agincourt War, A.H. Burne, 1956, p. 104-109; A History of the Royal Navy, Sir N.H. Nicolas, vol.2, 1847, p.419-425.
2. What Mr. G.V. Scammell has to say about the alterations of merchantmen impressed for royal service in the first half of the 16th century is true also of the 15th century, although even these minor adjustments were probably not made, and there were few and only small cannon: 'War at sea under the early Tudors', part 2, Archaeologia Aeliana, 4th series, vol. 39, 1961, pages 185-6.
3. The English Conquest of Normandy, 1416 - 1424, R.A. Newhall, 1929, p.55.

Huntingdon had had to do again in 1417, and although this is the last major battle of these years it produced no final decision. The channel had to be patrolled regularly if English control was to continue sure. The Earl of March was out with a squadron in the remaining summer months of 1417, and then from 1418 to 1420 forces were on the safekeeping of the sea each year[1]. Yet in 1419 and in 1421 there were strong fears along the southern coast of attack by Castillian fleets[2], in 1418 precautions were taken to protect the king's ships in the Hamble river, and in 1419 at Portsmouth and Southampton, against raids[3], and English merchant ships were never completely free from enemy attack[4]. To obtain this far from absolute security constant patrol and vigilance were necessary; a strong force of warships had to be at sea for many months of each year. It was primarily for this sound reason that Henry V built up a powerful fleet. He could not rely on the impressment of merchant ships for the speedy, efficient and reliable service

---

1. Newhall, op.cit. pages 59, 196 - 199. During the siege of Rouen in 1419 three Portuguese galleys were retained by the king for the safekeeping of the Seine: P.R.O. E364/61.
2. T. Rymer, Foedera, Vol. IX, p. 783; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1416 - 1422, p. 270, 323.
3. Issues of the Exchequer, ed. F. Devon, 1847, p. 354; Cal. Close Rolls, 1413 - 1419, p. 472-3, 525-6; Wylie, op.cit. p.382.
4. Cal. Close Rolls. 1419 - 1422, p. 190, March 1422.

that he required. Although of course he used other ships than his own, for the core of battle forces or patrolling squadrons under indentured commanders he had his own vessels.

Henry V took over five of his father's ships on his accession, not allowing them to be sold or dispersed, as by right they probably should have been according to Henry IV's will, for they were his personal property. And Henry V also had one ship already of his own, the '<u>Cog John</u>,' which he purchased as Prince of Wales for £300[1]. These six vessels he increased to 13 in 1415,19 in 1416,23 by February 1417,34 by August of the same year by purchase, building and capture. The number of his ships remained at 30 or just over until his death in 1422[2]. This large force included some of the finest ships of the time, not only the great '<u>Jesus</u>' of 1000 tons, the '<u>Holigost</u>' of 740 tons and the '<u>Trinity Royal</u>' of 540 tons - like the enormous '<u>Grace Dieu</u>' of 1400 tons, which was too large to be seaworthy, these were

---

1. P.R.O. E403/612 under 20 May, 1413. Henry IV had seven ships in 1410-12 according to the accounts of John Starling. Clerk of the King's Ships; Alan Moore, <u>Mariner's Mirror</u> (hereafter <u>M.M.</u>), vol. 4, 1914, pages 20 ff. 167 (transcriptions).

2. (See following page - 30.)

2. Richard II, 1398-99 : 4 ships. Henry V, 1413 : 6 ships.
Henry IV, 1399-1400 : 6 ships. 1414 : 7
1401 : 6 1415 : 13
1402 : 6 1416 : 19
1403 : 5 February 1417 : 28
1404 : 4 August 1417 : 34
1405 : 4 1418 : 34
1406 : 4 1419 : 30
1407 : 2 1420 : 33
1408 : 2 1421 : 34
1409 : 2 1422 : 32
1410 : 2 Henry VI, 1422 : 30
1411 : 5
1412 : 7
1413 : 5

These figures are based on : Cal.Pat. Rolls, Cal. Close Rolls, P.R.O. E364/39, E364/43 : John Chamberlain, Clerk of the King's Ships, accounts, 1398-99 and 1399-1406*, Alan Moore op.cit.; Cal. Norman Rolls, Deputy Keeper's 41st and 42nd Reports; W.J. Carpenter-Turner, 'Southampton as a Naval Centre, 1414-1458' in Collected Essays on Southampton ed. J.B. Morgan and Philip Peberdy, Southampton County Borough Council, 1958, 'The Building of the 'Grace Dieu', 'Valentine' and Falconer' at Southampton, 1416-20,' 'The Building of the 'Holigost of the Tower' 1414-16 and her subsequent history', both in M.M. vol.40, 1954, p.55, 270; P.R.O. E364/61, 65: Soper's accounts 1420-22 and 1422-27; from P.R.O. E403 - some references communicated to me by Mr. P. Rycraft. In Sir N.H. Nicolas, Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England (1834-7), vol.2, p. 202 there is a navy list of Feb.1417, and one of August 1417 in Henry Ellis, Original Letters, 3rd series (1846), vol.1, no. 31 (identical with that in Nicolas, History etc., Vol.2, p.514; and cf. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1416-22, p. 120, a shorter version.) The list given by M. Oppenheim, A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy, 1896, p.12 of circa 1420, I have amended and made slightly more definitive for that year, see appendix. From these figures it is clear that Henry V was not the 'founder of the navy' even for this short phase of development (see Wylie, vol.2, p.369, esp. note 4); for he had from his father a good administration and a small establishment. Henry V. was given a good start for the expansion of his naval resources, much better than Edward IV, rather worse than Henry VII had for instance. Just how good remains to be seen, and could be discovered from a critical work for the years 1399 - 1413 undertaken from the material available at the Public Record Office.

* P.R.O. E364/46: John Elmeton, Clerk of the King's Ships, accounts, 1406-1409.

prestige ships[1] - but also seven carracks taken from the Genoese and about 10 balingers, most useful for carrying messengers, ambassadors and the king himself across to Normandy as well as for patrol work. Many of the ships were built under the supervision of the Clerk of the King's Ships, William Catton until 1418, then William Soper, and both administration and establishment were developed to what were wartime proportions, with storehouses and dockyards at Greenwich and Southampton and a naval base on the Hamble. It has not been sufficiently noted how exceptional an achievement Henry's navy was; it has been accepted rather too readily by historians more used to the larger resources and wider developments of later periods, and this has led all too easily to their condemnation of the government after 1422 which drastically reduced the naval establishment. Henry V needed such a navy for his conquest of France; England from

---

1. For the 'Holigost' and 'Grace Dieu' see the articles of Mrs. Carpenter-Turner cited above. The 'Grace Dieu' is a notorious example of the naval white elephant, of which there are many examples in many centuries - the big ship built to impress, but being too large for real utility and faulty because ship construction would not match grandiose design. The Duke of Gloucester's opinion in 1420 that the 'Grace Dieu' was 'the fairest ship that ever man saw' was premature (Wylie, vol.2, p.378); for the vessel's melancholy history after 1422 see below. Henry V also had a large ship building at Bayonne in 1419, which perhaps fortunately, was never finished: Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1416 - 1422, p.82; Ellis, Original Letters, 2nd series, (1827), vol.I, no. 21; Wylie, vol.2, p.384; Carr Laughton, M.M. vol.9, 1923, p.83.

1415 to 1422 was a society at war - for these brief years more completely than it had ever been under Edward III or than it was to be again until the sixteenth century. The almost feverish activity of Catton, Soper and the masters of the king's ships was that of men involved in the prosecution of a war, and as such it was necessarily bound to be only temporary. By 1420 the pace was slackening; by 1422 with the English advance pushed well into France the problem of keeping the channel open for the passage of English ships had become less insistent, for by intelligent seakeeping there during the previous six years the English had achieved a security, which though not complete nor permanent, was sufficiently realistic to convince men that there was no outstanding danger. The patrols of the later years had, it seems, found no opposition; the French and their allies were no longer a menace at sea, they had been rendered relatively harmless[1]. To maintain a wartime naval establishment in these circumstances, and in that of the successful foundation of the twin kingdom of England and France, was clearly unnecessary, and an extravagance that the government could not afford. The expenses of the war had been heavy, were still so; it seemed

---

1. See Newhall, op.cit., p.199 : after 1420 'there was no need apparently, for special forces patrolling the narrow seas'.

to the council after Henry's death that now, in this direction at least, there could be retrenchment with both honour and safety[1].

It was not until March 1423 that the order was given for the sale of the king's ships. No doubt in the intervening months there had been discussion between Soper, who continued as Clerk, and the members of the council. Soper had some 30 ships to look after, a good many of them in a poor condition: this was the main problem. A wooden ship depreciated in value as rapidly in port as at sea; these vessels needed constant repair or they quickly rotted and became unseaworthy. If, therefore, she was not doing some useful service a ship was an expensive liability, for it cost near as much to keep her idle as it did to send her to sea. In the 15th century a navy could not be laid up inexpensively for some future troubled time- there was not this convenient answer to the problem, only the choice of using the ships and getting their

---

1. For the navy under Henry V the best sources (published) are Mrs. Carpenter-Turner's articles cited above, Wylie, vol.2, chap. 45, Oppenheim, op.cit., and Nicolas, History etc., vol. 2, chap. 6 - this last a slightly ingenuous narrative, for example p.403 ; 'the battle of Agincourt was, like those glorious victories (Poictiers and Crecy), followed by encounters on the ocean in which British valour was displayed in the usual manner, and was attended by the usual success'.

full value from them or disposing of them, and in this, the only way eliminating a heavy item of expenditure. It was obvious to Soper and the others that there was not enough work for so many royal ships at this time, and although he did hire outthe Holigost of Spain to a merchant, Victor Lombard, for a voyage to Zealand, and the Valentine to Paul Morrel and others of Southampton for a similar trading voyage to Calais, this only realised £30[1]. The carrack George also went on a trading venture to Bordeaux between October 1422 and April 1423[2], but most of the other ships were drably kept at Southampton, London or in the Hamble from the king's death until they were sold with only a handful of men aboard.

Whilst at least these ships, most of them the balingers built or acquired between 1417 and 1420, were being looked after, others were rapidly decaying. Sometime after June 1421 there had been a petition to Bedford, as Guardian of England, and to the council stating that the king's carracks required repair before they would be fit for service, and to this plea was added in another hand the information that the royal ships Thomas, Katherine, Redcog, and Little Trinity were in a similar plight[3]. It seems that this petition was partially answered,

---

1. P.R.O. E364/65.
2. Ibid; Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1422 - 1429 p.36, probably hired out to Anthony Hungary: P.R.O. E28/43, 24 Nov. 1423.
3. P.R.O. E28/38, no date.

for the Thomas and the carracks George and Christopher were repaired between 1420 and 1422 at heavy cost[1], though the five other carracks had little money spent on them, four being described as 'debilitate' after 1420 or 1421, whilst the three remaining ships that were mentioned were left in their poor condition. This matter of the high cost of repair of those vessels that had perhaps been left too long unattended is well illustrated in the case of the Grand Mary. She was thoroughly repaired and probably rebuilt (refacturam) between August 1422 and July 1423 at a cost of £182. 9. 10d; yet when she was valued before being given to Richard Buckland for money owing to him from Henry V, she was only estimated as worth £200. by 'suffissantes creables personnes de nostre ville de Hampton'[2].

The choice was uncomplicated. Once it was realised that there would not be the need for a large navy, it was obvious that ships should be sold, and quickly if they were to fetch good prices, for it was too expensive to retain this fleet

---

1. P.R.O. E364/61.
2. P.R.O. E364/65: E28/42, 3 July 1423, to the commissioners for the sale notifying them of the agreement whereby Buckland was to surrender 2 tallies worth £148. 8. 11d., which money was due to him for food etc., supplied to Henry V's household, in return for the grant of the Grand Mary and all her equipment. After she had been valued they were to inform the Treasurer of any difference between the two sums.

in comparative idleness. Either they could be left to rot away gently, or some money could be obtained by selling them. They would be more useful in the hands of private owners, in good repair and in time of need at the command of the king, than they would be decrepit in the Thames or Hamble mud. This was one consideration.

No doubt as imperative to the councillors was the will of the late king. To unravel all the motives, and to give each the correct emphasis in this business is not easy, but this other consideration was surely strong. The king's ships were his own personal goods, if in his will the sovereign wished them to be sold to pay his debts, as Henry V did, then this desire ought to be complied with, although Henry himself had not done so with regard to his father's will. Henry V stated that 1000 marks was to be raised from the sale of his ships, and handed over to his executors. His command was kept fairly closely, for the eighteen vessels sold realised £995. 6. 8d., and the 1000 marks was given to the executors. Some of the surplus, which also included £66. 13. 4d. from the sale of the storehouse and forge at Southampton, was allowed to William Soper, who had petitioned for such payment of his debts incurred when he was building the Holigost and Gabriel at Southampton in 1414 - 16, whilst selling ships in 1423 - 24 and during

various other labours over a period of fifteen years[1]. The directions given in the king's will were therefore certainly a rough guide upon which the council acted, though they exceeded the 1000 marks by nearly another 500. This at least demonstrates that the sale was no part of a ruthless new order promulgated by the council, but in origin an operation carried out according to a sacred directive, and in respose to the needs of the time. Whatever the manner, or the results, of the sale, the reasons for it were judicious enough.

On 3rd March 1423 Soper, Nicholas Banastre and John Foxholes, clerk, were ordered to sell 'certos magnos naves et alios tales quales ipsius videbitur expedire pro commodo Regis' before the coming Whitsun[2], and on the following day letters were sent to the mayors and sheriffs of London, Bristol, Plymouth, Lynn and Great Yarmouth requiring them to proclaim that all who would buy ships of the king, which he had ordered to be sold, should go to Soper and his fellow commissioners before that holiday[3]. At this time Soper and Foxholes were customers, and Banastre controller of customs at Southampton[4], whilst on 5 March Soper was regranted the Clerkship of the King's Ships,

---

1. P.R.O. E364/65; E28/52, 26 June 1430. He had £127. 5. 6d., out of £260.15.10d. owing to him.
2. Nicolas, Proc. Privy Council, Vol.3. p.53.
3. Cal. Close Rolls 1422 - 29, p.58.
4. P.R.O. E403/658.

at his former fee (since 1420) of £40 a year for himself and a clerk, but now under the controllership of Banastre, which was a new arrangement, perhaps intended specifically for the complicated transactions of the sale[1]. But the vessels were not all sold before Whitsun at Southampton; Soper and Banastre spent £20. 4. 0d. on riding to Dartmouth, Plymouth, Bristol, London, Greenwich, Sandwich, Winchelsea and Saltash about their business of selling ships[2], and sales continued until March 1425.

Seven of the ships that went were no loss to the crown; they were all described as 'debilitate', and as far as can be judged this was a true not just a convenient description. They fetched extremely low prices. The balinger Katherine Breton, a prize of 1417, was sold to the king's mariner, John Starling of Greenwich for £20. on 5th March 1423; only about £43. had been spent on her from 3rd February 1420, until Henry V's death, though she had been at Harfleur from then until February 1423. The small 30 ton balinger Roose - described as broken into pieces by winds and tempests, with only £29. spent on her in 1420 - 22, - was sold without any of her equipment to William Castle of Southampton for a mere £1. 6. 8d., on 17th February 1425, presumably to be broken up entirely; the ship Katherine, bought in 1415 for £440, but since 1420 apparently useless and lying in a primitive dock in one John Ramsey's

---

1. Cal. Pat Rolls, 1422 - 29, p.64, 70; P.R.O. E28/39, E404/40/122.
2. P.R.O. E364/65.

garden at Deptford, with but £12 spent on her in 1420 - 22, went to John Parse and others of Greenwich on 6th March 1425 for a miserable £5, and the ship Nicholas, purchased in 1415 for £500, but also a veritable wreck since 1420, with just 13/9d. spent on her in 1420 - 22, was sold for £5. to John Reynolds, shipwright of Ratcliffe in May or August 1424. Three of the five decayed carracks were disposed of: the Peter, a prize of 1417, to Robert Moring and William Tassier of Southampton for £13. 6. 8d., on 23rd October 1424, the Paul, another prize of 1417, and the Mary Sandwich, one of Bedford's captures in 1416, of 550 tons, to Richard Patin, Richard Prest, John and William Gladwin, men from Hamble and Shoteshall, for the very meagre sum of £26. the pair on 10th September 1424. Apart from the Katherine Breton, which went immediately and at the highest price, all these vessels were sold late in the day, almost as an afterthough perhaps. Neither the carracks nor the Nicholas were at all looked after between Henry's death and their sale; this can only have accelerated their decay. They were probably sold at knock-down prices to get them out of the way, after the first rush of buying had passed them by. The sum that they achieved, £70.13. 4d., seems to have been a genuine measure of their utility as ships, though as timber and iron they must have brought their new owners a large profit. The £70.13. 4d. was an insignificant contribution to the 1000 marks, and was perhaps

not counted in that figure[1].

The ships in good condition, and the balingers had ready purchasers. The carrack Christopher, a 1417 prize, was sold to John Morgan of Bristol for £166. 13. 4d. on 23rd May, 1423; her maintenance and repair between 3rd February 1420 and 7th August 1422, had cost £446. 7. 7d. The carrack George of 500 tons was sold to Nicholas Justinian and others for £133. 6. 8d. on 10th August 1423; the very large sum of £674. 1. 3½d. had been spent on her between 1420 and 1422. The ship Holigost of Spain of 290 tons went to John Radcliff, Ralph Huskard (master of the king's Grand Mary in 1422), Henry Baron and John Woodford of Southampton for £200 on 15th June 1423, and the ship Thomas to John Chirche, mercer of London, for £133. 6. 8d. on 5th September 1423. The Holigost had been maintained and repaired at a cost of £417. 4. 4¾d. between 1420 and 1422, and the Thomas during the same period at £529. 7. 4½d; she had been kept at Plymouth from December 1422 until she was sold. The balingers were probably in varying conditions of repair for they fetched some low, some higher prices; the Swan for instance, of 120 tons was sold for only £18. to John William (a king's mariner[2]), John Downing

---

1. P.R.O. E364/61, for the sums spent, 1420-22; P.R.O. E364/65, for the sale.
2. He and William Soper, were granted yearly pensions of 20 marks each in December 1422: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422-29, pages 13,44.

and Nicholas Stephens of Kingswear on 1st April 1423, whilst the Nicholas of the same tonnage, was sold for £66. 13 4d., to John More, William Strange, Richard Rowe - another king's mariner, who was to continue in the royal service until the late 1430's - and others of Dartmouth, on 15th June 1423. The Anne also of 120 tons, which had been launched from the royal stocks in 1417, went to John Slugge of Saltash on 27th June 1423 for £30; the 80 ton Falcon, on the other hand, went for £50 to Adam Forster of London on 1st June, 1423. The Cracchер of 56 tons was bought for £26. 13. 4d. on 30th April 1423 by John Cole, Thomas Assheldon and John William (again) of Dartmouth and Kingswear, but the George of 120 tons for only £20 by William Bentley of Plymouth on 31st August 1423. Finally the 100 ton barge Valentine was sold to John Emery and John Jon (master of the Holigost of Spain in 1422) of Southampton for £30 on 1st March 1424. All these vessels had had shipkeepers aboard from the time of Henry's death until they were sold, almost all of them lying at Southampton, though the Holigost, George and Valentine had been hired to merchants for trading voyages during that period[1].

The commissioners had worked hard in 1423 and 1424;

---

1. P.R.O.E364/61/65. Greenwich National Maritime Museum MS: Soper's own accounts, 1422-27, has the same information as the enrolled accounts.

although two carracks and two of the bigger ships had been sold by the autumn of 1423 for a total of £633. 6. 8d. a sum not far short of the 1000 marks required, yet the commissioners had also sold all of the balingers in good condition, except the Anne, during this same period, when they need only have sold one or two, to raise the remaining cash; they thus more than comfortably exceeded the 1000 marks. Perhaps this was done before the individual prices were totalled up, but this is unlikely as the commissioners travelled together and seem to have sold the ships carefully, one after another[1]. More probably no one bothered to keep to the strict figure specified by Henry V - so long as it was raised all was well; this would apply particularly to the executors who wanted only a quick sale and who were not interested in what was disposed of. No doubt too the expense of keeping in repair the balingers, as well as the larger ships which the crown retained, was too great to be contemplated, and had perhaps been found so in these years, 1422 - 23, especially as the balingers were not being used. But if in the 1420's there was little need of them, by about 1430 there was, indeed already in 1427 a balinger, the Little Jesus had to be built for the royal sergice. It is not easy,

---

1. Soper was possibly making sure that he would be paid his debts. In the autumn of 1423 he petitioned the council that the Treasurer might account with him for the period since August 1422, and that he might have his salary of £40.a year since he had been entitled to it in 1420. This was granted: P.R.O. E28/43, 24 November 1423.

hardly wise, to condemn the councillors of 1423 for not seeing the future, and medieval administrators tended anyway to look to the past in their calculations for the present, but if the sale is to be faulted it is at this point: the usefulness of three or four balingers, even in time of relative quiet, would surely have balanced the money required for their upkeep. If the Council had thought fit to buy in any of Henry V's ships for the new king (which it seems, they did not), then it would have been a good policy to have had these.

A clear sign of the government's intention to reduce the naval establishment, and a natural corollary to the selling of most of the ships, was the sale of the forge and storehouse near Domus Dei in Southampton, which had been constructed under Soper's supervision during Henry V's reign, to Walter Bell, master of that God's House, for £66. 13. 4d. on 3rd June 1424. The sale had been ordered by the council on 26th May, and the sum realised was to go towards the 1000 marks[1]. Without ships there was little reason for such a workshop with its valuable equipment, particularly at Southampton, for the remnant of the royal navy was kept at Burlesdon and then Hamble, where there were other stores, although in the 1430's Soper had to build

---

1. P.R.O. E364/65.

and rent accommodation for material salvaged from the wasting ships at Southampton again. The small sales of other equipment - anchors, old sails and some prize merchandise taken by the Little Jesus, when on the keeping of the sea in August 1427, were routine and brought in about £60 in the period 1422 - 27[1].

Henry V's rare and powerful fleet was destroyed, and his well appointed naval establishment dismantled, but for good reasons; his own will had required it and the needs of the time made it permissable. Yet more than this, it was also necessary. Such a force could not only not be maintained - money available could not keep pace with the continual need for repairs - but also it had not been fully maintained during the last two years of Henry's reign.

Of the thirty ships in the royal fleet at Henry's death in August 1422, eight were described as 'debilitate', including five of the seven carracks. In Soper's last accounts of Henry V's reign, covering the period 3rd February 1420 - 31 August 1422, seven vessels were similarly described - the Nicholas, the Katherine and four of the carracks, and the Grand Mary (later rebuilt at heavy cost), whilst no money at all was spent on the Redcog, Little Trinity and Philip,

---

1. Ibid.

which ships do not appear in the accounts. Also the carracks George and Christopher and the ships Holigost of Spain and Thomas had to have very extensive repairs, almost perhaps rebuilding, whilst three ships were disposed of - in June 1422 the balinger James was given to Sir Ralph Botiller for the defence of Dieppe, in July 1422 the barge Mary Breton, because of brokeness, was sold to John Tendering of Dartmouth for £40., and in May 1421, for the same reason, the Margaret was sold to John Wavell of Chichester for £9. 5. 7½.[1].

From these facts it can be seen that Henry's navy by 1422 was less strong than it had been, say two or three years previously, and that some of the ships were too far gone in disrepair to be recovered for service by the council in August 1422; of these only the Grand Mary was repaired, and then given away, the others were sold off or left to rot. In that period, 3rd February 1420 - 31 August 1422 just over £6,500 was spent on the king's ships, yet about £2000 went on the repair of only four ships - Thomas, Holigost of Spain, the carracks Christopher and George, whilst nine ships, almost a third of the entire fleet, were virtually written off and had only trifling sums spent on them. The king's navy was in decline before Henry V's death, the cost of keeping a wartime establishment in

---

1. P.R.O. E364/61.

peacetime was too great; with the decreasing need, and the falling away of government money the standard of the upkeep of the navy had deteriorated. So in August 1422 the new government faced a situation which was already, in this respect, out of their control. Those ships that had not been properly maintained over the past two years or more it was really not worth repairing, even if there had been the money to spare. The cost of building a ship was in most instances not great, but the expense of keeping her in good condition was comparatively heavy; constant minor repairs were necessary, and if these had been neglected a major overhaul soon became essential. In quieter times warships naturally received less attention; this is probably what had happened in these two years. Thus in 1422 the navy could only have been restored to its former glory at very heavy cost, and this the council, for good reasons, was not willing to undertake.

The government wanted to cut down expenses not increase them, and this they certainly did. But they perhaps went too far. The channel seemed English enough, although in 1426 the appearance of a Breton fleet caused defensive measures to be taken in the seaboard counties of the South[1], and the late king's will was not to be denied, yet when it was decided to

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422 - 29, p. 327.

sell, almost everything went. The selling of all the serviceable balingers was, we might say, gratuitous, for a small force of six or seven vessels would have been invaluable where one of twenty or thirty would have been a luxury. It was probably here, in the sale of the balingers, that some of Soper's friends and king's mariners did well for themselves - setting into business, knowing how that their royal careers were finished. The prices paid for some of the balingers, and for the two carracks and two ships were small. On this subject not much can be said with certainty, for it would be impossible to discover any ship's real value, but it is obvious that many of the purchasers had good bargains. If Henry V had paid for the 330 ton Nicholas £500, and £440 for the Katherine in 1415, £133. 6. 8d. for the 500 ton George, or £166. 13. 4d. for the other carrack Christopher, or £200 for the 290 ton 'Holigost of Spain, or £133. 6. 8d. for the Thomas - all four ships having had double or treble these sums spent on their repair only some months previously - do not appear to be high prices, even if we allow that the king had to buy dearly. With no pressure from government or executors to obtain the best prices possible, Soper and Banastre had no obligations to anyone, save presumably themselves and their friends. Soper no doubt had his reward, and Banastre too, though Soper's pleas for the payment of his

costs and wages, some outstanding for fifteen years, show that his job was not all profit, nor all graft; what he took by the way was as much as any 15th century official, good at his work, would have taken; but the sale must have been a golden opportunity for him. What the government did, it seems had to be done, but it was not done very intelligently, nor very well, and not to the crown's best advantage.

However, the four big ships - Jesus, Holigost, Trinity Royal and Grace Dieu, remained in the government's possession. Some £100's had been spent on them in the last two years of Henry V's reign[1], and now they still needed further repairs[2]. But there was not much else. Apart from the big four, losing their utility fast, though not yet past service, there were Redcog (first mentioned in 1415), Little Trinity (1417), Philip(1415), Mary Hulk (1416-17), the carracks Mary Hampton (a 1416 prize) and Andrew (a 1417 prize), and the balinger Gabriel Harfleur (1417). All of these were in poor repair, the first three not even mentioned in the 1420 - 22 accounts as having money spent on them, the Mary Hulk then only had £43. spent on her, and was described as broken, and the Gabriel had £31. spent on her. All of these vessels were written off at once in the new reign, only the Gabriel having shipkeepers

---

1. P.R.O. E364/61.
2. See below.

aboard from 1st February 1422 to May 1423; none of them ever figures thereafter as a ship, they were all stripped of equipment, which was stored or sold, and as hulks were left to rot[1].

On paper it seems that in 1422 some ships remained to the new king, even an adequate fleet for that peaceful time, but in fact after the sale the king's navy consisted of only the four big ships, and one of these was not seaworthy; to these was added the balinger Little Jesus, built in 1427. It is not surprising, therefore, that many historians have viewed the whole transaction with dismay and distaste, for on the face of things the change was a rapid and mighty one, though, as we have seen, it had begun before Henry V's death. The council made a mistake in 1423 - 24, when they disposed of the navy, or rather they were wrong in not having a navy again by 1435, which is more to the point. Yet there were adequate causes for their error of 1423 - 24, indeed as things stood at that date they no doubt felt that they could do little else - the problem of the permanency of the royal navy was that the ships were the king's, the council can hardly be blamed for this. This is the crux: the councillors of 1422 - 24 would have to have been men of strong resolution and

---

1. P.R.O. E364/65.

clear foresight if they had kept a strong naval force, against all the pressures of finance[1], the king's will and the peaceful situation.

The four big ships were left to the crown, and it was possibly pride in Henry V's achievement that prompted the government to spend money on their upkeep, for they were representative of his might and prestige, in their way symbolic of that monarch's popular status. Henry may even have stipulated that they were not to be sold. Between 31st August 1422 and 31st August 1427, Soper received from the Exchequer £758. 1. 4d., in small parcels at various times[2]. Repairs on the four ships cost £666. 9. 8d., various expenses on the Little Jesus, chiefly her construction, £53. 6. 10d., and the purchase of materials £161. 2. 5d.[3]. The money that was received from the Exchequer, although not comparable with the sums disbursed in Henry V's reign[4], was of just sufficient

---

1. The government was having to pay for naval services rendered in Henry V's reign in the years 1423-26, and as late as 1433: Dutch ships used for transport, E28/54, 4 and 14 Feb. 1433; E28/43,44; Richard Rowe with the king's ships at Rouen, and elsewhere, P.R.O. E28/41, 12 May 1423, cf. Proc. Privy Council, vol.3, p.82-3; P.R.O.E28/47, 30 May 1426, cf.P.R.O. E403/675, 11 May; Robert Shad with the Nicholas, P.R.O.E28/41, 12 May 1423; Sir Thomas Carew for 1417, P.R.O. E28/43, 28 Nov. 1423, cf. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 2, p.125.
2. P.R.O. E403/660, 663, 664, 666, 671, 675, 677, 680. All these payments are noted in P.R.O. E364/65 save 2 payments in Nov. 1426 and July 1427.
3. Mrs. Carpenter-Turner's figure of £298. 12. 8d. (M.M., 1954 p.279) as the total spent on the big ships is an error; this was only one of five parcels spent.
4. Over £4,000 from the Exchequer in 1420-22; Robert Berd had had £4,549.10. 0d., from the Crown for the building of the Grace Dieu. 1416-20. (M.M., 1954, p.60.)

pages correct; typist's error
in numbering.

ent with regard to

The Grace Dieu was pitched and her leaks plugged; work on her seems to have been continuous between August 1422 and September 1426. The Jesus was repaired and pitched, and the Trinity Royal was put in good condition also. The Holigost had leaks stopped and rents patched, and her defective boards were replaced by new ones; sand and water were taken out of her, and a diver was used to mend those holes below the waterline, but she was then put into a dock for more repairs and her mast and other gear were taken out. This beaching on the mud, and stripping were, as Mrs. Carpenter Turner rightly points out, the beginning of the end; one more ship was being written off. The three others remained afloat in the Hamble estuary. Apart from this rather dreary round of duties Soper had one more congenial task; the balinger Little Jesus was built out of the Grand Follower, a small boat of the Jesus, though the low cost (about £50.) and the type of materials bought suggest that it was more probably a thorough refit and a change of name. She was finished at Southampton - rigged, victualled and equipped after being launched from her dock and her sail raised, under the direction of her master John Robin, between 20th June and 2nd July 1427[1].

---

1. P.R.O. E364/65, Also (for the Holigost) M.M., 1954, p. 279.

quantity to show the government's serious intent with regard to the maintenance of these surviving vessels.

The Grace Dieu was pitched and her leaks plugged; work on her seems to have been continuous between August 1422 and September 1426. The Jesus was repaired and pitched, and the Trinity Royal was put in good condition also. The Holigost had leaks stopped and rents patched, and her defective boards were replaced by new ones; sand and water were taken out of her, and a diver was used to mend those holes below the waterline, but she was then put into a dock for more repairs and her mast and other gear were taken out. This beaching on the mud, and stripping were, as Mrs. Carpenter Turner rightly points out, the beginning of the end; one more ship was being written off. The three others remained afloat in the Hamble estuary. Apart from this rather dreary round of duties Soper had one more congenial task; the balinger Little Jesus was built out of the Grand Follower, a small boat of the Jesus, though the low cost (about £50.) and the type of materials bought suggest that it was more probably a thorough refit and a change of name. She was finished at Southampton - rigged, victualled and equipped after being launched from her dock and her sail raised, under the direction of her master John Robin, between 20th June and 2nd July 1427[1].

---

1. P.R.O. E364/65, Also (for the Holigost) M.M., 1954, p. 279.

Throughout the next period covered by Soper's accounts, 1427 - 1433, the Exchequer continued to dispatch money for the repair of the ships. In all Soper received just over £860 in these five years, having of this, £265. 9. 2½d., in two payments in December 1431, and £100. in a single payment in July 1432 - the only one for that year[1]. He was commanded in May 1429 to take men and materials for repairs, and again in June 1432, in association with John William , on this occasion specifically because the ships had been damaged[2]; it is with these repairs that the accounts are concerned[3].

Maintenance is the better word to describe the activity of this time than repair, and even that is too strong for what were the last series of major operations carried out on ships that would serve the king no more, for the ships were now being dismantled and docked, as the Holigost had been. Only the Grace Dieu continued afloat in the Hamble (and she had been useless from the start); she had ten shipkeepers aboard, at 3d. a day each, for the whole period, carpenters mended her defective woodwork and John Sunday, the caulker, was busy pitching her. But her great mast and topmast were taken down; this was a difficult task for which scaffolds

---

1. E403/683, 686, 688, 689, 691, 695, 697, 699, 700, 703, 706, 709, and E364/69.
2. Cal. Pat Rolls, 1422-29, p. 551; Cal. Pat Rolls, 1429 - 36, p.202.
3. P.R.O. E364/69.

had to be built, and one Peter Johnson came from Sandwich to supervise the work in June 1432. That a man of Sandwich was sent for, particularly as he was expensive - £1.11. 0d. for his journey and services, seems odd. Mrs. Carpenter Turner suggests that he would have known about the handling of large vessels, as Sandwich was the port of call of Italian carracks[1], but these also came to Southampton; possibly Johnson was in contact with Hanse or Dutch seamen, or was himself from the low Countries, and therefore knew their large cogs and hulks, vessels seen less in the Solent than in the Downs or Thames estuary; it may have been his experience in this direction that prompted Soper to send for him. In all £287. 13 2d., was spent on the Grace Dieu.

One indication that Johnson was a foreigner is that earlier, sometime in 1429 - 30, probably as a result of the commission of May 1429, John Perry had ridden to Sandwich to seek out wise foreign master mariners, and Johnson had come to Burlesdon to supervise the taking down of the Trinity Royal's great mast and topmast; other foreign mariners were also employed in this operation. After this the ship was towed from Burlesdon to Hamble, and there, 'propter debilitatem eiusdem', was put into a dock ('magna fossura') on the mud,

---

1. M.M., 1954, p. 72; the reference, footnote 1, should be E364/69, not 65.

and sand and water thrown out of her. Just over £100 was spent on this dismantling and laying up. Like the Holigost before her the Trinity Royal was now put aside for good, though a token force of shipkeepers remained aboard her.

The Jesus was attended to in August 1432, after the commission of June. Her great mast was taken down and carried off to the new built storehouse at Southampton, and she was stripped of other equipment. Then, after being pitched, she was towed from Burlesdon up the Solent, lying for a time off Netley Abbey, to Southampton, where she too was placed in a dock. But the Jesus was in a better condition than any of the other ships, for she was put on stocks and repaired in the course of 1432 - 3, an overhaul that seems to have been, in intention at least, to keep her seaworthy, not just to prevent her falling apart. £165. 6. 10d. was spent on her altogether.

Of the Holigost there is no mention. But the Little Jesus had repairs and some new equipment, including two large standards of worsted, whilst her mast was attended to and she was pitched, all at a cost of £9. 19. 6d. The ship, with Ralph Huskard as her master, went out on the safekeeping of the sea in August 1431 and captured prize goods, which brought Soper £7. 10. 0d. when they were sold off. Soper also sold two old masts for £1. 13. 4d. on 18th February 1428 - the only material he disposed of in this way during these years. He

had to buy material for the repairs undertaken however, £212. 16. 6d. worth including carriage, and his other expenses were £14. 16. 6d. paid to Jordan Browning, a royal shipmaster of Henry V's reign, for his shipkeeping duties over the six years and for working day and night baling out the ships and their boats, £19. 13. 4d., for the building of a storehouse at Southampton, 160 feet by 14, for the material taken from the ships, and £12. rent for another store there, at the rate of £2. a year for the six years.

Although expenditure had been fairly high in this period, about £800 (albeit less in a year than Henry V had spent in a month), the council had clearly dispensed with the king's ships as a fighting force. The money spent on the four big ships down to 1427 was for ordinary maintenance, if only just, now however in the early 1430's the ships were being laid up, and the money spent was for this melancholy purpose. The Holigost, Trinity Royal and Jesus were on the mud to stay, hereafter they cost the government nothing, and the Grace Dieu was soon to meet the same fate, for her a formality. Within ten years the royal navy, save for the Little Jesus, had disappeared. During that time a navy had been not strictly necessary, but by about 1433 again the channel was less a route joining the twin kingdom and more a sector for renewed conflict. With the events of the next twenty years the

remaining accounts of the Clerks of the King's Ships, from 1433 to 1452, have little connection; they merely show the final, if long, decay of those few ships that were once part of the king's main resource of naval action. After 1433 the king would have to look to others to provide ships to fight his enemies, and to protect his subjects and friends.

The next accounts cover the period 31st August 1433 to 31st August 1437[1]. Soper received three payments from the Exchequer during this four years: £8. 1. 3½d. in January 1435 for general purposes, £40 in December 1435, and £47. 18 11d. on 17th July 1436 for the rebuilding of the Little Jesus[2]. Another £70 was realised on the sale of equipment - ropes and cables sold to John Chirche for £46. 13 2d, many old sails and bonets sold to painters of Southampton and others. Most of the expense incurred was on the Little Jesus in 1435 - 36, but before this £47. 18 4d. was spent on the Grace Dieu, for eight shipkeepers aboard her from August 1433 until June 1434,

---

1. P.R.O. E364/71. There is also a book of Soper's own accounts, and another of the controller's , Nicholas Banastre, for this period; they contain the same information as the enrolled accounts, but with slightly more detail of gear, material etc.: P.R.O. E101/53/5,6.
2. P.R.O. E403/718, 721, 724, E364/71. On 4th July Soper was ordered to have £100. for the making of the Little Jesus,but he only received the £47. 18.11d.: P.R.O. E28/57, 4th July 1436; P.R.O. E404/52/378. Cromwell, in his estimates of 1433 had set aside £100 for the custody and repair of the king's ships : Rotuli Parliamentorum, 1767, vol. IV, p. 436.

for men getting water, sand and bilge out of her between June and August 1434, and for men making an enclosure ('clausura') for her near Burlesdon. She was then towed round from Burlesdon roads and put in her last refuge, 'propter debilitatem et salvam custodiam eiusdem', under the supervision of William Payne, her first master back in 1418, and there dismantled during June and July 1434; a fence - probably of stakes and wattle, 'cuiusdam sepis vocat Hegge' - was built around the ship for her better safety, as was ordered according to the advice of wise seamen, and her gear was taken away to the rented storehouse at Southampton[1]. In this manner the Grace Dieu also was put aside.

But in the following year there was more positive activity. The completion of the treaty of Arras in September 1435, the threat to Normandy and the subsequent loss of Paris in the spring of 1436 all aroused great concern in England, and this, in one slight way, was shown by the action on the part of the naval administration. On 8th November 1435 Soper and Jordan Browning were commissioned to take men and materials to construct balingers for the king[2]. Probably this order came

---

1. P.R.O. E364/71, and M.M., 1954, p.68-9.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429 - 36, p.518.

originally from the Treasurer, Ralph, Lord Cromwell, as Richard Rowe, long a king's shipmaster and soon to be master of the Little Jesus, was sent by Soper to Cromwell to learn his wishes on this subject[1], and Soper's own accounts state that the making of the balinger was 'per litteram Radulfum dominum de Cromwell'[2]. If the intention of the government had been to build more than one vessel, this was not carried into effect, but either instead or in addition they also decided to buy. Towards the end of November 1435 a warrant was sent to the Treasurer requiring him to buy eight cannon and forty-eight balasters for the defence of Crotoy, and for a royal barge and balinger going on the safeguard and victualling of that town[3]. The defence of Crotoy was one of the foremost considerations of the government at this time, and this was the chief reason for the acquisition of vessels. An order of the same day, 22nd November commanded the Treasurer to buy a barge 'de Thames' and a balinger 'de guerre; these to be equipped and delivered to Walter Cressoner, captain of Crotoy, just as the cannon and balasters were to be handed over to him; on the dorse of this warrant it was recorded that a barge, lately belonging to Joan, Lady of Abergavenny was

---

1. P.R.O. E364/71
2. P.R.O. E101/53/5, f.7v.
3. P.R.O. E404/53/151.

purchased from two of her executors, Robert Darcy and Bartholomew Brokesby, for £22, and that £34. was spent on the repair of, and on new equipment for, this barge and a balinger, whose purchase is unrecorded[1]. By two warrants of 16th December Cressoner was paid these two sums[2].

Of the barge we hear no more, but the balinger is no doubt that which in January 1436 is called '<u>Jacquet</u>'; then she was to be repaired and equipped with war material along with the <u>Little Jesus</u>[3]. The <u>Jacquet</u> was to have only a brief term in the royal service - until December 1439 - but at no time was she the responsibility of Soper; the care of her remained with her master John Watts and the two customers at Chichester, Thomas Pope and Godard Pulham[4]. In July 1436 the <u>Jacquet</u> was commissioned for service, with the <u>Little Jesus</u>[5] and probably

---

1. P.R.O. E404/52/152.
2. P.R.O. E404/52/172, 186.
3. P.R.O. E404/52/193.
4. Both Pope and Pulham were important men locally. Thomas Pope of Rye and Horsted, Sussex, esquire was frequently M.P. for Rye between 1426 and 1460, mayor of that town in 1444 - 47, and from 1439 also a customer at Sandwich. Godard Pulham, draper and shipowner of Winchelsea, was M.P. in 1431, 1432 and 1449, and mayor in 1446: <u>History of Parliament</u>, e.d. J.Wedgwood, vol. 1, <u>Biographies</u>, p.691, 701. That John Hexham, called 'Clerk of the ships of our Lord the King', to whom the town of New Romney gave 10s. to have his friendship in 1436-7 (<u>Historical Manuscripts Commission</u>, <u>5th Report</u>, p. 541) was in fact only John Hexham, a clerk arresting ships for the king's service on the South coast at this time; see for example, P.R.O. E403/724.
5. <u>Cal. Pat Rolls. 1429 - 36</u>, p.536.

went across the channel with letters and supplies and to collect news of the situation in France, as other vessels had been doing for the king earlier in the year, like the George of Crotoy, a balinger that had been sailing between Winchelsea and Crotoy[1]. The next mention of the ship is on 18th March 1437 when she was to be repaired and fitted out for service[2], but she was back in port, probably Rye or Winchelsea, by June, for Watts was paid for her safekeeping ('per manus Thomas Pope') for the period 19th June 1437 to 19th February 1438; she was then extensively repaired and equipped along with the Little Jesus , and both balingers conveyed Cressoner to Crotoy and patrolled in the channel for a time[3]. After this excitement the Jacquet does not figure until in August 1439 she was one of the ships that the Duke of Norfolk employed for his crossing from Calais after the embassy to the marches there[4]. She was perhaps constantly used for this sort of work, under Watts, a Sandwich man it is noted on one occasion, for he had £37. 8. 3. as wages for himself and thirty-three mariners serving in her from 16th June to 3rd October 1439, in December of that year,

---

1. P.R.O. E404/52/193; E403/724, under 4th May.
2. P.R.O. E404/53/184.
3. P.R.O. E403/730, under 28th Jan., 19th Feb.1438. Pope and Pulham were in charge of her complete overhaul ('nova factura'), as they were of the repair of the Little Jesus; the masters, Watts and Rowe, were responsible for the equipping of the ships and the payment of their crews.
4. Proc. Privy Council, vol.5, p.383 (Beckington's journal).

and £5. for repairs[1], as well as £10. for his care of her over the previous years[2]. This is the last that is heard of the Jacquet in the king's service; she probably went to Richard Clevedon, who had a vessel of this name in 1442[3]. Such a ship, small, easy to handle, having both sails and oars, was well suited for work inshore, in estuaries or harbours - at Crotoy, in the mouth of the Somme or on patrol work in the channel; for these purposes she had been bought, and in these years of danger after 1435 seems to have proved her worth.

It was for these same reasons that Soper was rebuilding the Little Jesus in 1435 - 36. We have seen that he received £37. 18. 11d. from the Exchequer for her construction; he in fact spent £36. 14 9¾d. on her from November 1435 to March 1436 at Burlesdon[4]. It was a thorough rebuilding rather

---

1. P.R.O. E404/56/149; a list of payments concerning the transport of ambassadors between May and October 1439.
2. P.R.O. E403/737, under 22nd December.
3. See below.
4. For the details of the building of the Little Jesus in 1435-36 see: W.J. Carpenter Turner, 'The Little Jesus of the Tower, a Burlesdon ship of the early 15th century,' Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society, Papers and Proceedings. Vol. XVLLI, part 2, p.173. She uses P.R.O. E101/53/5, but the essay should be read with caution as there are a considerable number of errors, for example £143. 6. 5¾ was not the cost of the building; this was the total of Soper's expenses for the period 1433-37. Nor was the Little Jesus built out of the Grand Follower as Mrs. Carpenter Turner says; this had occurred in 1427 and there is no mention of the Grand Follower in P.R.O. E364/71 or E101/53/5.

than a new construction[1], for the ship had seen service for nine years past, but it was a more complete conversion than that out of the Grand Follower in 1427 to judge from the cost: £86. as against £50. Jordan Browning supervised the work, and when finished she was handed over to her new master, Richard Rowe according to an indenture of 7th August 1436 between him and Soper[2]. Thereafter Soper had no more to do with her, and like the Jacquet the vessel became the responsibility of her master and the two officials, Pope and Pulham. Before this however the Little Jesus had been victualled by Jordan Browning, then, in July, called her master[3]. In August she was manned by Rowe with a crew of 60 to go on the keeping of the sea for a month, and other supplies were taken aboard[4]. She sailed to Crotoy and Calais with victuals, and returned with letters from Crotoy which Rowe delivered to members of the council at Canterbury; when she was in port he was busy riding between London and Winchelsea collecting his orders, and seeing what he was to do with the ship[5]. Between August and October she was given

---

1. 'factura, reparacione, remendacione et construccione' (E364/71), 'factura, ryggynge, reparacione et arracione' (E101/53/5.)
2. P.R.O. E101/53/II, with warrant of 7th June 1436 attached.
3. P.R.O. E403/724, under 17th July.
4. P.R.O. E403/724, under 29th August; E101/51/6, August year 14.
5. P.R.O. E403/724, under 28,29th August.

slight repairs under the supervision of Thomas Pope, and was kept at Winchelsea whilst Rowe was absent in London for a month[1]. In November Rowe was commissioned to impress mariners, some of whom came from Southampton, and the ship was sent to sea again to go to Crotoy with supplies and messages; she went to sea once more in the new year, for in February, Rowe was paid £4. 9. 0d. for bows, arrows and 20lbs. of gunpowder for her, and in March he and the two customers were paid for other stuff they had bought for the ship[2]. On one of these voyages the balinger had taken the Duke of York over to Normandy, and then gone on the keeping of the sea 'in partibus occentalibus'[3]. There is no notice of her after this until early in 1438, when Rowe was paid for her safe custody from 15th March 1437 to 19th February 1438, just as Watts had been paid for the Jacquet for much the same period; then, with the Jacquet, she was repaired and conveyed Cressoner to Crotoy[4]. This is her last recorded service; her new career had been shorter than that of the Jacquet.

Both ships had been valuable to the crown - if there had

---

1. P.R.O. E403/726, under 27th Oct, 5, 30 Nov.
2. P.R.O. E403/726, under 12th Nov., 28th Feb., 18th March; E404/53/181, 18th March.
3. P.R.O. E101/53/5, f.10.
4. P.R.O. E403/730, under 28th Jan., 19th Feb.

been fâve or six such royal balingers the king would have benefitted even more during these critical years 1435 - 37, when both Calais and Crotoy were besieged and Normandy had seemed to be lost. But the Burgundians failed before Calais, and Cloucester's punitive expedition, Talbot's successful campaign at Crotoy, and the Duke of York's vigorous lieutenancy in Normandy staved off immediate defeat, and postponed for some years what had at first seemed likely: the French conquest of Northern France. The contribution of the Little Jesus and the Jacquet to this activity was no very significant one, for they served only as auxiliaries in the naval operations of the time. It is no wonder that the writer of the 'Libelle of Englyshe Polycye' groaned for the loss of the king's great navy, when all that the two king's ships could do was to carry messages and supplies. But it was all that they could be expected to do; at least they seem to have performed these menial services with success.

The rebuilding of the Little Jesus was the last positive action on the part of the Clerk of the King's Ships, his only function between 1437 and 1452, was to watch over the material and the decaying hulks still his responsibility. As the ships rotted away, so the naval organisation, developed powerfully in Henry V's reign, disintegrated. Given such a hard blow in 1422 - 24, it had virtually collapsed, but not beyond recovery -

whilst there was a handful of ships there had to be an organisation of some kind; by 1437 however both ships and organisation had got beyond repair. When even the Jacquet and Little Jesus were not put in the Clerk's charge, it was clear that his time of usefulness was over. As Mrs. Carpenter Turner has said, the Hamble 'became a kind of graveyard for the Royal Navy[1]'; Soper, better than anyone, knew this. It was in November 1436 that he petitioned to be released from the Clerkship, but he had another six years to run as peaceful gravedigger.

For the years 1437 - 39 Soper received no money from the Exchequer, and no materials were sold; expenses totalled £8. 9. 7d. The heaviest item was the rent for the storehouse at £4, after this £3. 6. 8d. for the wages of men taking iron out of the Grace Dieu - she had been struck by lightning on the night of 6/7th January 1439, and set on fire - and carrying it by boat to Southampton, where it was unloaded and put in the store; Jordan Browning supervised their labours. Also iron chains were salvaged from the Holigost and Trinity Royal, and taken to the Southampton store. During August 1439 all this material and other stuff was moved from that

---

1. Hampshire Field Club etc., Papers and Proc., vol.XVIII, pt. 2, p. 174.

depository to another run by Alice Bacon, widow, at the cheaper rate of £1. a year. But there was slight contact with the active world: by an indenture of 20th March 1436 24 coffers containing 10,000 quarrels were delivered to Robert Whitingham, Treasurer of Calais, for the defence of that town; and also four great anchors from the Jesus were given to John Chirche[1]. Soper's last accounts, 1439 - 42, are equally unexciting. Although £3. 10. 0d. was received from the Exchequer, this was strictly for the custody of equipment; another £3. 0. 11¾d. came from a sale of lead. Expenses were cut to £4. 16. 4d., of which £2. 12. 0d. was for the rent of the store, now kept by William Bowier and his wife, £1. was for the thatching of the other store at Southampton, and small payments were for men taking planks and boards out of broken 'Cabanes' in the Holigost and Trinity Royal, and carrying these to the store. Whitingham again had some war material for Calais: six cannons with twelve chambers[2]. This series of accounts ends on 7th April 1442, the day on which Soper finished his long service; by an indenture of the same date, listing all the remains of the king's

---

1. P.R.O. E364/73.
2. P.R.O. E364/76.

navy, he handed over to the new clerk, Richard Clevedon[1].

Soper at last was allowed to go; his petition to be released, endorsed and granted on 15th November 1436, was only now fully answered. Although he had written then that he had been charged 'with right grete and combrous occupacions', this is not true of his period of office after about 1430; and when he centred his plea on the necessity of fulfilling a vow to go on pilgrimage, which he had promised 'for the greet perils and combrous occupacions that be liklynesse at divers tymes myght have falle in the office aboveseid' coupling this with a request that he might have for his expenses twenty sacks of wool to ship into Lombardy, it seems more likely that his interest was in the wool or perhaps the pilgrimage, but hardly the great burden of his office, for after the sale in 1422 - 24 Soper's career was more in trade than in the naval administration. His last, and most powerful reason, '...consideryng also that the seid Beseker groweth into such age that yif the seid pilgrymage be not done in right short tyme it may nevere be done by hym', also seems a thin one, as he lived for another prosperous twenty-two

---

1. P.R.O. E101/53/37: indenture, and warrant of 26th March in a leather pouch.

years and died in 1459[1].

The Clerk of the King's Ships had little work to do in the years after the sale; once most of the ships had gone, and those that remained were laid up for good, he had only a tenuous connexion with naval affairs. There was nothing of great moment until 1435, but thereafter, as the keeping of the sea became a matter of first importance, the Clerk, with only useless vessels to see to, was of no consequence. What he had once done was done in other ways, through other channels; between the Clerk and naval activity there was no link. Soper was more concerned with trade and municipal government, as a citizen, merchant, customer and M.P. of Southampton, than he was with the navy. He had been drawn into the naval administration in Henry V's reign because he was a wealthy and influential man at Southampton, which town Henry had decided on as a centre for the development of his navy - his

---

1. P.R.O. E28/58, 15th November 1436. His will, dated Nov. 1458, proved Nov. 1459, is printed in The Black Book of Southampton, ed. A.B.W. Chapman, Southampton Record Society, 1912-15, vol. 2, p.98. The licence to export the wool is in Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1436 - 1441, p. 36 and Cal. of French Rolls, 43th Report of the Deputy Keeper, p. 316. For the pilgrimage see A.A. Raddock, Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton, 1270 - 1600, 1951, p. 193; there is a short notice of Soper in Wedgwood, Biographies, p. 782.

money and his social position were a reason for his appointment, not a result of it. No doubt he profited from his clerkship, particularly from the sale in 1422 - 24, but there was scant chance of graft from the meagre resources at his disposal after 1425. Some equipment went astray (it always does), and some of his friends got some of the jobs that were to be had, Rowe, Browning and William Payne for instance; in this Soper was no more nor less typical than any other official of whatever century. But his opportunities for anything but petty fraud were limited; he was probably content with his high wage of £40., a year, which he received, though irregularly, throughout his term of office under Henry VI[1], the proceeds of his trading ventures, and the privileges granted him by the king that all officials expected to have - a licence to export wool to Pisa in 1424, licences to trade to Spain in 1420 and 1429 for example[2]. After 1425 he seems to have performed his light duties as Clerk as conscientiously, and giving as much satisfaction, as he had carried out his more important tasks under Henry V. From 1442 until the accounts end in 1452 he continued as Controller over the new Clerk.

Richard Clevedon cannot have had Soper's long experience of ships and seamen, but he was not simply the 'mere courtier' that Mrs. Carpenter Turner calls him[3], for he was also a

---

1. P.R.O. E403, to Easter 1443.
2. B.M. Cotton MS. Vespasian, F.XIII, f.33; Cal.Pat.Rolls.1416-22, p.295; Cal. French Rolls, 48th report of the Deputy Keeper, p.263.
3. Collected Essays on Southampton, p.47; M.M., 1954, p.281.

shipowner. In 1442 he owned the Jacquet of Lymington and the Mary of Lymington[1], and in 1439 he, with two other men, was granted a vessel that had been forfeited to the crown, as also in 1440 he and another had a grant of the James of Sandwich alias of Winchelsea, whose master was one Watts of Sandwich[2] - this ship could well have been the king's own 'Jacquet', of which John Watts of Sandwich was master, as there is no mention of forfeit in the grant; if it was, it presumably became Clevedon's Jacquet of 1442. His knowledge and understanding of maritime matters may not have been very great, but at least he was not entirely unacquainted with them, his appointment not altogether a gift to an amateur. But his real career was at court. He was a yeoman of the crown, by 1445 an usher of the chamber - in 1447 yeoman-usher of the queen's chamber - and controller of customs at Southampton; from 1435 he had been Clerk of the King's Works in the New Forest and from 1439 Surveyor of the same; he was also bailiff of Burley, a position he still held in 1455[3]. A man of the court he

---

1. P.R.O. C1/12/176; P.R.O. E28/71, 11th July 1443; cf. Rot.Parl, v., p.59.
2. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1436 - 41, p.235, 403; Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1441 - 46, p.39.
3. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1429 - 36. p.463; Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1436 - 41, p. 305; Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1441 - 1446, p. 356; Cal.Pat Rolls, 1446 - 52, p. 28; Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 61, p.235.

certainly was, but he was (at this stage of the navy's decay) not unsuitable, being a local man with some small pull perhaps in the council and an interest in trade and shipping, for the post of Clerk, to which he was appointed on 26th March 1442[1]. For by this time little experience of ships was called for in this position.

Clevedon's motive for taking up the post can only have been to add the rewards of another sinecure to his collection; although the fee of 1s. a day, a return to Catton's wage ~~— a return to Catton's wage~~ - a sure sign that the Clerkship was no longer of high account[2] - was not much, it was something. Probably he saw an opportunity to profit above and beyond the legitimate rewards of the office, and he no doubt did so, for he was engaged throughout the following ten years in selling off considerable amounts of material, about £120. worth; and there was no danger of incurring debts from the government as expenditure was only £16. 11. 10d. over the same period. Nor did he have to do the work himself for he exercised his office through a deputy, which Soper had not done[3]. The position

---

1. Cal. Pat Rolls, 1441 - 46, p. 58, 351.
2. Soper's wage was paid directly by the Exchequer; Clevedon's, like Cattons before, came out of the customs of Southampton, paid to him by the customers: a post of national importance returned to local insignificance.
3. Clevedon's patent of office (Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1441 - 46, p.58; P.R.O. C66/452, m.22) mentions the right to employ a deputy, Soper's (Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1416 - 22, p. 256; P.R.O. C66/402, m.10) does not.

was therefore an attractive one, a matter of slight effort and reasonable recompense - ideal for a man of Clevedon's stamp.

His first accounts cover the period 7th April 1442 to 6th July 1447; during this time no money was received from the Exchequer, and there were no expenses. Sales of material included the wood from the cabins of the Holigost and the Trinity Royal - 228 boards for a mere £2. 12. 4d, the iron chains that had formerly been placed across the Hamble to protect the ships from attack, and the iron that had been taken out of the Grace Dieu after the fire, a total of £61. 2. 7d. Clevedon also began to dispose of the ships; by virtue of a warrant of the king of 3rd December 1446 the Jesus, still lying at Southampton, was given to Christopher Barton and Richard Greenacres, two members of Cardinal Beaufort's household, with all the gear that was with her and one of her great anchors, which lay on the left as one went out of the Watergate at Southampton[1]. It was probably the equipment and the anchor that they wanted; the Jesus was left to disintegrate where she was[2].

---

1. P.R.O. E364/81, 86; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441 - 46, 454, 18th July 1446.
2. Collected Essays on Southampton, p.46.

The next, and last, accounts run from 6th July 1447 to 7th April 1452. £63. 11. 4d. was obtained for stuff sold: anchors, including one bought by the Earl of Oxford for £9, gear from the Trinity Royal for £10. to John William of Southampton, iron and other old, broken stuff also sold to John William, and various other oddments. £10 rent was paid for the storehouse for the ten years 1442 - 52, and there were small payments to men salvaging wood from the Grace Dieu and weighing and breaking up iron chains, in all just over £16. 10. 0d.[1]

So in 1452 there remained the hulk of the Grace Dieu, burnt out and submerged, the Holigost, described as submerged in the sea and broken by age. The Trinity Royal was given away in October 1452 to Guy Afford, it too was derelict and without any equipment, for it had lain, said the grant, for 20 years and more at Hamble and could not in any way be repaired[2]. However in these last decadent years there was a contribution to the naval activity that had now long been divorced from the Clerk of the King's Ships; by an indenture of 3rd August 1449 Clevedon handed over to Thomas Daniel two guns with four chambers, three anchors from the Holigost and four iron cannon with two chambers, which he was to employ whilst on

---

1. P.R.O. E364/86; clearly this account covers the expenses of the whole period 1442 - 52.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 61, p.19.

the keeping of the sea[1], a task he had been appointed to on 27th July; and by another indenture of 28th April 1450 William Fletcher, Clevedon's deputy, passed on to Henry Capon, citizen and merchant of London, the deputy of John Taverner, two anchors, one from the Holigost, the other from the Grace Dieu. Taverner was the owner of the Grace Dieu, a ship built in 1439 - 40, which vessel the king had ordered to go to Bordeaux with men and supplies for its relief, and because he was informed that she lacked sufficient anchors, he ordered Clevedon to release these, 'duas ancoras optimas in custodia sua' - they must have been a rare prize for Taverner[2].

Both these transactions are, in their way, significant ; thirty years after Henry V's death two small parcels of what remained of his powerful fleet were being used in a manner, and under circumstances he would barely have recognised. Daniel and his squadron at sea - the man himself and the method of his service, were a product of, and a response to, conditions that Henry could not have stomached. The crown's relations with Taverner and the Grace Dieu, though normal, for the king had always to make use of private vessels, were in this case unusual, in that this was the only ship between 1439 and 1461

---

1. P.R.O. E364/86.
2. P.R.O. E364/86; M.M., 1954, p. 281.

that the cr
difficult t
government'
John T
Peter of Hu
former mast
Peter had b
as well as
he intended
service and
for this pu
forest in Y
1439[2]. By
she was inc
sea -'atte
Dieu'[3]. I
In 1443 she
Duke of Some
so deep and
my said lord

as early as 22 July I440 there was a licence to John Taverner, master of the Grace Dieu of Holderness, to trade to Iceland; also, owing to the great size of the vessel so that it could not go into port, it was to be laden and unladen in the open sea.

Cal.French Rolls, Deputy Keeper's 48 th Report, p.338.

s
f the
as
mself
ntz',
e
z';
May
year
f the
race
.
the
th
where
ner

1. P.R.O. E28/57, May, Cal. Pat. Rolls. 1429 - 36, p.510: there was a John Taverner, master of the Christopher of Hull in 1422: Cal. Close Rolls, 1419 - 22, p. 241.
2. P.R.O. E28/60, 28th May 1439.
3. Rot. Parl., v, p.59.
4. Proc.Privy Council, vol.5, p.282; Somerset landed at Cherbourg (Sir J.H.Ramsey, Lancaster and York, 1892, vol.2.p.55), but the 10 miles is incredible.

that the crown could count as its own, and even then it is difficult to discover just what was the extent of the government's controlling interest in the ship.

John Taverner of Hull or Holderness was part owner of the Peter of Hull in 1436[1]; in 1439 he petitioned the king, as former master and owner of half of that ship, that as the Peter had been lost off Yarmouth, to the great loss of himself as well as 'of the Flour of youre Navy of Shippes merchauntz', he intended to build another vessel 'as notable unto youre service and nede as any other shalbe of shippes merchauntz'; for this purpose he asked for 200 trees from the king's forest in Yorkshire, and he was granted 100 oaks on 28th May 1439[2]. By 1442 the ship was notable enough, as in that year she was included in the Commons' scheme for the keeping of the sea -'atte Hull, a grete Ship called Taverners the name Grace Dieu'[3]. It was her size that must have impressed people. In 1443 she had to be discharged from transport duty with the Duke of Somerset going to Normandy 'forasmuch as he draweth so deep and he may not neither dart nor come to the land where my said lord wol arrive by Mymyle etc.'[4], and in 1445 Taverner

---

1. P.R.O. E28/57, May, Cal. Pat. Rolls. 1429 - 36, p.510: there was a John Taverner, master of the Christopher of Hull in 1422: Cal. Close Rolls, 1419 - 22, p. 241.
2. P.R.O. E28/60, 28th May 1439.
3. Rot. Parl., v, p.59.
4. Proc.Privy Council, vol.5, p.282; Somerset landed at Cherbourg (Sir J.H.Ramsey, Lancaster and York, 1892, vol.2.p.55), but the 10 miles is incredible.

was discharged from paying harbour dues at Calais as the ship was too big to enter the port there[1]. Although this does not necessarily mean that the Grace Dieu was very large (like Henry V's Grace Dieu), for as early as 1385 French prizes could not be got into Calais harbour[2], she was clearly of deep draught and of a famous enough build even in that age of big ships.

At no time between 1439 and 1445 was she described as having any connection with the crown; but in June 1446 Taverner was commissioned to take men and materials to build the king's ship, Grace Dieu[3] - 'pro factura cuiusdam Navis nostre vocate Grace de Dieu'[4]; this was either a rebuilding or an entirely new construction, but of a vessel which in some way had become, at least in part, the king's. In December 1449 Taverner was given a bounty, in the form of a customs-free voyage to Italy of the Grace Dieu, for the building of this ship 'adeo Magnam sicut Magnam Carrakam seu Majorem'[5]. Although the bounty makes no mention of the Grace Dieu being a king's ship, the wording of the commission

---

1. P.R.O. C76/127, m. 9, 12th March 1445.
2. Nicolas, History etc., vol. 2, p. 301.
3. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1442 - 46, p. 432.
4. P.R.O. C66/462, m 28.
5. Foedera, vol., XI, p.258.

of 1446 and the fact that in March 1446 Taverner was ordered to have a gown a year of the suit of esquires of the king's livery[1], show that ship and owner-master were at the crown's disposal. So it was in the following years; in 1450, 1451, 1452 and 1453 the ship was constantly in the royal service[2]; in January 1452 for instance Taverner was commanded to unload a cargo of wool with which she had been freighted, and to bring the ship to the Thames immediately; the Grace Dieu was there by February[3]. In June 1454 the ship was to be repaired at Taverner's expense and brought into service[4], and in 1457 she was arrested to serve with the Earl of Warwick; by this date Thomas Palmer was her master and no more is heard of Taverner[5]; he had presumably died. Whilst Taverner was alive he was always called owner of the Grace Dieu, as in the Clerk's accounts of 1450 - 'cum magna Navi sua vocata Grace Dieu'[6], and the crown's rights were never proprietary ones; there was, it seems, only this understanding that the ship should be ready to serve the king. But from 1457 onwards the

---

1. Cal. Close Rolls, 1441 - 47, p.336.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 378; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 61, p. 117, 124.
3. P.R.O. E28/80, 25th January, no year, but certainly 1452; P.R.O. E28/82, 21st Feb. 1452, cf. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 6, p.119.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 61, p.173.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 61, p.404 - 5.
6. P.R.O. E364/86.

vessel belonged to the crown, or to Warwick when he was officially keeping the sea; in April 1458 she was equipped at the Earl's expense and in March 1460 granted to the Duke of Exeter[1], for Dinham had been unable to bring her out of Sandwich in the January raid because she was damaged[2]. In 1461 she became Edward IV's first vessel, and remained a king's ship until she was broken up by Henry VII in 1486, and the material from her used for his new Sovereign[3].

Partial as the king's interest was in the Grace Dieu, it was all that Henry VI possessed in the way of naval resources in the 1440's and 1450's, apart from the decaying hulks and the decreasing dumps of equipment. It was not much, but it was all that the government of those middle years would or could have; it hardly constituted a naval establishment. That had disappeared long before the Grace Dieu was first built; by about 1436, with the Little Jesus out of the Clerk's control, there were none of Henry V's ships left that could have been made serviceable, and the government showed little inclination to purchase or build others in their place. With no vessels to be taken care of,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452 - 61, p.439, 554, 566.
2. An English Chronicle, ed. J.S. Davies, p. 84-5.
3. See chapter 5.

the administration, that had flowered in Henry V's reign, withered away. In the middle 1430's, if there was to have been a royal fleet, all would have to have been begun over again; this did not happen until after 1461. The reasons for this are not hard to find: the sale was a great setback not to be overcome by the natural inertia of a government during peaceful years, whilst after 1435 there was a concentration of resources on the war in France. A royal fleet and a naval establishment were a more or less permanent item of expenditure, which the council could not contemplate in such times of financial stress; there were, it seemed, more urgent calls for money than this one. Thus no king's fleet was recreated, no organisation centred on the Clerk was developed again, and all the benefits that this would have brought were not received. The government preferred to use other methods for raising forces to keep the sea, which, if not less costly nor so successful, were more fitted to the hand to mouth financial practices of the day. For by 1435 there was again the need to keep the sea in some form or another; what the situation at sea was must now be discussed.

Appendix: Oppenheim's navy list of c.1420 (Administration etc., p.12) as for 1420, with additional information.

Ships.		tonnage.
Jesus	Built 1415 - 17, at Winchelsea and Smallhithe.	1000.
Holigost	Built 1414 - 16, at Southampton, out of the St. Clare of Spain.	740 or 760.
Trinity Royal	Built 1413 - 15, at Greenwich, perhaps out of Richard II's and Henry IV's old Trinity (Wylie, 2, p.383).	540.
Grace Dieu	Built 1416 - 18 or 20, at Southampton.	1400.
Thomas	from c.1412; rebuilt 1417 - 18, 1420 - 22; sold 1423.	180.
Grand Mary (Mary of Spain)	prize 1417; rebuilt 1422 - 3; to Buckland for debts, 1423.	-
(Little Mary	last mention 1417.	140.)
Katherine	Bought 1415 for £440 (PRO: E403/619); sold 1425.	-
(Christopher	prize 1417; mentioned only in that year.	600.)
Mary Hulk	prize 1416 - 17.	-
Holigost of Spain	prize? 1420; sold 1423.	290.
Philip	from 1415.	-
Little Trinity	from 1417.	120.
(Great Gabriel	from 1415; Given away to William Catton, 1419 (Norman Rolls, Calendar of, in 41st Report of Deputy Keeper p.793).	-)

Ships.		tonnage.
Cog John	Bought by Henry as Prince of Wales, for £300 (PRO: E403/612); sold 1421.	220.
Red Cog	from 1415.	120.
Margaret	from 1416; sold 1421.	70
Nicholas	Bought 1415, for £500. (PRO: E403/621); sold 1424.	330.
Carracks.		
Mary Hampton	prize 1416.	-
Mary Sandwich	prize 1416; sold 1424.	550.
George	prize 1416; sold 1423.	500.
(Agasse	Taken at Southampton or Dartmouth 1416; broken up 1417 - 18.	-)
Peter	prize 1417; sold 1424.	-
Paul	prize 1417; sold 1424.	-
Andrew	prize 1417.	-
Christopher	prize 1417; sold 1423.	-
Balingers.		
Katherine Breton	prize 1417; sold 1423.	-
James	from 1416; sold 1422.	-
Anne	Built 1416, launched 1417 (Greenwich N.M.Mus.MS. end leaves); sold 1424.	120.
(Little John	last mention 1417.	-)
Swan	Built 1417; sold 1423.	120.

Balingers.		tonnage.
Nicholas	Built 1418; sold 1423.	120.
George	from 1417; sold 1423.	120.
Gabriel Harfleur	Built 1416.	40.
Falcon	Built 1418; sold 1423.	80.
(Roose	from 1421; sold 1425.	30.)
Graccher	from 1417; sold 1423.	56.
(Gabriel	from 1412; given to Catton, 1419 (Norman Rolls Cal. loc.cit.)	-)
Barges.		
Valentine	Built 1418; sold 1424.	100.
Mary Breton	from C. 1418; sold 1422.	-

Chapter 2.

Piracy and Disorder at Sea, 1422 - 1461.

The nature of the evidence dictates the character of the enquiry; this is obvious. But, so long as that evidence reflects, illustrates and illumines a real situation, and does not create an artificial one through some accident of survival or notoriety, all is in order. Thus the prominence most writers have given to piracy in the reign of Henry VI is not only because the records - Early Chancery Proceedings and Calendars of Patent Rolls in particular - have much on the subject, are easy to handle and the topic is an interesting one, but because piracy and disorder at sea during this time were disturbing and outstanding social phenomena. This concentration on the results of poor seakeeping, as opposed to seakeeping itself, is one that contempories shared[1]. Whilst there was always some measure of insecurity on the sea, these years 1422 - 61 were, chiefly for lack of good government, amongst the worst of this or the following century. It is therefore apposite to discuss the piracy of the period at some length.

---

1. For instance in the Libelle there is the complaint of present disorder and the lack of effort to combat it - 'Allas, oure reule halteth, hit is benome'. (l.38) coupled with the memory of past glories, when Henry V governed - 'And ever well kept rounde aboute the see' (l.14).

Once this generalisation - that English piracy was more potent in the reign of Henry VI than it was in that of Henry V or Edward IV - has been announced and acknowledged, it can be modified. As with other exhibitions of disorder, piracy did not decline substantially, though it did to some extent, until after 1423. Also the 1420's were the quietest decade between 1400 and 1490, and the years 1446-7 do not seem to have been one of mighty piratical enterprise. But from about 1433 - 35 to 1465, and especially from 1448 to 1459, when rebellion and piracy become confused, the English pirate had his last most perfect, and probably most successful, freedom. These times were not quite like the great days there had been between 1400 and 1415, when men like William Long of Rye, Richard Spicer of Plymouth, Mark Mixtow of Fowey and John Prendergast were only slightly less in stature than the heroic pirates Henry Pay and John Hawley. Then, as they were to be in Elizabeth's reign, enemies, if not legally so defined, were distinctly known, and the line between piracy and lawful prize - drawn thinly at the most impartial estimate - was seldom observed. French, Bretons and Spaniards were enemies to seafaring men, whatever government officials and treaty delegations might make them for the time being; patriotism was joined with profit (or at least the hope of

it) in convenient harmony. So in the middle years of the century it was almost the same: Bretons, French, Burgundians and Spaniards were despoiled heartily, so also were the English; piracy was less patriotic and more mercenary than it had been in the reign of Henry IV,[1]

Certainly there was little piracy in the channel in the 1420's and what there was was only on the part of small, local operators. This was for many reasons. The channel was English in a way it had not been since the early part of John's reign, trade was good, particularly between the Norman and South East English ports, and there was employment for ships, masters, owners and seamen carrying supplies, messengers, officials and soldiers across the channel; and if a man felt he would like to make a quicker return than by these pursuits, he came against a strong deterrent in Henry V's Statute of Truces[2]. This, in 1414, provided that all breaches of truce

---

1. For the extent of English piracy see the appendix graph; decade figures from that source, Cal.Pat. Rolls and Cal. Close Rolls, of piracy cases are thus:

1420 - 30	18.
1430 - 40	50.
1440 - 50	55.
1450 - 60	70.
1460 - 70	34.
1470 - 85	34.

2. Statutes of the Realm, 2 Henry V, c.6; Rot. Parl., IV, p.23.

or safeconduct, robbery, spoiling or any involvement in such, should be punished as high treason. A special officiah, the Conservator of Truces, was appointed in every port, and each of these was to be associated with two lawyers in a commission which gave them wide powers of enquiry into any alleged breach of the statute. All shipmasters before going to sea had to swear to observe truces and safeconducts, and the Conservators had to be informed of all prizes taken from the king's enemies. Like all laws this was often broken or ignored, but the penalty that was involved was too severe to be taken lightly, the risk too great for many men so long as the law was inforced; for even if death was not insisted on by the authorities, the confiscation of all a man's goods was a sure deterrent to the merchant or shipowner. Also the naval patrols of Henry V's reign had helped to prevent piracy, for a few years at least. Thus it did not get out of hand, did not become a menace, it was contained within some well acknowledged limits.

But piracy of course there was, unpatrolled trade routes - and most passed through the channel - the great numbers of ships always going to and fro, presented a temptation that could not sometimes be resisted even in this stricter time. Until 1435, if there was no licence for the pirate, there

was at least (as there was at all times until the 18th century) some liberty, for officials were not all disinterested guardians of the law. Those acts of piracy that occurred were small affairs, perhaps impulses of the moment, the work of amateurs mainly, of the lone pirate; they were the usual, almost routine, often local, robberies, unplanned and unpremeditated, that had happened for centuries. Some few examples will suffice. In 1426 off Hurst Castle, John Coteler in the balinger James of Studland, and Thomas Hoo in the balinger Welfare of Swanage took a ship of Portugal, the St. Mary, and brought her to Poole, where owing to their mariners' negligence the vessel was sunk[1]. At some time, perhaps earlier than the 1420's, John Mitford of Northumberland's ship, the Mary of Newcastle,'charge de carbons maritimes' and other goods, whilst lying off Lowestoft was assailed by Bartholemew Drayton of Great Yarmouth and others who beat Mitford's servants and took the ship's sail and other equipment[2]. These coastal conflicts were frequent affairs at all times - a sort of local infighting that took place up and down the country whenever the occasion seemed ripe. Sometime in the 1440's

---

1. P.R.O. C47/60/6/181; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422 - 29, p. 548.
3. P.R.O. C1/68/101; no date, French.

for instance, the Holigost lying at anchor before Orwell haven, was boarded by Roger Justlef, baliff of Harwich, and others from a ship of Dieppe, and taken to Harwich where her cargo was plundered[1]; in the early 1460's off the coast of Essex one Thomas John, accompanied by a French vessel, took a 'cache' freighted from London to Yarmouth with London merchant's goods, and assaulted the master[2]. And at Plymouth one January day in 1440 the 'Isabella' of Danzig was attacked by a balinger, the Michael of Bordeaux, and despoiled of goods worth (so the petitioners said) £207. 13. 4d.[3] Affrays in the Thames estuary were also common[4].

There was piracy on the high seas as well in the 1420's, of this routine type; cases like that of Wyker Johnson of Campe, who, sailing from Prussia to Newcastle, was attacked on the way by English ships and his ship and merchandise taken[5], or that of John Beaumont, who, sailing in a vessel of Dordrecht to England, was robbed of a £300. cargo of Rhenish

---

1. P.R.O. C1/15/160.
2. P.R.O. C1/28/228.
3. P.R.O. C1/43/20; Cal. Pat Rolls, 1436 - 41, p.409.
4. See below. For other good examples of harbour assault, in 1438 at Southwold, in 1439 in Ireland, see Cal. Pat.Rolls, 1436 - 41, p. 199, 271.
5. P.R.O. C1/72/8; no date, English.

wine by William Scot of Winchelsea, master of a balinger, of which John Lambert of Scarborough and William Braybrook of London, fishmongers, were owners and victuallers; the ship was taken to Grimsby and the goods disposed of[1]. Considering that in the petition it was said that 'the seid William Scotte is a Rover upon the See no wan wetyng what porte to fynde hym in certain', it may be that Braybrook and Lambert were involved in one of those partnerships with Scot that embraced both trade and any more lucrative enterprise that came his way. Men of Winchelsea were to the fore in piracy in the early decades of the century; in 1421 one Hoberd of that port, with Sir William Bardolf, lieutenant of Calais, seized a ship at anchor in the port of Harfleur charged with wine by Breton merchants, and carried it off to Winchelsea[2], and others of the town captured a vessel of Boulogne near Cherbourg and took it away to Portsmouth, probably sometime in the 1420's[3]. Foremost amongst the pirates of Winchelsea was William Morfoot, a good example of the single operator of the period; but like many pirates, he was more than just that, for he was a member of a community, and sufficiently

---

1. P.R.O. C1/17/95; no date, English.
2. P.R.O. C1/5/89.
3. P.R.O. C1/7/153; no date, French; for other piracies by men of Winchelsea, see Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422-29, p.403; ibid, 1429-36, p. 356, ibid, 1446-52, p. 476.

responsible to be elected M.P. for Winchelsea in 1428-9[1]. He had quite a long career at sea; sometime between 1413 and 1429 he, with others of his town, of Rye and Hastings, took a Flemish ship off Harfleur, sailed it to Dartmouth and there sold the cargo and split the money between them[2]. In 1426 it was complained that he had robbed two ships of Sluys, brought them to Winchelsea and imprisoned eight of the crew[3], and in 1430 he was concerned in the taking of another ship of Sluys, near St. Nicholas Island, Portsmouth, and his arrest was ordered[4]. During these years he received pirated goods[5], and was in and out of prison: in 1435 he petitioned in parliament that he was then at sea at his own cost, resisting the king's enemies (as others were at this hazardous time), but that food was forbidden him for himself and his fellowship, and that he dared not come to land, because he had not the king's pardon for his escape from Dover Castle - 'and afterward came oute as wele as he myght, for grete feer of more duresse of prisonment'. His request for a pardon was granted, 'for an esy fyn' to the Warden of the Cinque

---

1. Victoria County History of Sussex, vol. 2, p.142.
2. P.R.O. C1/6/130.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422-29, p.359.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 73, 75.
5. P.R.O. C1/69/316; no date, but probably 1430: Cal. Close Rolls, 1429-35, p. 118, 20th March 1431.

Ports[1], and so he sailed on to fight the king's battles a free man. After this release from judgement Morfoot the pirate does not figure again, though in 1442 a barge of his was included in the Commons' scheme for the keeping of the sea[2].

His career perhaps goes beyond the typical, for this period certainly, though his record as pirate and king's seaman, was not unique. Hawley and Pay before him had combined the two positions with ease, for they were by no means contradictory; others were to continue a practice that could hardly be otherwise, when the conditions of truce and war at sea were so ill defined, and when all mariners were a skilled force liable for royal service; Hawley, Pay, Morfoot, Robert Winnington, John Cole and Simon Lawless had distinguished successors in Drake and Hawkins. But in the context of the 1420's Morfoot's career was slightly different, for there were few pirates of his standing, and indeed his opportunity to serve the king only came at a time when the character of piracy, and the nature of its operation were changing. The more casual and normal piracies of the 1420's were to continue and to increase in the following three

---

1. Rot. Parl., IV p, 489.
2. Rot. Parl., V, p.59.

decades, but they were now joined by the more subtle practices and wider organisations of these years. Piracy would always be the same - robbery at sea on the king's subjects or friends - but the manner of it would begin to change in the course of the 1430's. The single pirates, working alone, or together in a spontaneous and short-lived union, were always there waiting for opportunities, but they - John Colville[1] and the like[2] - although widening their operations, gave pride of place to others who had a stronger, more influential organisation behind them; in some areas piracy, from being no more than the adventurous eye for the main chance, would become a planned and totally committed task, from being a natural hazard it would become an abnormal menace.

Piracies were already on the increase by 1429, as in that year the Commons petitioned:

> '..!que come plusours des Leiges nostre soverain Sire le Roi ove lour Biens et Chateux passantz sur le Mere, sont sovent foitz prises et robbes, par

---

1. John Colville of Plymouth; active c.1430-1443: P.R.O. C1/9/321, Cal. Pat Rolls. 1429-36. p. 352; P.R.O. C1/69/196 oate, French; Cal. Pat Rolls, 1429-36, p.199; Cal. Pat. Rolls 1429-36, p. 608, p. 527; Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.83, p.549; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p. 201, 247.
2. For other illustrative piracies of the 1420's see Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422-29, p.124, 220, 493; ibid 1429-36, p. 350.

> certeins gentz appellez Roveres sur le Mere queux sont comunalment Larons, Utlages, Futives et ceux que ont forjurez et banyschez hors de divers Roialmes, et autres tielx semblez, et sont sustinuz par lour robberiez et raveyns des Biens et Merchandises de cest Roialme, et autres, a graunt destruction et anientisement des plusours des ditz Lieges'.

And they asked that these pirates be judged as felons, that J.P's might be empowered to enquire concerning pirates, receivers and their helpers in the various counties, and that the Statute of the Conservators of Truces be annulled[1]. Superficially, the fact of a growing number of pirates and this request of the Commons that the Statute which aimed at preventing piracy should be annulled seem contradictory, but they are not. At sea it was every man for himself, now that the government only rarely sent out forces to patrol the seas, and whilst the enforcement of the Statute must have stopped any wholesale, planned, marauding expeditions and deterred the rash individual from too many unthinking illegal acts, it did hamper what might be called

---

1. Rot. Parl., IV, p. 350-1.

the free enterprize of English seamen, and above all it made reprisals against foreigners theoretically impossible. And here the motives of English merchants and shipowners - the group behind the petition - become more difficult to determine. If they were to protect themselves properly they needed the power of reprisal, if only to put some of the fear of God into the foreign pirates, who were becoming such a danger, as the Commons said they were gaining

> '... grand corage de grever les foialx Lieges du Roi, en tuantz ascunz d'eux, et ascunz enprignauntz prisoners, et auxi emprignauntz lour Biens et Chateux encountre de tenure dez treux...'[1]

Alien vessels, under no such limitations as those imposed upon the English, were no doubt making good use of their advantage. Yet just as that grave decay of the country's shipping, of which the Commons always complained in such petitions, was an exaggeration, so also was that goodness of motive that they protested. For once the Statute was gone, once ordinary justice (and not the penalties of special tribunals) should operate, once usual officials were in control of enquiry, then shipowners and merchants would have a greater freedon that might be used not merely

---

1. Rot. Parl., IV, p. 351.

for defence but also for attack where none was called for, and illegitimate spoilation of the innocent. Real though the danger from foreign ships was, and honest as their plea was for wider power to resist it, the Commons knew to what uses that power could be put. But it was not immediately to be; the petition was refused, so were others of 1431[1] and 1433[2]; only in 1435 was the Statute at last suspended for seven years.

The government's refusals before 1435 were no doubt due to its knowledge of what might happen at sea if Englishmen were given this licence and especially what might happen to Burgundian shipping; and Burgundy could not be alienated with impunity. The Duke of Bedford would certainly, if he was consulted, have opposed a policy that could have lost him his essential ally. No doubt also the government realised that conditions at sea were not as black as the commons painted them. But things were getting worse. In 1433 the king commanded the Duke of Gloucester, as Warden of the Cinque Ports, to send men to sea against enemies 'et autres Rovers et Robbours sur la meer de divers nacions',

---

1. Rot. Parl., IV, p. 376-7.
2. Rot. Parl., IV, p. 452.
3. Statutes, 14 Henry VI, c.8; Rot. Parl., IV, p. 493.

who were robbing and killing those that passed by sea near the coasts of England, and he repeated the Commons complaint that they were destroying the shipping of the realm and impoverishing merchants[1]. And English piracies in the years 1433-34-35 seem to have achieved a peak that had not been reached since Henry IV's reign[2]; there were also English complaints of foreign depradations; the king of Denmark had seized goods to the value of £25,000, the Commons asserted[3], John Chirche of London had lost a ship and goods worth 2000 marks in the Danish Sound, taken by an army sent out by the Hands[4], and another two ships taken by Flemish merchants[5], whilst merchants of Lynn and Boston had lost goods when the George of Boston was captured by men of the Hanse[6]. By 1435 therefore the hostility was mutual, and many men began to suffer. At about this time a Portuguese vessel, arrested at Dartmouth to help convey

---

1. P.R.O. E28/64, 18th February, 1433.
2. See the appendix 1.
3. Rot. Parl., IV, p. 402-3; 1432.
4. P.R.O. PSO 1/11/552; the action took place in 1428-9; Chirche could get no restitution, and a messenger from the council to the Hanse had been put in prison and ransomed for £30. Chirche was granted letters of marque, 7th Nov. 1440. On 28th Nov. 1439 he had received other letters of marque because he had been unable to obtain restitution of his Margaret of Clarence and goods worth £532. 13. 4d. taken by two Breton ships: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.349.
5. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.166: grant of letters of marque, 20th May, 1438.
6. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 220.

an army, under Sir John Radcliffe, to Aquitaine, whilst so doing was taken by Bretons; the unfortunate shipowner lay three years in prison as pledge for the ransoms of his fellowship, and then on his return to England spent a further three years in Newgate at the suit of London merchants who had lost £100. worth of goods that had been in his ship[1]. Becoming more common too were the frays and scuffles between seamen in port, like that which occurred in Ireland in 1438 between the crews of a Hull and an Amsterdam ship, when the men of Hull first pretending themselves brothers, eventually at Dublin, by oribery and trickery, took the vessel of Amsterdam and her cargo, value £1,500, and had her crew put into prison[2]. If native wit triumphed here, it was not always so, and Englishman would as happily plunder Englishman, as did Richard Veer and Martin Adam of Sandwich, when they took a ship of Brabant freighted by an Ipswich merchant, and this after Bretons had hailed the vessel, searched her and then sailed away with love and in peaceable manner[3], or as the Little John of the Isle of Wight took a Norman ship with an English cargo aboard in October 1438[4]. Nor were the English

---

1. P.R.O. E28/67, 26th March 1441: Cal. Pat. Rolls 1436-41, p. 515, 543.
2. P.R.O. E28/60, 16th May, 1439.
3. P.R.O. C1/9/414, between 1431-1443.
4. P.R.O. C1/15/50.

nobility spared: in December 1438 Lord Talbot's Margaret of Portladoun was robbed by men of Fowy on her way to Rouen with a cargo of salt[1], and this must have been a hard blow to him, for only in November he had lost another two cargoes, of salt, iron and other goods in two Breton ships, when they were taken by twenty-six vessels of Holand and Zealand[2].

Piracy was reviving, English piracy as much as any other and particularly in the West country; John Rygeling took a ship of Rouen and three ships of Brittany in 1431[3], whilst Rygeling and Colville plundered a Venetian carrack in the same year[4]; in 1432 John Lovell of Scotland was complaining that west country malefactors had taken a ship with his goods, on the high seas[5], and between May and August 1433, there were some ten enquiries into piracy, many of them committed by men of Devon and Cornwall[6]. 1434 was the same, piracies by John Mixtow of Fowey on a carrack of Genoa, when Chirche lost eight tons of Seville

---

1. P.R.O. C1/43/35.
2. P.R.O. E28/60, 8th May 1439.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.127, with the pirate William Kidd - for whom see C.L. Kingsford, Prejudice and Promise in 15th Century England, 1925, p.89 - 90.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.199.
5. ibid, p.198.
6. ibid, pages 278, 280, 300-1.

oil[1], by men of Winchelsea and Sandwich, by men of Hull[2] - Burgundians and Italians were being more frequently attacked, the prizes were getting richer, the manner of their taking often more violent, the number of pirates together greater - Mixtow was reported as having over 200 persons with him in a great ship and a balinger in the 1434 piracy; in the West especially there was more daring, more skill and probably more organisation.

By 1435 not only were foreign pirates more numerous than they had been, even six years before, but also English pirates were becoming a real danger with their indiscriminate plundering of shipping; clearly the Statute was breaking down in practice, especially in the West it was not being worked properly. If that was the case then most of the advantages lay in suspension; the 'rigorous and grievous' stipulations of the Statute would no longer apply, they would no long 'straitly ... bind' shipowners and mariners now faced at sea with warfare and confusion, the like of which there had not been since before 1420 - Burgundians enemies, the French resurgent and Breton pirates a

---

1. P.R.O. C1/11/204; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.352, 356; for Mixtow see Kingsford, op.cit., p.87-89.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.356, 357, 470.

continual trouble in the Western channel. Now that the Statute was suspended those merchants keeping the sea at their own cost in 1435-6 would not be 'greatly discouraged and abashed', for now many old scores could be settled and unofficial reprisals made; men like Chirche, who had suffered, would hardly be scrupulous as to the ships they fought or robbed, particularly at that time of national danger. Men who were going to sea on the king's behalf and without payment had to be encouraged, this was probably the chief reason for the suspension of the Statute in 1435. But also the more straightforward pirates would accept the opportunity, both the small men and those bigger operators who were at the start of their careers; and as trade was so complicated a business, international and careful, in that say English merchants imported and exported merchandise in ships of all countries, no English merchant was able to escape loss, even if English pirates were of a patriotic turn of mind (which they were not; it was merely that Italian, Hanse, Spanish or Flemish vessels tended to carry richer cargoes than English or Norman ships on short runs, and therefore presented a greater reward for the more ambitious).

Bit it would be unwise to see the suspension of the Statute as a cause, or as an effect; it was simply one

part of a trend. The Statute stood for little unless it was willingly worked, and from the evidence of the early 1430's it seems that this was not being done. Many enquiries there certainly were[1], but as a deterrent the Statute was failing, and prevention was, as Henry V had seen, the only cure for piracy; enquiry and restitution were poor weapons, never more than half successful. The non-observance of an increasingly inoperative Statute led to its suspension, as much as did the merchants' petitions, pleading that they were shackled from doing good and were being ruined in the process. The trend was towards violence, lawlessness at sea; after the sluggish and relatively peaceful 1420's English control of the channel, always dependent on the success of the war in France, and a sort of temporary legacy from Henry V, was lost through inaction; by 1435 it could not be recovered without a struggle, but neither the council nor the king had the energy, will or the money to maintain the continuous effort that effective seakeeping required, and by 1440, at the latest, the channel was the open and insecure water it more usually was.

---

1. There were presumably many piracies that were never enquired into, those that were settled out of court for instance. Therefore those figures we have, representing known piracies, can only indicate the relativity of piracy from year to year, and the resolution of administrations, at least to enquire. The actual scale of piratical activity must remain unknown.

The drift into lawlessness, or rather into more widespread, more uncontrolled and uncontrollable lawlessness was a general one; the responsibility was a communal one. Governments were only partly to blame at a time when systematic seakeeping was inconceivable, both because the cost was too great and the problem too wide for that day's administrations. The tendency towards piracy, and piracy itself were always there, like the poor the pirate was always with them - so all men must have thought. But the development of piracy as a real problem, as something more than a normal irritant, was due to a deeper reason than the lack of seakeeping. The English and Norman administrations were concerned with the war in France, this used up money and thought; meanwhile Burgundy and Brittany were becoming more hostile, and their governments did not much care how that hostility was demonstrated; conditions at sea were not the main care of any of these governments, whether they ought to have been is of no consequence, they were not, that is all. If anything the evidence is slightly against the foreign seamen, although to find who were the first offenders against the (relative) peace of the 1420's would be difficult, unless a thorough search of foreign archives was made. English merchants were suffering in the early

1430's, as we have seen, whilst the bulk of foreign complaints does not come until after 1435, as one would expect when there was English retaliation and the fracas was general. The foreign shipowner is not to be blamed - the lawlessness would have become widespread anyway - but the English shipowner is perhaps absolved from the accusation that he began it all by a desire for quicker profits and greater wealth. Anyway after 1435 they were all in it together.

Piracy became general; but there were certain areas where it flourished, the Thames estuary for example, always a good place for a rich capture because of the heavy traffic concentrated there, and with ports like Queenborough and Harwich where the booty could be quickly and profitably disposed of; the Downs and the straits were also favourite areas for exploitation. But it was in the West that the real professionals worked, and in Devon and Cornwall had their base; the men of Plymouth, Dartmouth and Fowey, especially Fowey, were professional pirates in the real sense of the word, and although they plundered up channel, they worked chiefly off their own coasts, the Breton coast or in the Bay. Only in the North Sea did piracy retain its original, more accidental nature.

The results of the annulment of the Statute, and the continued development of the tendency that had led to that, were not perhaps immediately apparent, or rather they were masked for a time. The slump in the figures for the later 1430's is no doubt due to the fact that after the Treaty of Arras the Burgundians became enemies, their shipping legitimate prey, and it may even be that the merchants who kept the sea in 1436-7, and the other forces that were out in those years, not only found employment for many seamen, but also deterred others from the more flagrant breaches of truce that were later to occur. Yet some of those merchants were themselves involved in piracy during the course of their service; John Vache and Hugh Dene had their vessels at sea in 1436 at their own cost, and the Christopher of Danzig was taken by them - in the complicated transactions that followed the capture the under admiral of Hampshire made money for himself by confiscating two anchors from the Christopher after they had been sold, and then reselling them to the purchaser; against such odds the part owner of the Christopher had little chance of restitution[1]. Also John Scot, one of the merchants'

---

1. P.R.O. [illegible]/44/223; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.202.

appointed admirals, and his fellow admiral, John Milbourne were involved in a dubious case of dapture whilst on service[1]. Thomas Gill, another shipowner out in 1436 at his own expense, an M.P. and customer at Dartmouth, was equally not an overscrupulous man, but then force was not the monopoly of governments, and as a petitioner said, Gill had 'grete reule and grete power in that contre there aboute[2]'. The case in which, sometime later, he was involved is worth quoting, not only because of its extraordinary circumstances - the petitioner seems to have proved his case - but also because it is a good illustration of what could happen at sea at this time; just as force was coming to be used more widely on land, as a means to acquisition, so on the sea its use was being developed both for gain, and even, as in this case, for its own sake. According to William Wallace and Robert Langherst, merchants of Drogheda, they and their goods were in the George of Wells of 120 tons, which on 21st January 1440 was in the strait seven miles from Dartmouth, when the Christopher of 320 tons, owned by Gill, was some three miles nearer in; the Christopher turned

> 'wyth full sayle a large wynde wyth lll men in the toppe castell well hernesed and other in

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.48.
2. P.R.O. C1/45/141.

other places ther in the said Christopher to the noumbre of LX persones well hernesed men and arayed for the werr and smott away the forshippe of the...George so that the... George and all the gudes and merchandises ther in wer lost and drowned, and the said Williame and all other ther in to the nommbre of XLIIII persones in poynte to have been perysshed and lost nad the grace of god had been, noght wythstondynge that the said Williame cryed opon the said Richard (Walter, master of the Christopher) and said that thai wer Ynglyssh men'[1]

Foreign merchants were also being attacked, and complaining of English depradations. In February 1436 the council wrote to certain Portugeuse merchants, replying to their complaint of the capture of merchandise by English pirates and the lack of justice and restitution, and stating that all was being done to

---

1. P.R.O. C1/43/33; see also P.R.O. C1/44/278, 45/141 and C81/1369/15. It was in July of this year that the government hired Gill's Christopher for the journey of Edward Hull to Aquitaine; cost £144.15.10d.: P.R.O. PS01/9/470, E404/56/295, E101/53/27.

discover and punish the offenders and to cause restitution; the council wrote at the same time, after the same fashion, to the authorities at Bruges[1]. On the 15th March they wrote to the Duke of Burgundy that the utmost was being done to arrest the pirates who had taken five ships, and that justice had been offered to the authorities at Bruges[2], whilst on 15th May of that year Martin Sanches, master of the St. Mary of Bilbao, petitioned the council for a safeconduct for a ship to raise money by trading so that he might send home his crew, who had been stranded by the capture of the St. Mary by English pirates[3]. In January 1436 an enquiry had been ordered into the taking of five Portugeuse vessels by English pirates, one of whom was John Colville[4], in January 1437 another was to enquire into the capture of three Dutch and German ships at Southampton[5], and in July of 1437 it was concerning goods taken from ten ships of Brittany and one of Rouen[6]. So the list could be continued - these are only the more audacious coups; by the early 1440's there are the general complaints to

---

1. P.R.O. E28/56, 13th Feb. 1436.
2. Proc. Privy Council, vol.4, p. 331.
3. P.R.O. E28/57, 15th May 1436.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 527.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.85.
6. Ibid, p. 89.

the English government by foreign mercantile communities, testimony enough to the established menace of piracy: in 1442 the Commanalty of Harlem, and the Magistrates of Rotterdam wrote of the harm done to their merchants, in 1443 it was the Magistrates of Amsterdam, in 1444 the merchants of Hoorn in West Friesland[1].

Equally, English grievances against foreigners continued. In March 1440 the king wrote to the Duke of Brittany about the taking of the George of Poole in February, by a ship owned by the Admiral of Brittany, and the imprisonment of the crew, asking for their release, and the restoration of the ship and her cargo[2]. In November 1441 it was noted by the council that many of the king's subjects had complained of vessels and goods taken by the Bretons, and that they desired letters of marque; the Duke of Brittany however was willing to make restitution, and a clerk and a merchant were to be sent to him for this cause[3]. One of the council's petitioners was William of Scilly, master of a vessel which was taken by Bretons, with a cargo of puffins, ling, eels and £20 of gold aboard, on

---

1. P.R.O. E30/477, 427, 1286, 1287; though in 1442 the citizens of Amsterdam and Hoorn were condemned to pay over 2000 marks to certain Normans for damage done to them at sea: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.105.
2. P.R.O. E28/63, 18th March 1440.
3. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.177.

its way to Cornwall in 1441[1], and another was Robert Patrick of Scarborough with other merchants who had had goods on the Trinity of Yarmouth, captured by Bretons whilst it was in Conquet Harbour[2]. Ships of other countries also were active against English shipping; in November 1440 nine ships of Holland and Zealand were reported to be lying in wait off the Isle of Wight for five big ships returning from the Bay with salt[3], and in April 1441 the king was writing to the Hamburg authorities asking for the restitution of a vessel taken by the seamen of that town, at the request of two Yarmouth merchants who had goods in her[4]. Whilst in 1444 John Hampshire and Henry May, merchants, had been robbed at sea by twenty Breton vessels of 1,336 marks worth of goods and 7,000 worth of bills and indentures of debt; the robbers also took away the rudder, sail, ropes and anchors of the ship, the Clement of Hamble, and so dispoiled the two merchants and crew even 'to theire shertis, and somme moder naked', and so abandoned them on the sea to drift for three days

---

1. P.R.O. E28/68, 29th July 1441.
2. P.R.O. PS01/12/644, 17th July 1441; see also PS01/13/733.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.502.
4. P.R.O. E28/67;3rd April 1441

and nights in foul weather. The Duke of Brittany had refused restitution - one of their messengers had been 'slayne with a tewell in his bed' - so the 1447 parliament granted them letters of marque[1].

Between 1435 and 1440 therefore the pattern of conflict became established; confused, often vindictive, a question of attack and retaliation, but as always opportunistic, for the majority of piracies were no doubt impulsive, the overhauling and plunder of a less well armed merchantman by another, larger perhaps and slightly better armed. There were pirates who were nothing else but that, and who were set on their one intent but these were in a minority. Nevertheless piracy, of one kind and another, flourished in the 1440's and 1450's - some of its aspects and examples during that time must now be examined.

First as regards legislation; although no longer of wide importance, yet king and council generally stood out for at least the theoretical maintenance of law and order, and the more irresponsible demands of the Commons were refused. In 1439 for instance they asked that no owner of a ship should be held responsible for accidents caused to other vessels by his ship, though wind and weather or

---

1. Rot. Parl., IV, p.135; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 104.

the negligence of the master and mariners; this was refused[1]. A similar request in 1442, that owners should not be held for the misdemeanours of their ships - a wider demand - was also refused[2], although one of the provisions of the scheme for the keeping of the sea drawn up in this parliament, stated that owners of ships involved were not to answer for any goods 'mistaken', as

> 'it is to be remembred, how in tyme passid awners of divers shippes that have, be commaundement of the Kynges Counsill, sent their shippes to the See, and they nought sette in their shippes Maisters ne Maryners, for their mesprision on the See were putte in grete trouble and disease[3]'.

In this instance, a temporary one, the sins of the sailors were not to be visited upon the owners, but no doubt the latter had their share of any plunder that escaped notice by the authorities; but apart from this short-lived concession, owners were always answerable for what their vessels did. In 1439 also the law concerning safeconducts

---

1. Rot. Parl., V, p.29.
2. Rot. Parl., V, p.55.
3. Rot. Parl., V, p.55.

was tightened - probably to the benefit of all - and more clearly defined; the Commons asked that all safeconducts should be enrolled in Chancery (that they should all be officially recognised by the central government); this was granted, that any capture of an enemy ship carrying the merchandise of alien friends, without either a safeconduct on board or enrolled in Chancery, should stand as valid[1].

In 1442 the seven year suspension of the Statute of the Conservators of the Truces was due to end, but in this year, in connexion with the sea keeping scheme, it was again annulled though only until the next parliament, and not for twenty years as the Commons had wished[2]. The government was determined to maintain at least this control, even if it was almost formal; for by this time it is difficult to see any link between the Statute and piracy. There was a lull in English piracy, it seems, in 1446-7, after the Statute came into operation again in the 1445-6

---

1. Statutes, 18 Henry VI, c.8; Rot. Parl., V,p.27. See also Statutes, 20 Henry VI, c.1; Rot. Parl., V, p.52-3.
2. Rot. Parl., V, p.64; Statutes, 20 Henry VI, c.II. Even in 1441, when the Statute was inoperative, the government had commissioned certain men at Dartmouth to receive bonds from all shipmasters leaving the port, that they would not take the goods of the Bretons, who were under treaty with the king: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.48, 28th Nov. 1441.

parliament, but by 1448-9 robbers and searovers were so numerous that expeditions had to be mounted against them; and although the Commons petitioned for its suspension in 1447 in the well turned phrases of the 1430's - it was still so 'rigorous, ponderous and grevous'[1] - the Statute continued in force and was reaffirmed in 1451[2]. In the same year it was established that the Chancellor, with one of the two Chief Justices, could summon people by writ to be examined concerning piracy, and he was also empowered to grant restitution; those who appeared before him were to be exempt from the penalty of treason under the Statute, and there was a further provision that any owners or victuallers not aware of the offence nor receivers of goods should not be held answerable - again this important loophole for the employers. This act was to be effective as from 1451, not from 1446 as the Commons had asked[3].

It is a measure of the times, and perhaps of the merchants and shipowners' intentions, that whilst they asked for and obtained the strengthening of measures of

---

1. Rot. Parl., V, p.137-8.
2. Rot. Parl., V, p.224. In March 1450 sheriffs had been required to proclaim the Statute, as it had been recently broken, 'and the king's will is to do away this nefarious audacity...that none may hereafter pretend to be ignorant thereof': Cal. Close Rolls, 1447-54, p.182.
3. Statutes, 29 Henry VI., c.2; Rot. Parl, V, p.224-5. See also in 1454, Statutes, 31 Henry VI, c.4; Rot. Parl., V, p.268, operative as from 1 May 1453.

enquiry and restitution, they still demanded the weakening of measures of prevention. In one way they escaped the discipline of the Statute through that provision in the act giving the Chancellor authority to examine in piracy cases, by which they could always plead ignorance of their ships' misdeeds, and anyway by 1450 the Conservators were not the power for good that they had been in Henry V's reign. To men who traded legally, but who were also pirates or received pirated goods that had been taken by their ships, the long and devious process of enquiry after the event was more attractive and favourable than any measure that attempted to bind them beforehand. And for an administration that was weakening daily, although the Statute was retained, the method of enquiry and restitution was the least strenuous way of tackling a situation that was well out of hand. One thing was certain: pirates were not deterred.

There were many sorts of piracy, many kinds of pirate. There were first those more accidental piracies, as when the merchants Henry May of Bristol and Richard May of London were alleged by John Veilho of Portugal to have been confederates of the pirate Hankin Selander at the taking of the ship Anthony, whereas the Englishmen maintained that they in the Trinity had rescued the

Anthony from Selander, but that afterwards he had returned and recovered the ship; whatever the truth of the matter, Richard May suffered for his part, as he was arrested at Lisbon and his goods seized[1]. Also there were those London merchants who, in 1435, came by a Prussian vessel, legally, they maintained, by purchase from men who had taken her from pirates after they had captured her in the Downs, but in this instance amicable agreement was reached between the original Prussian owner and the Londoners; the ship was valued (at £60.), security was given to the Prussians, and the ship remained in the Londoners' hands until investigation had revealed the truth[2]. It was perhaps difficult to escape association with pirates, either on the crowded seas like Henry and Richard May, or in port where captured ships and stolen goods might be sold openly and bought innocently. Then there were those captures made by merchant ships serving in forces keeping the sea - perhaps genuine mistakes, perhaps downright avarice; when out in 1452 or 53 in that fleet commanded by Lord Roos, the Cog John, owned by Thomas Gower, with other ships took a

---

1. P.R.O. C1/9/488-491; 1443.
2. Calendar of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, 1413-37, ed. A.H. Thomas, 1943, p. 283.

barge of Holland, called the Mary, and Gower afterwards had to pay her master compensation, by private agreement, though unfortunately he could not get the victuallers of the Cog John to contribute the share that they had promised[1]; at about this time, on the other hand, the crew of Lord Roos's carvel took the Mary of Rouen, ignoring a safeconduct shown to them, and carried ship and cargo off to Flamborough in Yorkshire[2].

Lord Roos was no doubt aware of his servants' actions, and a beneficiary of them; there were others of the nobility as deeply involved in the piracy of their men. Lawrence Abburbys, or Arburbis, merchant of the Hanse, complained that in July 1445 he was spoiled of batteryware by Lord Poynings and his servants; for this action Poynings had to pay Lawrence £600. in satisfaction it seems, though Lawrence's accusation against one William Cloude of London that he had received some of the stolen goods, was not upheld in the court and Cloude was dismissed[3]. In October 1453 men of war in a carvel of Lord Saye's took two ships of Dordrecht, which with their cargoes they

---

1. P.R.O. C1/25/200.
2. P.R.O. C1/28/472; Cal. Pat. Rolls., 1452-61, p.[illegible].
3. P.R.O. C1/25/152-155.

brought to Colchester and sold; the money was parted, the petitioners went on, between Lord Saye and the victuallers, master, purser and crew of the carvel. Lord Saye replied that he was not responsible: he had recently bought the carvel at Sandwich, but she had been almost immediately arrested, victualled and set forth by the king's officers to Bordeaux, before he had any chance to use her for himself; since then he had not seen the ship and he even asked the king for restitution. There the issue remains, but the Dordrecht burgomasters and citizens' evidence, names and all, is too substantial to be ignored, and Saye's rejoinder too glib to be accepted[1]. Lord Tiptoft, a few years before this, was another who sought profit from this source, though he more actively; certain Bremen merchants alleged that he, his men and others in thirteen ships of war set upon a cog of Amsterdam at anchor in Portsmouth harbour, and spoiled her cargo. Perhaps this was all a mischance, a spontaneous exhibition of martial valour of men bound for service elsewhere, for the cog's crew and merchants were imprisoned and set to ransom as enemies, but Tiptoft was mercenary enough to

---

1. P.R.O. C1/17/102a, b.

order his steward to sell the merchandise, which he did[1] - if the initial attack was a rash mistake Tipfoft took quick advantage to profit from it.

Between that piracy of Gower's Cog John and that of Lord Saye's carvel there was no great difference, despite appearances; each was an impulsive acceptance of an opportunity, whether you profited from it, or had to disgorge depended on circumstances after the event, but that event itself was perhaps not committed with undue malice aforethought. Many acts of piracy were like this. Equally there were many during the 1440's and 1450's, more than in the previous twenty-five years, undertaken by men who went to sea with that one evil intent, namely to rob; these were the true rovers of the sea, even if many of them also might, on other occasions, sail on legitimate trading voyages. Most of them are anonymous, or only names that occur once or twice, though sometimes they are important names, like the taking of a ship and goods of a knight of Portugal in 1454 by people of Calais

---

1. P.R.O. C1/19/104: the offender is called Lord Powis; this is presumably Tiptoft who assumed the title of Powis after his second marriage (c.1422), or his son, who also used the title, and who became Earl of Worcester in 1449: G.E.C., The Complete Peerage, vol. 12, 1953, p. 748 - 749.

in a vessel of Andrew Trollope[1], sometimes unfamiliar, as in 1454 men of Calais, especially one Turnebull, took the Barbara of Dordrecht[2]. The Calendars of Patent Rolls are full of piracy enquiries, and most of them are non-commital: piracy by William Alan and others on the ship Friday, bound from Sluys to London, taken to Fowy[3], by men of Hull on the Godaventure of the lieutenant of Harfleur[4], by servants of John Neville and others on six vessels of Flanders[5], by Simon Lawless, Robert Fan and others on the St. Jacob of Zealand near Winchelsea[6], by men of Penzanze on a Plymouth ship bound from Spain to England[7], by Hankin Selander and others on a carvel of Portugal which they took to Portsmouth and ran ashore there[8], by pirates in the company of Sir William Neville on the James of Spain[9], by certain men of Yarmouth on the Christopher of Aberdeen[10]. From these random examples two notable names appear: Hankin Selander, the professional

---

1. P.R.O. E28/84, 18th June 1454; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61. p.281.
2. P.R.O. E28/54, 14th July 1454; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61. p.173.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 187; P.R.O.E28/77, 8th June 1448.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.237; 1448.
5. Ibid, p. 316; 1449.
6. Ibid, p.436; 1450.
7. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.168; 1454.
8. Ibid, p. 306; 1456.
9. Ibid, p. 438; 1458.
10. Ibid, p. 607; 1460.

pirate from the West country, and Sir William Neville, the Yorkish and later Earl of Kent, leader of the naval expedition to Brittany in 1462. During the early 1460's Simon Lawless, another of our names, was captain of a carvel of the Earl of Kent's. But of the others we know nothing, and about these piracies only one or two facts which tell of the same usual action, which was repeated so often; the suffering of some individuals, the gain of others is unrecorded in the majority of cases. Piracies of this type made little stir in the country; only those of the scale of Winnington's capture of 100 vessels, Dutch, Flemish and Hanse, sailing from the Bay, when the government became intimately involved - on this occasion they had to pay over £4,500. compensation[1], and English merchants suffered collectively[2] - only such an exaggerated instance was reported fully. Generally we have no more than glimpses of the losses and profits incurred when an ordinary piracy was committed, but certainly some pirates must have gained a worthwhile reward; Trellope and Neville, Lords Roos and Saye or the unknown seamen operating out of Yarmouth or Rye,

---

1. P.R.O. E403/784, under 28th May, 1451; E28/81, 29th May 1451; E404/67/167.
2. Foedera, XI, p. 235, 236; The Brut or The Chronicle of England, ed. F.W.D. Brie, Early Eng. Text. Soc. 1906-8, p. 515; Fabyan, op.cit., p. 621-22.

Poole or Ilfracombe must have found their illegal ventures profitable. For the capital needed to own and run a ship was not excessive in the 15th century, though a vessel had always to be earning money or it soon became an expensive liability, and the proceeds from only one or two lucky captures well repaid the outlay, and were well worth the risk of having to disgorge. All classes of men were involved, in the West country from the Admiral of England downwards. But before we examine that region of organised piracy, it will be useful to select some examples of piracies that occurred in the Thames estuary, for the extent of piracy there shows not only how rich an area it was to exploit, but also how the administration was failing to protect its subjects and friends even so near its centre.

Apart from the English pirates who worked there, foreign pirates also came for the pickings, and enemies were not unknown; in 1441 the men of Dieppe and Boulogne, it was said, took the king's subjects 'yn youre watir of Teamyse and them robbed and ransomed to grete Sommes betyn and sleyn and thaire wives oribly despoiled to her utterest shame and confusion', and more than thirty persons from Essex and Kent had piteously complained to the king on the same day of these oppressions[1]. And there were those

---

1. P.R.O. C81/1367/40, 41, 42.

enemies , who in 1449 took the George, sailing from Colchester to London, off the coast of Essex, which was retaken by an Englishman - it made no difference, the injured merchants could get no restitution[1]. There were the usual frays and disorders; in 1439 for instance one between two groups of foreigners (though it was London fishmongers who lost their goods), when a ship's boat of the George of Lubeck or the Magdalen of Danzig, then lying at Ratcliffe, with thirty-two of the crews aboard, armed and arrayed, came to St. Osyth and there took a ship of Holland sailing to London, and despoiled her of merchandise worth £400., which they carried to Queenborough and sold. The Hanse masters admitted sending the boat, but for the purpose of meeting a Prussian vessel at Orwell in order to help bring it up to London; they said that they had no knowledge of the attack, and had received not a penny from the sale of the stolen goods[2]. And similarly in Edward IV's reign; one Walter Bildy, miller, and others came at night to a ship, ready at London for departure to Spain, with the intention of robbing her, but the crew seeing them

---

1. P.R.O. C1/13/146-7.
2. P.R.O. C1/43/37, 38, 39; number 36, a list of merchandise, does not seem to belong to this case, for their value is £1,300, and the petitioners only mention £400 worth of stolen goods.

'made a greate noyse thurgh which noyse such Shipmen that were next unto theym made resorte and drue fast unto the seid ship of which resorte the seid mysdoers were sore a drade and ymmediately flede'[1]. In 1440 such robbers had at first been more successful, for they came at night on foreign ships bound out of London, whilst they were at anchor and their crews asleep; they slew some of the men, and sacked the ships, but two of them were taken and executed by hanging in irons[2].

Other piracies were equally daring. In 1457 or 1458 certain hired English soldiers and others in ships of Calais took by force at Tilbury three Dutch vessels and their cargoes of wool bound for Italy worth some £3,200., carried them off to Calais and disposed of the wool[3]; if this was Warwick's doing, then his men certainly came and went with impunity in their search for plunder. In 1459 pirates of

---

1. P.R.O. C1/64/638.
2. The Brut, p.475-6; The Survey of London, John Stow, Everyman Edition, First ed.1912, p.375-6; also, on 28th March 1440, John Campe, husbandman, had a pardon for going on board a ship of Holland at Leigh in March 1438, cutting the throats of some of the crew, and stealing goods and money: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.403. In 1456-57 the 'ferrycote' at Tilbury was broken by pirates: Rochester Bridge, 1387-1856, J.M. Becker, 1930, p.105, from the Bridge Wardens' Accounts.
3. Cal. Close Rolls, 1454-61, p.311; Calendar of Letter Books.. of the City of London, K, Ed. R.R. Sharpe, 1912, p.377.

Kent entered and spoiled a ship of Holland at anchor off Gravesend[1], in 1454 men of Queenborough took a cog of Middelburg sailing towards London[2], in 1441 two balingers of Harfleur with English masters, took a Breton balinger when she was entering the Swale bound for Rochester, the stolen goods being disposed of at Queenborough[3], in 1461 pirates took wheat from a Flemish ship anchored in the Thames[4], and in 1462 it was a merchant of Zealand who complained that pirates, asserting themselves to be servants of the Earl of Warwick, had seized and robbed his ship in Colnewater[5]. Not only Warwick's men worked in the region of the Thames estuary; in 1440, according to John Michell, a merchant of Milan, servants of Lord Talbot came in a balinger and took a Flemish ship with a cargo of iron whilst she lay at Tilbury; they brought the iron to St. Osyth, and sold some there to the Abbot of the monastery - though he denied this - and then on to Colchester, where they sold some more[6].

One of the temptations of what was an attractive hunting ground - many vessels with rich cargoes, a bleak,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p. 496.
2. Ibid. p.221.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p. 573, 575.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p. 101.
5. Ibid. p.202.
6. P.R.O. C1/12/246a,b.

marshy area each side of the estuary, from Sheppey to Gravesend, from Leigh to Tilbury and beyond, and just outside this area, around the mouth of the estuary, the ports and towns where goods could be sold - what must have been a great temptation, was the number of small boats, which carried merchandise between ports like Colchester and Sandwich and London. In 1452 for instance three vessels called 'fates', laden with wood, were taken on their way to Colchester by George Blake, master of a Portsmouth barge, and carried off to Portsmouth [1], in 1442 it was the Earl of Shrewsbury's men again, who captured near Queenborough six packs of wool from a boat, that was taking them from London to Faversham, whence they were going to Dover, and then to Calais[2]. Especially rich prizes were the small vessels carrying to London the goods of Italian carracks and galleys, which had been transhipped at Sandwich; some time in the 1460's pirates took seventeen bales of woad out of a lighter at Sandwich, which had just been unloaded from a Genoese carrack in the Downs; the woad, the complainant said, came into the hands of the Earl of

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.579.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.108.

Arundel, and Thomas Combes esquire of Sussex[1]. In 1450 it was goods being transferred from small boats to a Genoese carrack at Sandwich that were stolen[2]. In 1449 a ship, laden at Sandwich for a Genoese merchant, was captured in the Thames by evildoers, and taken off to Wells in Norfolk, and in 1459 three balingers of England took near Queenborough goods of various Venetian merchants, in small boats loaded at Sandwich for London, and carried them off to Harwich[3]; similarly in 1464 the pirates Little Perrin of Sandwich, Pratte of Winchelsea and Fagge of Whitby (amongst others) seized a cray bound from Sandwich to London with Venetian merchants' goods[4], and in 1467 a vessel carrying woad to London was taken off Thanet[5].

The booty was taken away and sold wherever the pirates thought fit - Sussex, Portsmouth, Norfolk, but some was got rid of quickly at places nearer to hand, at St. Osyth or Colchester, Harwich or Queenborough, as we have seen. The number of piracies committed near Queenborough suggests that not only was this a convenient place to lay in wait,

---

1. P.R.O. C1/43/183.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.434, 442.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.285; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.494.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.347.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-76, p.28.

ready for ships coming from the Thames, Medway and Swale, but that also the port had its own community of pirates, that others could refit and victual there, and that goods could be sold and no questions were asked. Pirated merchandise certainly found its way around, and ready purchasers; in 1433 Stephen Ingram, draper, probably of London had, it was alleged, received certain bales of woad, knowing that they had been stolen from a ship going from Sandwich to London; he maintained however that he had come by them legitimately - the usual defence[1]. In the early 1470's various men of Canterbury were said to have aided pirates, who had taken soap and other stuff from a ship in the Thames near Queenborough, and had received a great part of those goods; but they replied that they had bought the soap in open market at Milton in Kent, and had no knowledge of the piracy[2], and at about the same time merchandise plundered off Sheppey came into various men's hands in Suffolk, though they pleaded ignorance of the piracy[3]. If there was an involved organisation here we only have these glimpses of it, but probably there was not; pirates may have had their regular receivers, but in most cases it was likely

---

1. P.R.O. C1/43/232-238.
2. P.R.O. C1/39/226-228.
3. P.R.O. C1/43/68-76.

to be first come, first served, and of combined operations there were no doubt few. Any too systematic and thorough an exploitation of the Thames traffic would have been too notable this close to the government's jurisdiction, and besides if losses had been very heavy, and regular, the London merchant class would not have stood it. The situation was bad, but not that bad.

In the West country it was different; there professional piracy was well organised. Kingsford, in his Prejudice and Promise in 15th Century England has a chapter on piracy in this area; it is invaluable. He shows clearly how the gentry of Devon, and particularly Cornwall, were involved in many piracies that occurred, how these men, in a region not known for its good order and civil amity, were to a large extent their own judges, for as the men of social influence they were those people that the government had perforce to use as its local officials. They were powerful in their own right, and even more so in the positions of commissioners and J.P.'s; as commissioners of enquiry into piracy they were in a crucial position in a seafaring land, and once other circumstances were opportune they were in a profitable one. And here chiefly that circumstance of a weak, and steadily weakening central government was dominant. It was not that these men were against the government, or that

later they were Yorkists, most of them were in fact Lancastrians - Trevelyan and Bodulgate for example; it was simply that given no positive reasons - greater wealth, prestige or position, or association in good or great works - to uphold the law, they did not do so with any enthusiasm. Nor could a government that was rapidly losing its power to win allegiance and manage its subjects, either through duty, self-interest or even coercion, do very much, particularly in that peripheral region, to see that they would do so. If at the centre there was a king who was no politician, it is not surprising that at the limits of his land men went their own way. And if they did remain Lancastrian at the end, this may have been because they saw less chance of graft under a Yorkist regime; at least they preferred the slack system that they knew - and for this reason supported - to an unknown one. Richard Penpons is a good example; he was a frequent commissioner to enquire into piracy, from 1451 a J.P., and principal owner of a pirate ship, the Katherine of St. Ives, and although involved in a piracy by this vessel in 1451, he escaped, by one means and another, all attempts to bring him to justice, and no restitution was ever made (it seems) to the injured parties[1]. This breakdown of the king's justice is very relevant to the

---

1. Kingsford, op.cit., p.97-101; documents in appendix p.194-200.

question of the keeping of the seas, or rather the lack of any such keeping, for the administration, failing in this respect, was equally unable to restore and punish where it could not prevent. Given these two inabilities, piracy in the West Country flourished as it did nowhere else. To supplement Kingsford's study (for as an illustration it is adequate in itself) it is perhaps wisest to see how those men who were concerned in the 'cause celebre' of 1449, were involved in piracy at other times.

The piracy on the galley of Barcelona, the St. Anthony and St. Francis, at Plymouth on 27th November 1449 is described and examined by Kingsford, and the relevant documents from Early Chancery Proceedings transcribed by him[1]. It is justly famous, not merely because it is well documented, but also because merchandise worth some £12,000 was taken, and many men of all ranks were involved. Francis Jungent, or Junyent, patron of the galley, lists those seamen aboard the two pirate vessels, the Mackerell of Fowey and the Edward of Polruan, the victuallers of each, the owners of the Edward, and those who were paid out of the goods of the galley for maintenance - this last is significant

---

1. Kingsford, p. 94-97; documents p.183-194.

purely by quotation: Sir John Colshill, £1,000[1], John Arundell of Talvern, £1,000, Michael Power, esq., £1,000, James Durneford, esq., £1,000, the Prior of Kearnek, £1,000, John Trelawny, esq., £1,000, John Ash, yeoman of the crown... the list has a further thirty-six less notable names, but with no amounts specified for each.

First however the omission, namely, the owner of the Mackerell, and a person not implicated by Kingsford: Henry, Duke of Exeter, the Admiral of England[2]. This was not Exeter's sole involvement in piracy; in 1454 the Mackerell took a ship of Normandy in the Western channel, and John Cornew, her master in 1449, was her master then[3]. But there is more certain evidence than this. In 1450 a hulk of Bruges, the St. George, was taken and despoiled near Portsmouth by an array of vessels - the Nicholas of the Tower, a barge of Henry Bruyn esquire[4], a carvell of

---

1. A John Colshill was the owner of the Mary of Looe in 1451: P.R.O. E101/54/15.
2. Named as owner in this case: Cal. Close Rolls, 1447-54, p. 169, 174.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.168.
4. Bruyn in 1450 was a man of the king's household, and steward of the Isle of Wight; it was said of him by the people of the island, in a petition to the parliament of 1450, that he was 'borne to gret reputacion and wel anherited and at no time corrupte, but egalli rulith the said Ilond aftur Justice withoute complaynt': Rot. Parl. V. p.205. He was also M.P. for Portsmouth in 1450-1: Wedgewood, Biographies, p.127.

Portsmouth with Clays Stephen as master, a barge of the mayor of Winchelsea, a barge of William Cook of Portsmouth (among other, unnamed ships) and a ship of the Duke of Exeter's, John Norton master[1]. This was not the most innocent of assemblies. Clays Stephen had many other piracies to his name - in 1448 in the Thames with William Kidd, again in 1448, and again, in 1450 and in 1453[2]; in 1455 the vessel of which he was master, the George of Calais, was ordered to be arrested, and on 3rd March 1456, he himself, with the pirate Hankin Selander, was to be arrested[3]; before all this, in 1444-5, he had been master of the Earl of Shrewsbury's Ghost of Harfleur[4]. The Nicholas of the Tower's most violent part in action came in this year 1450, when she intercepted the Duke of Suffolk on his way to exile, and on that occasion of high political importance her crew (amidst other duties) still had time to rob Henry Spencer, yeoman of the crown, of the king's letters and 44 marks[5]. Whether true patriots, or false and traitorously disposed people (as the Exchequer warrant calls them) they were still pirates; in 1435 the

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 432, 434.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 140, 186; p.188; p.190; p.432, 435; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.167.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.258, 301.
4. B.M. Additional MS. 23, 938 f. 19v.
5. P.R.O. E404/68/63.

Nicholas took a Flemish ship[1], and in 1455 a vessel of Guernsey[2]. Her owners in 1436 were five Bristol men[3], but in 1450 her owners are not named[4]. In 1451 another ship of Exeter's, the Galiot, took a cog of Holland at Harfleet[5]; the Duke at the request of the despoiled merchants' attorney, commanded one of his council and an admiralty court judge, Hugh Payne, to restore the ship and merchandise. But Payne, after asking for and receiving a gift of twenty marks from the attorney, refused restoration and said that the merchants should sue at the king's court - so the merchants complained; his reply to these charges was that he had done his best for them, but that all the cargo of wheat had been sold and the money shared out, and he of course had nothing to do with that and received no money from the sale[6]. Correct as the Duke's part in all this was,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.472.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.258.
3. See Chapter 3 below.
4. John Stow in his Annales of England, edition of 1601, p.639, says that Exeter himself owned her in 1450; Kingsford's statement that she is described as Exeter's ship in Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.435, arises out of a misreading of the commas (Prejudice and Promise etc., p.173, footnote 1). Apart from Stow there is no evidence for her ownership in 1450, and she was not a royal ship as some historians have believed; for a brief discussion of her origin see chapter 3 below.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.441.
6. P.R.O. C49/50/6,7; P.R.O. SC8/63/3141, a better copy of C49/50/6, number I; the merchants' original petition; and P.R.O. 31/7/139, p.17-24 - record commission's transcripts, the actual documents themselves cannot be traced.

superficially, it is unlikely that at some point he did not profit from his servants' endeavours; so it probably was in 1449. One more powerful than Colshill or Trevelyan was involved, and if they had £1,000. each he must have had considerably more, though his name never came up in the Chancery proceedings.

Sir Hugh Courtenay, in the 1449 case a victualler of the Edward of Polruan with a £1,000. against his name for maintenance, was at this time M.P. for Cornwall; he also had a hand in piracy, though not until 1460 is it apparent. In the last year or so of Henry VI's reign, Courtenay's carvel, the Peter Courtenay made three captures; on 27th January 1460 the Christopher of Bergen-op-Zoom was taken with a cargo freighted by London merchants[1]; later the Margaret of Brittany was captured, and by 1465 there had been no restitution made; Sir John Arundell, the sheriff of Cornwall and others were ordered to arrest the owners and victuallers of the Packer - presumably the Peter - including Courtenay, and bring them to Chancery, and the Chancellor was required to issue strict proclamation against them, for they had refused to restore the merchandise and

---

1. P.R.O. C1/28/476.

caused others to do the same, notwithstanding the king's letters[1]. The third ship robbed was the Mary of Dordrecht, sailing with Bristol merchants' wine from Bordeaux; as sheriff Arundell was again on the commission to enquire into this[2] whilst another commission of October 1460 stated that goods to the value of £2,713-13-4d. had been disposed of from the ship in various parts of Devon and Cornwall[3], but no restitution was made, and a little later John Jay and other merchants of Bristol petitioned the Chancellor to order the baliffs at Topsham to keep safely thirty pipes of woad, which had come into their possession from the ship's cargo[4].

Sir John Arundell's position as commissioner and sheriff can only have given confidence to the pirates, and not to the government, whether Henry VI's or Edward IV's. Arundell was clearly one of the most influential of the members of the clique involved in piracy in the 1450's - his £1,000. in 1449 is one proof of this, but there are others. He must have been a good friend in high places

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.36, 452, 488; P.R.O. C81/1378/42.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.612. The Mary of Dordrecht and 'a wine ship from Bordeaux' are one and the same vessel, and it is the same case, not two as Kingsford makes it; op.cit, p.103.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.650.
4. P.R.O. C1/30/60.

to the working pirate; if he was on a commission there was small chance of full restitution ever being made. In the 1449 case for example, he and Thomas Bodulgate (another of the same sort[1]) on 26th February 1450 bought for £100, paid to the Exchequer, the Edward of Polruan, forfeited to the crown because of the piracy, by Sir John Trevelyan and her other owners. The ship had been valued at £40, and as Kingsford suggests, Trevelyan in this way escaped the loss of his ship, for having been bought cheaply by his friends he could soon recover it[2]. There is no doubt that they were all in this together, not only on this occasion, but also on many others in the 1450's. Arundell himself was not usually directly concerned with piracy, the act itself; once in 1435, his ship, the Gabriel of Exmouth, master one Henry Knees, Dutchman, took a Bristol vessel and brought the goods to Cornwall, where they were disposed of[3]. But he was always in some way involved; in 1460 he was given his share of wine, as were Trevelyan and Bodulgate, from a pirated ship[4], and in

---

1. Kingsford, op.cit., p.101-103; 96. He was a commissioner in the 1449 affair; and also a connection of the Duke of Exeter's, as was John Ash, another of the 1449 men: Wedgwood Biographies, p.87, 20.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.312; Kingsford p.96.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.120.
4. Kingsford, op.cit., p.102.

1448 we have a real illustration of him at work. In June 1448 Chester herald of arms, amidst others, was commissioned to enquire into the piracy of the Jacquette of Dieppe, by men in a balinger of Arundell's[1]; the herald's return of his enquiry into this and other matters in the West country still survives[2]. He relates that a ship, the Peter of Le Redo, taken in another piracy by the notable sea rover, Hankin Selander, and one Hankin Renes (perhaps Arundell's Dutchman?) with other men of Falmouth and Fowey, was arrested in the king's name by Arundell at Falmouth; whilst the herald was holding his enquiry at Bodmin with the sheriff and J.P.'s, a merchant of Le Redo came to him and told him how the matter of the Peter stood, and so the herald, with the sheriff and J.P.'s sitting there, asked Arundell to deliver up the ship; he answered that

> 'he shuld not mell hym therof for he said that was noo point of his charge for he wald demen hit as hym lyked best and so the said Chester spak no more therof and left hit styll in the possession of the forsaid John Arundell'.

He was certainly a forthright man, but probably at this time as much could be won in this way as by subtlety or

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.140.
2. P.R.O. C49/50/8, no date.

underhand methods, and for men like Arundell there seems to have been no contradiction in being a commissioner to enquire into, and an organiser of, piracy; for at the time of his defiance of the king's representative he was also on a commission of enquiry[1]. In October 1451 however he was ordered to be arrested, but the men required to carry out this task included Bodulgate and Penpons[2] - there can have been little chance of justice being done here. By May 1454 Arundell was a commissioner again, with Bodulgate, Penpons and Trevelyan; John Cornew, master of the Mackerell in 1449 and in this year, was involved in the piracy into which they had to enquire[3]; so the connections continue.

Cornew had received £200. from the plunder in 1449; perhaps he needed the money, as in the previous year a crayer, of which he was part owner, had been robbed at sea by a ship of Fowey[4], and his losses then may have led to his new career. In 1453 the Barke, of which he was part

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 187, 24th May, 1448.
2. Ibid, p. 532.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.175, P.R.O. E28/85, 24th July 1454: P.R.O. E404/70/2/49.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.186.

owner and victualler, took a ship of St. Malo[1], in 1454 he was, as we have seen involved in two piracies, and in 1455 he was ordered to be arrested: one of the commissioners was Arundell[2]. Cornew is a lesser figure, a shipmaster and small shipowner, who committed the actual piracies; Thomas Philip, part owner and victualler of the Edward in the 1449 case, was of much the same type; another ship of his and others was concerned in piracy in 1453 on a Spanish ship[3]. The others on that list of 1449 were similarly lesser men, save for Thomas Tregarthen, a lawyer and water baliff at Dartmouth, Nicholas Carminoe, who was a Cornish squire, and who in October 1449 with Colshill and Arundell was appointed to arrest a Genoese carrack[4], just a month or so before a vessel, of which he was a principal victualler, was plundering that Spanish galley, and of course Sir John Trevelyan, chief owner of the Edward and in receipt of a £1,000. Trevelyan, a yeoman of the crown, a man of the royal household at the centre of affairs in the later 1440's, and an important local official in Cornwall, was bitterly attacked by the critics of the government in

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.119; P.R.O. C1/22/57.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.258.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p. 118; P.R.O. C1/22/14.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 389.

1449-50, though he survived, as many did, until the 1470's[1]. The evidence for his part in piracy is not great; apart from the 1449 affair, when they all found that they had become involved in a case of much larger scale than their normal activities in piracy, and the notorious piracy of Winnington's of the same year, Trevelyan seems to have kept clear of direct implications, though in his high position he no doubt had his share of plundered merchandise, as he did in 1460, when he was under-sheriff, and in return used his good offices for the pirates, their helpers and the receivers.

Clearly then in the West country there was a profit making organisation, in fact a powerful group of racketeers. This was all much more than say the casual piracies in the Thames estuary, or the careers of the individual pirates of the 1430's and 1440's, like Colville, Moorfoot, Mixtow or Kidd; there was perhaps even more sophistication, greater co-operation of officials, port administrators, seamen, shipowners, squires, nobility and merchants than there had been in the time of Hawley and Pay. It was less the

---

1. E.F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, 1961, p.497-8; The Trevelyan Papers, ed. J. Payne Collier, Camden Society, 1857, p.27-75; Trevelyan also, it seems was a friend of Exeter's: pi 63.

foreigner, and more the money that mattered, though it probably always had; the depth of the organisation, centred in the Fowey estuary, we cannot know, nor its scope, whether it included retailers in Devon or Somerset, nor can we know if there were other groups, smaller perhaps and less notorious, operating out of Plymouth or Dartmouth. In 1440 for instance the Mary of Bilbao met with thirteen English ships of war, all allowed her to go on save one which was a ship of Sir Nicholas Carew, master that 'comen Rouer upon the see', Thomas Pedder, who took both ship and goods; two series of letters under the privy seal to Carew failed to make him disgorge, then by writ of subpoena he appeared before the Chancellor and said that all the goods were of Brittany and not from the Mary at all; but commissioners sent to view them found all the stuff to be from that ship, none from Brittany - there was still no restoration made. The king sent a sergeant of arms to Carew to take those who had captured the ship, and one of the injured party saw Thomas Pedder, but Carew on being asked would not arrest him. After eight months of this sort of thing, of feigned commissions of Carew's, pretending the goods to be in other mens' hands (he having already both sold ship and cargo), only eight out of 180 tons or iron had been recovered, and the robbed merchants

were near to being undone, so they said, from lack of justice[1].

Lack of justice was what many merchants had in the West country in these years, though in that 1449 case there was some attempt at a higher level, as a London chronicler relates:

> 'And in the same moneth and yere (february 1450) was Trevilian, a squyer of the Kinges, and oon Courteney commytted to the Toure for brekyng of the Kinges saufconduyt and taking of a Galey of Catelone'[2]

Nothing much could have come of this, perhaps token, imprisonment. In the provinces there was often not even this pretence; we have seen a baliff of Harwich plundering with the French, a barge of the mayor of Winchelsea's, and a ship of the steward of the Isle of Wight's in the company of well known pirates, and those two customers of Exeter

---

1. P.R.O. E28/64, 24th October 1440; also C1/43/315; and Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p. 373, 448, 451, 506, 538 - there the story is that the Mary was wrecked at Belle Isle, and her cargo transferred to the George of Nantes, which was then taken by Pedder, master of a barge of Sir Nicholas Carew, who took the ship and goods to Chepstow where the cargo was disposed of. Carew was also a connection of Exeter's: Wedgwood, Biographies, p.155.
2. English Historical Review, vol. 29, 1914, p.515.

and Dartmouth in 1449, Thomas Gill and Robert Winnington, do not inspire confidence in the efficacy of local administration, or at least in its disinterestedness. Though some carried out the law, like William Atwell, baliff of Topsham, who let free a Breton ship, taken by two indignant petitioners, because of a safeconduct of the Admiral of England that the Bretons had[1], others avoided doing so; in some way restitution of stolen goods, or part of them, was prevented - it was after all a complicated process, finding and getting back an assorted collection of merchandise which could soon be distributed and identification made difficult. There were other ways than the concealing and delaying tactics employed by Carew, though this type were the commonest; there was the outright one of the threat of murder, or of violence, as John Salter was menaced when at Fowey, attempting to arrest vessels captured by Hankin Selander[2], and the more refined and more usual one of empannelling a favourable jury, as in that example

---

1. P.R.O. C1/22/93, 1452-54.
2. P.R.O. C1/16/730. Salter was no insignificant man; he was atterney and merchant of Fowey, haberdasher of London, between 1443-61 a customer of Plymouth and Fowey, and M.P. for Truro in 1449-50: Wedgwood, Biographies p.739.

noticed by Kingsford[1], when the Admiral's deputy in Devon chose a jury of the misdoers themselves, the owners and victuallers of the pirate vessels, their relatives and friends - Thomas Pedder was one of the pirates concerned; or if all else failed there was straightforward escape, like Morfoot's, or that which the petitioners feared might happen to William Lucas at Southampton late in Edward IV's reign; he had been put under surety for his part in the piracy of a Breton vessel and was likely to be 'perleyned awey by dyvers mettues and faveur of maryners'[2]. In the Western group proper things would not have been allowed to go this far, for they were all involved together as pirates and commissioners, and justice want begging.

Piracy of this fashion and with this range was to continue in the West well into the 1470's, when it had been cut down to a manageable scale elsewhere. With an unpolitical king as the weak centre, administration fell apart at the thrust of flagrant self-interest, and force rather than appeal became the strongest argument. As important as keeping the sea, was a willing administration in the counties, which would give justice without overmuch

---

1. Kingsford, p. 80; P.R.O. C1/11/45.
2. P.R.O. C1/67/172.

graft or favour or scandal; local officers would always do well for themselves - one of the reasons for their being officers - but this does not prevent them having an idea of allegiance, a conception of duty; given these, and only a strong king could give them, the administration would again work towards a more impersonal justice. Temptation was always strong, but it was the king's life-work to cut down these unofficial opportunities and to raise official ones, material and ideal, in their place; only then might efficient government function. Keeping the sea is but part of this wider problem, and a lax government did not keep the sea anyway; more important was that the sea could only be kept with a specific purpose in that century, for instance a patrol might operate for a summer off Fowey, seeking pirates, but this would have done little good against the West country organisation of the 1440's and 1450's; to go out to capture pirates in these times would have achieved nothing, for there were too many of them, they had too many friends and those that were sent after them were no better than they, so that legitimate shipping only suffered the more. To obtain reasonable order at sea, good order was needed ashore.

There are two other aspects of piracy at this time

worth noting; first, as in the 16th and 17th centuries, it was cosmopolitan, again most certainly in the West country. There Hankin Selander, in 1430's, 1440's and 1450's was a famous pirate, with important associates, as in the 1448 affair with the Chester herald[1], and there was Arundell's Dutchman, and the foreign friends of the West country pirate Frischow, noted by Kingsford[2]. In 1456 Clays Holand in the Katherine of Harwich with forty persons and more roving on the sea, took masts and planks that Hugh Clidero w of Hull was shipping from Norway in his ship George, and carried them off to Newcastle, where he promptly sold them and the George to Allen Bird, who knew the ship belonged to Clidero w, all the while keeping Clidero w's son Robert and three other Englishmen under the hatches to prevent them telling of the robbery[3]. In 1458 one John Castilion in a ship of Calais took a Spanish ship, and on another occasion in the same year the Christopher of Campe[4]. Co-operation at sea was paralleled on land. In 1450 a ship of Holland bound from Prussia to England was taken by Bretons and men of Dieppe - and both ship and goods came into the

---

1. For Selander, see Kingsford, p. 90-92.
2. Ibid, p. 93.
3. P.R.O. E28/87, 7th July 1456.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.437, 438, 439.

hands of men in Yorkshire[1]; this was common enough, as pirates sold their plunder where they could; nor were Englishmen averse from dealing with the enemy if good profit could be made, like Richard Arnold esquire of Cromer, Richard Hemming of Norfolk, Chapman and John Roke, fisherman of Norfolk, who around 1460, it was said, were

> 'the grettest colourers counseillers supporters aiders and favourers to our liege seid adversaries (the French) in takyng suche prises of eny persones that both in the parties so ferforth that they have money ever redy to bey suche prises of the seid adversaries and to ley doun the redy money therfor for their oune singuler lucre contrarie to the kynges lawes'[2]

A revealing example that hints at stronger fellowships between pirates of different countries is one of 1444, in which Robert Winnington is concerned. Certain London men had freighted a vessel, the Michael of Dartmouth, with wine and other merchandise, worth £500. they said, to come from Bordeaux to London. The ship was taken at sea by Thomas de la Tere of Brittany; as it was a time of truce between

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.389.
2. P.R.O. C1/29/540.

the two countries they wrote a letter to the Duke of Brittany asking for restitution, and were negotiating with a herald to take it, when on 5th May 1444 in the parish of St. Martin in the vintry of London along came Winnington, by covenant with Thomas de la Tere, and undertook to deliver the letter and return with an answer on 1st August 1444. He took the letter but never brought a reply, and moreover housed and harboured Thomas and had goods out of Brittany from the cargo still remaining there[1]. Just as in legitimate commerce there seems to have been much coming and going; piracy, like trade and shipbuilding, was international, and there were few barriers, save those of acrimonious dispute, in all these pursuits. How far this co-operation in piracy went it would be difficult to tell, whether for instance information about sailings was exchanged, or where men would readily accept stolen goods. Probably any combinations were only temporary, for immediate profit, and men like Selander only influential because they were good at their job. The seaman has always been cosmopolitan, the 15th century pirate was no exception.

Equally (our second aspect) all men, of whatever country,

---

1. P.R.O. C1/15/52.

were the victims. Pirates did not pick and choose their prey carefully, and if they did - Breton or Hanse ships perhaps - the merchants who suffered might be of any country. For merchants used what vessels were available to them; a Bristol merchant at Lisbon or Bordeaux would put his goods in any ships coming to London if he wished to send merchandise there, usually in a number of ships to shorten the risk of loss, so long as they were friendly or covered by safe conduct. Freightage space, not the origin of the ship, was the relevant question. Therefore no merchant could insure himself, in this way, against pirates, all ships being liable to suffer at the hands of any pirates. Of twenty-five petitions to the chancellor concerning piracy by Englishmen between 1430 and 1470 (a random selection) fourteen are by foreigners, eleven by Englishmen. Piracy was therefore international in this sense also; a survey of English piracy, from English sources, is thus not entirely one-sided. Foreign pirates were a curse to their own governments too. It is not until the late 16th century, and then it is doubtful, that English pirates are more anti-Spanish than they are anti-everyone. In the 15th century piracy by Englishmen was as much the English government's problem (to protect English commerce), as it was

the foreign merchants' misfortune. If there was any undeclared national war at sea it was chiefly the English shipowners or merchant's fault - in the 1430's for instance - where their vigorous protection of the coasts of England and of English shipping might well spill over into a zealous persecution of alien merchantmen, carrying foreign goods; or it would be the result of extraordinary feats like those of Winnington and Warwick, in which one group, usually the Hanse, suffered from a genuine, if mistaken, jingoism, or again of events that took place ashore - confiscations, disputes over privileges and so on; all this was not piracy proper. The pirate, whether professional or amateur, was no respector of persons; throughout this period the English suffered as much as anyone from both English pirates and foreign ones. At sea the give and take was universal.

But this impressionist survey has perhaps been too dark. There was disorder, lawlessness and danger at sea - too much, more than was necessary, more than at other periods, 1413 to 1430, or 1470 to 1540 for instance; but there was never complete chaos, trade never broke down. There were too many ships at sea for this at alltimes; Mr. Scammell's totals of tonnage and figures of sailings for the East coast show this for the period 1450-1550[1], whilst some

---

1. See overpage. (161)

figures worked out from the Southampton Port Books are equally telling. In the year October to September 1469-70 there was a total of 469 sailings in and out of Southampton, fifty-five in November 1469, forty-one in May 1470 alone; from October to September 1480-81 the total was 289, for the months April to September 1471, it was 205[2]. In October 1439 the number of vessels sailing out of the port was twenty-nine, in March 1440 it was thirty-five, in May six, in June thirteen, in July sixteen, in August four, in September ten[3]. These were of course not the actual number of ships; many were small coastal craft in and out of Southampton perhaps two or three times a month. Mollat's figures for Dieppe are also revealing: for 1424-5 there were 390 sailings in and out of that port by 269 ships, in 1437-8 there were 221 by 123 ships, in 1447-8 there were 174 sailings, in 1450-1 164 sailings by ninety-eight ships, and in 1457-8 one-hundred-and-twenty-three

---

1. G.V. Scammell, Economic History Review, vol.13, number 3, 1961, 'English Merchant Shipping at the end of the Middle Ages: Some East Coast Evidence,' esp, p.333, 336, and appendix, p.341.
2. The Port Books of Southampton, 1469-71, ed. D.B.Quinn, Southampton Record Society, number 37, 1937; The Port Books of Southampton, 1477-81, ed. Quinn, S.R.S. 38, 1938 These figures do not include the few sailings of Italian vessels, which in 1469-70 were 9 in and out, in 1480-81,15.
3. The Brokerage Book of Southampton, 1439-40, ed. B.D.M. Bunyard, S.R.S. 1941, p. XXII.

by 78 ships[1]. These figures are sufficient to show the volume of traffic at sea; only in the 16th century perhaps were there ever more vessels sailing the North Sea, the channel and the Bay than there were in the 15th century. The Thames estuary, the straits, the Downs, Southampton water were crowded with ships, mostly small, many insignificant, and a few perhaps 250-350 tons or more - mostly foreign these, Italian carracks, Hanse cogs or Spanish vessels, but some from London and Bristol - with rich cargoes. Compared with the many ships at sea the piracies that occurred were not great, even in some of the worst years - twelve commissions of enquiry in 1433, ten in 1434, nine in 1448, nine in 1453, thirteen in 1454, nine in 1470, seven in 1483[2], even if there were double or treble this number of actual piracies they would not have disrupted trade, though they certainly would have disturbed traders. Piracy was generally a nuisance, in such times as the 1440's and 1450's a dire hazard, a real menace; but piracy never defeated its own ends: there was always a surfeit of ships to prey upon. And trade for many must always have remained

---

1. Michel Mollat, Le Commerce Maritime Normand a la Fin du Moyen Age, 1952, appendix, 12, p. 609.

2. From Cal. Pat. Rolls only.

as, or more, profitable than piracy.

For some perhaps this was not so. It would be convenient to demonstrate that trade and piracy were related in this way: that when trade was good piracy was slack, when trade declined piracy increased. But this is a sight too simple, and generalisations from statistics are either not easy, or too easy. The various tables in Studies in English Trade in the 15th Century bear out Gray's statement that trade recovered from a depression in the early years of the century, and between about 1425 and 1450 was prosperous, giving way in 1450 to 1475 to another depression, followed after 1475 by a return to prosperity[1]. However piracy flourished most strongly apart from the period

---

1. Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan, 1933, p.l. See for example: Chichester, table 4; Exeter and Dartmouth, 5: Kingston on Hull, 7; Sandwich, 13 - the column headed: Value in £s of merchandise paying poundage: These figures show a similar pattern; a prosperous period c. 1430-c. 1450, a slump c. 1450-c. 1465, though here, whilst Exeter and Hull remain in decline until 1470 (indeed Hull's slump is rather the period 1456-1472), Chichester has made considerably recovery by 1465, and shows good prosperity from then onwards, and Sandwich's slump is gradual from 1449 to 1456, then there is a period of contrast from year to year throughout the 1460's and 1470's, after the really low years of 1457 to 1460. In all four cases the years 1448-9-50 were very bad ones, and although there is in each case a slight recovery, the prosperity of the 1430's and 1440's is not regained until the late 1460's or 1470's. Though just as piracy flourished in this period, so too probably did smuggling - an inefficient administration allowed both.

of Henry IV's reign, during the years 1430 to 1470 or thereabouts; piracy it would seem was doing well whilst commerce was still good (1430-1450), though in the next twenty years as trade flagged, piracy flourished, only falling away in the late 1460's before trade had properly recovered. Certainly the 1450's were a bad time for merchants, with trade slack and piracy at its height. Piracy of course may have affected trade, but this is doubtful; the chances of being robbed at sea were not high even in the worst years, and few merchants can have been deterred by pirates, though they may have cursed and feared them; the profit from a successful voyage was too great to be refused on account of such robbers. There are many other more important considerations, individual, local and general, that caused trade to fluctuate, and these have nothing to do with piracy. And equally there were other reasons for increased piracy than that of declining trade; these we have seen: a weak royal administration meant that there was a very good chance of escaping justice, and no regular or controlled seakeeping gave the opportunity to plunder. Piracy could be committed, and you could get away with it. But there were some connections with trade, some correspondence between the two; there is one very important one at least. If a shipowner could not get a

cargo (trade was not good) then his property and his talents were lying idle, his assets - one or more ships or part of a ship - were diminishing, for a ship rots quickly if it is laid up; in fact he was making no money, only losing it. In these circumstances - and they occurred most markedly in the West country where there were many ships, even perhaps too many, but after 1449 there were fewer wine cargoes to bring from Aquitaine[1] - a shipowner might well employ his ship as a pirate vessel, sent out to get what it could[2]. In this way shipowners would be both legitimate traders and

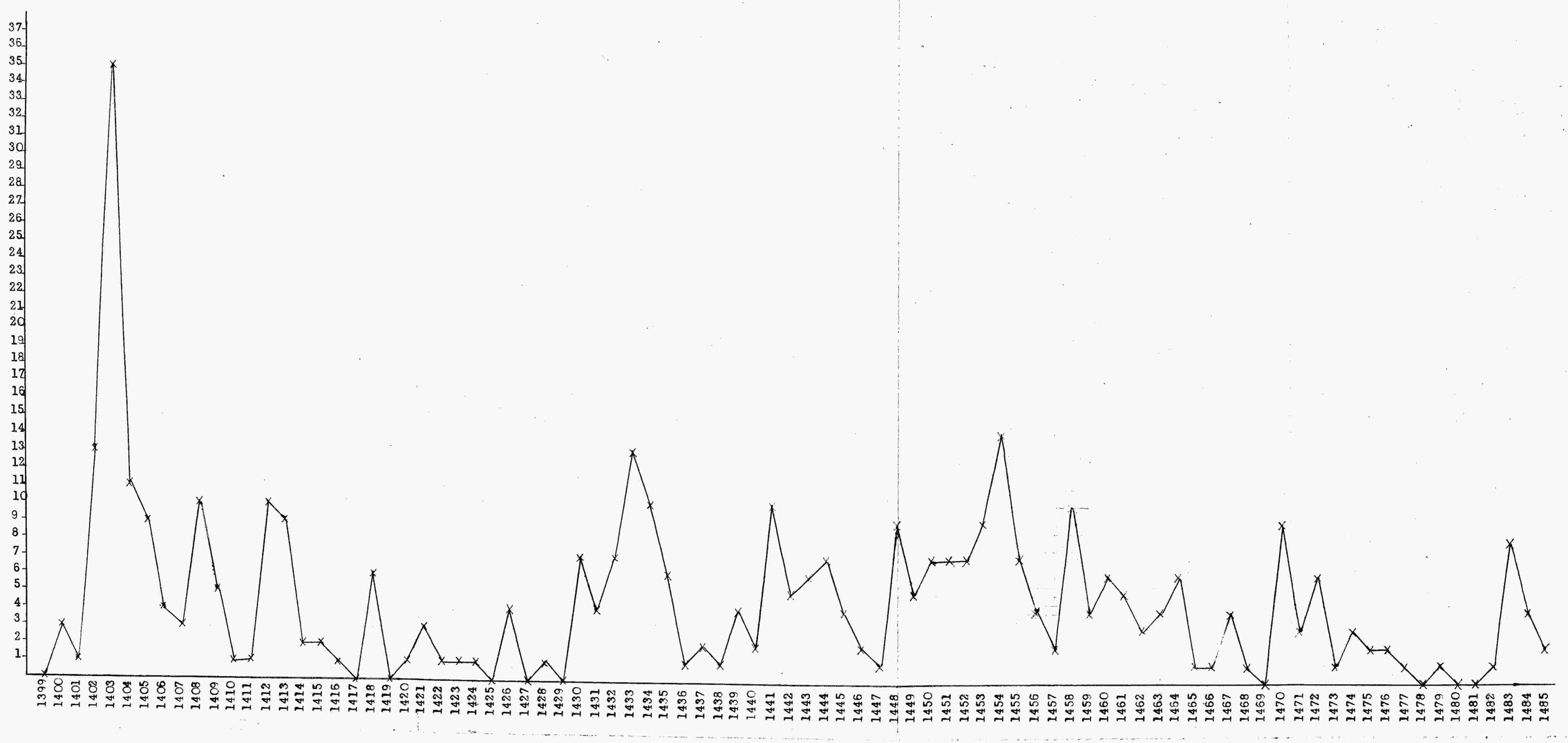
---

1. See Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, table 5, Exeter and Dartmouth, table 12 Plymouth and Fowey - tuns of wine imported; both series of figures have similar features: the period 1430-1450 was a time of good trade, with 1436-7-8 bad years. 1432 also being a poor year for Exeter; then from 1450 to 1474 a time of depression, though with some moderate recovery in the 1460's, including a very good year in 1464-5, whilst Fowey had good years in 1450-1 and 1452-3. The prosperity of the 1440's was never regained. Cf. Bristol's imports of wine, 1399-1485, in E.M. Carus Wilson, Medieval Merchant Venturers, 1954, p.42, See Ibid, chapter VII, The effects of the Aquisition and the Loss of Gascony on the English wine trade, p. 271-278; these figures are given of tuns of wine imported from all sources - the great bulk of imports came from Gascony: 1447-8, 12,000; 1448-9, 13,000; 1449-50, 6,000; 1450-1, 6,000; 1451-2, 7,000; 1452-3, 10,000; 1453-4, 6,000; 1454-5, 9,500; 1455-6, 5,000; 1456-7, 3,000; - 'In such a fashion the trade continued for another six years - still in the hands of English and Gascons, but limited, closely regulated, and much diminished in volume'.
2. See G.V. Scammell 'Shipowning in England c.1450-1550', Trans. Royal Hist. Soc., 5th series, Vol.12, (1962), p.110-111.

the maintainers of pirates, and their role might vary from month to month depending on the amount of goods that there were available to carry. Trade was always the safest way, but sometimes that other way was chosen, either freely or by necessity. The same applied perhaps to the bigger merchant-shipowner; in those disorderly times in the 1430's or 1450's, and if trade was slow, the ship's master might be told to attack any other vessel, preferably foreign, if he thought the occasion propitious. His employer could always, if the consequences were unwelcome, endeavour to evade responsibility, presumably with some success. Such a connection between trade and piracy was, I think, a real one, and in this period a close one. It was probably the lack of a cargo that came first, not the itch of piracy, though that had its place in some regions, in some men. In this way, from year to year, or even from month to month, trade and piracy went together perhaps.

The picture (and this has only been a brief sketch) of conditions at sea during Henry VI's reign is not a simple one nor a particularly bright one. The situation has, in this one respect of piracy, been described. The government also had enemies to deal with - how it coped with both pirates and enemies by measures of sea-keeping must now be examined.

Piracy cases, taken from the Calendars of Patent and Close Rolls, 1399-1485.



Chapter 3.

The Government's Repponse, 1422-1456.

By the mid 1430's pirates and enemies abounded, but the government had no resources of its own to meet them. The king's ships in 1436 were few and mostly decayed; the balingers Little Jesus and Jacquet were the only seaworthy vessels, and these constituted the royal navy, the task force, as opposed to the dereliet hulks in the Hamble. No wonder therefore that the writer of the Libelle should praise Henry V and his great ships[1] - 'The Trinite, the Grace Dieu, the Holy Goste. And other moo, whiche as now be loste' - and rue the day when those first three ships remained for the curious as sorry relics of more heroic times, and the others were gone - 'Where bene oure shippes, where bene oure swerdes become'. Nor was there to be any return to the policy of Henry V, at any time in Henry VI's reign; the council had been unconcerned when the king's ships were sold off in 1422-25, in the 1430's the councillors and king contemplated and undertook no revival of the royal fleet. In a way this is difficult to understand, for it was usual for the crown to possess at least three or four

---

1. Edited Warner, 1926, lines 1010-1019.

vessels, even Richard II, Henry IV and Henry VII had a few more than this, whilst the warrior kings, like Edward III or IV, Henry V or VIII had many more. It was indeed natural for the king, first among aristocrats and landowners, to have some ships of his own, apart from all other considerations of war and defence. The crown was often coming by vessels, through forfeit or purchase; in 1437 for instance the crown bought a balinger from the executors of the Earl of Arundel, but it was sold again to the Admiral of England, the Earl of Huntingdon[1], so that in 1441 when William Basset was sent to Aquitaine on the king's business, a ship of Huntingdon's, the Anthony had to be hired to take him[2]. Behind all this there may have been good reason, but never to keep any of the forfeited ships or those purchased was a shortsighted policy, even from the point of view of mere convenience. The cost of maintaining say six or even ten ships of between 50 and 250 tons would not have been excessive, would have been only a small part of a year's expense on military and naval matters, and the advantages would have been great. But the government rejected this

---

1. Proc. Privy Council, vol.5, p.27.
2. P.R.O. E28/69, 28th November 1441; cf. Proc. Privy Council, vol.5, p.169.

policy of maintaining royal ships, the practice of Henry V was discontinued and no crown naval force formed the nucleus of expeditions during this reign.

Nor by the 15th century was that other traditional contribution to England's seapower, the service of the Cinque Ports, at all adequate. The decline of the ports themselves, through geographical changes and the misfortunes of the 14th century, left them unable to perform the service of 57 ships for fifteen days fully, even in Edward III's reign.[1] Moreoever the obligations of that service were by that time out of date; the 15 days was too short a period for serious patrol work or a large expedition, and the crew of twenty-two men to a ship meant that the vessels they set to sea were too small to use as anything but auxilaries to the larger ships which formed the main body of any task force. The ports did not have any big ships of their own, so that even if their service was halved, or only a few ships were demanded but of a good size, then they had to hire them, as Hythe had to do in 1430[2], and as Lydd

---

1. K.M.E. Murray, The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports, 1935, p. 213-217. For the geography of the Cinque Ports, which Murray does not stress, see J.A. Williamson, 'The Geographic History of the Cinque Ports' in History, 1926, and his The English Channel, 1959, p.95-113.
2. Hist. Manuscripts Comm., 4th Report, p.438.

had to do in 1444 from Sir Thomas Kyriell and from Sandwich[1]. Apart from transport duties in the invasions of 1475 and 1492 the last time that the service was undertaken in anything like a complete form - half the number of ships but with full equipment - was in the winter of 1444-5[2], and this is the only time that the service was used for strictly naval purposes after 1430 when the king crossed to France[3]. For naval defence the Cinque Ports service was obsolete. Individual ships from the Ports were impressed in the normal way, as ships from other English ports were, when they were required, but even here, save for Sandwich and Winchelsea, the Ports had few vessels of adequate tonnage that could be called upon. The service itself was a relic from an earlier, and in these things, less complicated time; the Ports were no longer able to play the part they had done in the 12th and 13th centuries, their day was over by 1400.

Thus, when the crisis came in the 1430's after a decade of comparative peace at sea, the crown had no immediate and organised resource of ships and personnel

---

1. The Records of Lydd, ed. Arthur Finn, 1911, p.91, 93, 94, 97.
2. Murray, op.cit. p.207.
3. Cal. Close Rolls, 1429-35, p.10.

upon which to draw. That of the Cinque Ports was inadequate and not to be thought of, that of a naval establishment of its own the government did not consider. This failure of insight, of realistic thinking, of will, of character (whatever it was), was at the root of the failure of the English to keep the seas for the remainder of Henry VI's reign. For without resources of its own the crown was necessarily forced into reliance on others, and an almost total reliance at that. Without its own ships it had to use the ships of others; this of course had always to be done to some extent until the 17th century, but never so completely as now in Henry VI's reign. And more important perhaps was the fact that the crown had no body of experienced and loyal personnel; without even a small group of king's ship-masters, those naval expeditions that were undertaken were not only led by men not in the first instance, in the context of the 1440's and 1450's, fully responsible to the government, but also each and every ship was captained by persons who had no specific loyalty to the king. Some of the royal mariners of Henry V's reign returned in 1430 to serve in the king's journey to France - John William, William Zalton, Jordan Browning, William Payne, John Marsh, Ralph Huskard, and Richard Rowe, in what

capacity we do not know[1] - and Browning and Rowe were concerned with the Little Jesus in 1435-37; but without king's ships there was no need for r[illegible]al mariners. And without both of these there could be no group of ships and men in a force at sea, which was primarily the king's and considered itself as such. If this was lacking there was bound to be failure of a greater or lesser degree, depending upon the self-interest of those involved.

About the expeditions sent to sea during the years 1422-54 we know very little, for the evidence in most instances is meagre. We have a summary schedule of events, a spare chronicle of effects, and only for the forces of 1440, 1442 and 1454 any details of organisation. In one way this is to be expected, for much activity, if initiated by the government, was not controlled by it directly; this is particularly true of the 1430's when the shipowners and merchants went to sea at their own cost. But in other cases it is unexpected: in 1430 all we have is the minute of the council that states that 2,100 marks were to be paid for the victualling of a force going on the sea from the Western parts of England against the king's enemies for six

---

1. P.R.O. E404/48/147, 11th February 1432, when they were paid for their labours.

weeks, and the commission for its muster[1]; in 1439 the single reference that John Chirche, Godard Pulham, William Scott and Richard Vere were to arrest ships and men for an armed force going to sea at the king's command[2]; in 1440 another that 'in consideration of the damage done to the king's subjects by pirates' some twenty ships and ten other vessels - barges and balingers - were to be arrested from London, Southampton and the West country to serve in the company of Sir Philip Courtenay and Sir William Bonville[3]. And for some later expeditions, those of 1449 for example, there is also little information, not least about Lord De la Warr's keeping of the sea, for which the king thanked him and prayed him to continue in an undated letter - we do not know even the year in which he performed this duty[4].

However two distinct forms of seakeeping can be discerned from the paltry evidence that exists: that by indenture (the usual method), and that by which shipowners and merchants were licensed to go to sea to fight the king's enemies at their own expense (the more unusual measure). We cannot always distinguish between the two, as for instance

---

1. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 4, p.52, 18th June; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.74, 17th June.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.369, 24th October.
3. Ibid, p.411, 2nd May.
4. P.R.O. E28/83, 18th May...

in that arrest of ships in 1439 by Chirche, Pulham and others, themselves shipowners, for which there survives no record of payment from the Exchequer; this was probably service of the second type. But in the case of Courtenay and Bonville, also shipowners, in 1440 when again there is no record of payment, or in that of Gervaise Clifton, ordered on 12th August 1443 to arrest thirteen or so ships for service against the king's enemies (the only reference)[1], we cannot be so certain, for these were men of a different rank to Chirche and Pulham, and were used to paid service for the crown. Either the Warrants for Issue have not been preserved or they did serve at their own cost.

In the 1430's the government favoured the second expedient, that of the merchants themselves keeping the sea. This method had been tried before as an official policy, but very rarely and only on a limited scale. In 1243 Henry III had granted licences for two vessels to proceed against the enemy at their masters' own expense; they were, however, to render to the crown half their gains[2]. John Philpot's successful venture to sea in 1378, when he hired 1000 men and a number of ships to fight a hostile fleet in the North

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.202.
2. Nicolas, History of the Royal Navy, vol.1, p.209, 238-239.

Sea, was without the government's consent - though it can hardly have been without its knowledge - and he was rebuked by the Council[1]. But in 1383 two merchants and two mariners undertook to keep the sea from Winchelsea to Berwick, and the government ordered all persons to aid them in their task, and ships were impressed for them[2]; this, however, was not seakeeping by licence. In April 1406 Henry IV had set merchants to patrol at sea from 1st May until one year after Michaelmass, but they by act of parliament were to receive tonnage and poundage for their expense and trouble[3]; this scheme does not appear to have worked well, and was stopped in October 1406, the king stating that the merchants had failed, there having been continued disorder at sea since they had started to operate[4]. No doubt at all times merchants were consulted about measures to keep the sea, as they were in 1413 by Henry V[5], and in 1442 the Commons'

---

1. Ibid, vol, 2, p.270.
2. Ibid, vol, 2, p.293.
3. Rot. Parl., III, p.[illegible]-71, 602-3, 610; Foedera, VIII, p. 437, 439, 449.
4. Foedera, VIII, p.455; Cal. Close Rolls, 1405-9, p.156. At least two merchants of Brunswick suffered; both were robbed at sea by the merchants under their appointed admirals - it is the familiar story: Cal. Close Rolls, 1405-1409, p.169, 172.
5. Proc. Privy Council, vol, 2, p.131.

scheme must have been drawn up after discussions with leading merchants and shipowners, some of whom were M.P.'s themselves. But now, in the 1430's, there was a revival of a course used only hesitantly in the past; virtually we can say that it was used for the first time as a major part of the crown's naval policy. Perhaps unprepared for the growing disorder at sea, and with many of the gentry and nobility still in France, this was the quickest and seemingly most efficient method to adopt.

Although in 1433, because of the damage committed by pirates, the council wrote to the Duke of Gloucester, as Warden of the Cinque Ports, asking him to order the men of those Ports to set to sea against the evildoers, and in another hand was added the note that certain persons in a schedule attached were so to make war on the king's enemies, it is not at all certain that the two skips of parchment now sewn together to this document belong to it; for the names on one of them are of men from London, Calais, Harwich and Devonshire who served in 1436[1]. Anyway this was not the system proper. In 1435 there is more certainty; in July the Little Anthony of London, five ships of

---

1. P.R.O. E28/54, 18th February 1433.

Winchelsea, two vessels of Orwell and the balinger Jonet of Sandwich were commissioned to resist the king's enemies at their owners', the commissioners', wages, although perhaps these had their victualling paid for by the crown, as other ships at sea in the winter of 1435-6 had[1]. In that same July of 1435 other money was to be paid by the Exchequer for the victualling of vessels keeping the sea, and John Chirche had £10., whilst on 20th February 1436 Richard Quartermain had £60.[2]. This appears to be a hybrid form - co-operation between the crown and private individuals, in which the crown took a lesser part.

But in 1436, the year of crisis, the system can be seen in its pure form. On 28th February licences for four months were granted, to equip, man and victual their ships at their own expense to resist the enemy, with vessels and goods captured to belong to them, except for the Admiral's and Warden of the Cinque Ports' share of 'shares', to Hugh Dene, Robert Shad and John Style for the Little Anthony of London, to Richard Buckland and John Milbourne for the Anthony of

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.608, 609; P.R.O. E404/52/192: but in this instance it seems that the ships had all their costs paid by the crown.
2. P.R.O. E404/51/349: 'per manus John Chirche','per manus Richard Quartermain'.

London of 280 tons, John Peers and John Vache for the 240 ton George of London, John Bale and John Stevens for the 280 ton Christopher of London, John Rifaw and Dene for the Gabriel of London, John Somerton for the Little Jesus of London, William Berking for the balinger Goodyear of London of 50 tons, and Thomas Gill for the Anthony of Dartmouth, the Katherine and two balingers or barges[1]. In the following months other licences were granted, in March to John Judde for the Christopher of London for instance, and another for two ships of Ipswich, all for four months[2], and in May to men from Hull; these last - John Bedford, owner of the Mary, Robert Holm, owner of the Leonard and balinger Mary, Robert Haddilsay, owner of the George, John Taverner and others, owners of the Peter, Robert Weston and the other owners of the George, Thomas Brampton, owner of the Grace Dieu of Beverley, William Northby and Thomas Sheriff, owners of the Mary - petitioned that they might be so licensed for four months, having any goods taken from enemies (the Admiral's shares always excepted), and moreover that for any offences committed by

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 509.
2. Ibid, p.510, 512.

those on board their ships they, the owners and victuallers, should not be held responsible. Their petition was allowed after many of them had sworn on oath to observe the conditions of the grant[1]; this was no great hardship, and no real check, for with the escape clause giving them freedom of association with the crews of their vessels, they were in a position that admitted of easy virtue and easy profit; the ships could plunder as the master wished, whilst the owners, weighing up the chances, could contract in or contract out. These licences must have been attractive, or they would not have been petitioned for, as this was not the only petition. Was this system begun on Crown or merchant initiative? Perhaps the London shipowners had advised the council that this method was a good one, and advertised of this, other merchants' petitions came hastily in. During May the owners of two ships of London, and Dame Alice Andrew for the Bartholemew of Orwell were granted licences for four months[2], and Clement Bagot and William Stemm, owners and victuallers of the James of

---

1. P.R.O. E28/57, 9th May 1436; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36. p.509-10; not all the men received grants, that is those which are on the Patent Roll: six out of eight ships were licensed.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.510.

Bristol, then at Winchelsea with 200 men aboard ready to take the Duke of York across the channel, asked that after this task was accomplished (not to waste an opportunity), they might pass in warfare with the ship and the 200 men under licence, in recompense - and here the motive is blatant - of their great costs had on the behalf of the king[1]. This request was granted. Also licensed was a ship of Lynn in May, and in July the Nicholas of the Tower of Bristol, whose five owners had petitioned for the privilege[2], whilst in June John Godfrey and Godard Pulham of Winchelsea, owners of four vessels of that port, and Roger Gale and others, owners of the Little Trinity of Winchelsea were granted licences for four months service[3], and William Cannings for his balinger St. Esperit, and Ralph White for his Peter of Barnstaple had them each for two months[4]; in July Richard Forster had one for about a month's service for the Grace Dieu of Bristol[5].

Clearly the system was a popular one, certainly with the shipowners. There should have been about thirty ships

---

1. P.R.O. E28/57, 18th May 1436; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 515.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 515; P.R.O. E28/53, no date.
3. P.R.O. E28/57, 26th June 1436.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p. 603.
5. P.R.O. E28/57, 13th July, 1436.

patrolling the seas after this fashion in the spring and summer of 1436. The merchants were satisfied: doing their country and themselves some good at the same time. The government was probably equally content, for during this year there was too much else to be seen to. Harfleur had been lost in the autumn of 1435, and now Calais and Crotoy were besieged, measures to relieve these had to be taken; from the autumn of 1435 England had been in a genuine, and unusual, state of panic, but a panic enforced with a determined bitterness against the Burgundians, and it was this determination that prevented the loss of Northern France that year. As to the government's attitude to the merchants and their seakeeping we can say little, but it may well be that the Treasurer, Lord Cromwell, was most intimately concerned with them. In the winter of 1435-36 it was by his command that the royal balinger, the Little Jesus was being built[1], and in one of the merchants' petitions, that of Godard Pulham and the Winchelsea men, it was asked that the king, with the advice of the Treasurer, might see to the grant of their request, whilst Cromwell's signature alone is on two of the other petitions. There

---

1. See chapter One above.

is probably nothing in this; but the connection of the Treasurer with a device that saved government expenditure may not have been entirely coincidental.

Not only were the merchants at sea this summer. The king's two balingers, Little Jesus and Jacquet, were constantly crossing and recrossing the channel to Crotoy and Calais[1], and other vessels were on the same duty. In August 1436 the Duke of Gloucester finally sailed off to Calais and then on to Flanders for his successful raid, after months of preparation, whilst Sir William Wolf was commissioned to take men for ships carrying victual to Calais, and to the Duke of Gloucester, thereafter to resist the king's enemies by land or sea[2]. Those ships of Lynn and Suffolk, originally licensed to keep the sea, were commanded to be ready for transport duties[3], as the armies of Gloucester and York had to be conveyed across the channel, and there were victuals for Calais and guns for Cherbourg[4]. This was an hectic year, ships and men were being used in large quantity and there were few to spare - one cause of the free hand given to merchants - so that in June it was

---

1. P.R.O. E403/724, 726.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.536, 12th July 1436.
3. Cal. Close Rolls, 1435-41, p.57, 28th March 1436.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.533, 17th March 1436.

to be proclaimed by the sheriffs that all who would go with the Earl of Huntingdon, the Admiral of England since the previous October[1], to the defence of Calais might have free equipment and licence to retain all that they might take from the enemy[2]; a familiar stimulus in this year. It was perhaps the vessels of this force of the Admiral's, which in August were paid for by the crown - £1,387 on these and some of the expenses of Gloucester's journey in three payments[3]. There was also a force of ships from the West country out keeping the sea, and probably another patrol out of Winchelsea[4]. It is not easy to differentiate one fleet from another, one expedition from another, when entries of payments are so noncommittal: 'diversorum Navium et Vasorum supra mare existentium pro salva custodia eiusdem'; and when arrests of ships usually have no motive specified. Huntingdon's force indeed is almost apocryphal, considering that single, bare reference to it.

But that the merchants were at sea and organised we are

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.488.
2. Foedera, X, p.646; Cal. of London Letter Books, K, p.205.
3. P.R.O. E403/724, under 29th August.
4. £45. 13. 4d. was paid 'per manus Thomas Gill' for men keeping the sea; this was probably the Western patrol; and Thomas Pope of Winchelsea had £13. 6. 8d. for wages of men and masters of ships keeping the sea: P.R.O. E403/724, 17th June, 29th August.

certain; for in April 1436 the king gave to John Scot and John Milbourne, elected by the merchants to be their admirals, full powers over them[1], and in September Milbourne and others, owners of the Mary of London, Vache and Peers owners of the George, Rifaw and Dene owners of the Gabriel had their licenses renewed, and three other vessels had licences for the first time, on the same pattern, for a period of ten weeks[2]. Other men were commissioned in the same month to take mariners for their ships going to resist the king's enemies[3]. Of the results of their seakeeping we can only be certain that (as in 1406) some of the innocent suffered from the zealous performance of their duty, as Vache and Dene[4], Scot and Milbourne[5] were involved in doubtful captures, although at least one of the men also struck against the enemy: John Burton of Bristol, who served under licence at about this time with two ships and a balinger, took three enemy ships of war, but he had much trouble over the distribution of his prizes once he had brought them home[6]. Not all did well: John Stevens of

---

1. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.115.
2. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.1; cf. P.R.O. E28/58, 18, 27th September 1436.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.82.
4. Ibid, p.202, P.R.O. C1/44/223.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.48.
6. P.R.O. C1/7/329, no date, French.

London, who had six ships at sea for five months in 1436, was petitioning in 1439 for a licence to export wool to the Low countries in récompense for his great charges and and costs, incrurred during his 1436 seakeeping[1]. Prpbably the risk that the merchants and shipowners took was an equal one - to take or be taken; it was in all respects a chancy business venture, but a venture worth taking, for in effect their normal practices were now being given royal approval and slightly wider scope. One cannot help feeling that the requirements of the country's defence came a distant secondbest to the merchants' need for profit.

The government's use of the merchants in this way in 1436, organised and in large number, was probably a temporary expedient, a quick and useful method which involved no government organisation in a time of crisis, and no issue of money from a hard pressed Exchequer. By 1437 the pressure had decreased, and although times were to be bad again, there was never to be that blatant, overall danger at one specific time in the years of creeping defeat that followed. So the use of the merchants and their ships - on their own terms as it were, making war for the king -

---

1. P.R.O. E28/62, 22nd August 1439; his request was granted.

was not repeated after 1436 on the same scale; there were still licences given to individuals, down into the early 1440's, but they were isolated, localised measures, not the matter of wide policy that they were in 1436; after this date the expedition financed by the crown was the usual method of keeping the sea. Perhaps many licences were in fact granted, but if this is so only few survive.

In May 1437 Thomas Cannings, a very important London merchant, brother to William of Bristol, later Mayor and M.P. for London, and William Milreth were licensed to dispatch a vessel to Zealand with three armed ships and two balingers and a barge to convey her there, then after her arrival to keep the sea for a month at their own cost[1]; and in August of the same year Thomas Albowe, master of the Angel of Colchester, was commissioned to take her to serve at his own expense against the king's enemies, who were 'besetting and invading the coasts and adjacent parts of England'[2]. In 1441 John Chirche, now victualler of Calais, was given a three year freedom from arrest for two of his ships, which he had fitted out and victualled at his own charge for the defence of the sea, as well as to bring goods

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.64; Cal. Close Rolls, 1435-41, p.122.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.90.

to England, and in consideration of his labours and losses in the king's service, particularly the loss of several of his vessels at sea[1]. On the other hand Henry Russell of Weymouth, who had done service at sea for three months with 110 persons in 1440 was paid £130. 7. 8d. for his trouble[2]. In 1441 and 1442 there were other single licences; in September 1441, after they had petitioned against the enemies who came into the Thames estuary robbing and raping, two victuallers of Barling in Essex were allowed to fit out the Thomas of 24 tons and go to sea to chastise the evildoers, and similarly William and John Stephen of Whitstable were licensed to fit out the 20 ton balinger, Mary - they to have all that they might take from the enemy as their own[3]. This was hardly a solution of, hardly an attempt to solve, the problem of disorder in the Thames estuary area, just another two ships to join the anarchic throng. In February 1442 a balinger of Robert Capes esq., was to go to sea with thirty armed men against the king's enemies,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.488.
2. P.R.O. E28/65, 16th Nov. 1440; E404/57/124; E403/740, under 21st Nov., for 85 men for five weeks in the James of Weymouth.
3. P.R.O. C81/1367/40, 41, 42; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-6, p.3.

but exactly under what conditions we are not told[1]. The last reference to this form of licensed seakeeping[2] is in 1444; in May of that year John Gower esq., owner of the Cog John of Cherbourg, John Style, merchant and vintner of London, owner of the Jesus of London, Thomas Lucy and others, victuallers of the two ships, because they proposed to go to keep the sea for six months, and for their comfort and encouragement, were granted full rights on all prizes that they might take (with no mention of the Admiral's 'shares'); and moreover, if they took any alien friends' or Englishmens' goods in an enemy ship they were to keep the ship and restore the merchandise, and similarly if the ownership of ship and cargo were reversed, they were to keep the enemy goods but restore the friendly ship; and finally the said owners and victuallers were not to be held responsible for any wrongdoing of the ships's crews, nor were they to be compelled to restore any mistaken goods,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-6, p.77. In 1430 Thomas Godstone esq., had been commissioned to arrest 60 seamen to man ships of war of Colchester, about to go to sea, but at the king's wages: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1429-36, p.40.
2. The latest possible reference is in 1451, when Richard Pynne of Winchelsea was granted the mast from a hulk of Sluys, lying in Portsmouth harbour, as reward for victualling Calais, and in regard to his promise to go to sea for a year against the king's enemies with three ships, 60 men in each: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.470.

only the actual robbers were to be punished.[1]

This last example of licensed seakeeping is the most full blown as it were; private enterprise was given an almost free hand. This near privateering venture of two ships for six months is a long way, even in intention, from the organised, large scale scheme of 1436, and much more open to abuse than these licences to the men of the Thames estuary with their small vessels. What happened to the Cog John and Jesus at sea in 1444 we do no know[2]; but like the merchants of 1436, these owners and victuallers did not go to the trouble and expense of sending their ships to sea, and keeping them there, merely for the salvation of their country and the good of their souls. What the real significance of such a licence was for the shipowner it would be difficult to determine exactly, for presumably enemy ships were legitimate prize at any time, though then the king probably had his share when the capture was notified to the Conservator of Truces if that Statute was in

---

1. P.R.O. E28/73, 3rd May 1444. In 1447, however, Thomas Lucy was paid £100, part parcel of £200, for victualling the Cog John and John of London, sent to resist the king's enemies off Kent and Suffolk: Devon Issues of the Exchequer, p.458.
2. In 1449 the Cog John took a great ship, presumably legitimately, with many notable persons aboard - blessed be Jesus!, wrote the king: P.R.O. E28/78, 3rd April 1449, cf. Wars of the English in France... Letters and Papers, ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, 1861-64, Vol.I, p.490.

force. The licence gave the owner full grant of prizes certainly, but on the other hand the ship would have to be more fully armed and manned, and there would be no profit from trading (or smaller profit) whilst the ship was patrolling. But there must have been something in it for the shipowner. That they want to do the king's service, and fit themselves to be doing so, is perhaps not to be questioned; but that they want looking for gain is also certain, and they were probably not scrupulous about how it was obtained. If, for instance, after three or four months at sea the Cog John had captured few and poor enemy prizes, John Gower (safeguarded as he was) would not have been blamed by his contemporaries if he had given his master a much freer hand to recoup and advance on his expenses; then would friendly ships suffer, as we know that they always did from forces, of whatever sort, keeping the sea. This kind of seakeeping in effect was little different from the voyages undertaken by individuals solely for plunder - Lord Roos and Lord Saye sending their men to sea, and the host of smaller men who want themselves, were not averse from attacks on weaker ships, friend or foe. The only difference was that Gower's service was sponsored by the government; thieves set to catch thieves is not a subtle enough comment on the situation, for the councillors

knew, if the king did not, what was bound to happen when such licence was granted: that it would be taken with both hands. Certainly Albowe in his Angel patrolling off the Essex coast could do no great harm, he might possibly chase off pirates and enemies; similarly with the men of Whitstable and Barling, but they would be unlikely to be finicky in their revenge when all foreigners might appear to be enemies. Gower too might deter the king's enemies, but with his expenses he was liable (if no more than this) to indulge in those practices he was supposed to prevent.

Seakeeping by licence was open to abuse. But so was that by indenture. Any system that used merchant ships, whether they were paid by the crown or not, was in action liable to be perverted. Only under licence, going at his own cost, a man would be tempted more urgently than if he was doing a job and being paid for it. Yet by the 1440's, and particularly in the 1450's, one type of seakeeping was (in its effects) indistinguishable from another, and both approximated to straightforward privateering: this was one result of having no royal fleet. Thus our classification of the two forms, roughly by indenture and by licence, is true only of organisation, arrangement and form itself,

which is sufficient for our purpose; but it must be remembered that in outcome they tended to be the same.

The activity of 1449 is a good illustration of this. On 27th March of that year the king wrote a letter that was to be sent to six groups of influential men in various parts of the country. He stated that there were great numbers of 'pilleurs and robbeurs' continually at sea, robbing and damaging those who exercised merchandise; this was harmful to trade, the commonweal and the welfare of all; therefore he asked them to do all they could to get ships to sea, well armed and victualled, to search out the evildoers, and in addition to stir up men and communities to help in this - for this purpose letters under the privy seal with blank headings were to be enclosed, which they were to distribute as they thought expedient[1]. Now 1449 was to be an evil year for England as regards the war; in the autumn Rouen and Harfleur were lost to the French, with no naval forces there to protect and defend them, and there were these pirates, against whom the king was begging his subjects to act. They were not being

---

1. P.R.O. E28/78, 27th March, no year; copy of one of the privy seal letters is attached, also with no year, but there is another copy of this letter, which asks the recipients to do all that the Earl of Oxford, Viscount Bourchier, and Sir Thomas Tyrell desire them to do, dated 27th March 1449, in E28/78.

organised in a naval expedition - just as there was no expedition sent to save Lower Normandy - but were being asked to do all they could on their own initiative; there was no mention of money, and clearly no payment was intended. What came of the king's plea we cannot know, for the measures taken in this year may have been the result of other causes. On 3rd April the king wrote again, this time to six important men in Devonshire, some of whom had been written to on 27th March, asking them to do all that they could to aid Robert Winnington, who had indented with the king to serve at sea 'for the clensing of the same and rebukyng of the Robbeurs and pirates therof whiche dayly do alle the noysance thay canne'[1]. On 4th April Winnington, Gervaise Clifton and Alexander Eden, all esquires, all retained by indenture, were commissioned to take ships, men, materials and victuals for their service at sea[2]. No indentures now survive for these forces, indeed these two instances give the only mention of indentures; Clifton and Eden, however, were paid; originally this was to be from the tenth and fifteenth, but

---

1. P.R.O. E28/78, 3rd April 1449, cf. Wars of the English in France etc., I, p.489.

2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.270.

as the collection of this was slow, they were to have 1000 marks to be raised by loan from people who would receive tallies, which they could cash on the proceeds of the tenth and fifteenth[1]. Early in May Clifton and Eden received the money[2]. On 27th July Thomas Daniel himself was appointed to go to sea with his 'posse' against the king's enemies[3], and two days later he had £250 by assignment for 1000 longbows, 1000 sheaves of arrows, 100 gross of bowstrings and other war equipment, and besides this he received material from the remaining stores of the king's ships[4]. A few days before this, on 24th July, some seven men including John Judde, merchant and owner of the Christopher of London in 1436, when she served under licence, appointed master of the ordinance in 1456[5], were required to take mariners and soldiers to serve at sea[6].

Apart from these men - clearly merchants and others who with their ships probably served under Daniel - the

---

1. P.R.O. E404/65/145, 26th March. In March 1450, Bartholemew Halley, sergeant of 'our joynery' at the Tower, was to be paid £3. 6. 8d. for 100 spears that he had delivered to Clifton: P.R.O. E404/66/133.
2. P.R.O. E403/775, under 5th May.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.270.
4. P.R.O. E404/65/212, 28th July; E403/775, under 29th July; and see Chapter I above.
5. Excerpta Historica, ed. E. Bentley, 1831, p.10.
6. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.265.

measures of 1449 were all more, rather than less, official[1], for Clifton, Eden and Daniel all had money from the government towards the cost of their service, though it was not very much. But Winnington, so far as we can judge, had no financial assistance from the Exchequer, and little direct connexion with the government; whatever his indenture contained, it seems more likely to have been an agreement akin to the licence of Gower's in 1444 than to the more formalized indentures of Speke in 1440 or even Roos in 1435, not that it amounted to much difference when they were at sea. Therefore Winnington's service, official of course, but only casually sponsored by the government, in which the administration played little or no part, is a link between the two types of seakeeping. Even Winnington himself stands between the two. He was not of Clifton's or Eden's class, though he approached near to it in 1449. He was a merchant and shipowner at Dartmouth by 1437, bailiff of that port in 1445-6, already involved in piracy, when he had taken goods from a ship sailing under safeconduct, and beaten and slain some of the crew - for

---

1. Sandwich, by royal command sent out a ship for four months on 23rd May 1449, and again on 18th July, but under what circumstances we are not informed: Samuel Jeake, The Charters of the Cinque Ports, 1728, p.29.

which he had a pardon[1], and, as we have seen, he was in contact with a Breton pirate, aiding and abetting him[2]. He was respectable enough however, in 1446-7, 1447-8 he was customer at Exeter and Dartmouth[3], in 1447-8 Mayor of Dartmouth, and in 1449, and 1449-50 M.P.[4]. He was more than a mere shipowner, for he was a man of importance in his own town, like so many others: Russell at Weymouth, Pulham at Winchelsea, Pope at Rye, Hugh Clidérow at Hull[5] or John Cole at Sandwich[6]. Because of this local authority such men were bound to be used by the government in naval administration, only Winnington exceeded the usual in the duty he undertook in 1449. How he was chosen, or recommended - out of so many in the West country, richer, more powerful, more experienced like Courtenay or Bonville, or Thomas Gill, his fellow customer at Dartmouth - we do not know; perhaps he was more than just a correspondent of Daniel's, perhaps he was a connection of the Duke of Exeter's, perhaps he was genuinely stirred by the king's appeal of March, perhaps he was all three. As it is he comes and

---

1. Wedgwood, Biographies, p.934.
2. See Chapter 2 above. (P.R.O. C1/15/52.)
3. P.R.O. E403/769, 773.
4. Wedgwood, op.cit., p.934.
5. Wedgwood, op.cit., p.196.
6. See Chapter 6, below.

goes in history; one brief, disastrous action, one happily articulate letter and he became notorious, and has become eminent. How Clifton and Eden fared we shall never know[1], but Winnington on 25th May 1449 wrote to Thomas Daniel, informing him that he had taken the Bay fleet of Hanse, Dutch and Flemish vessels on their return journey, 110 ships in all - 'ye sawe never suche a syght of schypps take in to Englond thys c. wynter'[2]

He had had a good sized force with him, over 2000 armed men he wrote, so that the number of ships he commanded can have been few less than forty. But whatever his original commission he had gone beyond it and on such a scale as to raise international consequences of a more than local or personal character. He had taken the fleet whilst waiting (he said) for a Breton force in the Western channel, and had captured them, with misguided patriotism, after they had refused to strike in the king of England's name as he had commanded them to do. They were all friendly ships,

---

1. On 1st September 1450 Eden had the grant of the custody of Rochester castle for life, for his good service at sea and elsewhere (taking Cade): Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.401.
2. The Paston Letters, Library Edition, ed. J. Gairdner, 1904, vol. 2, No.90.

and his anxiety about this, mixed with anger, for at first they had resisted his demand - 'therfor I am avesyd, and all my felesohyp, to droune them and slee them, withoute that we hafe tydyngs from owr Soverayn the Kyng and hys counsell' - come out in his letter. His ideas of rough justice, his hope that this blow at the Flemings will make them treat for a final peace, are reminiscent of the views expressed in the Libelle, but they are equally unrealistic; neither peace nor justice could come of such a heavy-handed action. In fact English merchants suffered; their goods were taken as reprisal at Danzig, they themselves were arrested in Burgundy until the government paid over £4,500 in compensation to the Burgundian authorities[1], and relations with the Hanse, particularly Lũbeck, were strained almost to breaking point[2]. In one way and another the government paid for Winnington's service.

There is one other consideration. Mr. Postan states that certain members of the council had some of the captured merchandise; the merchants suffered, but not this governing clique. He implies that this group - that around Suffolk - and others of the nobility and gentry were enriching

---

1. See Chapter 2 above.
2. Studies in English Trade in 15th century, p.129 et. seq.

themselves by extensive privateering, both privately and, as in 1449 or 1442 (the scheme for keeping the sea of that year he calls 'an organized system of privateering') as part of a quasi-official policy. In 1449 the men he names are Lord Saye, Sir John Trevelyan and Thomas Daniel[1]. These are serious charges, and must be dealt with here. For if the government itself, or some members of it, were consciously and deeply committed to these illegal practices that were perpetrated by those men officially told to keep the sea, then the whole ideal of seakeeping is turned on its head. That merchants and seamen, by accident or design, were involved in piracy, that some of them sent to patrol the seas in the king's name were, spontaneously or with intent, also involved, cannot be denied. But that they were sent out for such a purpose by the council, and that certain of the king's servants and court officials were profiting from this policy goes far beyond this. There does not seem to be any direct evidence that this was the case, namely that seakeeping in the 1440's and 1450's, in intention as well as practice, was thoroughly corrupt.

---

1. Ibid, p.122, 126, 128-9; on p.128 Postan states that Winnington wrote to Trevelyan, but this seems an error for Daniel, as the letter, cited above, is given as the reference. Mr. Postan's phrase about the 1442 scheme is exactly the same as that used by Ramsay, Lancaster and York, vol. 2, p.42.

Trevelyan, Daniel and Saye did profit from Winnington's piracy almost certainly, for so the London members of the Hanse believed implicitly, and the four men are almost always roundly condemned together for the action[1]. But there is little to suggest that the affair was a planned operation between them, only sufficient to suggest that Trevelyan, Daniel and Saye took their chance after the event. The capture of the Bay fleet was impromptu; as it appears from his letter, done on Winnington's own initiative, whilst he was waiting for the Bretons to give fight. The whole tone of the letter, for he was after all writing to Daniel, is not that of an accomplice who has done what is expected of him; he is excited, overawed, by his success (if such it was), but undertain of its reception by the government.

Trevelyan, as we have seen, was deeply involved in piracy in the West country, and later in this year of 1449 was implicated in the robbery of the Catalan galley at Plymouth, one of his own ships taking part. But for this he was imprisoned in the Tower, and even if this was only a

---

1. Hanserecesse 1431-76, 2, vol. 3, numbers 638, 647, 669, 670.

formal gesture on the part of the government, it meant something, as did the long and not ineffectual proceedings in Chancery. Trevelyan could, no doubt, get away with a lot, but it seems unlikely that he could have got away with organising official piracy expeditions under the guise of their keeping the sea. Such an ability for graft must surely have been beyond him. Lord Saye, Warden of the Cinque Ports from 1447 to 1450, and Treasurer of England at this time, would certainly have had ample opportunity to profit from illegal captures at sea (and probably did so); but the hatred in which he was held by the men of Kent in 1450, which cost him his life, stems from other causes than that of his connection with piracy, of which there is no evidence. Daniel was slippery, as Jacob says, and his seakeeping venture of July appears dubious; but again, apart from the windfall of 1449, there is nothing to connect him with the organisation of those far-reaching malpractices, for which he has been condemned. These three men were corrupt in their public life, and hated for their corruption, as the events of 1450 show. In the 1440's and 1450's the administration was not as pure in spirit as it might have been, but completely evil, in respect of this seakeeping, it was not, though in 1449 graft in high places perhaps reached its

peak. Winnington himself seems to have left the country, but when is not certain; he was abroad by September 1450[1], though this could have been for other reasons. But his alias of Robert of Caen first appears on 26th August 1449 in the letter that the king wrote to the merchants of Campe promising them restitution for his piracy[2], and this suggests that he went to France almost immediatdy. And if, as Ramsay infers[3], it was this Robert who took the Duke of Suffolk on board the Nicholas of the Tower in the Spring of 1450, his sympathies can hardly have been with the Suffolk clique. It was not until 1452 that he received a pardon, ostensibly for other reasons, and in 1456-7 he was again Mayor of Dartmouth. In 1462 he had a pension of £10. for life - one wonders for what services he was rewarded - and he was dead by 1466[4]. We shall never know his real part in the 1449 affair, for the failure of evidence between cause and effect is too great. But his part was surely less than Mr. Postan imagines. Even if Saye, Trevelyan and Daniel seized what they could from that capture of the

---

1. P.R.O. E28/81, 9th July 1451.
2. Foedera, XI, p.235.
3. Ramsey, op.cit., vol. 2.p.121; French sources state that the man responsible was a Robert, who came from Caen. Winnington is not Robert Whitingham, captain of Caen in 1450, before that Treasurer of Calais, as R. Flenley, Six Town Chronicles, 1911, p.124, note 2, states.
4. Wedgwood, Biographies, p.934.

Bay fleet, they were not prime movers in that capture, only Winnington was that and he impulsively. Three men in one year do not make two decades of administration totally corrupt; 1449 was a bad year on any score, but Mr. Postan oversimplifies the motives of these men, and overestimates their consistency; they were more opportunists than died in the wool scoundrels. Nor surely was the gulf between the men of the council and the merchants so wide as Mr. Postan would have it - the famous incident of January 1454, when a delegation from the city of London complained to the Chancellor of piracies committed by Lord Bonville on Burgundian shipping, and receiving an unsatisfactory reply shouted 'Justice! Justice!', suggests not so much a clash between two opposing groups as it does the inability of the government to act[1]. For council and merchants did not have contradictory policies or different attitudes. The merchants wanted security at sea, but they did not want restrictions like the Statute of Truces, and they were the worst offenders as regards piracy; the government sought to keep such a preventive measure, and strengthened the methods of enquiry and restitution, but was unable to give

---

1. Paston Letters, Library Edition, number 235.

full justice because the administrators, many of them merchants, were themselves interested parties. In addition many of the gentry and nobility were themselves shipowners[1] and merchants. Thus there were not two separate communities in the realm, and the issue was not clear cut between them. The government and the administration consisted of nobility, gentry, shipowners and merchants indiscriminately, and policy in action was the result of many conflicting motives.

We have taken sometime over this matter, but it is relevant to our original theme. How the sea was kept means more than the recital of the details of putting ships to sea. In the main during this period the government left this to others; we have discussed how this was done by the issue of licences - a method first used in the 1430's, which had its final consequences, not welcome to the merchants, in 1449. Now the other form, by indenture, in which the administration and the Exchequer were more intimately involved, must be considered.

In the 1420's there was not much cause for action at sea. From 1421 for some years, after the yearly patrols of Henry V's squadrons, 'there was no need, apparently, for

---

1. See the appendix to this chapter.

special forces patrolling the narrow seas'[1]. Ships were used at the siege of Crotoy in 1423, but these were raised by the Earl of Suffolk, Admiral of Normandy, and were the responsibility of the Norman administration[2]. So also with the fleet of some twenty ships, which Suffolk raised, to blockade Mont St. Michel in 1425; they were defeated by a French force on 16th June[3]. From time to time there were perhaps patrols, but we catch only glimpses of them; in the summer of 1427 the king's Little Jesus was out on the keeping of the sea with other vessels 'versus dictas costeras de Spayn Britanny et alibi' from 2nd July to 3rd October[4]; in 1431 she was out on the same task in a force commanded by Thomas Carew[5]. Whilst in 1424 and 1429 there was some seakeeping activity at Kings Lynn: in 1424, at the request of the Duke of Exeter, two ships were fitted out against enemies, in 1429, in response to a letter from the Duke of Gloucester, some contribution was made to a naval

---

1. Newhall, op. cit., p.199.
2. Ibid, p.297, esp. footnote 171; Cal. Close Rolls, 1422-29, p.141. Suffolk had been appointed Admiral on 19th May 1419: Foedera, IX, p. 753.
3. Charles de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine Française, vol. 2 (1900), p.247. - 249; Chronique de Mont St.Michel.ed. (Simon Luce, vol.I(1879), p.185.
4. P.R.O. E364/65.
5. P.R.O. E364/69.

defence of the Norfolk coast.[1] By the 1430's there was more reason for anxiety; control of the channel was slipping away uncontested, and in 1435-6 it disappeared. The way in which the government responded to the challenge in the mid 1430's we have seen; they did so by the licensing system. Apart from Gloucester's force of 1436, and the expeditions of 1430, 1439 and 1440, about which we have little information[2], there was only one major naval measure, sponsored and financed by the government, in 1437, and of that also we are ill informed. In April 3000 men were to go to sea under Sir William Wolf, Thomas Neville and Sir Nicholas Carew for, it seems, a period of six weeks[3]; other than these spare details in the council's minutes there is nothing - no issue of money, no mention of a muster. In these circumstances it is permissible to doubt that the fleet ever sailed.

But in 1440 we have the first surviving record of indentured service at sea, and much more evidence concerning it. On 2nd May 1440 Sir John Speke of Devon indented with

---

1. King's Lynn Borough Records, Assembly Book I, pp.84-5; 239, 242, 249, 314.
2. See above, page 172-3.
3. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.19; and also pages 24-25 (10-11th May).

the king to do him service on the keeping of the sea for six months from the 26th May, when the muster of his force of 420 armed men was to be taken in the ports of Devon; Speke was to be paid by the crown a quarter of the wages of his retinue at the making of the indenture (in order to buy victuals) and another quarter when the muster was taken; the remaining half was to be paid to him after three months' service - if it wasn't, then Speke was discharged from further duty. This was the usual manner of payment, as for instance in 1437[1], and the usual condition of service. Of any legitimate prize taken the king was to have a quarter, the owners of the vessel that made the capture a quarter, and Speke and his men the other half, save for the share of 'shares' which was due to the Admiral. In order to receive his share, the king was to appoint persons to sail with Speke - this would discharge the captain and the shipowners from any complicated accounting on their return, and insured the crown against fraud. Speke was not to attempt anything against the king's subjects and friends, nor those sailing under safeconducts, but he could take goods of

---

1. Ibid.

friends or subjects if he found them in enemy ships[1]. This formal arrangement differs quite widely from the licences of 1436 or that of 1444; it was not such an attractive proposition to shipowners, though of course they were being paid. But, on the other hand, they were allowed to have friendly merchandise taken in enemy ships, which was not so in 1436 or 1444. Speke and his men cannot have been overexcited by their prospect of half shares, nor their wages, which were perhaps sufficient for Speke at 2s. a day, but at 1/6d. a week for each man compare badly with 1/- a day for men at arms and 6d. a day for archers in Henry V's reign[2], even if it is true that deflation was well under way.

In May ships were arrested to carry the force, which was then only said to be 300 strong[3], but on 31st May, at Dartmouth, the muster was taken of 705 men going under Speke[4]

---

1. P.R.O. E101/53/30, Speke's part of the indenture; E101/53/30 is a pouch containing Speke's documents relative to his service, probably sent to the Exchequer with his petition of February 1441.
2. P.R.O. E101/71/2/821, 14th April 1417: the Earl of Huntingdon to keep the sea for three months.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.413.
4. P.R.O. E101/53/30, tab on indenture, and muster roll; also writ to muster commissioners of 13th May, cf. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.450.

for service until the 1st September. On 2nd June he was still waiting in Devon, and his protection was revoked; it was stated that he was going on the victualling of the French ports[1] - clearly there had been some change of plans. Harfleur had been taken by the French in the autumn of 1435, and now in the summer of 1440 it was being besieged by the English; Speke went to join the besiegers. On 22nd July he was given £266. 13. 4d. for the victualling of 600 men for two months (he should have had £500 according to the warrant)-'Ita tamen quod dicti homines entendantes circa Harfleur'-[2], and on 12th July another commission for the muster of 1000 men in his force was issued[3]. Whether he had in fact been across the channel in the meantime is uncertain. On 7th September a new indenture was made; this time Speke was to have a retinue of 800 men, at the same wages, to be mustered in Devon on 20th September, for two months service at sea and at the siege of Harfleur, where if necessary they were to land and fight the enemy. He was to have 400 marks immediately, the

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.415.
2. P.R.O. E403/739; E404/56/303. 17th July.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.451; there is no record of this in Speke's accounts.

remainder at the end of two months; other conditions were as before[1]. The muster was not taken until 30th October, at Appledore, for a period of service to 12th December[2].

On 2nd February 1441 a petition of Speke's was granted; he said that he had taken on his first voyage 300 men over the initial 420, which gives the muster roll figure of 705 roughly, and that the Treasurer had promised him they should be paid for as the others were; he requested payment for all the men he had taken with him according to his indentures and for the additional 300[3]. On the same day a warrant was sent to the Treasurer requiring him to make payment as Speke had asked, and so on 22nd November 1441 he had £248. 10. 8d., and on 14th March 1442 £560. 8. 0d., both by assignment[4]. This completed the full figure owing to him, as it was set out in the Exchequer

---

1. P.R.O. E101/53/30, Speke's part of the indenture; the figure of 400 marks is the same as he had received in July, £266. 13. 4d. Sir John Fastolf's memorandum on the conduct of the war in September 1440, recommended the use of a naval force at the siege of Harfleur: Wars of the English in France, Vol. 2, Part 2, p.588.
2. P.R.O. E101/53/30, indenture tab (has 600 men) and muster roll; also writ to muster commissioners of 12th September for muster at Dartmouth.
3. P.R.O. E28/66.
4. P.R.O. E404/58/114, E403/744; both have year 17 in error for year 18 as the year of Speke's service.

Enrolled Accounts[1], and in Speke's own accounts[2]: in addition to the £266. 13. 4d. received for 600 men in July 1440, he had had £418. 16. 0d. for himself and 420 men from 31st May to 1st September, £292. 10. 0d. for the extra 300 men for the same period, and £364. 6. 0d. for himself and 800 men for forty-three days from 30th October to 12th December - a total of £1,075. 12. 0d. paid in full, and only then by assignment, nearly two years after the first period of service had begun; and on 10th December 1442 Speke had £231. 19.3d. on twenty-two tallies, issued to him in October 1441 and March 1442, which he returned to the Exchequer[3].

His success at seakeeping had been slight, for it seems that he took no enemy prizes at all[4], but at the siege he was perhaps of more use, for Harfleur was taken by the English in November 1440. In a way his service barely counts as genuine naval activity, for he was chiefly occupied at Harfleur, where he may even have fought ashore. The

---

1. P.R.O. E364/75, m.K.
2. P.R.O. E101/53/30. 53/31 is another copy of this, but crossed through.
3. P.R.O. E403/747.
4. P.R.O. E364/75, m.K. But in August 1441 the mayr of Southampton and William Soper were required to restore wine from a carrack, taken by Speke: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1436-41, p.575.

undertaking was more specific than had originally been intended; it became in effect part of a straightforward war measure, similar to those of Henry V's reign - the siege of Harfleur and battle of the Seine in 1416 - or Edward IV's reign - the invasion of Scotland in 1481 - all very different from the vague seakeeping commissions of the 1430's and 1449. It was a return to a normal course; a captain of some authority and standing served at the government's wages with his retinue, under definitive conditions. And although the first period of six months was cut to three, and arrangements were changed, Speke did get to sea for some weeks, and he was paid. After the expedients of the 1430's there was a revival of the more tried, and probably more efficient, methods. This was continued in 1442.

In the early 1440's enemies and pirates were becoming an increasing menace; the men of Dieppe, in French hands since 1436, were as unscrupulous pirates as any, and at one time in the 1440's they even attacked the English coast[1],

---

1. La Roncière, op. cit., vol. 2, p.267; they raided a place called Avonnelles; La Roncière tentatively suggests that this is Christchurch. In 1439-40 at New Romney 8d. was paid to a man coming from Winchelsea to know whether the truce ought to be kept between them and those of Dieppe: Hist. MSS. Comm, 5th Report, p.542.

whilst in 1441 a king's messenger going to Burgundy had to wait at the seaside for five weeks and two days because of the weather and enemies - seven times he went to sea but each time was driven back by these enemies, and at last, only accompanied by many ships, did he cross to Calais[1]. In this same year timber of the king's being taken to Calais for works there, was captured by enemy ships, and the government had to buy it back again from those who had come by it through purchase in the meantime[2]. In 1442, though peace negotiations were tentativdy pushed forward, the council made one last strong effort to halt Charles VII's growing success in Northern France: the expedition of Somerset (which failed in 1443). So also the Commons took the initiative; they proposed a scheme for the keeping of the sea, and it was accepted. Their plan was a detailed one[3].

Eight carefully selected ships were to comprise the core of the seakeeping force. Each ship was to be manned by 150 men with a barge (80 men) and a balinger (40 men) to

---

1. P.R.O. E404/57/322, 4th August 1441.
2. P.R.O. PSO1/12/604-5, 23rd February 1441.
3. Rot. Parl., V, p. 59-60.

accompany every of the eight ships, and with four pinnaces to wait upon them all, each with twenty-five men. The keeping of the sea was to begin on the 15th May, to continue until the 15th November in this year, the wages and victualling of the fleet to cost £761. 6. 8d. a month, this money, as was proper and customary, to come out of the grant of tonnage and poundage of the present parliament. The scheme was not just for one year:

> 'And than, at the first day of March, next aftre the said XVth day of November, the keeping of the see begynne in manere and fourme as is aboveseid, to endure for the terme of VIII monethes than next folwyng'.

The money - £4,968 for the first six months, and £6,090 for the next eight months - was to be paid by the Treasurer to the chief captain and under captains, with whom the king would indent for this service.

The eight ships that were to be at sea were handpicked. They were all to have forestages, the act declared, and thus each was to be more than an ordinary merchantman, larger and more built up. The two ships that were to come from Bristol were well known. The Nicholas of the Tower had served under licence in 1436, had been involved in piracy in 1435, and was to become of nationwide fame in 1450;

the other vessel was the Katherine of Burton's - John Burton, the merchant and shipowner, father-in-law of William Cannings. Now William of Worcester in his topographical survey of Bristol on two occasions locates a round tower near the Key by stating that 'Burton shyp edificata fuit' there[1]. Of the Nicholas of the Tower's five owners in 1436 one was a Thomas Burton. It seems probable therefore that Worcester was referring either to the Katherine or the Nicholas; but it does not matter which it was, for clearly the tower near the water was a notable landmark from which ships built nearby perhaps took their name. If the Nicholas did obtain her title of the Tower from this place where she was built, as seems most certain and as Miss Carus Wilson says[2], and not from being, or having been a royal ship, then the confusion concerning her origin will have been dispersed; though under whose direction she was in that spring of 1450 we still do not know.

Also included in the list was John Taverner's Grace Dieu[3]

---

1. Itinerarium, ed. J. Nasmith, 1778, p.250, 255.
2. Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, p.241.
3. See Chapter One.

whilst from Dartmouth was to come Sir Philip Courtenay's 'grete ship', probably that which he had built in 1440 'at great cost for the defence of the realm and people'[1], and 'the Spaynysshe ship that was Lord Pouns' - perhaps the late Lord Points. The remaining three vessels were the Trinity[2] and Thomas of London, and a 'grete shippe called the George' from Newcastle. All these must have been some of the finest ships in the kingdom. The owners or the ports were also named for the barges and balingers that were to serve; for example, Henry Russell of Weymouth, who sat in this parliament, contributed a barge and a pinnace, Sir Philip Courtenay contributed a barge and a balinger, John Chirche a balinger and Sir William Bonville a balinger, whilst from Winchelsea there came a barge of Morfoot's and another of Pratte's, from Saltash a bagge called Sluggebarge[3], and from Southampton the balinger of

---

1. For this he had the first bounty of relief in order of time that I have come across; it was in the form of a year's freedom of arrest for the ship: Cal. Close Rolls, 1435-41, p.324. The ship was probably his Trinity Courtenay, in which he had licence to take pilgrims to Compostella in 1445; Foedera, XI, p.77.
2. A Trinity of London of 300 tons was one of the vessels arrested for the journey of Lord Rivers to Aquitaine in 1451: P.R.O. E101/54/15; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.448. She was then owned by Thomas Gyre of Dartmouth, who sat for that borough in the 1442 parliament: Wedgwood, op.cit., vol. 2, Register, p.33.
3. John Slugge of Saltash and his son owned two ships in 1451, the James of 90 tons and the Nicholas of 80 tons: P.R.O. E101/54/15.

Clifton's - probably Richard Cleveden - called Jacquet[1].

The act stated that none of these vessels should harm any ship of 'oure Freendes' whilst on seakeeping duty, but added that no owner of any of them, unless he went in his own ship or was a partner and receiver, was to answer for any goods 'mistaken' - a familiar enough precaution this, but granted only temporarily[2]; it safeguarded the owners but barely the king's friends. It was set down how captured goods were to be divided[3], and the Statute of Truces was again suspended[4]. Finally the Commons recommended that the king should choose eight knights and worthy squires of the West, South and North 'so that no cuntre be dispesid', one to be in each ship, and one to be the chief captain.

---

1. Full analysis of the list: Bristol two ships; London two ships, 1 barge, 1 balinger; Dartmouth two ships, 1 barge, 1 balinger, two pinnaces; Newcastle 1 ship, 1 balinger; Hull 1 ship; Weymouth 1 barge, 1 pinnace; Plymouth 1 barge; Winchelsea 2 barges; Saltash 1 barge; Falmouth 1 barge, 1 balinger; Fowey 1 balinger; Dover 1 balinger; Sandwich 1 balinger; Southampton 1 balinger; St. Osyth 1 balinger; Hastings 1 pinnace. (Nine balingers were listed.)
2. See Chapter Two.
3. Rot. Parl., V, p.60 paragraph 12; half was to go to those who had made the actual capture, one third to the shipowners, one-sixth to the captains. It is noteworthy that the king has relinquished his one quarter, which he took in 1440, whilst the owners have increased their share from one quarter (in 1440) to one third. The men were to receive both wages and victualling, at the rate of 2s. a month wages and 1/2d. a week victualling; together this was to be about the same as Speke's men had received: 1/6d. a week.
4. See Chapter Two.

Everything was theoretically set when parliament was dissolved on 27th March.

This ambitious plan for two years seakeeping was reduced in practice to a mere three months patrol in the summer and autumn of 1442, and the provisions of the act for the composition of the fleet do not appear to have been adhered to. Nevertheless the government's willingness to accept the desires of the Commons, and a good part of their petition, at a time when there was little money to spare for naval enterprise, shows that there was sympathy between the merchants and shipowners, who had conceived this measure - for it exhibits applied knowledge and co-operative discussion - and the members of the council. It has none of the attributes of an organised system of privateering, and none of the owners involved, save possibly Bonville and Courtenay, were primarily seeking profit. Behind the act there was a genuine wish for security at sea, or more truly a strong feeling that something must be done to reassert England's lost power in the channel. As Capgrave was to write a few years later, 'if the sea were kept by our navy many good results would follow - it would give a safeconduct to merchants, secure access to fishers, the quiet of peace to the inhabitants of the kingdom, to our king himself a

large measure of glory'[1]; many men would have agreed with this, and supported Sapgrave's complaints of the lack of English action at sea. Of course at the last one reads the act as one reads the minds of men, as the evidence (as always for this period) is enigmatic, inscrutable and impartial. But the scheme and the subsequent operations were not the product of an unholy alliance of merchants and highly placed men bent on plunder - the 'piece of mercenary legislation' that Mr. Postan calls it[2]; it was not that simple. The merchants and the others, those shadowy figures for whom Mr. Postan never has quite sufficient evidence, may have been out for the main chance (as they always were), but the scheme did not provide the best way to go about it; a summer patrol under reputable, salaried leaders did not give much, or long, opportunity to the shipowners; they would do better on their own. In fact the government had neither the money nor the

---

1. Liber de Illustribus Henricis, ed. F.C. Hingeston, Rolls Series, 1858, p.134.
2. Studies in English Trade etc., p.126. Of the men whom Mr. Postan mentions as providing ships for the scheme, John Howard no where appears in Rot. Parl. (or elsewhere), nor was there any vessel to come from Norfolk or Suffolk; for Hugh Taverner read John Taverner; of the 'others who, as the subsequent events (i.e. in 1449) showed, were closely related to certain members of the King's Council', I can find no trace in any documents concerning 1442.

administrative ability to organise measures of seakeeping that would have satisfied the petitioners' need for security or their desire to profit. It was too inefficient to do as Capgrave urged or as Mr. Postan states.

During the early summer the scheme slowly became fact, though not as planned. On 21st June men were commissioned to take vessels of any portage in most of the major English ports, to be at the Camber - named in the act as the rendezvous - by 1st August[1]; especially they were to arrest two ships of Fowey, then at London, the Barry and the Julian[2]; these were perhaps substituted for two of the other ships, as was permitted in the act. On 26th June an indenture between the king and Sir Stephan Popham[3], the chief captain, was made. This stated that Popham, Sir William Eure, Sir John Pashley, Miles Stapleton and John Heron esquires[4] were appointed to keep the sea in the last parliament, but that as the others were not present, nor ready, the indenture

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.105.
2. A Barry of 300 tons, and a Julian of 200 tons, both from Fowey, were arrested for Rivers' voyage in 1451: P.R.O. E101/54/15.
3. A Stephan Popham owned the Cok William of 40 tons in 1444-5: B.M. Additional MS. 23, 938, f.18.
4. Popham sat for Southampton county, Eure for Yorkshire, Stapleton for Norfolk, and Heron for Northumberland in the 1442 parliament, so that the captains were in fact taken from a wide area, as the commons had desired.

was being made with Popham only; he was to serve with 565 men at arms, archers and seamen for three months from the 1st August, to have wages, victual and rewards as the act stipulated. He was to have the ships collected by the commissioners for his retinue, and at the Camber on 31st July he was to meet the others to make rules for their company, and to proclaim that no ship of subject or friend was to be molested, then to take the muster. He was further commanded to do all that he could during the three months to ensure the safety of merchants, to defend the see and the king's castles and towns in Normandy and Guienne, and to rebuke and resist his enemies; he was enjoined not to harm any of the king's friends, and if any were taken he was to answer to the king; nor was he to land in any of the king's realms, save for the purpose of defence, and if he did land for victual he was to spend but a day and a night ashore, and pay for all he had[1]. It was a comprehensive document, its provisions do not show

---

1. P.R.O. E101/71/911. Popham's part of the indenture is in E101/53/38: his documents concerning his service, presumably sent to the Exchequer after his widow's petition in Feb. 1445. On 26th June also Popham and the others were granted licence to issue safeconducts to any prisoners they might take: Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.190, cf. P.R.O. E28/70.

an irresponsible government, though perhaps an apprehensive one.

By a letter of the same day - with Pashley's name crossed through; he did not serve, and his name disappears from further documents - the king informed the authorities of Hull, Yarmouth, Poole, Southampton, Portsmouth, Lymington, Newcastle, Lynn, ,Hartlepool, Boston, Whitby and Norwich of the captains' service, and asked them to provide guns and war material at a reasonable price according to indentures with the captains, they to have the stuff again, or the value, when the term of duty was completed. This was an unusual plea, for plea it certainly was; not only were the government's own resources of equipment insufficient, which is to be expected, but also the capability of the administration to organise through the normal channels the collection of material seems to have failed. Although the government had set itself to run a full scale naval operation, it was still thrown back on others in an abnormal way, by necessity falling into a reliance upon the goodwill and co-operation of others in a submissive manner, that would have appalled Henry V, and not appealed to Edward IV[1].

---

1. P.R.O. E28/70.

But Popham had some material from the government; on the 26th June he received eight barrels of gunpowder - these were purchased from William Cantelowe, citizen and mercer of London, for £27. 7. 4d.[1] - and later on 23rd August he had 200 spears, 500 bows and 500 sheaves of arrows, price £103. 13. 0d.[2]. The captains were also paid; on 27th June the king ordered the Treasurer to pay Eure, Heron and Stapleton their wages and victualling money, as expressed in the act, for their 1,695 men, and similarly Popham with his 565 men was to be paid - they were all to have victualling for fourteen days before the muster on 31st July[3]: Eure, Heron and Stapleton had £1,910. 15. 0d. between them and Popham had £636. 18. 4d.[4] On 18th July they were given power of justice over their companies[5],

---

1. Proc. Privy Council, vol. V, p.190 (E28/70); P.R.O. E404/58/169; E403/745, under 8th August, cf. E101/53/36 - extracts from Issue Roll.
2. Proc. Privy Council, vol.V, p.198; P.R.O. E404/58/185; E403/745, under 8th August, cf. E101/53/36.
3. P.R.O. E404/58/170, 171.
4. P.R.O. E403/745, cf. E101/53/36. See also the Enrolled Account: P.R.O. E364/77, m.P., dorse; and Popham's own account: P.R.O. E101/53/38. All was not cleared up until after Feb. 1445, when Beatrice, Popham's widow, asked for a royal warrant to appoint an attorney to act at the Exchequer for her, in the matter of the Account: P.R.O. E28/74, 15th Feb. 1445.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.108.

the commissioners to take the muster were appointed[1], and all was ready. It was not to be. On the 29th July the king had to write to the captains, commanding them to keep and perform their indentures[2], and by 21st August new instructions were given. Eure, Heron, and Stapleton were to muster at sea off the Isle of Wight, there to meet Popham who was coming from the West country[3]; the place was changed (it was said) because the Camber was dangerous to sail out of, and the time because they were not ready. At last on 2nd September new commissioners were appointed to take the fleet's muster,[4] and on 13th September, at Southampton, 'infra naves', this was made: Sir William Eure's company was missing (apparently), but Popham had 587 men at arms and archers, Heron 562, and Stapleton 195 - in all 1,344,[5] rather less than the 2,260 stipulated in the Exchequer warrant and in the act.

So they went to sea, but for how long and what they

---

1. On 2nd July: E28/70.
2. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.193.
3. Ibid, p.196 cf. P.R.O. E28/70, 23rd August.
4. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.203; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.107.
5. P.R.O. E101/54/3, writ to commissioners and muster roll; down the left hand margin there are five names at intervals: George, Christopher Anto(ny), Mar(garet), Kat(er)yn Newc' - these are pwobably some of the ships that the force sailed in

achieved we shall probably never know. Stapleton was at sea in October, as in that month two merchants of Harwich and Ipswich entered into a recognisance in Chancery not to hinder him in his service[1], which suggests that he may have been active in that area. Some part of the force may have conveyed the wine fleet to Bordeaux that autumn, as on 28th August, when the captains were making their final preparations, the council ordered that any ships going for the vintage were 'to come to oon place and not to departe unto the tyme tharmee be redy'[2] On 14th September 1438 the council had given the same order, but then had rescinded it eight days later, asking officials to stir up the merchants to arm themselves[3]; where the government was unable to provide, self-help was the only way, and many ships must have carried extra men in these dangerous times. In 1448 for example, Richard Martin of Southampton and fourteen others were hired by a merchant as soldiers to go on his ship to the Bay - in this case however the defence was ineffective, and Bretons took the ship on her homeward voyage[4]. But in 1442 the

---

1. Cal. Close Rolls, 1441-46, p.113, 3rd October 1442.
2. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.205.
3. Cal. Close Rolls, 1435-41, p.194.
4. P.R.O. C1/28/438.

wine fleet may have had Popham's force as protection, as there was much concern for Aquitaine in the council that summer, and it is unlikely that it waited for the military expedition under Sir William Bonville, which sailed sometime early in 1443. Still whatever Popham and his companions did, it could not have been much; though the fact of their service may momentarily have appeased Capgrave and the many others at this time, whose patriotism grew stronger as England's continental position grew weaker. Certainly interest had been aroused by the scheme: in 1443 the council directed that Cardinal Beaufort be sent a copy[1], and the Duke of York and the other members of the government in 1454 were influenced by the form of the 1442 act when they drew up their plan for the keeping of the sea. But there were long years of inactivity between.

The scheme had not worked as it had been meant to, and there was no organised seakeeping in 1443, unless perhaps Gervaise Clifton commanded a patrol in the summer[2]. The effort in 1442 was both slight and very late. The force, lacking not only Pashley but also (it seems) Eure, sailed away a month later than the date specified in the indenture,

---

1. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 5, p.302.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.202.

nearly four months after the date given in the scheme. There had been delays, unreadiness, even perhaps abstentions; there was lack of equipment, and defective equipment from the government[1]. About £2,500 or £3,000 was spent by the Exchequer, not, in absolute terms, very much; but considering what the government had for it, and at a time when Somerset's expedition was being fitted out, and the Duke of York could not be paid, it was more than enough. Inefficiency prevented the turning of an idea, and an acceptable one at that, into fact; neither the government nor the captains seem to have cared very much, but then there were other more important theatres of war. The government had failed the Commons, and themselves, for one cause of the loss of Aquitaine was this lack of English initiative at sea, which was not entirely due in turn to a lack of money, for very large sums were spent on bringing the new Queen to England in 1445, when some 87 vessels were involved[2]. The government had not the will to use the indenture system properly, as Henry V had done, for yearly patrols- the only effective way of keeping the sea; nor had they that fleet of royal ships to

---

1. P.R.O. E364/77, m.P, dorse.
2. B.M. Additional MS. 23, 938.

make their reliance on the wasteful mechanism of arrest less total. Equally clearly the men who kept the sea in 1442 were not making sufficient profit (if that is what they were after) to keep them operating in this fashion. The scheme of 1442 was an attempt by merchants, shipowners and council to keep the sea - for whatever motive - but it was not a success.

During the years 1443 - 1449, whilst peace negotiations continued and there were many truces, there is no record of naval activity against pirates or enemies on any scale. In 1449 there were the expeditions of Winnington, Eden and Clifton (as we have seen), and in the spring of 1450 Clifton was again out, on 1st April having 400 marks for his trouble,[1] and on 3rd April being commissioned to arrest equip and arm the Nicholas of the Tower to serve against the king's enemies[2]; about a month later her crew - with Clifton's knowledge? - were cutting off the head of one of the king's

---

1. P.R.O. E28/80; E404/66/134, cf. Wars of the English in France etc., vol. 1, page 516.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.380. In 1449 10d. was paid to a man by the Lydd authorities, for going from there to Clifton - as Lieutenant of Dover castle, Lord Saye's deputy - with an excuse for the 40 fishermen he wanted to have in the ship Nicholas: The Records of Lydd, p.134. Clifton was an important man in Kent, being also in 1450-1 mayor of Canterbury, and Treasurer of Calais from 1450 to 1460: Wedgwood, Biographies, p.194.

friends, the Duke of Suffolk[1]. Ships were also sent to secure Calais and Cherbourg[2], but the latter fell to the French on 12th August; Rouen and Harfleur had already been taken at the end of 1449. In 1451 there was the abortive voyage of Lord Rivers to Aquitaine, when the arrested ships lay at Plymouth from September 1450 to June 1451 unpaid, and then all was abandoned. The shipowners were eventually paid by being given customs relief to a certain sum on goods that they might ship within the following three years[3]. The whole affair was a perfect example of how inefficient, expensive and harmful this system of arrest could be, that indeed, as had been noted in the council in May 1438, the 'longe comyng togider of the shippes' was the 'destruccion of the contrey where that thei logge[4]'.

---

1. See for example, Gregory's Chronicle in Collections of a London Citizen, ed. J. Gairdner, Camden Soc. 1876, p.190; Paston Letters, Lib. Edition, number 120; Fabyan, New Chronicles etc. p. 622; The Great Chronicle of London, p. 181; An English Chronicle, ed. Davies, Cam. Soc., 1855, p. 69.
2. P.R.O. E404/66/203.
3. See variously Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 389, 437-39, 444, 447, 462, 472, 476; Cal. Close Rolls, 1447-54, p.219-20, 1454-61, p.19-20; C.L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the 15th Century, (1913), p.372; Proc. Privy Council, vol. 6, p.105; Ramsay, op.cit., p.146, vol.2.
4. Proc. Privy Council, vol.5, p.102.

In November 1451, it seems, there was an attempted invasion by the French in the North, but it failed, and some of the leaders of the expedition, 200 soldiers and five ships were captured at Whitby[1]. But there was no English naval activity of any consequence in this year, though the concern for Calais continued.

In January 1452 the king wrote to the authorities at Hull, Newcastle, Lynn and Boston, telling them of the threat to Calais by the French, and asking them to send as many ships as they could gather to Sandwich by the end of February, where carracks and other vessels were assembling, not only to save Calais, but also to occupie the see in such wise as we shal mowe have the rule and the governaunce yer of and withstande the malacious purpose of all oure adversaries and enymyes'[2]. The king wrote after the same fashion on 21st February to Lord Bonville, Sir Edward Hull, the sheriff of Devon, John Arundell esquire, and the sheriff of Cornwall, and to the authorities at Plymouth, Dartmouth,

---

1. English Historical Literature etc., p.367.
2. P.R.O. E28/82, 28th January 1452; E28/83 28th January (misplaced) cf. Wars of the English in France, vol. 2, p.477 (wrongly dated). A messenger from the king was paid 6/8d. at Lynn for bringing this letter for the arrest of ships for Calais: Lynn borough records, Chamberlains' Accounts, 1451-52, (E.A.52).

Bristol and Fowey, stating that the Earl of Shrewsbury had been made commander of the gathering force, and asking them to do all they could to induce the shipowners of the West country and any others to come, and praying that they themselves would take over the task of bringing the ships to the Downs and Sandwich and to the Camber or urge knights and esquires to do so.[1] On 14th March the same message was sent to Lord Clifford, and on the 22nd of that month other instructions were sent to him - 'your own ship if it be ready', he was to send, the owners of other ships were to be asked to victual them at their own cost, 1000 persons were to be raised to serve at the king's expense, to have 1s. a week for their victualling, every knight or leader was to have his victualling and 10 marks reward, all these men to have what they could get by the custom of the sea[2]. On the same day Clifford was appointed commander, with full powers over those ships and men that he had collected in the North[3]. This was virtually a repetition of 1436, though now the panic was more uncontrolled, less resourceful and more

---

1. P.R.O. E28/82. All ships at Calais, or any coming there, were to be arrested to serve: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52. p. 477.
2. P.R.O. E28/82 cf. Proc. Privy Council, vol.6, p.119, p.122-25.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 540.

forlorn. The appeal had gone out (as in 1449), the inducements were offered, allegiance requested rather than demanded. This appeal, probably for the last time in Henry VI's reign, was generally answered; in 1453 for instance Sir William Bourchier was rewarded with a licence to trade to Iceland, for sending ships to sea to fight the king's enemies off Devon and Cornwall and for other ships sent to join Shrewsbury, all at his own expense[1]. However these men and ships collected in the South were to be used elsewhere than at Calais, as the opportunity to recover Bordeaux and perhaps Aquitaine, lost in 1451, was offered, and here was ready the force necessary for that task.

As a preliminary to the attack on Aquitaine, and to keep the force together, Shrewsbury, on 27th June, was appointed chief captain of an army of 5000 fighting men who were to go on the safekeeping of the sea for three months, from 17th July to 16th October. He was to have 3000 men under him personally, Sir Edward Hull was to have 1000, and Sir Gervaise Clifton 1000, but all were to be under Shrewsbury's command, For his own force he was to have

---

1. P.R.O. C76/135, m, 9, 23rd March 1453.

3,000 marks, and this was paid to him in three instalments at the hands of Sir John Lisle and Christopher Cumberford[1]. Hull had already been commissioned to go to sea for the rescue of Jersey, at that time besieged by the French, and had received war material for that purpose[2], but now his service was brought into line with the new situation, and both he and Clifton received 1,000 marks each for their 2,000 men for three months service[3]. More ships to carry the force were arrested in June from along the South coast[4], and presumably the fleet sailed on shhedule, and kept to it, for it was not until the 17th October, the day after his term of seakeeping was over, that the Earl of Shrewsbury landed in Medoc, and four days later entred Bordeaux, with Hull and Clifton beside him[5]. Their naval service was really only a preliminary exercise before the attack on

---

1. P.R.O. E404/68/149; E403/790, under 18th July. There was some trouble with tallies for £1,000, which he could not cash because they were overcharged; on 6th July the Treasurer was ordered to replace theme with others or with cash: E404/68/156.
2. P.R.O. E28/82, E404/68/138, 12th June; E403/790, under 17th July.
3. P.R.O. E404/68/144, 20th June (Eden): E404/68/143, 20th June (Clifton), also E404/68/151, another copy; E403/790, under 14th July (both).
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.579.
5. Hull spent £600 of his own in Aquitaine on the 1,000 men, for two months: he was repaid from the Exchequer: Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.108. Hull was killed at Castillon; for him see P.S. Lewis, 'Sir John Fastolf's Lawsuit over Titchwell, 1448-55,' The Historical Journal, 1958, esp. p.3-4, 18-19. Clifton petitioned for £1,075 owing to him for service in the Duchy in 1452-3: Wedgwood, Biographies, p.

Aquitaine, probably a waiting on events; their main purpose was probably not to keep the sea, though that was involved, but to watch for the opportunity and the proper time to sail up the Gironde. The efficacy of their seakeeping was a secondary consideration, for it was no doubt determined almost from the start that the expedition should go to Bordeaux, so long as conditions were favourable[1].

The expedition was a mixture of the two forms of seakeeping: the formal and the impromptu. Early in the year ships were raised at their owners' expense, or at the cost of others like Bourchier or Clifford, and merchants, like John Sharp of Bristol who served with Shrewsbury with his own ship[2], who had an interest in the wine trade must have willingly contributed. According to the instructions given to Clifford, the soldiers for his Northern force were to have 1s. a week for their victualling from the crown, and it was at this rate that the men of Shrewsbury's force served, and for this purpose he, Hull and Clifton had 5,000 marks; there was no mention of wages, their own or the

---

1. Shrewsbury received his commission as lieutenant of Aquitaine on 2nd September: Ramsay, op.cit., p.153, Vol. 2.
2. Cal. Close Rolls, 1447-54, p. 360.

soldiers, though even if the 1s. a week did in fact constitute the soldiers' wages it was 6d. less than Speke's men received in 1440. There must have been many arrangements such as that between Shrewsbury and John Judde of London, who indented with the Earl to serve for three months with 100 armed men at 13/4d. for each man's victualling; in Judde's case the ship he had prepared, the George of Scarborough, her owners refused to allow to go on the king's service - not all were willing - and he had to use a bigger ship, the Ghost of London of 300 tons, into which he put another 100 men, and for these he was later given payment, at the same rate, at the Exchequer[1]. On the other hand it was an expedition by indenture, for Shrewsbury, Hull and Clifton, all shipowners, indented with the king (though no indentures survive[2]), and the force in its final form was financed, albeit economically, by the government. It was no small undertaking, but it was basically extempore, perhaps somewhat ramshackle, yet the

---

1. P.R.O. E404/69/116. See also Thomas Martin, Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.76.
2. B.M. Stowe MS, 440, a 17th century book of abstracts of Indentures, folio 65, has brief notices of the indentures in this order: Edward Hull for the rescue of Jersey and Guernsey and the keeping of the sea; Shrewsbury with 3,000 men for three months at sea 'tam pro salva custodia regem anglie quam in generalem omnium subditorum'; then Hull again, and Clifton, with 1,000 men each.

motive of all concerned for once was single and the object straightforward: the recovery of Aquitaine; seakeeping was merely incidental.

So it was also in 1453; reinforcements for the Duchy were the main interest. To carry these, vessels were arrested from April onwards[1]. Taverner's Grace Dieu was equipped[2], and even in August, after Shrewsbury's defeat at Castillon, the preparations continued. John Clerk's Trinity of Dartmouth - mentioned by name in Clifford's instructions of the previous year - 'howe grete a Jewell she is to alle this oure lande', was prevented by the government from sailing to Spain, and taken for the voyage to Bordeaux[3], whilst the Ghost of London and the Margaret Debenham were taken at the king's wages for the same reason[4]. The port authorities in the West country were required to proclaim that all who would help convoy the army, and would assemble by 31st August, might carry victuals custom free to Bordeaux, and the mayors, bailiffs, sheriffs and

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.117, 120, 123.
2. Ibid, p.124.
3. P.R.O. E28/83, 29th August 1453.
4. P.R.O. E28/83, 10th August 1453.

customers were to induce all whom they could to co-operate, for the enemy was at sea to stop the army's passage[1]. Other town officials, at Hull, Lynn, Orwell and Bristol were ordered to proclaim that all who were going to Bordeaux should assemble in one place[2] - finally decided on was Falmouth - by the 7th September[3]. On 1st September Lord Bonville had been appointed to take ships from the Western ports - as many as were necessary to serve the king for the safe keeping of the sea - and to put crews in them, with victuals at the king's cost, they to have any goods that they might capture[4]. Clearly the successful venture of the previous year was about to be repeated, though Bonville had no money from the Exchequer; but all was this time in vain, for the English and Gascons in the Duchy finally capitulated in October, and the long war was virtually over.

There was one other naval force proper at sea in the years 1452-3, that of Lord Roos. In September 1452 he was commissioned to take mariners, used to war, at his own wages

---

1. P.R.O. E28/83, 17th August; Wars of the English in France, Vol. I. p.489.
2. Proc. Privy Council, Vol. 6, p.151, 155.
3. P.R.O. E28/83, 28th August; dorse.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.166.

for vessels keeping the sea off the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, provided he did not meddle with any going with Shrewsbury[1]. In 1453 what was a local measure was broadened and given more complete government backing. On 28th July Roos indented with the king as captain of 2,000 fighting men to go on the safeguard of the sea for three months, from 20th August to 19th November; he was to have 2,000 marks from the Exchequer for the victualling of the ships and his retinue. He undertook not to molest the king's friends, but to do all the harm he could to his enemies, and he was to have all goods that would come to him by fortune of war to divide amongst his retinue at his discretion, without any claim or interference by the king or his servants. He was to be ready to embark at Lynn and Yarmouth on the 20th August[2]. On 29th July 2,000 marks was ordered to be paid over to him, but there was no endorsement, and there is no entry on the Issue Roll[3]. On the 30th July ships were to be arrested to go to Lynn and Yarmouth[4]. How Roos fared we do not know; he was a shipowner, and in the 1450's his vessels, one of them

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.55.
2. P.R.O. E101/71/4/934; E28/83.
3. P.R.O. E404/69/212.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.123.

keeping the sea- perhaps in 1453 - , were involved in piracy on two occasions[1]; if he received no money, then the temptation that his indenture offered for privateering, would have become a very strong one; he may have felt obliged to make vice out of necessity. His indenture was much different from that of Sir John Speke in 1440; the king had now renounced all claim to any share of enemy prizes, and the Admiral was also excluded. Shipowners serving under licence had long had these full rights, but then as they were serving at their own expense there had to be some inducement; but now a captain taking (in theory) the king's money was given the same advantage, the same freedom, as the soldiers in 1452 had had. The king's money was not much, even if it was supplied: 6d. less a week than Speke's men had received, with no mention of any wage for Roos himself, and this was the lowest point that they reached in the century - by 1475 they were up to 1/3d. a week; but soldiers must have been plentiful at this time, home from Normandy and Gascony. No doubt Roo's indenture, hardly at all the formal document that Speke's, or Popham's in 1442 were, but more an agreement - halfway between licence and indenture -,

---

1. See Chapter 2 above.

was very much like those of Clifton, Eden and Winnington in 1449: as much an incitement to disorder as a means to check it. Between 1440 and 1453 there had been a degeneration in many things, not so much that as a rotting away of the power of the government to control both men and events; this was general, and it was true also of the forms of seakeeping, not only the manner of it. By the time Roos was at sea the king's own control had completely broken, and he was, in some way insane.

The war was over, though it continued officially and at sea; normal government, if there was such a phenomenon, was breaking up, but before the open conflicts began in earnest there was one last attempt, in 1454, on the part of the Duke of York to take care for the keeping of the sea. One of the articles presented by York in parliament in March 1454 was:

> 'that substantiall provision be made in all hast possible for the kepyng of the See; to th'entent that all your Navire bee redye togedirs, and of power for to assemble in such place as is most convenable for th' assemblyng of thaim, for to breke the puissance of the Navire of the seid Adversarie, before thaire assemblyng, so that your subjets may have fre passage to and fro the

> seid town and Castel of Caleis, for th'aide and rescows therof'.

It was moved by the Bishop of London that four knights should take this duty upon them, and it was appointed that Lord Grey should speak with the Bishop, and that others should approach the merchants to 'fele theim if they wull take uppon theim the same charge' - but presumably they would not, for the keeping of the sea was provided for by act of parliament[1].

This appointed the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Worcester, the Earl of Wiltshire and Lord Stourton to go to sea,

> 'with grete Navicy of Shippes and people defensible in grete number, purveied of abilmentes of werre, to entende with all diligence tothem possible, to the saufgarde and kepyng of the see, for the resistence of his seid enemyes, and repressyng of ther outrageous malices.'

The money was to come out of the revenues of tonnage and poundage (granted in 1453 to the king for life), which the

---

1. Rot. Parl., V. p.254-55.

keepers were to receive for three years from 3rd April 1454. As money was required immediately, loans were to be raised from certain ports, and the amount of these was laid down in parliament - London £300, Bristol £150 and so on down to Newcastle £20 - , a total of £1,000.[1] On 30th March the keepers, who now included the Earl of Oxford, Lord Fitzwarin and Sir Robert Vere, indented with the king. They were to have 3, 4, or 5,000 men, according to their discretion, at sea at all times convenient and seasonable during the time of three years, in as many ships as would be sufficient for them; the subsidies of tonnage and poundage were to be theirs' for three years; they were to have complete power over their companies, and to grant safeconducts to any enemies they might capture on land or sea. Also they were to have all enemy goods that they took, and all merchandise of subjects and friends found in enemy ships without safeconduct, to divide amongst them and their retinues, without any claim from the king. Finally if the grant of tonnage and poundage was stopped, they were discharged from their duties[2].

---

1. Rot. Parl., V, p. 244-46.
2. P.R.O. E101/71/4/935.

On 28th May, as the revenues of tonnage and poundage from Sandwich had been set aside for the payment of the wages of the Calais garrison, the keepers were to have £700 a year direct from the Exchequer to replace them, and this was paid to them by assignment on 4th June[1]. On 28th May also they had a gift from the crown by way of reward, of 2,000 marks[2], whilst the loans from the ports, or some of them, began to come in; on 3rd July, for instance, the £300 from London was paid to the keepers by the Mayor, John Wood[3], and Hull and York contributed their £100, as in the following November it was to be repaid[4]. Meanwhile collectors of customs, at Exeter and Dartmouth for example, were ordered to hand over the subsidy to the keepers' representative, according to indentures to be made between them[5]. Ships were being arrested, and mariners impressed - all at the king's wages[6], and the keepers were making ready throughout the late spring and early summer; Bristol was willing to do her part (it was

---

1. P.R.O. E28/84; E404/70/1/69, cf. Wars of the English in France, vol. 1, p.493.
2. P.R.O. E28/84; E404/70/1/68, cf. Wars of the English in France, vol, 1, p.494.
3. P.R.O. E403/798.
4. Cal. Close Rolls, 1454-61, p.7.
5. Cal. Close Rolls, 1447-54, p.461.
6. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.172, 173, 175, 176, 178, April to August.

said), and the Mayor, William Sturmyn, had built a ship especially for the war[1].

We have no further record of the keeper's service, merely the information that in May 1454 those soldiers and sailors about to go on the keeping of the sea, were causing trouble at Sandwich - the mayor was required to order them to avoid the town on pain of imprisonment[2] - , and that in October 1454 the Trinity of the Isle of Wight was commissioned to serve in the army appointed to keep the sea[3]. This is all that there is until 1457. There are no details of the fleet's fitting out in 1454, no evidence whatsoever of its actual service in the summer or autumn of that year. Of course it was all the keepers' business once they had received the money, at the hands of their own representatives, and little of the government's; but with tonnage and poundage estimated by the Treasurer at just over £6,000 for 1432-3[4] - though it would be somewhat less in 1454-5 - and with the immediate loan from the ports as well as the king's 2,000 marks, the keepers should have made some

---

1. Paston Letters, Lib. Edition, number 249, 5th July.
2. P.R.O. E28/84, 21st May.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.224.
4. Rot. Parl., IV, p.435.

showing 'to do away all such robbery and plunder' which the pirates, against whom they were to procede, were committing. As however York's brief term of authority came to an end early in 1455, when the king recovered, as in May the first major battle between the two political factions - Wiltshire and Salisbury on opposing sides - occurred at St. Albans, and particularly as there is no evidence at all of any naval service, as stipulated in the Act, after the summer of 1454, it is certain that that act was as unsuccessful as that of 1442, in fact much less successful, considering how grand had been the idea. Since 1442 the gap between idea and action had widened, and was now impossible to bridge. How much on paper the scheme of 1454 seems - a fine write up in the rolls of parliament, a long indenture, involved financial arrangements - yet we can be sure of nothing, not even that any organised force ever put to sea. The two years of seakeeping of the 1442 scheme became a three month patrol; the three years of the 1454 act may not even have become that, though there probably was a force at sea in the summer of that year. The government's wishes were genuine enough, but there was no longer sufficient impetus to make them come true. All responsibility concerning the security to be had at sea -

for fishermen, merchants, travellers and those living along the coast, let alone as a matter of strategy - had been lost by default, by inefficiency, by circumstance: the government did not, and now was not able to, care. Yet at the end they might have said: the fault lies in ourselves. It was the 1370's all over again.

For the failure to keep the seas was only part of the wider failure of Henry VI's reign. The reasons that eventually caused civil strife, were just those that allowed pirates, of whatever rank, to go unpunished, that led to seakeeping expeditions, like those of 1449, which were a mockery of that definition, and that prevented strong action being taken against the French in the channel. The weakening administration, the general loosening of allegiance, of the sense of duty in officials and nobility alike, and the lack of money, all inhibited purposeful action. As Henry VI's government began to lose its grip on itself, from the early 1440's onwards, so it lost control in the country, and so it surrendered its power for definitive action and initiative - save in the last resort to defend itself. These are general causes for the failure to keep the sea, but they are genuine ones, and the most important. For the ways in which a government can act increase

according to its strength, but a weak government can only act along a few channels, and these tend to be ineffective or corrupt. There was no intrinsic inefficiency in the indenture system, no harm in using men like Winnington or Lord Roos, Thomas Daniel or Gervaise Clifton, indeed they had to be used for there was no one else; but under what conditions did the system work, and what were the attitudes of these men who served, are the relevant questions. And as the system dperated under a weak government, and men were not intent on looking beyond themselves, then there was bound to be some degree of failure. Neither the methods nor the men are to be condemned, but the government which employed both. Henry V and Edward IV used the indenture (though not the licence), and the same men as leaders and officials, that is nobility, gentry, merchants and shipowners, and used them successfully. Edward IV made no innovations, save perhaps to use professional seamen more skilfully and more often, and on occasion as commanders. The reason for Henry V's and Edward IV's success, as opposed to Henry VI's failure, was - and we return to this truism - that they were strong kings, and their government and administrations were efficient because of this; they were strong just because they managed (and that surely is the right word) to weld their subjects' self-interest to their own, the country's

interest. Henry VI and the council did not do that, and here lies their failure not only to keep the sea but also to govern the realm.

The more specific reason for Henry VI's government's inability to prevent disorder at sea and to fight its enemies with success, and perhaps to hold on to Lower Normandy and Gascony, was that the crown had no naval force of its own. Though here again the strong king would, almost automatically, have had some such resources. Sir John Fortescue put it succinctly in the 1470's:

> 'And though we haue not alwey werre vppon the see, yet it shalbe nescessarie that the kynge haue alway some ffloute apon the see, ffor the repressynge off rovers, sauynge off owre marchauntes, owre ffishers, and the dwellers vppon owre costes, and that the kynge kepe alway some grete and myghty vessels, ffor the brekynge off an armye when any shall be made ayen hym apon the see'[1].

And a navy was not only ships, it was men. The masters of

---

1. Sir John Fortescue, The Governance of England, ed. Charles Plummer, 1885, page 123.

royal ships formed a professional and experienced body of personnel, above all responsible and efficient. With such a nucleus of men and ships any armed force at sea was at once more liable to do good, rather than indifferent, service. It was as simple as that. But also a fleet meant power, and this is one reason why Henry VI, long a minor and always bet quite his own master, never had one: the circumstances of the time and his character were against him. A fleet of ships was not all powerful, never the final arbiter in political or international struggles, but it was something. In the later 1450's possession of a fleet was to mean much to him who had one; Warwick's small force, gathered in the years after he went to Calais, was to be an instrument of that man's will to power, and there was none to match it. In the years 1456-61 the Earl, with Calais and a fleet against a disorganised government, was to be entirely successful; there is no better illustration of how valuable a fleet could be to its owner than the narrative of Warwick's progress and the Lancastrians' deterioration between 1456 and 1461.

Appendix: Noble Shipowners, 1422-85.

Joan, Lady of Abergavenny. a barge bought from her executors by the crown, November 1435.	P.R.O. E404/52/152.
Sir John Arundell. the Gabriel of Falmouth, 1453. a balinger, 1448.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.120. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.140.
Cardinal Beaufort. the Mary of the Tower, c.1435.	Letters of Margaret of Anjou, ed. C. Munro, Camden Soc., 1863, p.52.
the Clement of Waltham, 70 tons, 1444-5.	B.M. Add.MS, 23, 938, f.18.
Duke of Bedford. a barge of his hired for the Countess of Warwick, to go from Rouen to Paris, December 1431.	from the household accounts of the Earl of Warwick, 1431-2, f. 134d., in appendix 3 of Gothic England, John Harvey, 1947.
Sir John Blount.(?) a carvel of John Blount, 1472.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.299.
Sir William Bonville, Lord Bonville. the Mary of Fowey, 1440.	Official Correspondence of Thomas Beckington, ed. G. Williams, Rolls Series, 1872, p.193.
balinger, Palmer, 1442.	Rot. Parl., V, p.59.
Sir William Bourchier. the Trinity of Orwell.	Victoria County History of Essex, vol. 2, p.266.
the Magdalen of Winchelsea, of 30 tons; the Thomas of Crotoy, of 60 tons, 1444-5.	B.M. Add. MS., 23, 938.
Sir Henry Brownfleet. the Katherine of Hull, 1437.	Cal. Close Rolls, 1435-41, p.111.

Sir Nicholas Carew.
a ship, 1440. — P.R.O. E28/64, 24th October.

Lord Clifford.
a ship, 1452. — P.R.O. E28/82, 22nd March; Proc. Privy Council, vol 6, p.122-4.

Sir Gervaise Clifton.
the Mary of the Tower, of 200 tons, 1451. — P.R.O. E101/54/15; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.447-50.

Lord Cobham.
the George Cobham, built c. 1475. — Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.595; see also Acts of the Mercers Company of London, ed. Watney and Lyell, 1936, p.86, and Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85. p.240.

Sir Robert Constable.
a ship, 1473. — Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.409.

Sir Hugh Courtenay.
a carvel called Packer, 1461; prob. his Peter Courtenay. — Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.36, 452, 488; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.612, 650. P.R.O./C1/28/476, 30/60.

Sir Philip Courtenay.
the Trinity Courtenay, built c.1440. — Cal. Close Rolls, 1435-41, p.324; Foedera, XI, p.77; Rot. Parl., V, p.59.
P.R.O. E403/779.

the Mary Courtenay, of 140 tons, 1450. and a barge and a balinger, 1442. — Rot. Parl., V, p.59.

Sir Thomas Courtenay, Earl of Devon.
'bargiam comitis Devoniae in Thamesia'. — c.1449. (Worcester) Annales, in Wars of the English etc. v.2. pt. 2, p.769.

(Sir)? Gilbert Durbertille.
the 'Mounseraunt' of Rouen, of 60 tons, 1444-5. — B.M. Add. MS., 23, 938.

Lord Duras. (a Gascon)
a ship, 1456-60. — Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.574. Foedera, XI, p.372.

the Katherine Duras, 1462-4. — Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.204, 302, 348-9.

Duke of Exeter, the Mackerell, 1449. the Galiot, 1451, cf. a ship, 1450.	Cal. Close Rolls, 1447-54, p.169, 174. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.441; P.R.O. C49/50/6, 7. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 432, 434, 435.
the Katherine of the Tower of 240 tons, the Christopher of London, of 75 tons, 1451.	P.R.O. E101/54/15; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p. 447-50.
Sir John Fastolf. the cogship, James Fastolf, of 48 tons, 1443.	P.R.O. E403/750.
2 ships called playtes, a farecast, 2 balingers and cogship (cf. above), 1443. ...'the greetship'... (and) ...'my ship called the Blythe'... 1451; these are only two of a fleet of between 8 and perhaps 14 vessels of Fastolf's in the 1440's.	Foedera, XI, p.45. K.B. McFarlane: 'The Investments of Sir John Fastolf's profits of war,' Trans. of the Royal Hist. Soc. 5th Series, VII, (1957) p.115.
Sir John Fogge. the New Elen, c.1464-76: part owner.	P.R.O. C1/32/340.
Sir John Fortescue. a ship, of 120 tons, the 1480's.	V.C.H., Kent, vol. 2, p.279.
Lord Herbert. the Gabriel, wrecked 1465.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.427.
Lord Howard. owned about 12 ships at various times between 1463-1483. See chapter 5, page 394, footnote 1.	
Sir Edward Hull. grant of the Christopher of Bristol and Le Busse from the crown in 1448.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.156. 175.

Earl of Huntingdon,
the Anthony, of 200 tons,
1441. P.R.O. K28/69, 28th November; Proc. Privy Council, vol, 5, p.169.

the St. John, a barge, no date. P.R.O. C1/68/40.
a balinger bought from the crown, which had been purchased from the executors of the Earl of Arundel, 1437. Proc. Privy Council, vol.5, p.27.

Sir Thomas Kyriell.
a ship, 1444. The Records of Lydd, p.91, 93.

Sir John Lisle.
the Anne of Southampton, 1457. Medieval Merchant Venturers, Carus Wilson, p.277, footnote 1.

? the Mawdelen Lisle. c.1450. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.166.

Sir Simon Mountford.
a carvel, c.1470. Letters of the 15th and 16th century from the Archives of Southampton, ed. Anderson, South Rec. Soc., 1921, number 12.

Sir Edmund Mulso.
the Mary of Dublin, 1451. P.R.O. C1/25/207.

Sir William Neville, Earl of Kent.
the carvel Mary, 1462-3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.204, 302.

Earl of Northumberland.
the Anthony of Hull granted him by the crown, 1465. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.378.

Sir Robert Ogle.
a ship given him by the crown in recompense of a ransom, 1438. Proc. Privy Council, vol.5, p.93.

Earl of Oxford. The Jesus of Orwell, built c.1445.	P.R.O. E28/74, 28th February; Original Letters, ed. Ellis, 2nd series, No.36.
a balinger and a barge; cf. barge Thomas of Oxonia, of 40 tons; 1439 and 1449.	Proc. Privy Council, vol.5,p. 384, 386; P.R.O. E364/92,m.M.
(Sir)? Stephen Popham. the Cok William, of 40 tons, 1444-5.	B.M. Add. MS, 23, 938.
'late Lord Pouns' (Pointz?) a ship, (1442).	Rot. Parl., V. p.59.
Lord Rivers. the Star, 1475. ?the Katherine Rivers, 1475.	Acts of the Mercers Company, p.86. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.496; P.R.O. E405/61.
Sir Thomas Roos, Lord Roos. the Jakette,c.1453. the carvel of Teuke, 1458.	P.R.O. C1/25/200. P.R.O. C1/28/472; Cal. Pat. Rolls. 1452-61, p.435-6.
Sir William Ryder. the Giles of Hull, c.1460; part owner.	P.R.O.C1/27/84.
Lord Saye, a carvel, 1453.	P.R.O. C1/17/102,a.b.
Lord Scales. a balinger granted him by the crown, 1446.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1441-46, p.437.
Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. the Margaret of Portladoun, 1438. the Valentine of Harfleet, of 12 tons; the Ghost of Harfleet, of 55 tons; 1444-5; cf. a balinger, 1442.	P.R.O. C1/43/35. B.M. Add. MS., 23, 938; Cal. Pat. Rolls,, 1441-46, p.108.

the Mary Talbot of Bristol, of 240 tons, 1451.	P.R.O. E101/54/15.
Sir Humphrey Talbot. a Breton ship given him by the crown, 1484.	B.M. Harleian MS, 433, No. 1823.
Sir James Tyrell. a ship granted to him and others by the crown, 1481.	Cal. Close Rolls, 1476-85, p.236.
Sir John Trevelyan. the Edward of Polruan, 1449; part owner.	P.R.O. C1/28/469; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.312.
Earl of Warwick. the Isabella of Calais, wrecked 1426.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1422-29, p.385.
Earl of Warwick. owned at least ten ships c.1465.	See chapter 5, page 378, footnote 4.
Sir Henry Waver. the Mary Grace of London, 1466.	P.R.O. C1/44/220.
Sir Robert Willoughby. the George of Boston / Willoughby, of 140 tons, 1451.	P.R.O. E101/54/15; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-51, p.447.
Earl of Worcester. the Peter, carvel of Worcester; the James of Worcester; the John of Worcester;? the barge of Worsle; cf. a ship: 1462-3.	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.302; P.R.O. E403/825; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.559.

Chapter 4.

The Earl of Warwick, 1456-1461.

The events of the years 1455-61, and the story of Warwick at Calais, have been described many times, most recently by Jacob, most romantically by Kendall, but still most fully by Oman. The task here is not to repeat this well-known history in detail, but to illumine the maritime aspects of the civil war, and to analyse, albeit slightly, their significance in the struggle for power. There is virtually no new evidence for this, and most is printed; yet perhaps some understanding of the period, 1422-85, as a whole can be achieved from a brief survey of these half dozen years.

When Warwick entered Calais sometime after July 1456 as Captain of that town, the real civil war had begun. For, as he continued to hold the town and garrison to himself with the financial backing of the Staplers', and with the proceeds of plunder on sea and land, he ruled (as it were) his own territory; he governed a Yorkist province - like Ireland after 1459 - and had established 'in effect the seat of an alternative government[1]'. This was made more

---

1. G.L. Harriss. 'The struggle for Calais: An aspect of the rivalry between Lancaster and York', English Historical Review, 1960, p.52.

obvious to contemporaries by the English government's removal from London: 'roughly from 1456 the government of England was conducted not from London but from the provinces'[1]. The government that went to Coventry was more a court intent on saving itself, than a central administration trying to preserve the peace; as the crown withdrew during the next three or four years from governing the country, and 'devoted the political and administrative resources at its command to the task of strengthening its material power and the protection of the dynasty'2, so Warwick and the English at Calais seemed less like a group of desperate opportunists, and more like a party with a good claim - through its actions - to govern. Rebels in 1459 they might be called, but in fact, as the Lancastrians had abdicated all but formal responsibility, they were equal contenders for the powers of government. The keeping of the sea was a part of this, a most significant part; the Lancastrian authorities made no attempt, whilst Warwick, it seemed, offered an active alternative.

In the summer of 1457 Pierre de Brézé with a strong French fleet sailed the channel unmolested, and finally on

---

1. E.F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, 1961, p.513.
2. Ibid, p.513.

28th August sacked Sandwich; this was more than a casual raid, like those on the ports of the South coast, or most recently on Harwich[1], for it was by a powerful force, well led and organised, on an official expedition, and it was directed against a major port, and a rich one at that, already perhaps sympathetic to the Earl of Warwick. The French spent a day in the town, and were not chased out until the evening by Sir Thomas Kyriell with some hastily raised men; but they had done much damage, taking three ships of war and other vessels, prisoners to ransom and much plunder[2]. Whether Queen Margaret had first suggested this sort of pillage to the French or not, the act itself was a sufficient condemnation of the government. France had been lost, now the English coast was not secure, not even a port of the size of Sandwich; the English man's pride had been worn down since 1435, but the process had been gentle, here however was an outrage hardly to be accepted, yet the government did little about it. In October ships were arrested for Sir Gervaise Clifton and

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-52, p.528, 24th March 1452.
2. La Roncière, op cit., vol. 2, p.290-2; An English Chronicle, p.74;3 14th century Chronicles, ed. J. Gairdner, Camden Soc., 1880. p.70, 152, 166; The Brut, p.524-5; Ramsay, op.cit., vol. 2, p.201-2.

his company going to sea to resist the king's enemies[1], and in October and November various vessels, including the Grace Dieu were taken for an armed force[2]; these may have been for the Admiral, the Duke of Exeter, who had been ordered to victual ships to the sum of 400 marks and set to sea, which by the end of December he had certainly done, as the 400 marks was to be repaid to him by the Exchequer[3]. But 400 marks could only have got a few ships to sea for a short time, and if Exeter did get to La Rochelle, as Ramsay states, he did not achieve anything, whilst an English attack on Harfleur, perhaps by Clifton, also failed[4]. After this dismal record by an impotent administration, it was perhaps natural that one of the few successful men of action should come forward, or be recommended, and be accepted by an indifferent government.

On 26th November the Earl of Warwick indented with the king; it was a long and careful document, after the form of that of the keepers in 1454. Warwick undertook to keep the sea for the term of three years, as from the previous 29th

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.403.
2. Ibid, p. 404, 405.
3. P.R.O. E404/71/2/41, 30th December.
4. Ramsay, vol. 2, p.202; La Roncière, vol. 2, p.293.

September, with 3,500, 4,000 or 5,000 fighting men to be at sea from 1st February to 31st October in each year. For the payment of these men and the ships to carry them, he was to receive the revenues of tonnage and poundage for three years from the 29th September, except from Southampton and Sandwich, in place of which he was to have a £1,000 a year from the Duchy of Lancaster. He was to have the right to nominate one collector of the subsidy in each port, and these were to hand over to him the money according to indentures made between them - this was a similar arrangement to that of 1454. The other clauses are also familiar: all enemy ships and merchandise taken by him were to be his alone, to divide amongst his retinue as he thought fit, as were the goods of subjects or friends found in enemy ships without a safeconduct. Warwick was to have full power against the king's enemies, on land, and sea, and authority to grant safeconducts for six months to any prisoners taken; his service was to cease if the grant of tonnage and poundage was discontinued, and he was enjoined not to molest friends and subjects at sea, but to harm all who did so and do all the hurt he could to the king's enemies[1]. On 27th December the customers were ordered to

---

1. P.R.O. E101/71/4/938; There is an incomplete contemporary copy of this indenture in the British Museum: Harleian Charter, 54 C 17. cf. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.413; Foedera, XI, p.406.

hand over the specified subsidy to Warwick during that period of three years[1].

The formula was very much the same as that of 1454, remarkably so considering that the government was now Lancastrian and that Warwick was one of its principal opponents. By this time Warwick must have realized that his income for the garrison at Calais from that part of the customs set aside for that purpose was inadequate, as the government used it elsewhere[2], and he must have known that the chance of receiving much from tonnage and poundage, even for a year, was a thin one; support from the Exchequer for him as captain of Calais or as keeper of the sea was not likely to be forthcoming for long, if at all. It seems improbable that he could have kept his nominees at the ports, even if he got them appointed, and there is no record of his receiving any money from that source - though of course the collection of that money was his own affair, not the government's. On 4th March 1458, however, because the £1,000 from the Duchy of Lancaster was not available in ready money, Warwick was to have £500 from the Hanaper

---

1. Cal. Close Rolls, 1454-61, p.240.
2. Harriss, op cit., p.49.

obtained out of the general pardon lately granted; action was to be taken it seemed, for 'thus it was ordeyned and graunted consideryng the navye of Fraunce is northward that it might be mette with and for gode direction of the Englysshe navye'[1] On 15th March John Bocking wrote to Sir John Fastolf that Warwick had received £1,000 from the Hanaper that week, and that the Duke of Exeter was displeased that the Earl of Warwick was to keep the sea[2]. This is all that we have: that Warwick was to have £500 or £1,000 and that Exeter was angry - which he may well have been, seeing that he had received less money in the autumn of 1457, and here was the Earl, disaffected, yet given a wide commission and the virtual freedom of the seas. The government appeared to be making a genuine effort this time, but Exeter need not have worried on this score; formal and significant as the indenture seemed, though it was an open one - the termination of that development from Speke to Roos -, there was little of the ordinary, no formality but plenty of significance, in the actions that followed. Even in April, when the Grace Dieu was to be repaired and

---

1. P.R.O. E28/88, cf. Proc. Privy Council, vol. 6, p.294.
2. Paston Letters, Lib. Ed., No. 366.

armed, it was to be done at the Earl's expense[1], and the battles of the summer of 1458 were more his own affair than the government's. Exeter had not been superceded, he was being opposed; he did not have a rival, but an enemy. In 1458 Warwick was not working for the government, but for himself, for the Yorkists perhaps but chiefly for himself. Whatever he did was as unofficial as an act of piracy by a licensed ship of the 1430's. The whole system of seakeeping had, in a way, collapsed; not only had the government insufficient money for seakeeping forces, even in 1460 when it was directly threatened, but also this last real enterprise of the reign, sponsored by the crown rather than by a party, had no chance of success in the interest of that crown. Of course already the interests of government and country were no longer the same, but this too was a result, the final consequence, of the break down of the administration, just as another result was this keeping of the sea which was only to the benefit of him who did the keeping and who was in all this opposed to the government. Irresponsibility had become defiance, was

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.439, 20th April.

seen to become rebellion; government control over its officers had reached its nadir: Warwick at Calais, on the sea, was a free agent.

He was what no other captain had quite been before him - completely independent. The money that he received from the Exchequer or from tonnage and poundage was probably negligible, and no doubt soon discontinued; the ships and men that he employed were not raised by the government, but by him, and the loyalty of shipowners and soldiers was, as the months passed, to him and not to the crown. Even if the Calais garrison could not be entirely depended upon, unless he paid their wages (which he was not always able to), the masters and owners of many of the ships he used, and the seamen in them, looked to him and not to the crown for reward and perhaps for glory. As early as May 1457 Warwick had thanked the people of Sandwich and Canterbury for their help in victualling Calais[1], and thereafter, during these last years of the reign, the men living on and near the coasts of Kent had more goodwill towards the Earl than to the king, many going over to join him and man his ships, for instance from Lydd[2]. And Sandwich was to remain for

---

1. Paston Letters, Library Edition, ed. Gairdner, number 356.
2. Fabyan, New Chronicles etc., p.635; The Records of Lydd, p.181, 188.

many years peculiarly Warwick's and the Yorkists' port, perhaps the reason that the French, on Margaret's instigation, had singled it out for attack in the summer of 1457. Only in this sense dependent on the co-operation of his supporters in the South East, he (and they) were free of the government in outlook and attitude; and by 1458 they were coming together in active opposition.

Warwick's two seabattles in 1458 show this clearly. Both of necessity and of choice he saw that he could do much for himself, and the Cause, in the straits. From his vital base at Calais he could strike not only at England - that lay in the future - but also at the foreigner, and in so doing keep his following loyal, and increase his own power; for to remain inactive was useless. His alternative government at Calais to exist had to be vigorous, had to offer more than the other government at Coventry, had to prove itself. On 28th May 1458, informed of a Spanish fleet at sea of twenty-eight ships, sixteen of which were great ships with forecastles, Warwick fitted out of Calais five big warships, three carvels, and four pinnaces, and on the following day met with and fought the Spaniards. The fight was a fierce one - not so great a battle at sea for forty winters, wrote John Jernygan who took

part - and Warwick captured 6 vessels[1]. Soon after this he intercepted the Hanse fleet returning from the Bay, and on the old excuse of their refusal to strike in the name of the king of England (an ironic request), he took many of them as prizes - 17 hulks and smaller vessels says one chronicler[2]. The Spaniards were technically enemies, but not the Hanse, and a commission of enquiry into Warwick's piracy was ordered[3]; it was probably to defend himself at the council against the commission's charges that he came to Westminster in November 1458. But the brawl between hostile retinues that occurred there, in which Warwick nearly lost his life, interrupted any proceedings, and he returned to Calais unrebuked and unpunished for his high-handed action on the narrow seas. That was anyway a trifling matter compared with other disputes, for he had refused to resign his Captainship at Calais and the open conflict was now begun.

In the summer of 1459 Warwick fought another battle at sea. In March 1459 commissioners were appointed to arrest

---

1. Paston Letters, Lib. Ed., No.369; Flenley, op.cit., p.160; Fabyan, p.633; The Great Chronicle of London, p.190.
2. Three 15th century chronicles, p.71.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.443; cf. Foedera, XI, p.415.

men, victuals and munititions for vessels going to sea under Warwick or his lieutenant, at his wages[1]. There was, it seems, still some connection between government and opposition, some co-operation in the organisation of seakeeping, though that seakeeping could only be to Warwick's benefit; also it suggests that the Earl was continuing to receive at least part of the revenues from tonnage and poundage and that the arrangement of 1457 was still in force at this date. With these ships, or those of Calais and the South East, or his own - for some of the prizes were probably retained by him - he met with two Genoese carracks and three Spanish ships, 'and tooke theyre grete vesselles and a carake of Jene, and gate in theym grete rychesse'[2]. It was, as Harriss says, flagrant piracy, and this instance was probably only the most notable amongst others in this year; but it was necessary piracy, just as the raids into French and Burgundian territory were necessary. The plunder was needed to pay the garrison and

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.494.
2. An English Chronicle, p.83; see also Registra Johannis Whethamstede etc. Rolls series, 1873, p.330-1; Flenley, op.cit., p.147; C.W. Oman, Warwick, p.69, wrongly puts this battle in the spring of 1458. (1899)

reward the seamen, and as important, for many stolen goods no doubt found their way to the markets of the South East, to keep his friends and supporters loyal and interested. Not only this, for his constant activity 'embarrassed the court and rallied his own supporters' (Harriss), and was of itself sufficient justification as it demonstrated to all that the 'erle of Warrewyk, havyng a strong and a myghte naveye kept the strayte see'[1] as no English man had done for a long time, and that 'Calais was a beachhead of power not a beleagured town'[2] - and this too had not been seen for many years. It is no wonder that he was eulogised in such handsome terms, and that 'all the cominalte of this lond hadde him in greet laude and chierte'[3], for he was giving back to his countrymen some of the self-esteem that they had lost in the depressing years since about 1440; there was a feeling of pride in his achievements. Warwick was the greatest pirate of that age, yet he escaped the condemnation of society, the merchants included, because his piracy was on that grand scale, in that grand manner

---

1. An English Chronicle, p.83.
2. P.M. Kendall, Warwick the Kingmaker, 1957, p.42.
3. Flenley, p.147: the chronicler wrote thus of his naval activity '...wheryn that noo lorde of the lond toke the jeoparde nor laboured for the honour and profit of the king and the londe but only he...'

and only against the foreigner, which appealed to men who had seen little English aggression in the past twenty years, only deterioration in English prestige. But where the people applauded the government trembled, for Calais was also a beachhead into England, and from the summer of 1459 onwards Warwick was to use his power against the foreigner no longer.

In September Warwick with some of the Calais garrison under Sir Andrew Trollope and Sir John Blount came over to England to join the Yorkists, who were arming against the king, who himself was mustering troops in the Midlands. Warwick met his father and the Duke of York at Ludlow, and they prepared a defensive position against the advancing royalists at Ludford bridge. But the Yorkist army was small; apart from the Nevilles, Lord Clinton was the only nobleman with York, and the attempt to coerce the king, although in self-defence perhaps, was premature. When the royalists came up on 12th October the king's offer of pardon was sufficient to detach Trollope , Blount and their experienced garrison troops from the rebels' cause, and with their defection the Yorkists broke up their camp and got away as best they could. Warwick's influence (and York's for that matter) was still less than the king's;

when the contest for power occurred, here on a wet Midland field where two meagre armies faced each other, the king's name meant more than service with a rebel, however weak the one, however successful the other.

Warwick escaped with the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of March and Sir John Dinham to Deven, and there they bought a ship (for 220 nobles[1]), and sailed first to Guernsey and then to Calais, where, early in November, they entered the base that had remained, under Fauconberg, loyal to Warwick. Already on 30th October Sir Richard Woodville and the sheriff of Kent had been ordered by the government to arrest all ships of Warwick's and to keep them for the king's use, and on 6th December Lord Rivers, Sir Gervaise Clifton and the Duke of Buckingham, the warden of the Cinque Ports, were required to see that all the Earl's ships at Sandwich were kept safely by a fit number of gentlemen of Kent, whilst mariners, carpenters and smiths were to see to their maintenance[2]. Warwick's command of the sea was apparently over- his ships taken at Sandwich, himself and his few friends rebels on the run.

---

1. The Great Chronicle of London, p.191; cf. the £80. recieved by Dinham's widow for their transport: Ramsay, vol. 2, p.216, footnote 2.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p. 555, 525, 526.

Now came the government's last efforts to regain that command and to defeat those rebels; with the Duke of Somerset in Guisnes and loyal fleets at sea, Warwick was to be contained within the narrow confines of Calais itself, which would again become a beleagured town.

Throughout the last months of 1459 the government was preparing naval forces in the South East, the seizure of the Earl's ships being the first step; and finally on 10th December the muster of Clifton's and Woodville's fleets was ordered[1]; on the following day William Scot esquire was commissioned for one year to arrest ships necessary for 200 men at arms to go with him to sea against the king's enemies and to safeguard Winchelsea[2]. Scot's force was probably a defensive one, patrolling the coast to prevent any attempted crossing by Warwick's men; but the Earl also had many men on the English side of the channel, and there was a contest between his authority and that of the government in this area down until June 1460, when the Earl's power and influence finally proved the stronger. At Lydd, for instance, early in the year men were sent to Lord Rivers

---

1. Ibid. p.555.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.555, 556.

'to know how we should speed to be guided' if Warwick's men were to land there, and in January a man was sent to the Lieutenant of Dover for counsel of the Lord of Warwick[1], whilst at Rye men of the Earl's entered the town and took down the quarter of a man and buried it in the churchyard, and a man was paid for sailing to the Camber to communicate with mariners from the West as to news about Warwick[2]. From his friends Warwick was well informed of the government's activity at Sandwich; to stop the mustered forces from sailing, and to prevent Lord Rivers crossing with reinforcements for Somerset, and perhaps to recover his own ships, he sent Dinham and a small force across to Sandwich on 15th January on a raid, and their success was complete. Lord Rivers and Sir Anthony Woodville were carried off from their beds (it was early in the morning), and all the ships in the harbour were sailed back to Calais, with the consent of the mariners, save for the Grace Dieu which was damaged[3]. Warwick had taken the king's fleet

---

1. The Records of Lydd, p.192.
2. Hist. MS. Comm., 5th report, p.492. Some of the ships that had been taking troops to join Somerset were sailed into Calais harbour, because the seamen 'ought more favour' to Warwick than to the Duke; The Brut, p.528.
3. An English Chronicle, p.84-5; Fabyan, p.635-6; The Great Chronicle of London, p.192; The Paston Letters, Lib. Ed., Nos. 399, 400; The Brut, p.528.

before it had opportunity even to procede against him.

In February the government began again to fit out expeditions to root out the rebels from their base. On 3rd February Sir Baldwin Fulford indented with the king to do service at sea with 1,000 men for three months. He was to have 2s. a day for himself, 6d. a day for the masters of ships and 2/3d. a week for each of the soldiers; he was to receive £1,000 immediately and the remnant after six weeks service, and if that was not forthcoming his duty was to cease. The equipping of all the ships was to be undertaken by the crown, and a quarter of any prize with the share of 'shares' was reserved to the king, whilst all rebels and traitors taken were to be entirely the king's, though Fulford was to have £1,000. for any lord captured and 500 marks each for Sir John Wenlock, Sir James Pickering or Thomas Cole. Persons were to be sent with the fleet to take charge of the king's share of prizes, and Fulford was commanded not to molest any of the king's subjects or friends, not to break any safeconduct, nor to take the goods of subjects or friends found in enemy vessels without a safeconduct - the clause allowing him to do so was crossed through[1].

---

1. P.R.O. E404/71/4/28, warrant of 15 Feb. to the Treasurer tp pay the retinue's wages, cf. Wars of the English in France, vol. 2, part 2, p.512.

This indenture, which itself has not survived, is unusual for this time because of its strictly formal nature; it is a return to those of 1440 or 1442, only with the wages of the men much increased (which was perhaps due to the difficulty of recruiting); the king again claimed his share of captured goods. Of course if the king paid wages, and not just the 1s. a week for victualling, as he had been doing, then he naturally was entitled to benefit from his commander's activity. Perhaps the chief reason for this revival of formal service, during such a time of strain, was that it was service with a specific purpose; Fulford went out to destroy Warwick, he was not like the men of 1442, 1449 or the early 1450's who merely went to keep the sea. As the danger became immediate and the need to respond urgent the government returned to the well-tried and precise arrangements that they had abandoned during the previous twenty years, when the problem had been of a general, and rather distant insecurity at sea. Perhaps too Fulford had insisted on such a well-defined agreement, for he was not interested in keeping the sea for what it could bring him, but only in taking Warwick.

During February various ships were arrested for

service[1], and on 4th March the muster of Fulford's force at Dartmouth was ordered to be taken[2]. On 31st March he was to have 2,000 marks out of a loan given by the king's faithful subjects, as sufficient ready money could not be had in time for the setting forth of the fleet, which loan was to be repaid from the revenues of tonnage and poundage. The Duke of Exeter was to have the remaining 2,500 marks of the loan as he also had been retained to serve at sea[3]. He had in fact been retained on the 19th March to resist the king's enemies and rebels, and to punish pirates for three years, with a force of not less than 3,500 men[4], and apart from the money from the loan he was to have all the revenues from tonnage and poundage after the loan had been repaid during the three years from 1st January 1460 - the whole arrangement being similar to that of 1457 with Warwick; when appointed as collector at Yarmouth on 29th May William Calowe was

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.563.
2. Ibid, p.564.
3. P.R.O. E404/71/4/36, cf. Wars of the English, etc. vol. 2, part 2, p.515, but has 2,000 marks each.
4. P.R.O. C76/142, m.5, 26th March: grant of authority over his retinue, and order to officials to obey him; there are no details of the indenture. See also C.L. Scofield, The Life and Reign of Edward IV, 1923, vol. 1, p.60.

instructed to hand over the subsidy, subject to the repayment of the 4,500 marks, to the Duke[1]. Meanwhile vessels were commissioned for his force in March, and victualled[2], and the Grace Dieu was granted to him, being forfeit to the crown - presumably Warwick had been using it as his own ship - and she was equipped with arms, victuals and cables, all her tackle having been carried off by Dinham in the January raid[3].

These were not the only naval preparations by the royalists in the early months of 1460. On 12th March Thomas Osbern, sergeant at arms, was required to take mariners called 'galeymen' for certain galleys of the Earl of Wiltshire at Southampton[4], and this was the prelude to Wiltshire's withdrawal from English politics, described by one chronicler thus: that the Earl under the pretence of going to take Warwick, but really in order to 'stele priuyly oute of the reame', went to Southampton and manned five Genoese carracks there with soldiers at the king's expense, putting his own treasure aboard; he then embarked

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.554; Cal. Fine Rolls, 1452-61, p.258; Cal. Close Rolls, 1454-61, p.412.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.567, 602, 605, 606.
3. Ibid, p.554, 566, 577; The Brut, p.529.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.564.

and 'sayled aboute in the see, dredyng alwey the commyng of the forseyde Erles of Warrewyk and Salesbury, and atte laste arryved in Ducheland, and sent hys sowdyers in to Englond ayens'[1]. The sarcastic malice is overdone perhaps, but Wiltshire's flight was real enough. Both this and the government's dealing with the Venetian and Genoese carrack masters show clearly that the 'war of nerves in the straits' (Harriss) was having its effect on the administration in England. The government, after Warwick had retrieved his own ships from Sandwich, must have lacked large, heavy warships that were to hand, for there was not the time to collect together the bigger merchantmen of the realm; but in the Thames and at Sandwich were Venetian and Genoese carracks ideal for carrying large bodies of troops, and these were close at hand. Now, as at other times of strain, the English government sought to use these for its own purposes. On 26th March it was stated that all captains of any galleys or carracks serving against Warwick were to have pardons of any offences concerning the shipment of goods in their vessels[2] - an offer of a

---

1. An English Chronicle, p.90; cf. Calendar of State Papers: Milan, ed. A.B. Hinds, 1912, No.38.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.591. cf. Foedera, XI, p.448.

free hand in return for co-operation. Early in April the offer was increased; on 5th April Julian Cope, captain of a Venetian carrack was ordered to have £100. a month for 50 persons, and Julian Flew, captain of a Genoese carrack £105 a month for 80 persons; if they would serve for longer than a month - for they were as yet only being asked to serve for that period - they were to receive 2/3d. a week for their men; all this money was to come out of the loan for the keeping of the sea[1]. Another warrant to the Treasurer of 7th April required him to pay the Duke of Exeter, from the same source, £200 - £100 each for two more Genoese carracks, whose captains were being asked to do the king's service[2]. The rates at which the crown tried to ensure the co-operation of these foreign vessels were absurdly high: for the first month there would have been about 8s. a week for each of the crew of the Venetian ship, 5/3d. a week for those of the Genoese vessel, although thereafter at 2/3d. a week they would have had only as much as Fulford's men, but probably the government did not contemplate more than a month's

---

1. P.R.O. E404/71/4/37, cf. Wars of the English, etc., vol.2, part 2, p.516.
2. P.R.O. E404/71/4/38, cf. Wars of the English, etc., vol.2, part 2, p.517.

service from them. It did not even get that. The entreaties and temptations were of no avail, for the Venetian fleet, which probably included the Genoese vessels, sailed for home before they could be made use of; as in 1483, the Italian seamen preferred not to take sides in English domestic conflicts. The government in a peevish manner arrested Venetian merchants and demanded 36,000 ducats as ransom for them - a panicky and highhanded action that reveals the tension of that spring and the failing of the government's grip on events.[1]

Whilst these preparations were being made, Warwick in March sailed from Calais to Ireland with no one to prevent him. After discussions with the Duke of York there he set out to return at the beginning of May. Fulford's force, it would seem, was only just now at sea, for although its muster had been ordered at the beginning of March, his own power of authority over his retinue, and of punishment of rebels was only dated 24th April[2]. Probably the loan was slow in coming in, and it was no doubt difficult to find men and ships willing to serve.

---

1. Calendar of State Papers: Venice, ed. R. Brown, vol.1, 1864, No. 355; Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, p.317.
2. P.R.O. C76/142, m.17; cf. Foedera, XI, p.450.

But once at sea, Fulford, who (that same cynical chronicler wrote) had said that he would destroy the Earl of Warwick and his navy on pain of losing his head if the king would give him his expenses, did nothing and 'whenne he had consumed and wasted alle that money, his vyage was done and (he) wente home ayenne'[1]. It seems unlikely that he joined with Exeter, as the chroniclers make no mention of this when they recount Exeter's and Warwick's encounter; and if he had been at sea for six weeks and then returned for lack of money (which seems the most likely origin for the chronicler's story) he should at some point have come into contact with Warwick. But he did not, that honour being left to the Admiral himself. At least Fulford was right in his boast, for he lost his head at Bristol in September 1461, after a vain endeavour to stir up the West country: in a way a direct result of his failure to destroy Warwick in 1460.

Exeter was no more successful. He was given power to receive the submissions of rebels and to grant safeconducts

---

1. An English Chronicle, p.85, under April.

to prisoners whom he might take on 22nd and 26th April[1], and his force must have sailed soon after 8th May when the order for its muster was given[2], to be held near Sandwich. The'English Chronicle' then states that Exeter sailed from Sandwich to Dartmouth, where for lack of victual and money 'his soudyers were dysparbeled and wente awey fro hym'[3]. Between Sandwich and Dartmouth however, the chronicle continues, Exeter met with Warwick going to Calais, but whether this was after his soldiers had left him or before he had reached Dartmouth the chronicle is not clear; if Exeter had lost some of his men - the events probably happened in this order - it would explain his hesitation and final refusal to fight with Warwick, as well as do the usual stories of his seamen being unwilling to fight the mighty Earl. And Warwick also probably had a strong fleet of ships with him - his own ships in which he had sailed from Calais, others he had taken during his voyage, like the Julian of Fowey and the Mary of Bristol, which he had pressed into service on his way to Ireland[4], and perhaps others

---

1. Foedera, XI, p.451.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.607.
3. An English Chronicle, p.85.
4. P.R.O. C1/27/383, 471; C1/27/440.

that he had brought from Ireland. For all the chroniclers agree that Exeter came up with Warwick but that he did not give battle, and it may have been because his mariners owed more favour to Warwick than to him[1]; but it seems more likely that this was only one of the weaknesses of his force, that in fact it was a poor, scruffy, ill-knit expedition, and it was for this reason he 'durst nat sette opponne the Erle', which is the 'English Chronicle's' terse and only statement about Exeter's inactivity, and plain enough: he could not act because he was in a weaker condition than his opponent. Warwick did not want to become involved either so 'nichil actium fuit interecs[2]', and Warwick came to Calais, almost in triumph at the beginning of June.

Our historical imaginations can be stretched too thin oter this encounter perhaps; but if Exeter would or

---

1. The Great Chronicle of London, p.192; The Brut, p.529. Fabyan has this enigmatic statement (p.636): 'But were it for this cause (the favour of Exeter's seamen to Warwick) or for other whiche the commonfame runneth upon, which were longe to wryte...' Presumably it was rumoured that Exeter had been afraid.
2. 'A London Chronicle of 1460', ed. G. Baskerville, Eng. Hist. Rev., 1913, p.125. Whethamstede's register merely has that Warwick compelled Exeter to leave the sea and return to port: Registra Johannis Whethamstede, p.369.

could not attack, when he had the oppertunity - and it was rare in the 15th century that two opposed fleets should meet on the high seas, and even rarer that a real decision should be achieved - then it surely shows that for one reason and another he had lost all the advantages. For here was one of those moments in life when much could have been done that was left undone, when Warwick's gathering success could at least have been checked, for a defeat would have cost him dear in reputation and in the loss of valuable ships. But there was no decision, or only by default, namely that the government's seakeeping, undertaken by the Admiral of England, had failed absolutely. It had failed against what was a personal fleet, or rather a fleet of which Warwick's vessels were the compact nucleus. It was a struggle between the two forms: the personal fleet, not the king's this time but one of his greatest subject's, and the heterogeneous, impressed fleet, with casual masters and no sense of unity; the latter failed before the other. It was Warwick who had organised, who was refounding, a navy. In this May of 1460 its worth had been proved against a government which had long lost sight of the value of such a weapon; the command of the channel that it had thrown away Warwick

took up to use against the king; that government's neglect was his opportunity and he gratefully employed it to overthrow them.

Whilst Warwick had been away Somerset had been contained in Guisnes, and then decisively checked at Newham bridge on 23rd April; now on the Earl's return the garrison turned to aggression in the last days before England was once more invaded. On 6th June Warwick sent out carvels and balingers against some French ships, and there was a long and confusing fight before his men took a captured English merchantman from the French. As a correspondent wrote from Calais, 'and thus daily as my lorde (Warwick) hafe any knowlage of an enemye, anone my lorde makes his schippes to the see'[1]. On about the 21st June, Dinham, Sir John Wenlock and Lord Fauconberg crossed to Sandwich, which was now garrisoned and where reinforcements were being made ready for Somerset under Osbert Mountford. It was not a raid this time but the seizure of a base; munitions were captured, Mountford was sent back to Calais to be executed, and men came into Sandwich to join the invaders - as a clerk wrote in the

---

1. C.L. Kingsford, 'The Earl of Warwick at Calais in 1460', E.H.R., 1922, p.545: a letter in P.R.O. Ancient Correspondence, S.C.1/60/43.

chamberlains accounts at Rye: the counties of Kent and Sussex were up with the Earls of March and Warwick[1]. These two with Salisbury crossed to Sandwich on 26th June, and soon the army moved on to London. On 10th July they defeated the royalists forces' at Northampton.

Warwick's success was by no means complete, indeed the conflict within the realm had only just begun, but one phase, that of his exile as a rebel, was over. Not until the following spring when the confusion concerning the crown, the claims of York, the unpopular and then unfinished aggression of Queen Margaret had all been resolved by the battles of Wakefield, St. Albans, and Towton, and the Earl of March had ascended the throne as Edward IV was the real beginning of secure success achieved. With the death of York and Salisbury Warwick's influence, great already by his deeds for the cause, was strengthened, and his further career becomes part of the new reign. But his claim to supremacy in that sector of action in which he had long been powerful, the naval, had been realised before Edward became king. It was a

---

1. Hist. MSS. Comm. 5th Report, p.492.

just and undeniable reward. On 17th December 1460 he was appointed to go on the safekeeping of the sea, and to receive the revenues of tonnage and poundage for this purpose, from 29th September 1460 until the Easter of 1461 with the same powers that he had been given in December 1457[1]. He had returned, after demonstrating his ability for three years, to his rightful place.

Those three years show us much that is significant. The Yorkists came to power because, in the end, they were stronger on the battlefield; there, as always in the 15th century, the struggle was consummated and power won or lost - however miserable the manner of it, as at Ludford bridge or Northampton, St. Albans or Bosworth. What happened in those seemingly slight contests was vital. Yet Warwick's command of Calais and the narrow seas, with the support that he had in Kent, this also had been essential; he had acted upon Sigismund's reputed advice to Henry V on Dover and Calais:

'Kepe these too townes sure to youre magestie
As youre tweyne eyne to kepe the narowe see'[2]

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p.642.
2. The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, lines 20-21.

At Calais Warwick was not just a rebel, for he headed an alternative government and showed it to be a strong one against the enemy; on the sea he demonstrated to all who cared to see - and many did in that depressing time - that he had a policy, an English policy of patriotic aggression. And he had the means for that: a fleet. Calais and Warwick's fleet went together; their value cannot be appreciated singly for they were part of the same resistence, the same success. His strategy of these years was sound, save for the premature commitment that failed at Ludford bridge; he kept Calais, he kept the sea, and by so doing he advertised his ability at the same time as he proved his power and financed his rebellion.

His own fleet was one of the chief instruments for this; with it he showed himself stronger at sea than the government, by his arrogant control of the straits and by the inability of Exeter to challenge him, though there was the opportunity, in May 1460. He had what the government should have had, a fleet, and did what the government should have done, kept the sea. Their failure in this aspect of good government was thus one of the direct reasons for their downfall. It is extraordinary

that a fleet of only perhaps ten ships - Warwick had this many (at least) in 1464-5 - could contribute so much to this effect. The contribution must not be overestimated, but it must be recognised; for these few ships owned by one man constituted power. He who had them was more powerful than he who did not have them, and this is one measure of Warwick's success and the king's failure. In the 1460's, as we shall see, Edward IV was dependent on the Earl of Warwick, in this aspect as in many others; and in 1470-1 those ships and his naval ability were almost decisive again in the struggle with the king. Edward was astute enough to gain by his experience; his development of a force of royal ships was as much a feature of the return of the crown initiative as was any of the other much praised attributes of the 'New Monarchy'; it was in fact only the revival of one of the characteristics of the government of the strong king. By 1481 Edward had his own fleet, as Henry V had had: the power had returned to its proper master. How much of all this - Warwick in the 1450's, Edward IV in the 1470's - was conscious policy we can never know; probably both men acquired ships just because

they were realistic in their attitude towards power, and saw that these ships were a part of that power which they both sought and both obtained.

Thus the narrative of the years 1456-61 has its point, has an important link with the years preceding it from 1422 and with those succeeding it to 1485. The failure of the government after about 1436 to keep the sea, and their lack of a fleet have their consequences in this period; and the fact of Warwick's keeping the sea with a fleet has its repercussions in the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III.

Chapter 5.

The Pattern of Naval Activity

1461 - 1483.

The twenty-two years of Edward IV's reign do not at first glance appear to be one unit, for the years 1469-71 break into, in many ways decisively, the pattern of the period they divide. Particularly is this true in the actual administration of naval affairs. But the one chief reason why this period can be separated from the preceeding twenty or thirty years is that there was once again a strong king as head of the government - despite the Earl of Warwick. The years of inactivity in this reign (1464 to 1467, 1467 to 1480) were not due to the feebleness of the government, but simply to there being peace; and when there was war at sea then Edward was prepared for it, and able to prosecute it with some vigour. This in itself suggests that there was more security at sea for English merchant ships in Edward's reign than there had been in the twenty or so years before his accession, or rather before 1464 when the civil war had come to a temporary halt.

Certainly it seems that piracy by Englishmen was on the decline steadily throughout the reign, apart from the years 1470-1472[1]. Piracy of course there was, especially in the Thames Estuary, which remained (as we have seen) a happy hunting ground for those bent on quick, illegal profits[2]. Whilst in the West country conditions continued much as they had done in the reign of Henry VI well into the 1470's. The spoliation of a Breton ship by Cornish pirates in 1464, on which a commission of enquiry reported in 1468, is a good example of an ordinary West country piracy of the time, though no doubt such cases were becoming rarer as the king's justice reasserted itself in that region. The pirated vessel had been carrying some 92 tuns of wine, and we have a list of the persons to whom

---

1. See the appendix graph to Chapter 2; these figures are drawn from that source.

1461	5	1465	1	1469	0	1473	1	1478	0
1462	3	1466	2	1470	9	1474	3	1479	1
1463	4	1467	4	1471	3	1475	2	1480	0
1464	6	1468	1	1472	6	1476	2	1481	0
						1477	1	1482	1

1470 was an exceptional year anyway. But it is noteworthy that six out of the nine recorded piracies of that year, and four out of the six of 1472 were by men of the South Western ports.

2. Two late, and typical cases were in 1470 and 1479: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.217; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.146.

the greater part of this was distributed by the pirates. About 68 tuns was given, in small parcels of up to five tuns, to twenty-eight persons, including two tuns to John Basset, 'armiger', three tuns to William Trehere, 'vicarii de Seynt Beveran' and two tuns to one Agnes Trenwith; the remainder of the wine and the ship itself were kept by the five owners of the pirate ship[1]. The wide dispersal of the captured goods to the local population shows the continued involvement of at least some section of Cornish society in piracy, although the comparatively small sum of money involved (the wine was valued at £2. a tun) is probably much more typical of piracy as a whole than the £12,000 worth of goods taken from the Spanish galley in 1449. Piracy was a more humble and less rewarding pursuit - considering the risks involved - than we would sometimes imagine. Yet although this case was searchingly enquired into, and we might argue from this that justice was again being administered with some success, the two commissioners who carried out the enquiry do not inspire us with great confidence in

---

1. P.R.O. C47/30/10/12 and 13; see also Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.54, 57, 101, 104.

this conclusion; they were John Arundell (none other!) and Henry Bodrugan, who was also it seems a pirate and general disrespector of the peace[1].

Piracy in other areas gradually returned to its casual nature, where one case is much like another and none of them are outstanding; it became once more a matter of irregular opportunity rather than that of a regular business. Few important names appear, though the Earl of Oxford was the offender in one case[2], and Lord Grey of Codnor received a pirated ship (which he restored) in another[3], and there are few names that appear more than once or twice. The time of what we have called the lone pirate, the amateur, had returned. Even Thomas Yoksall of Portsmouth, who had a brief career in the 1470's, was no more than this. He took the Margaret of Ostend off the Isle of Sheppey in January 1473 - the stolen goods found their way to Suffolk[4] - and two ships of Zealand some years later[5]; he was ordered to be arrested in July

---

1. Rot. Parl., VI, p.135ff.
2. P.R.O. C1/48/270, no date.
3. P.R.O. C1/43/53, 1466.
4. P.R.O. C1/43/68-78.
5. P.R.O. C1/66/83.

1477, but was granted a general pardon in the following September[1], and so he disappears from view. As a major problem for the government, and as a genuine danger to the merchant piracy was not what it had been.

There are two principal reasons for this, though there were probably others of a local and individual kind. First there was the general picking up of trade; in the last thirty or thirty-five years of the century trade not piracy was the more profitable pursuit for English seamen. This had perhaps always been so, and was always to be so, but given the conditions of the 1440's and 1450's - the lack of justice, the lack of seakeeping, and sometimes the lack of cargoes to carry - some men had increased their activity as, or their involvement with, pirates. Now with the royal arm more powerful in retribution (our second reason), this aspect of their maritime enterprise was cut down. Although Edward IV did not revive the Statute of the Conservators of Truces - for the conditions at sea did not perhaps warrant it[2] - the general strength of his

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.50, 54.
2. Rot. Parl., VI, p.163; 1474-5 parliament: it was stated that the statute was not to be revived.

government was sufficient to deter many men from piracy. Gathering prosperity and an efficient administration did more to prevent robbery on the seas than any measures of seakeeping.

But Edward did act in this manner if pirates had become troublesome beyond the accepted limit. In the West country in the early 1470's he took drastic action. In November 1474 all seamen in Fowey were ordered to be arrested, as they had committed so many piracies, had not heeded the king's mandates and daily were doing worse[1]. In April 1475 a general commission of enquiry into piracy in the South West was named[2], and in this same year Sir John Fortescue was paid £100, and then £145. 16. 0d. for suppressing rovers in the western parts[3]. Two other such expeditions against pirates were sent out in Edward's reign, both significantly enough in the Thames estuary. Sir John Howard received twenty marks for the victualling of two ships in August 1470; with these vessels he

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.492.
2. Ibid, p.525.
3. P.R.O. E405/60,61. B.M. Stowe MS. 440, folio 69v, gives the information under 12 Edward IV that Fortescue was on the 'gubernacionem et repressicionem' of various robbers at sea. This service therefore was undertaken sometime between 1472 and 1475.

undertook to capture the rovers that were in the Thames[1]. This was a government grant to private enterprise in the interests of both. Also in 1483 the king sent out Christopher Collins, with sixty men in the carvel Christopher Lockwood of Sandwich, to take rovers and other ill-disposed persons who robbed and despoiled ships coming into the port of London. Collins was successful and took John Miles and others of his company; he was paid £3. for his costs and £97. reward by Richard III in 1484[2].

These three relatively minor naval operations were the only ones mounted against pirates; all three were specifically stated to be for that purpose, and each was in a particular area. Other forces sent to keep the sea went against the enemy proper, and almost all with a set duty to perform. There were none - except perhaps that of Lords Scales and Mountjoy in 1468 - of those expeditions of the 1440's and 1450's whose intention apparently was only to go to sea and sail there for a time at random. They were an example of the general disorder; the naval ventures of Edward IV's reign were the results of planning on the part

---

1. P.R.O. E404/74/3/31.
2. P.R.O. E404/78/2/44.

of an ordered administration, and direct answers to a situation at sea that was generally not beyond that administration's powers to control. Thus piracy, or rather the response to it, had only a small place in the naval activity of the reign; other considerations were more important.

Two functions of Edward's naval forces must first be described before these considerations are given the main attention. In the 15th century men looked after themselves at sea, and the government's interest was seen as a narrow one of defence and attack. The crown was not averse from helping those who helped themselves, particularly with ships and men (when it had them) or with rewards of money or remittance of customs; but action beyond the straightforward needs of warfare was never conceived by the government, although once in operation, or achieved by individuals the king often helped or repaid; so it was in these two cases: the protection of the Calais wool fleets, and the safeguarding of the East Anglian fishermen. Richard III, as we shall see, seems to have had a real sense of the royal obligation to assist and protect those of his subjects whose business was in shipping; but during Edward's reign any such emotion was only hesitantly a

motive for action. We must now see it at work.

The royal protection of the Stapler's annual or twice-yearly fleets sailing to Calais arose from an agreement of February 1473 between Crown and Staple involving the former's debt of £21,000, which was entered on the Rolls of Parliament[1]:

> And also it is ordeyned, enacted and established by the seid auctorite, that duryng the said terme of XVI yeres, and unto the tyme the said Maire, Felishipp and Marchauntes, and every of theym, be hooly and fully content and payed of the said somme of XXI M£, that at such tymes as the said Maire, Felishipp and Merchauntes, will ship or doo ship their Goodes and Merchaundises unto the Towne of Caleys, be it be oon tyme or II tymes, of every or any such yeres, if any such Shippyng be, it be leeful to theym to purvey or ordeyne, by the overslght and advis of the Tresorer of England for the tyme beyng, sufficiaunt and sure conducte for the sure conveyaunce of the said Merchaundises to the said Towne of Caleys, if the Kyng nor his said Tresorer of Englond for the tyme beyng, after due notice yeven to the same Tresourer of every

---

1. Rot. Parl. VI, page 55.

such Shippyng to be II tymes in the yere, purvey and ordeyne noon such Sufficiaunt and sure Conduct; then the Maire, Felishipp and Merchaunts, to perceyve and reteigne in their owne handes, and in the handes of every of theym, of the seid Custumes and Subsidies, over and above the said somme of XM XXIIℓ IIIIs VIIId. by yere, for the said ordinarie payments of the Capitaigne, the Kyng's Lieutenaunt, and Souldeours etc., and over and above the 100ℓ yerely, for the fees and rewardes of the Custumers and Controller of the Cust' and Subsidies of Welles and Wollefelles in the Port of London, all such and so many sommes of money, as by theym shal be so reasonably by the said oversight and advis expended and emploid uppon the said conducte, to be made at oon or II tymes in every of the said yeres.

It was presumably the staple merchants who suggested this arrangement; but one would like to know how agreement was reached, and why such royal protection, as a satisfactory way of repaying a debt, was regarded as a useful service - by crown and staple alike. For the crown's contributions were not on a large scale - a few ships and men, and these

one would have thought the merchants would have provided for themselves. No doubt the free hand given the Staplers to choose their own measures of protection at the king's expense was the most important aspect.

The accounts of the Stapler's expenses survive for the years 1474-1476 amongst the Exchequer records[1]. William Fetherston, master of the king's ship Caricon, sailed with that ship in the fleet going from London to Calais in 1474 and saw to the victualling and wages of 200 men in that ship, and the service of his own ship The Mary Grace; and that of the Burnet and again the Caricon with the same complement on the voyage of 1475. Indeed in this last year he was, with John Cole of Sandwich, the organiser of the convoys of London and Ipswich vessels, which probably met off Sandwich and so sailed for Calais. In 1474 Robert Vincent of Dover[2], was as much the organiser as Fetherston; for he went with his ship in the London fleet

---

1. P.R.O. E101/198/8, E101/55/8.
2. Vincent was also on the safe-keeping of the sea during the army's crossing in 1475; he received £42. for serving with 40 men in his Barbara of Dover for two months: E 405/60 m. 3v. He was one of the important citizens of Dover in the 1470's and mayor in 1476-1477: B.M. Egerton MS. 2090 esp. folio 148.

and saw to the sending of a boat from Calais to Dover to give warning of men of war; whilst on the Hull fleets's journey earlier in that year he also served and sent a man of trust sailing in his ship 'skowring' the coast.

The total cost for the measures of the first account for 6th April 1474 to 6th April 1475 was £331. 5. 7d.[1], and for the second for 6th April 1475 to 6th April 1476 was £171. 5. 0d. There were five ships on the London voyage and five on the Hull voyage of 1474; whilst four were sufficient for the combined London and Ipswich fleet of 1475. All were well manned with soldiers and fighting men, their period of service in 1475 being two weeks. The ships used were local ones - from Hull and Grimsby in the Hull fleet, from Woodbridge for the Ipswich fleet, from London for that going out from London, and these were supplemented by Vincent's ship, Fetherston's and the King's Caricon.

These spare facts show that the Staplers were taking seriously the agreement of 1473, although the expenditure,

---

1. Or £330. 5. 7d.: my total. But this account is badly damaged and some information (for example, the period of Fetherston's service, the names of the Northern ships) is missing. The two fleets separately cost £189. 0. 4d. (London), £141. 5. 3d. (Hull).

at this rate, would hardly come to £21,000 in sixteen years. 1475 was a year of war and the years before and after were filled with rumours of wars; perhaps this is the reason for the protection asked and given during this time, and that for the original agreement. Robert Vincent's man watching for men of war was looking for foreign enemies as much as for pirates; wool ships seldom appear as the victims of piracy. Probably then a war-measure, a precaution against the uncertain time, the convoy system had begun well in the first of its sixteen years. The king's part was small; he merely paid, and sent his foremost master with one of the royal ships to see that all went well. His obligation to protect was at the least influenced by the need to pay old debts, at the most an intelligent oversight and probably a skilled direction of his subjects' own arrangements. This last is the major note of Edward's civil (rather than militant) naval programme.

There is no evidence of the convoys in the years 1478 - 1478, perhaps they were discontinued during these peaceful years. But in 1479 the king's Mary of the Tower

otherwise the Caricon [1] and the ship Mary Curtis were appointed by the crown to go on the safeguarding of the wools going to Calais and of the fleet going to Sealand to the mart there. In June artillery and weapons of all kinds were delivered by John Sturgeon, master of the ordnance, to the pursers of those ships for that purpose[2]. Again in 1480 William Fetherston, now master of the king's Falcon, was paid for his service in going with 140 men in that ship on the Boston wool fleet's voyage to Calais[3], and the Caricon was on similar duty, probably with the London fleet[4]. Again also the London ships sailing to Bruges mart had the Mary Gale along to protect them by the king's commandment[5]. And in June 1481 the Mary of the Tower was at Dover being victualled there for her voyage

---

1. This ship may have been the original Caricon, may be that ship bought by the king in 1478 of that name, and renamed Mary; throughout 1479 this was her official title: Mary of the Tower otherwise the Caricon. Both these vessels specialised in this convoy duty.
2. P.R.O. PSO 1/47/2412.
3. P.R.O. E404/77/1/33, cf. Devon F. Issues of the Exchequer, page 500; P.R.O. E405/68, 69. Once at Calais Fetherston's vigilance continued, as we see from The Cely Papers, ed. H.E. Malden, C.S., 1900, number 52, from Calais 13th May.
4. P.R.O. E404/77/1/38.
5. P.R.O. E404/77/1/38. The king's wools were also conveyed by Fetherston from Southampton to Calais between June and August of this year: P.R.O. E28/92, cf. E405/69.

to Calais with the wool fleet; Richard Rainford, a squire of the Household, was paid £4. 13. 8d. for riding about Kent to see to this, and other matters concerning the sure conveyance of the wools to Calais[1].

These glimpses of the system at work in 1479-1481, years of war and impending war, show that it had become regular in pattern and execution; that one or perhaps two of the king's ships sailed, providing the heavy armour, along with local vessels; that the king took a decided interest in the success of each year's ventures, Rainford's busy June of 1481 shows this (he was coming and going between Sittingbourne, Sandwich, Dover and London at the king's command); and that the ships of the Merchant Venturers were also being given an escort of a similar kind, at least in some years[2]. The system continued in Richard III's reign, into that of Henry VII, and the

---

1. P.R.O. PSO 1/50/2570a.
2. The Merchant Venturers' ships went in convoy and armed when this was required, for instance in 1475: Acts of Court of the Mercers Company 1453-1529. ed. F.D. Watney and L. Lyell, 1936. page 86; but perhaps a royal ship along provided an additional guarantee of security, and that leadership and authority necessary for corporate defence. This service was intermittant, perhaps given when asked for.

Flanders ships also received protection on occasion[1]. It was a special service, no integral part of naval administration, for Rogers when he became Clerk in 1480 does not have anything to do with it; it was strictly an agreement between king and merchants. But royal ships and royal mariners were used, indeed they led the convoys and, at least in 1481, the government itself was involved in the organisation of the fleet. The king's obligation to protect this branch of international commerce - this to the Low Countries was the easiest to control and Richard III was to extend his protection to the Iceland trade also - was more than that of a debtor conciliating his creditors; it seems to have been a genuine understanding that his naval responsibilities extended beyond the active repression of his enemies, that they also involved the less glorious, but more often successful, task of protecting English merchant ships and fishing boats.

For the fishermen of East Anglia in the last years of Edward's reign also benefitted from this awareness of the royal government's. Sometime in 1482 William Fetherston

---

1. See below, Chapter 8.

and John Davy, another important king's mariner, and Edmund Ince were appointed 'guards, convoyers, and wafters for the security of the king's subjects of Norfolk and Suffolk and the ships and fishermen at sea there, against the king's enemies', as on 9th September the king appointed supervisors over them. These were to communicate with the fishermen for contributions towards their defence, and to arrest all who presumed to be such guards[1]. A similar system was in operation in 1481, although unofficially it would seem. For on 20th September 1482 Earl Rivers and Thomas Rogers amongst others were commissioned to enquire who had been the protectors of fishermen in the previous year, how many of the fishermen had contributed to their expenses, how much these were and who had collected them[2]. We can perhaps see in this a private enterprise, whose origin in 1481 was due to the dangers from the Scots, which in 1482, when Scottish ships roved and dispoiled more freely than in the previous years, was continued with royal servants as guards and royal officials as

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 317.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 322.

supervisors[1]. This practice continued into Richard's reign and was developed on a wider scale in Henry VII's time when the Cinque Ports' fishermen benefitted from a similar system[2]. We can see with certainty that the men of East Anglia had in 1481, perhaps earlier[3], organised a method of self-defence, and to this Edward gave the blessing of royal approval and the aid of skilled men from his service. His successors were to continue both, as the measures became regular and the pattern of organisation familiar from year to year. There was no great, urgent concern for the maintenance of fishermen, the constant worry of Elizabethan statesmen; but surely there was here the realisation that the king, whilst he was fighting a war had some duty to protect those of his subjects who were wont to suffer thereby.

---

1. Almost certainly one or two royal ships also. In 1482 Davy was master of the Carvel of Eu, Fetherston of the Elizabeth, both of which served through the Summer from 3rd June to 9th September (the very day that the supervisors were appointed) with these men. They were therefore, at some time, on this protective duty. P.R.O. E405/70, 71.
2. See below, Chapter 8.
3. In 1471 the citizens of Orwell had hired a carvel of war for the safety of fishermen at sea there: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 318.

If there was no sense of duty or obligation, then at least there was the feeling that these measures of self-protection, conceived by others, should have royal support. These first years of the 1480's were in many ways germinal, not least in the idea of the king's more careful oversight of his seafaring subjects.

But it would be a pretence to say that this idea was of much importance - as a motive for action - in Edward's reign. Naval activity is determined chiefly by war. Out of the kaleidoscope of war we must extract from its shifting patterns that of naval action, only sketchily relating it to these of diplomacy, of politics, of land warfare. Pirates were not the enemy, measures to protect were few: most expeditions were sent out against the enemies of the Yorkist regime.

The years 1461-1463 were a time of real danger and more or less constant watch; the running fight of the Lancastrians was at hardly any stage, until the last, a hopeless one. That the government survived was due as much to the efforts of the Earl of Warwick as to the regal position of the young Edward. Warwick had been retained to serve at sea against the king's enemies after his return in 1460, and on 24th November ships for his

retinue were ordered to be arrested at Dartmouth, and to be equipped at the Earl's own expense[1]. On 17th December he was granted the whole subsidy of Tonnage and Poundage from the preceding 29th September until the following Easter with similar powers to those given him in December 1457, to serve against the king's enemies and to punish pirates during that period[2]. During these months enemies and pirates must have been difficult to distinguish. On 6th March 1461 a fleet was to be sent against the Lancastrians in the Northern parts, and Henry Auger and Edmund Ince, its leaders[3], were almost certainly lieutenants of the Earl of Warwick. Auger and Ince may have commanded those fleets that the Yorkist gentry had raised in these hectic times, first the Northern one and then, in June, that of six ships and 700 armed men that the king asked his supporters in Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire to provide and equip[4]. Edward had also written freely to his friends in East Anglia for

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-1461, page 652.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-1461, page 642.
3. Cal. Close Rolls, 1461-1468, page 55.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 33, 24th June. The men of York, Scarborough and other places in the North were stated to have provided a fleet for half a year against the French and Scots.

support[1]. The king in these early months leaned heavily on his supporters, indeed almost completely on the resources and ability of Warwick.

He had need to; for his enemies, and theirs' too, were strong enough. In June the Milanese ambassador in France was writing that a large fleet had left Normandy and was in the western channel (it was said) sailing to Wales. He continued: 'In the direction of the strait of Dover and Calais which is eighteen miles, Warwick is said to have a fleet, not so much to give battle to the French one in the open sea, but merely to prevent them from landing in the island and to guard that passage'[2]. If the ambassador had received correct information then Warwick's policy was a wise and successful one and the Yorkist fleets were being used to good purpose. But along the channel coasts that Summer the French were feared and their arrival awaited. Their capture of the

---

1. The Paston Letters, ed. James Gairdner, Library Edition, number 459. Robert Lethum wrote to John Paston on 19th June that he and others had received alletter from the king desiring them to find men for 'the kepyng of the see'. Lethum had promised one man, to be ready when he should have knowledge where the shipping should be; the others too had promised men.
2. Calendar of State Papers: Milan, ed. A.B. Hinds, number 109.

castle of Mont-Orgueil in Jersey made Edward apprehensive of their further designs, and already in May he had sent men into the South West to urge his subjects there to resist them, and ordered his officers in the Isle of Wight to ready themselves against an attempted invasion[1]. In the South West too these good Lancastrians Sir Baldwin Fulford and William, the Bastard of Exeter and their supporters were stirring up the people, and perhaps even 'saylenge on the see toward Brettayne to reyse pepull agaynes Kynge Edwarde'[2]. They hoped for a speedy French invasion, which, despite reports of their raiding in Cornwall[3], never came, and Fulford and one John Haysond were taken, carried to Bristol and executed there in

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, pages 34, 38; Scofield C.L. The Life and Reign of Edward IV, pages 179-180. Geoffrey Gate, captain of Carisbrooke Castle, was at least successful in capturing Edmund, son of the Duke of Somerset: P.R.O. E404/72/1/30; 28th July.
2. Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, ed. James Gairdner, C.S., 1880 page 77; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 33.
3. Cal. State Papers: Milan, numbers 110, 115; Charles de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine Française, Vol.2, (1900), page 296, states that about ten ships, eight of them Basque, and a Breton force were fitted out to sail to Wales in Spring 1461; but they only reached Cornwall, where they raided. Scofield op.cit., vol. 1, pages 179-180, says that this report (of the raiding) was unfounded. Kingsford, however, (Prejudice and Promise in 15c.England ps. 55-8, and 177-179.) using two documents from Early Chancery Proceedings (61/29/327, 28/478) which mention the French at Plymouth in May 1461, shows that there was at least a French attack on that town in the Spring.

September on Edward's visit to that city[1]. In the South East the men of the Cinque Ports were on the watch for the Frenchmen, riding from place to place with report of them, and at Lydd a man with letters from the Duke of Somerset was caught and taken up before the king[2]. Margaret Paston too wrote to John in June that she had been told that there were many French ships off Yarmouth and that they would do harm on the coast[3]. Ubiquitous as the French appear to have been, unreal as many of the fears were, the danger was there; as Summer wore on the Yorkist government began to organise against this threat.

Edward still used varied methods. In July he appealed to his loyal subjects in the counties of Devon, Wiltshire and Southampton to organise, equip and supply a fleet for half a year[4], doubtless against the expectant Lancastrians of the South West; on the 11th July he granted a loan of £1,966. 10. 0d. to Warwick, on his grant of Tonnage and

---

1. Ricart's Kalendar, ed. Smith L.T., C.S. 1872, page 43.
2. Hist. Mss. Comm. Fifth Report, appendix, page 493 (Rye), page 523 (Lydd) cf. The Records of Lydd, ed. Arthur Finn, pages 196-197.
3. The Paston Letters, Lib. Ed., number 462.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 37; 23-24th July.

Poundage, for the 'setting forthe of Navy to the see and keeping of the same'[1], and on the 12th July his men Auger and Ince were appointed commanders of the force[2]. Now the navy was set forth. On the 20th May there had been an order to victual the king's ships[3] - one wonders which ships these were, but now in July the flood of preparation comes. On the 4th William Thomas and William Fetherston (one of Warwick's captains) were appointed to take ships and mariners for the King's fleet, along with other persons[4], on the 5th John Stokes and John Aldrey were appointed to provide victuals for the expedition, as were Auger and Ince[5], and on the 27th these two were given war equipment for the safeguard of 'our ships'[6]. They probably led the fleet in the king's Grace Dieu which was on 9th August armed, victualled and manned at Warwick's expense[7]. The king's great (and only other) ship The Margaret was also hastily equipped for service[8].

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/72/1/15, cf. E 403/822, 857 under 2nd July. He was paid 'per manus Edmundi Yns', which suggestw that the money was paid direct to Ince for this purpose.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 102.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 13.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 36.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 14.
6. P.R.O. E404/72/1/12.
7. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 38.
8. P.R.O. E404/72/1/17; 20th July.

As the Milanese ambassador wrote that the French fleet was being reinforced in Normandy[1], these English preparations were necessary to convince the enemies of Edward's regime that he was determined to resist all attacks upon it. No French or Lancastrian invasion came; no doubt Charles VII had been unprepared to attack England, yet the rumours, the anxieties of the Summer of 1461 had sufficient reason behind them for these measures to be taken at sea; and these too must certainly have deterred French and Lancastrians alike. Warwick's control of naval organisation and his lieutenant's command of naval forces was one of the chief contributions to the foundation of Edward's power. During the next two years, with the French led by Pierre de Brézé, the Scots and Margaret of Anjou active in the North and many Lancastrians still in England, the danger hardly slackened; nor did Warwick's control and energy.

As Autumn of 1461 came the danger, for this year, grew less; but ships from the Severn Estuary ports were commissioned in September to go to the siege of Pembroke

---

1. Cal. State Papers: Milan, number 115.

castle, which the Lancastrians surrendered on the 30th of that month[1]. Whilst on 9th October Robert Radcliffe was appointed Admiral of Norfolk and Suffolk[2]. This was a unique appointment, and although made (presumably) for judicial purposes demonstrates the variety of responses in this full year. In October and November the king's Margaret and other ships were equipped and victualled[3] for service in the North[4].

It is not likely that ships patrolled during the Winter months, but by February 1462 preparations for the season's activity had begun. On 26th February the Earl of Warwick was paid £1,000. out of the clerical tenth, for this

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, pages 99-100; Scofield, vol. I, page 202.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 41. R.G. Marsden in 'The Vice-Admirals of the Coast', E.H.R., 1907, page 471, says nothing about the real nature of this appointment.
3. P.R.O. E 404/72/1/53; E 403/824.
4. A fleet may have been in the North for some time. Payments to men for victualling ships in the North were made in 1462, and give no indication of the time when the service occurred; for example John Wainfleet: P.R.O. E404/72/2/29, 14th June 1462. Auger and Ince (king's commissioners and victuallers of the northern fleet) had been supplied with beer from a brewer of Hull: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 272, 10th June 1462. On 26th November 1461 however John Twyer was paid £195. 17. 0d. for victualling Newcastle and the king's ships on the sea: P.R.O. E 403/824.

the first year of a three year contract to keep the sea against the king's enemies and the 'repressing of theire malice'[1]. His indenture[2] stated that the term of his service was to run from 11th November 1461; and no doubt in connection with this, arrangements were made in April for the transference of the revenues of Tonnage and Poundage to him. The collectors of this subsidy at London were directed to pay to him all such revenues that should come to them for the period 29th September 1461 to 1st March 1462, without any account to be made between them, they to receive sufficient acquittance from him testifying to these payments[3]. These monies were to be well used in the Summer. Not only was Warwick financially independent in naval affairs, probably also the idea of a punitive expedition against the French coast was his, for on the

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/72/1/110.
2. Now lost; perhaps dated 1st February: Oppenheim M. Administration etc., page 34. B.M. Stowe MS. 440 f.67 is an abstract, probably from E 404, cf. Foedera XI page 488.
3. P.R.O. PSO 1/22/1152; a letter to the Exchequer notified them of these arrangements: PSO 1/22/1153; Both 1st April. cf. E 159/239, Trinity 1462, m.6.

20th March he was given authority to levy contributions from any places of the king's enemies provided that these were not prejudicial to the captain of Calais[1]; and it was Warwick's uncle and firm supporter, William Neville, the Earl of Kent, who was appointed, on 30th July, Admiral of England to lead such an expedition.[2]

The preparations for Neville's expedition were considerable, but it is not easy to discover whether they were all for this one purpose; for instance Avery Cornborough in the west country was paid over £500 not only for rigging and victualling three ships to go with Neville, but also for equipping two of these vessels for keeping the sea after the completion of that voyage, for buying ships and part shares in ships for the king and equipping these in Cornwall and Devon[3]. Cornborough's industry in the west was matched by other officials and

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 176. Says that Warwick was appointed to the custody of the sea on 13th February; cf. P.R.O. E159/239, Trinity 1462, m.5.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 195, cf. Foedera, XI, page 490. Appointed during pleasure only, as Warwick was already Admiral: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 89, and on 12th October of this year Richard, Duke of Gloucester was made Admiral of England, Ireland and Aquitaine for life: an honorary position: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 214.
3. P.R.O. E404/72/3/29, 50.

supporters of Edward's government there, who were asked in May and June to provide victuals and array men at their own expense for the king's fleet[1]. Sir William Herbert too was using ships from Bristol and the ports in that area for the siege of Harlech[2]. Whilst in East Anglia that Summer Sir John Howard and Sir Thomas Wal*e*grave were busy preparing two ships from Lynn, and perhaps other vessels also, for service[3], and the authorities at Lynn in June, decided to supply £80 worth of victuals for the ships that were to serve 'de hoc portu versus mare pro defensione regni'[4]. At Norwich Sir Gilbert Debenham was having trouble with the city authorities, but was eventually successful in commissioning there the Barge of Yarmouth, and another ship from that port was also readied for the royal service[5]; further, Mohn Twyer and

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 204; P.R.O. E403/826 under 1st June.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 100.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 203; 29th May. Howard himself also victualled a ship of Harwich: PR.O E403/826 under 23rd May; the Anne of Lynn also went with Neville: P.R.O. E403/825 under 30th June.
4. Lynn Borough Records, Assembly Book III, p.175; see also Chamberlain's Accounts, 1461-62 (E.A.54), where John Sorell, who had been to report concerning the victualling of ships in the port, was paid 13/4d.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 206; The Paston Letters Lib. Ed., numbers 518, 521-523; The Records of Norwich, ed. W. Hudson and J.C. Tingey, (1906-10) page 95. See also two articles by W.I. Haward, in E.H.R. 1926, History, 1928-9.

others were given a general commission to take ships, mariners and victuals there for the king[1].

Probably most of the vessels that these places supplied were small, perhaps supply, ships. Louis XI believed that Neville had about twenty-one of these, the other fourteen ships of his force being great warships with fore and after stages[2]. Of these seven were certainly Warwick's, another the Earl of Kent's out of ten commissioned on 16th June[3]. To these the king's Margaret and some other vessels equipped and victualled by him, must be added[4]. The collecting together and fitting out of this force took some time[5], and it was not until early August that it sailed out of Sandwich[6].

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls,1461-1467, page 201, 1 July; P.R.O. E 403/829 under 23rd June, John Sorell. Edward's letters were sent broadcast this Summer; even the citizens of Salisbury contributed £20. 14. 0d. towards the manning and victualling of the Trinity of Lymington for Neville's fleet: Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Coll.4, page 204. And letters from the king and Warwick were sent to New Romney to have men ready for the fleet: Hist. MSS. Comm., Fifth Report, appendix page 544.
2. Lettres de Louis XI, ed. J. Vaesen, vol.2, page 68, 72.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 204.
4. P.R.O. E 403/825, 826 (formerly fragment numbered 834; is now attached to 826). In all about the 35 that Louis had heard had left Sandwich.
5. P.R.O. E 403/825, 826, 827, 829 passim.
6. Between 30th July (Neville's appointment) and 13th August (when Louis wrote his letter).

The defensive measures of 1461 were now changed to offensive enterprise, and this September it was Louis XI and the French who had to make preparations against an English attack[1]. But the expedition was directed against the enemies of Edward's new government, it was still a defensive policy in this sense, whether it was to intercept Margaret from going to the North in which it failed, or to reply to the French plunder of Sandwich in 1457 in which it was a success. The importance that was accorded the expedition is shewn not only by the planning and preparation that went into it, but also by the number of lords who accompanied Neville[2]. If Margaret was not deterred, the French were from any offensive for this year.

---

1. Lettres de Louis XI, pages 74-80.
2. Lords Saye and Audley: see P.R.O. E 403/825 under 14th July; Clinton and Sir John Howard: Baronage of England, Dugdale W. 1675-76. vol. 2, page 266. Stow, Annales of England, 1601 edition, p.691, also has Clinton, Howard and Sir Richard Waldgrave. The Great Chron. of London, ed. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, 1938, p.199, says certain prelates were with the expedition, cf. Chronicles of London, ed. C.L. Kingsford, 1905, p.177. Warwick received £100: E405/40, m.5. The minstrels of Lord Clinton were at Sandwich this Summer, when they were paid 1s. by the town. Warwick was there also - he was given gifts, and the king was there on 6th August - perhaps the day on which Neville sailed: B.M. Additional MS. 33511, Sandwich Treasurers' Accounts 1462-1463. Edward kept in touch with Neville at sea; John Cole was sent with the king's letters; the first of his services to the crown: P.R.O. E 403/825.

The force took Conquet near Brest and ravaged the Isle de Ré, whilst the French along the Biscay coast waited, just as the English had waited in the previous Summer, for an attack that did not come. La Roncière with distinct patriotism remarks that: 'Jugeant impossible tout coup de main le comte de Kent retourna désarmer en Angleterre', and Scofield also regards the expedition as a failure[1]. But when Margaret did sail, on 7th October, she had only a small force[2]; Louis had been taught that he could not tamper with English politics too actively: in this the expedition had hardly been a failure, and, as The Great Chronicle of London, says, the expedition 'Retournyd into England wyth Joye and worshypp[3].

However, Margaret had reached Northumberland on 25th October, despite the ships that Cornborough had sent to

---

1. La Roncière Histoire etc. vol. 2, pages 315-316; Scofield vol. 1. page 258; Chronicles of London ed. C.L. Kingsford page 177. The defeat of sixty Spanish, French and Breton ships, as reported by John Russ to John Paston, does not seem likely, so too with the wild reports of French prisoners in March 1462. These illustrate the rumours that were rife in 1462: powerful enemies and great victories. The Paston Letters, Lib.Ed. numbers 512, 531, cf. C.L. Kingsford in History, 1928-29.
2. Scofield, vol. 1, page 261.
3. The Great Chronicle of London, p.199.

sea after Neville's return and the other force which was in Northern waters in the autumn of 1462[1]. As 1463 came and the Lancastrians were successful on the border, Edward himself went North and a fleet was prepared to be led by the Earl of Worcester, who was retained on the 5th August[2]. The settlement of the regime was not yet completed, the fight had to be continued, and Edward was still far from being his own governor in naval affairs. Worcester was given financial control of the operations at sea; the crown seems not even to have contributed the few ships that it had to Neville's fleet in the previous year. Either Edward and Warwick were too busy on the border to bother with only secondary naval measures, or Worcester was Warwick's deputed lieutenant (which is more likely) and Warwick's grip on authority continued firm for another year - the second of his three year contract.

There remains in the British Museum an incomplete transcript (from the collection of Sir Julius Caesar)[3] of Worcester's indenture with the crown - the indenture itself nowhere survives. The Earl was to serve from the

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.211, 231; P.R.O. E403/827, under 26th October 11th Nov.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.282; Scofield, vol.1,p.292.
3. B.M. Lansdowne MS. 171, folio 167.

17th August for three months until the 17th November; during that time he was to keep 3,000 fighting men at sea in ships, arrested and paid for at his own cost, against the king's enemies and rebels. For this purpose he was to have from the crown £4,000 (in money), with an additional £500 by way of reward. The only other clause that has been transcribed is the routine one that Worcester was not to molest or hurt the king's friends and subjects. The greater part of this money had already been made available to him: on 6th July the Treasurer was required to pay him £4,680, and he certainly had £3,500 of this soon afterwards, but by assignment[1]; probably it was this sum, or part of it, which by an order of 4th August was to be kept at the Exchequer in the form of tallies, and these the Exchequer officials were to change at such time and place as the Earl or his attorneys should desire[2]. Worcester also had three other small payments from the Exchequer: on 24th July he received £133. 6. 8d. in payment for a carvel he had bought for the keeping of the sea and for the king's use[3]; and in May 1464 he received £172 for mariners' payments[4], and £120

---

1. P.R.O. E404/72/3/57, cf. E28/89, E403/829, under 23 June.
2. P.R.O. E404/72/3/68.
3. P.R.O. E404/72/3/64.
4. P.R.O. E403/382, under 7th May.

by way of gift[1]. Apart from these financial arraggements Worcester was also involved in others concerning the revenues of Tonnage and Poundage. On 30th June 1463 there was an agreement that Worcester was to have £1,938. 12. 3d. and Robert Stillington, Keeper of the Privy Seal, £960. 6. 8d. for the purpose of keeping the sea, out of Tonnage and Poundage at London, Sandwich and Southampton, these two men to have the nomination of one collector of the subsidy at each of those ports[2]. No doubt Stillington's money had been lent to Worcester, and in this manner he was to obtain repayment, for it was stated that they had entered into indentures over this. Perhaps we can see in this an early attempt by the Earl to finance the impending naval operations, presumably according to some understanding with the Earl of Warwick, for, owing to complications with the grant of Tonnage and Poundage to Warwick, Worcester was still owed £112. 7. 6d.

---

1. P.R.O. E404/72/4/42, 12th May.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-67, p.283.

from this source in February 1467[1], and it was probably for this reason also that Worcester was given money from the Exchequer later in the summer to speed his preparations. It is clear that his expenses were high - even if he only received about £4,000 - and that <u>he</u> did what he thought best with the money: the clause in his indenture that he was to be responsible for the ships to carry his force for example; his was a position of extraordinary freedom, a throwback to the middle years of the century, save that Worcester was one of Edward's most trusted counsellors. The methods of the middle years remained, only now, in the 1460's, new and stronger loyalties were coming to save them from abuse.

During July ships were collected at Sandwich, and by the time that the force sailed Northwards it must have comprised about twenty-five vessels in all, six at least

---

1. P.R.O. E404/73/2/55. If this document were not so badly mutilated it might tell us more; as it is we only have half-sentences about the indentures between Worcester and Stillington, and the inability of Worcester to obtain payment because of Warwick's grant.
In addition to all this, some further sums were disbursed for victualling Worcester's force and fitting it out at Sandwich: to Sir John Scot £100: P.R.O. E404/72/4/42; to Edmund Widewell of Yarmouth £100: P.R.O. E404/72/3/76; to John Wykes £66. 13. 4d: P.R.O. E403/830, under 18th August.

being Warwick's, one of the late Earl of Kent's, four perhaps Worcester's. Sir John Howard fitted out the Mary Talbot, probably his own ship, and the king's Margaret and Grace Dieu were also in the fleet[1]. The force was at sea in the North by the beginning of September; clearly Edward's intention was to combine his attempts by land and sea to winkle out Margaret, de Brézé and their supporters from their Northern fortresses, and destroy them. Edward himself only reached Yorkshire and it was Warwick who completed the first part of the scheme; but destroying one's enemies in fifteenth - century warfare was no easy task and Margaret, avoiding Worcester's blockading fleet, escaped narrowly into France[2]. Worcester returned to criticism, and a general sense of failure surrounded this year's operations in the North. There was a feeling, as one chronicler put it, that 'alle was loste and in vayne, and cam too noo purpose,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, pages 281, 302; P.R.O. E 403/830 under 18th August; for Howard: Manners and Household Expenses of England, ed. Beriah Botfield, Roxburghe Club 1841, pages 188-191, 192-194, 196, 222. Worcester and Howard were in contact during the preparations: Manners, p.218, 221.

2. Chronicles of London, ed. C.L. Kingsford, page 178; Chronicles etc. Robert Fabyan page 653; John Tiptoft, R.J. Mitchell, 1938, page 93, The Great Chronicle of London, p.200.

neyther by water ne by londe'[1], a contrast to the attitude on the return of Neville in the previous year. Worcester was never again to serve at sea; his unique experimnce had not been very successful, though to blockade such a rough coast can hardly have been a task that any seaman could have carried out thoroughly.

The next years are empty of activity. The peace of October 1463 with France and the final defeats of the Lancastrians led to a few years of calm not really broken again until 1468. In February 1464 one ship from Newcastle was commissioned for service[2], in March 1467 some ships were being prepared for the defence of the realm; but about these we know no more[3]. Diplomacy, not war, filled these years. The first three years of defence and consolidation were over; naval activity had been determined by these aims and had helped much to their fulfilment. The Earl of Warwick had been the designer, the agent of success, by sea as well as by land. The king's part in the naval expeditions of these years had

---

1. Gregory's Chronicle in Collections of a London Citizen ed. James Gairdner, C.S. 1876 cf. Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, page 177.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 304.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 29.

been small, that of a contributor only; except for the initial grant of monies to Warwick or his men, he did little but enjoy the benefit of their work. This is understandable. Not only politically was Edward not out of the wood, in the way of naval resources and organisation he had nothing to compare with Warwick's. Not until after 1471 was Edward to break out into his own world of free (or rather, freer) movement. But the years 1463-1471 saw him trying to, at first peacefully, at the last in open warfare with those who in this first three years had made his government safe and given him the means wherewith to challenge them. So stability in 1464 was in fact still seven long years away, and just as the period 1457-1463 had been Warwick's so now this seven year's struggle revolved around him.

By 1468 king and kingmaker had separated over politics, and in this year Warwick was no longer to the forefront of naval activity. Just as Sir John Howard was one of the organisers of the convoy that carried Duchess Margaret to Burgundy, and not Warwick, so also in the more important war measures against France Edward and Anthony Woodeville,

Lord Scales were the leaders, not Warwick[1]. But the first expedition that was sent out, in the Spring of 1468, was a small one. The truce with France expired on 1st March and was not renewed; this force was probably sent out to show Louis how Edward was feeling. On 17th February Richard Harleston and John Wainfleet were commissioned to take ships for a fleet[2], and this was led by Harleston himself, William Wade, Thomas Fulthorpe and Edmund Weston, and comprised 500 soldiers[3]: a modest power indeed.

---

1. Howard's increasing importance in naval affairs: for Margaret's voyage he contributed 2 ships: P.R.O. E404/74/1/35, out of the 19 that went: Scofield vol. 1, pages 456-7. Stow, Annales, 1601 ed. p.699. But he took a much more important part in bringing the Bastard of Burgundy across the channel in 1467 which is significant: see Manners and Household Expenses, pages 408-9. Also his share in the preparations for Scales' voyage: P.R.O. E404/74/1/43, 65, show that he was following Edward's lead in foreign policy, and also, on a diminished scale, slipping into the place in naval affairs under the king that Warwick had vacated.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 57.
3. P.R.O. E404/74/1/8, 2nd April; this records the issue of £833. 6. 8d. to the four captains, for which the Exchequer had had no warrant for discharge, and requires the Treasurer to make plain issue of the same. At this date the ships were stated to be now set forth. P.R.O.E403/839 under 9th November 1467 records the issue of £833. 6. 8d. to the four captains for wages, repairs and equipment, cf. P.R.O. E405/46 Mich. 7 Edward IV. B.M. Stowe MS. 440 f.68 gives under 7 Ed.IV these four men as retained for the keeping of the sea with £1,500 for wages and rewards. Significantly it then gives under 8 Ed.IV not only Lord Scales, but Harleston and Weston again retained for the same task. Their indentures, whether there were one or two, from which the compiler of Stowe 440 took his information, are missing.

Whatever the original intention of this expedition, it became in fact a very successful one, perhaps as much through Harleston and Weston's iniative as Edward's; for these two men with some ships, including four from the South Western ports serving fmx 20 weeks[1] went to help at the successful siege of the castle of Mont-Orgueil during the Summer. As, however, one Thomas Dobney went three times to them with the king's letters, they may have sailed there at the king's command[2].

The French answer to this demonstration was to send three ships to Harlech to help that castle's Lancastrian defenders who were still holding out. But these were beaten off by Lord Herbert, who took one of them, and the castle at last fell on 14th August[3]. But if the French

---

1. P.R.O. E404/74/1/43, 138, 141; perhaps also E405/50 m.4.
2. Dobney was granted £12. 5. 4d. on 5th July 1469; he seems already to have rec. £24. 10. 8d: E404/74/1/35. But he was still sueing for that £12. 5. 4d. some nine years later: E404/76/2/46, 9th February 1477. Harleston for his services in recovering the island of Jersey and the castle of Mont-Orgueil, was made captain of that island and castle on October 13: P.R.O. PSO/1/31/1648, and repeated on 26th October: P.R.O. 1/32/1681. See also Scofield vol. 1, page 480, note 1.
3. Annales in Wars of the English in France, Rolls series ed. Rev. J. Stevenson 1861-64, vol. 2, part 2 page 791; La Roncière op. cit., vol. 2, page 326. For Herbert's expenses at the siege see: P.R.O. E404/74/1/35; the ordnance that was to be taken to the siege, by sea from Bristol on 2nd September, was not presumably needed: P.R.O. 1/29/1518a.

lacked success here they won it at diplomacy. Edward was preparing a second expeditionary force during the Summer of 1468, to be led by Lord Scales and Walter Blount, Lord Mountjoy, to go to the aid of the Duke of Brittany in his war against Louis XI. But on 10 th September, the day that Scales' and Mountjoy's indentures were sealed, Francis and Louis concluded a peace, and the English force became redundant. But vessels had been arrested to carry these troops[1], the men themselves had begun to assemble for their musters, scheduled for 28th September, and money in large sums was being spent on victualling and equipment, as well as on wages. So now Scales and Mountjoy were retained to resist the malice of the king's

---

1. P.R.O. C81/820/2528, 3rd August; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 105, 30th August. Peter Bowman was arresting ships from that 30th August to 17th October (47 days) at 5s. a day with £2. reward: P.R.O. E404/74/1/43. The report in France that Edward was arresting and arming Genoese galleys: Cal. State Papers: Milan, number 167, was a true one; the two of them cost him £500 for three months hire, and another £23. 6. 8d. for unloading their goods and equipping them: P.R.O. E 404/74/1/43.

enemies at sea as well as by land; on 7th October Scales was appointed captain and governor of the armed power going on the sea 'and elsewhere' for the resistance of the king's enemies[1]. The somewhat long pause between the Breton-French peace and the appointment of Lord Scales as commander of the naval force suggests that there was much thought and discussion on exactly what this expedition was to do, and where it was to go. Apart from a rumoured appearance of Margaret of Anjou at Harfleur ready to invade England, which may have influenced the instructions given to Scales, there seems to have been no certainty as to the objective of the fleet. That his orders included or envisaged some fighting on land is clear

---

1. The original indentures do not survive, only in brief abstract in B.M. Stowe 440 f.68. Mountjoy's terms are in the warrant for issue of 28th Nov. It states that the king and council have laid aside the original expedition, but as Mountjoy has received sums of money, he has offered to go into any other place than Brittany at the royal command and pleasure. He was to have 1,000 soldiers and 500 mariners to serve for three months: P.R.O. E 404/74/1/43. This replaced the warrant of 13th September, when he was retained to serve in Brittany for six months with 3,000 soldiers, half English, half Breton: P.R.O. E404/74/1/67. Scales was to serve for the three months with 3,000 soldiers and 1,500 mariners E404/74/1/102, 26th October; but the terms of his earlier indenture are not to be found. His appointment as captain is in Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 109, cf. Foedera, XI, page 630.

from the large number (4,000) of soldiers that he took with him; perhaps Guienne was to be the area of operations[1]. More probably Edward sent out the force because it was there at hand, with no settled destination or direction other than to exhibit his defiance of Louis' power[2].

It was a very expensive defiance. 'Worcester's[3] figure of 5,000 men is a close enough approximation of the 6,000 soldiers and mariners of the indentures for us to view his other statements about this expedition with favour. Scales took large amounts of equipment with him and some 2,500 lbs. of gunpowder. The money involved was a large sum, and 'Worcester's' figure of £18,000 is substantiated by the entries on the Issue Roll and in the

---

1. Louis XI had information that the English were 'grosse armée sur la meer' and were bound for Guienne: Lettres de Louis XI, vol. 3, p.297-98, 23rd October. Scales had pilots with him: P.R.O. E403/841, under 9th December.
2. See Scofield, vol. 1, p.473-478 on this venture.
3. The Annales, cited above, page 792 has an excellent and well-informed summary of the voyage. 'Worcester' represents the unknown author of this work, for the William Worcester is not the author, as Mr. K.B. McFarlane has shewn in Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. J. Conway-Davies, 1957, p.206-7.

Warrants for Issue. There were not only the monies paid to Scales, including £1,000 by way of reward, and Mountjoy for wages and for victualling, and those to Sir John Howard for the victualling and fitting out of ships, there were also those to Sir John Woodville, Sir Geoffrey Gate and the Bastard of Brittany for going on the voyage, and to others for equipment and victualling and for the arrest of shipping: amounting in all to just over £17,000[1]. One reason for these heavy costs must have been the long delay from September until the end of October when the expedition finally sailed, for the masters and mariners of the arrested ships, and the assembled soldiers had to be paid for their inactivity; and this again may have been one reason why the fleet was only on the sea for some six weeks instead of the stipulated three months; that the expenses had been so great before the force went on active service. The lateness of the year must have also been a deterrent[2].

---

1. Issues of money in P.R.O. E404/74/1/43, 65 (Howard), 70 (Woodville), 74, 83 (Woodville), 102; E403/840, 841, 842 passim; P.S.O. 1/32/1682 cf. E404/74/1/102. The list of eleven ships that Howard victualled is in Manners etc., p.488, and his accounts for his part in the preparations Ibid, p.512-32, 568-80.
2. Sir John Howard for instance was paid for repairing the John of Newcastle, and for keeping and victualling her and other ships for a certain period in September: P.R.O. E404/74/1/65, 9th September.

After all this preparation and indecision the expedition sailed away about the 25th October[1], cruised at sea doing nothing - despite rumours in France that it was doing great damage, landing in one place and another[2] and returned towards the end of November. Scofield's suggestion that it may have touched at the Channel Islands to help at the siege there does not seem likely as the castle fell to the English before the end of October, and there is no evidence of it having done so[3]. Thus 'Worcester's' conclusion is worth quoting, if only for the biting criticism: 'Sed circa finem mensis Novembris in insula de Wight inglorii applicuerunt, nil honoris in dicto viagio facientes, Constabat dictum viagium regi XVIIIM librarum'[4].

---

1. The commission for the muster of the fleet was issued on 9th October, to be taken at Gravesend and Sandwich, with no date given: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.127. 'Worcester' gives 25th October; Louis' letter however was of the 23rd October (note 1, page 333 above), but a warrant to the Treasurer to purvey and buy war equipment in all haste is dated 26th October: P.R.O. E404/74/1/102.
2. Cal. State Papers: Milan, no.168, 28 November: the English were said to have landed in Languedoc.
3. Scofield, vol. 1, p. 479; her reason for this is that Scales had been granted the island of Jersey on 23rd September, but this only passed the Great Seal on 25th November, and was therefore, she thinks, contingent on his success there. But this conflicts with the grant to Harleston (see above page 330 note 2).
4. Annales, p. 792, cf. 3 15th century chronicles, p.182.

If this venture was peculiarly the design of Edward and the Woodville group then its failure must have rankled with the Earl of Warwick and his friends, who were by now outside the inner councils of the king, and who were at this time especially involved, Mr. Poston suggests, in the English quarrel with the Hanse. They may have argued - adding to their more straightforward political grievances - that as a striking force Woodville's expedition should have been used in the sea war being fought out between English and Hanse vessels, in which the English were having little success[1]. But any concerted government action in this direction now had to be put aside, for in the course of 1469 the dispute between the king and Warwick became an armed and open one.

---

1. Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, p.132-135, and note 74, p.378. Warwick the Kingmaker, P.M. Kendall, p.223-5, The sea war against the Hanse and the losses incurred by the Nevilles in the Danish capture of an English fleet in June 1468 - the event that began the trouble (Hansisches Urkundenbuch, vol, 9. number 478) - as well as the wasteful, ineffective voyage of Lord Scales, add some justification to the statement in the manifesto put out by Warwick, Clarence and the Archbishop of York on 12th July 1469, namely that Tonnage and Poundage should be employed for the safekeeping of the sea, for the safety of the intercourse of merchandise and for defence against enemies, and put to no other use: John Warkworth, Chronicle, ed. J.O. Halliwell, Camden Soc., 1839, notes p.51.

But before he resorted to this violence against the crown Warwick continued to show himself a loyal subject (or so it seems): in the spring of 1469 he once again undertook to send his ships to sea for the defence of the realm, but for what real reason it is difficult to determine. No doubt he both wanted to exhibit for as long as possible a loyalty which he no longer believed in, and desired to have his fleet available and easily manoeuvrable, out of reach of the king's officers. He was granted £933. 6. 8d. from the Exchequer for his trouble[1], and the force probably sailed before the 22nd May[2]. The Milanese ambassador in France wrote on May 30th of a vast English fleet which had appeared off Bordeaux, and that an invasion had begun; all this was exaggerated and confused rumour, by the time it reached the ambassador it was pure myth, but it may be that Warwick's fleet had been in that area, and that the sighting of this and the presence of English merchants at Bordeaux had aroused stronger than usual fears

---

1. P.R.O. E403/842, under 20th April; E405/50,m.3 gives the information 'cum certis navibus suis'.
2. The day on which Hames Hawte wrote to Sir John Paston, telling him that Warwick's ships had gone to sea: Paston Letters, Lib. Ed., No. 714.

of English attack[1]. At any rate Warwick can hardly have been prepared to enter into hostilities with foreigners, least of all with Louis XI, nor presumably had he any wish to risk losing any of his ships; it is certain that the Earl's fleet saw little action in this early summer. On the 12th June Warwick was at Sandwich where his newly rebuilt ship the Trinity was blessed by the Archbishop of York[2], and the malcontents were gathering for their decisive move of explicit rebellion; before they crossed to Calais early in July it is probable that Warwick's ships had returned to their base at Sandwich, for 7s. was spent on wine for the shipmasters by the town authorities at this time[3], and no doubt Warwick came in his own ships to England again from Calais on about the 18th July. He came to petition the king, but he came at the head of an armed force, which marched on London: the war, for such it was to become, had been begun.

---

1. Cal. State Papers: Milan, numbers 170, 171.
2. John Stone's Chronicle, Cambridge Antiquarian Soc., 1902, ed. W.G. Searle, p. 109-110.
3. Kent Record Office, Sandwich Borough Records, Treasurers' Accounts 1468-9 (now cat.: F. at 6), m.4, included in: Expenses on the Lords, Gentlemen and other persons.

Naval activity for the next two years is shaped by political events and party necessity, although for the remainder of 1469 politics alone held the king's and Warwick's attention. Having captured the king, the Earl was unable to make personal use of him, and by the end of the year Edward had regained much of the support (and hence much of the power) that he had temporarily lost. In February 1470 some of the higher clergy lent the king £920 for the setting forth of a naval expedition; it is indicative of the king's strength that this was to be led by Sir John Howard, and that it was to go against rebels and traitors as well as against the Hanse[1]. As the preparations for this expedition went forward so too did Edward's plans to rid himself of Warwick, and on the day that Howard's term of service was due to begin, Warwick - then at Chesterfield - was summoned to come before the king to answer certain charges against him. This was on the 18th March, by the beginning of April Warwick was riding down to the South West coast in flight, for he had found in the interval that all support had been withdrawn from him. Howard's instructions were now clear enough;

---

1. P.R.O. E404/74/2/108, 21st Feb. The Archbishop of York contributed £200.

the rebels and traitors had become as obvious enemies as the Hanse. Howard's force was not a powerful one, as on the 20th February only some nine ships were arrested for service with him[1]. On 4th March he was officially appointed captain and governor of the expedition[2], which was to be for a period of ten weeks, beginning on 18th March, and to comprise 1,500 men. He was given 1,875 marks for their wages and a further 125 marks was delivered to Robert Bassett, alderman of London, for their victualling[3]; other sums were paid to Howard for war equipment[4].

Thomas Fauconberg went with Howard - receiving £50 as his reward[5] - and it is his presence perhaps that accounts for some of Warwick's ships, his Trinity for example, going to sea with those of Howard.

Whilst this force was at sea inflicting damage on the vessels of the Hanse[6], Warwick came to Exeter on about the 10th April; there, and at other Devon Ports, he appropriated ships, like the Christopher of Exmouth at

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.201.
2. Ibid., p.204.
3. P.R.O. E404/74/2/111, 3rd March.
4. P.R.O. E404/74/3/4; E405/51, m.1-2.
5. P.R.O. E404/74/3/1.
6. Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, p.135.

Dartmouth[1], and embarked with his retinue for Calais. He soon came to Southampton where his Trinity apparently was, but in trying to take this ship he was beaten off by Lord Rivers, and on the 16th April he arrived before Calais[2]. This change in Warwick's fortune between March and April is well demonstrated by the Lydd records; at first the king ordered the authorities there to take men for the carvels, presumably Warwick's, but a little later 4d. was paid to a man bringing a commandment to arrest all manner of ships belonging to the Earl of Warwick[3]. And on 25th April the mayor of Southampton was ordered to arrest ships for a force (probably that later led by Lord Rivers) going to resist Warwick and Clarence[4]. By this time Warwick, having been refused entry into Calais, was roving the channel doing considerable damage to shipping, especially to that of the Burgundians, and his small fleet was strengthened by Fauconberg joining him. Howard, however, was still at sea and he did capture some men going

---

1. P.R.O. C1/67/63.
2. Warkworth's Chronicle, p.9.
3. The Records of Lydd, p.257.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.217.

across to the Earl of Warwick, amongst them Sir Geoffrey Gate, who later escaped[1], and his patrolling must have deterred others. At the beginning of May Warwick sailed with his prises into the mouth of the Seine and anchored off Honfleur; to contain him there was the aim of Lord Rivers, who was appointed captain of a fleet on 23rd June, which force was mustered at Sandwich towards the end of the month[2]. At least one of Warwick's old seamen, Simon Lawless, went with Rivers[3]. In alliance with the Burgundians Rivers was successful in his

---

1. Fabyan, Chronicles etc.,p.658. But one of the king's men, William Hoore, a merchant of Winchelsea, sent to 'aspy and understand the demeaning' of the Earl of Warwick, was perhaps equally unfortunate, for it was stated afterwards that he had lost his ship: P.R.O. C81/836/3322.
2. P.R.O.C76/154; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.221. The 200 marks lent to the crown for the keeping of the sea by John Baker and other merchants from the will of one Andrew Huls, on 26th April, was presumably used for fitting out Rivers' force: P.R.O. E404/74/3/8. John Aldy of Sandwich, merchant, was not repaid the £100. that he had spent on the victualling of Rivers' ships until April 1472: P.R.O. E404/75/2/12.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.217.

object[1], and Louis XI was embarrassed by Warwick's presence with his illegal captures, an embarrassement that probably speeded the reconciliation between the Earl and Margaret of Anjou and their decision to invade England. Warwick sailed for England once again on the 9th September, the blockading fleet having been dispersed by a storm[2]

Warwick landed in the West country and marched to Coventry. There he learned that Lord Montagu had deserted Edward; this quickly led to Edward's flight to King's Lynn, from where on 2nd October, with only a

---

1. Jehan de Waurin, Recueil des Croniques etc., Rolls Series 1891, vol 5, p.604-605; Kendall, op. cit., p.267; Scofield, vol. 1, p.226. Whilst at Southampton Rivers had taken and spoiled a carvel of Warwick's friend, Sir Simon Mountford: Letters of the 15th and 16th century from the Archives of Southampton, ed. R.C. Anderson, Southampton Record Soc., 1921, number 12. And in the course of that summer Rivers probably took two other ships that were with Warwick: The Port Books of Southampton, 1469-71, ed. D.B. Quinn, Southampton Record Soc., 1937, p.34-5.

2. Jacob, op. cit., p.560.

few followers, he crossed to Burgundy[1]. On 6th October Warwick entered London, Henry VI was brought out of the Tower and the Readeption was proclaimed, with Warwick at last supreme in the government of the realm. He naturally regained the power in naval affairs that he had held in the early 1460's, being appointed Admiral on 2nd January 1471[2]. But before this formality he already had his ships out patrolling the channel under Fauconberg, who was probably in the Admiral's Trinity, which had been commissioned in November 1470[3]. During this winter Warwick was collecting together ships and men, ostensibly for the purpose of bringing Margaret and her son over from

---

1. Lynn Borough Records, Assembly Book III, (usually cited as II, but is in fact the third volume) p.284: a memorandum of Edward's arrival at ten o'clock at night on 30th September, with Lords Rivers, Cromwell, Saye and Hastings, and another 3,000 men, and of his departure at eight o'clock in the morning, on 2nd October with only Rivers, Saye and Hastings. See also Henry J. Hillen, History of the Borough of King's Lynn. Norwich, c. 1907, p.195.
2. Foedera, XI, p.679.
3. Altogether six ships were arrested for service in Nov. and Dec.: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.250. But there would be other ships out in Warwick's service, as, for instance, his own Katherine was out under a Hull merchant: P.R.O. C1/49/45, though this particular vessel was commissioned in Dec.

France, and he was granted £2,000 for this[1]. Money was also being raised in the Cinque Ports, at Sandwich[2], at Dover[3], and at Lydd money was contributed 'for our part of the Navy'[4], as well as at the other Ports. No doubt the forces that Warwick was raising were intended for an attack on Burgundy[5], not for the safe convoying of Margaret into England, for when finally she did come she had no great power with her. Instead of Warwick (and Louis XI) attacking Burgundy however, it was Edward IV who returned to England with Burgundian aid; at the beginning of March he landed in Yorkshire and by his speedy journey southwards prevented Warwick from concentrating

---

1. P.R.O. E404/71/6/35, 17th Dec. 1470; this was paid in various amounts in the following months.
2. At a town meeting on 21st January it was decided that £7 each was to be levied from Deal, Walmer and Fordwich: Kent Record Office, Sandwich Borough Records, The Old Black Book (cat.: Sa.ac.1.), folio 199.
3. B.M. Additional MS., 29, 616 (Dover Chamberlains' Accounts, 1462-85), folio 67, (1470-71) lists the seven ports contributions which totalled £102.
4. The Records of Lydd, p.260 - 1. Warwick was also collecting monies from the sheriffs at Southampton - by force they later wrote to Edward IV - which he stated was due to him as Warden of the Cinque Ports: Letters of the 15th and 16th centuries at Southampton, number 15. But Warwick was within his rights, for in 1461 the constable of Dover Castle (Warwick was this as well as Warden) was to have £154 (or £144) from the fee farm of Southampton, as his predecessors had done: The Book of Remembrance of Southampton, vol.1, ed. H.W. Gidden, Southampton Record Soc., 1928, p.56-7, 59.
5. See A.R. Myers, 'The outbreak of war between England and Burgundy in February 1471', Bull.of the Institute of Hist. Research, 1960, p.114-5.

forces against him, though at Coventry Warwick refused a combat when he was challenged by Edward, who went on to London, which he entered on 11th April. On that day Warwick heard that Louis XI had signed a truce with the Duke of Burgundy, so that there was now no chance of help from that quarter; he therefore had to fight it out with Edward. On the 14th April their armies met at Barnet, the Yorkists won the victory and Warwick was killed. Edward quickly moved to meet Margaret's force in the West, and decisively defeated it at Tewkesbury on 4th May. Lord Fauconberg assaulted London whilst Edward was away, but failed, and surrendered soon afterwards to the Duke of Gloucester at Sandwich, with, it was reported, 47 ships[1]. When Edward returned to London towards the end of May Henry VI was disposed of, and the tragic interlude (in retrospect) of the Readeption was over. If Edward IV was still having to make restitution in 1473 for Portuguese ships taken by Fauconberg in March 1471[2], he had at least learnt by hard experience, that naval power

---

1. Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV in England etc., ed. John Bruce, Camden Society, 1838, p.33-39 passim, cf. Three 15th century Chronicles, p.183-4.
2. P.R.O. E30/545, 547.

and initiative, like much else, must remain in his hands, not in those of his noble subjects.

The years after the Yorkists' victory in 1471 were much quieter than those that had followed their victory in 1461, for the Lancastrians' defeats at Barnet and Tewkesbury were shattering and bloody. There was no long drawn out struggle this time, and apart from the Earl of Oxford's capture of St. Michael's Mount in 1473, which caused a slight stir and some determined government action, Edward had little cause for disquiet on this score. The French too were not the menace they had been in the early 1460's (though they were a nuisance), for Edward was not firmly allied to the Burgundians. The invasion of France in 1475 was an offensive launched from a position of strength. French vessels did of course do some harm to English subjects on the seas in the early 1470's[1], and the men of the South East were always on the watch for any

---

1. See for example P.R.O. E404/75/2/41, 3rd October 1472: goods were taken from William Hatcliffe when he was sent on a royal mission to Burgundy; and P.R.O. C81/836/3323, 1st September 1471: Stephen Driver was robbed at sea by the French and imprisoned by them, whilst on a similar mission.

French fleet[1], whilst in East Anglia fishermen and those living on the coast were sometimes troubled by Frenchmen[2]: at Lynn on 8th July 1471 the congregation agreed to victual 'iij' shippes a Werrefare' for a month at the request of 'diverse Gentilmen of my Lord Rivers', but only if given security that they should not be held responsible for any harm done by the vessels.[3] The Easterlings too and the Bretons were causing considerable losses on English merchant shipping, reported the Milanese ambassador in France during March and May 1471[4], and he was probably right for once; and on 25th November 1472 a correspondent wrote to the Duke of Milan from Gravelines that 16 armed

---

1. The authorities at New Romney paid a man for bringing a letter from the mayor of Sandwich warning of the French ships sometime in 1471-2: Hist. MSS. Comm. 5th Report, p.545.
2. Paston Letters, Lib. Ed, numbers 828, 829: March 1473. One Thomas Easthawe of Hunstanton was taken out of his house, probably at this time, by Frenchmen: P.R.O. Cl/66/365. Commissions of array in 1472 were stated to be against the French as well as the Easterlings: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.351.
3. Lynn Borough Records, Assembly Book, III, p.291. Miss W.I. Haward gives a transcript of this in her article in E.H.R., vol. XLI., (1926) p.188.
4. Cal. State Papers: Milan, numbers 208, 217. Stein W., Die Hanse und England etc., p.43, states that the mercantile fleets sailing between the Low Countries and England at this time were protected by armed vessels.

vessels of the King of Denmark were cruising in the straits, plundering English ships[1]. But this continuing sea war was not a one-sided affair.

Edward must have been well-informed of the dangers that English commerce was undergoing, and he knew that the war with the Hanse had not been ended by the rapprochement between him and them in Burgundy in 1471; real negotiations would only be possible from positions of more equal strength. This consideration, and the lesser one of keeping watch on the French, was behind the activity of 1472. On 12th January four ships were arrested for service[2], and on the 24th the musters of a force going to sea under the leadership of John Cheyne were ordered to be taken[3]. About 320 soldiers went with Cheyne and the other captains of his fleet, and their victualling and equipment were on an equally modest scale: a cost overall of perhaps only £400[4]. This unusual winter

1. Cal. State Papers: Milan, number 240.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 299.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 318.
4. P.R.O. E405/54. The other captains were John Moyne, John Harby, Edward Brampton and Thomas Fawke.

activity was followed in June by action on a larger scale. On the 26th of that month John Kyrell, Richard Hawte, Philip Dimmer esquires, Edward Brampton, John Cole and William Fetherston were appointed captains of an armed power that the king was sending to sea[1]. During June eighteen ships were commissioned for this fleet; Kyrell captained the king's Garse, Fetherston the Spencer and Cole his own Trinity Cole; the king's Trinity, formerly Warwick's, was included along with many of Howard's vessels[2]. The king's Antony was also amongst the ships at sea that summer[3].

As there is no record of any of these men receiving payments from the Exchequer (although evidence is scanty for this summer[4]) and many of them were professional seamen or shipowners, they possibly undertook this duty at their own cost. They were probably at sea all that summer - the Garse for instance was in port again by 6th

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 340.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 355.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 355 and P.R.O. E405/55 m.1.
4. There are no Issue Rolls for this period and no crucial Tellers Roll for Easter 1472. Lord Howard may well have been in charge of the financing of this expedition (see p.351 note 3.); if so, any record of a large payment to him from the Exchequer is wanting.

October[1]. The Hanse certainly suffered from their sea-keeping; as Mr. Postan says, 'the naval war definitely turned to England's favour in the late summer of 1472'. The German writers elaborate on this. Apparently there was also a French fleet of eighteen ships in the channel, and after driving this back into the Normandy harbours, the English ships had considerably success against those of Lűbeck during July[2]. They state that this English fleet was commanded by Lord Howard; and although there is no reference in English sources to this, it seems certain from Hanse records that this was in fact the case[3]. In the same year an unofficial liason was established at Bruges

---

1. P.R.O. E405/55 m.6.
2. Schulz F. Die Hanse und England etc., page 120; cf. Stein W. Die Hanse und England, page 40, Vogel W. Geschichte der deutschen Seeschiffahrt, vol. 1, page 349.
3. Hansisches Urkundenbuch, vol.10, page 83, note 1 (the source for Schulz and the others), number 173 paragraphs 13-16 (for example 14 puts Howard's presence at sea almost beyond doubt), number III and note 3. It is unfortunate that no Howard household accounts survive for this period. It is just possible that Howard gave his ships and his name to the expedition, and saw to the organisation of it, but did not go himself - as Warwick had done in the early 1460's; for he was named on a commission of 18th June 1472 to treat with the Burgundians concerning the Pale of Picardy: Foedera, XI, page 759. It is also possible that Howard's son led the fleet, as amidst references to the 1472 fleet in the Dover Accounts, there are two entries of wine being given to Howard's son: B.M. Add. MS. 29, 616, f. 84v, f. 85v.

between Hanse and English agents, and in 1474 a conference met at Utrecht which resulted in a settlement and the end of the war in 1475[1]. English mercantile concessions played a large part in this, but the ability of the English to resist and retaliate at sea as demonstrated in 1472, must also have helped towards peace.

The years 1473-1474 saw no such action as that of 1472. During the Spring of 1473 the king's Grace Dieu was almost completely rebuilt[2], and although the French were said to have 40 ships at sea during July, scouring the English channel[3], only the king's vessels Grace Dieu, Garse and the carrack Peter were at sea against them[4]. In November however the king decided to take some action against the Earl of Oxford, who had taken St. Michael's Mount and was holding it, rather fruitlessly, for the Lancastrian party. The operations against the castle

---

1. Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century pages 136-7; note 77.
2. P.R.O. E404/75/3/2,3; E 405/58 m.2.
3. Cal. State Papers: Milan, number 253, 25th July.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 399, 404; 9th July, 24th August. B.M. Stowe MS. 440, f. 69v. gives an abstract of indenture for John, Lord Dinham to serve with 3,580 men on the keeping of the sea in an army of the king's, under 12 Ed. IV. There is no other evidence of this. The MS. also gives Dinham's indenture of 1475: probably this has been entered twice, once in the right year, and once in 1472. The number of men is much the same.

were chiefly those of siege by land under, at first Henry Bodrugan and later Sir John Fortescue; but Edward also used ships in this very successful siege. On 20th November he entered into indentures with the seamen William Fetherston and Edward Brampton, who had both served in the previous summer. Fetherston undertook to serve with three ships - the king's Caricon, and the Christopher of Calais and Mary of Calais, each to be equipped and victualled at the king's expense with 260 men in the Caricon, 75 in the Christopher and 65 in the Mary for the term of two months beginning on the 9th December. With Brampton, serving in the king's Garse with 200 men, the same conditions were to apply. All wages were to be paid by the king. Both men were directed to attend continually at the siege, as near to the mount as was safe for the ships to go, doing as much hurt and nuisance to those that were in the castle as to those who would send relief to them[1]. The ships had

---

1. P.R.O. E 101/71/954, 955. There is a copy of Fetherston's indenture, with the notice after it that there was to be a similar indenture for Brampton in the Garse with 200 men, in the British Museum: Cotton Charter XVII, 19. It is initialled by the king - perhaps it was a fair copy for the Exchequer clerks.

already been commissioned earlier in November[1], and the Caricon was now fitted out[2]. Brampton was paid £183. 6. 8d. for the wages and victuals of his men, and Fetherston £366. 13. 4d.[3] They must have been skilful at their duty, for no support, from France or elsewhere, reached the castle, and early in February 1474 Oxford opened negotiations with the besiegers. However Edward was prepared to take no chances, for Fetherston was paid a further £80. and £98. 15. 0d. for himself and the 260 men in the Caricon for being at sea at the Mount from 6th February for six weeks[4]. The Earl of Oxford surrendered on 15th February[5]. The siege had been conducted with skill, helped by French mistrust of what seemed a lost cause. Edward must have noted this French failure to take opportunity of his Lancastrian embarrassement; before a year was gone he himself was preparing for an invasion of France.

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 409; the Mary Shireborn is undoubtedly the Mary of Calais of the indenture.
2. P.R.O. E405/57 m.4. Fetherston bought 13 guns for the Caricon; ibid m. 7v, and another 39 guns, new made, for the same ship.
3. P.R.O. E 405/57m. 5.
4. P.R.O. E 405/58m5v.
5. Scofield vol. 1. pages 87-88. John Newman was paid 6s. 8d. for going with letters from the king to Fetherston: P.R.O. E 405/57.

During 1474 the French must have still presented some threat at sea, for sometime in the year six ships went from Southampton to the Isle of Wight to resist French ships which were there[1], and the protection of the wool convoys to Calais was perhaps as much a response to this danger, as it was a result of an agreement between king and Staplers. As the preparations for the invasion went forward, it is necessary to remember that in the midst of more grandiose enterprises the Crown was able to spare men and ships for the more humble task of protecting English trade at sea. The invasion of 1475 - the motives that gave rise to it, and the conduct of it - lie outside the scope of this paper; but the naval forces that were sent out in this year chiefly for the purpose of clearing the channel in order that the transport vessels might cross safely, are. The organisation of two fleets, one in the western channel, the other in the narrow seas, was a new development and a very successful one.

Apart from the arrest of ships, including those of the Cinque Ports[2], and the provisioning of those that

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/59 m.4.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 493, 495 (Dec.1474), 525-6 (April, May 1475); Cinque Ports: Cal. Close Rolls, 1468-1476, page 399, 8th March, P.R.O. E 404/76/1/6, The Records of Lydd, ed. Arthur Finn, pages 292-3.

came from Flanders and North Germany[1], which were for transport purposes, many vessels were commissioned for the fleets during January, February and March[2]; a good number of these were king's ships, and these were being fitted out and equipped during this winter and spring. Some at least of the vessels from the Western ports were at sea by February, as John Jay and John Weatherpol, merchants of Bristol, were allowed to ship goods uncustomed to the value of £190. 15. 0d. for maintaining five ships of their's at sea from 3rd February to 10th July in the king's service, Thomas Gale of Dartmouth was similarly allowed £35. 11. 2d. for maintaining two ships for the same period[3], and John Stevens also of Dartmouth £26. 13. 4d. for his one ship from 10th February to 10th July[4]. Avery Cornborough too was paid various sums for the costs of keeping ships at sea out of the Western ports, although some of these came around to the Thames and Sandwich, probably to be used as transport or escort vessels.

Cornborough was paid also for safe-keeping vessels at

---

1. P.R.O. E405/60 passim; E 405/61, where John Alder was paid £1,114. 15. 6d. for provisioning them.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 494-496.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 543,545.
4. P.R.O. PSO 1/43/2216.

Southampton, and even in October was captain of the king's power on the sea. Probably he not only organised the ships that were at sea in the West, but also commissioned and sent to the invasion ports in the South East those that were required there. It seems likely that the king's Grace Dieu was with Cornborough during October was well as with Dynham earlier; that ship was apparently in service for eight months during this year[1].

John, Lord Dinham was appointed to command the other force of 3,000 men going on the narrow seas, on 15th April[2].

---

1. P.R.O. E405/59 m.7, 60, 61 passim. Cornborough, by an undated commission, was required to take all vessels over 16 tons in Devon, Cornwall and Bristol and to bring them to London and elsewhere for the conduct of the army: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 495. Charles Dinham was paid £20. for bringing 240 soldiers from Exeter to Southampton in the ship Mary Asshe: P.R.O. E 405/59 m.7, cf. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 495, 16th February. Cornborough was very active this year. Apparently he also served in France with two men at arms and 40 archers: Foedera, XI, page 845, and in a description of him (for purposes of a pardon) in July 1477 he is called 'late captain of 100 men at arms beyond the sea... late captain of 2,000 men at arms at sea': Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 41. Probably therefore he was in France during the invasion, and returned to go to sea in October.

2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 527 cf. Foedera, XII, page 1.

No indenture of service remains for him, but one does survive[1] for Sir William Pirton, who was to serve under Dinham with 360 men; he was to keep the sea and to hurt the king's enemies to the best of his ability, and his small force was to serve in ships provided and equipped by the king for the term that Dinham was at sea, four months. The king was to pay the wages and the cost of victuals. As the musters of this expedition were to be taken on the 10th April, it must have sailed soon afterwards, probably from Erith[2]. In all Dinham was given about £6,000, including £133. 6. 8d. 'in precio 93 clothes coloris albi et rubii pro jacquettes ad usum dictorum soldarum et marinarum[3]! William Fetherston too probably served under Dinham as well as looking after the wool convoys, for he was paid £417. 3. 0d. (as captain), for the wages and victuals of men serving in a force under him; and he and John Cole were busy repairing vessels - the king's and

---

1. P.R.O. E 101/72/2/1050, 12th March. B.M. Stowe MS 440 f.77 mentions this and Dinham's indenture.
2. Thomas Buckley was paid £2. 0. 0d. for going from Westminster to Erith, with money for the retinues' wages, to Dinham who was in the Grace Dieu there: P.R.O. E405/60 m. 3v. He was at sea at the end of May: Cal. Close Rolls, 1468-1476, page 410.
3. P.R.O. E405/60, 61.

their own, some of which served in the wool convoys, and fitting out ships[1]. Cole was mayor of Sandwich at this time, and that important port seems to have been his and Fetherston's base for the operations of this year.

Whilst it is difficult to discover exactly the ships that sailed in the different English expeditions of this year, and for what periods they were at sea, from the rough entries on the Tellers Rolls, it is clear that their task of keeping the sea against French attack on the invasion force, was successful. Although the French navies were mobilized on a wide scale, they did nothing to stop the English transports crossing the channel in June. This took three weeks, but was accomplished without serious accident; that this was due not only to French inactivity, but also to English efficiency even La Roncière admits[2]. The return of the army in September, during peacetime, seems to have been hardly less eventful[3].

---

1. Ibid and Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 496.
2. Scofield vol. 2 pages 130-131. Lettres de Louis XI, vol. 5, number 851. La Roncière Histoire etc., vol. 2, pages 363-365; he says 'enfin toutes nos forces navales furent mobilisés', and goes onto list the mobilisation in some detail.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 522, 29th August: arrest of ships to go to Calais; P.R.O. E 405/60 m.2v,; Scofield vol. 2, pages 148-149.

From 1476 until 1481 little of moment occurred. The invasion of 1475 had been costly and the French were no longer (open) enemies. Royal ships were kept safely in various harbours and sailed sometimes on peaceful trading voyages, or, as in June 1480, the Falcon went under William Fethersten to bring the Duchess of Burgundy over to England[1]. But already in this summer of 1480 the hostile movements of the Scots and the intentions of the French were regarded with suspicion, and the other activity of this year - four ships sent to sea in May, the conducting of the wool fleets[2] - was no doubt a precaution against these enemies. By the end of the year war against the Scots had been decided upon. The success of the invasion of 1475 at least on its naval side, must have been remembered by those who were in control of organisation in 1481, for some thought went into the planning of the naval expeditions of this year, and these were managed, as far as we can judge, as skilfully as in

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/77/1/33 cf. Devon F. Issues, etc., page 500, P.R.O. E405/68, 69.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 214; for the wool convoys, see above page 303.

1475. More evidence exists for this year, so that the details of preparation are clearer; although one record, and that an invaluable one, is missing[1]. On 12th December 1480 Thomas Rogers, once a master of Warwick's ships, then from 1475 purser and then master of the king's Antony, was appointed Clerk of the King's Ships[2], but his accounts for his part in the activity of 1481, submitted to the Exchequer in May 1482 are not to be found.

Two forces were sent to sea; the attacking expedition against the East coast of Scotland, led by Lord Howard, and the fleet that was to patrol off the Thames and in the straits against any possible French intervention, led by Avery Cornborough. Ships were arrested for Northern service and other ships, including the king's, commissioned[3]. Lord Howard was given £5,500 by an indenture with the king

---

1. The Tellers Rolls also fail here. The Easter and Michaelmas rolls for 1481 are missing. Thus whilst we have considerable record of the preparations of the naval forces, by the time these have sailed and for the remainder of the summer and autumn, when other forces were at sea in the North, ignorance largely prevails.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 242. He had been acting as Clerk since the previous 1st August: P.R.O. C66/546 m.2. See the following chapter.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, pages 240, 264.

of 23rd February 1481, by which he was to serve with 3,000 men, landsmen and mariners, for sixteen weeks against the Scots[1]. The Howard Household Books enable us to see how he used this money. On 25-26th February he sealed indentures with those who were to serve with him: John, Lord Cobham in his ship George Cobham and the Mary Lynn, Sir Harry Wentworth in the king's Antony, Robert Clifford in the king's Mary Asshe, and on the 26th April with Cornborough in the Grace Dieu again, Edward Brampton in the Great Carvel of Portugal, John Wainfleet in the New Spaynard (both royal vessels) and John Williams in the Carvel of Ipswich. Another three ships went with Howard, as the Mary Asshe, it seems, did not go, and the Spanyard, like the Grace Dieu, served in the narrow seas squadron. Howard himself sailed in the new king's ship, lately his own, the Mary Howard. In all he had a fleet of about nine or ten warships, and his men, like Dinham's in 1475, had each a jacket, no doubt of uniform colours[2].

---

1. The Household Books of John, Duke of Norfolk, and Thomas, Earl of Surrey, 1481-90. ed. J. Payne-Collier, Roxburghe Club, 1844, page 9; P.R.O. E 405/69.
2. The Howard Household Books, p.3,4-5, 9ff. (cf.p.243-6); pages 13-92 contain various entries of Howard's for the fitting out of his force, esp., p. 78, 79, 81.

Avery Cornberough was also given about £2,000, and although listed as one of the gentlemen going with Howard to the North, and being indented with him to this entent, in fact he was delegated to organise and lead the Straits squadron. Some 1,200 men were to serve with him in seven or eight ships for a period of sixteen weeks[1]. However these arrangements may have been modified again, for many of the masters of these ships, five at least being the king's, were paid direct by the Exchequer for the wages and victuals of their men for a period of six weeks only, and two of them then served for another month in April[2]; but these may have been out - and probably were - before the main operations began. In addition a naval force under Sir Thomas Fulford was on the sea to the West of Scotland, containing Scottish action in that area[3].

On 12th May William Combersale, master of the king's

---

1. Ibid, p. 3-5.
2. P.R.O. E 405/69 passim; E101/329/2. The lists of ships, and the number of men in each of them, in the Howard Books should be supplemented and slightly amended by the lists in Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.240, 264 (the Clement), P.R.O. E101/329/2, and E405/69. Of the 18 vessels, 10 were certainly the crown's, perhaps more.
3. P.R.O. C81/1390/10, 13th May.

Michael of the Tower[1] was at Calais collecting guns and other material of war for the 'king's voiage' into Scotland, for Howard, and for Cornborough[2]. The king came to Sandwich to review his fleets[3], and Howard finally sailed from Harwich on 20th May[4]. During the summer Howard had some considerable success, capturing eight ships in the Firth of Forth and burning Blackness; on 6th July Edward wrote to him, charging him to keep the sea off Leith and to burn this and other villages on the shore; he was to return on 31st August (when his indenture was due to end), leaving 600 men at sea in various vessels, led by Combersale in the Spaynard, until 31st October, whilst he was to go to Newcastle with the remainder of his retinue. But Howard, says the Scottish historian Lesley,

---

1. So called in P.R.O. E101/329/2, but called the Nicholas in E405/69 and in the Howard Books.
2. P.R.O. E101/198/13, book one. The guns may have been for the army's use, though 8 'charyettis ready apparelled' for the guns were one of the items that Combersale collected.
3. Kent Record Office, Sandwich Borough Records, Treasurers Accounts, 1481-82, (cat. F. at 7): payments for shooting off guns when the king was there, to the king's and Lord Howard's trumpets, to Lord Cobham, and money spent on Avery Cornborough; on Corpus Christi Day (21st June) a reward of 5s. was given to the trumpets of the Grace Dieu.
4. The Howard Books, p.98.

was repulsed at Inchkeith, and this may have been the reason for his early return to Suffolk, by 17th August[1]. He probably did leave a seakeeping force in Scottish waters, but it cannot have inflicted much damage, or itself been much disturbed, as Lesly would have reported it[2]. The success of the naval operations of 1481 was perhaps limited, but the Scots were prevented from much action at sea and the French deterred from going to their aid, and Howard did not (it seems) return to the criticism that Worcester had come back to in 1463. The careful preparations, and the experience of those who commanded and organised, were perhaps good reasons why he did not.

In 1482 the war against the Scots was continued, and again a fleet was sent against the Eastern coast of Scotland and a smaller force kept the sea in the West.

---

1. Ibid, p. 98, 274; John Lesley, History of Scotland, etc., Banatyne Club, 1830, pages 44-45.
2. On 28th July money was paid to Combersale, one Tetney of Holy Island (who is mentioned in the king's letter cited above), and two other shipmasters; and on about 28th August John Williams and Sir William Pirton have wages for forty men for a week - but these could well be paying off wages: The Howard Books, p.83, 85.

On 8th July Robert Radcliff was appointed captain of the main army on the sea[1], whilst the Duke of Gloucester himself seems to have been responsible for the men fighting against the Scots on the Western sea[2]. But there were ships at sea before this; three royal ships were fitted out in March for six weeks service 'and so forth other vj weeks, as long as shall please us'[3], and James Douglas, master of the carvel Michael, which had brought the Duke of Albany to England, was appointed by the king to serve with 100 men in her for eight weeks from 9th May[4]. Douglas may have gone with Radcliffe, and the king's Prince commissioned on 3rd July, almost certainly did[5], but how many of the ships that appear on the Tellers Rolls sailed with Radcliffe it is impossible to tell. When

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 307, cf. Foedera, XII, page 159.
2. Devon F. Issues etc., page 504: £133. 6. 8d. for their wages to be paid by Gloucester. P.R.O. E405/71: Thomas Greyson was given £100 for the wages and victuals of men safekeeping the sea in the Western parts: m.2.
3. P.R.O. E 404/77/3/1, 6th March.
4. P.R.O. E 404/77/3/21, cf. 405/70, Devon F. Issues page 503; he received £92. 11. 8d.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 308. Thomas Rogers was responsible for the Prince throughout this year's activity; for her periods of service, with 300 men for one month, with 360 men for six weeks, with 160 men for another month; for the costs of her master at Ipswich coming on a journey to London and returning, and for the wages of men repairing her for 3 weeks: P.R.O. E405/70 passim.

appointed he had been required to take ships, mariners and soldiers, and it is likely that these vessels, or some of them, composed his fleet.

There were eleven other ships (of which there is record) that were on the king's service, all but three or four of them being the king's own vessels. They all served for short periods of from two to eight weeks, four of the royal ships being out in May and June, and then some of them - all king's ships - continued for a further month, and then for another month again; the king's Lucas having four periods of such monthly service in all, and his Caricon served from 14th May to 4th August[1]. These vessels were doubtless to help the Duke of Gloucester in his campaign in the North, before Radcliff's force was ever raised, which again was probably to help Gloucester against Berwick. In fact this fleet must have done short

---

1. P.R.O. E405/70 passim, 71 ms. 2, 3v., 6. Other examples were the king's Elizabeth, with Fetherston as master, which served from 3rd June until 9th September; the Carvel of Eu for the same period; and the Christopher of Sandwich, hired by the crown for war against the Scots for five months (1st April to 31st August), for which Richard Lockwood received £15: P.R.O. E404/77/3/41. Rogers also was paid £300 for men at sea in various ships for three weeks in the early summer: P.R.O. E405/70 m.4, and a further sum for 240 men later, but for no specified time: E405/71 m.2.

but successful service, as Gloucester returned from before Edinburgh early in August, and the castle at Berwick fell on the 24th of that month, which put an end to the war.

The early summer seems to have been the period of more intense naval activity, than the time when Radcliff's force was at sea. Although William Fauconberg was paid for his good service at sea in Scottish waters with forty men, in the Tellers Roll for Michaelmas 1482, these waters had become more peaceful by then; many of the king's vessels that had been used earlier were now being repaired or safely kept.[1]

But during that summer the seas had not been at all peaceful. Scottish ships were active against English shipping, particularly in the narrow seas where there was no English squadron this year[2]; and the Magdalen de St. Pol de Lyon from Brittany, whilst on the king's service in the North, probably carrying supplies to the army there, was robbed of her cargo by the Scots[3]. In the Western

---

1. P.R.O. E405/71 passim.
2. The Cely Papers, ed. H.E.Malden C.S.1900, number 91, 24th June.
3. P.R.O. C81/884/5721-2. However another Breton ship coming out of Scotland was despoiled and taken by Englishmen: P.R.O. E404/77/3/32.

seas the small English force did not prevent Scottish men of war capturing the Flower of Minehead[1], although another Scottish war ship was taken by men in two ships of Barnstaple on 20th July, for which they were given a reward for their service and to strengthen their courage[2]. Also the fishermen of East Anglia were being protected by armed ships, two of them perhaps the king's; this measure, unofficial in 1481, became in 1482, perhaps because of the great danger, a concern of the government and the naval administration[3]. But it would be unjust to end this record of naval activity in Edward's reign with a description of England's enemies not at all daunted by English enterprise, attacking and taking English merchant ships. Englishmen no doubt were doing as well out of the latitude that war conditions allowed.

If, when he died on 9th April 1483, Edward cannot go altogether uncondemned for leaving the realm open to conflict, his conduct of its defence during his reign

---

1. The men captured in the Flower were imprisoned in Scotland; they had much trouble in gaining repossession of the ship and goods, chiefly through the bad faith of their friends and agents in the West country: P.R.O. C1/59/88.
2. P.R.O. E 404/77/3/41.
3. See above, page 305-308.

equally cannot go unpraised. In the maintenance of his power the control of naval forces had played a large part - in 1469-71 a determining part, and Edward's control had not become supreme until after the Readeption. Before this the Earl of Warwick, with his experience and his resources of ships and men, was the director, organiser and operator of English naval activity until such time as his and the King's politics clashed; then came that trial of strength which left Edward, at last after ten years, his own master in his own house; then finally naval power fell to him also.

Yet sea-power was still a largely unworked resource for good or ill. Navies were not yet the instrument of great victories; they played a subordinate role in warfare, even in the defence of England: Edward's new government in the early 1460's was not saved by Warwick's ships, but rather by his resolute measures on the Northern borders. But the ways in which sea-power could be used - for the raiding expedition against enemy shores, for the keeping of the sea against enemy squadrons, for the capture of castles, for the protection of merchants ships, and on occasion as a deterrent against pirates - in these

ways, Edward used his resources, and used them well. This is the pattern of naval activity in Edward's reign, hardly a sensational one, but a far cry from the latter days of Henry VI's reign when these tasks were not fulfilled.

Chapter 6.

Naval Administration 1461-1483.

The organisation of this activity, how an expedition was raised, fitted out, manned and paid for, is not very clear, for the evidence that remains is not often sufficiently detailed. But there are enough records to show how this organisation changed during Edward's reign, or more correctly how the administration of a naval practice, that itself did not alter very much, was in the first stage of what was to be (this time) a permanent development.

Men during the fifteenth century agreed that the seas had to be kept when there was insecurity on them, but they disagreed on how this was to be done. It would not be easy to judge how self-conscious these differences of opinion were, particularly in Edward's reign when no one was very articulate, and, as in all ages, attitude was determined by, and part of, social (and that is political) position. However efficiency was necessary to successful sea-keeping; it is on this point that the differences arose. But this dispute over efficiency in

the administration was that which was also at the root of the civil disturbances of the years between 1450 and 1470; consequently the shaky, but eventual triumph of Edward in 1471 was a victory for the group that (naturally) advocated greater government control in naval affairs.

In the decade 1460-1470 the Earl of Warwick is the major figure;the keeping of the seas was perhaps his by qualification, his previous success and his resources being what they were. But in the 1460's Warwick was not providing a service in, as it were, a vacuum as he had been doing in the later 1450's; there was now a government, run by the king, that helped, and was helped by him. The service that Warwick, and Neville and Worcester, provided was in many ways an efficient one. But efficiency also involves loyalty, and ?Warwick in the years after the initial struggle down to 1463, was made increasingly aware that the hectic, and prosperous, days of 1457 to 1460 had gone, and that there was a government to which he, as one of its servants, was responsible. The conflict that ensued between Warwick and Edward IV was really one between the noble amateur and the government professional, and as in most history books - unlike good

story books - the latter won. Out of this conflict Edward brought with him ideas; one for instance that he should buy ships more consistently than he had done previously. It was this idea, put into practice during the next twelve years, which, once royal government had triumphed over disloyal and therefore inefficient nobility, was to change the whole character of naval administration.

Whilst Warwick's ships were used by the crown there could be no royal naval organisation; in the last event the keeping of the sea depended upon whose ships were keeping it, and in the 1460's therefore this power was always in Warwick's hands, and these hands that could not be trusted to provide efficient, loyal service, as Edward discovered in 1469. After 1470 then Edward's control becomes more complete in the organisation of naval expeditions; his ships form the nucleus of any expeditionary force, and by the 1480's the majority of any such force[1]. And with the purchase of ships there came

---

1. Royal ships 1461-1482. These figures are the most probable that I can produce. See the next chapter for a detailed history of these ships.

1461	2	1466	2	1470	2	1474	5	1478	8
1462	3	1467	3	1471	5	1475	7	1479	8
1463	5	1468	5	1472	5	1476	7	1480	8
1464	4	1469	3	1473	6	1477	7	1481	16
1465	3							1482	16.

the men to sail them, and to take care of them when in port: mariners in royal service. If these professionals seldom led naval expeditions of any size, they were usually all involved in them, in their preparation and execution, and on these men depended the day to day running of the navy. Whilst Edward never had sufficient ships, nor did any great war bring the need, for a naval establishment such as Henry V had, the development of the royal navy during his last years, and the re-creation of the office of Clerk of the King's Ships gave a continuity to royal administration. This continuity was still hand to mouth - no planning from one year to the next, but whilst there were royal ships to be looked after, men and equipment and some applied knowledge were necessary; all these were present towards the end of Edward IV's reign. They had been there too under Henry V, but on a larger scale; but all had gone during the first twenty years of Henry VI's reign. The tentative moves of the 1460's became sure, if unsensational, in the 1470's and 1480's, and the foundation, this time lasting, of the royal navy was begun before Henry VII came to the throne, surviving the quietness of that reign, finally to prosper after 1509.

This then is the theme that lies behind naval organisation in Edward's reign, that gives coherence to the naval activity we have already described. It is not a neat theme, nor always consistent, nor indeed was it one which men were mightily aware of; and the way in which the seas were kept did not alter. But the organisational differences between 1461 and 1483 are too obvious to be overlooked; they will probably have been noted in the last chapter, now they must be discussed in more detail.

In the first few dangerous years of the reign the Earl of Warwick was supreme in naval affairs; he was granted the revenues from Tonnage and Poundage and his ships were foremost amongst those that served the king at sea. In 1461 there was much hasty improvisation; Yorkist supporters in East Anglia, in the South West and in the North were called upon to provide fleets, and (as in the next two years) Edward's men and his letters were sent about the country to raise men and vessels for the expeditions at sea, as Cornborough was in the West country in 1462, and Gilbert Debenham, John Sorell and Sir John Howard were in East Anglia in the same year.

These unusual measures, coupled with the usual commissions to arrest ships (that were named in those commissions), were those that brought together the vessels that sailed in the expeditions of 1461, 1462 and 1463. When we examine the composition of the fleets of 1462 and 1463 we can see clearly that these were Warwick's years[1]. Eight of the large ships that went with Neville in 1462 were Warwick's, two were probably the Earl of Worcester's, two Howard's, one the Earl of Kent's, another belonged to Lord Duras, and only one or two were the king's[2]. Of the 1463 fleet, perhaps twenty-five in all, at least six were Warwick's, four Worcester's, one the late Earl of Kent's, one Howard's, one belonging to Lord Duras, and perhaps three the king's[3]. As Warwick's vessels formed the largest contingent of war-ships in these expeditions, and his men captained and manned them, the operations were clearly as much his as the king's, more especially as the financial control was also in Warwick's hands. Warwick

---

1. Little evidence of the composition of the 1461 forces survives; what there is was set out in the last chapter. As the operations were as much Warwick's affair as were those of the succeeding two years, no doubt his ships took a similarly important part under Auger and Ince.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 204; P.R.O. E403/825, 826 (old 834).
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, pages 281, 302; P.R.O. E 404/72/3/64.

had ten ships that we know of, two of them described as great ships - the Trinity of 300 tons and the Mary Warwick of 500 tons. These were in the 1460's the equivalent of a royal naval task force; like Edward's ships in the 1470's, they too went on trading voyages during peaceful years, in 1464 and 1465 for instance to Bordeaux. Edward's two or three ships, beside these fine vessels, were but puny representatives of English power at sea[1].

The organisation of these expeditions of 1461-1463 was equally not under the direct control of the government;

---

1. For Warwick's ships during these years see notes 2 and 3 on previous page, and esp., the list of eight of them in the licence to him to trade to Bordeaux of 30th August 1464: P.R.O. C81/1378/16.

   Mary of Cliffe 280 tons, Mary of Grace 240 tons, George 140 tons, Great Mary 500 tons, Giles 240 tons, Mary Richardson 80 tons, Trinity 300 tons, Katherine 220 tons.

   To these must be added The Christopher, in which Warwick was given shares with all her gear, by William Wadner, mariner, of Bristol in September 1460: Cal. Close Rolls, 1454-1461, page 475. And the Jesus Warwyke, John Benet, master, only a crayer or barge; and called also in the same Plymouth Customs Returns, Jesus of Sandwich; P.R.O. E122/114/3, for 1465-66. I owe this reference to Mr. G.V. Scammell. See also for the Mary Grace and the Trinity, The Paston Letters, number 531; and the George, sailing for Bordeaux from Bristol on 8th November 1465, The Overseas Trade of Bristol E.M. Carus Wilson, Bristol Record Society, 1937, number 170. And for the Giles in 1468: Cal. of Plea and Memoranda Rolls, of the City of London, 1458;1482, ed. P.E. Jones, 1961, p.51.

much, if not all, depended on the response of Edward's supporters up and down the country; towns and individuals supplied, equipped and manned many ships for service, and only some of these were paid for by the crown[1]. Warwick himself, or his lieutenants, saw to the preparation of his own vessels, and no doubt some others, and to the payment of the men who sailed in them, out of the large monetary grants he received for these purposes. Whilst the Earl of Worcester in 1463 received large sums from various sources, which he used for the operations of that year, presumably as he saw fit[2]. The crown seems only to have equipped its own vessels, the Margaret and Nicholas de Marche in 1461[3] and in 1462[4], and some others for Neville's fleet, which were small and appear not to have been chosen for any particular reason as those which the king should provide[5]. Only in the victualling of the 1462 expedition, and to a

---

1. See the previous chapter.
2. See the previous chapter.
3. P.R.O. E 404/72/1/17, 53 (the Margaret); E 403/824 passim.
4. P.R.O. E 403/825, 826, 827 cf. E 405/40 ,passim.
5. Ibid. These were the Giles with 80 men, the Carvel of Worcester with 30 men, the John of Worcester, with 30 men, and the Barge of William Newland.

lesser extent that of 1463[1], did the crown take any important direct part. Payments on the Issue Rolls for saltfish, oxen and beer to butchers, brewers, fishmongers and to many others merely for their labours about the victualling of the ships going with Neville, abound[2]. Some of the war equipment was paid for by the government, though not much[3], as were the banners and streamers for Neville's ships[4]; but these contributions to the expeditions of these years were small compared with those made by private individuals and corporate organisations. The delegation of authority and responsibility to others for the enterprises of these years, in which otherwise the crown appears only as a very secondary participant, was perhaps the only course open to Edward at this time, when the power and the administration were not yet wholly his. The success of these operations was therefore hardly due to the royal administration; the variety of methods

---

1. See the previous chapter. A John Colt who was to be paid £58. 10. 0d. in January 1464 for providing victuals, resin, tallow and other things for 'our Navyez' at Newcastle, when the king was at York in 1463: P.R.O. PSO 1/25/1337.
2. P.R.O. E 403/825, 826, 827, 829 cf. E 405/40, passim.
3. For example in 1461 for Auger and Ince: P.R.O. E405/72/1/12; in 1462, four barells of gunpowder: P.R.O. E 403/827 under 16th November.
4. Bought from William Clement of London, tailor, at a cost of £16: P.R.O. E 403/827.

used, the improvisation of resources, the dependence on the nobility, show how the government had not yet moved out of the free-for-all of the 1450's.

The years between this early fumbling and dependence on others and the time after 1471 when the crown became increasingly reliant on its own ships and men, are filled with the struggle between Edward and Warwick. From 1464 to 1468 there is no record of any important naval operation, and from 1468 to 1471 expeditions at sea rather confirm that Edward had not moved very far towards a new conception of the organisation of naval forces. The political issues, the quarrel and sea-war with the Hanse and the transference of party strife to the sea once again, do not make analysis of these years easy, particularly as there is little information on the expedition of 1470 and virtually nothing on that of 1469. We do however have some indications that Edward was endeavouring to free naval organisation from the control of Warwick; and in the outward forms he succeeded, but the real power remained to Warwick because he had the ships and Edward did'nt. In January 1465 Edward was granted Tonnage and Poundage for life[1], and the last year in which we hear of Warwick

---

1. Rot. Parl., V, page 508.

having that grant for naval purposes is 1463 - though his contract was due to end on 11th November 1464; thereafter it was to remain in the king's hands. And in the expeditions of 1468 it is clear that Warwick had little or no part. Whilst the organisation of the voyage of Lord Scales and Lord Mountjoy is more truly that for a military venture, the other enterprise of that year, under the four captains, is in some ways a fore-runner of many of the expeditions of the period after 1471.

William Wade, Richard Harleston, Thomas Fulthorp and Edmund Weston were retained with 500 men to serve for an unspecified time in April 1468. They were to have £833. 6. 8d. for the wages of themselves and their men, and for the equipping of the ships they were to sail in. All their armament - guns, powder, bows and arrows - was supplied directly by the Master of the Ordnance[1]. The masters of some of the ships that later in the year were at Jersey with Harleston and Weston - a continuation of the original expedition - were all paid by the king[2].

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/74/1/8.
2. The Mary Whitby, 80 men: £82, P.R.O. E404/74/1/43; the Mary Hampton, 37 men for 22 weeks: £40, P.R.O. E404/74/1/141; the Julian and the Peter of Fowey, 100 men for 20 weeks: £20, P.R.O. E404/74/1/138.

None of this appears startling; only two things need emphasis: that the expedition was a small one led by men who were not of the nobility, and that the organisation and initiative were from the royal administration. Neither of these points should be seen as parts of some consistent policy on the part of the king, for this they were not. But the expedition indicates the type and manner of things to come, a strong contrast with the grander, more expensive operations led by one or more of the higher nobility, which were the rule in the 1450's and early 1460's.

Sir John Howard's place in the naval activities of these years, 1468-1471, was not only important in itself, but also illustrates the change that was to occur in naval administration and practice. Ipswich and Harwich were, as Miss Haward writes, 'bases for the building, manning, provisioning and assembling of the ships that he (Howard) supplied to Edward IV between 1462 and 1481[1].'

---

1. 'Economic aspects of the wars of the Roses in East Anglia', E.H.R., 1926, p.181. His position in the 1460's as a man who had to do with, and knew about, ships, must have been well known; in an undated draft of a letter of his he writes, that two Spanish ships have lost their masts in the Downs, and he expects that they will buy one of his. He tells John Norris to keep it well at Deptford and to 'dress' it for when they will come to see it - he was a good salesman too: The Manners and Expenses etc., p.560.

During the first two or three years of the reign we have seen that Howard was raising ships for the crown, and himself sailing in the expeditions of 1462 and 1463[1]. He was also building a carvel for the king at this time, and perhaps a balinger as well, as the king had commanded him to do. The carvel, called the Edward, was built at Dunwich under the supervision of John Spence, one of Howard's men, perhaps indeed that cunning maker of ships that Howard wrote to the king he had on the task; work on her was not continuous and she was under construction from April 1463 to May 1466, when she was finally fitted out but for Howard's own use[2]. For the Edward never served as the king's, and was in fact that carvel of Howard's which was ready to sail to Prussia in 1466[3], and which went to Bordeaux in 1468 with the Thomas Howard on a licensed trading voyage[4]. Edward did however pay John Spence forty marks in 1464 as a reward for the

---

1. Victuals were bought for his going to sea in August 1463; he presumably went in the Mary Talbot with Worcester: The Manners and Expenses, p.196.
2. The Manners and Expenses, pages 169, 171-73, 186, 197-214, 557-558.
3. Ibid, p.332-33; various other expenses on the carvel, Ibid, p. 369, 376, 395.
4. P.R.O. C81/1381/21, and see below page 394, note 1.

building of the ship[1].

Now in the late 1460's Howard took, in a much less ambitious way, the place that Warwick was leaving in the organisation of naval affairs. It was Howard's carvel that took the Bastard of Burgundy over to Calais in July 1467[2], and he was involved in taking Margaret across to Burgundy in 1468. In the same year he was paid for victualling 1,000 soldiers and 500 mariners in ships going with Scales and Mountjoy, and 80 men in his own vessel, the Edward of London, as well as for repairs on, and the equipping of, the John of Newcastle going on the same voyage, and for keeping that ship during the long wait in September, before the Lords sailed away[3]. And in 1470 he was in command of a force at sea of 1,500 men in nine or so vessels, some of his own, some Warwick's[4].

---

1. P.R.O. E403/832, under 8th June. He was of course paid by Howard: The Manners and Expenses, p.197; and in January 1466 he also had £1. 6. 8d. from the Earl of Worcester: Ibid, p.204.
2. The Manners and Expenses, p.408-9. The Bastard had arrived in May 'with foure kervelles of forstage richely apparailde', but whose these were we do not know - they were presumably Burgundian: B.M. Lansdowne MS. 285, f.35.
3. See the previous chapter.
4. P.R.O. E404/74/2/111. The list of vessels is in Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 201. Perhaps four were Howard's and two Warwick's.

By this time Edward and Warwick were at war and any normal developments in naval organisation had to wait. Howard's prominence in these years therefore is due as much to his loyalty to Edward as to any ability and experience of his in naval affairs, of which however he had plenty. For his importance in these years is not only a matter of politics, as during the early 1460's, in 1472, and then in the war against the Scots in the 1480's also Howard is one of the most hardworked of men both in the organisation of expeditions and in their leadership. Some analysis of Howard's role in administration is necessary, and at this point of transition in the reign, might be helpful in showing what that transition was, and what it was not.

Howard was always an important man in naval affairs, chiefly because of his connection with the two ports of Ipswich and Harwich and his position as their local lord. He was involved in trade, the building of ships and the supplying of victuals to naval expeditions. The position of these two ports at the mouth of the Thames was one good reason why he fulfilled these tasks, for they were near to Sandwich and the Downs, the chief naval port and the most usual place for ships to gather, as well as to London. For all these reasons he became one of Edward's

chief naval commanders and administrators, and was no doubt also a close advisor on naval policy. Once Warwick was outside the king's inner councils, Howard replaced him. This, as Edward must have realised, was essential, since having no ships of his own to speak of, now that the use of Warwick's fine fleet was denied him, Howard's ships had to become the central part of any squadron he sent to sea. But Howard was not another Warwick[1]; a discussion of their differences would lead us too deeply into politics and social structure (let alone the unknown region of personalities). But Howard's loyalty was unquestioned in both Edward's and Richard's reign; one of the richer gentry he was very much a self-made man, and many of the offices and titles that fell to him were rewards for good service. There were many men like him, though few rose so high. If we consider his activity in naval affairs it is clear that this did not alter very much - providing, equipping, commanding ships for the king; but the difference between 1463, 1470 and 1481 is that these services were being given in changing circumstances

---

1. See following page.

Footnote from previous page:

1. He does seem to have shared some of Warwick's attitudes (naturally enough). For instance he seems to have been one of the party that took strong action against the Hanse in London in 1468: Warwick the Kingmaker, pages 223-225; Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, page 133, of which group of course Warwick was a member; for the James of Lynn captured by the Danes in the Sound was under the nominal ownership of Richard Outlaw, (Hansisches Urkundenbuch, vol 9, number 478,) perhaps one of Howard's men, as Outlaw was master of the Mary Talbot in 1463: Manners etc., p.188-191. The George, also captured then, under Thomas Rogers, was without doubt Warwick's ship, as Rogers in these years was one of Warwick's captains. Howard also had something of Warwick's brash and naive (perhaps) attitude towards those who stood against him, not only the Hansards, in the war against whom he was foremost, but also the Mercers Company of London. In 1472 this honourable body had not given his ships preferential treatment in the Low Countries: they had not been freighted amongst the first as, he said, the Mercers had agreed with him to do. They replied that his masters had broken the agreement, and refused to pay him the £120 he demanded. Howard threatened that if he could not prevail against them by law, then he would take their goods wherever he could, in the Thames, at Calais or elsewhere. (He would have been in a good position to carry out this threat). But in December 1472 the Company gave him 20 marks to be their good lord and lover, and so presumably the matter ended: Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company, ed. Watney and Lyell, pages 63-5. In 1470 he had been clearing the Thames of pirates, yet in 1472 he could threaten his own form of piracy. See also The Paston Letters for this side of his character. But, like Warwick, he knew about ships and what could be done with them; his influence on Edward's naval policy from 1469 onwards may have been great indeed.

and under different conditions. And the change was simple enough; after 1471 as the fleet of royal ships grew in numbers, so it came to fulfill the function that in the 1460's and in 1470 Warwick's and Howard's ships always undertook, namely that of forming the organised core of any naval force. It became not a question of king's ships serving with an expedition that was formed around the ships of one of his subjects, as so often happened in the 1460's, but of Howard's vessels serving in a fleet which was truly royal, as was so by 1481. With royal ships there grew up also a group of men who both commanded them and took care of them, so that Howard's services were called upon less often[1]. As a commander of course his experience was not to be wasted, and he led the expeditions of 1472 and 1481. But now, when Margaret came over from Burgundy, or wool ships were to be convoyed to Calais - even from Ipswich, then it was royal ships that were there to carry and protect, and mariners

---

1. The fact that there are no household accounts of Howard's for the years 1471-1480 may be one reason perhaps that this statement can be made. But if there were any I doubt that they would show him as heavily committed to the government, in material things anyway.

in the royal service who want to organise and command. It is perhaps significant here that many of Howard's men, important in naval administration in the early 1460's, do not figure at all in the 1470's.[1]

Always it must be remembered that Edward's navy was never sufficient to be, on its own, more than a moderate striking force, in time of war other ships had to be called in; this of course was still necessary in the

---

1. This may have been for other reasons. Richard Felaw was, on his own account, an important and a none too scrupulous man at Ipswich and Harwich, long before 1460: Wedgwood, History of Parliament, Biographies page 315; P.R.O. C 1/27/84; C 1/59/56. In 1458 he was building (he said) a great ship to the king's weal and pleasure: P.R.O. E28/88, 30th October 1458. He, like William Baldry, who became a searcher in the port of London from 1463 to 1479 and was also described as a merchant of London, probably was too involved in trade to be concerned in naval organisation in the 1470's: for Baldry, see Wedgwood, op.cit., page 36. Edmund Ince only appears in 1461-3, then as one of Warwick's lieutenants, and involved with Howard's preparations for Worcester's venture: Manners, p.192, in 1481, when he went with Howard to the North: The Howard Household Books, page 5, p.40-1, 68, 79, 86, 247, and in 1483 when he is concerned with the protection of the East Anglian fishermen, presumably as a man of influence in that area. John Davy, that important sea captain of the 1480's, was not, as Mr. Kendall asserts (Richard the Third, 1955, page 188), one of Howard's men. There are at least three John Davys in the household books (see The Howard Household Books, page 5, p.248, p.490) all three never have anything to do with naval affairs; all are too lowly to be the royal mariner of that name.

sixteenth century. The king in naval affairs was never independent; and the transition was a gradual one, never completed; but from being in 1463 just one of a number of shipowners, the king became by 1481 the first and foremost of these, and in so doing he created anew a royal navy and the beginnings of a naval establishment. Lord Howard's contribution to naval activity did not so much decrease in these years, as the king's increase; but the brief time of his supremacy in naval affairs was over, as was that longer and more thorough time of the Earl of Warwick's, when the Duke of Gloucester accepted Fauconberg's surrender at Sandwich in 1471, and the ships that had been Warwick's, 'such fine ships filled with so many men'[1], became the king's.

It is indicative of the accidental and unplanned nature of the slow, and slight development of the king's navy, that none of these ships, save the Trinity were

---

1. So described by Louis XI's ambassador in London in 1470, quoted by Scofield, vol. 1. page 561.

kept by the crown[1]. And it is a warning not to read too much conscious endeavour on the part of Edward and the Council into their building up of a fleet; for this surely would have been the opportunity to begin. But the way in which the royal administration tackled the problem of sea-keeping in the 1470's was more careful and circumspect; as situations arose they were met, and as this was generally a time of peace, there was no sudden growth, as in Henry V's time, of a naval establishment. But the slow growth that we do see - the take-over by the king's ships and the king's men of the main tasks of sea-keeping - was not this time to wither suddenly; the war against the Scots in 1481-2 and the policy of Richard III were to put that casual progress on a foundation sufficiently sure for future sovereigns to continue the development.

---

1. The 47 that the writer of The Arrivall, pages 33-39, says that Fauconberg had is quite likely. Warwick had taken many prizes in April 1470, some of these perhaps he sent out with Fauconberg in 1470-1; Fauconberg himself had taken ships, including those Portuguese which later Edward had to return (see previous chapter). Edward may have kept more than the single Trinity, but it seems most likely that he gave Warwick's ships away, the Katherine perhaps to John Cole (the Katherine Cole of 1473: P.R.O. E 405/55), and perhaps the George and Mary to Howard. Others may have had their names changed.

The expeditions of 1472 show how slight was the break with the past, yet how this tenuous change meant an increase in royal control. The winter venture was under John Cheyne, and with him as captains went men of no great social standing, one, John Moyne was later to be purser of the king's Mary of the Tower,[1] another was Edward Brampton whose varied services to the Yorkists were many. Similar to the expedition of the four captains in 1468 in this, it was also like it, in that it was small; probably only five ships went in all, including the Grace Dieu[2] and the Rose captained by a later royal mariner, Robert Morris[3]. Clearly this was a force that was directed and organised by the crown. The June expedition was on a much larger scale, and Howard's part in it must have been an important one, for out of the eighteen ships that were commissioned for the fleet[4], four

---

1. See for example P.R.O. SC 1, vol. 51, number 98, circa 1478-79.
2. A £100's worth of repairs were done on her at this time: P.R.O. E405/54.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 299. The Rose still with Robert Morris as her master, was called a king's ship in 1475: P.R.O. E405/61.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 355.

or five were Howard's[1]; however a further three were the king's, and another, the Spencer, was captained by William Fetherston, a royal mariner by 1473 at the latest,

---

1. The number of Howard's ships it is difficult to discover; these at least were his:

Edward Howard	1468-70	P.R.O. C81/1381/21, E404/74/3/31, Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 201.
Margaret	1470-75	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 201, 250, 355, 525; The Manners, etc., pages 560; The Acts of the Mercers Company, page 63.
George	1472-75	Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 355, 525; The Acts of the Mercers Co., page 63.
Thomas	1468-75	P.R.O. C 81/1381/21, Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.525.

There were others: the Katherine (The Manners etc., page 535, c. 1469), Mary (sold to the king 1481, see perhaps P.R.O. E 404/74/3/31), Barbara (The Howard Household Books, pages 57, 92, 66, 112, 294-6; 1481-2), the Paker Howard (Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.240, The Howard Books, p.3, p.39-40, 112. 1481), and he was trying to sell a hulk of his at Deptford (The Manners, etc., p.560 N.D.), also Tryge Howard: (1481: HB. p.39-40), also a balinger or balingers in the 1460's: (Manners p.194, 212, 222, 394-5, 470, 478). His close connection with the equipping of many ships at different times does not help here, for example the John of Newcastle in 1468 (P.R.O. E404/74/1/65), and some of these were often associated with him, like the Peter of Harwich (Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 201, 355 perhaps the later Paker of Harwich/Paker Howard) and the Carvel of Turk (ibid; and P.R.O. E101/198/8.). The Mary Talbot may also have been his, in the early 1460's (The Manners etc., pages 188-194) The statement in the Dictionary of National Biography that he was building a ship called Mary Grace in 1466 I have not been able to find any source for, save that a Gregory Elliot is mentioned as steward of a ship of this name going with Scales in 1468(The Manners etc. p.580.) There is no ref.in Manners; probably the carvel is meant.

and who had served the king's ships previously in 1465-6[1], though his naval career, as befitted a man of Sandwich, had begun with Warwick. Also Robert Lightharness, now master of the St. Peter the Martyr of Genoa, had been the master of the king's Margaret as far back as 1463[2], and John Cole, who now served with his own Trinity Cole, had already shewn his loyalty in the troubles at Sandwich with Fauconberg, and was an important man there for the royal administration in the early 1470's. Whatever Howard's part in this expedition, whether he sailed or not, the captains that were appointed[3] were all men of that class that was especially to help, and be helped by, the Yorkist government of these years 1470-85; Edward Brampton, John Cole and William Fetherston were at the beginning of their royal service, John Kyrell was master at this time of the king's Garse, Philip Dimmer was to be master of the king's Lucas in 1482, and only Richard Hawte's qualifications are unknown. It is possible that Lord Howard was responsible for this expedition - the

---

1. P.R.O. E405/43.
2. See for example Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 302.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p. 340.

organisation and financial arrangements[1]. If he did serve the crown in this way then it shows that old methods could be made to work well enough, as was to be the case in 1475 and 1481, particularly if a number of men, whose skill and loyalty were beyond doubt, were amongst those who organised and commanded. The English success of this summer shows too that this trust was not misplaced. Fetherston and his like were to continue their work throughout the 1470's; with them rested the day to day running of naval affairs. Therefore the administration of this decade, with the major operations of 1475 and the lesser activity of other years, is best seen by following some of the careers of these new naval administrators.

William Fetherston of Sandwich was no doubt the son of that Thomas Fetherston, citizen and vintner of London, who was controller of customs at Sandwich in 1447-8[2]. William was captain of Warwick's Mary Grace in the early 1460's[3], and as early as July 1461 was on a commission to take mariners for the ventures of that year[4]. On two

---

1. See the previous chapter.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-1452, p.13, 59, 155.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p. 204, 302.
4. Ibid, p.36.

occasions in the middle years of the decade he was busy in naval affairs on the crown's behalf - equipping ships and taking seamen for others[1]. There is no mention of him again until 1472, when he was given the responsible position of captain in the armed fleet of that summer. He must have exhibited both his capacity and his loyalty in the brittle years around 1470. Not all of the mariners who had been associated with Warwick earlier, made the change in allegiance so easily. John Porter, master of Warwick's Trinity disappears after 1470[2], Richard Strange and William Thomas do not figure after the early 1460's[3], whilst Simon Lawless, pirate of the 1450's[4], master of the Earl of Kent's carvel in the early 1460's[5], and recipient of an annuity of five marks during the Readeption[6] despite his serving with Lord Rivers in

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.29; P.R.O. E405/43.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.204, 302; Ibid 1467-1477, p.250.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.204, 302.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-1452, p.436, 445, cf. P.R.O. E404/67/176 and E28/81, 7th June 1451: he was arrested at Newcastle and brought to London by Robert Weldon, esquire. Lawless was described as a great pirate and robber of the seas.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.302; this was probably the same as the Mary of Rye, of which he was master in 1470: Ibid, 1467-1477, p.217.
6. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.208.

1470, was ordered to be arrested in 1475[1]. On the other hand Thomas Philip, a captain of the Earl of Warwick's early in the 1460's, appears again as master of the king's Garse in 1473[2], and Thomas Rogers, another of Warwick's shipmasters even in the years 1470-1[3], survived this and climbed to the highest position in the administration in 1480. Clearly experience and ability were always a recommendation for the king's service.

Fetherston had both; for he, like Rogers, was truly a professional royal servant. After the command he held in 1472 his service really begins. In the winter of 1473-4 he it was (with Brampton) who indented for duty at the siege of St. Michael's Mount, where he captained the king's Caricon, one of the crown's most important vessels throughout the latter part of the reign. Fetherston's force of 400 men in three ships was his own responsibility, and their wages and victuals were paid

---

1. Ibid, p.571.
2. P.R.O. E405/57, m.7v. Afterwards, in 1483 and 1491, Philip was mayor of Hull, and in 1491-2 M.P. for that port: Wedgwood, Biographies, p.681.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.201, 250.

through him. He too saw to the Caricon's fitting out; he bought cables, canvas, ropes and hawsers from the usual naval supplier of these years, William Milne, an ironmonger of London, as well as cables from William Remington, another ironmonger of London; 39 guns were made for the ship by G. Vanrasingham, the master of the king's guns, and Fetherston bought 13 more in London. In February 1474 when he and the men in the Caricon were retained for a further six weeks, he was busy at Erith refitting her with cales. Unlike Brampton, on similar service at the siege, Fetherston was in complete charge of all the preparations for the ship of which he was master, and of the entire force of which he was leader[1].

The three years 1474-1476 were full ones for Fetherston. As master of the Caricon throughout this period he was responsible for repairs on the ship, and for equipping her for service; this was one of his most active times. He was with the wool fleet convoys in 1474-1475, and was on the London one of 1475 the chief

---

1. See the previous chapter; P.R.O. E 101/71/954, E 405/56, 57, 58, 59.

organiser and commander, handling all the payments for wages and victuals of the men in the three vessels that sailed as protection for the wool ships. These were not great or expensive ventures, but they are shewn, by Fetherston's presence with the Caricon, to be a responsibility that Edward took seriously[1]. The summer of 1475 also witnessed the invasion of Northern France by the English army, and once again Fetherston was fully occupied, on repairing ships, with John Cole, and only the Caricon, and his own Mary Grace, but also three ships of Cole's and four others, and as a captain assigned with a force to go against the king's enemies at sea. Probably he served with a squadron, perhaps the nine vessels that he had helped repair and equip, under Dinham's command in the channel, as the money for paying his men was handed over to him at Sandwich[2].

Fetherston's part in the covering operations against French attack on the transport ships carrying the army to France was not a large one, but it was a significant one. For he, a royal mariner, was with his ship leading

---

1. P.R.O. E 101/55/8, E101/198/8. E 405/61,63, E 404/76/1/47 repairs.
2. P.R.O. E 405/61.

a mercantile convoy and an armed squadron at various times in this year, as well as preparing his own and other vessels at the crown's expense, to serve for the king's money. The expeditions of 1475 contrast very obviously with those of the early 1460's; the forces sent out in this year were directed and organised by the government, and even those measures of sea-keeping undertaken by West country merchants, perhaps originally on their own initiative, were paid for by the crown[1]. Royal control and government responsibility was complete, and the Tellers Rolls are filled with the record of payments to the masters and pursers of the king's ships (the first civil servants of the new navy[2]) for the repairs and equipping of their ships, whilst William Milne and William Rose, the ironmongers of London most often used by the crown, were kept busy supplying materials. The individuals who served with their own ships, or some of them at least, like Robert Vincent with his Barbara of Dover with forty men, and William Brewer with the

---

1. See the previous chapter.
2. They were more civil than military servants of the crown.

Katherine Brewer of Fowey, were paid directly for their service[1]. Avery Cornborough, as we have seen, was active in the West supplying vessels for all duties, victualling ships out of Bristol and other ports and himself commanding a squadron at sea[2], and Lord Dinham was leader of the main fleet and in charge of the payment of his 3,058 men strong force's wages and victuals[3].

In this Dinham was no Warwick nor Worcester to have large sums of money, the spending of which was not directly controlled by the crown. Now, as in the small expedition of 1468 and in Fetherston's and Brampton's service at the Mount, Dinham had to indent for service strictly: men and wages were specified and only this - the actual raising of men and their payment - was left to the noble commander. Even Howard in 1481 was concerned with little more than this. All else in 1475, the provision of ships, their equipment, victualling and terms of service, was determined and undertaken by the crown, either directly by the use of its own ships and

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/60, 61,
2. See the previous chapter.
3. P.R.O. E405/60, 61.

men, or by the hire of others under the supervision of men who were in the administration. There were now no pleas to supporters in town and country to provide ships and men, no dependence upon a few or many men whose loyalty was not that of servants but that of equals. Dinham went to sea in 1475 at the king's command with perhaps seven king's ships and with many king's men; the whole organisation of his enterprise was directed by the crown. The king's ships were still not a majority in his fleet, but now they were the essential leaven, which provided the necessary weight of loyalty and efficiency. The expeditions of 1416-17-18 were more akin (in all this) to that of 1475 than were those of 1461-62-63.

After 1475 the peaceful years down to 1480-1 meant that activity at sea was slight. It is therefore quite remarkable that, remembering how much peace is a destroyer of navies[1], the number of king's ships continued to remain at seven or eight, and that in 1478 the king even

---

1. As for instance after 1422; and Henry VII's reign, if then not a destroyer, hardly a creator; cf. an article by J. Holland-Rose in The Fortnightly Review, November 1920.

bought a new ship from a Spanish merchant, the Caricon renamed the Mary of the Tower. And it was just during these years that men like Fetherston, the masters of the king's ships, were becoming a part - even if a shifting part - of the naval establishment, as in the day to day[1] keeping of the vessels some continuity of corporate experience was gained. Some of the ships remained inactive through the four or five years like the Grace Dieu; the payments to her purser, David White, for the wages of the few men keeping her in the Hamble river or in the Thames at Erith are monotonous in their regularity, but she was not left to rot for she was in service again in 1481 and in Richard's reign. Others were from time to time repaired, as the Trinity in July 1478[2], and the Antony in August of the same year[3], and most seem to have gone on at least one voyage. The Trinity and Antony went

---

1. It was very much just that; for example sometime in the 1470's Richard Hay a mariner of the Antony bought £5. worth of tallow from a London grocer, but left the payment to the uninformed and unfortunate William Dunham, grocer, with whom he had been lodging, which caused Dunham much trouble when Hay's creditor came to account, after the Antony had sailed away. Stores for the king's ships were not always legitimately come by, king's mariners not always the most respectable of men: P.R.O. C 1/64/319.
2. P.R.O. E 403/846.
3. P.R.O. E 403/847.

on a journey under Thomas Rogers to Guernsey early in 1476[1]; the Mary of the Tower under Robert Morris was constantly at sea in the years 1478-9, bringing wine for the King[2], going to Zealand with merchandise[3], and the Falcon sailed to Flanders in 1478[4] and Bordeaux in 1479[5]; the Burnet too went on a trading voyage to Spain in 1478[6]. Many of Edward's ships at this time, and later were sailing as merchant ships, either on his own behalf or on that of others (who some-times traded in his name), going often into the Mediterranean[7]. Those wools of the king that Fetherston conveyed from Southampton to Calais in 1480 were perhaps in one or more of the king's own ships.

In these years David White, William Combersale, John Davy, the newer men, were working with captains like Roger Trewman, in the king's service since 1472, Thomas

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/62.
2. P.R.O. E 404/76/4/134; SC 1, vol. 51, number 98.
3. P.R.O. E 403/850.
4. P.R.O. E 405/66, E 28/92 (tellers account).
5. P.R.O. E 28/92 (ibid).
6. P.R.O. C 81/1386/4 (formerly C 81/1514/4976).
7. The Cely Papers, number 77; Eileen Power in the Camb. Hist. Journal 1926, page 17 seq., especially page 21.

Rogers increasingly involved in administration as master of the important Antony, and Robert Morris master of the Mary of the Tower and then the Caricon in 1480[1]. Many men come and go - John Birley purser of the Falcon on her trip to Flanders in 1478, Richard Simon, master on occasion of the Grace Dieu, as in 1473 when she was extensively rebuilt and again in 1480[2], whilst John Cole has retired from all activity. Fetherston rather drops out of naval affairs in the late 1470's; indeed it seems that he was a soldier at Calais, on the safe-keeping of the town, or at least he had agreed to such service[3]. However by 1479 again he was master of the Falcon[4], and it was with this ship that he was so active in 1480, on the wool convoys and bringing Margaret from Burgundy.

Fetherston's abilities must have been high and well regarded for him to come back to captain one of the king's finest ships, and to be used and trusted in 1480 on such

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/68.
2. P.R.O. E 405/68.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 119.
4. P.R.O. E 405/68.

important voyages. By the end of the reign, in 1482, he was master of the king's Elizabeth[1], and one of the protectors of the East Anglian fishermen[2]. In Richard III's reign John Davy and William Combersale replace him as the crown's most hardworked mariners, although in 1483 and 1484 he was commissioned to take mariners for the king's Mary of Greenwich, going to foreign parts in 1483 and on the safe-keeping of the sea in 1484[3]. But he was by then, 1482-3, member of parliament for Sandwich[4], and perhaps this office and local affairs took up some of his time.

His career, and probably his life, ended about 1485, as there is no further mention of him after that date, save in 1505 when he was noted as being dead[5]. His career was not altogether a typical one, he was perhaps too successful for it to be that, and he had for instance, never been involved in piracy; though once, in 1472, he

---

1. P.R.O. E405/70.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.317.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.402, 466.
4. William Boys, Collections for a History of Sandwich, 1792, p407ff. He received £8., with the other burgess, John Arthur, from the town: Kent Record Office, Sandwich Borough Records, Treasurers Accounts, 1482-3 (cat. F. at 8), m.3.
5. Wedgwood, Biographies, p.321.

did have gear from a pillaged carvel in his house at Sandwich, but his wife, perhaps jealous for his career, intervened and restitution was made[1]. He was, however, representative of the masters of Edward's ships, those who in the 1470's and in the campaigns of the early 1480's were the staff of the royal navy; only he, probably because of his tested ability and loyalty, was more than a mere shipmaster, for he commanded squadrons at sea in 1472, 1473 and 1475 and was to the forefront of those involved in the protection of the Calais wool fleets and the East Anglian fishermen. He was not an important shipowner like John Cole, nor a merchant (of any standing) like Avery Cornborough or even Thomas Rogers. He seems simply to have been a seaman and a sea-captain, but with sufficient wit, intelligence and idea of leadership to be a commander and organiser as well. He was perhaps the first of a long line of English seamen of professional ability and resource, who were first and foremost in the king's service rather than their own.

John Cole's part in the administration of the 1470's

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.319.

was different from that of Fetherston's in almost all things, but his role is equally relevant to an explanation of that administration. For, whilst he was never a real member in the way that Fetherston was, he was, in the early 1470's, intimately connected with the beginnings of naval organisation. Like most seamen of his generation he was caught up in piracy in the 1450's[1], and although only described as a mariner when he went with letters from the king to Neville in 1462[2], he was already a shipmaster and shipowner of some importance in his native Sandwich[3], going with Lord Rivers to Lydd in 1460 to obtain seamen and having town meetings held in his house in 1462-3[4]. By 1468 he was a connection of Sir John Howard's - receiving £20. from him in that year[5] - and he sent a carvel with Lord Scales' expedition of the same year[6]. By then he was much more than just a shipowner, for he was M.P. for Sandwich in 1467 and mayor

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1446-1452, p. 432,381; Ibid 1452-1461, p. 167, 174, 304; P.R.O. E28/84, 10th May 1454, C1/27/414 cf. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.65.
2. P.R.O. E403/825.
3. He was master of a balinger in 1454: P.R.O. E28/84, 10th May 1454; and owner of a carvel in 1456: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-1461, p.304.
4. The Records of Lydd, p.191-2; B.M. Additional MS. 33511, Sandwich Treasurers Accounts, 1462-3.
5. The Manners and Expenses etc., p.520.
6. Ibid, p. 488, 521.

in 1469-70[1]. He emerged from the troubles of 1470-1471 relatively undamaged, though he was forced to resign from his mayoralty in October 1470 and by desire of the Sandwich Commons was ordained to be 'kepte in sauffe garde for such charges as they will allege ageynes hym'[2], and was also involved with Nicholas Faunt in a piracy case in 1471 - Faunt was to suffer for his Lancastrian sympathies[3]. But Cole's position was advanced, for in July of 1471 he was granted the office of tronage and pesage at Sandwich[4], and in September he was on a commission to seize the goods of ~~Lord~~ the Bastard of Fauconberg[5], who was hanged in that same month. After the clear indication of his loyalty in these years, and because of his established reputation and influence at Sandwich - the nearest to a naval base that there was in the 1470's,

---

1. William Boys, op. cit., p. 407ff, 416ff.
2. Dorothy Gardiner, Historic Haven, The Story of Sandwich, 1954, p.148, probably quoting the Black Book, but the reference is not clear. He perhaps suffered for his loyalty to the king, for this was the month that the Commons of Kent were up with Warwick.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 240. For Faunt see Scofield vol. 1. pages 590, vol. 2, pages 20-21.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 259.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 288.

he was drawn into service for the crown.

He was the chief and sole organiser of the transport of the soldiers going across with Lord Hastings to Calais in 1471. He arranged for the provision of passage boats from Dover, Deal and Walmer, and mariners for them, as well as for food for these and the soldiers. There were not only these boats but also thirteen armed ships which, as they were provisioned for four weeks and two days, must have patrolled the straits whilst the troops were conveyed across, unless they themselves were part of the ferry service, which is perhaps more likely as the soldiers were only given victuals for two days each[1]. In 1472 he was employed in keeping the king's Antony at Winchelsea with thirteen mariners in her, and then in the Spring of 1473 in bringing her to Erith with 80 mariners; in the 1473 Easter Tellers Roll he is described as that ship's master, but then so is Fetherston[2]. It is unlikely that he was ever a master of a king's ship, for he had too much to do on his own account, or on wider service of the king's. In 1472 he was one of the

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/53, 54.
2. P.R.O. E 405/55, 56.

commanders of the summer fleet, and he then served with his ship the Trinity Cole[1], which may have been one of Warwick's former ships, as in the 1472 Michaelmas Tellers Roll Cole was paid £20 for keeping in safe-custody and repairing this Trinity and the Katherine Cole for the past one and three-quarter years; probably Cole looked after these vessels that Fauconberg had surrendered, and they became his as a royal gift or perhaps by fact of possession[2].

His usefulness in the early 1470's was no doubt mainly due to his position at Sandwich - he was mayor in 1473, and again in 1474[3]; he was a useful operator to have in that port. In the activity of 1475 he took a major part, significantly his last appearance in naval administration. He was involved in the conduct of the wool fleet from Ipswich to Calais in this year[4], indeed he seems to have been one of the organisers; and he was paid for repairs on the 'New Nicholas of Fowey', and for the service of that ship on the safe-keeping of the sea in July and August with fifty men in her[5]. He was associated with

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 340, 355.
2. P.R.O. E 405/55.
3. William Boys, Collections etc., page 416ff.
4. P.R.O. E 101/55/8.
5. P.R.O. E 405/60.

Fetherston in the repair of nine vessels - including three of his own: the Mary Cole, the Swan, the Packer - which also saw service that year[1]. After this he does not feature in the administration and he held no further post at Sandwich; but he was perhaps concerned with higher things, for in 1482 he was granted an annuity of £20. from the customs and subsidies of Sandwich, being then described as a yeoman of the crown and a servant of the king's[2], and in 1484 a similar annuity, this time of £10. and for life, was given to him[3].

The time of Cole's service in naval administration runs only from 1471 to 1475; he took no part in the keener developments of the years around 1480. But his activities as organiser, commander and as a shipowner who contributed vessels to expeditions show how Edward in these years still improvised. It may be that Cole took no further part after 1475 for reasons of his own, but it might equally be said that his all-purpose contribution was not needed so much in the later years when the king's own men, the masters of his ships, ran the daily

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/61; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 496.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 258.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 535.

administration, and some degree of specialisation had begun. These were peaceful years too, yet when the campaigns of the 1480's were being prepared Cole played no part, perhaps because he chose not to - for Richard Lockwood of Sandwich served with his ships in 1481 and 1482 - but also perhaps because the more closely knit and centrally controlled organisation of these years could dispense with his services. Not too much must be read into Cole's omission after 1475, but what is certain is that in the years that the royal administration was beginning to function around the king's ships - the new centre of action and organisation - but was as yet far from achieving this aim, Cole's loyal and efficient contribution was essential. He could have made a career in the administration, but he probably had no desire to do so; others, however, filled his place; the professionals like Fetherston, Combersale and Rogers had no outside commitments, no careers to be made, or in the making, elsewhere; they could, and did, take over from him.

Two other men who played different parts in the 1470's were still more uncommitted than John Cole. But

then the smallness of the naval establishment hardly allowed of more than one William Fetherston, and the need for representatives outside London and Sandwich, and the necessity during wartime for men of action as commanders, meant that Avery Cornborough and Edward Brampton were used, if never regularly, certainly when occasion demanded. They, and the lesser men like them, were not professionals; their naval duties formed some important part of their careers, whose principal direction lay elsewhere, and the crown found in them good servants.

Cornborough was at some time an ironmonger in London, and he was, in the later 1460's and early 1470's, a friend of Gerard von Wesel, one of the more prominent of the Cologne merchants in London[1], but his career was to be made in government service. He was already a yeoman of the crown in the 1450's, and controller of mines in Devon and Cornwall[2]. During the 1460's he increased the number of offices he held in the West country, being made (for example) escheator for the Duchy of Cornwall

---

1. Calendar of London Letter Books, L, ed. R.R. Sharpe, p.58. For the friendship with Wesel, see Scofield, vol. 1, p.467, note 2; vol. 2, p.80.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-1461, p.217.

lands in Cornwall, and water baliff of Plymouth in 1460[1], and having the custody of various royal parks and woods in the Duchy of Cornwall and the constableship of Restormel Castle[2]. In 1469 he was appointed one of the auditors and an assessor of Duchy lands in the West[3], and he was regularly on commissions of enquiry into land ownership, piracy, commissions of arrest, of array and of the peace[4]. He was in fact one of the middling civil servants of the South West, and he was not at all a specialised officer. Thus matters of naval organisation came his way, and with these, being the local representative of the crown, he was entrusted, In 1462 he was one of the commissioners to raise a fleet in Cornwall[5], and he was very active in this duty; for he sent three vessels to serve with Neville, and then kept two of them at sea after that voyage was over, probably on the watch for the coming of Margaret of Anjou. He also bought two ships for the king, one at Dartmouth, the other at Saltcombe, and saw to their equipping and

---

1. Ibid, p.630.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.78, 447.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.169.
4. See Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, 1467-1477, passim.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.204.

manning[1]. This was all that he was called upon for in the 1460's.

In the 1470's his general duties increased; he was on many commissions in the South West, in Essex, and, on occasion, in Ireland, and he was a sheriff and M.P. several times[2]. In 1475 his naval services were again required. He was the West country organiser of that year, sending ships to the Thames for the transport of troops, safekeeping vessels at Southampton, fitting out ships from Bristol and other Western ports on the keeping of the sea, and himself being leader of a squadron at sea during October[3]. He had received the usual rewards of money and manors in the 1460's[4], and in 1478 he was, with Thomas Greyson, given the privilege, that so often went to men who were in naval administration, of a trading licence; they were allowed to ship 200 quarters of wheat and 200 quarters of rye and beans into Spain in

---

1. P.R.O. E404/72/3/29,50.
2. See Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, 1476-1485 passim; Wedgwood, Biographies, p.223.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p. 495; P.R.O. E405/59,60,61 passim.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-61, p. 629; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.220, 421.

the ship, which may have been the king's, the Burnet[1]

Cornborough was to continue his duties for the crown in the 1480's; in the Scottish campaign of 1481 he commanded the narrow seas squadron from the Grace Dieu [2], the ship that he had served in during 1475. Clearly he must have shewn ability in 1475 to be given such an important duty in 1481. In Richard's reign he became under-treasurer of England, but was still among the commissioners for the musters of George Neville's force going to sea in the spring of 1485[3]. Like many good civil servants he survived the change of government in 1485 and he served on several commissions in 1485-6; he died on 2nd February 1487[4]. He had been a very industrious royal officer, the man to whom the necessary tasks of local government would be delegated; some of these happened to concern naval organisation and leadership -

---

1. P.R.O. C81/1386/4.
2. P.R.O. E405/69; The Howard Household Books, p.4, 245.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.545.
4. In Trans. of the Essex Archaedlogical Soc., New Series, vol. 8, 1900-3, there is a representation of a brass effigy, which the writer dates as c.1480, from St. Edward's Church, Romford; this may well be of our Avery Cornborough, who was buried there, as his father(?) was before him in 1437. That Avery Cornborough founded a chantry there: Trans. Essex Arch. Soc., 1st. Series, vol. 4, 1869.

these too, in the course of his duty, came his way. This is a long distance from Fetherston's whole career in naval affairs, but it demonstrates how the administration looked to men like Cornborough, firstly as local officials to organise in the area of their influence and power, and secondly as men of sufficient social standing, ability and proved service to command naval forces when called upon to do so. The administration in the 15th and 16th centuries never could dispense with the services (of many kinds) of such men: Cornborough was as indispensible in 1481 as in 1462. What is obvious about Cornborough's service in Edward IV's reign is, we might say, its public-spiritedness. He no doubt throve on his own account from his position, but there is none of that unsubtle self-aggrandisement that is the mark of local officials, for instance in the West country, in the 1440's and 1450's. Cornborough - like Fetherston - was never involved in piracy, and did not seek to profit himself, directly or indirectly, from the imprecise definition of legitimate war at sea. His loyal, and above all, efficient and devoted service is the distinguishing mark of Edward's reign in most branches of

the administration, particularly after 1471, and it is certainly representative and typical of the naval. This attitude was one of the essential foundations of a naval establishment, as it was of much good government; after the disorders of mind in the middle of the 15th century its return to superiority over other attitudes marks a precarious advance.

The career of the Portuguese jew, Duarte Brandao, or more familiarly, Sir Edward Brampton, differs widely from that of Avery Cornborough; indeed his part in naval activity is, if not incidental, very much a matter of his (accidental) availability as well as of his capabilities. He first appears in the Domus Conversorum in 1468, and there again in 1471-2; perhaps in the interval he had served Edward IV in his tribulations and victories - for so it would appear from the grant of lands in 1472, and the careful way in which he is exampted from the 1473 Act of Resumption[1]. However his first recorded service in the royal employment is in 1472, in January when he was one of the captains serving at sea under John Cheyne[2], and in June when he was one of the

---

1. Rot. Parl., VI, p.92.
2. P.R.O. E405/54.

commanders of the fleet sent against the Hanse[1]. In October 1472 he was given letters of denization[2], and also certain lands in London in virtue of his service to the king in many battles[3]. In 1473 he fought at the siege of St. Michael's Mount, captaining the king's Garse with 200 men in her[4], and in 1475 he was concerned with providing equipment for a ship - described as the king's - called the Bark[5]. He was no doubt in the army in France that summer. During the ensuing years of peace his services were not, it seems, required, though he did cross to France on a mission in 1477[6]. In 1481 he served under Howard in the voyage to Scotland, as captain of the king's carvel of Portugal, with 400 men[7]. The king had only bought this ship in March 1481 from some Genoese merchants, who were paid 'per manus Edwardi

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.340.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-77, p.357.
3. Ibid, p.357.
4. P.R.O. E101/71/955.
5. P.R.O. E405/61.
6. P,R.O. E405/64. This was probably in connection with Alphonse, King of Portugal - penniless in France - whom Brampton helped with money at this time, for which he was rewarded on Alphonse's return to Portugal in 1479 with naturalisation as a Portuguese subject.
7. The Howard Household Books, p.4, 246.

Brampton', and he it was who kept the ship safely with 70 mariners in March and April, all of which suggests that he was intimately involved in the transaction[1]. At some time also Brampton had lent the king £700. to pay off part of the money that Edward owed to some merchants of Guipuiscoa in Spain, and in this year of 1481 he was allowed quittance of customs to the value of £700. on wool shipped by him to the Mediterrenean from London, Southampton or Sandwich[2]. In the following year he was appointed governor of Guernsey[3], though he served in this post only until January 1484 when Thomas Ridley was made governor[4]. Other customs grants and gifts of lands fell to him in Richard's reign for his services against the rebels[5]. By the summer of 1484 he was a knight of the body, and receiving an annuity of £100. for services to be done by him according to certain indentures[6]. What these tasks were, and whether they were carried out, we do not know, for with the accession

---

1. P.R.O. E405/69.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p. 248, 279; Rot. Parl, VI, p.202.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85. p.318, 24th August 1482; cf. P.R.O. C81/1379/35.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.413.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.194, 366, 416, 479.
6. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.481.

of Henry VII his career in England came to an end, though it was continued in Burgundy in 1485-87 when none other than Perkin Warbeck was a member of his retinue. He returned to Portugal in 1487, was given a general pardon by Henry VII in 1489[1], and died in Lisbon - probably without having ever revisited England - on 11th November 1508[2].

The Portuguese jew of 1468 had gone a long way indeed. In sixteen years he had been many things: naval captain and commander, a notable merchant in England and Portugal, governor of Guernsey, and a knight of the body and politician in the brief reign of Richard III; also, in the 1470's and 1480's, he had been an English country gentleman through his ambiguous marriage to Isabel, former wife of Sir William Peche, who brought him estates, especially Tresham property, in Northamptonshire, from which he took the name Brampton.

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1485-94, p.274.
2. This account is largely taken from Cecil Roth, Sir Edward Brampton alias Duarte Brandao, Governor of Guernsey, 1482-85, published by La Societe Guernesiaise, The Guille-Alles Library, C.I., which supercedes Roth's earlier articles in Trans. of the Jewish Hist. Soc. of England, vol. IX, 1922, and vol. XVI, 1952. Roth, however, has not used P.R.O. MS. material.

His career, whether in naval affairs only or as a whole, cannot be called usual, but then there was much scope for this type of man - opportunist and capable - in the England of the later 15th century. Edward IV had many foreign friends and Brampton had his many uses, in trade, and war and diplomacy as well as in naval matters. What Brampton's part in naval organisation and practice during the latter half of Edward's reign illustrates is how the abilities of such a man could be turned to good account by the administration: experienced naval commanders particularly would always be needed. But the difference between the 1450's and early 1460's, and the period after 1471 is just that men like Brampton were the captains in the later time. The days of the independent naval commander, whether Roos or Exeter in the 1450's, Warwick, Neville or Worcester in the 1460's, had gone. Now Cheyne, Dinham, Brampton, Cornborough, Cole and Fetherston were the men who led and they did so as officers of the crown in every real sense. Lord Howard should perhaps be added to both these lists; the Sir John Howard of the 1460's played a different part (and could have played an even more different one if he had been less loyal) from the Lord Howard who led the

Scottish expedition in 1481. It was circumstance rather than the man that had changed. We must now see those changes in the last two years of Edward's reign with their crowded activity, which itself was the principle cause of the quickening of the hesitant developments of the 1470's.

Whilst there is considerable record for the organisation of the 1481 operations, in fact what remains is slight compared with what there might be: there are no Issue Rolls and no Tellers Rolls for Easter and Michaelmas 1481. From the surviving Tellers Roll for Michaelmas 1480 and (particularly) from the Howard Household Books we are able to see the early preparations of the administration - the equipping of king's ships, the buying of new ones, the terms of service of some others, and the complement of ships and men going with Howard and Cornborough. What we lack, however, is information on how the expeditions continued in the summer and autumn, whether any reinforcements were sent out, and how these were organised. Thomas Rogers' role in these activities we cannot now fully discover, though it must have been an important one, for by 1482 he is more or less in charge

of administration.[1]

But there is enough evidence to enable us to see how those tendencies of the 1470's were continued and developed apace. The 1470's had been peaceful years, now for more than two years there was war, and it is a truism to say that war always stimulates development in the administration of the armed forces. As the French war expanded the naval establishment that had existed in Henry IV's reign, and in the years 1415-1422 made possible the finest fleet, the most effective and efficient naval establishment that England was to have at any time before 1509, so now in a smaller but parallel way, the Scottish war ensured the continuance of the developments of the 1470's, increasing their rate and clarifying their direction. Firstly the king bought five ships: Mary Howard, Holy Ghost of Portugal, Carvel of Eu, Mary of Bilbao, Mary Asshe[2], at a cost of about £2,000 in all; and Edward seems to have had at least two more new ships in the course of this year, giving him a royal fleet of about sixteen ships, a steep increase over the eight or 1480, and evidence enough of the king's

---

1. See below.
2. See the following chapter.

purpose of building up his naval forces.

This was the most obvious effect of the war on the administration in this year (though the appointment of Rogers as clerk is equally startling), and this was sufficient to alter the circumstances of naval activity. Most important was that these ships all needed competent masters. The king's ships in the 1470's, as we have seen, required a number of masters more or less continually in royal service, to take care of them when they were in port or to sail them on active service. Now these men, with some who were just beginning to make their way in the royal employment, were the captains of the king's vessels at war, and with them went those who were always useful as naval commanders in time of need, men like Brampton, Cornborough, Sir Harry Wentworth, Robert Clifford. Not least amongst these was Lord Howard himself, who led the fleet that sailed to Northern waters.

Of the eighteen ships that we know were at sea in the two squadrons of this year ten or eleven were the king's. In Howard's fleet of nine or ten vessels sailed four or five royal ships, three of his own, Robert Lockwood's carvel The Karentine (called a king's ship in

1482) and Lord Cobham's George Cobham. With Cornborough's smaller force of eight ships went six of the king's[1]. For the first time in the reign, the king's ships formed the majority of vessels in an expedition; Howard and Cornborough were commanders using Edward's ships, rather than Edward using them and their ships and the ships of men who were in the first instance loyal to them rather than to him. Now too the masters of these ships were truly royal servants, a group of men with a shared experience and a common obedience. John Wainfleet, captain of the Spaynard, usually on the fringe of royal service[2], Robert Michaelson,

---

1. The Howard Household Books, page 3, et seq.; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, pages 240, 264; P.R.O. E 405/69, E 101/329/2.
2. He had been active in naval affairs in the 1460's, freighting ships with victuals for the Northern fleet in the autumn of 1461: P.R.O. E404/72/2/29, captaining Warwick's (?) Grce Marie in Worcester's 1463 force: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.302, and arresting ships for Harleston's first venture of 1468: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477. p.57. Perhaps he went on this, for he was involved in piracy on a Flemish ship in this year, when he was at sea with two balingers: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.104. He was made a sergeant at arms in 1471: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.263, 557. He only reappears in naval affairs in 1481, and then as a guard of the East Anglian fishermen in 1482, 1483.

returned to the King's employment in the Mary Howard[1], Richard Simon, master of the Grace Dieu since 1460[2], William Combersale, just beginning that successful career which ended with the clerkship, John Davy, master of the Carvel of Ru and William Smith: these, and others were the new men. With ships and masters the king's, commanders like Howard - of his rank and standing - became men fighting the king's wars on his behalf, not, as in the 1450's and 1460's on their own behalf, or even their own wars. Howard in the expedition of 1481 is much closer to his son and to sixteenth century admirals than he is to Warwick, Exeter, Worcester or the Howard of the 1460's.

Both Howard and Cornborough were paid sums of money

---

1. He had been the pilot of the Antony, in which Edward had come from Zealand in 1471. He received an annuity of £5. for this service: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p. 266. He then went into trade at Hull, being master of that port's James, but he was captured by the French in 1473: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p. 368, 513. In 1475 he was concerned with the supply of wheat to the army in France: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p. 526; and in 1481, as steersman of the Mary of the Tower, he received an annuity of £5, which Richard III increased to £10: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, pages 253, 509.

2. On 28th September 1460 he received £51. 10. 10d. from the mayor of Southampton, presumably for the safe custody of the Grace Dieu: Hist. MSS. Comm. 11th Report, part 3, page 85. He received an annuity of £10. in 1480: Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 211.

for the wages and food of the men serving under them[1], although the king undertook the payment for some of the ships that were in the narrow seas, like the Carvel of Eu, for periods of six weeks and then one month, although these ships were probably on service in this way before the two main forces sailed[2]. For these, indentures were used between the king and Howard, andbetween Howard and Cornborough, and the men going with Howard to the North. The indenture system for naval purposes has received much condemnation from historians, who have seen in it the cause of the evil sea-keeping of the 1440's and 1450's. In fact indentures were the normal practice throughout the fifteenth century by which the king was able to obtain the men and victuals for them, for his expeditions. The cause of the collapse in the middle years of the century was in the conditions in which the indentures were sealed and undertaken, not in the indentures themselves. Whilst the king supplied ships and the skilled masters of them, clearly then the commanders could supply the men and the food, and all would be well. This 'system'

---

1. The Howard Household Books, pages 3, 9. (also p.243,245).
2. P.R.C. E 405/69, E 101/329/2.

in those middle decades was abused (as so much else was), because government was being dispersed amongst those who should principally have been those who were to be governed, and the king's part of these undertakings was not being fulfilled. The crown could exercise no control over its naval officers, when these were in their own ships with their own men, and all that the king had contributed (as in the 1460's) was the money, and not always that (as in the 1440's and 1450's). But under Henry V, and as now again under Edward IV, the indenture system worked in the proper conditions of medieval kingship for which it was made, and it worked well; the indentures of 1473 with Fetherston and Brampton are models of their kind, and that with Howard in 1481 echoes those - that were equally successful - of Henry V's reign.

The activity of 1482, whilst there was no such well-planned expedition as in 1481, shows even more thoroughly how measures for the keeping of the sea were directly under the control of the royal administration. Although in July Robert Radcliffe sailed with a force to the North, and there was again a squadron off the West coast of Scotland, the ships that went with these or were out keeping the sea earlier in the Spring and

early summer, were all paid for their service directly by the crown, most often through Thomas Rogers, Clerk of the King's Ships.

There were thirteen ships of which we have record that went on the safe-keeping of the sea during this year, and about eight or nine of these were ships of the king, although at this time, and at his death in April 1483, Edward must have had between sixteen and eighteen vessels of his own. These all served for short periods - two weeks, a month, six weeks or two months - and the royal ships, Lucas, Elizabeth, Caricon, Carvel of Eu and Prince all served for these short terms three or four times, therefore being at sea for most of the summer. The Elizabeth under William Fetherston, for instance, served for two weeks from 3rd June with 100 men, then for three periods of monthly service with the same number of men. Amongst those who captained the ships there are many men familiar to us: Fetherston, Davy, William Smith, Robert Lockwood, whilst Philip Dimmer was perhaps the same as he who had been a captain of the naval force in June of 1472. Some privately owned vessels were also used, Richard Lockwood's Christropher of Sandwich, James

Douglas's Scottish carvel, Michael, the Anne of Calais and the Bark of Topsham; all these, like most of the king's ships, served with 100 men or less, only the Caricon, Lucas and Prince (with 300) had more, which suggests that these vessels formed a protective, patrolling fleet, rather than an expeditionary force as of the previous year, which would have called for larger warships. Indeed the absence of the king's bigger vessels- the Grace Dieu, Antony, Mary Howard, Mary of the Tower, Spaynard, Carvel of Portugal, Mary of Asshe - would also suggest that they were either not involved, or being used elsewhere, perhaps on Radcliffe's expedition, of which we have no certain information.[1]

What is more interesting than the ships used, and the service that they performed is the fact that each captain was paid directly for himself and his men for each short period of duty, and more important that Thomas Rogers, as Clerk, was in this year the most active member of the administration. The office of Clerk of the King's Ships had been revived on 10th July 1464 when

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/70, 71; E 404/77/3/1, 21, 41.

Peter Bowman was granted it for his good service to the king and to his father, in England and beyond the seas, with the accustomed fees[1]. This reads as though the accustomed fees were the reward to Bowman for good work done, rather than that he was expected to perform good works in the future; in fact he was a very minor figure in the administration. He had been more active in the 1440's and 1450's, when he was an ordinary clerk, than he was to be now. In April 1465 he was charged with the repair and upkeep of the king's Margaret, and of royal vessels 'now pertaining unto us or shall pertain hereafter', and of the equipment that went with them as long as he remained in office; the Treasurer was charged with paying him money whenever it was necessary. This warrant was made because the Margaret was in a bad state of disrepair and her master and mariners unpaid (another comment on the lack of royal administration in the early 1460's,) but there is no record of Bowman receiving any sums for these purposes. After this he only appears

---

1. Cal..Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 335.
2. P.R.O. E 404/73/1/10.

as a commissioner arresting ships in September and October 1468 for the voyage of Scales and Mountjoy[1]. This type of duty he had performed often in the last twenty years of Henry VI's reign, and perhaps he was used again in 1468 because of his experience of this work. But of his new duties, as outlined in 1465, we hear nothing. As there was only the Margaret[2] and the Grace Dieu (of which there is no record between 1463 and 1471 anyway) continuously in the king's possession from 1465 to 1470 his task must, if he carried it out, have been a light one. But he doesn't seem to have carried it out[3].

Thomas Rogers, like many another seaman, was in the 1460's one of Warwick's shipmasters, being master of his

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.105; P.R.O. E 404/74/1/43, E 403/841.
2. The purser of the Margaret, Robert Ruysen, was paid for the wages and food of mariners looking after the ship, and for repairs on her (£5. 13. 4d. in all): Easter Tellers Roll 1465, P.R.O. E405/42. Apart from this ship being in Brittany in 1468, when over £350. was spent on making her seaworthy and getting her Home: P.R.O. E404/74/1/95, 99, 74/2/8, there is no other mention of her from 1465-1470.
3. If he had his own accounts (which are now missing, if there were any), there should be some reference to them. I do not think that he exercised his office, simply because there was hardly anything for him to do.

Giles in 1462[1], master of his Christopher in Howard's fleet of 1470[2], and of the Katherine Warwick during the Readeption[3]. He was described in 1461 as a mariner of East Greenwich[4], but by 1477 he was a fishmonger of London[5]. From 1475 he was continuously in royal service as purser, and later as master of theAntony, a post he held until 1480[6], when he was made Clerk. He had not been one of the foremost men in naval affairs in the 1470's, indeed he arrived comparatively late in the royal employment, and had not been perhaps an entirely successful official, as in 1477 he was given a general pardon for all debts, arrears and accounts owing to the king from him, as purser of the Antony[7]. Nevertheless he was appointed to this new post in 1480, chiefly because such a co-ordinating official was felt to be necessary as the administration readied itself for the war against the

---

1. P.R.O. E 403/825.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.201, The Manners and Expenses etc., p.524.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p. 250.
4. Cal. Close Rolls, 1468-1476, p. 25.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 12.
6. P.R.O. E 405/60, 62, 63, 68; E 403/846; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 113.
7. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 12.

Scots, but also no doubt because Rogers had shewn himself a fit man for the task. Indeed as his patent of appointment of 12th December pointed out he had been acting as Clerk since the previous 1st August, and his fees of 1s. a day, 6d. a day for a clerk and above this 2s. a day when he should ride about the business of preparing and equipping ships, were to be paid from that date[1].

However from the little evidence that we have, particularly the Michaelmas 1480 Tellers Roll, Rogers seems to have taken only a slight part in the early organisation (until Easter 1481) of the operations of 1481. He did see to some repairs on the Caricon, and to the construction of a dock for the Antony, costing £3, with another £4. for the wages and victuals of the

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 242; this does not give the valuable information about Rogers being Clerk since 1st August; the Patent Roll does: P.R.O. C66/546 m.2. This says that the king had certain information that Rogers had occupied the office from that date, and therefore his fees were to be paid as from then, which suggests that he had been carrying out semi-officially duties that warranted legitimate appointment (and wages) in December. The writ to the Exchequer informing them of this is enrolled on the Memoranda Roll (K.R.) for 21 Edward IV, dated 17th January 1481: E 159/258, Hilary, m. 7d.

men placing her in position. She was kept there for nine weeks from 30th November 1480, and presumably made ready for the expedition of the following Spring[1]. Here his duties as the Antony's purser would seem to have coincided with those he had taken over as Clerk, perhaps indeed here was the occasion (or one of them) for the transition. Lacking evidence for the greater part of 1481 we can discover little of Roger's role in the administration for this time. Butthat he was taking his place at the head of that administration is clear, and not only because he was there in 1482 when the evidence is full again. For a writ under the signet of 18th May 1482, and the identical and subsequent warrant for issue of the same date, state that the king had appointed auditors who had duly audited Rogers' accounts as Clerk, of payments made for the equipping, victualling and arming of ships, and other necessary expenses made for the 'conduyting of our grete Navie' against the Scots, for the period 1st August 1480 to 2nd February 1482. The Treasurer and Chamberlains

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/69.

were charged with examining these accounts with the auditors against their issues of money to Rogers in the Pell Book, to pay him any outstanding sums, so to settle between them, and to keep the accounts at the Exchequer[1]. During 1481 then Rogers as Clerk, must have been fulfilling the many duties that that position, taken seriously, involved in a way not seen since William Soper's long years under Henry V. He kept his own accounts, a significant enough indication of the amount of work that he had to do; and the period of one-and-a-half years and three days (so carefully noted), for which he had to account must have seen him hard at work. The clerkship was called into being by war, and it was as a wartime official that Rogers really functioned, as the wording of the writ, and perhaps the very fact of the accounts,

---

1. P.R.O. PSO 1/51/2646; E 404/77/3/24 (in very bad condition). Unfortunately the Privy Seal clerk erroneously wrote I August 21 Edward IV instead of 20 Edward IV, which has caused some confusion as this mistake occurs in a copy of the warrant for issue in an Exchequer Precedent Book of the sixteenth century amidst the Exchequer LTR Miscellaneous Books (E 369/118 f. 236), which has been printed (none too accurately) by A.P. Newton in Mariners Mirror, 1923, p.56. And the error is repeated in a transcript - no doubt from the 16c. book - in Sir Julius Ceasar's collection of transcripts of Exchequer documents: B.M. Lansdowne MS. 171, f.339.

make clear. But once in being the post remained, and Rogers was to continue as Clerk through war and peace until 1488.

In 1482 we can see more clearly how Rogers was at work. He received several payments throughout the year for the custody, repair and fitting out of the king's ships, and was the only man to do so; obviously the custody and repair of those ships was now solely his responsibility. Also, whilst many of the masters of the king's, and of their own, vessels were paid directly for their service, Rogers not only was in charge of the payments for the large number of men in the Prince, but also on occasion saw to the payments for others, the king's ships, and three times received money, twice merely for certain numbers of men in certain ships keeping the sea, and once a sum of £229. 9. 0d. which was described as monies given to him at various times. He also received £15. for his office[1]. He continued his work - looking at a French ship at Sandwich[2], repairing the Mary Asshe[3],

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/70,71.
2. Kent Record Office, Sandwich Borough Records, Treasurers Accounts 1482-3, (cat. F at.8).
3. P.R.O. E 404/77/3/84, 2nd March 1483.

checking on the protectors of fishermen[1]- until the end of Edward's reign in April of 1483, as well as trading under royal licence (a deserved reward, one feels), on his own account to Iceland[2].

Rogers' accounts have not survived, and from the scanty record remaining it would be unwise to conclude too much. But it is plain that the Clerk was in 1482, and almost without doubt in 1481, the chief naval administrator; he was the man through whom the crown usually organsied and maintained its seapower. Instead of individual royal shipmasters being given separate orders and separate payments for each task that had to be done, Rogers could now be the crown agent in naval affairs, not only being in control of repairs, the collection of equipment and fitting out, but also, as we have seen, having some responsibility for the seakeeping measures for 1482, and probably for those in 1481 also, The post of Clerk was no doubt revived as a response to the demands of an approaching war, but perhaps too Edward, as the number of his ships (and staff) grew, was

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 322.
2. P.R.O. C 81/1391/18, 22nd October 1482.

becoming tired of issuing orders for each task that had to be done, and these issued to a multitude of different individuals; it is certain that there was a need in the administration, owing both to the war and to the widening establishment, which led to the revival of this co-ordinating office. By 1482, probably by 1481, Rogers was fulfilling this task very much as Soper had done in his hyeday, and perhaps with even more direction over the keeping of the sea than that model Clerk of the Ships had.[1]

The significance of all this is of course great; that the Clerk of the King's Ships was at work before Henry VII came to the throne, Rogers was to continue his work under Richard III, shows how far the building up of the royal navy had come since the evil days from 1440 to 1470. Rogers had plenty to do; he was necessary, not like Clivedon and Bowman in the middle years who were Clerks for the profit it would bring them. It was the years 1470-1485 that saw the recreation of a royal navy. How far this was a planned endeavour of Edward's, how far the natural and conscious duty of a strong king, it would not be easy to judge; it probably doesn't matter. But

---

1. For Rogers' subsequent career see the chapter on the reign of Richard III.

the most telling fact in favour of the former is that Edward maintained and employed his ships during the peaceful years of the later 1470's, just the time when navies are liable to rot away. Henry VII far from creating, merely prevented, during similar years of peace, any decay from being total, so that his son (unlike Edward IV in 1461 and even 1471) had something to begin with for his years of war. In Edward's reign the royal navy was remade from nothing, except perhaps necessity, tradition and logic. As Edward revived the power that lay in medieval monarchical government, so he sought, both as Edward and king, to recreate one of its essential attributes; a naval force of its own. All the strong kings that men could remember - Edward III, Henry V - and many that they could not, had possessed powerful navies; and they knew also the simple equation that the more powerful the king's navy, the better the seas were kept, which for all its simplicity was generally true; Edward, particularly after the lesson of 1471, was able to grasp the point. His task was not easy, because he had first to destroy or render void the power that those of the nobility possessed who owned more ships than he did; this aim was part of the

political struggle, and chiefly concerned the Earl of Warwick, a man who, during the 1460's, not only in naval power, was stronger than the king. After 1471 Edward, realising that the more ships and men he had, the less he need depend on the nobility, or indeed on general arrests of the country's shipping, held to this idea of the purchase of ships as the beginning of royal seapower. He did not buy consistently, and the demands of war were always the main motives of action; but ships he had, and their number grew to the sixteen (at least) of 1483.

As the number of ships grew, so did the administration; this was never as well-developed as Henry V's had been, or even Henry VII's was to be, because Edward never built any of his ships (as far as we know), and so had no important royal dockyard or naval base. Not even this development might be permanent; when most of a navy of some thirty-five ships could be sold as the king's personal property in 1422-1423 and the remainder rot away, or when king's contested the throne, the continuity of the royal navy was a precarious thing. What Edward did was to make the keeping of the sea once again the king's responsibility in fact as well as in name, by

creating a navy and an administration that had disappeared under his predecessor, and giving these sufficient permanence by the revival of the office of Clerk of the King's Ships so that they had a good chance of survival under the equally strong kings who followed him.

Chapter 7.

The King's Ships 1461-1483.

In a note, Mr. C.A.J. Armstrong has written: 'In the latter part of the fifteenth century England's ability to command the sea was dependent on her success in hiring a foreign fleet'[1]. He goes on to mention those occasions, between 1460 and 1485 when Genoese carracks were hired or comandeered by the English government. However in none of these years does England appear to have commanded the sea. No one Western European country, in this period or for another century at least, was strong enough to command the sea alone; an alliance of sea-powers was always necessary for this: France and Castille, England and Burgundy, Genoa and France, England and Brittany. Perhaps only the Hanse had sufficient power to be supreme alone, but it rarely chose to be so, always having the

---

1. The Usurpation of Richard III, by Dominic Mancini, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong 1936, page 148, note 67.

sympathy of one or another of the western countries. To talk of the command of the sea is misleading, for no one group of powers could achieve this for much longer than a summer at a time, and none tried to do so for much longer. In the 15th century, as even in the 16th, it is more accurate to speak only of one country's success or failure to protect its armies when crossing the seas, its merchant ships and fishermen, to raid the enemy's coasts and perhaps partially to destroy his fleets; in Edward IV's reign there was no real battle at sea: the sea-powers all retained their equality of naval status. We can only say that in certain years English forces succeeded or failed in some specific duty; in 1462 they were successful in deterring the French from invasion, in 1475 successful in keeping the channel clear for the army to cross, in 1472 successful in demonstrating to the Hanse the English ability to retaliate; but in 1463 Worcester failed in his blockade of Scottish shores, in 1468 Scales and Mountjoy failed in whatever their object was, in 1470 the Yorkists failed to keep out Warwick, and in 1471 the Lancastrians failed to keep out the Yorkists. Sea-power was as yet too haphazard and unworked a force

for success or failure at sea to be dependent just on numbers and size of the ships sent to sea, or the skill with which they were handled and commanded; but it is noteworthy that in all the four instances that Mr. Armstrong records - Exeter's force of 1460, the Scales (1468) expedition, the fleet sent out under Woodville in 1483, and Richard III's measures to prevent Richmond landing in England - when Genoese carracks were used, the forces failed in their objectives, let alone commanded the sea. Whilst the expeditions of the years 1462, 1472, 1481 were all successes, and no foreign ships seem to have sailed in them. Only in 1475 is it possible that Lord Dinham had Genoese vessels with him (although there is no direct evidence), as he was ordered to let all ships of Genoa, going to England or Burgundy, pass safely, and to punish any men of war that would molest them[1]; even so the French, the Milanese ambassador in France reported, were sending for Genoese shipbuilders to come to Normandy at the end of 1474[2].

---

1. Cal. Close Rolls, 1468-1476, page 240.
2. Cal. State Papers: Milan, number 274, 19th November, 1474.

What is implied in Mr. Armstrong's careless statement is that the English government needed the larger and better ships, and perhaps the more skilful sailors, of other countries, especially of Italy, to make up the deficiency of English shipping at this time; that English naval forces to be feared by their enemies had to be to some extent foreign. This is entirely untrue. English ships in the last forty years of the 15th century compare in size very favourably with those of other European countries, as Miss Dorothy Burwash has shewn. From evidence of tonnage given in grants of safe-conduct and licences to trade enrolled on the Treaty Roll, she has come to an average of 159 tons for English ships between 1461 and 1483, whilst the average for North French ships is 76 tons, for South French ships 187, for Breton ships 130, for Spanish ships 151, and for others, a category including Hanse, Italian, Portuguese and Burgundian ships, 247 tons[1]. Here it must be remembered that the countries that sent their vessels to England from some distance would send larger ships, so that the survey is weighted in favour of the Italians, Hanse and

---

1. English Merchant Shipping 1460-1540, D. Burwash, Toronto 1947, appendix 2, table C.

Southern French, whilst the average for the ships of Northern France is hardly a fair one. If a similar survey was made from documents at Genoa, Cadiz or Lübeck the figures might read differently. However it is clear that the English ship was not necessarily smaller than those of other nations; only the Italian carracks and the Hanse hulks were larger, though these were specialised vessels and were probably little larger than those English ships trading to the Mediterranean. All these anyway were too large for fighting purposes, and were used or hired (as in 1475) for carrying troops. Bigger did not mean better, especially for merchants, for if the ship was too large it became too unwieldy to manage and could not always enter certain ports, such as Calais[1]. Between 100 and 200 tons was the most useful size for a ship, particularly an English ship, which would be employed most frequently on short trading runs; and it seems that of English vessels - although many were of course much smaller - a large number were of this size at this time, and there were some that were considerably larger.

---

1. See for example The Cely Papers, number 106.

Miss Burwash is perhaps too overconfident when she states that the English vessel of over 200 tons was 'becoming fairly common' in this period, 'becoming' being the key word[1]. As Mr. G.V. Scammell has recently shewn, in the years from roughly 1450 to 1550 English ships, certainly from the East coast but probably generally also, tended to become smaller not larger, with about 100 tons being the most favoured size in the first half of the 16th century; for this development Mr. Scammell gives sound reasons. Miss Burwash has let evolutionary thinking run away with her historian's caution: because there were many large vessels in the period 1450-1480, and ships of around 200 tons were then 'fairly common', this does not signify that ships were becoming bigger and bigger as the years want by. It seems that large ships were more popular in England between say 1420 and 1480 than they were for about 100 years after that last date. But during Edward IV's reign big, heavily and highly built ships existed in some numbers; these were probably a surviving manifestation

---

1. Burwash op cit., page 97. For a fairly exhaustive discussion on 'The size and build of English ships', and on 'Various types of English ships', see Burwash, Chapters 3 and 4.

of an earlier feeling of grand confidence in England's commercial as well as martial ability[1]

This conclusion is borne out by some of the other evidence of the period. The lists that we have of ships show that English vessels were often of 200 tons or more. The Earl of Warwick had ships of 500, 300, 280, 240 and 220 tons[2]. William Cannings of Bristol had the Mary and John of 900 tons, the Mary Radcliffe of 500 tons, the Mary Cannings of 400 and two others of over 200 tons in the list given by William of Worcester[3], and there were other large ships at Bristol at that time, about 1480[4]. The fact that the mayor of Newcastle was ordered to fit out a ship of 400 tons or under, shows too that in the North there were vessels of that size[5], and Lord

---

1. See G.V. Scammell, 'English Merchant Shipping at the end of the Middle Ages: Some East Coast evidence,' Economic History Review, 1961, esp. pages 331-334.
2. P.R.O. C 81/1378/16, and previous chapter.
3. Itinerarium, William of Worcester, ed. Nasmith 1778, page 99.
4. Ibid, page 224: a list of ships belonging to Bristol in 1480. For ships and shipbuilding at Bristol, see Studies in English Trade in the 15th Century, chapter 5, pages 239-41.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 304.

Herbert's Gabriel, called great, must have been of at least 200 tons[1]. The Margaret of Orwell, which later became the king's, had a tonnage of between 600 and 700 tons[2], whilst the king's Grace Dieu (a ship of great size indeed) and his Mary of the Tower, both of which had four masts, must also have been large vessels[3], for in this period most ships of any size had only three masts[4]. These of course were the biggest ships in the realm, comparable to the 800 ton Cordyller of the Duke of Brittany, the 800 ton Martha of the Treasurer of Brittany, and the 1,000 ton Mary of the Admiral of that Duchy[5]. But if English ships were no larger than those of other Western European countries, they were by no

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 427.
2. Burwash op. cit., page 90.
3. Accounts and Inventories of Henry VII, ed. M. Oppenheim, Navy Records Society, 1896, pages 40-41, 47-49, 53-55.
4. For a discussion of tonnages and three masted ships, see Burwash, chapter 3. Care must be taken here, for Lord Howard's Edward, which had four masts: Burwash p. 88, was, if they are the same ship, of only 140 tons: P.R.O. C81/1381/21. The adjective 'great' accorded some ships, especially some of the king's, may have referred to their upward build; their forecastle size, aftercastle size.
5. P.R.O. C 81/1385/15, 26th November 1473.

means as far behind in performance or design[1] as has so often been suggested in the past. The ships, for instance, that sailed hopefully from Bristol in the 1480's to find Brazil[2], were not inadequate for that task; the reasons for England's slight participation in the new discoveries of the later 15th century and early 16th century were not ones of maritime backwardness.

Clearly Edward had little cause to seek ships beyond his own coasts, and when he did so, in 1468 from the Genoese, in 1475 from Holland and Zealand, it was only for the transport of troops; for the duties of keeping the sea he was able to rely on the shipping of the realm. As far as possible he endeavoured to use only his own ships after 1470, but this he never could do, as Henry V had more nearly succeeded in doing. Whilst the hiring of foreign vessels formed no part of his general policy,

---

1. The number of English carvels is quite large; Howard for instance built one at Dunwich: see the previous chapter.
2. Itinerarium, William of Worcester, page 267; The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the later Middle Ages, E.M. Carus-Wilson, Bristol Rec. Soc., 1937, numbers 204, 205, 209; Mariners Mirror, vol. 16, 1930, p.198, a note by W.E.C. Harrison: 'An Early Voyage of Discovery;' Mariners Mirror, 1935, 'Edward IV and Exploration,' D.B. Quinn.

as it did Henry VII's even when English ships were available and no great enterprise was afoot, and the widespread arrests of ships which had marked the period 1430-1460, are not to be found in his reign, save for the invasion of 1475, Edward had always to use some at least of his subjects' vessels in his expeditions. As we have seen, in the 1460's he had to use the ships of Warwick, as well in the early years of the decade those of others, his supporters, and of various towns and ports. But in the 1470's and 1480's as his own navy grew in number, his dependence on others correspondingly lessened, and he was able to hire specific ships, often from Lord Howard, only to supplement his own in the forces sent to sea, most notably in 1481 and 1482. It was therefore in Edward's interest to encourage the use and building of ships that would not only serve as merchantmen, but also, when the need arose, would be able to do service, and hold their own, against the king's enemies. Royal care for the merchant service was not to be a consistent policy of English governments until well on in the sixteenth century, and Edward in this did not even match the much lauded bounty 'system' of

Henry VII[1]. He did, like that monarch, hire out or use himself his own ships for trading voyages, thus giving English merchants the opportunity to note the performances of the finest ships of the time, and their cargo capacity. More important was the direct stimulant of rewards to shipowners to build for themselves; here too Edward showed himself to be at least aware of all that he, as well as English trade, stood to gain from the construction of better ships.

When at Bristol in October 1474 he promised anyone who should make a ship of any value that the new ship's first voyage should be (both out of and into the kingdom) with uncustomed goods. In May of 1475 such a grant was given to William de la Founde for having built a ship of 220 tons or under, which, as the writ significantly added 'shall at all tymes be redy to doo us service when we shall commande him'[2]. In 1481 John Forster of the same town, and as a consequence of the same promise, was granted a similar freedom from customs, up to £100, on the first

---

1. For the bounty system under Henry VII see M. Oppenheim, The Administration of the Royal Navy, pages 37-38; and an unpublished thesis at the Institute of Historical Research, London, 'Maritime Activity under Henry VII' by W.R.C. Harrison, for M.A. Degree 1931, pages 79-81.
2. P.R.O. C81/853/4156.

voyage of a 400 ton ship he had newly built and equipped[1]. It may also have been as a result of Edward's promise that in November 1474 ten merchants of Bristol were licensed 'for the continuance and increase of shipping in the port of Bristol', to take their four ships to Spain or Portugal and back with goods free of custom[2]. Whilst Edward seems to have shewn most favour to Bristol, he was ready to grant rewards elsewhere if they were deserved; there are two examples of this. On 3rd August 1476 the king granted to John Seman, mercer of London, the familiar reward of a first customs-free voyage (this time specifically to Gascony) for the ship that he had recently built, the George Cobham[3]. This time we know that the king used a ship, whose builder he had rewarded, for the George Cobham was on the Scottish expedition under Lord Howard in 1481[4]; although it is likely also that some of those

---

1. P.R.O. C76/165 m.8, 20th Nov. 1481, cf. E 159/259, 22 Ed. IV Mich. m.87d. The figure of 5s. on the ton is significant.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 471.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 595, cf. P.R.O. PSO 1/40/2056, 28th June.
4. See for instance, Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 240.

ships of John Weatherpol's and John Jay's which were on the king's service for the first six months of 1475[1] were those that had sailed to Spain or Portugal in the previous autumn. Also in July 1481 John Hill of Bridgewater was rewarded for building a 160 ton vessel, The Margaret of Bridgewater, with a bounty; on wines imported into the country on the ship's first voyage he was to be free from customs and subsidies[2].

These measures, and the few others - the clause in the Act of the 1463-4 parliament that English ships were always to be used by English merchants, and only when none were available were goods to be carried in foreign vessels[3]; the licences to trade to Iceland[4], which must have made for the construction of stronger ships, and the

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 545.
2. P.R.O. PSO1/50/2584, badly torn, but can be checked with E159/259, 22 Ed. IV, Easter, m.6d. Other examples might be found, though not many I feel, if the Treaty and Memoranda Rolls were checked through thoroughly for this purpose.
3. Rot. Parl., V, p.504.
4. Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, chapter 4. Many of these went to Bristol men - Forster, Jay etc., - some of the most important merchants in the country: The Overseas Trade of Bristol, Bristol Record Soc., 1937, passim.

obvious interest shewn in the shipbuilding of Lord Howard, so much so that he was ordered to build a carvel for Edward's service - all these must have made scant difference to the development of English merchant shipping. ~~Although~~ But the emergence of Bristol during the last thirty or forty years of the century was no accident, and perhaps the attention Edward paid to its shipowners, shipbuilders and merchants ~~may have~~ contributed to this latter day splendour of the port. But slight as this government aid was - though not much less than that of Henry VII in fact - and however small the extent of its efficacy, England's security at sea and her ability to protect her trade, coasts and interests did not rest with such means as these. As Edward grasped, more readily than Henry VII did, the ships that the king himself owned were those upon which naval security turned. These provided efficient and dutiful service, and eliminated the waste of time and money that the calling up of a host of merchant vessels involved. The history of the development of naval administration in Edward's reign, as we have seen, is very much the story of the increasing numbers of his own small fleet. Important as these ships

are, they must now be described in more detail.

The only vessel that Edward acquired with the crown was the Grace Dieu, if indeed he did so obtain her. For in the party strife at sea in the later 1450's she was in effect Warwick's own ship rather than Henry VI's. Even in August 1461 she seems still to have been Warwick's responsibility, for in that month she was fitted out at his expense[1]. During this time, September 1460 - April 1462, she was being kept at Southampton under her master Richard Simon, at the charge of the town.[2] She presumably saw service with Neville in 1462, but there is no record of it; she did sail in the fleet to the North in 1463[3], but after this there is no mention of her until 1470-71, when she was being kept at Southampton once again[4]. It is very likely that she was allowed to fall into a

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p. 38, 99.
2. Hist. MSS. Comm. 11th Report, Part 3, page 85; This may have been out of the monies of the fee farm that Warwick received as Warden of the Cinque Ports - see above, Chapter 5, p. 354 , note 4.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.281.
4. Letters of the 15th and 16th centuries from the archives of Southampton, numbers 13, 15; Hist. MSS. Comm., 11th Report, part 3, p.97, 98, 99.

serious state of disrepair, for in the years 1471-73 the ship (now properly the king's) was almost completely rebuilt.

Of the few other vessels that Edward had during the 1460's, the Margaret, sometimes called of Ipswich, sometimes of Orwell, was the most important. She was apparently of 600-700 tons, and the complicated manner of the king's purchase of the ship lasted for two or three years. Edward was granted by William Baldry the two-thirds of her that he owned sometime before June 1462[1], but Robert Toke, ironmonger of London, was not given his 'reasonable recompense' for the quarter (so stated) that he owned of her until 1465, which sum amounted to 400 marks, though this also covered Toke's losses; for he had victualled and loaded the ship with his goods before the king had obtained his parts of the Margaret, and then the king had discharged him so that he was prevented from sailing her to foreign parts and thereby suffered much damage[2]. Toke must have continued his connection with the king, for in 1468 he and others were paid a sum of £967. 11. 3d. for the victualling, supply, fortification

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p. 229.
2. Cal. Close Rolls, 1461-1468, p. 287-88.

and salvage of the king's ship Margaret[1]. In 1461 and 1462 the Margaret was very much under the care of Baldry, who on one occasion is termed 'clerc of oure ship called the Margarete of Yepeswiche'. He saw to her fitting out in July 1461, not only with war equipment, but also with drinking pots, dishes, platers, saucers, cups and trenchers to the value of £3., and in the following October with more war material[2]. And in 1462 he and her master, Robert Lightharness and her purser, William Hind, prepared the ship for the Earl of Kent's voyage, keeping the London ironmongers busy supplying cables and other necessary things[3]. The Margaret also saw service, with Lightharness as her master, in the expedition to the North of 1463[4], but Baldry by this year has dropped out of the naval organisation, in which in 1462 he had played such an important part. Early in 1465 Baldry's companion from Ipswich, Richard Felaw, was

---

1. Cal. Close Rolls, 1468-1476, p.3-4.
2. P.R.O. E 404/72/1/17, 53: Baldry received £100 out of the custom on cloth shipped abroad in the Margaret, in repayment of money spent on the equipping of the ship, and on the wages and victuals of her men: P.R.O. E159/239, Mich. 1462, m.16.
3. P.R.O. E 403/825, 827, E 405/40, passim.
4. P.R.O. E 403/830 under 4th Aug.; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 302.

paid £157. 5. 0d. as his expenses for the repairing and safekeeping of the Margaret[1], but that ship was in poor condition by April of the same year when Peter Bowman was charged with her maintenance[2]. After her good service of the early 1460's the king's Margaret disappears from the records until 1468 when she was in Brittany, perhaps on a trading voyage (though still a royal ship), and over £350 had to be spent on her repair before she could return to England[3]. She is not heard of again; although possibly Lord Howard's Margaret, which is first mentioned in 1470 and appears down to 1475, may once have been the king's, particularly as during the Readeption, in 1470, she is called merely the Margaret[4].

In the 1460's apart from the Margaret, there is little mention of the king's ships on service, even of those of whose purchase we have record. In 1462 the entries on the Issue Rolls[5] which show the preparation for Neville's expedition give all the vessels there recorded the title 'Navis Regis', but it seems unlikely

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/72/4/97, 18th Feb.
2. P.R.O. E 404/73/1/10.
3. P.R.O. E 404/74/1/95, 99, 74/2/8.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 250.
5. P.R.O. E 403/825, 826, 827.

that they all were. The Giles, so termed for instance, was almost certainly Warwick's ship of that name, and the John of Worcester would appear by its very name to have belonged to the Earl of Worcester, with whom it again saw service in 1463; this applies also to the Carvel of Worcester, whilst the Barge of William Newland must surely have belonged to that man. The ambiguity of these rolls is not easy to balance by any other evidence, as the Tellers Rolls[1], which are the only other general source for this year's expedition, are equally ambiguous, and only duplicate the entries on the Issue Rolls. The only ship that seems likely to have belonged to the King is that called 'King's Barge'[2] which is perhaps that ship the Nicholas of Marche, which is noted as the king's in November and December 1461, although there called a balinger, as well as a barge[3]. Without corroborative evidence, it is impossible to read any certainty as to ownership into these entries, and impossible

---

1. P.R.O. E.405/40.
2. P.R.O. E 403/825, 826.
3. P.R.O. E 403/824, under 7th Nov., 7th Dec.

to accept that all these four or five ships were the king's. Their description as the king's ships may have occured because they were his responsibility - for fitting out and equipping, and for the wages and victuals of the crews - in the Earl of Kent's fleet. The other ships that were commissioned in June for the same fleet, do not appear in the government records; these presumably were fitted out by Warwick (many were his own vessels anyway) from his grants of money[1].

Of Edward's other ships in the 1460's we have little information save of their purchase. He bought five parts of the John Evangelist of Dartmouth for 100 marks in 1462 or 1463[2], and later, in 1464, paid twenty marks each to Thomas Gale and William Forster of Dartmouth for their parts of the same ship[3], after this all we hear of her is that £5. 6. 8d. was spent on provisioning her and getting water out of her in 1465[4]. The Carvel of Saltcombe the king bought in 1462 or 1463 for £80.[5]; there is no other

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 204.
2. P.R.O. E 404/72/3/50, 5th July 1463.
3. P.R.O. E 404/72/4/26.
4. P.R.O. E 405/42.
5. P.R.O. E 404/72/3/50.

record of this vessel. Similarly the Carvel of Leybourne, bought by the Earl of Worcester for the king's use, for the keeping of the sea in July 1463, for £133. 6. 8d.[1], never appears after this recorded fact of her purchase. Nor does the ship (unnamed) that the king bought from Nicholas Faunt of Canterbury for £170. in 1467[2]. Whilst the Mary of Grace bought from Sir Henry Wavor in December 1468 for 200 marks[3], is only mentioned thereafter as having cables supplied for her, when she was going on service with Lords Scales and Mountjoy. Mary of Grace is a common name; Fetherston was captain of Warwick's ship of that name in 1462 and 1463[4], and he himself was the owner of a Mary Grace, perhaps Warwick's former ship, in 1474-1475[5]. What connection the king's ship has with these, or with that repaired in 1475[6] it would be impossible to say. Certainly Edward had no Mary of Grace of his own on active duty after 1470.

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/72/3/64.
2. P.R.O. E 403/839 under 31st October.
3. P.R.O. E 404/74/1/140.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, p.204, 302.
5. P.R.O. E 101/198/8.
6. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 494; P.R.O. E 405/61.

As for the building of ships Edward seems to have had little time or inclination in the 1460's, indeed throughout his reign no ships were built (so far as we can tell) specifically for the king's use, or by his order. Howard apparently had been commanded by the king to build for him a carvel in 1464, probably with another smaller ship, but once built the carvel, called Edward, remained in Howard's possession and probably figures thereafter as the Edward Howard[1]. Why the king never took the ship that he had originally ordered must remain unknown. The only other vessels that the king ordered to be built for him were the two galleys, which had been begun in Henry VI's reign, in April 1460, when the Earl of Wiltshire was Treasurer, at Lambeth[2]. Geoffrey Kent was in charge of this construction work during 1462-1463; carpenters and other workmen were sent up from Sandwich to work on the galleys[3], and Kent received payments at various times throughout these years[4]. The patron of the galley was paid for safekeeping

---

1. See the previous chapter.
2. P.R.O. E 404/72/3/66; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1452-1461, page 583.
3. P.R.O. E 403/825 under 17th August 1462.
4. P.R.O. E 403/827 under 23rd March 1463, /828 under 28th May, 23rd June 1463.

her in the spring of 1463[1], William Sterling was to be paid for providing war equipment and other things necessary for 'our galley' in January 1464[2], and our galley is mentioned again in April 1464[3]. Although in July 1463 Robert Spalding sergeant at arms and John Guest were ordered to take mariners for the governance of the king's galley or galleys, at the same time as the ships going with Worcester were commissioned[4], it does not seem likely that these were sea-going war ships; for once completed at Lambeth they could not have been got through London Bridge if they were of any size. Anyway they do not appear again, whether they were fighting ships or just river, or coastal craft for ceremonial and passage purposes. They have small importance except to show that shipbuilding on the king's part was possible, that there was no great reason against it, as indeed the large scale rebuilding of the Grace Dieu

---

1. P.R.O. E 403/827 under 23rd March 1463.
2. P.R.O. PSO 1/25/1308, at a cost of only £15.16. 5d.
3. P.R.O. E 404/72/4/23.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 302.

in 1473 also indicates.

From the rather poor evidence that remains it is clear that Edward was intent on buying ships in the 1460's to augment what few ships - the Grace Dieu perhaps, the Margaret, the Nicholas of March - that he had in the first few years acquired in one way and another. But the period from 1464 to 1468 was a quiet one, and many other more pressing matters, of marriage, politics and diplomacy came to divert any consistency he might have had in this policy. All that we can say from this thin record of Edward's purchases is that this idea of the king owning ships, not present in government circles since the 1430's at the latest, was now being entertained and practiced once again. In the 1470's and 1480's when Warwick - who in the 1460's may well have disuaded the king from buying ships, for could not he always be relied upon to supply his own fine vessels for the royal service? - had been removed, Edward could seriously direct naval affairs, and set out upon a more consistent, if gradual, development of his own naval resources.

The Garse the king had bought in July 1470, before his exile, from John de Pount of Portugal, but John was not to be paid the 250 marks for the ship until July 1471,

plus a further £20. for his other costs, as the ship had been in the king's possession since the previous summer[1]; for this no doubt was that same Garse which John Lister, then her master, brought from England to Zealand whilst the king was there in 1470-1 'to our behove and to his great cost and charge'; Lister was suitably rewarded[2]. The Garse was often in service in the next few years; in 1472 with John Kyrell[3]; then she was kept safely by her purser and master, Thomas Philip, until July 1473[4], when she went on service with him[5], and at the end of 1474 and in the early weeks of 1475 she served with Edward Brampton, her captain still being Thomas Philip, at the siege of St. Michael's Mount[6], and after this was kept in the Thames at Erith[7]. After 1474 there is no mention of the Garse, but it is probable that her name was changed to Elizabeth, as the ship was known as

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/74/3/23, /75/1/13, cf. PSO 1/34/1791a, /35/1820a, E 405/53m.5.
2. P.R.O. C 81/836/3321, 1st Sept. 1471. Letters of safe-conduct for a ship of 60 tons or within to trade, were given him.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 355.
4. P.R.O. E 405/55m.6, E 405/56m.3.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 404.
6. See for example P.R.O. E 405/57, 59.
7. P.R.O. E 405/57 m.7v.

the Garse otherwise the Elizabeth in 1473[1], although this (or perhaps it is another) Elizabeth only reappears in 1482, under William Fetherston[2], and then throughout Richard III's reign.

The Antony was bought by the king immediately after his return in 1471. Indeed it was in this ship, the Antony of Camfer that the king sailed to England in the spring of 1471, and her master, at that time her owner, Mark Symondson, and her pilot, Robert Michaelson, were both given annuities for life[3]. Edward seems more or less to have appropriated the vessel to his own use from that time onwards; and although the price of the Antony was mentioned as £80, in fact he made two payments of £66. 13. 4d. each to Symondson specifically for the purchase of her, one in 1472, the other in 1480[4]. This seems a very low price to pay for a ship that was later to be called the king's Great Antony, but it may have been in poor condition. For apart from serving in the

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/56 m.3.
2. P.R.O. E 405/70, 71.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, pages 266, 303; P.R.O. E 404/75/2/15, 56.
4. P.R.O. E 405/55 m.5, E 405/68 m.4.

summer operations of 1472, when men were taken for her at Lydd[1], she was from the Autumn of 1472 until 1475 merely being safely kept either at Erith or Winchelsea[2], and in November 1474 she was ordered to be repaired[3], indeed John Haster the carpenter and John Robbins her master were 'to make again our shippe called the Antony'[4]. After this drastic rebuilding the ship probably served with Lord Dinham in the summer of 1475, for cables and anchors were bought for her in this year from one Peter Smith of Dansig[5], and later in 1475 she went on a voyage to Guernsey[6]. But the Antony does not seem to have been one of the king's most successful purchases, as she had often to be repaired during the next years, in 1480-1 in the wet dock prepared for her by Thomas Rogers, as well as in 1478 and 1482. She did however sail to Italy with the wool of a London merchant in 1478[7], and she served with Howard in the North in 1481.

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 355; The Records of Lydd, pages 273-4.
2. P.R.O. E 405/55, 56, 57.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 471.
4. P.R.O. C 81/1388/1.
5. P.R.O. E 405/61.
6. P.R.O. E 405/62 m.4.
7. Cambridge Hist. Journal, 1926, p.21; Cal. Pat. Rolls 1476-1485, page 113; P.R.O. PSO 1/46/2352.

On the other hand a ship of the Antony's recognised size would have needed frequent repairs, particularly if she was not being used too often; this is one of the difficulties that the administration had to face in peacetime: the decay of ships lying idle. But the Antony was still a great ship of the king's in 1481, and saw service under Richard III, perhaps owing to Rogers' good care of her during his long period as her purser and master.

The carrack Peter that the king bought for a paltry £50. from Ochoa de Bedona of Spain in December 1471[1] disappears after July 1473 (the only reference to her) when she was on service with William Fetherston as her master[2]. It is possible that this vessel became the Caricon, which first appears in 1473 with Fetherston as her master also, although again the Carteon may have been 'the great ship of Spain' arrested on the king's orders late in 1472 or early in 1473[3]. Whatever the

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/75/1/67. This does not say that the £50. was part of a larger sum, merely that £50 was due to him for the ship St. Peter, which of course might mean the same thing.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 404.
3. P.R.O. E 405/55 m.1.

origins of the Caricon, she soon became one of the most important of the king's ships, and was undoubtedly one of the finest. She served with Fetherston at St. Michael's Mount in 1473-4, was at sea probably with Dinham in 1475, and was one of the ships delegated to the protection of the wool fleets in 1474-5 and in 1480. She went to Brittany in 1479, and was at sea against the Scots in 1481 and 1482. Between these terms of service she was often repaired; in March 1475 a new mast was fetched for her from Zealand, and in 1480 she had another new mast bought for her at Yarmouth by her master Robert Morris[1]. The Caricon continued as a king's ship into Richard's reign. If indeed Edward did buy her for £50 she was clearly one of his more successful acquisitions, for out of her the crown got over ten years of frequent use.

The other ship that Edward had in the early 1470's was the Trinity, probably once Warwick's 300 ton ship, rebuilt in 1469. Apart from service in 1472 and 1475,

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/57, 58, 60, 61, 63, 68, 69, 70, 71; E 404/76/1/47, /77/1/38, E 101/198/8, E 101/55/8; PSO 1/41/2104; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p. 496; The Howard Household Books, p.3; Acts of Court of the Mercers Company, p. 134.

and a voyage to Zealand in 1473 however, the Trinity was not often used by the crown. She appears to have remained at Sandwich for much of the time, under the care of John Cole from 1471 to 1473, and she was still there in 1475 when hawsers were bought for her[1]. She then only appears in 1478 when repaired[2], and in 1482 when being kept in port[3]; she was one of the vessels acquired (in some way) by Henry VII[4]. Although certainly an excellent ship when she became crown property, she seems to have been left aside for most of her long life, down to 1503; there seems to be no good reason for this[5].

By 1473 therefore Edward had about six ships of his own, including the Grace Dieu, which in the spring of this

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/54, 55, 57, 60, 61, 62; Cal. Pat. Rolls 1467-1477, pages 355, 496.
2. P.R.O. E 403/846.
3. P.R.O. E 405/70. She might well be that Trinity boat of the king's, repaired at Hull by William Combersale and then sent up to Scotland to join Howard, in 1481: P.R.O. PSO 1/52/2672.
4. Oppenheim, The Administration etc., page 35.
5. Though of course some of the larger of the king's ships - Trinity, Antony, Grace Dieu, - were only used on special occasions; they were (as we know also of large royal vessels in the 16th century) very much a sort of naval status symbol.

year was so extensively repaired as to be almost completely rebuilt. Mark Symondson, the old owner of the Antony and a man with connections in the Low Countries, was sent thither, and there he bought many of the materials for the Grace Dieu's reconstruction, including seventeen masts - eight of them Norway trees, tar, wainscot, and one hundred oars; these and some other stuff he delivered to the ship's master, Richard Simon at Southampton, and his careful list of the costs of the materials, of their freightage and of the customs he had to pay at Sluys survives, with Simon's list of what he received from Symondson. Altogether he had spent about £185, all of which he was very quickly repaid[1]. By the summer of 1473 the Grace Dieu was commissioned to go to sea[2], and she was certainly at sea in one, or both of the squadrons out in 1475, being at sea over a period of eight months during that year[3]. But after this burst of excitement and action the ship remained inactive down to 1481; but unlike the Grace Dieu

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/75/3/2, 3.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 399.
3. P.R.O. E 405/60, 61; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 495.

of Henry V she was not allowed to rot gently away in these six peaceful years. Regularly David White, her purser, or Roger Trewman and Richard Simon, her masters were paid for mariners keeping her either in the Hamble river or in the Thames at Erith, and the ship was kept in a good state of repair and rigging[1]. So that in 1481, after six years of inaction, she was docked at Erith for final repairs under Roger's supervision, fitted out and sailed off in May to join the squadron that patrolled in the straits as Cornborough's flagship[2]. After this the Grace Dieu stayed at Dartmouth from 1482 to 1485, although in this last year she was out keeping the sea against the coming of Richmond[3]. Henry VII had her broken up in 1487, and the materials used for the construction of his new ship the Sovereign[4]. In this way the mighty Grace Dieu, sole representative of royal sea power in the bleak 1440's and 1450's, ended, yet not ignominiously. Her role as the royal flagship

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/64, 66, 67, 68; E 403/846, 850; E 404/76/4/134.
2. P.R.O. E 405/69; The Howard Household Books, p.3ff. 245.
3. P.R.O. E 405/70, 71; E 404/78/3/40.
4. Oppenheim, Accounts and Inventories of Henry VII, p.47.

was continued in the Sovereign, just as this Grace Dieu had taken over this part (and two anchors) from the rotted and burnt out Grace Dieu of Henry V's in the early 1440's. Perhaps as much as anything else, the careful manner in which Edward kept the vessel during the peaceful years of the 1470's, and used her sparingly as the commander's ship in the expeditions of 1475 and 1481, shows- in a figurative way - his understanding of naval affairs.

The six ships of 1473 had been increased to eight by 1480. The Falcon, which first appears in 1475, was undoubtedly that ship called the St. Elen de Semmey , which the king bought from Lupe Ferandes of Spain for the large sum of £450 at this time[1]. For the Falcon was a ship of considerable size, taking fifty-two men and two boys in her on the voyage to Flanders in 1480, and clearly was one of Edward's finest vessels, being used continually through the rest of the 1470's and in the early 1480's. She was straightway repaired and equipped in 1475, and served against the French in that year. In 1478 she went on voyages to Zealand and

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/61, m.4v.

Bordeaux, and again to Bordeaux in 1480, as well as carrying Duchess Margaret over from Flanders in that year and protecting the wool fleet out of Boston to Calais; she returned with the Duchess and a complement of 500 soldiers (a large ship indeed) to Burgundy in 1481[1]. After that date there is no record of her under this name.

The king does not seem to have bought any other ships for the operations of 1475, although the Rose, with Robert Morris as her master, is called a king's ship in this year - as she had been in 1470, when William Wade was her master[2]; but in 1472, with Morris as her master, she was not so termed[3], and the vessel does not appear again after 1475. She was probably called a king's ship in 1470 and 1475 because she was being paid for by the king to do his service; this applies also to the Katherine Rivers, called a king's ship in 1475[4], which by its name ought to have belonged

---

1. P.R.O. E405/61, 67, 68, 69; E 404/77/1/33, 77/2/49; E 403/845, 846, 852; E 28/92, Tellers Account.
2. P.R.O. E 405/61, m.5; Letters of the 15th and 16th centuries from the Archives of Southampton, No.15 (1470).
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.299.
4. P.R.O. E405/61, m. 4v, cf. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, p.496.

to Lord Rivers who owned another vessel called the Star in this year[1]. The Burnet is another ship about which there is some doubt; in 1475 she was with Fetherston guarding the London wool fleet to Calais, but was not then noted as the king's[2]; in 1478, however, Cornborough and Thomas Greyson were granted a licence to export foodstuffs to Spain in her, and in this she is clearly called 'our shippe'[3]. In 1483-4 the Burnet is once again only the ship, although on this occasion Greyson was one of the men commissioned to fit her out against the Bretons[4]. These are the only times that the ship figures in the records, and it would therefore be unwise to decide upon her ownership one way or another. It would be equally unwise in the case of the Mary Curtis, which was on convoy duty with the wool fleets in 1479, and was then termed our ship[5]. Apart from a reference to her in 1484, when Thomas Rogers was given a licence to carry pilgrims in her to Spain, she figures no further in the period down to 1485. But about the

---

1. Acts of Court of the Mercers Company, p.86.
2. P.R.O. E 101/55/8.
3. P.R.O. C81/1386/4.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.140.
5. P.R.O. PSOI/47/2412.

Mary of the Tower there is no doubt. She was bought as the Caricon from John Alos of Spain for £100. in May 1478[1], and by 1479 her name had been changed - for the king already had one Caricon - to Mary and she was bringing wine from Brittany for the king and others, and going on a voyage to Zealand in the summer; during this year, and also in 1481, she was on the convoying of wool fleets[2]. During the first year of her service she was often called Mary of the Tower otherwise the Caricon, but despite her new name and title she was never used as a fighting ship; even in the hectic year of 1482 she was equipped to go to foreign parts and in fact went to Italy with a cargo of wool, and did not serve with the other ships of the king on the keeping of the sea[3]. Henry VII had the ship until at least 1496[4].

In 1481 the king's fleet of eight vessels was increased to about sixteen. This 100 per cent increase

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/76/4/134; E 30/1339.
2. P.R.O. E 405/66, m.4v.; E 404/77/1/41; E 405/67; SCI/vol. 51/No.98; PSOI/47/2412, PSOI/50/2570a.
3. Camb. Hist. Journal, 1926, p.21; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.308.
4. Oppenheim, Administration etc., p.35. L.G. Carr Laughton estimates her at 600 tons in 1485, as she then carried 58 guns with 140 chambers: M.M., 1960, p. 246.

was due principally to the war against the Scots, and the expedition undertaken to the East coast of Scotland, for which Edward purchased five ships, and (in some way) acquired others. The ships that Edward bought were all fine vessels. The Holy Ghost of Portugal, variously called the Great Portingale, the Ghost, the Carvel of Portugal, was obviously a carvel and a large one at that, carrying 400 men in her on the 1481 expedition. She cost the crown £1,000 from Richard Lomelyn, Anthony Savage, merchants of Genoa, and other merchants; they were paid 100 marks, and later £600. was allowed them on the customs of goods exported by them out of London, Sandwich and Southampton[1]. The ship served that summer under Howard[2], but was kept in port from 23rd May to 18th July 1482[3]. Later in that year her master, Nicholas Parker, was given a reward[4], and the carvel was still in the crown's possession in December 1483[5].

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/69; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.282.
2. Howard Household Books, p.3.
3. P.R.O. E 405/70.
4. P.R.O. E 405/71. Sometime in 1482-3 New Romney paid 2/4d. to John Ford and others going to Dover to sail in the Great Portingale with Parker: Hist. MSS. Comm. Fifth Report, p.547.
5. P.R.O. E 404/78/2/23.

The Mary of Bilbao was purchased for £300. from Spanish merchants[1], and she saw duty as the Great Spaynard - though she carried only 140 men - in 1481, probably in the straits squadron[2]. As the Mary of Greenwich she reappears in Richard III's reign[3]. The Mary Howard the king bought from Lord Howard for 1,000 marks[4], and she was Howard's flagship for his expedition to the North in 1481[5]; after this there is no mention of her under this or any other name - perhaps she stayed with Howard because she was never fully paid for. The Carvel (or Trinity) of Eu was bought from Sir Philip Courtenay, William Nicholl, Robert Brick and John Paint of Plymouth for £100.[6]; she served in the narrow seas force in this year[7], was at sea throughout the summer of 1482[8], and, with John Davy as her master, was one of Richard III's ships[9]. By 1487 Davy owned her,[10] but later in Henry VII's reign she was once more in the king's

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/69, two entries.
2. Howard Household Books, p.3; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.240; P.R.O. E101/329/2.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.402, 466.
4. P.R.O. E 405/69.
5. Howard Household Books, p.243.
6. P.R.O. E 405/69.
7. Howard Household Books, p.3ff; P.R.O. E101/329/2.
8. P.R.O. E405/70, 71.
9. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.225b.
10. Oppenheim, Accounts and Inventories, p.28.

possession[1]. The fifth vessel that the king purchased was the Mary Asshe, which cost £200. from Thomas Yogge, Ralph Easter and William Gashe, merchants of London[2]; she was on active service in 1481 and 1482, and was repaired in 1483[3].

Apart from these five, the Clement, the Mary of Calais - noted as a royal vessel in both 1481 and 1482[4] - and the Michael (or Nicholas) of the Tower, all appear for the first time in 1481 when they served in one or other of the two squadrons, and all three are called ships of the king; this they most probably were, though there is no record of their purchase. The Michael was captained by William Combersale in May of 1481 when he sailed her to Calais to collect war material there for the coming operations, surely a task for a royal mariner and a king's ship[5]. He also was her master in her other service in 1481[6]. The Clement of 1481 under John

---

1. Oppenheim, Administration etc., p.35.
2. P.R.O. PSOI/50/256la. 16th June 1481.
3. Howard Books, p.3ff; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.240; P.R.O. E 405/70; E 404/77/3/84.
4. P.R.O. E 405/69,70.
5. P.R.O. E 101/198/13.
6. P.R.O. E 101/329/2, E 405/69.

Naseby[1] might well be the Prince of 1482 which went to the safe-keeping of the sea for long periods during the summer, at one time with 360 men in her, at another with 300 men in her[2]. The Prince seems either to have been the Clement or perhaps the earlier Falcon, mention of which also abruptly stops in 1481 although the vessel reappears in the possession of Henry VII. In 1482 the only ship that we can say with certainty was an addition to the king's fleet, is the Lucas[3], which continued in royal service and ownership until 1484[4]. The others that are called the king's in 1482 - the Mary of Bridgewater, the Carentine and the John de Lopes - might well be so; but without any other references to them, apart from the Tellers Rolls, it would be unwise to include them amongst Edward's fleet. They might well have been termed the king's because they were being paid for by him to do his service, and were therefore for that time in a way the king's, as we have seen was

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 264, cf. The Howard Books, page 2.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 308; P.R.O. E 405/70.
3. P.R.O. E 405/70, 71.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 465; P.R.O. E 404/78/2/46.

perhaps the case in 1462 and 1475. The last ship that Edward bought was the Bark from Roger Kelsale of Southampton for 100 marks inJanuary 1483[1], and this vessel seems to have been on the king's service at Newcastle at about this time[2]. Thus at his death the number of Edward's ships stood at about sixteen.

This bald and rather dull catalogue of Edward's ships is no doubt an imperfect one, but is (I think) the most satisfactory that can be obtained on the evidence that is available. About these ships themselves we know little. Edward bought many sorts of vessel, including carvels and carracks, and of course many of them were large ships, war ships in fact; but some others were smaller. like the Carvel of Eu and were used (as were the bigger vessels) sometimes for more peaceful purposes as was, for instance the Mary of the Tower. There was considerable variety in the king's fleet. Edward never had many ships - two or three in the 1460's, between five and eight in the 1470's, about sixteen in 1481-2 - but they were always on the increase. It is

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/77/3/74.
2. P.R.O. E 405/71 m.6.

not enough just to know that Edward probably owned 27 - 30 ships altogether in his reign; but once his ownership is given some chronology, it is clear that Edward was, especially from 1470, intent on the purchase of ships as the basis of royal naval power[1]. His success here cannot be denied. Out of about twenty ships going with Neville in 1462 only two were the king's, in 1481 of the eighteen or so ships in the two squadrons ten or eleven were the king's. As we have seen, behind these facts lies the reality of the increase in royal power to control naval operations, to ensure loyal service, to develop efficiency, to create that feeling of responsibility to the crown which is the cornerstone of any civil service in a monarchy.

There was much that Edward had not done. He had built none of his own ships, and the adolescent - if that - administration of his reign had no permanent shore establishment or installations, although there must have been storehouses and perhaps workshops of some sort at Erith and on the Hamble, where ships were so often safely kept; whilst at Sandwich, a Yorkist port inherited from

---

1. See appendix graph.

the Earl of Warwick, there might also have been a small establishment of some kind, as this was the port most often used as a point of assembly for expeditions and a starting place for voyages of all types. Henry VII supplied these deficiencies, building his own ships and developing Portsmouth as a naval base. He did not do much else however; he seems to have had fewer ships at the end of his reign than at the beginning despite his building.[1]

Mr. Armstrong's remark is in fact much truer of Henry VII's reign than it is of Edward IV's, although it is doubtful whether he meant it so to apply[2]. Edward's command of English seapower rather than England's command of the sea is the crucial aspect of naval affairs in the period 1460-1485, and Edward's control, although tied up (at first) with politics depended very much on his ownership of ships. And with these, not with those

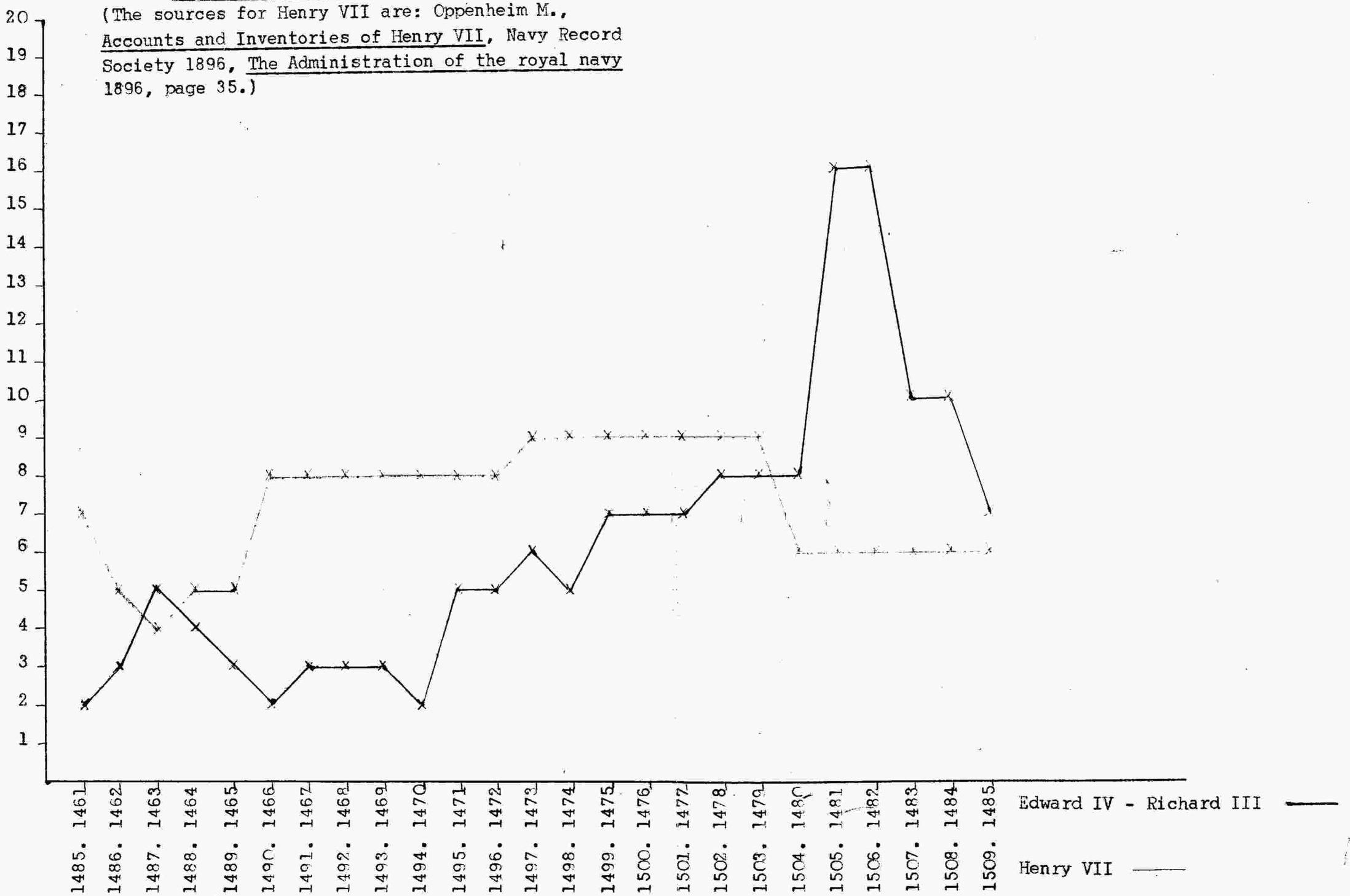
---

1. Ibid.
2. Even if we apply Mr. Armstrong's thought to those ships that Edward bought, we find that of sixteen ships, of whose purchase we have record, eight were English and eight were foreign: of the six ships bought before 1470 all were English.

of any other country, was he able to help form the fleets of English ships that in 1462, 1472, 1475, 1481, and 1482 commanded the sea for the brief seasons for which it was then possible.

Royal ownership of ships 1461-1509

(The sources for Henry VII are: Oppenheim M., Accounts and Inventories of Henry VII, Navy Record Society 1896, The Administration of the royal navy 1896, page 35.)



Chapter 8.

The Reign of Richard III.

The two years of Richard's reign form in many ways a fitting climax to Yorkist rule: Richard reaps where Edward had sown. True as this is of politics, so also is it true of naval affairs; Richard followed his brother's policy, but with more energy and purpose during two years of danger. As Richard had been Admiral of England, Ireland and Aquitaine since October 1462[1] - although he appears in administration not at all - he may have acquired some more precise knowledge of the navy than his brother ever had, and his position as head of the Admiralty Court may have given him a surer grasp of the evils of piracy as a destructive force both in trade and international relations. For the vigour with which he endeavoured to right wrong done and to recompense the injured is one of the distinguishing marks of his short

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1461-1467, page 214.

reign, and his measures to prevent piracy, few as they are, make these years reminiscent of Henry V's glorious time.

Action on Richard's part was determined not only by piracy, but chiefly by the sea-war with Brittany, the threat of invasion by the Earl of Richmond, and - in the summer of 1484 - by Scottish preparations to take advantage of this uneasy position. Certainly there was no peace during this brief time which came to test the idea of a permanent navy, but equally there was little time for the conscious improvement of administration. Improvisation to meet urgent need is nowhere more evident than in these two years, yet at the same time it is clear that Richard saw the importance of his own control over naval forces, and acting on this directed a series of operations with considerable success, which, as far as can be judged, ensured that the navy and the naval administration were strong enough to survive a change of dynasty and (with the help of Henry VII) twenty-five years of peace.

Whilst the danger from Henry Tudor was, throughout Richard's reign, to represent the continuance of party strife, the more domestic struggle in the early summer

of 1483 produced its own drama in the pattern of naval activity. Shortly after Edward's death the Queen and her relatives appointed Sir Edward Woodville commander of a fleet which was promptly sent to sea, not only one feels, to protect the coasts in this dangerous period of a minority, but also, particularly as Woodville had some of the late king's treasure with him, as an armed force that could be used against enemies of the Queen's party within the realm and which could move against Calais, where Lord Hastings was governor[1]. But by the first week of May Richard had taken over control of the government, and the potential danger from Woodville's squadron had to be extinguished. On 10th May Sir Thomas Fulford and one Halwell (perhaps John, the later rebel) were ordered to 'rigge them to the see in all hast and to goo to the Downes among Ser Edward and his company in that they may'[2]; what exactly Fulford was required to do it would be difficult to say, but probably he went only to observe Woodville's movements and discover his intentions if that was possible. Four

---

1. Paul Kendall, Richard III, 1955, page 168.
2. Grants of King Edward the Fifth, ed. J.G. Nichols, C.S., 1854, page 2.

days later the Protector's instructions were more clearly defined; on 14th May Edward Brampton, John Wells and Thomas Grey were required 'to go to see with shippes to take Ser Edward Wodevile', and in the orders to Roger Kelsale and others to fit out these ships, it was stated that all who would leave Woodville's force would be pardoned, all except Woodville himself, the Maquis or Dorset and Sir Robert Radcliff[1]. No doubt Lord Cobham who was at Sandwich and Dover with a small force at this time was there not merely to accept any who returned under the pardon, but if necessary to resist any attack[2]. Mancini relates how Richard's men fared in the Downs that May in vivid detail; his story is probably very near the truth. Brampton and Fulford spread the offer of a pardon amongst Woodville's men, and this commander in some alarm put picked men in each ship, especially in two Genoese carracks which he had in some way acquired for service. But the captains of these, not wishing to get involved in the political

---

1. Ibid, page 3.
2. Historical MSS Commission, 9th Report, part 1, page 145 (Canterbury City muniments).

squabbles of a foreign country overpowered Woodville's men and sailed for London declaring their allegiance to the Protector; all the ships, save two, followed them. These two ships, probably the king's Trinity and Falcon, Woodville sailed to Brittany and there joined the Earl of Richmond[1].

Although John Davy was appointed to captain the Carvel of Eu, and Thomas Overton to captain the Elizabeth on 21st May, and both were busy taking 120 mariners and soldiers for each of their vessels on 2nd June, they were not able to prevent Woodville's escape, if that was their intention[2]. By 26th June Richard was king, by 25th July Lord Howard Admiral of England[3], a fitting reward for his services in the previous reign, and the birth pangs of the new regime were over. The pattern of naval activity now was to be determined by war against foreign enemies and the need to secure English trade in this perilous time. With these two men at the top of

---

1. The Usurpation of Richard III, by Dominic Mancini, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong, 1936, pages 103-7; Kendall, Richard III, pages 186-8. The Trinity and Falcon do not appear at all in Richard's reign, but belonged to the crown again from 1485.
2. Grants of King Edward the Fifth, page 67; B.M. Harleian MS. 433, folios 225b, 226.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.363.

naval administration the vigorous operations of the next two years are perhaps partly explained.

The Bretons and Richmond were the enemies first to be dealt with. Duke Francis was supporting Richmond, and his ships were a menace to English trade and a possible danger to England's security. But first the pretender: in October 1483 Thomas Greyson sent out a ship from Exmouth with 80 men in her, and in November Greyson was rewarding 100 men who were at sea in various ships in the Western channel for their 'true devoir to take and resiste therle of Richemond and other oure Rebelles and traitors in his compenye then being upon the see', as well as other persons who were assigned to spy out the 'malicious disposicions of oure said Rebelles'[1] These measures were taken against the direct threat of Henry's invasion, for at the beginning of November he had appeared off Poole with two ships just as Buckingham's rebellion was collapsing; but he sailed away again when he discovered Richard's triumphal progress to Exeter[2].

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/25, 19th Dec. 1484.
2. Kendall, Richard III, pages 274-5.

Charles Dinham was the leader of the small loyalist force[1], and although he failed to take Richmond, in December he captured three Breton vessels which were unfortunately freighted with goods of Spanish merchants; this caused some confusion[2]. Meanwhile, at the end of 1483, Richard was taking wider action against the Bretons; the need must have been great for these Winter operations to be undertaken. Sir Thomas Wentworth was appointed commander of the king's fleet going out to meet the Bretons[3], and captured Breton ships as well as English ones were fitted out in December and in January 1484, including the Burnet and the king's Antony[4]. John Gosse, merchant of the Staple, was ordered to do the king service with his ships, and Nicholas Palmer was likewise commanded to serve, but in the king's newly bought Spanish ship, doubtless that which was afterwards called the Garsia[5]. On 20th December Richard sent

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.37b. Matthew Arnold was paid £45. for five tuns of wine and 2,000 stockfish that he supplied to Dinham's company.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.[illegible].
3. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.135.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.131, 140, 141; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 411.
5. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.143, 146.

commissions to officials in all ports to man out their small vessels to help and man the English fleet if they should see it engaged with the Breton fleet, then lying off Flanders, but apparently intending with the right wind and weather to depart homewards[1]. There may have been an engagement, as Breton prisoners were given letters of passage to return home to fetch money for their ransoms on 22nd December[2]. But all Breton goods in London were arrested and delivered to the Exchequer, Breton ships and goods were sold and dispersed amongst those who had been dispoiled by them[3], and a force continued at sea during February and March to resist the king's enemies of France and Scotland as well as those of Brittany. During these months two merchants of Faversham were victualling the fleet[4], and the king's ships Lucas, Mary of Greenwich and the new Governor were fitted out for service[5]; Lord Scrope of Bolton, who commanded the force, sailed in the Grace Dieu[6]. This

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.136.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.136b.
3. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.139b, 149b, 134.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.151b., 12th February 1484.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.465, 402, 426; P.R.O. E 404/78/2/46.
6. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.402; P.R.O. E 404/78/3/40; B.M. Additional MS. 4616 (Rymer's transcripts) f.184.

expedition was clearly successful, as before the end of April Francis had withdrawn his ships and promised to observe the truce and commercial agreement that he had signed with Edward IV, for a year[1].

Successful as Richard's naval forces were against the Bretons, in the summer of 1484 they, so the Croyland Chronicler tells us, were equally victorious in Northern waters against the Scots. Probably many of the ships that had served earlier in the year now continued, perhaps still under Lord Scrope, on active duty in the North. Four ships, amongst unknown others, were commissioned: the Andrew, Michael, Bastian, and Tyve; one John Hayning was taking mariners for these probably in April[2]. From May to July the king's forces were at sea, for in June they took a ship of Hamburg into Newcastle, and the mayor was ordered to free her[3], whilst many payments were made in this period for wheat, saltfish, beef and

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 446.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.168[b].
3. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f. 175b. cf. Cal. Close Rolls, 1476-1485, p.367.

other victuals for the fleet at Hull and Scarborough[1]. By the end of June Richard himself was at Scarborough, and one John Papedy was finding mariners for the king's ships there[2]. Richard was there again in July, and the Croyland Chronicler says that the victory over the Scots, which must have soon followed his visit, was achieved through his naval skill[3]. It seems unlikely that the king himself would have gone to sea (as Kendall suggests), though it must be remembered that Richard had been in charge of the naval operations off the West coast of Scotland in 1482, and his words of August 1484 in a letter to the Warden of the Cinque Ports - 'the kyng is that prince whiche for the defence of this Reyme and all the possessions of the Cronne of Englond is disposyed to employ his owne royall persone asferre as ever eny king hath doon in yeris paste to thencorageinge of his feithfull subgetts and confusion of all his enemyes' - were no idle boast or customary royal conceit,

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.174b., 182, 183.
2. Ibid, f.180.
3. He says: 'super Scotos eisdem maritimis artibus mirum in modum eadem tempestate praevaluit'.

as was shewn at Bosworth[1]. Certainly his own direction of activity, and his ability and energy impressed the chronicler. This defeat of the Scots, paralleled by one on land, had the desired result: James III of Scotland sent word that he wished to treat for a genuine peace[2].

Richard still continued his vigilance against Richmond's coming. Even as the summer waned he kept a force at sea; on 14th August the king's Garcia and the privately owned Margaret of Sandwich were commissioned for duty[3], whilst from 29th September to 11th November 200 soldiers and seamen were at sea in the king's Caricon, and another 100 in the Michael of Queenborough, which service cost Christopher Collins £194. 17. 6d. for wages, victuals and equipment; the king repaid him in April 1485[4].

---

1. P.R.O. C81/1531/3.
2. The Croyland Chronicle, ed. W. Fulman, Oxford, 1684, p.571; Kendall, Richard III, p.294.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.492, 520. Also on 14th August the king commanded Lord Arundel, Warden of the Cinque Ports, to proclaim that all the men of those ports should make themselves ready with their ships in case the French should besiege Calais, as they were bound to do 'at suche tymes as kynges of Englond make their viage into fraunce' - this is a new definition of the Portsmens' service, in accordance with the practise of the 15th century: P.R.O. C81/1531/3.
4. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/49.

There were probably some ships patrolling right into the new year, as John Joyce and Nicholas Palmer were taking mariners in November and December[1], and in January a Genoese carrack was brought into the royal service at Southampton. Her patron and merchants had to land their goods, but were given permission to freight any ship at their leisure, and so continue on their voyage to Flanders[2]. This high-handed action suggests that Richard needed large ships at this time, for equally unusual and overbearing was his purchase of a ship of Lübeck in the same month. This vessel her unlucky master had sailed into Dartmouth under the stress of bad weather; the king bought the ship at his own reasonable price for his own use, explaining to the puzzled master that this was according to ancient English usage[3]. These arbitary measures reveal perhaps a nervous administration; but this autumn and winter there was no sign of Richmond.

Richard had hardly relaxed his careful watch during

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.195, 208b.
2. Ibid, f.202.
3. Ibid, f.203.

1483-84, and had indeed kept, as Lord Dinham, Lieutenant of Calais, had urged him 'to kepe his stremes betwixt this (Calais) and Dover'[1], and shewn to all his power and determination to hold that which he considered his own. During the spring of 1485 the watch for Henry continued. Sir George Neville was at sea with a force from the beginning of April until August[2]; in connection with this, on 30th May, the king's Elizabeth was repaired, and along with the Mary of Yarmouth fitted out for service[3], two Breton vessels with 80 men in each of them served the king for five weeks and six days[4], and at Southampton Thomas Rogers, the Clerk of the King's Ships, Lord Audley and Avery Cornborough were busy victualling and repairing the ships of the squadron, the king's and others, from 10th July to 21st August[5]. But

---

1. Letters and Papers illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII, ed. James Gairdner, Rolls, 1861-63, vol. 2, p.2, September 1483.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.545.
3. Ibid, p.544.
4. P.R.O. E 405/74.
5. P.R.O. E 405/74; £410. 6. 8d. was spent.

by that last date all preparations and activity had lost their point; Henry had sailed from Harfleur on 1st August, had managed to avoid Neville's ships - though perhaps losing some of his vessels to Richard's fleet[1] - and had landed unopposed at Milford Haven on 7th August[2]. By 22nd August he was the new king of England at Bosworth. Success at the last was Henry's, and for all Richard's victories over Bretons and Scots he had lost the final (as it turned out) battle of the party strife, which he had inherited and exacerbated. Hubris does not usually figure in English history, but it might well have done in these years 1483-1485.

But whatever the fate of Richard III - and one wonders how the navy would have fared if he had won at Bosworth - his short reign is significant not only because of the personal vigour which he seems to have contributed to the organisation of naval affairs, but also because these two years show how he was able to channel this

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/74; Robert Herwood and John Green were sent to Winchelsea 'ad explorandum et capiendum diversis Rebellis Regis ibidem cum navibus suis existentibus'.
2. Kendall, Richard III, p.340.

energy and his obvious concern for the security of English trade in directions that had been marked out in his brother's reign. Scots and Bretons had to be fought and Henry's coming prevented - though the fact that it wasn't is one more illustration of how little seapower mattered in the decision of conflicts - but equally English merchant ships must be protected, and piracy, as far as possible, prevented or, if this was not altogether possible, its victims fairly recompensed. It is an indication of Richard's capabilities and scope of mind that these considerations - largely called into being by the war at sea - were given thought and action, although Richard was beset by many a more urgent problem.

The protection of English commerce was a main task, in these two years, of both the king's ships and those hired by the crown. The wool fleets going to Calais from London, Boston and Ipswich were conducted safely by ships, whose masters and mariners were paid by the government; this seems to have been the system that was envisaged in the agreement of 1473, as the accounts run from 6th April 1483 to 12th December 1484; the costs,

no doubt because of the danger at sea and the consequent strengthening of the conveying measures, were high[1]. Although we have no details of the system at this time it would appear that it worked much as it had done in the previous reign, although now (as then) there was no total security; in September 1483 a wool fleet going to Calais 'for fere and daunger of ennemys retouned home to London agen'[2], and there is much pious relief in William Cely's thanks to God for the safe arrival of the wool fleet at Calais in April 1484[3]. The Hull wool fleet in September 1484 was certainly protected, for Richard York was directed to take mariners and soldiers for the 'waughting' of it[4].

But the continuation of measures undertaken by his brother was not sufficient in this uncertain time of war, so Richard realised. Thus the guards that Edward had

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/57. For the period 6th April - 6th April 1483-84 the cost was £497. 11. 8d; for that 6th April 1484- 12th December 1484, £251. 5. 0d.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.38.
3. The Cely Papers, number 122.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.187b. For the system at work in Henry VII's reign see the thesis of W.E.C. Harrison, 'Maritime Activity under Henry VII,' p. 181-184.

used to appoint for the defence of the East Anglian fishermen, were continued in 1483 and 1484[1]; but now more than this was done. In February 1484 the king ordered those fishermen and merchants, who were going out from East Anglia to Iceland, whom he had been informed were going without protection, to sail armed and all together to Hull, and there to meet with 'our ships of Hull', which were to be their escort; thence they were to sail in convoy for Iceland[2]. Despite the Scots and French they reached Iceland safely; when they were due to return in July, the king wrote, ordering them to obey William Combersale, master of the royal Elizabeth, 'and in no wise to departe from him', for he would be their guard until they met with the king's army at sea in Northern waters[3]. Here the king's ships, vessels in his employ and his own seamen were being used to protect not primarily the king's rights, but those of

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 466, 487. The guards were continued in Henry VII's reign, on occasion being extended to the fishermen of the Cinque Ports, and also in Henry VIII'S reign, for example in 1512: Letters and Papers relating to the war with France, 1512-1513, Alfred Spont, Navy Record Society, 1897, p.64, note 1, page XXIX, note 4.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.159b. Printed in Letters and Papers etc., ed. Gairdner, vol. 2, p.287, and in Kendall, Richard III, p.279.
3. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.180.

private individuals, and doing so not under an obligatory agreement, but by the king's free will. Not only this, for sometime in 1484 the Mercers Company of London also had royal naval protection at the crown's expense; in February 1485 £349. 15. 0d. was paid to them, for they had 'paied by their owne money (this sum) by oure speciall commaundment to suche shippes of oures as waughted theim that voiage' into Flanders[1]. This amount was a large one for such a purpose: the safe-conducting had been no light side issue in that year's naval activity. As far therefore as one can judge from the scattered evidence, such royal oversight and direct protection of English foreign trade was one of Richard III's high concerns - the very phrasing of the Iceland letter shows this - and a real part of his policy. There is perhaps this difference of attitude between the two brothers; Richard took the government's paternal role more seriously.

This too involved a strong effort against piracy.

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/43. Similarly in 1485, Thomas Rogers was paid £26. for conducting ships from Flanders to London with merchandise in August, which suggests even more that the administration was intimately involved in these ventures: P.R.O. E 405/74.

Richard not only sent his ships to sea to keep it against his enemies, he tried also to ensure that the merchantmen of his own country and of friendly or allied foreign lands might go unmolested. Particularly he endeavoured to prevent his own patrolling squadrons from that easy accident or design of attacking such vessels. Already in December 1483 he had commanded letters to be sent to officials at a large number of ports, requiring them to proclaim that all his subjects were not to harm or rob those of Castille, Aragon, Portugal, Burgundy, the Hanse or Italy, but to show them friendship[1]. And in August 1484 he sent writs to the sheriffs of all the maritime counties and to the Warden of the Cinque Ports, ordering them to see that no person fitting out ships was to sail without giving security not to attempt anything against the king's subjects, friends or confederates, under pain of forfeiture as rebels and traitors; and if any mayor or official suffered any ship of war to depart without an oath being taken to this effect, then he was to satisfy any persons despoiled[2].

---

1. P.R.O. C 81/1530/12.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.493 cf. Hist. MSS. Comm., 2nd Report, p.91.

This is a clear return to Henry V's famous measures, and was a result of a similar desire to show a promise of good behaviour to neutrals; Richard had enough enemies, he could not afford to make more. Probably for the same reasons, and also perhaps because the Admiral, Lord Howard, was so much occupied on other matters of state, the king appointed on 8th April 1484 Sir John Wood, the Treasurer of England, Robert Brackenbury and three Masters as king's commissioners general in the office of Admiral of England, with full power to do all pertaining to that office; and Wood and Brackenbury were made king's vice-admirals, and Sir John Norbury king's vice-marshall[1]. This development of the Admiralty office was no doubt so that these men could enquire, decide and award in cases of piracy that might come before them in speedier fashion than previously, and shows a singular effort on Richard's part to ensure justice to any who had been wronged. If the first measure of prevention failed, then this of enquiry and restitution should not. His determination in this is shewn in many

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 391-2.

ways. There were for instance eight piracy commissions in 1483 alone[1], he negotiated with Burgundy and Brittany, concerning claims and injuries arising not only in his own reign but from the troubled early months of 1483 as well[2], commissions were sent out for the arrest of pirates in the Ipswich area[3], and Thomas Greyson was paid for keeping eight vessels at sea in the Western channel from March 1483 after Stephen Bull and John Green 'Rovers upon the see ..... whom the said shippes toke and subdued'[4], whilst restitution or compensation was given more promptly than for some years past[5].

---

1. And four in 1484, two in 1485; see Cal. Pat. Rolls, and Cal. Close Rolls.
2. Letters and Papers etc., ed. Gairdner, vol. 1, p.26, 27, vol. 2, p.49; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 446, 518.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 493, 16th June 1484.
4. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/25. Greyson's costs were £150; Edward IV had paid him £100, Richard now paid him the balance.
5. See for example: B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.91, 175b, 170; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.446; P.R.O. E 404/78/3/26: Anthony Keele, merchant of Antwerp, was allowed £562. 1. 6d. on the London customs in compensation for goods taken from him at sea. (cf.B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.90b.). And P.R.O. 30/580, petitions of Breton merchants for compensation in cases of piracy, which occured in May 1483; with acquittances by them for sums of money received in partial recompense, dated 23rd December, 1483.

Richard III (in many ways) was thorough, nowhere more so perhaps than in his attitude towards the protection of commerce and the prevention of piracy. The ambiguity in the phrase 'keeping the sea' which is the characteristic mark of mid-15th century naval expeditions has now gone for a time, if not for good. Richard was intent on security and legality at sea; he had to be perhaps to keep the friends he had, whom he so much needed; and his determination to achieve this - the brief two years shows us the determination, but not the achievement - is an attitude not seen since the time of Henry V. Edward IV had thought in this way also, but neither so strongly nor so actively as his brother.

These last two years therefore are, in the pattern of naval activity, in some ways unique, but also they form a consistent enough ending to the period 1461-1485. This consistency is not perhaps at first obvious; but once the period is seen as a whole, and the haphazard and improvised naval organisation of the early 1460's, with the crown relying on its subjects almost completely in all departments, is remembered, then it is clear that Richard III has continued where Edward IV finished in

his campaigns of 1481 and 1482, and continued even more powerfully. The king directs, and on one occasion is at the scene of operations; the naval service is undoubtedly the king's: responsible and efficient. It is a time of war and danger, but the king is able to respond and fight, and to protect with means which are truly his own. This is a long way from 1461 or 1462 or 1463. It is a fitting culmination to Edward's efforts to achieve just such direction and control.

There is then no question of the royal authority. What thin evidence there is for the administration in these two years - a few warrants for issue, Harleian MS. 433, two tellers rolls - shows us this undeniably, if it can show us little else. Richard's visits to Scarborough in the summer of 1484, his direct control of operations and personal oversight of naval activity, as well as his policy itself - the successful sea war against Bretons and Scots, the careful protection of merchant shipping by royal vessels under the crown's supervision - all give a picture of a king who not only directed naval administration, but who also was himself involved in its functioning. But this is not surprising; Richard was

the last of the medieval personal monarchs.

Of the working of that administration however, we have only glimpses. The number of ships that Richard had cannot now be known with certainty; but he had at least ten in 1483 of Edward's sixteen, and he purchased three ships within the next two years[1]. Certainly he had enough ships of his own to form a substantial part of any fleet he sent out to keep the sea against his enemies. Like Edward in 1482 he used forces composed of his own ships and those hired from his subjects; so the English fleet led by Wentworth in December 1483 is described as being composed of ships belonging to us and to our realm[2]. Richard, like his brother before him knew the value and purpose of owning his own vessels: they formed that essential core of his striking sea forces. It is therefore unusual that he should have restrained for his service in 1485 the Genoese carrack at Southampton. He may have lost some ships in the course of 1484, as some do not appear after this year, including the Antony.

---

1. See below.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, folio 136.

With this large ship gone, and with the Grace Dieu near her end at last, Richard probably felt the need to replace them by other large vessels to lead his naval expeditions, and this part was fulfilled by the carrack, and perhaps too by the Lübeck ship he compulsorily bought at this time. One (or two) ships do not make a fleet however, and the king's use of one foreign vessel does not show his reliance on sources not his own. The fact that Thomas Rogers was again Clerk of the King's ships in this reign is proof enough of the king owning ships; it is certain that these were the centre of his naval power, to which, when it was necessary - as it almost always was of course - other ships were added. But by 1485 there was no chance of the king having to rely on others for the whole process of naval action.

He relied on many men to implement his policy and organise activity. It is not until sometime in 1484 that there is a movement to simplify the administration by the revival of the office of Clerk, but generally in these years the organisation reflects the political agitation and the character of the king, for much seems personal, efficient, unspectacular, necessary.

The expeditions of Wentworth, Scrope and Neville were not like those of 1475 or 1481; no indentures survive between king and commander witnessing to the rather more grandiose, planned operations that were usually the product of their making. The forces sent out in this reign were more workmanlike, responsive to urgent needs, their leaders king's men who served rather than helped the king. From the impressionistic evidence for the organisation of these expeditions little can be determined. John Joyce is commissioned to take mariners on 17th December 1484, this order being given at Canterbury, all are to assist John Papedy in manning and victualling 'certayn oure shippes', an order given at Scarborough in June 1484, two merchants of Faversham are to victual certain of our ships of war, Richard Gough and others are paid for victualling ships in the North, Christopher Collins is paid for the wages of 200 men; these bald statements form Harbian 433 are only indications of action, hardly more than aids to the imagination, and it is all too easy to slip into generalisations that

the evidence does not warrant[1]. One of the better ways of trying to obtain a clearer view of the administration at work is by describing the positions and the tasks of the men involved in it. From nearly a year and a half's activity we are not able to glean very much about method, except to note its personal nature, perhaps in some cases by word of mouth. But the men that were used were all servants of the crown, they were not independent agents; in this the work of the 1470's had not been in vain.

Of the masters of Richard's ships we know barely anything. John Davy, a Sandwich man probably[2], master of the Carvel of Eu in 1481-1482, served the Protector against Woodville in June 1483[3], was a guard of the East Anglian fishermen in the autumn of that year[4] and then

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 folios 195, 180, 151b, 174, 182b, 183, 100b. We can see how these facts are only parts of a much wider whole in Collins' case: the 200 men were serving in the King's Caricon, and there were another 100 in the Michael of Queenborough; the warrant for issue that survives adds this, and other information: P.R.O. E 404/78/3/49.
2. P.R.O. PSO 1/52/2655.
3. Grants of King Edward the Fifth, p.67; B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f. 225b.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 466. With Edmund Ince.

disappears until Henry VII's reign, when he figures in 1487 as the owner of the Carvel of Eu, hired for royal service, and is described then as a yeoman of the crown[1]. He was still captain of that ship, now called the Mary and John in February 1489[2]. William Fetherston remained as master of the Mary of Greenwich in 1483 and 1484[3], but apart from this is not mentioned. Perhaps William Combersale was the most active of the king's mariners; he captained the Elizabeth in the summer of 1484 when he was delegated to lead and guard the returning Iceland fleet - a task of some responsibility[4], and he was in charge of repairs on this ship in May and June 1485[5]. He succeeded Rogers as Clerk in 1488 and served in that post until 1495, when he may have been dismissed[6].

These masters played the same part in the administration

---

1. Accounts and Inventories etc., Oppenheim, pages 28-29.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1485-1494, p.277.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.466, 402.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f. 180b.
5. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 544.
6. Accounts and Inventories, page XVII. He was granted the office of baliff of the royal manor of Dovercourt, and town of Harwich for life, by Richard III in December 1483: P.R.O. PSO1/57/2927.

that they had in Edward's reign, as they always would in so many ways; only their responsibility for their ships, the maintenance and repair of them when not on active duty, was to be lessened as the administration grew and became centralised, as we have seen starting to happen once a Clerk was appointed. But we have too few notices of them to read any details into this process. Of the other men who represent other aspects of the administration we can say a little more. Both were organisers and helpers - local agents, Thomas Greyson in the West country, Christopher Collins in the Thames Estuary area. Greyson achieved the peak of his modest career in Richard's reign. Chiefly a merchant and local administrator his part in naval affairs was only that which would naturally in this time fall to a loyal, willing, efficient crown servant who showed some interest in this direction.

He had been on a commission to arrest ships in Devon and Cornwall in 1475[1]; in 1476 he became a yeoman of the crown and was granted the borough of Kenford in

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 525.

Devon[1]. In May 1478 he was given, with another man, the king's quay and crane of Opsam and five cellars previously belonging to the Duke of Clarence, valued at £6. 13. 4d. per annum[2], and in the same year he sat for Dartmouth in the Commons and was, with Cornborough, licenced to export grain and beans to Spain[3]. He became a customer of Exeter and Dartmouth in 1479, and in November of that year was given a licence to have ships of his own, to trade, to have wharves and quays, the Act of Parliament of 20 Henry VI notwithstanding[4]. In 1480 the manor of Kenford was granted to him for life[5], and in 1482 he had a general pardon on 5th March and was on a commission to arrest various men only eight days later[6]. With the accession of Richard III this merchant of Dartmouth, Plymouth and Exeter, customer and yeoman of the crown became an important official in naval affairs in the West. In the summer of 1482 he had been concerned

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1467-1477, page 545.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 97.
3. P.R.O. C 81/1386/4.
4. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 168.
5. Ibid page 177.
6. Ibid pages 296, 325.

with sea-keeping measures against the Scots in that part, and in the spring of 1483 he sent out some eight ships to harry pirates. Then in the autumn of that year, with Henry Tudor hovering off the Devon and Dorset coasts Greyson organised the forces that went out against him (at a cost of £106. 13. 4d.)[1], no doubt receiving his instructions from the king himself, who was at Exeter for a week or so at the beginning of November. After this his moment of administrative and patriotic glory, he settled down once again to more routine works. As mayor of Plymouth in 1483-4 and perhaps that town's M.P. in 1484, he was on a piracy commission[2], was rewarded for his good services against the rebels by a grant of manors in Cornwall[3], saw to further sea-keeping operations against the Bretons in the Winter of 1483-4[4], and fitted out a ship to take one Saluzard to Brittany at the king's command in September 1484[5].

With the death of Richard III Greyson's wider

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/25.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 426, January 1484.
3. Ibid page 415, March 1484.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.140.
5. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.189.

career in public service ended; he lost his crown offices, was pardoned, but remained only as an officer for the town of Plymouth, being mayor in 1486-7, 1489-90, and M.P. in 1487[1]. His period as a naval administrator had been short but effective: a man used by the crown for a particular and pressing need. Naval activity was still too slight, not continuous, for men like Greyson, with their local influence and knowledge of maritime matters, to be used often let alone consistently; but they were that type to be relied upon when the time came for organisation and who later, in the sixteenth century when naval administration became a full time duty, became the local operators in a centralised system.

Christopher Collins is a more mysterious figure than Greyson, appearing not at all in the Calendars of Patent Rolls, and his part in naval administration is limited to the years 1483-4. He was in 1476-7 a draper of London, by 1481 a customer there also[2] purchasing carpets for the king[3], and a merchant connection of Howard's; for in this year he, and others, who had

---

1. For his brief biography see: Wedgwood, History of Parliament, Biographies, pages 389-390.
2. Calendar of London Letter Books, 'L', ed. RR.Sharpe, p.145, 148.
3. P.R.O. C 1/47/101; E 159/258 Mich. m.7.

freighted the London ship, the Mary Flower, promised him a tun of wine on her return from Bordeaux, as Howard had obtained for them the licence for that voyage[1], whilst in November 1482 Howard too was reckoning with Collins for eleven carpets he had purchased from him[2]. In December 1482 he received a reward of £20. from the king for his diligent service, perhaps as a customer[3]; and in January 1483 he hired and fitted out the carvel Christopher Lockwood at Sandwich with sixty men, to tkae pirates who were molesting vessels in the Thames estuary. He in fact captured one John Miles and others of his company, and brought them to London, but he was not paid for his successful labours until April 1484[4]. Towards the end of 1484 he it was who, by royal command, saw to the wages and victuals of 200 men in the king's Caricon, and 100 in the Michael of Queenborough, and the equipping of both vessels for a period of six weeks service from the 29th September to 11th November[5]; he seems to have

---

1. Howard Household Books, p.41.
2. Ibid, p.312. He had also received 3/4d. from Howard in April 1481, p.38.
3. P.R.O. PSO1/54/2794.
4. P.R.O. E 404/78/2/44; he was paid £100 in all.
5. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/49; His costs were £194. 17. 6d.

sailed in the Caricon , for when at Dover with her at this time he was given wine by the town, whose clerk called him the ship's captain[1]. Apart from these two important instances we know nothing of his role in the administration. In January 1485 he was given the ship Barbara of Fowy, which had been forfeited to the crown[2], and he also had an annuity of £100. granted him for twenty years as from Easter 1485, for services to be done by him according to certain indentures; this was identical to one granted to Sir Edward Brampton at the same time[3]. By February 1485 he was constable of Queenborough castle, carrying out repairs there[4], and

---

1. B.M. Additional MS. 29616 (Dover Accounts), f.261v.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.94.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.481, 20th August 1484, cf. B.M. Harleian MS. 433,f. 76. The unusual nature of this grant to Brampton, and the fact of Perkin Warbeck's presence in Brampton's household in Burgundy after Richard's overthrow has led Roth (op.cit., chapter 6, page 423) into certain theories concerning the transport ~~of the transport~~ of the young Richard of York (the later Perkin Warbeck) by Brampton to Burgundy sometime between August 1484 and Easter 1485. For what it is worth this theory might be given more substance by the addition of Collins to the plot of abduction; he was a friend of Howard's, constable of Queenborough, a man who probably had as many friends in the Low Countries as Brampton. Young York might even have been taken to Burgundy in the Caricon. Collins' disappearance after 1485 is at least a sign that he was unable to come to easy terms with the new regime.
4. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.207b., 212b.

then he is lost sight of. Slight as the information is about him, it has its significance, for his small part is not unlike that of John Cole's in the early 1470's: a man called into royal service because he was available in an important region - the Thames estuary - and obviously dependable, when there was much to be done, and as yet no regular organisation to do it all.

Both Collins and Greyson figure very much as interim instruments of the crown, whilst that beginning of an ordered administration created by Edward IV in the early 1480's was for a short time in abeyance. By the end of 1484 however, this had been pulled together again; indeed it may have been before this date that Thomas Rogers was once more an active Clerk, directing naval organisation. On this the evidence is slight and confusing, but it must now be examined, for upon the office of the Clerk of the King's Ships rests the case for the development of naval administration in Richard's reign.

The first reference to Rogers is early in 1484[1], and

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.144b. The entry is undated, but is amongst those for January 1484.

is a draft in Harleian 433 of his appointment as Clerk. He is made Clerk, the entry runs, of all manner of ships belonging to us within our realm, with full power and authority to take such ships for our service as by his discretion he shall think necessary, to appoint masters and pursers to our ships, and also to sell any of our vessels and prizes as he shall deem fit for our most profit. Nothing could be clearer than this definition of the Clerk's powers, wide as they are. But this appointment does not seem to have passed the Great Seal, as it does not appear in the Calendar of Patent Rolls. Perhaps Rogers did not trouble to have it enrolled, particularly as his grant from Edward IV was for life and this was sufficient to ensure his official position.

In March 1484 Rogers - not described as Clerk however - was to be paid £24, which the king owed him for buying at Southampton twenty new guns and two serpentines for the use of the crown[1]; clearly he was on government business here. In August he was appointed one of the supervisors over the fishermens' guards[2]. The fact also that in April

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.163.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 487.

1484 he was given a licence to carry pilgrims to the shrine of St. James at Compostella in four ships, suggests that he was being well rewarded for services rendered[1]. But there is no record of what he did, whether he did play that part which his appointment had mapped out for him, in the activity of 1484. Towards the end of that year it is certain that he was again carrying out his duties. In December, this time described as Clerk, he was given a privy seal warrant to the Treasurer for an assignment of £44. 18. 3d. for the exercise of his office, and £20. as the king's reward[2]. It is recorded on the Tellers Roll for Michaelmas 1484 that he was paid £40 'super officio suo', and a further £206. 13. 4d. for the same cause in two payments of 100 marks and £140.[3]. These moderate sums paid to him for unspecified reasons, merely for the exercise of his office, take us back to 1482, when he received similar payments; they are a mark of the standing of his office, that a lump sum could be disbursed from the Exchequer and

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.171b.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.91.
3. P.R.O. E 405/73. These payments may have been made early in 1485 of course, as there were operations going on all through this time.

record of the use to which it was put, only reported afterwards.

But in 1485 the confusion arises. On 30th January, described as late Keeper of the Ships of Edward IV, alias citizen and fishmonger of London, alias late purser of the king's Antony, Rogers was given a pardon for all offences, arrears and accounts due from him to the king[1]. Although not termed clerk of Richard's ships the fact that he was pardoned for debts to the crown suggests that he had been acting in that capacity. On 24th March, this time with an associate, Thomas Gale, he was granted for life the office of Keeper or Clerk of the King's ships, with 1s. a day as wages, 6d. a day for a clerk and 3s. a day when they should ride about their business, this last was 1s. more than Rogers had received in the grant of 1480[2]. This double grant of March 1485 was enrolled on the Patent Roll, and is the first appearance of such an appointment. Thomas Gale was paid 20 marks for the expenses of his office sometime in the next months,

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.509, cf. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.94b.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.533, cf. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.100.

but he does not appear to have done anything for his money.[1] Rogers, on the other hand, now seems to have returned to a more full round of duties. With others he was concerned in the preparations, including the musters, at Southampton, of a force - undoubtedly Neville's - going on the safe-keeping of the sea, for which they were paid together £410. 6. 8d; he was paid £26. 0. 0. for seeing to the safe-conveying of English merchants' goods from Zealand to London in August, and received another £5., 'super dicto officio suo'[2]. After Richard's death, and receiving the necessary pardon in November 1485[3], he was reappointed Clerk on 21st February 1486; he continued in that office until his death in 1488[4].

These then are the facts that survive; to gauge from them the most probable sequence of events is not easy, and to raise conclusions upon this structure of probability is to stretch the elasticity of impartial

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/74.
2. P.R.O. E 405/74.
3. Accounts and Inventories, ed. Oppenheim, page XVI; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1485- 1494, page 60.
4. Accounts and Inventories, pages 3-6. This is not in the Patent Roll Calendar, and is therefore really only a confirmatory grant.

facts too far, perhaps even to that breaking point of error. For instance the pardon of January 1485 might have been the routine affair, a part of the usual ritual; but alternatively, particularly as it came so late, and seen in conjunction with the (re)-grant of the following March in which Thomas Gale was involved, it might now mask some drama, conflict or misunderstanding long since gone into oblivion. Happily (in one sense) it is not essential to know the reasons behind this. For what is most important in the analysis of naval administration is to know whether the office of Clerk, demonstrating that the administration was developing continuity and some permanence, was the pivot upon which organisation was coming to swing, or only a sinecure (as it was for Bowman in the 1460's), no real part of naval administration. The facts that we have are just sufficient to allow us to decide this.

Once there were sufficient ships of the king's, as we have seen, then the re-appointment of an active Clerk was an obvious and natural step to take. As Richard attached as much importance to the maintenance of his ships as his brother had done, then for him too the

continuation of Rogers service was both right and necessary. Perhaps the best explanation therefore of Rogers' appointment in January 1484 not appearing on the Patent Roll (as that of February 1486 did not) is that the original grant for life of 1480 was adequate, and that his re-appointment in Richard's (and in Henry's) reign was only a recognition, a confirmation of his position under a new monarch, that his duties were considered to be continuously essential in naval administration. The entry of the grant to Rogers and Gale of March 1485 does not vitiate this conclusion, for that surely was due to the unusual nature of this double appointment, the reasons for which we can no longer know - unless Gale was to be used as a check on Rogers - but which did not alter Rogers' place in the administration.

Oppenheim suggests that Rogers' continuous term of office under three monarchs was 'on account of the financial assistance he was able to give the government'[1]. This conclusion is, however, due to confusion over the

---

1. Accounts and Inventories, p. XVI-XVII. This of course was undoubtedly one of the reasons for Soper's long tenure of the office.

various men of the name Thomas Rogers, whose careers and social standing are not easy to separate[1].

---

1. This confusion I have been able to confound by looking at (our) Thomas Rogers' will: Somerset House, 8 Milles, page 72. This is dated 25th February 1488, the date that his wife gives in the accounts that she wound up for him: Accounts and Inventories, page 6. Thus The will is clearly his, as his wife Joan (of the Accounts and Inventories) was to have his lands for her life; and his association with East Greenwich also shows this to be the Clerk of the King's Ships. He left no children, though his wife had a son, John Mone, who was to inherit the lands on his mother's death, and a god-daughter, Joan Goyse, who was to have £10. when she came of age or married. If his wife died and John Mone had no lawful heirs, lands were to be sold, and £100. worth of vestments to be bought for the priory church of the Friars Preachers in London, where Rogers was to be buried, and his soul's salvation - along with his parent's and Edward IV's - was to be prayed for, for which purpose sums of money were to be regularly provided from the lands, in whoever's hands they were. After the £100. had been taken, the remnant of money from the sold lands was to be distributed amongst poor people, and for the amendment of highways around London and in other deeds of charity as his executors thought fit. The only lands not to be sold were those in St. Andrew Hubard's parish, in London, which were to go to the Vintners Company of which Thomas had been a member.

This information shows that the Thomas Rogers of Lambourne, Bucks., who left manors in Hertfordshire and Sussex: P.R.O. E150/289/6,7; E 150/1059/11, in trust for his daughter Elizabeth, already married to William Essex (see also Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1485-1494, p.237, 10th July 1488), whom Oppenheim has taken to be our Thomas Rogers: Accounts and Inventories, page XVII, is an entirely different man, and a much richer one too. So also is that Thomas Rogers of Watton, Herts., who died about this time, whose will is dated 10th May 1488: Somerset House, 8 Milles, page 268.

Oppenheim has in fact got hold of the wrong man. Until 1480 Thomas Rogers was little more than one of a number of men involved in naval organisation, albeit as a professional, and although in the following eight years he certainly prospered, and acquired lands[1] his wealth was not the reason for his position as Clerk, more a result of it perhaps. William Combersale, who succeeded Rogers in 1488, was certainly no rich man. It surely is that Rogers was appointed, and retained his place, because he was a professional naval civil servant, whose knowledge and experience were essential to the co-ordination of administration, and whose moderate riches were only, at the most, some assistance to him when the Exchequer was dilatory in payment.

From 1480-1 onwards a Clerk was needed, needed again because naval administration had developed to that extent

---

1. At his death he owned lands at East Greenwich, Charlton and in the parishes of All Hallows the Little (in Thames Street), and St. Andrew Hubard in London; Hardly large holdings one would imagine. His licence to trade to Iceland of 1482: P.R.O. C 81/1391/18, and his licence to take pilgrims to Compostella of 1484: B.M. Marleian MS.433 f. 171b, must have proved remunerative. His progress from mariner in the 1460's to fishmonger in the 1470's, to vintner in the 1480's, also demonstrates his prosperity.

where such a responsible official could, and did, fulfil his proper task, and organisation would have functioned considerably less well without him. So Rogers held his place in three reigns, and from his death until the development of the navy board after 1509 the Clerk's position at the head of naval affairs remained secure. During Richard's reign therefore, the administration, still adolescent as it was, was maintained at the level of development that it had reached in 1481, perhaps slightly advanced. Thus the slow progress towards royal control of naval resources, begun properly after 1471, was secured as a basis upon which later sovereigns could build.

We can discover very little about the king's ships during Richard's reign, but sufficient to see that he considered royal ownership a necessary part of his naval policy. For he kept almost all his brother's vessels that came to him with the crown, and acquired more during the short time that he was king.

The Grace Dieu, which was at Dartmouth at the end of 1482 and the beginning of 1483[1], remained there

---

1. P.R.O. E 405/71.

probably until the summer of 1484, when two merchants of London by royal command fitted her out to go from there to Southampton and thence to Italy. But the ship was required for the defence of the realm, and was taken for the force which served under Lord Scrope in that year[1]. How long she was at sea we do not know, but she was in the river Hamble on 10th October 1485 when Thomas Rogers received her for Henry VII[2]. She never went to sea again and was soon - before February 1488 - delivered 'to be broken spent and emploid for and upon the makyng of his ship cald the Souveraine'[3]. The Elizabeth Richard kept throughout his reign; she served against Woodville in June 1483, in the North in the summer of 1484 with Combersale as her master, who in May 1485 was required to fit her out again probably to serve with Neville's squadron[4]. Of the Anthony there is only one mention, when this vessel went to resist the king's enemies in

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/40.
2. Accounts and Inventories, p.36.
3. Ibid, p.47.
4. Grants of King Edward V, p.67; B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f. 226, 30b; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p. 544.

January 1484[1], and she does not appear in Henry VII's reign. The Caricon was in the king's service in December 1483, when her master, William Parker, was paid £7. due to him 'for olde arrerage'[2], and again in the autumn of 1484[3]. William Parker moved around, at some time in these years he had been master of 'our ship called the Portingale'[4] - the only reference to this vessel in the reign - and later he was master of the royal ship Governor. The Carvel of Eu saw service in June 1483 with John Davy[5], but the next reference to her is in April 1487 when she was owned by Davy and on hire to the crown[6]. Between 1483 and 1487 she must have been sold to him or granted to him as a reward; but later in Henry's reign - now called the Mary and John - she was once more in the possession of the crown[7], and after

---

1. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, p.411.
2. P.R.O. E 404/78/2/23.
3. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/49.
4. P.R.O. E 404/78/2/23.
5. Grants of King Edward V, p.67, B.M. Harleian MS. 433., f. 225b.
6. Accounts and Inventories, p.28.
7. Oppenheim, Administration etc., p.35; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1485-1494. p. 277.

being rebuilt in 1512-13 she served Henry VIII in the operations against the French of those years[1]. The Lucas and the Mary of Greenwich appear in 1483 and 1484 on royal service[2], whilst the Burnet, if king's ship she was, was at sea against the Bretons at the end of 1483[3].

Of Edward's other ships there is no mention in Richard's reign, yet Henry VII had the Falcon and the Trinity[4], and the Mary of the Tower appears in Rogers' accounts of 1485-88[5]. It seems very likely that the Falcon and the Trinity were those two ships that Woodville escaped with to Brittany in the early summer of 1483, and that these came into Henry's hands then. The Mary of the Tower might possibly be the Caricon, as these names were interchangeable for the ship Edward had bought in 1478, and no Caricon figures after 1485. Therefore Richard seems to have had at least eight, but probably

---

1. Letters and Papers relating to the War with France, 1512-13, Alfred Spont, Navy Records Society, 1897, p.53 and passim. She was then estimated at 240 tons.
2. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85, p.402, 465, 466; P.R.O. E 404/78/2/46, cf. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.64.
3. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.140.
4. Oppenheim, Administration etc., p.35.
5. Accounts and Inventories, p.12, et seq.

ten, of his predecessor's ships, and these in 1483-4 composed his own fleet. But towards the end of that first year Richard began to add to their number.

Apart from the compulsory purchase of the Lübeck ship at Dartmouth in January 1485[1], and any of the Breton prizes that he retained - though many he gave away - Richard III bought three ships; no mean number in so short a reign. He had bought a Spanish ship before January 1484, which was in that month fitted out to serve at sea[2]; this was probably that royal ship, Garsia of Spain which was commissioned for duty in the following August[3]. She was acquired with the crown by Henry VII, and promptly given away to Sir Richard Guildford on 24th December 1485[4]. Henry also gave away another of Richard's purchases, the Governor, though he waited decently until February 1486 before he did so[5]. It perhaps appears strange that one of England's most careful monarchs, noted (amongst numerous others) as the

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.203.
2. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.146.
3. Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-1485, page 492.
4. Accounts and Inventories, pages 67, 70.
5. Accounts and Inventories, page 74.

founder of the royal navy, should begin his reign so generously, distributing his naval resources to his subjects. Neither the Garsia nor the Governor can have been in poor condition, for they had only recently been bought, the Governor at a cost of £500. As the Governor was given back to two of the men from whom she had been bought, the merchants Ralph Astry and Thomas Grafton, it may well be that the £500, or some of it, was still owing to these men, and that Henry prefered to return the ship rather than pay off the debt. Richard had purchased the Governor towards the end of 1484, and in January 1485 issued a warrant to the Treasurer to pay Astry, Grafton, Guy Wolstan and John Baxter £300. of the £500. by assignment levied on the customs and subsidies of Southampton[1]; the warrant was endorsed with a note that this had been done. A warrant of the same date, 31st January, was issued to pay Thomas Grafton alone 100 marks out of the London customs for his ship the Nicholas, which the king had also lately bought from him[2]. The only

---

1. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/40. L.G. Carr-Laughton (M.M. 1960, p.246) estimates her size as around 600 tons, as in 1485 she had 70 guns with 265 chambers.
2. P.R.O. E 404/78/3/41 cf. B.M. Harleian MS. 433, f.95b.

other mention of a royal ship is in February 1485, when Richard Simon had a warrant to be paid £40. out of the temporalities of the Bishop of Exeter for rebuilding a ship of Scotland, called the Margaret, which was in the king's hands[1].

There is no indication as to where ships were kept during the reign, but clearly as Rogers in the new reign after 1485 received ships that were in the Hamble or at Winchelsea, it was there and probably at Erith and Sandwich, as in Edward's time, that vessels were safely kept during the more tranquil times; though as there were no such long periods in Richard's reign ships were probably refitted wherever they might be. There appears to have been no shore establishment, and Lord Howard's role in naval administration is not known, although he figures not at all in the surviving evidence. He was probably too busy elsewhere.

As in the development or maintenance of the administration, so too in the retention and aquisition of ships - the two are aspects of the same theme - Richard

---

1. B.M. Harleian MS. 433 f.204b.

III continued his brother's work. His reign was more however than merely a time in which Edward's work was carried over for Henry VII and later sovereigns to develope. Richard's contribution was a positive one, in so much as Edward's slow organisation of naval administration and the building up of a fleet during the 1470's had come only to some sort of real achievement in the 1480's, and was a shaky, easily destructible achievement at that; Richard put his own energy into naval activity, maintained and added to the number of royal ships and kept Rogers at the head of the administration. Edward's work was fragile; even the fine navy, the ordered administration of Henry V was lost within a few years; much less time and conscious effort would have destroyed Edward's work. But Richard, probably more because of, then despite, the ceaseless sea-wars and watches of his reign, gave that administration another two years of growing life essential to ensure its existence during Henry VII's reign - a period unripe for much further development - until such time as this administration could be

reshaped for the needs of the sixteenth century. He therefore shared with Edward IV in the re-creation of the royal navy.

Conclusion.

There is little reason to elaborate on the conclusions that have been made sufficiently obvious in the body of this work.

Changes in the period there were, but not in the manner of seakeeping or in the ways of making war at sea; there was no advance (but no regression) in strategy, such as it was. Henry V's patrols of 1416-1420 were as well conceived as Edward IV's operations in 1475 and 1481. Government responsibility for the protection of commerce - the wool fleets, the fishermen - was, however, something new, and of real benefit to the country. The ships that kept the sea were more heavily armed towards the end of the period - this was one gradual change -, though in the years 1510-1550 there was a greater development in this than there had been between 1422 and 1485. Ships were equipped more fully when they came to do the king's service in 1480 than they had been in 1430, especially of course with guns, though here again the early 16th century was perhaps the period of

more rapid advance[1].

In the administration of naval affairs there was no recruitment of staff from new sections of society; the royal seamen of Henry V's navy were as much the day to day administrators as were the shipmasters of Edward IV or Richard III's vessels. The only change here - and I think that it may be an important one - was that these men, the professional seamen, were used by the Yorkists as organisers of squadrons, and as commanders of convoys and patrols. Mr. Scammell[2] has taken Mr. Michael Lewis to task for stating that under the early Tudors, as in the Middle Ages, it was particularly difficult for professional seamen to 'acquire experience in war-leadership'. In fact, as there were always sailors and there was always war, it would probably be difficult to antedate a shipowner's or shipmaster's participation, as the captain of his own vessel, in naval scuffles of various kinds. But certainly in the period after 1471 William Fetherston

---

1. See Mr. G.V. Scammell for this aspect: 'War at sea under the Early Tudors', part II, Archaeologia Aeliana, 1961, p.179.
2. Ibid, p.193.

was only outstanding amongst a number of seamen - Combersale, Cole, Davy for example - , all of whom commanded ships, their own and the king's, in the varied operations of the time.

In our period the naval administration saw decline, even death, and resurrection, but there was no guarantee that it was a permanent one. As for progress, that had not been achieved, was not indeed thought of by 15th century men, who did not regard themselves as trustees for the future[1]. Henry V's navy was created for a particular need: the conquest of France. But no other sovereign until Henry VIII required such a navy again for the purposes of war, although perhaps Henry VI could have done with one against the Burgundians in the 1430's, and against the French in the 1450's. The period 1470-1510 was not one of great wars, but the operations of 1475 against the French, and of 1480-82 against the Scots were the chief reason for the development of Edward IV's royal navy and its attendant administration. The judgements of 18th century naval historians have been

---

1. See some remarks by Miss McKisack, 'Edward III and the Historians', History, vol.45, 1960, p.4-5.

more just to Edward IV in this matter, than have later generations of scholars, who have reserved their tributes for Henry VII. Some of those fine phrases of the 18th century are worth quoting: 'He (Edward IV)... had true notions of naval power'[1]; Edward, after 1471, 'placed the Navy on a respectable Establishment'[2] ... 'justly sensible of the Advantages resulting from a formidable marine...'[3]. Such subdued and eminently reasonable words of praise summarize admirably Edward's attitude to the navy, and he should be remembered after this fashion.

But the Royal Navy and its administration were a post-1509 development. There were five royal vessels on Henry VIII's accession, and a dockyard only at Portsmouth; that king built forty-six more ships, bought twenty-six, took (and kept) thirteen as prizes, and by 1550 there

---

1. Lives of the Admirals and other Eminent British Seamen ... etc., John Campbell, Second Edition, 1750, vol. 1, p.301.
2. Biographia Nautica, or Memoirs of the Illustrious Seamen to whose Intrepidity and Conduct the English are Indebted ... etc., Dr. J. Campbell and J. Kent, 1785, vol. 1, p.365.
3. Ibid, p.366.

were yards at Portsmouth, Gillingham, Deptford and Woolwich[1].

One hundred years after Henry V the royal navy recovered its position; only the requirements of 16th century war made that possible. The contributions of Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII to this advance were not negligible, but in the last event their work must be seen, not as a building for the future, but as a response to the needs of their own time, and those needs were not great. What those kings did, they did for themselves, and they did it adequately. Henry VI's government responded less well. How efficiently the government met the exigencies of the day, is the only safe way that historians can examine qualitatively such a subject as royal administration and the keeping of the seas. This, it is hoped, has been done in this work.

---

1. Oppenheim, Administration, pages 48-51.

Bibliography.

A. Manuscript Sources.

1. At the Public Record Office.

Exchequer.

Warrants for Issue (E.404), files 39-78.

Tellers' Rolls (E.405), rolls 38-74.

Issue Rolls (E.403), 1422-1485.

Council and Privy Seal (E.28), files 38-92.

Various Accounts (E.101).

Foreign Accounts (E.364).

Diplomatic Documents (E.30).

Memoranda Rolls, King's Remembrancer (E.159), rolls selected for certain years.

Chancery.

Early Chancery Proceedings (C.1.).

Writs of Privy Seal and Signed Bills (C.81).

Signet Warrants (C.81), files 1367-1392.

Treaty Rolls (C.76).

Parliament and Council Proceedings (C.49).

Miscellanea (C.47).

Diplomatic Documents (C.47).

Miscellaneous.

Privy Seal Warrants (PS.O. I), files 5-60.

Ancient Correspondence (S.C. I).

2. At the British Museum.

Cotton Manuscripts, including Julius E.IV, art. 6, The Life of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick.

Harleian Manuscripts, including No. 433, Register of warrants under the Privy Seal and Signet, Edward V and Richard III.

Lansdowne MS. 171, Collection of Sir Julius Caesar.

Lansdowne MS. 285, Book of Sir John Paston's.

Stowe MS. 440, A Book of Abstracts of Indentures, 1664.

Egerton MSS. 2088, 2089, 2090, Dover Accounts and Courts, 1387-1479.

[1 space clear] Additional MSS. 29, 615; 29, 616, Dover Accounts, Edward III to Richard III.

Additional MS. 33, 511, Sandwich Treasurers' Accounts, 1462-63.

Additional MS. 23, 938, 'Compotus John Brecknock et John Everdon de expensibus domine Margarete venient in Anglie'.

Additional MS. 4, 616, Rymer's Transcripts.

Additional Charters, II, 489; 40, 683.

Cotton Charter, XVII, 19.

Harleian Charter, 54, C.17.

3. <u>At the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.</u>

The Accounts of William Soper, Clerk of the King's Ships, 1422-1427.

4. <u>At Somerset House.</u>

The will of Thomas Rogers of London, Register 8 Milles, f.VIII, p.72.

The will of Thomas Rogers of Watton, Register 8 Milles, f.XXXIII, p.268.

5. <u>At the Townhall, King's Lynn.</u>

Lynn Borough Records: Assembly Books, volumes I, II and III. Chamberlains' Accounts between 1422 and 1485 (K.A.50-59).

6. <u>At the Kent County Record Office, Maidstone.</u>

Sandwich Borough Records: The Old Black Book (Sa.Ac.I.). Treasurers' Accounts, between 1454 and 1483 (F.at.2-8).

B. Printed Sources.

1. Government Records.

Accounts and Inventories of Henry VII, ed. M.Oppenheim, Navy Record Society, 1896.

Calendar of Close Rolls.

Calendar of French Rolls, in the Deputy Keeper's 44th Report and 48th Report.

Calendar of Norman Rolls, in the Deputy Keeper's 41st Report and 42nd Report.

Calendar of Patent Rolls.

Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts existing in the Archives and Collections of Milan, ed. A.B. Hinds, 1912.

Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, volume I, ed. R.Brown, 1864.

Catalogue des Rolles Gascons, Normans et Francois, ed. T. Carte, 1753.

Foedera, Thomas Rymer, First Edition, London, 1704-1735, volumes IX, X, XI; see also T.D. Hardy, Syllabus of the documents in the collection known as 'Rymer's Foedera', London, 1869-85.

Grants etc. from the crown during the reign of Edward V, ed. J.G. Nichols, Camden Society, vol.LX, (1854).

Issues of the Exchequer, ed. F. Devon, London, 1837.

Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, ed. Sir. N.H. Nicolas, volumes I-VI, Record Commission, 1834-37.

Rotuli Normanniae in Turre Londinensi asservati Johanne et Henrico Quinto Angliae Regibus, ed. T.D. Hardy, Record Commission, 1835.

Rotuli Parliamentorum, 1767, volumes III, IV, V, VI.

Statutes of the Realm, Record Commission, 1810-1822.

2. Local Records.

Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company of London, ed. L. Lyell and F.D. Watney, Cambridge, 1936.

Black Book of Southampton, The, ed. A.B. Wallis-Chapman, Southampton Record Society, 1912-1915.

Book of Remembrance of Southampton, The, ed. H.W. Gidden, Southampton Record Society, volume I, 1928.

Brokerage Books of Southampton, 1439-1440, The, ed. B.D.M. Bunyard, Southampton Record Society, 1941.

Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London, K and L, ed. R.R. Sharpe, 1912.

Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, 1413-1437, ed. A.H. Thomas, 1943; 1437-1457, ed. Philip E. Jones, 1954; 1458-1482, ed. Philip E. Jones, 1961.

Historical Manuscripts Commission, Second Report (MSS. of H.B. Mackeson esq., of Hythe); Fourth Report (Hythe); Fifth Report (Lydd, New Romney, Rye); Ninth Report (Canterbury); Eleventh Report (Southampton Borough); Various Collections, Four, (Salisbury).

Overseas Trade of Bristol in the later Middle Ages, The, ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson, Bristol Record Society, 1937.

Port Books of Southampton, The, two volumes, 1469-1471, 1477-1481, ed. D.B. Quinn, Southampton Record Society, 1937-38.

Records of Lydd, The, ed. Arthur Finn, Ashford, 1911.

Records of the City of Norwich, The, ed. W. Hudson and J.C. Tingey, Norwich, 1906-1910.

3. Letters and Papers; Treatises and Accounts.

Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions, ed. M.D. Legge, Anglo-Norman Text Society, III, Oxford, 1941.

Cely Papers, The, ed. H.E. Malden, Camden Society, Third Series, vol. I, (1900).

Cotton Manuscript Galba B.I., Le, ed. L. Gilliodts van Severen, Brussels, 1896.

Excerpta Historica, ed. S. Bentley, London, 1831.

Expeditions of Henry, Earl of Derby, 1390-91, 1392-93, The, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, Camden Society, New Series, vol. LII, (1894).

Forbescue, Sir John, The Governance of England, ed. C. Plummer, Oxford, 1885.

Hanserecesse, Part II, 1431-1476, Leipzig, 1876-1892.

Hansisches Urkundenbuch, volumes 9 and 10, Leipzig, 1876-1907.

Household Books of John, Duke of Norfolk, and Thomas, Earl of Surrey, 1481-1490, The, ed. J. Payne Collier, Roxburghe Club, 1844.

Letters of the 15th and 16th centuries from the Archives of Southampton, ed. R.C. Anderson, Southampton Record Society, 1921.

Letters of Margaret of Anjou, ed. C. Munro, Camden Society, vol. LXXXVI (1863).

Letters and Papers illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII, ed. James Gairdner, Rolls Series, 1861-63.

Letters and Papers relating to the war with France, 1512-1513, ed. Alfred Spont, Navy Record Society, 1897.

Lettres de Louis XI, roi de France, ed. J. Vaesen and E. Charavey, Paris 1883-1909.

Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, The, ed. Sir George Warner, Oxford, 1926.

Literae Cantuarienses, the Letter Books of the Monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, ed. J.B. Sheppard, Rolls Series, 1887-89.

Manners and Household Expenses of England in the 13th and 15th centuries, ed. Beriah Botfield, Roxburghe Club, 1841.

Official Correspondence of Thomas Beckington, ed. G. Williams, Rolls Series 1872.

Original Letters Illustrative of English History, ed. H. Ellis, Three Series, London, 1825-1846.

Paston Letters, The, ed. James Gairdner, Library Edition, 1904.

Political Poems and Songs relating to English history, ed. T. Wright, Rolls Series, volume 2, 1861.

Royal Letters, Henry IV, ed. F.C. Hingeston, volume I, Rolls Series, 1860; volume 2, a copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Trevelyan Papers, The, ed. J.Payne Collier, Camden Society, vol. LXVII, (1857)

Wars of the English in France during the reign of Henry VI, Letters and Papers, ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, 1861-64.

4. Chronicles and other Narratives.

Brut or Chronicle of England, The, ed. F.W.D. Brie, Early English Text Society Original Series, vols. 131, 136, (1906-1908).

Capgrave, Johannis, Liber de Illustribus Henricis, ed. F.C. Hingeston, Rolls Series, 1858.

Chronica Monasterii S. Albani, ed. H.T. Riley, Rolls Series: Registra Johannis Whethamstede etc., 1873; Ypodigma Neustriae, a Thoma Walsingham etc., 1876.

Chronicles of London, The, ed. C.L. Kingsford, Oxford, 1905.

Chronicles of the White Rose of York, ed. J.A. Giles, London, 1845.

Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel, ed. Simon Luce, Paris, 1879-83.

Debate of the Heralds of England and France, (English translation), ed. Henry Pyne, 1870.

English Chronicle of the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI, ed. J.S. Davies, Camden Society, vol. LXIV, (1856).

Fabyan, Robert, The New Chronicles of England and France, ed. H. Ellis, London, 1811.

Great Chronicle of London, The, ed. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, 1938.

Historiae Croylandensis continuatio, in Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores, ed. W. Fulman, Oxford, 1684.

Historical Collections of a London Citizen, ed. James Gairdner, Camden Society, New Series, vol. XVII, (1876).

'An Historical Collection of the 15th century', C.L. Kingsford, English Historical Review, vol. XXIX, (1914). p505-15

Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV in England and the Finall Recoverye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI, A.D. 1471. ed. J. Bruce, Camden Society, vol. I, (1938).

Incerti Scriptoris Chronicon Angliae de regnis Henrici IV, Henrici V et Henrici VI, ed. J.A. Giles, London,

'London Chronicle of 1460', G. Baskerville, English Historical Review, vol. XXVIII, (1913). p124-7

Mancini, Dominic, The Usurpation of Richard III, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong, Oxford 1936.

Ricart, Robert, The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar; ed. L. Toulmin Smith, Camden Society, New Series, vol.V, (1872).

Six Town Chronicles, ed. R. Flenley, Oxford, 1911.

Stone, John, The Chronicle of Christchurch, Canterbury, ed. W.G. Searle, Cambridge Antiquarian Society, vol. XXXIV, (1902).

Stow, John, Annales of England, London, 1601 edition.

Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, ed. James Gairdner, Camden Society, New Series, vol. XXVIII, (1880).

Travels of Leo of Rozmital...1465-1467, The, ed. M. Letts, Hakluyt Society, Second Series, vol.CVIII, (1957).

Warkworth, John, Chronicle of the first 13 years of the reign of King Edward IV, ed. J.O. Halliwell, Camden Society, vol. X, (1839).

Waurin, Jean de, Recueil des Croniques, ed. W. Hardy and E.L.C.P. Hardy, Rolls Series, 1864-1891.

Worcester, William, Itinerarium, in Itinenia Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre, ed. J. Nasmith, Cambridge, 1778.

C. Secondary Authorities.

Anderson, R.C., 'The Grace de Dieu of 1446-86', E.H.R., Vol. XXXIV, (1919). p584-6

" 'The wreck in the Hamble River', Antiquaries Journal, vol. XIV, (1934). p1-6

" 'The Burlesdon Ship', Mariner's Mirror, vol. 20, (1934). p158-170

Becker, J.M., Rochester Bridge, 1387-1856, London, 1930.

Boys, William, Collections for an History of Sandwich in Kent, Canterbury, 1792.

Burne, A.H., The Agincourt War, London, 1956.

Burwash, D., English Merchant Shipping, 1460-1540, Toronto, 1947.

Callendar, G.A.R., 'The evolution of seapower under the first two Tudors', History, vol. V, (1920-21.) p.141-158.

Campbell, John, Lives of the Admirals and other Eminent British Seamen, Second Edition, 1750.

Campbell, Dr. John, and Kent, Thomas, Biographia Nautica, 1785.

Carpenter Turner, W.J., 'The Little Jesus of the Tower, a Burlesdon ship of the early 15th century', Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society, Papers and Proceedings, vol. XVIII, part 2, (1953). p173-8

Carpenter Turner, W.J., 'The Building of the Gracedieu, Valentine and Falconer at Southampton, 1416-1420'; 'The Building of the Holy Ghost of the Tower, 1414-1416, and her subsequent history'; both in Mariner's Mirror, vol. 40, (1954). p55-72; 270-81.

Carpenter Turner, W.J., 'Southampton as a naval centre, 1414-1453', in Collected Essays on Southampton, ed.J.B. Morgan and Philip Peberdy, Southampton County Borough Council, 1958. p38-47.

Carr Laughton, L.G. 'The Great Ship of 1419', M.M., vol. 9, (1923). p83-7

" 'Early Tudor Ship-Guns', M.M., vol. 46, (1960). p242-85

Carus-Wilson, E.M., Medieval Merchant Venturers, London, 1954.

Clowes, G.S.L., Sailing Ships, their history and development as illustrated by the collection of ship-models in the Science Museum, Part One, Historical Notes, reprinted 1959.

Complete Peerage of England, The, by G.E.C., 1910-1959.

Dictionary of National Biography, ed. L. Stephen and S.Lee, 1885-1900.

Dugdale, William, The Baronage of England, London 1675-76.

Gairdner, James, History of the Life and Reign of Richard III, Cambridge, 1898.

Gardiner, D., Historic Haven, the story of Sandwich, 1954.

Goldingham, C.S., 'The Navy under Henry VII', E.H.R., vol. XXXIII, (1918). p472-88.

Gosse, Philip, 'Piracy', M.M., vol. 36, (1950). p337-349

Harrison, W.E.C., 'Maritime Activity under Henry VII', an unpublished thesis for the M.A. degree, 1931, at London University.

Harrison, W.E.C., 'An Early voyage of discovery', a note in M.M., vol. 16, (1930). p198-9

Harriss, G.L., 'The struggle for Calais: an aspect of the rivalry between Lancaster and York', E.H.R., vol. LXXV, (1960). p30-53

Harvey, John, Gothic England, 1947.

Haward, W.I., 'Economic aspects of the Wars of the Roses in East Anglia', E.H.R., vol. XLI, (1926). p170-189

Haward, W.I., 'Gilbert Debenham; a medieval rascal in real life', History, vol. XIII, (1928-29). p300-14.

Hickmore, M.A.S., 'The shipbuilding industry in the South and East of England in the 15th century', an unpublished thesis for the M.A. degree, 1937, at London University.

Hillen, Henry J., A History of the Borough of King's Lynn, Norwich, c. 1907.

History of Technology, Oxford, volume Two, 1956, chapter 16, 'Shipbuilding', by T.C. Lethbridge.

Holmes, G.A., 'The Libel of English Policy', E.H.R., vol. LXXVI, (1961). p193-216

Jacob, E.F., The Fifteenth Century, Oxford, 1961.

Jeake, Samuel, The Charters of the Cinque Ports, two ancient towns and their members, London, 1728.

Kendall, P.M., Richard III, 1955.

" Warwick the Kingmaker, 1957.

Kingsford, C.L., English historical literature in the 15th century, Oxford, 1913.

" Prejudice and Promise in 15th century England, Oxford, 1925.

" 'The Earl of Warwick at Calais in 1460', E.H.R., vol. XXXVII, 1922. p544-6

Kingsford, C.L., 'The beginnings of English maritime enterprise', History, vol. XIII, (1928-29). p97-106;193-203.

Lesley, John, The History of Scotland from the death of King James I, ed. J. Thomson, Banatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1830.

Lewis, P.S., 'Sir John Fastolf's lawsuit over Titchwell, 1448-55', Historical Journal, vol. I, (1958). p1-20.

McFarlane, K.B., 'William Worcester, a preliminary survey' in Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. J. Conway-Davies, Oxford, 1957.

McFarlane, K.B., 'The investment of Sir John Fastolf's profits of war', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, vol. VII, (1957). p91-116

McKisack, M., 'Edward III and the historians', History, vol. XLV, (1960). p1-15.

Manwaring, G.E., 'The safeguard of the sea', M.M., vol. 9, (1923). p376-9

Marcus, G.J., 'The first English voyages to Iceland', M.M., vol. 42, (1956). p313-18

Marsden, R.G., 'The Vice-Admirals of the coast', E.H.R., vol. XXII, (1907). p468-77

Medieval England, General Editor A.L. Poole, Oxford, 1958, volume One, chapter 5 by K.M.E. Murray.

Mitchell, R.J., John Tiptoft, 1938.

Mollat, M., Le Commerce Maritime Normand a la Fin du Moyen Age, Paris, 1952.

Moore, Alan, 'Acts and inventories of John Starling, Clerk of the Ships to Henry IV', M.M., vol. 4, (1914). p20-6; 167-73

Murray, K.M.E., The constitutional history of the Cinque Ports, Manchester, 1935.

Myers, A.R., 'The outbreak of war between England and Burgundy in February 1471', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, vol. XXXIII, (1960). p114-5

Newhall, R.A., The English Conquest of Normandy, 1416-1424, New Haven, 1924.

Newton, A.P., 'Auditing of Navy Accounts under Edward IV', M.M., vol. 9, (1923). p56-8

Nicolas, Sir N.H., A History of the Royal Navy, London, 1847.

Oman, Charles W., Warwick the Kingmaker, London, 1899.

Oppenheim, M., A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy, London, 1896.

Perroy, E., The Hundred Years War, English translation ed. by D.C. Douglas, 1951.

Power, E., 'The English wool trade in the time of Edward IV', Cambridge Historical Journal, vol.II, (1926). p17-35.

Power, E., and Postan, M.M., Studies in English Trade in the 15th century, 1933.

Quinn, D.B., 'Edward IV and exploration', M.M., vol. 21, (1935). p275-84.

Ramsey, Sir, J.H., Lancaster and York, Oxford, 1892.

Roncière, Charles de la, Histoire de la Marine Française, volume Two, Paris, 1900.

Roth, Cecil, 'Perkin Warbeck and his Jewish master', Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England, vol. IX, (1922).

Roth, Cecil, 'Sir Edward Brampton: an Anglo-Jewish adventurer of the Wars of the Roses', Trans. Jewish Hist. Soc. of Eng., vol. XVI, (1952).

Roth, Cecil, Sir Edward Brampton, alias Duarte Brandao, Governor of Guernsey, 1482-85, La Société Guernesiaise, The Guille-Alles Library, Guernsey, C.I., no date.

Ruddock, A.A., Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton, 1270-1600, Southampton Record Series, volume I, 1951.

Russell, Percy, Dartmouth, A history of the port and town, 1950.

Scammell, G.V., 'English Merchant Shipping at the end of the Middle Ages: some East coast evidence', Economic History Review, Second Series, vol. XIII, (1961). p327-41

" 'War at sea under the Early Tudors', Part 2, Archaeologia Aeliana, Fourth Series, vol. 39, (1961). p179-205

" 'Shipowning in England, c. 1450-1550', Trans. of the Royal Hist. Soc., 5th Series, vol.XII, (1962). p105-122

Schulz, F., Die Hanse und England von Edwards III bis auf Heinrichs VIII, Berlin, 1911.

Scofield, C.L., The Life and Reign of Edward IV, London, 1923.

Seyer, S., Memoirs, historical and topographical, of Bristol, Bristol, 1821-23.

Stein, W., Die Hanse und England beim Ausgang des hundertjahrigen Krieges, Lübeck, 1921.

Stow, John, The Survey of London, Everyman Library, First Edition, 1912.

Tucker, M.J., 'The Household Accounts of John de Vere, Earl of Oxford', E.H.R., vol. LXXV, (1960). p468-74

Victoria County Histories; chapters on Maritime History : Cornwall, vol. I, Dorset, vol. 2, Essex, vol. 2, Hampshire, vol. 5, Kent, vol. 2, Suffolk, vol. 2, Sussex, vol. 2; chapter on the borough of Southampton, Hampshire, vol. 3.

Vogel, W., Geschichte der Deutschen Seeschiffahrt, volume I, Berlin, 1915.

Wedgwood, J., History of Parliament, 1439-1509, two volumes: Biographies, and Register, 1936.

Williamson, J.A., 'The geographic history of the Cinque Ports', History, vol. XI, (1926). p97-115

Williamson, J.A., The English Channel, 1959.

Wodderspoon, J., Memorials of the ancient town of Ipswich in the county of Suffolk, Ipswich and London, 1850.

Wylie, J.H., The Reign of Henry V, Cambridge, 1914-1929.