

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

*Industry in the countryside* is a wide-ranging and readable study of manufacturing before the Industrial Revolution. It examines the widely debated theory of 'proto-industrialization', drawing on data from the Kentish Weald – an area which was already a centre of cottage industry in the Tudor era, and was also the earliest rural manufacturing region to 'de-industrialize'. The book analyses the Wealden textile industry from its workforce to its industrialists, and emphasizes the ubiquity of dual employment among textile workers and the importance of landownership to the entrepreneurs who financed rural clothmaking. It explores the local context of cottage industry: the pattern of landholding and inheritance, the local farming regime, and the demographic background to rural industrialization. Zell outlines what type of local economy became the site of this so-called 'proto-industry' and shows the impact of cottage industry on the people of such regions. He concludes by asking, is there anything in the 'proto-industrialization' model?

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

*Industry in the countryside*

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

*Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and  
Society in Past Time 22*

---

*Series Editors*

PETER LASLETT, ROGER SCHOFIELD, and E. A. WRIGLEY

*ESRC Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure*

and DANIEL SCOTT SMITH

*University of Illinois at Chicago*

Recent work in social, economic and demographic history has revealed much that was previously obscure about societal stability and change in the past. It has also suggested that crossing the conventional boundaries between these branches of history can be very rewarding.

This series exemplifies the value of interdisciplinary work of this kind, and includes books on topics such as family, kinship and neighbourhood; welfare provision and social control; work and leisure; migration; urban growth; and legal structures and procedures, as well as more familiar matters. It demonstrates that, for example, anthropology and economics have become as close intellectual neighbours to history as have political philosophy or biography.

*For a full list of titles in the series, please see end of book.*

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

# *Industry in the countryside*

*Wealden society in the sixteenth century*

---

MICHAEL ZELL

*University of Greenwich*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 1994

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1994  
First paperback edition 2004

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Zell, Michael.

Industry in the countryside: Wealden society in the sixteenth  
century/Michael Zell.

p. cm.— (Cambridge studies in population, economy, and  
society in past time; 22)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 44541 8 hardback

1. Wealden (England) — Industries — History. 2. Wealden (England) —  
Economic conditions. 3. Wealden (England) — Social conditions.

I. Title. II. Title: Industry in the country side. III. Series.

HC258.W4Z44 1994

338.09422'51 — dc20 93-3978 CIP

ISBN 0 521 44541 8 hardback.

ISBN 0 521 89306 2 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2004

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

*To My Mother and the Memory of My Father*

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xv
1 Introduction	1
2 Landholding, inheritance and the local land market	10
3 Demographic movements, household structure and geographical mobility	52
4 The Wealden agrarian regime	88
5 Occupational structure and levels of wealth in the Weald	113
6 The textile industry in the Weald	153
7 Clothiers and capitalism	189
8 The Weald and ‘proto-industrialization’	228
<i>Bibliography</i>	247
<i>Index</i>	254

Figures

2.1	Map of Kent showing sample Weald parishes	<i>page</i> 16
2.2	Plan of typical Wealden farm	18
2.3a	Distribution of land by size of holding: Sandhurst (1608) and Southborough (1621)	27
2.3b	Distribution of landholders: Sandhurst (1608) and Southborough (1621)	27
3.1	Aggregated baptisms, burials: fifteen Weald parishes, 1562–1600	61
3.2	Aggregated baptisms, burials: Brenchley, 1561–1603	67
3.3	Aggregated baptisms, burials: Cranbrook, 1560–1603	67
3.4	Aggregated baptisms, burials: Staplehurst, 1540–1603	68
4.1	Distribution of farms by size in five sample parishes, from rates	93
4.2	Arable acreage in Weald farms, 1565–1601	100
4.3	Pasture acreage in Weald farms, 1565–1601	103
6.1	Weald parishes with ten or more clothiers	157
6.2	Prices of Kent broadcloths: wholesale from clothiers, 1500–1600	162
6.3	Fulling mills in operation, before and after 1550	187
7.1	Clothier’s costs and profits on coarse and fine cloths, 1560s	208

Tables

2.1	Size of holdings in the manors of Pembury, 1618	<i>page</i> 23
2.2	Holdings owing quitrents to Marden, 1574	24
2.3	Holdings on the dens of Cranbrook, Swatlingden, Thornden, Hartley, Badlingden and Hockeridge, 1603	25
2.4	Size of holdings in nine Sandhurst dens, 1608	26
2.5	Size of holdings in Southborough and Bidborough, 1621	28
2.6a	Wealden land prices: parcels up to fifty acres each	50
2.6b	Decadal means of grain prices	50
3.1	Numbers of children mentioned by married male testators	56
3.2	Age at first marriage	70
3.3	Birth (baptism) intervals (in months)	71
3.4	Seasonality of births (baptisms): monthly indexes	73
3.5	Seasonality of burials: monthly indexes	74
3.6	Infant mortality (1,000q <sub>0</sub> ) in two Weald parishes	75
3.7	Household size in Staplehurst, 1563–4	77
3.8	Household size in rural Cranbrook, 1608	78
3.9	Turnover of surnames in Staplehurst, 1538–1608	82
3.10	Numbers of baptisms per father in same parish	82
3.11	Residential persistence, Kent Weald witnesses	84
3.12	Sample Weald parishes: basic data	86
4.1	Farming activity in Wealden inventories, 1565–99	93
4.2	The occupiers of land in five Wealden parishes	94
4.3	Size of farms from probate inventories, 1565–1601	97
4.4	Arable and livestock on Wealden farms, 1565–1601	101
4.5	Livestock on Wealden farms, 1565–1601	108
4.6	Inventory values of full-time farmers, 1565–99	111
5.1	Wealden occupations from probate acta, 1560–1610	117
5.2	Occupations in Wealden probate inventories, 1565–99	118
5.3	Male occupations in Westerham, Kent, 1559–69	120

xii	<i>Tables</i>	
5.4	Cranbrook male occupations, 1653–61	page 121
5.5	Values of estates of tradesmen and craftsmen, 1565–99	135
5.6	Tax payable by Wealden hundreds	141
5.7	Weald hundreds: taxpayers per 1,000 acres	142
5.8	Weald hundreds: tax due per 1,000 acres (in shillings)	142
5.9	Taxation in three Wealden hundreds, 1545/6	144
5.10	Taxation in three Wealden hundreds, 1524/5	144
5.11	Taxation in Wealden hundreds, 1571/2	147
5.12	Inventoried wealth by parish, 1565–99	147
5.13	Wealth in male inventories by quinquennia, 1565–99	151
6.1	Residences of clothiers (from all sources)	155
6.2	Inventoried wealth of weavers, 1565–99	170
6.3	Weavers and farming, 1565–99	177
7.1	Clothiers’ tax ratings compared to all taxpayers, 1524/5 and 1543/4	209
7.2	Distribution of clothiers’ estates, 1565–99	211

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgements*

The title of this book is only the most explicit recognition of its intellectual ancestry. Joan Thirsk's essay, 'Industries in the Countryside', long pre-dates the proto-industrialization 'model'. Her short article raised the question of manufacture before the Industrial Revolution in a more multifaceted and less jargon-laden way than most of the contributions to the 'debate' that have appeared subsequently. My own curiosity about the early modern Weald was prompted by the combination of Dr Thirsk's paper, my own relative familiarity with Kent (my Ph.D. thesis examined the Reformation in that county) and an interest in studying pre-industrial social and economic history at the local level. It was a happy coincidence that among the regions of pre-industrial rural manufacturing discussed in Thirsk's 1961 paper, only the Kent Weald had not yet found its modern historian. More than a decade ago I decided that this was a niche for me. An indication of just how long this book has been 'in the pipeline' is that I have to acknowledge – with genuine appreciation – the receipt of a small grant from the Social Science Research Council which helped pay for research trips to Kent archives and to parish churches in the Weald. I remember, with diminished vexation, the many hours I spent (sometimes locked) in draughty church vestries – poring over parish registers which had not been deposited in public archives as they should have been. There were the incumbents, proud of 'their' registers, who could not read them themselves, and the appalling case of a Wealden parish where parts of the early registers had been handed over to a number of local worthies – and could no longer be found! My research was not so much 'history on the ground' as 'history out of the bowels of parish churches'. On the other hand, there were the archive staffs, who never failed in their helpfulness and willingness to answer queries and offer useful suggestions of their own. Without minimizing my appreciation of all the archives I have worked in, I must single out the kindness of Kath Topping and Nigel Yates at Maidstone, Anne Oakley at Canterbury and the staff of the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane.

I would like also to acknowledge the help of the University of Greenwich and of its library. Academic research may not have been crucial to one's employment at

Cambridge University Press

0521445418 - Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century -

Michael Zell

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

---

xiv

*Acknowledgements*

Thames Polytechnic (now the University of Greenwich), but at least the University has not stood in the way. More important has been membership of the Institute of Historical Research of London University, home away from home for all historians. Parts of this book, in earlier versions, were presented to seminars at the Institute, as well as to seminars at the universities of Bristol, Oxford and Reading, as well as to the Humanities Research Seminar at Thames Polytechnic. In every case *I* have learned something from those audiences.

If the history of this project can be viewed as a series of movements between London (where I live and teach) and Kent, it can also be traced to gifts and exchanges between London and Cambridge. The gifts have flowed in my direction, and go back to my earliest years in Britain. They began with the unstinting advice and subsequent patronage of Professor Sir Geoffrey Elton. More recently they have come in the form of help from the Cambridge Group for the Study of Population and Social Structure. Roger Schofield has long been a source of ideas, assistance and beneficial criticism, not least over this book. If history – the discipline – is a series of voyages across time taken by historians, my own history has been a series of voyages across space. The most relevant has been my journey from the New World to the Old. In the former my mentor, Professor Joe Slavin, taught me the basic ‘tradecraft’, as well as the belief that a critical stance towards received wisdom and ‘great men’s work’ should be the keystone of my work, both as researcher and teacher. I may occasionally have taken this advice too literally, but deference and reverence are traits that never properly assisted the study of the past.

# Abbreviations

All printed works are published in London unless otherwise stated.

AgHR	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
Arch Cant	<i>Archaeologia Cantiana</i>
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library, London
Bodl. Lib.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Cal. Pat.	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
CCL	Canterbury Cathedral Library
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
EcHR	<i>Economic History Review</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
Hasted, Kent	Edward Hasted, <i>The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent</i> (10 vols., 1797–1801)
Hist.J	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
IPMs	<i>Inquisitions post mortem</i>
J.	<i>Journal</i>
J.EcH	<i>Journal of Economic History</i>
KAO	Kent Archives Office, Maidstone
LP	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–47, (21 vols., 1862–1932)</i>
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
PRO	Public Record Office, London
Soc.	<i>Society</i>
Trans.	<i>Transactions</i>
VCH	<i>The Victoria History of the Counties of England</i>