PART I - CHAPTER TWO
CHARACTERISTICS OF KENTISH DEER PARKS

Having established which parks existed in Elizabethan and Jacobean Kent, attention will now turn to their distribution (i), density (ii), shape and size (iii), and longevity as active parks (iv). Gathering even basic information for these aspects has not been easy because there is no corpus of park-related material. Evidence has emerged haphazardly from a wide range of sources and tends to be fragmentary in nature, but despite these inadequacies, the characteristics of Kentish parks can be portrayed, if somewhat sketchily at times. Another obstacle has been the lack of countywide research into the Kentish parks before the Elizabethan period, which would have given a useful basis of comparison. Conversely, although research from other counties, such as Hertfordshire, Derbyshire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire with Huntingdonshire, and Suffolk has been done, it offers little comparative material for the period from 1558 to 1625.¹

Lambarde's lists have provided a starting point for the names of parks, and the five contemporary maps give a vivid visual representation of their distribution as perceived by Elizabethan and early Jacobean cartographers. However, the survey here undertaken includes all Kentish parks, whether or not disparked, for which references have been found from the eleventh century to 1660. Research, both general and county-based, into medieval parks beyond Kent, has proved invaluable in providing comparative material for factors influencing distribution, density and longevity. It has also suggested guidelines to follow. Documentary evidence has provided data about the

¹ County studies of medieval parks include – Rowe A., Medieval Parks of Hertfordshire (Hatfield, 2009), Wiltshire M. & Woore S., Medieval Parks of Derbyshire (Ashbourne, 2009), Liddiard R., ‘The Distribution of Parks in Hertfordshire: Landscape, Lordship and woodland’ in Liddiard (ed.) The Medieval Park – New perspectives (Macclesfield, 2007), Way T., A Study of the Impact of Imparkment on the Social Landscape of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire from c.1080 to 1760 (Oxford, 1997), Hoppitt R., A study of the development of deer parks in Suffolk from C11th to C17th ((University of East Anglia, 1992, thesis presented for degree of Doctor of Philosophy), Dye J., Change in the Norfolk landscape – the decline of the deer parks (University of East Anglia, 1986, dissertation presented for degree of Master of Arts). Prince H., Parks in Hertfordshire since 1500 (Hatfield, 2008) covers Hertfordshire parks since 1500, although only the first 26 pages cover the period 1500-1660; elsewhere the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been included at the end of more detailed medieval park studies e.g. Way(1997) and Hoppitt(1992) above.
size of over 60 Kentish parks. In addition, about 20 pre-1660 estate maps, of variable usefulness, show park boundaries and occasionally depict internal structure. The sites of over 40 parks have been visited in an attempt to ascertain the route and survival of boundary earthworks and other features, and local historians have provided field-work details of a further 11 parks.\(^2\) Field visits have covered the geological zones of Kent, and give a spread from its westernmost park, West Wickham(99), to one of the most easterly, that of Canterbury park(18); from Cooling(24) on the fringes of the north coastal marshes to Lympne(57) overlooking Romney marsh, Kent's southernmost promontory. The choice of locations was arbitrary in that several were on private land, which was visited by the kind invitation of the owners; others were selected because they were readily accessible from public footpaths; and yet others because map-work gave a fairly accurate guide to where boundaries might lie within the landscape.\(^3\)

(i) **Distribution and location**

Elizabethan parks in Kent were largely the legacy of previous generations. With only a handful of parks being set up after 1558, the choice of park location had been established decades or even several centuries earlier, so a detailed analysis of the factors determining the original distribution of parks lies beyond the scope of this study. However, some general comments can be made to indicate factors that might have influenced the earlier park-making process.

Map 1.1 showing the distribution of parks in Kent, identifies parks referred to in Elizabethan and Jacobean documents; parks for which no post-1558 references have been found; and parks for which references have been found in Charles I's reign, and for which an earlier existence is suspected, but remains unproven.\(^4\) Map 1.1 is as comprehensive as possible, bearing in mind that not all the parks have been located, not all were active at the same time and their longevity varied, some earlier parks might possibly occupy the same location as later ones under a different name, and some parks with the same name occasionally moved sites.

\(^2\) I am grateful to Chris Owlett for Northfrith(89-91) and Cage(88) parks, pers. comm.; Sally Simmons for Eltham Great(31), Middle(32), Horn(33) and Well Hall(95) parks, pers.comm.; Harold Gough for Ford(35), pers.comm.; Tatton Brown T., 'Recent Fieldwork around Canterbury' in *Arch. Cant.* XCIX (1983) pp.115-119, delineated Canterbury New(18), Old(19) and Trenley(20) parks; Bowden M., 'The Medieval Park at Kemsing' in *Arch. Can.* CXVI (1996) pp.329-332, Kemsing(49) park; Taylor K., 'The development of the Park and gardens at Knole' in *Arch. Cant.* CXXIII (2003) p.155, Knole(50) park.

\(^3\) I am grateful to many individuals who allowed me to explore their grounds and who accompanied me.

\(^4\) See Map 1.1 'Map of Kent showing all known parks' (Appendix 4 p.326).
Research into the distribution of medieval parks in other counties has shown that several factors, including geology and soil structure, the location of woodland, settlement patterns and strategic sites, were universally applicable. Also to be taken into account for influencing choices would be the constraints placed on the ambition of individual landowners by the extent, nature and location of their land holdings.

Broadly speaking Kent can be divided into six geological zones - the Thames estuary and north coastal region, the North Downs, the Greensand Ridge with the vale of Holmesdale, the Low Weald, the High Weald, and Romney marsh. These have been succinctly and graphically outlined by Everitt:

There were, and still are, six Kents, covering a million acres and stretching 70 miles east and west, and of each area this theme (i.e. antiquity) was broadly true; of the Marshland from the Thames past the Swale to Thanet Minster; of the Downland with its southern scarp and winding northwards valleys; of the wooded ragstone hills and Holmesdale; of the Low Weald with its many 'dens'; of the high Weald with its ridge of 'hurst' villages; or again of the Marsh from Stone to New Romney.  

Two of these zones, the Thames estuary with its coastal hinterland and Romney marsh, were virtually devoid of parks. The rich grasslands for sheep grazing on Romney marsh and the north Kent coastal marshland, and the fertility of the loamy soil of the north coast hinterland for agricultural production at very early dates, probably meant that the opportunity for park creation was limited; enclosing land for parks resulting in unacceptable losses both in production and in rental income. The exception was the cluster of mainly royal parks to the west of the Darent valley, towards London, where the parks adjacent to the palaces of Greenwich and Eltham were situated. Here, having suitable hunting grounds close to the capital would have been of paramount importance to the monarchs and their court, but otherwise there were few parks because the area was well settled and the fertile soil so close to London could be cultivated to supply the capital's food markets.

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7 See Map 2.1 'Parkland areas of west Kent', p.47 – park areas have been deduced from personal field and map work, and from information kindly supplied by others (see fn. 2 of this chapter). See Park profiles (from p.360) for individual parks.
The North Downs also had few parks, even towards London, but more were located towards the eastern end in the upper reaches of the Little Stour valley. The variable nature of the chalk substrate might account for this pattern. To the west the chalk plateau is overlaid with sand and clay drift well suited to various types of agriculture, except where the Downs are capped with clay-with-flints, where woodland persisted and parks could be sited. More potent than geological factors, the distribution of parks in east Kent reflected the former ownership of land by the archbishop of Canterbury where, unlike to the west of the county, several parks were sited on chalk down land despite its suitability for agricultural use. Although the archbishopric owned vast woodlands in the Weald, which might be thought to be more suitable for parks, deer being woodland animals, priority there was given to timber extraction, as will be discussed shortly.

The unproductive, shallow soiled, steeply sloping Greensand ridge with its 'chart' names supported a band of parks along its entire length. The greater density of parks in the west of the county might reflect the influence of London, but the string of parks continued to run southeast towards Folkestone, with further clusters of parks around Maidstone and southeast of Ashford. It is probable that here lay unexploited or under-exploited land where parks could more easily be carved out of woodland, which in any case was being cleared faster than that of the Weald, especially in the west of the county, because it lay nearer to settlements and to the London market.

In the Low Weald, parks were more closely grouped to the west of the Medway, with markedly fewer to the east. Pioneering work by Cantor and Hatherly established a close correlation between woodland and parks. 'More significantly, a high woodland cover in the Domesday Book of 1086 was almost always the scene of much subsequent imparkment.' Rackham concurred with this observation in general, although he pointed to several anomalies including that of the Weald – the most extensive woodland

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9 Chart from the Anglo-Saxon 'ceart' meaning a rough common overrun with gorse, broom, bracken (http://dictionary.oed.com).
area of all – which contained only a little above average number of parks and he posed the question 'Did it lack gentry to establish them'?12

The contrasting medieval development of the west and east Weald, as argued by Witney, offers an explanation for the higher number of parks in the west than in the east.13 The Wealden forest had been divided into a complicated system of dens, which became detached parts of the surrounding parishes exploiting woodland resources of timber and autumn pannage for pigs.14 By the mid-thirteenth century the den system was petering out in the western Weald. Lack of water transport routes, coupled with the abundance of woodland on the Greensand hills to the north, made timber extraction from the western Weald unprofitable, so there was little resistance to woodland clearance for settlement. Dens were transformed into subordinate farm-based manors and it became possible for the gentry to take over smaller holdings in order to amass large estates on which to site parks. At the same time the crown established the Clare dynasty at Tonbridge, where the family built Tonbridge castle and extended its territory, the Lowy of Tonbridge, ever more widely to the west. The establishment of the Clares at Tonbridge was further strengthened by the effective withdrawal of the interests of the archbishop of Canterbury. Around Tonbridge, the Clares formed an immense chase by fencing off numerous dens. This chase of 40 square miles comprised two woodland areas separated by the Medway, namely Northfrith(89-91), served with deer from Cage(88) park, and Southfrith(93), supplied with deer from Postern(92) park. Gentry like the Penchesters of Penshurst followed suit with parks of their own.

Meanwhile, in the eastern Weald the traditional den system remained robust under the dominating power of ecclesiastical and royal landowners, and park creation was inhibited. In the southeast Weald in particular, woodland lay close to the river Rother and timber could be easily shipped out to the continent. Prices, pushed higher by demand, led landowners like the archbishop of Canterbury to protect their Wealden woodland until a much later date, when it was more difficult for secular gentry to accumulate holdings and therefore to acquire sufficient land for a park.15

14 Pannage = right or privilege to pasture pigs (or other animals) in a forest (http://dictionary.oed.com).
Across the High Weald parks were also more widely spread. Although much of the land remained woodland, and the heavy clay and Hastings beds only supported marginal farming dependent on grazing, park creation was limited and came late. For centuries settlement was scattered and isolated by waterlogged roads for several months of the year. It was not an area that attracted magnates, and wealth eluded it until the advent of cloth making which became well established by the mid-fifteenth century and expanded in the sixteenth century, peaking in about 1560.  

In response to Rackham's query, most parishes in the whole area of the Weald had resident members of the gentry, including newcomers rising from the ranks of successful yeomen, clothiers and merchants. The subsidy rolls of the 1520s showed that some clothiers were wealthier than the local landowning gentry, and many acquired 'nouveau' gentlemen status. They invested in their industry and in land, but most either did not aspire to parks or had scattered landholdings, which they preferred to lease out.

Although the geology and soil structure of the six 'Kents' underlay the distribution of parks, it has been indicated that other more complex factors also played their part. This has been found to appertain to other counties as well, with variations reflecting the type of land available, whether woodland, common, waste or cultivated, and settlement and lordship patterns. Early parks in Oxfordshire were carved out of woodland and waste. In Derbyshire while early parks were associated with wood pasture, later parks were located on the margins of parishes, often with boundaries coterminous with that of the parish. In Northamptonshire parks were sited away from settlement on the edge of cultivated land, but in the north of the county were enclosed out of forest. In Berkshire parks were formed from the commons of the Kennet valley in the south, and from the woodland of Windsor forest in the east, both areas with the

17 Ibid. p.31.
least productive sandy soils.\textsuperscript{23} In Suffolk the location of 63\% of parks was biased towards the heavy clays of the wooded central area.\textsuperscript{24} However, the early clearance of woodland in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire meant that 25\% of parks were sited on cultivated land, with no emphasis of park creation on lower grade soil.\textsuperscript{25} In Hertfordshire neither the heavily wooded Chilterns nor the depleted woodland area in the north were favoured for parks; instead more parks were to be found in the well populated east and centre of the county where knightly families created parks to secure the dwindling manorial woodland resources for themselves.\textsuperscript{26} In Sussex, parks were more likely to replace manorial waste containing patches of wildwood.\textsuperscript{27} In Cornwall parks were not normally placed on less valuable rough ground on the edges of estates as might be expected, but in the agricultural heartland surrounding or adjacent to the house or castle to which they belonged. The wooded east of the county held more parks, but they were also often established on previously cultivated land, although the overall pattern was concentrated on the sites of medieval castles.\textsuperscript{28}

The juxtaposition of castles and parks noted in Cornwall is present to a lesser degree in Kent. The friths and parks created around Tonbridge castle were a spectacular example, and, of the major castles, Saltwood(75), Leeds(54) and Cooling(24) also had parks, although there are no signs that Dover or Rochester ever had such an amenity. New thinking about castles downplays their defensive role and emphasises the importance of their symbolic, ceremonial and status images.\textsuperscript{29} The need for an imposing residence sometimes meant that the castle was designed as much for visual effect as for militaristic function, and attention was also given to its landscape setting, with parks being one aspect of the display of wealth and power, as well as being 'landscapes of production and pleasure.'\textsuperscript{30} Rochester and Dover occupied key strategic

\textsuperscript{23} Hatherly & Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of England' p.67.
\textsuperscript{24} Hoppitt, A study of the development of deer parks in Suffolk, pp.34-35.
\textsuperscript{26} Liddiard R (ed.), The Medieval Park – New perspectives (Macclesfield, 2007) pp.142-143.
\textsuperscript{30} Liddiard, Castles in Context, pp.97-121.
Plate 2.1
Parks sited near Castles


b) South side of Cooling Castle gatehouse. The castle itself overlooks the north Kent marshes. The flat farmland was once part of Cooling (24) park, the west boundary being the bank with fence on the left.

7 March 2007
positions, and perhaps their defensive function took priority, but Leeds castle, surrounded by water, and lying in a sheltered valley overlooked by high ground, was not in the best defensive position. The landscaped park(54) and water features at Leeds castle seem to fit in better with the new thinking that aesthetic considerations might have been rated more highly.31 Cooling castle, on the edge of the plateau above the marshes overlooking the Thames to the north, has a bleak aspect that was probably enlivened and enhanced by the park(24) to its south.32

Much more detailed research into the origins of medieval Kentish deer parks would be required before a distinct picture of their distribution emerges, but the lordship of Canterbury over the eastern Weald and the east of the county, was one important element that would seem to set Kent apart. In addition, underlying all land ownership was the custom of gavelkind, which made it difficult to accumulate large landholdings, and which may well have inhibited early imparkment.33

Apart from the overall distribution of parks in Kent, an owner had to make a choice of the exact park site within each locality. Again, because most park sites had already been established by Elizabethan times, a detailed study has not been possible at this stage, but parks in Kent are to be found in a wide variety of landscape settings, unlike in Suffolk or Derbyshire where they tended to occupy higher ground on the periphery of settlements.34 Cooling(24) and Westenhanger(96) parks are unusually flat; other parks, like Penshurst(71), Brasted(15), Sissinghurst(79) and Halden(41), lie on gently undulating land; Leeds(54), Scotney(76) and Stowting(82) parks are within an amphitheatre of hills, secluded from public gaze; Greenwich(39) and Lullingstone(55) parks are spread across valley hillsides offering a panoramic view from the mansions below, while at Boughton Monchelsea(13) and Lympne(57) the mansions overlook their parks on the steep Greensand scarp below. Five of the six geological zones of Kent are represented by these examples, underlying the amazing variety of locations available to park creators.35

31 Liddiard, Castles in Context, pp.97-98.
32 See Plate 2.1 p.37 for photographs of Leeds and Cooling.
33 Zell, Industry in the Countryside, pp.14-19; Clark, English Provincial Society, p.7.
34 Hoppitt, A study of the development of deer parks in Suffolk, p.114; Wiltshire & Woore, Medieval Parks of Derbyshire, pp.9-12.
35 There were no parks on the flat and treeless Romney marsh. See Plates 2.2 p.39, 2.3 p.40 and 3.9 p.87.
Plate 2.2
Varied location of parks

(a) The undulating terrain of Halden(41) park on the High Weald. This area was once the interior of the park. 8 March 2010

(b) The gentle undulations of former Brasted(15) park, on the Greensand belt, looking northeast from the southwest corner of the park. 9 December 2006
Plate 2.3
Varied location of parks

(a) View looking east towards Lullingstone castle, from higher chalk Downland, once within Lullingstone (55) park, near St. Botolph's Church, which is just visible against the backdrop of trees. The park was spread across the Darent valley side above Lullingstone mansion on the valley floor.

3 June 1999

(b) Lympne (57) park spread out on the south slope of the Greensand ridge below Lympne castle, overlooking Romney marsh.

19 November 2005
The close association between park and parish boundaries, as observed by several landscape historians, would merit closer scrutiny in Kent, and might well indicate a much earlier imparkment than documentary evidence reveals.36 At least 18 parks shared part of their boundaries with parish boundaries, while Lullingstone(55) park, covering about 600 acres of a 1000 acre parish, is neatly aligned between the parish boundary of Lullingstaine in the north and of Shoreham in the south, the southern boundary also being the boundary of the hundred of Axstane with the hundred of Codsheath.37 Whether or not a park predated the parish boundary is open to debate, but a substantial pre-existing bank would have been a convenient route for whichever was the later boundary. Experts date the fixing of parish boundaries to the late twelfth or possibly early thirteenth centuries.38 Usually the sequence of events is undocumented, but there is strong evidence that the Kent/Surrey county boundary was later used as a park boundary at West Wickham(99). There, the line of the county boundary demarcated the lathe of Wallington to the west from the lathe of Sutton-at-Hone to the east in Jutish times. The boundary is still marked by a substantial banked ditch.

However, before 1176 the county/lathe boundary northwest of Wickham Court deviated from the north/south direction to put a block of land to its east into Surrey. This anomaly was ended in 1176 when the block of land was transferred to Kent, leaving the new county boundary running continuously on a north/south alignment.39 Along this new boundary at New or Spring park another banked ditch was made to link with the older one. It was this county boundary that became the west boundary of West Wickham(99) park for which Sir Walter de Huntingfield, c.1313-1399, was given licence to impark.40

The subtle interaction of ambition, finance, landholding, lordship, rural economy, geology, topography and aesthetics to varying degrees lay behind individual

37 The 18 are Birling(6), Brasted(15), Broxham(17), Cooling(24), Glassenbury(37), Halden(41), Ightham(48), Knole(50), Leeds(54), Lullingstone(55), Lymnpe(57), Panthurst(67), Starborough(80), Sundridge(83), Throywell(87), Westenhanger(96), West Wickham(99), Wrotham(100); Pittman S., _Lullingstone Park: the evolution of a medieval deer park_ (Rainham, 1983) p.13, see Plate 2.4 p.42.
39 Davis B.F., 'An early alteration of the boundary between Kent and Surrey' in _Arch Cant_. XLVI (1934) pp.152-155. See Plate 2.5 p.43.
40 Lennard J.F., 'West Wickham Court', in _Arch.Cant_. XIII (1880) p.256.
Plate 2.4
Parish boundaries in relation to parks

(a) Map showing the close relationship between the parish boundaries of Lullingstaine to the north and Shoreham to the south of Lullingstone(55) park. The Shoreham parish boundary also marks the Hundred boundary between Axstane (N) and Codsheath (S).

(b) Ryarsh/Meopham parish boundary bank with hornbeam coppice and stubs, formerly part of the north boundary of Birling(6) park.
4 February 2005

(c) Ditch and bank of shared Brasted/ Westerham parish boundary which also served as west boundary of former Brasted(15) park.
9 December 2006
Plate 2.5
The early alteration of the Surrey/Kent boundary

(a) Sketch map by B.F. Davis in *Archaeologia Cantiana* (1934) XLVI p.153, illustrating the 1176 alteration of the Kent/Surrey boundary at West Wickham. This became the west boundary of West Wickham(99) park, serving the mansion of Wickham Court.

(b) Surrey/Kent boundary stone, bank and faint ditch, once west boundary of West Wickham(99) park at Spring Park. 16 October 2005
park locations, but in the last resort whether or not certain places had parks ultimately depended on the choice of individual landholders.

(ii) Park density

The publication of Saxton’s and Speed’s county maps in atlas form enables a crude estimate to be made of the degree to which Kent was imparked in the late sixteenth century compared with 16 other counties in the south eastern sector of England, stretching from Norfolk through Oxfordshire to Hampshire. In Figure 2.1, the counties have been set out in descending order of area calculated in square miles, followed by the number of parks shown by Saxton and by Speed, with a crude estimate of one park to number of square miles alongside each. A margin of error must be read into the total numbers for each county because although parks are shown as fenced rounded enclosures, there are certain ambiguities, especially as not all the parks are named. In Kent all enclosures on Speed’s map can be linked to parks, but in Rutland

Figure 2.1 - Chart showing the number of parks per county and their density in southeast England from Christopher Saxton's maps of 1576 and John Speed's maps of 1611 (set out in descending order of county area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>sq. miles</th>
<th>Saxton : 1 pk to sq.mls</th>
<th>Speed : 1 pk to sq.mls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>2092</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>23 (- I of W)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kent</strong></td>
<td><strong>1537</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>1532</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>1512</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>1463</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1017</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hertfordshire</td>
<td>528</td>
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</tr>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>Huntingdonshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I of W = Isle of Wight

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42 County areas are from Smith & Gardner, *Genealogical Research in England and Wales* (Salt Lake City, USA, 1959).
some enclosures are named as woods, leaving doubt as to whether this county was exceptional in this approach, or whether some unlabelled enclosures in other counties might have been woods rather than parks. In Hampshire, Speed leaves nearly half the parks uncoloured without indicating what distinguished them from the coloured enclosures. In forest areas, such as in Sussex, some park-like enclosures might have been subdivisions of the forests into walks rather than deer parks in their own right. Lastly, the lack of parks in Norfolk is an anomaly that cannot be explained since a document of 1581 listed 18 parks, of which only one, Hanworth park, had no deer. Overall, if Kent is typical, the number of active parks shown both by Saxton and Speed is likely to be an underestimate, but these county maps are the only direct comparison available to the historian.

Kent was the third largest county, after Norfolk and Hampshire, and had roughly one park to every 57 square miles according to Saxton's map and 53 according to Speed's. These figures put Kent midway in density of parks. The most imparked counties, by this rough estimate, were Surrey, half of Kent's size, and Hertfordshire, less than a quarter of Kent's size. Both these counties offered easy access from the overcrowded city of London to fine mansions set in parkland estates. Even though Kent also bordered London, its lower density of parks might be explained by the earlier settlement and higher agricultural fertility of northwest Kent, which restricted the availability of land nearer to the capital. As has been noted, park sites tended to leapfrog over the Thames side and North Downs geological zones in west Kent to concentrate on the Greensand ridge and the western Low Weald, the latter in particular being more than a day's ride away from London. Sir Robert Sidney of Penshurst was affected by the bad roads of the Low Weald, which presented obstacles to seeing his family when he was serving at court. To avoid 'a wearisome journey' he either rented a town house for his family, or, as in 1594, persuaded his wife to spend winter at Otford.

44 Prince, *Parks in Hertfordshire since 1500*, p.9, Rowe, *Medieval Parks of Hertfordshire*, p.71, confirm that contemporary maps underestimate the number of parks; Prince H, *Parks in England* (Isle of Wight, 1967) p.2, Christopher Saxton's map records 817 parks in England and Wales, but no parks are shown for Norfolk and parts of Wales.
46 See Map 1.1 'Map of Kent showing all known parks' (Appendix 4 p.326).
where she would be within 16 miles of London and 'no foul way to speak of.'

Despite the poor roads in southwest Kent, the overall density of parks was higher here than elsewhere and the impact such enclosures had on the countryside would have been considerable. Map 2.1 of west Kent, from the Thames in the north to Tonbridge in the south, and from the Surrey border in the west to Wrotham in the east, shows the distribution of parks with the areas they covered. Twenty active and 17 disparked parks have been included, with boundaries of a further eight parks unverified. Not all the parks were active at the same time, but there is evidence to suggest that, even after disparkment, park pales or boundaries were maintained – and some boundaries can still be traced on the ground.

(iii) Park shape and size

The characteristic park shape was broadly rounded, without kinks, to keep the outline as compact as possible, because this shape required the minimum length of fencing. Kent deer parks while reflecting the general ideal, took on a variety of shapes, as can be seen in Map 2.1 of the parks in west Kent. Broxham(17), Henden(45) Langley(51) and Panthurst(67) parks most closely conformed to the rounded shape, while others such as Eltham Great(31) park, Knole(50), Penshurst(71) and West Wickham(99) parks were more elongated. Greenwich(39) park was (and still is) rectangular.

Park sizes were rarely mentioned in documents except in surveys, but areas have been found for 38 of the 53 active parks and 27 defunct parks in Elizabethan and Jacobean Kent, giving a total of 65 parks or two-thirds of the 100 known parks.

48 See Map 2.1 'Parkland areas of west Kent', p.47.
49 Examples of parks on Map 2.1 p.47 include the east boundary of Broxham(17) park, north and south boundaries of Ightham(48) park, north boundary of Lullingstone(55), north boundary of New(64) park, Otford, and west boundary of West Wickham(9) park.
50 Rackham, Trees and Woodland in the British Countryside, pp.144-145.
51 See Map 2.1 'Parkland areas of west Kent', p.47.
52 See Figure 1.4 'All known parks in Kent' (Appendix 3 pp.320-325) for park sizes at given dates. 31 park sizes came from surveys, 24 from rentals, leases, grants and sales of land, charters, patents and
Park areas have been deduced from documentary evidence, personal field and map work, and from information kindly supplied by others (see fn. 2 of this chapter). See Park profiles (from p.360) for individual parks.
Figure 2.2 plots these parks, from the earliest to the latest in date. Park areas range from 25 acres to 1600 acres at each extreme (omitting the most exceptional Southfrith(93) and Northfrith(89-91) estimated at 5000 acres and 2000 acres respectively, but divided into several enclosures). Because the dates when the areas were recorded span more than two centuries, for example, from 1432 for Greenwich(39) to 1657 for Sissinghurst(79) park, a park may well have covered varying areas during its history. Some parks were extended, while others were reduced especially prior to disparkment, according to the whims or fortunes of their owners. Parks like Knole(50), and the later parks at Chilham(21a) and Mersham Hatch(61), began very modestly. In Knole's case 74 acres had been enclosed by 1544, but by 1610 the park had been enlarged to cover 550 acres. Chilham's ancient park(21a), a mile or so distant from the castle, was superseded in 1616 by a modest 25 acre park(21b), subsequently enlarged, adjacent to the castle. Over decades during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, the Knatchbulls with the agreement of the archiepiscopate and the manorial court acquired pieces of Mersham Hatch common to enclose into their park(61). Glassenbury(37) was among the parks that contracted. Walter Roberts was given licence to impark 1,600 acres in 1488. If enclosed as licensed Glassenbury(37) park would have been the largest in Kent, with a deep ditch with bank to the north of Old Park wood seeming to indicate its northern boundary. However, by 1628 the area of the former parkland north of the Goudhurst road had reverted to woodland, and the park around Glassenbury house, to the south of the road, covered just 113 acres. Some parks contained compartments from which deer were permanently excluded, but which, nevertheless, lay within the park pale. In a survey of 1521 Birling(6) park covered 969

licences to impark, six from maps and fieldwork, eight from court cases, and two from Inquisitions Post Mortem. See Park profiles p.360 onwards for source of size for individual parks.
53 See Figure 2.2 'Park size arranged in order of date', p.49.
57 Heron T., Antiquities of Chilham Collected by Thomas Heron esq., 1791, p.69.
58 CCA/DCc/ChAnt/M/30, 1564; CCA/DCc/ChAnt/M/31, 1589; CCA/DCc/ChAnt/M/33, 1608; summarised CCA/DCc/ChAnt/M/32 c.1685-1696.
59 TNA Charter rolls 16 m13 (8).
60 A footpath runs east/west roughly along the probable north boundary of the large Glassenbury Park - TQ757386 near Colliers Green to TQ742397 near Combounre Farm.
61 Wyndham D., Family History of Roberts (1952): original maps owned by Marcus Sutcliffe.
Figure 2.2 - Park Size Arranged in Order of First Known Date of Park
Figure 2.3 - Number of Parks of Similar Size
acres, over half of which was farmland. A herd of 300 deer was supported by 388 acres of pasture and woodland, and 74 acres of downland, but the remaining 507 acres comprised 430 acres of arable land and 77 acres farmed by three tenant farmers.  

Given the disparity of dates at which park areas were recorded, only tentative comments can be made about the sizes of late Tudor/early Stuart parks, but the wide range from 25 acres to 1000 acres is shown on Figure 2.3. The majority size is not as clear-cut as Suffolk’s 200 to 300 acres. In Kent 24 parks were that size but the greater number of 37 were between 100 and 300 acres, eight were below 100 acres, and 18 above 400 acres. Of the active parks, the two smallest covering less than 100 acres were Chilham(21b) and South Park(12), and the four largest parks, Eltham Great park(31), Sissinghurst(79), Birling(6) and Eastwell(28) each covered between 600 and 1000 acres. Excluding Southfrith(93) (often referred to as a forest) and Northfrith(89-91), Kentish parks, with an average area of about 293 acres, but across a wide time span, were larger than Hertfordshire’s parks, which averaged 275 acres.

(iv) Longevity of parks

The longevity chart (Figure 2.4) of the 53 active parks in Elizabethan and Jacobean Kent shows that 15 have documentation going back to before 1300, and a further nine to before 1400. Of the other 29, eight have earliest records dating to between 1400 and 1499, 15 between 1500 and 1599, while six were new parks created after 1600. These groups have also been plotted alongside the figures for Suffolk (Figure 2.5) which, of 130 parks dating from the eleventh century onwards, had 63 surviving until at least 1600, with 18 dating back to before 1300. In both Kent and Suffolk, therefore, a substantial group of the earliest parks had been in existence for over 250 years. As only nine earliest records in Kent were licences to create parks,
Figure 2.4 - Longevity of Active Kentish Parks, 1558-1625
many parks were probably well established before their first chance mention. Kentish parks such as Bedgebury(4), Cobham(23), Groombridge(40), Hever(46), Lullingstone(55), Scot's Hall(77) and Sissinghurst(79) appear surprisingly late in documents after 1540, but are all likely to be much older given the prestige and wealth of the various estate owners, the Guldefords, the Brookes, the Wallers, the Boleyns, the Harts, the Scotts and the Bakers respectively.

Economic cycles and political instability affected the overall success of parks, but evidently, despite the peaks and troughs, some parks that survived into the late sixteenth century were more successful and long-lived than others. It has been suggested that the longest continuing parks tended to be the largest, although whether this was because they might have been more economically viable (their size allowing more flexibility in managing diversification), or whether the owners of smaller parks were less likely to have the income to support them, is a matter of speculation. Looking at Kent (Figure 2.2 p.49), the various park sizes, shown in sequence of the earliest documentary evidence, reveal some larger parks to be shorter lived than some smaller ones, but no strong pattern emerges. There is no obvious link between park size and the longevity of a park, at least as far as those parks that survived to 1625 were concerned. However, incomplete data makes it unwise to be categorical.

Another explanation given for longevity is the link between a principal residence and its park, with parks lacking a residence falling into disfavour. This might well have caused some disparkment in Kent before the sixteenth century, but by Tudor times most owners had only one park, which in the majority of cases had a mansion within it. Apart from the archbishop and the crown, the few owners who retained more than one park in the county did eventually concentrate resources on the park linked to their residence. The Sidneys at Penshurst disparked their nearby parks at Southpark(72),

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71 Rowe, Medieval Parks of Hertfordshire, pp.26-27.
Leigh(70) and Ashour(69) in favour of Northlands or Penhurst(71) park adjacent to Penshurst Place; while in Sevenoaks, the former archbishop's park of Panthurst(67), with no residence, was disparked after being taken over by the crown, while nearby Knole(50) park, surrounding the new residence, was extended. Evidence at Birling is circumstantial, but it appears that the park at the older residence of Comford(7) was allowed to lapse in favour of Birling(6) park near the Nevill's new mansion, a couple of miles away. A park which succumbed towards the end of James I's reign was Hungershall(47) at Tunbridge Wells, retained until then by another branch of the Nevill

![Figure 2.5 - Longevity of Active Parks in Kent and Suffolk, 1558-1625](image)

73 CKS U1475/E55/1, 1559, Southpark; CKS U1475/T33, leases of 1553, 1572, 1574, Ashour; CKS U1475 T61/2, 1553, Leigh; CKS U1450/T5/40, 1567, Panthurst(67) park then rented out in plots. Lambarde has Panthurst(67) disparked; See p.48 for the expansion of Knole(50).

74 Lambarde omits Comford(7), but its name appears in accounts (1586-1592 CKS U787/E9), without mentioning deer.
family along with their ancient seat and park in nearby Eridge, in Sussex.\textsuperscript{75}

Discussion about longevity hinges on general factors such as political and economic stability, as well as continuity of dynasty. However, as will be seen as this study progresses the quirks of family fortune were also influential in ensuring the survival of an individual park.\textsuperscript{76}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Parks in Kent display many characteristics that would be familiar to medieval historians, which is to be expected with 59 of the 100 parks documented in the period 1558 to 1625 originating before 1485. Although there were common factors across counties that influenced the distribution of parks, Kent was not alone in having its own variations, which have challenged generalisations. The county's distinct geological zones, its proximity to London, its ancient settlement patterns and the large holdings of the archbishop of Canterbury all contributed to a distinctness in the distribution of its parks.

The invaluable research undertaken by Cantor in compiling county lists of medieval parks might lead to the conclusion that Kent, the third largest county with 54 parks, had fewer parks for its size than other counties.\textsuperscript{77} As can be seen in Figure 2.6, compared with the figures for the 17 counties covering the southeast sector of England, this figure is the fifth highest, but well below Sussex with 114, Essex with 104, Hampshire with 66, Suffolk with 65, and Buckinghamshire equalling Kent's figure of 54.\textsuperscript{78} However, although no systematic search was undertaken, references to 103 medieval parks in Kent have been found, almost doubling the previous total, thereby increasing the overall density of its parks.\textsuperscript{79} This higher number of parks puts Kent more on a par with Sussex and Essex, but until figures for those and other counties are

\textsuperscript{75} ESRO ABE/52.1, 1633, leases back to 1618 show new tenancies in the former park.
\textsuperscript{76} Hoppitt, A study of the development of deer parks in Suffolk, pp.280-281, for Suffolk, and further explored for Kent in Chapters 5 p.142 and 6 p.172.
\textsuperscript{78} See Figure 2.6 'Number of medieval parks compared with the number of parks on Speed's map of 1611 for 17 counties' p.56. The counties all lie in the S.E sector of England as selected for Figure 2.1 p.44.
\textsuperscript{79} See Figure 1.4 (Appendix 3 pp.320-325) and Park profiles (from p.360) for earliest references to each park.
Figure 2.6 - Number of Medieval Parks Compared With Number of Parks on Speed's Map of 1611 for 17 Counties
updated no realistic comparisons can be made, because all Cantor and Hatherly's park lists are likely to be underestimates, as Rowe, for example, has confirmed for Hertfordshire finding nearly 70 medieval parks compared with 46 listed by Cantor and Hatherly.80

Despite the scarcity of information a picture is emerging about some of characteristics of Kent's parks, but without other county studies, it is impossible to judge whether or not Kent's parks were typical.

80 Rowe, Medieval Parks of Hertfordshire, pp.4-5.