

CHAPTER SIX

THE SUCCESS OF THE EXPERIMENT

6.1 The development of the barge traffic

The Commission of Sewers was appointed in September 1575. Within a few years, and definitely by early 1580, they had improved the navigation to the extent that a substantial downstream traffic in malt, meal and grain had developed. For the first time in many years the Lea was an important artery supplying London, the very result that the City had sought when they began their investigations in 1560.¹

1. *In 1574 the City of London did not mention the Lea as a source by which grain was brought to the capital. In 1592 there is a reference to 'xiiij years after the water Carriage began'. Norden said that carriage began about the 18th year of the reign, whilst a report to Star Chamber in the 1590s stated that traffic had developed within the last 20 years or thereabouts.*

Precise quantitative data is not available, but in 1585 road carriers stated that 'threescore thousand quarters of mault' were brought to London every year by the Lea bargemen, whilst in 1591 officials of the Duchy of Lancaster were told of 1000 quarters of corn a week being carried down river.² Confirmation of these figures is provided by a list of barges compiled in 1588 (see Table Two below). The 32 barges listed had a total capacity of over 1000 quarters and the journey to London and back could be made within a week.

Less information is available about the back carriage. Smiths, brewers and limeburners all benefitted from the cheaper carriage of coal, paying 6s 4d a chaldron for the carriage. Smiths also had iron brought up river, Fanshawe had London beer brought to Ware Park, and salt was another probable back carriage.³ No quantities were ever mentioned.

Besides the vastly improved navigation, the major factor encouraging these developments was the cost advantage enjoyed by the bargemen compared to the road carriers. In 1585 the latter advocated a tax of 1s 4d per quarter on all malt carried down the Lea, arguing that this was the cost advantage enjoyed, but the bargemen countered that their advantage was in fact only 6d or 8d per quarter. This last is confirmed by a road carrier who in 1581 defended his attempts to destroy the navigation on the grounds that 'he sawe one sell a quarter of Malte caried by water better cheape then he could sell a quarter caried by land by a vi^d'.⁴

A further element in the expansion of this barge traffic must be the concerted effort of the townsmen of Ware to capture a greater share of the trade to London at the expense of Hoddesdon market where the road carriers of Enfield, Cheshunt and Waltham were dominant. However, although Ware did emerge as the most important barge centre, communities further downstream also took advantage of the improved navigation, including Enfield and Waltham.

6.2 The barge owners

Further evidence of the response to the new opportunities offered by the improved navigation can be obtained from two lists of barge owners which were compiled during this period. The first, reproduced as Table 1, was compiled during investigations into the riots of 1581, whilst the second, Table 2, was compiled in 1588 when there was much discussion over the future of the navigation

TABLE ONE: LIST OF BARGE-OWNERS, 1581

'The names of such as have barges uppon the River'

Barges of Hertford	Thomas Hoode	1
	Thomas Jurye	1
	Thomas Springham	1
of Ware	Robert Leonarde	1
	Rychard Brooke	1
	John Mathysonn	1
	John Whykhoo	1 boate
	John Spencer	1 boate
	Richard Sibborne	1 bardge
of Braughing	Thomas Colte	1
of Stansted	Andrew Gyf	1
	Thomas Tyler	1 bote
of A		
of Broxborne	Mr Garner	1 bardge
	John Barber	1
of Waltham	Robert Eaton	1
	William Hudde	1
	Crosse	1 boate
of East Smithfield in London	Edward Parker	1 bardge
	John Stead	1
of London of Enfield	Richard Pegram	1
	John Orysmen	1 boate
	Francis Bond	1 bardge

The boats were most probably smaller than the barges, but exact capacities in the above list are not known. It is known that about 100 men were employed on the boats in 1581,⁶ whilst 118 men were employed on the barges listed in Table 2 below. The largest barge in 1588 needed five men, barges with a capacity between 36 and 40 quarters and the

timber barge needed four men, whilst the smallest barges needed only three. Of these, one was the steersman, the rest were hired to hale the barges from the bankside or to row when in tidal waters.

TABLE TWO: LIST OF BARGEOWNERS, endorsed September 1588

Bargeowner(s)	Residence	Name of barge	Capacity(qtrs)
Richarde Brooke	Ware	greate blue lyon	42
Richarde Brooke	Ware	litle blue lyon .	28
Edward Parker	Ware	Hynde	36
Roger Parker	Ware		
Thom Whiscot	Ware		38
Beniamin Buckehurste	Amwell		30
Thom Pomfret	Newechippinge	Grayhounde	38
Beniamin Buckehurst	Amwell		
William Pyke	Amwell	Primarose	38
Beniamin Buckehurste			
Thomas Hud, baker	Islington	Mermayde	26
Thom Shelley	Ware	Cocke	38
Thom Leonarde, miller	Ware		
Gyles Shelley	Ware	Feysante	30
Richard Stringer	Amwell	Pacocke	38
Augustine Walker & Son-in-law Wm Cocke	Baldocke Baldocke	Nightingall	28
Thomas Tyler	Stansted	Swan	28
Thopmas Butler	Ware	Swallow	28
Edwarde Scale	Broxaburne		
William Thorpe	Hodsedon	Talbot	38
Richard Waters	Waltham Abbey		
John Spencer	Ware	Whitehorse	40

Roger White	Ware	goulden lyon	30
James Croyen	Ware	George	27
Thom House Thomas Fage	Amwell Baldocke	Mary (oblit)	40
Francis Bearapacke Willm Hafeheade	Broxaburne Yardley	Baptiste	40
Francis Bearapacke Willm Hafeheade	Broxaburne Yardley	Harte	40
Francis Bearapacke Roger James	Broxaburne St Catheryns, . London Rams Heade		40
Richard Barber Thom Barber Thom Matheson	Amwell Bow Ware	Angel Phame	30 38
Thomas Hillan	Broxaburne	Unicorne	36
Thomas Springam	Harteforde	Antelop	26
Michael Kettle Hugh Bottm	Harteforde Harteforde	Rose + Scales	26
Thom Godarde Willm Bishop	Enfelde Waltham Abbey	Tygre	30
Richarde Hickeman	Waltham Abbey	Beare	24
Thomas Curtys	Enfelde	Oulde Faulcon	36
Henry Loft	Enfelde	New Faulcon	38
Robert Doe	Enfelde	Maltesacke	38
Finche	Waltham Abbey	Oulde Cocke	Timber Barge

At the bottom of this second list, Burghley made several notes about the navigation.⁵

A comparison between the two lists does suggest a continued growth in the barge traffic during the 1580s, although it cannot be said just how complete the two lists were. Whether joint ownership was a later development cannot be said, such information might not have been considered relevant for the purposes of the earlier list.

From the additional information available of some of those appearing in these two lists it can be discerned that two differing groups of barge owners developed. There were those who acted as carriers, most probably dealing on their own account as well, and those who invested in barges as an extension of their dominant economic activity, particularly the milling and brewing trades.

Of those of whom it is possible to identify as being of the first group it is difficult to provide sufficient or informative detail. However it can be said that Richard Brooke was a prominent member of this group. He was named in both lists, and with two barges in 1588, he had the greatest carrying capacity at his disposal. He acted as a spokesman for the bargemen in the aftermath of riots in 1581 and 1592. In 1604 Brooke, described as a carrier and bargeman, was involved in a legal dispute with a Hitchin maltster, William Hurste. It is clear from the evidence that Hurste expected Brooke to use his initiative in disposing of the malt that Brooke was carrying from Ware to London on his behalf. Brooke was still a bargeman in 1606. It can be noted that in 1592 and 1597 court clerks listed him as a yeoman.⁷

7. *Richard Brooke alias Yokesley of Ware*

Another bargeman, John Whykhoo (Whiskerd) was similarly described as a yeoman,⁸

8. *John Whykhoo of 1581 could be the John Whiskerd listed in 1588, and the John Wisket of Ware, yeoman, named in the 1592 riots. In addition, in 1605 a John Whiscard of Ware, and in 1618 a John Whiskett, junior of Ware, were indicted for keeping unlicensed alehouses. A Thom Whiscot was listed as a barge-owner in 1588:*

whilst others, Thomas Springham and Francis Bearapacke, were sometimes described as husbandmen.⁹

9. *By 1596 Bearapacke may have moved to Essendon:*

Two others, Richard Stringer and Thom House described themselves as bargemen when they made their wills, but Stringer was also described as a labourer.¹⁰

10. *Richard Stringer: In his will, made 1597, he left small bequests between 2/- and 10/- to the poor of Amwell, for the repair of Amwell Church, to the vicar of Amwell, to his maid, and to John Wheeler's wife, but only 1/- each to his four grandchildren. The rest of his goods, chattels and cattle were left to his widow:*

Thomas How: In his will, made 1611, he left his clothes and all debts owed him to his sister, Joanne Browne. Amongst these debts was £11 due from Thomas Whitehead of Stratford atte Bowe, bargeman. Of this £11, £4 was for wages. It can be noted that in 1592 a John Howe of Ware was wounded in the riots at Waltham:

Further evidence of the activities of this group has not been discovered. It is not known how they financed the construction of their barges, whether there was much economic differentiation amongst the group, or just how secure their position was. It is difficult to establish just how they worked. The initiative allowed Brooke would suggest that many

must have been more than mere carriers, for it was in dealing rather than in carrying that the profits were to be made.

Perhaps several of this group developed their activities by entering long term contracts to supply the expanding London brewing industry.¹¹ Such contracts would have given them security, and scope to expand their own trading activities. On the other hand, several of the London brewers themselves invested in Lea barges.

An example of this group is the Roger James of St Katherines listed in 1588, who could be either the father or the son of that name involved in a brewery near the Tower.¹²

12. *Roger James, senior, came to England from Holland about 1540. He was wealthy, paying the highest rate of £300 in a 1582 subsidy, and the highest rate of £100 in a 1588 assessment of the Brewers Company. His son, James, became a freeman of the Brewers Company in 1584, and was assessed at £25 in 1588*

Other identifiable members of the London brewing community include Thomas Pomfret who was apprenticed to the Brewers Company in the 1570s,¹³ and Edward Parker of East Smithfield who may have been a London brewer in 1581 before taking up the trade in Ware later in the decade.¹⁴

14. *Parker(or Packer) was living at East Smithfield in 1581, and was recorded as being in charge of a barge at Enfield that year. In 1587 he gave evidence to the Brewers Company about deliveries of wheat and malt to a London brewing partnership. In 1588 he was living at Ware, and his will in 1593 describes him as a 'Beerbrewer' of Ware. His widow, Elizabeth, was sister to the Leonard brothers of Ware(see fn.18 below) and his daughter, Elizabeth, was married to another local brewer, William Armstrong:*

Complaints from the badgers would suggest that more London brewers were involved in this traffic.¹⁵

The barge owning group easiest to discern and describe are the millers. Most of those working mills along the upper river invested in barges to carry meal to London, being part of a trend whereby country millers expanded their activities to exploit the London market. To such an extent in fact that there was at times insufficient grain for the mills near the City to grind. Legislation did exist prohibiting millers from trading on their own account, but such laws had long fallen into disuse.¹⁶

An example of this group was Thomas Hudde, whose name is found in both lists. Between December 1580 and September 1583 he held the lease of the Town Mills at Hertford. He in fact owned a bakery at Islington, and obviously used the Lea as a means of supplying this enterprise. In 1581 he was the author of a strongly worded petition in favour of the improved navigation.¹⁷

The Leonard brothers of Ware, Robert, John and Thomas, were another important milling group who invested in barges. Robert owned Ware Mills in 1581 when he mortgaged them with Thomas Fanshawe, but he was unable to meet his commitments and in 1587 Fanshawe purchased the mills. He continued to lease the mills however until his death in 1597, after which brother John took over the lease. John had inherited Ware Westmill in

1581 and was still the owner in 1613, but it should be noted that in 1596 it was his brother, Thomas, who was listed as the owner and occupier. In addition Robert and John inherited Edward Parker's Ware brewery in 1592. It would be interesting to discover whether they were also related to Peter Leonard the elder and his son, Peter, who were Dutch brewers working in London during James' reign.¹⁸

In addition to these, other millers who invested in barges included those working Broxbourne Mills¹⁹,

19. *In 1572 Robert Garnett of London, draper, purchased Broxbourne Mills from his brother, Henry. He still possessed them at his death in 1600. He must be the Mr Garner of Broxbourne listed as a barge-owner in 1581, and there is a reference in 1587 to 'gardyners barge of broxborne mill':*

another miller at Hertford Town Mills,²⁰

20. *The Hugh Bottm listed in 1588 could be the Hughe Bottinge who owned a ½ sha--re in a lease to Hertford Town Mills in 1583-84:*

and possibly a miller at Waltham Abbey Corn Mills.²¹

21. *Richard Hickman of Waltham Abbey listed in 1588 could be the same as the miller at Waltham Abbey Corn Mills in 1600:*

Such was the development of this traffic that one of the promises the Privy Council made to Denny and the badgers in 1592 (see 7.4) was that they would investigate the abuse whereby millers were investing in barges.²² Whether the prohibitive legislation was ever brought into force on this occasion cannot be determined.

6.3 Flattery by imitation

An obvious indication of the success of the improvement scheme is the very ferocity and persistence of the opposition it aroused amongst the road carriers. They obviously feared that the cost advantages enjoyed by the bargemen threatened their position. Yet there are indications that some badgers were prepared to exploit the advantages offered by water transport themselves.

Enfield and Waltham badgers are amongst those listed as barge-owners in 1581 and 1588. In 1585 one group of badgers felt it would be beneficial to extend the navigation a further 5 or 6 miles above Hertford so that traffic to London from Bedfordshire and west Hertfordshire could be tapped.²³

Such evidence illustrates conflicting attitudes amongst the badgers, they were not a homogenous group. Yet there is also evidence of conflicting attitudes amongst the very badgers who led the opposition to the navigation.

In 1593, after the badgers actions had effectively closed the navigation above Waltham, several badgers and inhabitants of Hoddesdon, including two who had been implicated in

the 1581 riots, petitioned Lord Burghley to obtain his support for a scheme to improve water transport facilities at the town. They wanted the tail stream of the Lynch Mill at Hoddesdon to be made navigable so that barges could load and unload at wharves close to Hoddesdon market.²⁴

Not only did the badgers fear the cheaper costs of the bargemen, they feared that the town of Ware was capturing traffic that formerly came to their local market, Hoddesdon. Further research is necessary to establish the relative growths of these communities at this date, the development of the river must be an important influence effecting their growth. It is probable that the town of Ware in particular must have expanded as a result of these developments.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. In 1574 the City of London did not mention the Lea as a source by which grain was brought to the capital. In 1592 there is a reference to 'xiiij years after the water Cariadge began'. Norden said that carriage began about the 18th year of the reign, whilst a report to Star Chamber in the 1590s stated that traffic had developed within the last 20 years or thereabouts. R.H. Tawney, E. Power, editors, Tudor Economic Documents, (3 vols, London, 1924), 1.156-61; Bodl., MS. Rawl. Essex 11 fos.89-90; BL, Harleian MS. 570 fo.9; CSPD, . 1591-94, 499-502.
2. PRO, S.P. 12/177 no.10; PRO, D.L. 44/478.
3. BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.33; Bodl., MS. Rawl. Essex 11 fo.93; Hatfield House, CP 166/47.
4. PRO, S.P. 12/177 no.10; BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 nos.33, 40,41.
5. Table 1: BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.36; Table 2: Hatfield House, CP 166/47.
6. BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.40.
7. Richard Brooke alias Yokesley of Ware: Harte, fo.2; PRO, Req 2 387/40; ERO, Calendar of County Records (Essex), Sessions Records 1590-96,124,128,216; HRO, HAT/SR 10 no.4; HAT/SR 17 no.139; BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.41; *ibid*, 38 no.34.
8. John Whykhoo of 1581 could be the John Whiskerd listed in 1588, and the John Wisket of Ware, yeoman, named in the 1592 riots. In addition, in 1605 a John Whiscard of Ware, and in 1618 a John Whiskett, junior of Ware, were indicted for keeping unlicensed alehouses. A Thom Whiscot was listed as a barge-owner in 1588: ERO, Calendar of County Records (Essex), Sessions Records 1590-96,124; HRO, HAT/SR 1 nos.55, 92; HAT/SR 13 no.109; HAT/SR 29 no.229.

9. By 1596 Bearapacke may have moved to Essendon: HRO, HAT/SR 1 no.5 ; HAT/SR 4 no.121; HAT/SR 8 no.68; HAT/SR 9 no.126.
10. Richard Stringer: In his will, made 1597, he left small bequests between 2/- and 10/- to the poor of Amwell, for the repair of Amwell Church, to the vicar of Amwell, to his maid, and to John Wheeler's wife, but only 1/- each to his four grandchildren. The rest of his goods, chattels and cattle were left to his widow: ERO, 222 BW 35; HRO, HAT/SR 8 no.57.
Thomas How: In his will, made 1611, he left his clothes and all debts owed him to his sister, Joanne Browne. Amongst these debts was £11 due from Thomas Whitehead of Stratford atte Bowe, bargeman. Of this £11, £4 was for wages. It can be noted that in 1592 a John Howe of Ware was wounded in the riots at Waltham: ERO, 156 BW 20; ERO, Calendar of County Records(Essex), Sessions Records 1590-96,124.
11. BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.40; Bodl., Rawl. Essex 11 fo.93; F.J. Fisher, 'The development of the London Food Market', Economic History Review, 1st Series, v pt.2(1934-35),46-64. For details of the London brewing industry at this date: p.Mathias, The Brewing Industry in England 1700-1830(Cambridge,1959), 5-6,140,437; J. Archer, The Industrial History of London 1603-40'(unpublished M.A. thesis,Univ. of London,1934),17-18,27-29,199-201; P. Clark, The English Alehouse, a social history 1200-1830(London,1983),106; VCH Surrey, ii.381- 87.
12. Roger James, senior, came to England from Holland about 1540. He was wealthy, paying the highest rate of £300 in a 1582 subsidy, and the highest rate of £100 in a 1588 assessment of the Brewers Company. His son, James, became a freeman of the Brewers Company in 1584, and was assessed at £25 in 1588: Guildhall Library, MS. 5445 Vols 7 and 8, unfoliated; R.E.G. Kirk, E.F. Kirk, editors, Aliens dwelling in the City, Vol 10 pt. 2,134,160,202,214,256,325,402; ibid, pt.3, 321,386.
13. Guildhall Library, MS. 5445, Vol 7, unfoliated.
14. Parker(or Packer) was living at East Smithfield in 1581, and was recorded as being in charge of a barge at Enfield that year. In 1587 he gave evidence to the Brewers Company about deliveries of wheat and malt to a London brewing partnership. In 1588 he was living at Ware, and his will in 1593 describes him as a 'Beerbrewer' of Ware. His widow, Elizabeth, was sister to the Leonard brothers of Ware(see fn.18 below) and his daughter, Elizabeth, was married to another local brewer, William Armstrong: BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.37; Guildhall Library, MS. 5445, Vol 8, unfoliated; PRO, PROB 11/83(6); PROB 11/132(116).
15. BL, Lansdowne MS. 32 no.40; PRO, S.P. 12/177 no.9; S.P. 12/146 no.86.

16. CLRO, Journals, 20(1) fo.200; *ibid*, 21 fo.336; R. Bennett, J. Elton, *A History of Corn Milling* (4 vols,London,1898-1904 ,iii.168-71; R.B. Westerfield, *Middlemen in English Business*(Newton Abbot,1968 ed), 168.
17. PRO, D.L. 6/30; D.L. 1/150/G4; BL, Landsdowne MS. 32 no.33; *ibid*, 38 no.35; W.B.B. Marcham,editor, *Tottenham Court Rolls*,*passim*.
18. HRO, 70612 HAT/SR 8 no 123 ; ERO, 4 BW 24 ; PRO, PROB11/63(6)12PROB11/83(6);1PROB 11/121(40) SP. 12/261 no.73; S.P. 14/28 no.136; BL, Add. MS. 27979.
19. In 1572 Robert Garnett of London, draper, purchased Broxbourne Mills from his brother, Henry. He still possessed them at his death in 1600. He must be the Mr Garner of Broxbourne listed as a barge-owner in 1581, and there is a reference in 1587 to 'gardyners bardge of broxborne mill': HRO, B460, B622; PRO, S.P. 12/261 no.73; BL, Landsdowne MS. 53 no.76.
20. The Hugh Bottm listed in 1588 could be the Hughe Bottinge who owned a ½ share in a lease to Hertford Town Mills in 1583-84: PRO, D.L. 1/150/G4.
21. Richard Hickman of Waltham Abbey listed in 1588 could be the same as the miller at Waltham Abbey Corn Mills in 1600:HRO, HAT/SR. 13 no.1.
22. APC 1592,11-12.
23. PRO, S.P. 12/177 no.8.
24. Hatfield House, Legal 231/22; *ibid*, CPM 213/78.