

## The French Raid on Southampton 1338, Part One

Historians of the French Raid stress Southampton's fatal vulnerability on its waterside, the stealth of its attackers, the panic-stricken flight of its inhabitants, the ferocity of the English counter-attack, and a lesson finally learned that the town had to be wholly walled in. We must take none of that for granted; repetition only broadens the myth. Stories have continued to be told, for no good reason except that older historians told them, at a time when few sources were easily available. In consequence, as other and more significant texts have later been edited and published, the tendency has been to read them in the context of an already established story, sometimes to ignore them.

### Dating and Timing

For instance, the customary dating of the raid largely derives from two sources available to the Victorians, Froissart's *Chroniques* and Stow's *Annals*. Froissart says that it began on a Sunday, in the morning, when the townspeople were at mass, and Stow provides the actual date and time, October 4, around nine of the clock. The two sources complement each other, for October 4 1338 was a Sunday in the Julian calendar. Nonetheless, they are wrong: the raiders landed on the Monday at mid-afternoon. A difference of only 30 hours seems not worth the arguing about, except that it carries large consequences for our understanding of what really happened.

The earliest sources—an inquisition into the loss of the king's wool,<sup>1</sup> six months after the event—a royal council,<sup>2</sup> eight months after the event—and Murimuth,<sup>3</sup> the first of the chroniclers to write about the raid (d 1347)—all date the beginning of the raid to the Monday after Michaelmas, which was October 5 in 1338, again in the Julian calendar. Baker, the next chronicler to write about the raid (d c 1360), dates the event in a significantly different way but still makes it October 5: in his version it began on the sixth day after Michaelmas,<sup>4</sup> September 29 (*feria sexta proxima post festum sancti Michaelis*). Baker's text is the basis of the entry in Stow's *Annals*, but Stow blunders the date. His Latinity was said to have been poor,<sup>5</sup> or perhaps he counted 31 days in September.

Murimuth and Baker agree in saying that the raiders appeared off Southampton about three or four in the afternoon, not nine in the morning, as Stow translates it. To demonstrate this, we have to begin with a comparison of time and tide, for the course of the raid was determined by Southampton's double tide, which is notable for having several hours of extended high water ('stand' or 'slack') and which has been celebrated since the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Bede described the two waters that flow into the Solent and daily clash outside the mouth of the River Hamble.<sup>6</sup> Froissart tells us that the French Raid came to an end naturally: when the tide rose, they refloated themselves, weighed anchor, and sailed before the wind towards Normandy. It was not quite that simple; the tide that freed them also imprisoned them for a while. The galleys could not sail when Southampton's tide was setting against them. Though moving forward relative to the water, at best they would have made no

progress relative to the land, and at worst they would have been pushed backwards. In these narrow waters, the experienced captain would have preferred to sail during the periods of slack. Sailing with the tide was also possible, of course, but navigation could be complicated at times by the shifting interplay of wind and wave.

Figure 1 is reasonably close to showing the situation on October 4–5 1338 on the Julian calendar, or October 12–13 1338 on our Gregorian calendar (still Monday). Only a thin sliver of the moon’s crescent then remained and a spring tide was imminent. More detail than that cannot be projected back nearly seven centuries with any hope of precision: we may not check the times of high and low tide with an almanac for October 1338. Yet there are other ways of finding the answer, and the results force a reassessment of the evidence. Readers of the usual documentary sources take them to indicate a landing in the morning and a departure the following morning, but these times do not sit comfortably within the framework imposed by the tides. It is a very tight squeeze and something is never right.

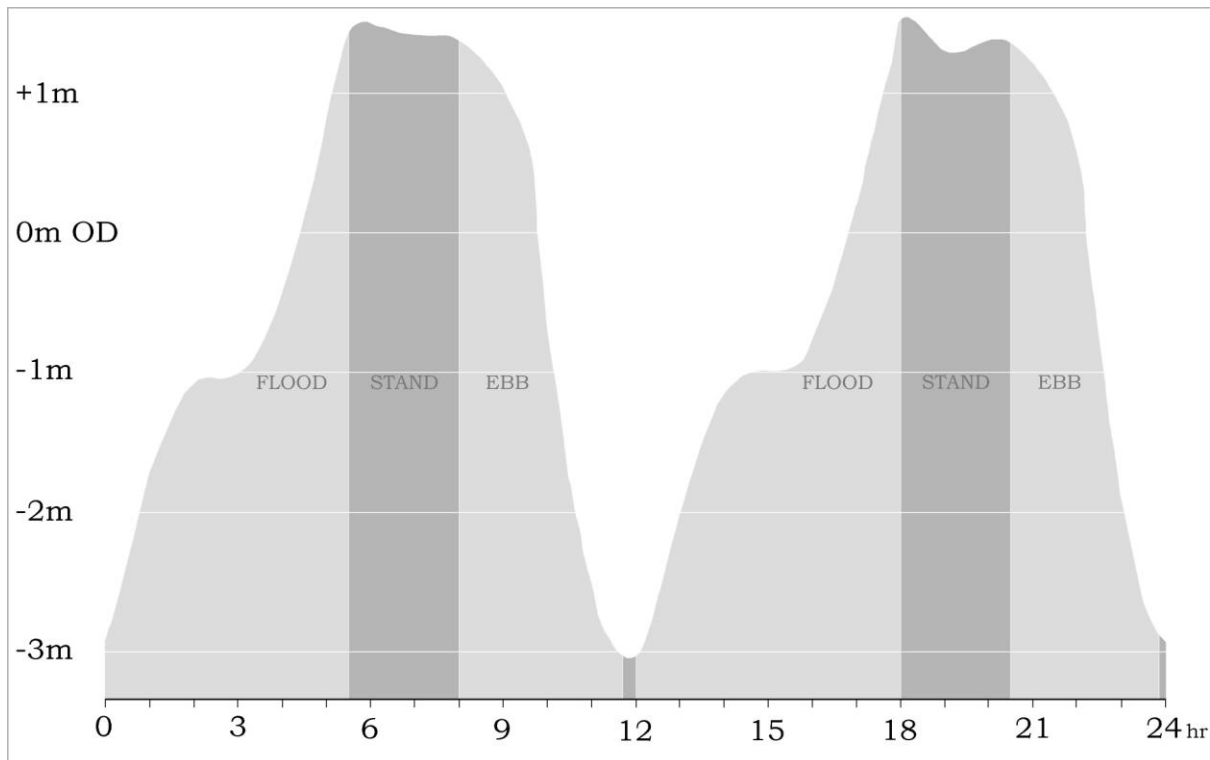


Figure 1. Two cycles of Southampton’s tides, as measured at Town Quay (after Macmillan 1964). The hours shown are numbered only to make calculations easier, but do not necessarily indicate those times of the day.

The time of the raiders’ arrival is attested by Murimuth and Baker, who both say it was ‘about the ninth hour;’ *quasi hora nona* and *circa horam nonam*. That can be translated two ways. First, as Stow reads it, it was around nine of the clock, though perhaps he did not recognise a medieval nine-in-the-morning, three hours after sunrise (sunrise invariably was the sixth hour). In early–mid October the sun rises just after 7am, as we measure time, and the raiders would have arrived at around 10am therefore.

The end of the raid is not so precisely defined, but there are several pointers to when it happened. The captains of the galleys would have been cutting it fine if they sailed any later than the first hour of the ebb tide (figure 1, hr-22), and they would not have trusted their ships to the tide while it was still dark. A time after daybreak is also suggested by a reading of certain chroniclers, who state that the raiders *saw* or *perceived* the forces gathered against them (see further below).

This combination of times and tides can be made to work—but only just—if the raiders arrived at Southampton at 10am, having ridden the flood tide for an hour (figure 1, hr-1), which allows them to leave the town the next day next day at dawn (7am modern time), an hour into the ebb. The arrangement sits inflexibly within those two points (figure 2, top), for shifting a boundary to permit a likelier combination of time and tide at arrival or departure turns the other calculation into nonsense. However, if the raiders arrived before Southampton at 10am, either the flotilla had spent all of a practically moonless night crossing the Channel, with little or no time available in the morning to regroup, or it had sheltered in a haven of the English coast, very near to the mouth of the Solent and without alerting potential victims. Neither alternative recommends itself.

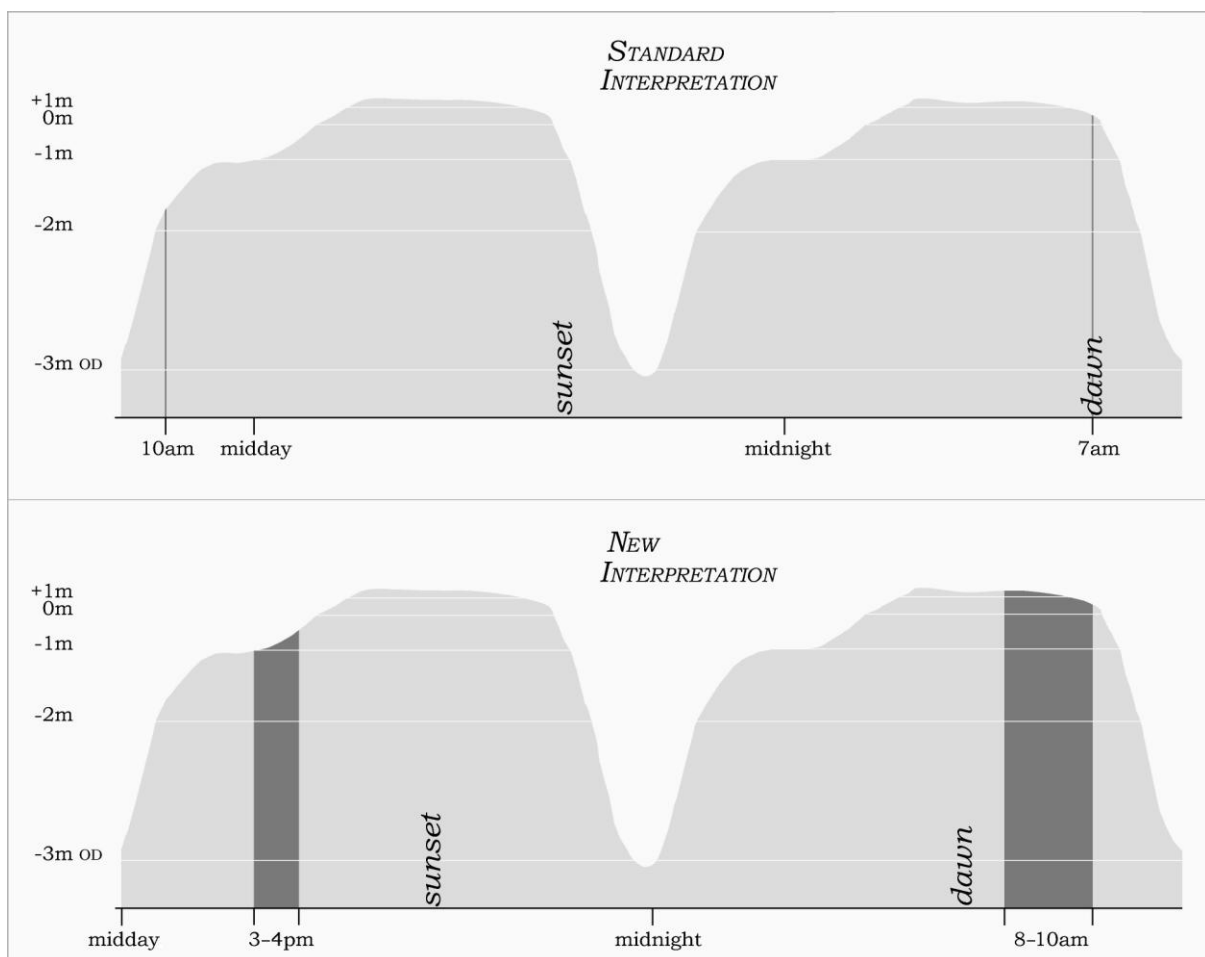


Figure 2. As figure 1, but with a diminishing scale to the top. Dark grey lines and bands show the two options for landing and departure. The times of day shown are those suggested in the text.

On the other hand, if Murimuth and Baker were timing by the canonical hours, they will have meant the ninth hour of the day after sunrise, three in the afternoon. Using our measurements of time we would say that in early–mid October nones started somewhere between 3pm and 4pm. Provided the medieval timekeepers reset their calculations at midday, it probably was close to 3pm by our timing; otherwise it could have been around 4pm. Reading *hora nona* in this way simplifies the Channel crossing. The raiders would still have had to set off in the dark, before midnight, but much of the crossing would have been in daylight and there would have been time enough to gather in the strays before entering the Solent. Entering Southampton Water at the best moment, during an interval of slack, they would have had ample opportunity to move swiftly on to Southampton. The revised timing sharply reduces the raid on that first day to three or four hours of daylight, but the relative brevity of the afternoon's work would help to explain much that then unfolded, not least why the raiders stayed overnight. Sailing from Southampton the next morning might have begun at the end of slack water or while the full tide was just beginning to turn, an hour after sunrise that day, about 8am as we would time it, or any time in the next two hours. The points of arrival and departure on the tidal pattern (as shown on figure 2, bottom) can be moved by an hour, or perhaps two, without seriously affecting the options.

That makes better sense in all ways except that it does not fit into Froissart's narrative, which is no matter as we already disagree by a day. Among other things, it reduces the time that Southampton was occupied by the raiders from 21 hours, nine of which were in the daytime, to about sixteen hours, only four or five of which were in the daytime. Halving the period of daytime occupation makes this more nearly consistent with other raids of the period and shines a softer light on Hampshire's speed of response.

## **Defending Southampton**

Usually we are told that everyone ran away who could do so, and as quickly as they could. That was Edward III's early assumption, a week after the raid: 'the enemy plundered and burned and then retired to their galleys without encountering any resistance from the men of those parts.' The keepers of the maritime land had 'basely fled with the men of the said town on the sight of the enemy.'<sup>7</sup> This has to be understood as a first reaction to shock. Edward was a young man, not yet 26, with a straightforward view of the world, quick to interpret failure as treason. Defended in some depth from the Isle of Wight northwards, and with easier targets such as Portsmouth to deflect raiders, Southampton was one of the least vulnerable ports on the south coast. It had been chosen, only a month before, to handle the shipment of 150 tuns of wine to the king.<sup>8</sup> He was abroad, in Flanders, desperately trying to land a telling blow against the French, and fast depleting his borrowed funds in the process, and he expected the important towns of his kingdom to play their part in frustrating the enemy. After the loss of his ships at the Battle of Arnemuiden and the sacking of Southampton a fortnight later, it began to seem that he would be cut off from England at a time when it was wide open to invasion.

Hue Quiéret, the Admiral of France, commanded the raid in person and he knew very well that the defenders had put up a fight. (Getting himself involved in the action was to lead to his death, in 1340, at the battle of Sluys.) A fortnight after the raid, Quiéret explained that he had offered a prize of 100 livres tournois to the first to break into the town. A party of ‘our own esquires and men’ (*nos escuiers et genz propres*) led the way in but were too eager perhaps for they enmeshed themselves in peril. They were saved and supported by a force of Genoese soldiers and sailors, who landed as a second wave (they *secourent et aident les ... gens ou peril où il se mirent*); in grateful recognition of which Quiéret ordered that 100 livres tournois were to be distributed among the Genoese.<sup>9</sup>

This version of events is echoed in two pro-French chronicles, derived from a single source,<sup>10</sup> except that now it is the Genoese who are reinforced by another (third?) wave of attackers: Quiéret, having gathered the men-at-arms in four ships, approached a town called Southampton; and met strong resistance. Then the Genoese sallied forth and fought so fiercely against the townspeople that they stormed the town-gate—or the harbour (the two texts differ on this one point)—and then the Admiral’s men came to the help of the Genoese and took the town.

These are not the only intimations that the attacking forces suffered losses. One other French chronicler, who writes of the Genoese fighting against the people of Southampton, summarises the year 1338—in effect its autumn quarter only—by saying that a very great number of Philip VI’s Genoese galley-troops were killed and slain by the English (*furent mout grant foison de Genevoiz, qui estoient ès gallies comme soudoiers du roy de France, tuez et ochiz des Angloiz*).<sup>11</sup> We must not rely too heavily on this. Though the writer seemingly was a contemporary of the events (the chronicle goes no further than 1339) and though he knew certain important facts, such as the names of the foreign *connestables*, he was based in Paris and sometimes fills the page with mere rumour. So, in this case, he tells us that the Genoese burnt the Southampton suburbs and that the town would also have been burnt if its walls had not been so good and strong (*yceaux Genevoiz ... les faubours ardirent, et la ville eussent arse se lez murs n’eussent esté bons et fors quy y estoient*)—which is nearly the complete opposite of what happened, as we shall see.

Writing from the English side, Laurence Minot<sup>12</sup> also tells of a great struggle, at the end of which the defenders force the raiders to retreat:

they were met / by men who soon stopped their game. / Some were knocked on the head / and died on the spot; / some were seeing stars; / and some had their brains knocked out. / Then they only wanted / to escape’.

Minot is not given his proper due as a reporter by English historians, who miss the many little details that he gets correct—or gets wrong in ways that suggest an access to high-level gossip. Whether or not he wrote all the poems attributed to him,<sup>13</sup> he may very well have been the Laurenzio Mynotz or Loreng de Minguot who acquired valuable parts of Crécy Forest, to whom Edward III remitted some of the purchase money still owing,<sup>14</sup> and who would have been dispossessed when the French seized Ponthieu in 1337. He may have been

related to the king's butler, Michael Minot or Miniot, who regularly features in the rolls of the time, or Thomas Minot, the king's notary.<sup>15</sup> If they manage not to ignore him totally, English historians do him the disservice of attaching his lines to the events of the following day, when the raiders returned to the ships. Though he may conflate the two days' activity, Minot is principally describing the fighting near the beginning, when the town's defenders met the raiders and fought against them.

In much the same way as Minot spins the story, but with even more bias towards the defence perhaps, the *Anonimale* and *Lanercost* chronicles describe a landing at Southampton from two of the enemy's ships. In this version, the invaders find themselves surrounded and are all killed.<sup>16</sup> Though they date the attack to 1335, which cannot be right, the two chronicles contain many plausible details, as we shall see, and the extermination of the invaders could be an echo of what actually threatened the esquires, but with the outcome changed to allow an English triumph.

In summary, three separate sources apart from Quiéret, each individually questionable to differing extents but more convincing when taken together, indicate that the defenders inflicted many casualties in the course of a hard fight.

In the weeks following the raid, Edward seems to have quietly altered his understanding of what happened. He shut up after enquiries into the facts; which is a lesson most historians of the French Raid have yet to learn. The keepers of the maritime land had been accused not only of crippling venality but also of running away as soon as the enemy was sighted, thereby wholly failing to do their appointed duty, which was to oversee the protection of the coast and the coastal towns. However, only days later, the king appointed two of them, John de Scures and Thomas Cowdray, as keepers of Southampton.<sup>17</sup> Scures, sheriff of Hampshire since 1321, was a capable administrator, having learned his business during the troubled years at the end of Edward II's reign. He was an obvious choice, but not if deep suspicion ruled the king.

The keepers of the maritime land worked with four arrayers who were charged with raising all the fencible men in the county (knights, esquires and others) and equipping them with suitable mounts and armour. The arrayers were to lead that force wherever the keepers directed. As it first seemed to the king and his full council, the men-at-arms and archers who had been appointed to defend the coast simply were not there. The officials had accepted bribes and allowed them to go home, and they had pocketed the wages;<sup>18</sup> nor had any attempt been made later to fight the raiders. Official crookedness was likely enough: Gorski<sup>19</sup> devotes an entire chapter to the complexities of 'shrieval corruption.' However, again the king quickly showed his confidence in the men on the spot, for when Cowdray and Scures were unable to accept the keepership of Southampton, he appointed two of the arrayers, John de Palton and John de Buckland.<sup>20</sup>

Eight days after the raid, the king and council were ordering an inquisition, alleging that 'the enemy plundered and burned ... and then retired to their galleys without meeting any resistance from the men of those parts.'<sup>21</sup> If that enquiry happened, it must have proved that

there had been resistance; and, despite Edward's threats, no-one was found to be 'most guilty' and jailed, nor were there any others that received an appropriately lesser punishment. Platt suggests that the imprisonment of Nicholas de Moundenard in the Tower of London was really because of his failure to defeat the French Raid: 'If the fall of the town were not blamed on him directly, it can only have been because there were others at least as guilty as he.'<sup>22</sup> That is a wild surmise: Moundenard's punishment was statedly for committing numerous frauds against the king over the years of which he was indeed guilty. It was compounded perhaps by the fact that he was extremely wealthy and could be pressured into underwriting the expenses of building a town wall. For example, required to make good what he had embezzled, he was also fined £40 'to be paid for the works in enclosing the town of Southampton and in wages to the men staying in garrison there, or otherwise at the king's will.'<sup>23</sup> However, no-one was punished for the sacking of the town because, by July 1339, when Moundenard was imprisoned, it had become clear that there were no guilty people. Shortly before, in March 1339, five months after Edward had taken back the direct government of the town, those officials who had been in charge at the time of the raid were restored to power, under the same mayoralty of Nicholas Sampson. That is not the action of a king who felt himself betrayed by their incompetence and cowardice. It completely reverses his initial estimation that

the mayor, bailiffs and men of that town, holding it at fee farm to be kept safely for the king's use, ... abandoned it on the coming of certain aliens in galleys, ... to the dishonour of the king and realm.<sup>24</sup>

## **The Precursor**

Southampton had been raided recently, in 1321, by its neighbours along the coast. What happened on that occasion gives some idea of the tactics employed by the defenders in 1338. The earlier raid is often represented as a grabbing of the chance to damage a trading rival of the Cinque Ports, while the realm was diverted by the Despenser Wars. The *Annales Paulini* speak of 'the sailors of Winchelsea, ablaze with the fuel of envy at the town of Southampton,'<sup>25</sup> and a petition, presented in 1321/2 by two Dorset merchants whose ship had been plundered off Portsmouth the day that the raid began, named the leaders as several important citizens of Winchelsea as well as 'other unknown men of the Cinque Ports.'<sup>26</sup> In fact, the raid seems to have mingled greed and private war with the business of a hostile state very much as the 1338 raid did.<sup>27</sup> The barons, bailiffs and sailors of Winchelsea had 'promised that they would go by water in the king's assistance,' while he dealt with his enemies on land.<sup>28</sup> According to a petition from the true men of Southampton, presented early in the following reign,<sup>29</sup> the raiders had been led by Robert Batail, who was a baron of the Cinque Ports and Edward's admiral, and his pretext had been that the townspeople supported the Earl of Lancaster, one of the opponents of the king. Then Edward, having arrived at Portchester four days after the attack,

sent the Community of Southampton to Portchester Castle, and imprisoned them there, and made them swear that they would make no case or bring suit against the men of the Cinque Ports for the damages and misdeeds; and he promised to compensate the said men of Southampton for all their damages, which he never did

In May 1322, in another display of partiality, he pardoned Batail for all offences committed on land or sea.<sup>30</sup> It may be telling that the men of Southampton waited until a new king was on the throne before they petitioned parliament.

Like the raid of 1338, that of 1321 caused great losses, totalling £8,000 or more it was reckoned.<sup>31</sup> When the raiders appeared, Southampton's burgesses had offered two of the town's best ships, fully equipped, as ransom, but the men of Winchelsea, despising both the men of Southampton and the offer they had made, maliciously burnt fifteen of the town's ships, then two more the following day.<sup>32</sup> Platt guesses that the claim was 'almost certainly ... exaggerated.'<sup>33</sup> If so, at £470 per ship-with-gear-and-cargo, it was no more than the going rate for exaggeration. In 1328, the loss in France of four ships, with their gear and cargo, affected Southampton merchants statedly to a total amount of £2,020.<sup>34</sup>

The two raids differ in one important respect. When the men of Southampton petitioned Edward III, they alleged only that the raiders burnt the said men's ships and the contents. No buildings were described as damaged or looted, no-one was reported to have been injured or killed. Yet we can be confident that if the two sides had met, blood would have been spilled. As a generality, mariners were said to be brutally violent, 'their wickedness greater than other men's,' according to a guide for confessors that probably dates to 1344:

not only do they kill clergy and laymen when they are on land, but also when they are at sea they engage in savage piracy (*piraticum exercent pravitatem*), seizing other people's goods, especially those belonging to merchants crossing the sea, and cruelly they kill them.<sup>35</sup>

In particular, the rolls of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century are punctuated with references to just that sort of mayhem. Barely a month before the men of Winchelsea raided Southampton, Edward II had expressed his concern that the 'the great dissension that has lately arisen between the barons of the Cinque Ports and the ... men and mariners of western parts' had resulted in 'homicides, depredations, and burning of ships and other damages.'<sup>36</sup> The following year, in 1322, arguments between Venetian sailors and Southampton residents escalated to 'men slain on both sides.'<sup>37</sup>

It seems therefore that neither side could get at the other. Southampton held the town and Winchelsea controlled the water, for a couple of days. There is little in the documentation to suggest that a landing was attempted. According to the annals, the men of Winchelsea approached the *villa* of Southampton and took control of the *portus*. The switch of terms may have been no more than the elegant variation often found in texts of the time—for example, Richard Lescot writes of a force raiding the port or town of Portsmouth:<sup>38</sup> *portus seu villa in*



*Anglia*—but perhaps it defines a real difference in function. The *portus* or ‘harbour’ in that case would have included the whole of West Bay, now reclaimed and home to furniture stores (figure 3). It would have been the same as the *havre de hantonne* that the French raiders first came to, according to Froissart. Platt writes that the ships burnt by the raiders were ‘drawn up on the strand,’<sup>39</sup> but the original account does not inevitably imply this: *naves ... cum anchoratae fuerunt ad terram*, the ships were held with anchors to the land. The annalist indulges in pretty phrases, and surely all he means here is that the ships were at anchor.

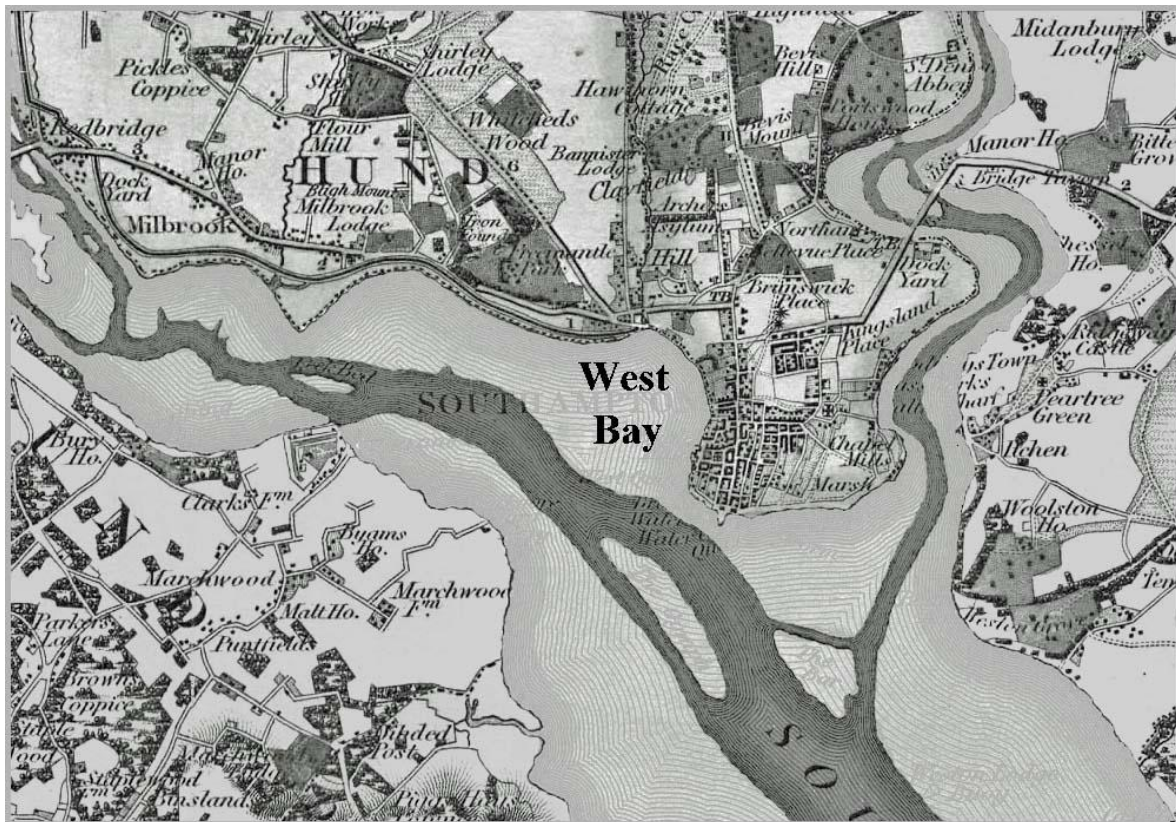


Figure 3. Wet, intertidal and dry (after Greenwood 1826).

The lessons learned were of mixed value. The town’s defences needed improving in places, but a large enemy force, led by a seasoned fighter, did not effect a landing in the town. The waterside held. That was a comfort to cling to in the next reign. Whatever hopes they had under the new king, they could expect little of England’s naval forces charged to protect the south coast. In 1336, Edward III was entrusting the preparation of a fleet for war against the Scots and their allies to the same people who had been leaders in the 1321 raid, who remained too important for any monarch to discard, and who would never be active defenders of their trading rivals.<sup>40</sup>

### Natural Barriers

Other factors will have helped to limit the places where the men of Winchelsea might confront the men of Southampton. Before reclamation and dredging, the lowest reaches of the

Test and Itchen changed in size and shape according to the ebb and flow of the tides, and an expanse of mud was revealed as the tide receded (figure 3). The mud shaded from land to water in often unpredictable ways. It might be a firm beach in one place and a sink-hole in another. The adventures of three men in 1844 provide an example. When their rowing boat was caught on the edge of the mud and swamped, they cautiously belly-flopped down and rolled towards safety. Two of the three discovered that crawling and walking upright were possible ('they threw themselves along, ploughing in the mud, sometimes their limbs sinking so deep that they despaired of dragging them out again') and they laboured across about 200m to a rescue boat. The third man made his own way, rolling for about 400m 'through mud, creeks and other impediments to the shore.' All three were exhausted by their efforts. When they were landed at Southampton quay the two rescued by boat lacked the strength to get themselves home unaided and needed a day to recover. The third man, who was acknowledged to be much the strongest, was obliged to lie still for a half-hour until he regained the use of his legs and feet.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 4. The cliff at Portland Terrace, looking south.

Raiders in the 14<sup>th</sup> century could not have moved across the mud in any kind of formation, and they would have been defenceless when they reached solid land. Wearing armour would have only increased their troubles. Of course, most of these problems disappeared when the rivers were high, though a vessel anchored close inshore risked being stranded by the ebbing tide; for up to six hours in the northernmost parts of West Bay. Quite apart from other reasons to be anxious and watchful, the quirks and vagaries of Southampton waters will have troubled the men of Winchelsea as they approached their goal.

Another natural feature limiting the areas of potential conflict is an escarpment that runs a little way back from the western shore (figures 8 & 11). Of little importance at first, it

quickly increases in size to the north so that in the St Michael's area it is around 3m tall; and further north it becomes a serious obstacle, easily defended (figure 4).

## **The Land Defences**

Having corrected the date and time of the French Raid and disposed of the myth that the townspeople ran away without a fight, we now look at the defences, beginning with the landside, supposedly much more strongly defended than on the waterside. In a short essay, only a few pieces of the archaeological evidence can be looked at, so, just this once, let us take it as read that, by the time of the French Raid, some gateways and perhaps one or two towers existed in some form or other on the landside<sup>41</sup> and look instead at the stretches of wall filling the gaps. Even that is a complex matter, where much has to be skated over. Despite several historians' attempts to apply fragments of the evidence to large and entire units, the growth and development of the defences appear to have been every bit as localised as the archaeology implies; and also may have been influenced by whatever authority controlled the adjacent land, whether the town itself or one of the religious houses.

The improvement of the defences in the south-east corner of the town demonstrates this. In a sequence of events that has no close parallel elsewhere, we find the God's House accounts making reference first in 1322 to an intrusive ditch dug recently straight through the hospital's curtilages, then in both 1324 and 1326 to 'the new wall of the town.'<sup>42</sup>

Strange to say, the 'new wall of the town' in the 1320s is unlikely to have run on its present line. Payment is recorded in the God's House accounts for 1325/6 for the making of an earthen wall from the pigeon house to the wall of the Friars Minor, and reference is also made to a wall (evidently constructed of earth, because covered with straw) on the other side of the pigeon house. The pigeon house was later converted into a half-drum defensive tower and still exists (figure 5). Therefore we know almost precisely where those earthen walls stood. They coincide with what is now the stone-built town wall. That is the problem; the two sets of walls cannot have been identical in the 1320s when the pigeon house and the walls either side of it were God's House's responsibility while, as its name suggests, the new wall of the town was the town's responsibility, along with the new ditch. The walls must have existed separately. At the very least they must have been legally distinct. One might conceive of a new wall set up by God's House as a boundary just inside the new town wall, and the eventual coalescence of the two features, but clearly they were still separate entities in the 1320s.

The new wall of the town that appears in the God's House accounts very likely was one of the features that Edward II referred to in 1326, when he granted Southampton's burgesses the right to levy a custom on all goods traded into and out of the town, because they had 'by the king's command started to make the quay and wall of the town, and have expended great charges over these, but they are not able of themselves to complete the work.'<sup>43</sup> The location of those features is unstated, but we do not have to suppose they were all in the same part of the town. The burgesses would not have been building a quay on God's

House property, but they certainly had just upgraded the defences in the south-east corner, and that will have cost them money. It is the only piece of defensive work that we can be sure of identifying from the first years of the 1320s.



Figure 5. The town wall and half-drum tower.

Platt makes the point that the works named in 1326 reflected ‘a new sense of military urgency’<sup>44</sup> that was occasioned by the raid of 1321. More than that, we should add, the threat in 1321 was so immediate that it forced the digging of a new ditch straight through God’s House’s curtilages. The emergency was essentially nautical, the raiders arriving in ships and burning the town’s ships, and it is counter-intuitive to argue that it required a strengthening of the landside defences. However, the people of Southampton had lost control of the water, which meant they could have done little to prevent a landing away from the town and the gathering of a force to assault from the north or east. It would have made sense to strengthen the defences where the greater threat was thought to lie, which always was inland (as far as the townspeople were concerned, if there was an exposed backside, it projected inland, not across the water). Nor does the damage inflicted on God’s House appear unusually extreme. In France, in the 1350s at least, when invading English armies were the danger, entire churches might be demolished, if their survival was seen as a defensive flaw, and all or some of their grounds appropriated into the defensive system—as happened for instance at Reims and Troyes.<sup>45</sup>

The north-east corner provides a different sequence of events. Figure 6 is a simplified drawing of a section cut through the eastern town defences, a little to the south of Polymond Tower. It shows an earth bank, rampart 1, cut through when a stone wall was inserted, and overlain by more soil, which forms rampart 2. The second rampart is shown here smaller than it was published, in the belief (evidently not shared by Wachter, the excavator, or Platt, his editor) that further layers of the bank were built up in a rampart-3 phase. Happily, that

argument can be set to one side, for rampart 1 is the important feature here, and there is no dispute about the basics. It comprised redeposited natural soils, presumably the upcast of a ditch that was being dug alongside. That will have disappeared as a feature when later and much larger ditches were dug, so its dimensions and shape are matters of speculation: shown here is perhaps the largest it could have been, assuming that not all of the natural soil was heaped up to form the bank. It would have been Southampton's only defensive ditch on the east side at the time of the French Raid. Despite some tortuous attempts to suggest otherwise,<sup>46</sup> the written evidence unambiguously shows that the second ditch still did not exist as late as 1360, when Peverel recommended that 'a double ditch should be made round the town from end to end,' adding in a more personal letter that the people were angry at what he had been obliged to clear away to improve the defences, but others desired 'another ditch round the town on the land side.'<sup>47</sup> Supposing that the second ditch was dug after 1360 would better fit the overall picture. Peverel and those who succeeded him as keeper of the town will have familiarised themselves with the layout of Calais, a town that Edward III had taken in 1347, and still held. It had been a tough nut to crack and its defences included double ditches on all three land sides.

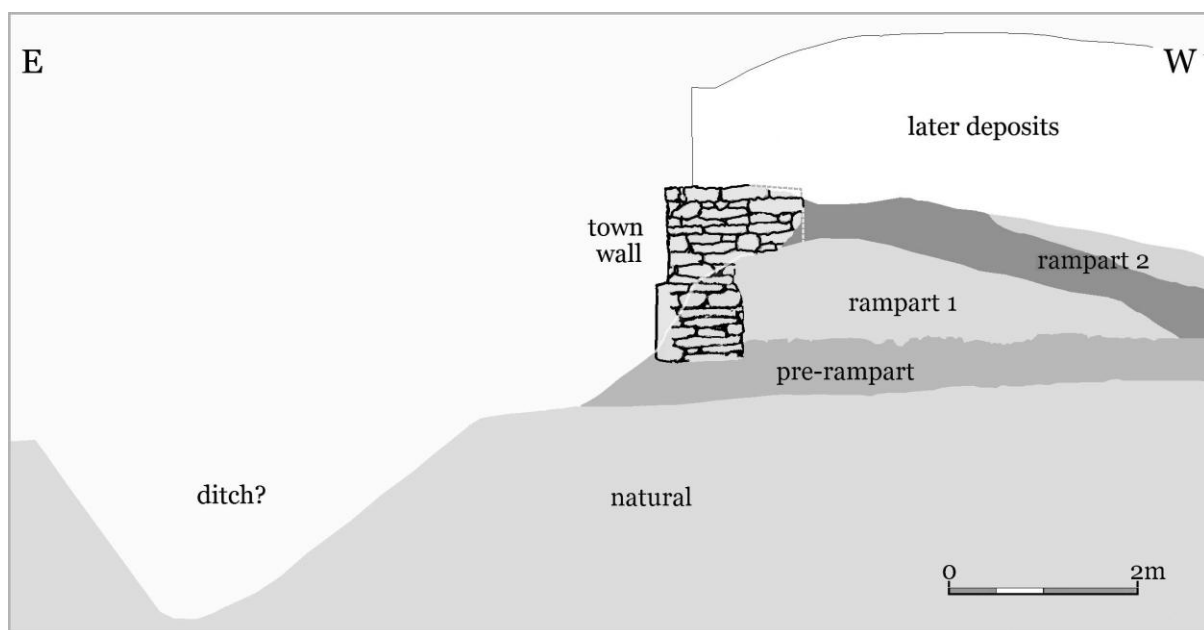


Figure 6. A section through the eastern defences (after Wacher 1975, fig 40).

Trying to explain the small size of the bank (only 1.4m high), Wacher argues that we are seeing a feature much reduced by erosion. It is true that there would have been some settling of the bank after it had been heaped up, but that would have ended relatively soon, and there is little sign of erosion. Indeed, visible on the upper edge of rampart 1 was a thin turf line, which represents a deliberate preservation of its bulk: at God's House in the 1320s earthen walls were covered with straw or turves, and sometimes also plastered.<sup>48</sup> The coincidence of the upper level of rampart 1 with a step-change in the town wall suggests that rampart 1 was not substantially larger at the time the stones were laid—which occurred very soon after the French Raid, it will later be argued.

Rampart 1 is only loosely dated. The features sealed beneath it contain a small amount of 12<sup>th</sup>-century pottery. So we might link its origins, as Wachter does, to King John's grant of £100 in 1206 'for the closing in of his town' or to a series of murage grants running from 1260 to 1275.<sup>49</sup> Rampart 2, which overlies rampart 1, probably originated as spoil from a scouring of the ditch that cannot be dated to earlier than the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps the 15<sup>th</sup>. Its lowest layer, 'grey clay' according to Wachter, looks to have been a mixture of rubbish and cess. Initially it would have built up elsewhere, probably in the town ditch—ditches being notorious for the way they attracted filth—then it would have been heaped onto the bank. The layer above it, a redeposited-natural soil, perhaps is evidence of a limited recutting of the ditch once it had been cleared. The rubbish layer contained a large piece of a Dutch pot that is very unlikely to have been in circulation earlier than the late 14<sup>th</sup> century (Wachter says the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, but he is being too generous; the pot could easily date to any part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, if not even later). The original section fudges the junction between the town wall and rampart 2, but there is some photographic evidence that shows a nicely squared-off inner-wall face against which rampart 2 butts.<sup>50</sup>

According to this interpretation, differing from Wachter's in many respects, rampart 1 was a feature of the landside defence, not only at the time of the French Raid but also for many decades after. In response to the raid, a stone wall was added by cutting back the bank. Where it rose higher, the masonry was widened to sit on the remains of the bank, faced inside and out and giving a false impression of its overall thickness. Rampart 2 was a later addition, no earlier than the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Interpreted in this way, the town's defences at the time of the French Raid comprised little more than a breastwork running behind a correspondingly small ditch, and remained so for decades afterward. These would not have discouraged anyone, let alone a force of determined combatants. What is missing from the picture is the wooden superstructure that would have given pause for thought to quick raiders (as distinct from besiegers, who still would have been put to very little trouble). Wooden defences could be very strong, when new, as figure 9 shows, and the royal Edwards all believed in the protective virtues of wood, where stone was scarce. In 1338, for instance, when he was urging the people of London to get on with completing their defences, Edward III told them to build in stone or with boards.<sup>51</sup> As late as 1459/60 Southampton's burgesses were complaining that, because the stone walls were so inadequate, they were forever doomed to rely on earth and wood, making 'scaffolds of timber for men to stand on ... which timber ... yearly wasteth & consumeth by force of weathering.'<sup>52</sup>

## **The Landing Place**

Before considering the waterside defences, or their supposed absence, we first have to confirm that the waterside was where the attack on Southampton began. This may seem a long-winded proof of what everyone already 'knows.' However, little can be taken for granted, the primary sources do not spell out where the attack began, and in fact the course that events took was extraordinary. Medieval illustrations of an assault launched from the sea usually show the attackers, having landed elsewhere, skirmishing with the defenders outside



the town. Throughout history, it has been known or has had to be relearned that assaulting a town straight from the sea tends to fail spectacularly. Except where the attacker has an enormous advantage, the defender possesses the resources to contain a direct amphibious attack and eliminate it. Landing a hostile force inside Southampton was close to madness, therefore. The unlikelihood of such a gamble succeeding may have stoked Edward III's anger at the sacking of Southampton, and enforced his accusations of incompetence and cowardice—and even of collusion with the raiders.<sup>53</sup>

Well over a century ago, Davies was the first to draw attention to something that apparently reinforces Froissart's story of the raiders breaking in on a Sunday while the people were at mass:<sup>54</sup> less than a year after the raid, permission was given to reconcile St Michael's Church because it had been polluted by homicide and the shedding of blood.<sup>55</sup> The bloodshed probably was a direct result of the French Raid, as he suggests, but that is not quite the same as saying that the victims, therefore, had been celebrating mass. There are other explanations, explored further below, that do not depend on the raid starting that Sunday. Though several of Southampton's churches suffered damage in the raid, it seems that blood was shed only in St Michael's. Apparently, it was the scene of early fighting and the other churches were not. The game, therefore, requires plotting a route to St Michael's Church that does not first pass by another church; relying on Speed's map for its network of streets and the location of churches or chapels, but with the addition of several lanes that Speed does not show, one that did not exist by his time, one that was too narrow to notice, and two that were implied but not marked (see figure 7; the additions are all edged in a darker grey). Leaving aside some fantastic arabesques, it will be found that the only feasible routes begin with a landing on the stretch of shore delimited by the two arrows. It is surely no coincidence that in 1360 Henry Peverel, commissioned to suggest ways of remedying defects in the town's defences, drew attention to precisely this part of the town and recommended that an earth bank be emplaced, running from Pilgrims Pit to the Bugle Street gate.<sup>56</sup> (The editors understand Peverel's recommended feature not as an earth bank but as a ditch, which makes little sense in this context. In Anglo-Norman, the language in which Peverel's report is written, a *fosse* can mean a ditch, a rampart, an embankment, or the combination of an earthwork and ditch. He will have meant there to be a substantial bank defending the shore where raiders had previously landed).

### **The Defensible Waterfront**

Nonetheless, the people of Southampton were not doing anything very unusual when they neglected to build a wall along the waterside. That was an occasional practice in English towns in the Middle Ages, where the adjacent river or sea functioned as an extravagant wet moat. It must be emphasised that this was an English town-plan: elsewhere in the British Isles and on the Continent, where the margins of safety had proved to be much narrower, people walled themselves in more thoroughly.

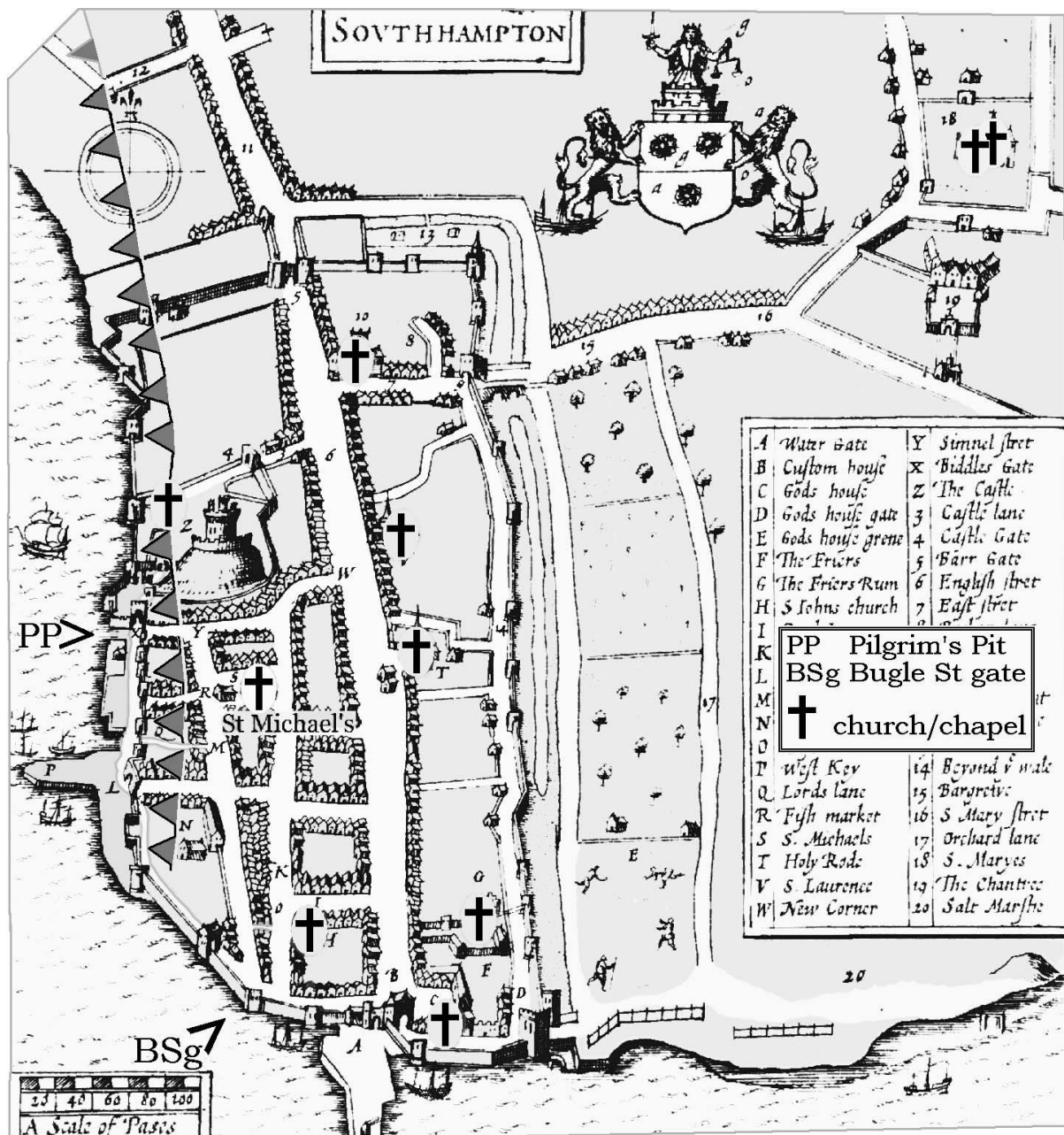


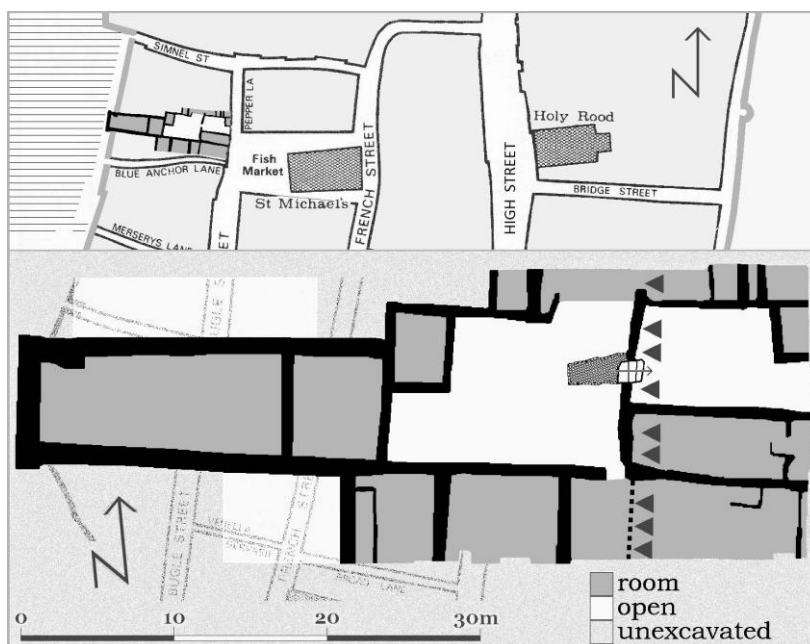
Figure 7. (based on Speed 1611).

Natural factors defined Southampton's basic layout. The south-western corner of the peninsula was the only place where intertidal mud and a tall escarpment did not interfere significantly with the shipping of goods. Its being therefore the most crowded part of the town (figure 7) complicated the problems any assailant would meet. We cannot see the many lanes and buildings opening onto quays as a strong feature of the town—there are good reasons for Peverel's recommendations<sup>57</sup> that many of the entry-points be blocked up and the building-frontages turned into dead walls—but the waterfont was never as porous as many historians assume.

It has been argued that the stone-built houses of Southampton and certain other English towns 'indicate a concern with security [but] were not seriously defensible in any real



sense.<sup>58</sup> That is true, but it does not make them any weaker than Southampton's town wall on the landside, which properly equipped besieging forces would have found a pushover. These labyrinthine properties could have frustrated a raiding force that entered them, dissipating the strength of an attack, and they must have been largely out of bounds until resistance had been overcome. An example is illustrated as figure 8 (the original site plan has been amended to incorporate this writer's observations of the site). The buildings ran from the quays in the west to St Michael's Square in the east. Anyone entering the house at its western end would first have had to make his way across a ground floor stacked with merchandise, but with little idea of the layout that had yet to be faced, including, four-fifths of the way across, the unwelcome surprise of a 3m-high cliff, vertically walled off and topped by buildings except for the one access point up a cobbled ramp and a flight of stairs. In this case, therefore, the intruder would surely opt instead for access to the town by way of Blue Anchor Lane, which ran along the southern edge of the property.



Access may have been barred. Platt reminds us about the gates at the bottom of Bugle and French Street, and mentions 'others [that] protected the approaches from the line of the western shore.'<sup>59</sup> That is to claim more than the sources indicate. The archives contain plentiful references to the Bugle Street and French Street gates, datable to 1330 or thereabouts,<sup>60</sup> and the town

Figure 8. Medieval properties on the western shore, SOU 122 (after Daniells 1973).

gate that we know as Biddle's Gate is mentioned as a landmark in a deed of 1331—'the town gate by "Pilgrimmes putte," in the way towards the castle'—but only those three.<sup>61</sup> We can guess that the other entries along the western side of the town were barred, but at present there is no direct evidence. According to one chronicle, already mentioned in passing,<sup>62</sup> Southampton fell when one of its gates was stormed: the Genoese sallied forth and fought so fiercely against the townspeople that they stormed the town-gate (*li Genevois saillirent avant et se combatirent tant à ceulx de la ville que par force il gainnièrent la porte*). However in the Latin version of the same narrative,<sup>63</sup> the Genoans stormed the port or harbour (*vi pugnandi lucrati sunt portum*). So, in one text, they took a town-gate, a *porte*, in the other they took the *portus*. Either reading makes good sense, but only one is possible. As it makes slightly better sense to record that the taking of the town followed the forcing of an entry into it, this writer prefers the French-language version—in which case the wording of the Latin text would originally have been *vi pugnandi lucrati sunt portam* ('they stormed the gate'),

and the copyist has mistaken one letter in the key word, influenced perhaps by the *in portu Hantonie* of the previous sentence.

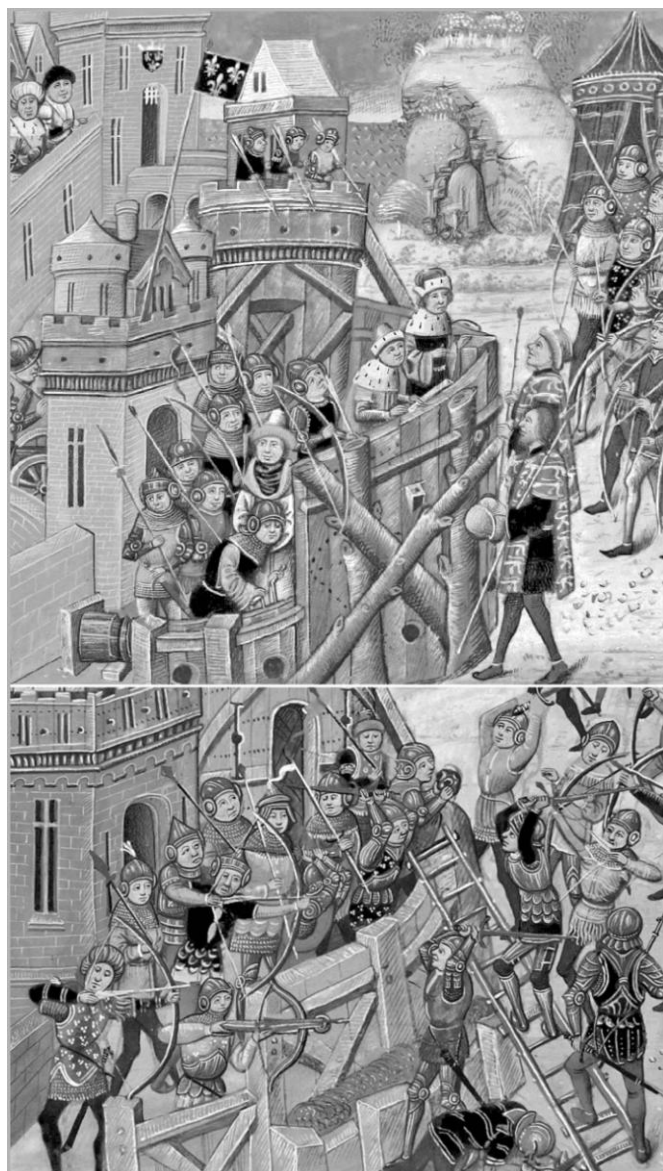


Figure 9. How the English came and skirmished at the bulwark in front of Troyes, and how they took it by force of arms (BL Royal MS 14 E IV).

Elsewhere in Southampton, a gate meant a gatehouse, so do we assume that the waterside gates also were elaborate structures? And would they have been built of stone or of wood? Any answer will have to be archaeological, and in the uncertain future, but that does not stop the supposing. The gate at the end of French Street, which lay next to a part of Tenement 267<sup>64</sup> was *Barflete yat* in 1334, named from Richard Bareflete, who once had a tenement close by, and *la fludegate* in 1340, two years after the French Raid.<sup>65</sup> Tenement 267 was destroyed in the raid, but we have no clear lead on what happened to the gate. If it also was burned, being a wooden structure, it had quickly been rebuilt. In Thomas de Beauchamp's accounts of autumn 1339, we find such expenses as 'four planks for making an arch at the new gate against the sea,'<sup>66</sup> which might refer to the reinstatement of a destroyed feature. On the other hand, if *la fludegate* survived, largely unharmed, it may have always been a stone gatehouse; and Beauchamp's new gate

has to have been erected at another site. Were wooden gatehouses, located elsewhere, subsequently rebuilt in stone? Westgate, for example, stands at one end of a route from West Quay directly into the heart of the town, a route that may have been in use since the Late Saxon period.<sup>67</sup> Though it does not appear in the records until late in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as *Florentstoutgate*,<sup>68</sup> and though Faulkner finds nothing in the present structure earlier than the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>69</sup> it would seem the obvious location of some sort of earlier wooden gate or barbican.

And we must find a place for a timber barbican that the town had built 'against the sea.' Its first recorded reference, on March 20 1336, seems to suggest that it was not

particularly old: the inhabitants ‘have built a defence called a barbican; ... and they now intend to build a barbican of stone for the better defence of their town.’<sup>70</sup> It is not stated whether it was meant to replace the earlier feature or to augment it, protecting another entry. At all events, it was unfinished by 1341, when Edward III renewed the grant, shortly before the king’s council began to suspect that the men of Southampton ‘had converted such money to their own use for the most part.’<sup>71</sup>

That is not to say that it never was built. If the work subsequently was paid for through the grant of murage, not barbicanage, it would be invisible in the records. This argument is further distorted by our uncertainty as to what the burgesses and the king thought they meant when they referred to a barbican. In the Middle Ages just as now, technical terms were loosely employed by amateurs, anyway evolved new meanings, and so might be variously understood. One of the following three interpretations is the most likely to be correct: again, archaeologists will have to discover which.

Professionally speaking, a barbican should be a semi-circular outwork that shields an entrance. Figure 9 reproduces details from two 15<sup>th</sup>-century illustrations of Jean de Wavrin’s *Recueil des Croniques d’Engleterre*, both purporting to show the one feature. With some minor alterations, Wavrin is following Froissart word-for-word at this point, so figure 9 may be taken as illustrating Froissart also. Both chroniclers call it a demi-lune-shaped fortification of large timbers. Southampton’s barbican may have resembled either of the two idealised examples except for the cannon and cannon ports; built with stout timbers, and reinforced with tree trunks (as in the upper picture) or with an earth-filled revetment (as in the lower picture). It is taller than a quick glance might suggest: the heralds crane their necks upwards, the attackers deploy a scaling ladder, and a defender finds it high enough to drop rocks on the enemy. If Southampton’s barbican stood at the outlet of one of the lanes, it might have been replaced eventually by a stone gateway.

However, though we assert that the pictures illustrate a barbican, we do not know that the people of Southampton would have agreed with us. The thing represented in figure 9 is never called a barbican by Froissart/Wavrin. It is repeatedly called a *bastide* in many of the manuscripts, a fortification. Perhaps originating as a scribal error, in other manuscripts it is sometimes called a *bastille*, meaning a fortified tower, a small fortress, or a fortified outpost. *Bastille* is the preferred term used in the manuscript illustrated here, though it is twice also called a bulwark—*bollewerq*—once in the text and once in a chapter heading.

‘Bulwark’ is another word that skitters away from simple definitions, which luckily can be ignored here, except to note that it may have functioned in a similar way to a barbican, and sometimes perhaps was the same thing. Lydgate in his *Troy Book* (written 1412–20) provides a lengthy description of the city’s defences, including these lines:

Barbicans and also bulwarks huge / Afore the town made for high refuge, / If need  
arose, early and also late.

At the latest by the the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Caxton used the term, a barbican could be almost any circular defensive feature, actually or effectively free-standing. Both

illustrations of Troyes' outer defence show a wooden tower at the far corner, supported with large timber props (the lower picture has been tightly cropped and here shows only the base and the buttress). What Caxton described as a barbican, professionals might also have called a 'boulevard,' a French term derived from the English 'bulwark,' if they were not opting instead to call it a 'bastille' (see above). Thirdly, also by the 15<sup>th</sup> century at the latest, 'barbican' had expanded in meaning to include the gateway that was screened. Perhaps a timber gateway on the waterside, misnamed a barbican, was rebuilt in stone after all.

In brief, Southampton's defences at the time of the French Raid will have comprised a variety of elements, barriers that were natural or deliberately constructed or fortuitously effective. Figure 10 sketches a possible layout.

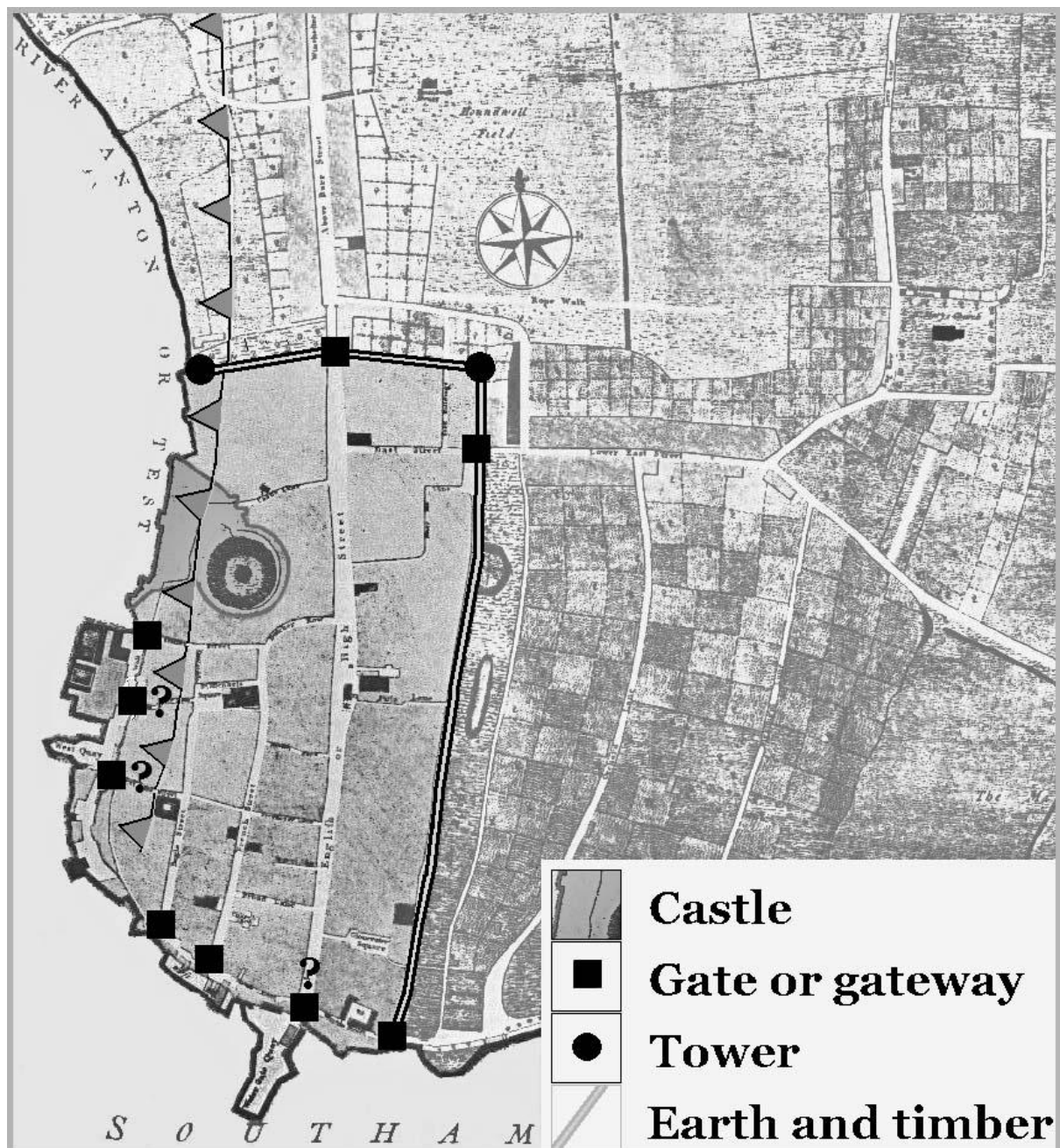


Figure 10. Possible layout of the defences in 1338 (base map after Mazell 1771).

## The Town's Defenders

Having established that the people of Southampton did stand and fight, let us try and add some more detail; numbers, armaments, organisation. Platt, who accepts the notion that the inhabitants ran away at the first opportunity, argues that a systematised defence of the town by its people developed only after the French Raid when 'there was now at least some pattern to determine the limits of personal responsibility.'<sup>72</sup> That is unconvincing. Unless Southampton's ditches, banks and gates were entirely symbolic, there had to have been people in place at times of trouble, for the defences were next to useless without defenders, and so many would have been needed that the townspeople must have had their assigned positions, as soon as there was somewhere to defend from. Guarding the town was a corporate responsibility, divided into individual obligations to pay for construction or repairs and also to serve, 'every man to his ward, where his life must be pledged,' as the matter is put in *The Siege of Thebes*.<sup>73</sup>

It is likely that about 100 to 150 were ready to defend the town at the time of the raid, the numbers been bulked out by greater numbers; scarecrows of limited worth who usually went unrecorded. Only once in the 14<sup>th</sup> century do we catch sight of them, in 1360, after Henry Peverel had reviewed the townspeople in arms. There were, he reported, '30 well armed, 30 others armed, 30 archers, and others with clubs up to 200.'<sup>74</sup> Those clubbers were not categorised as being armed, nor can they have possessed much protective gear. Peverel was not bothered to count them accurately, but as a professional soldier he must have seen that there were enough to make them a factor in the town's defence, if only for as long as there was a rampart to stand on and a wall to shelter behind. All of the casualties described in Minot's verses were bashed on the head, so wielding a club may have been effective enough. However, in Peverel's professional estimation, the balance of forces was wrong: 'if the town is to be well guarded in times of war, there should be 100 men-at-arms and 100 archers.' As we are about to see, this defensive imbalance very probably existed at the time of the French Raid.

The assigning of every man to his ward is not properly documented in Southampton until the *Terrier* of 1454,<sup>75</sup> by which time the arrangements had been refined and put to the test. However, Moffett draws attention to the provisions for the keeping of the town that are collected in Southampton's Oak Book and argues ingeniously that 'the scheme changed little between 1300 and 1454.'<sup>76</sup> We can go further: there is enough evidence to suggest that the numbers of people allotted to the town's defence were directly proportional to the extent of its defensive features, in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century as much as in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup>. This was demonstrably the case in 1454, where it was assumed that 472 people would be found, one person every five yards, at each of the 472 loops on the town's defences.<sup>77</sup> That this was only an ideal is confirmed by a letter written soon afterward, in 1459 or 1460, where it was complained that in fact only two-thirds of the force were available:

there been 462 loops [*sic*; an *x* seems to have been omitted from the total *ccccclxxii*] ... to the defence of which loops there cannot be found within this said town 300 of good

and defensible men [people capable of defending; fencible]. More men there been in number which we dare not trust unto, for they been aliens and of divers nations.<sup>78</sup>

RELIGIOUS					
Personal duty		Duty to provide			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	armed men	tot	archers	tot
1		—		—	
4		2	8	4	16
2		2	4	2	4
—	—		—		—
7	—		12		20
tot					
24					
8					
SECULAR					
Personal duty		Duty to provide			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	armed men	tot	archers	tot
2		—		—	
1		—		1	1
2		3	6	—	
9		2	18	—	
18		1	18	—	
6		—		1	6
42		—		—	
—	—		—		—
3	77		42		7
—	—		—		—
10	77		54		27
TOT					

Any comparison with the situation in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century means extrapolating backward from the arrangements of 1339–41, just after the French Raid. In part two of the essay, we shall see that, during the period of greatest perceived danger—February to August 1339—around 150–220 men were thought to be an adequate defensive force, though perhaps only a few more than 100 were in fact available. Dating probably to 1341, when the town was again finding the means to defend itself, a register was drawn up of 87 individuals, noting their duties of payment and of service in the town.<sup>79</sup> It is the duty of service that concerns us here. One was entirely excused; two were excused everything except payment to the defences of Southampton; six had no personal responsibility of service but had to provide armed men and archers (seven of those nine were heads of religious houses); a tenth had to provide an armed man; 35 had personal responsibility and had to provide

Table 1. Individual defensive duties

armed men or archers; and 42 had a responsibility of service only for themselves: Table 1 shows the breakdown of the figures. Two-thirds of those provided were armed men, the rest were archers; a ratio that can also be found in Peverel's review of 1352 (setting aside the clubbers). Including the 77 people who had a personal responsibility for service, the available force was 158-strong. A summary of the numbers at the bottom of the list reads 'more than 120 armed men,' which must omit the archers from the total. At first glance, not acknowledging the contribution of the archers makes little sense, given the increasingly important role they were playing in English armies (and, as we shall later see, as embodied in the garrisons provided in 1339), but it is likely that the townspeople held an older-fashioned idea of combat. Figure 11, which derives from an apocalypse of about 1320–30, is a good illustration of that thinking. Of the eight 'common people' identified by their weapons, only two are archers, who skirmish as individuals. Three have axes and three have swords, one of which is a falchion. The low percentage of archers is anyway consistent with what was being found in reviews of arms elsewhere in the country.<sup>80</sup> The scarcity of archers would have had



one consequence in 1338: the townsmen could not have kept an enemy at a distance, if the enemy was determined to close with them.

As table 1 demonstrates, there was a fairly clear division of responsibilities: 20 of the archers (74%) were to be supplied by six heads of religious houses and 42 of the armed men (78%) were to be supplied by 29 burgesses. Platt gives some examples of what a few of the grander individuals owed,<sup>81</sup> and will not be repeated here. We just have to note that, where he mentions Nicholas Sampson's duty to provide an archer, he is referring to young Sampson. Old Sampson (mayor in 1338) also appears on the register, in fourth place among the burgesses, and he had to provide 60 shillings, to serve in defence, and to provide an armed man.



Figure 11. How the common people will arise against one another and kill their fellows for what they have (Holkham Bible, detail).

Only seven of the archers were to be provided by the townsmen, for where was the place of archery in urban daily life? There were fewer opportunities to employ a bow in the commons and fields outside the town than there were around a village. It has been suggested that even the peasantry was unlikely to be practised in the use of the bow at this time,<sup>82</sup> but archers must still have been easier to find on the estates of the religious houses that appear on this list—Netley Abbey, God's House and Barton Priory (Isle of Wight) for three examples.

Overall, the roster of Southampton's defenders in 1341 is comparable in numbers to the professional garrisons of 1339, intended or actual. There are also clear similarities with the set-up detailed in the 1454 *Terrier*, though the information appears in a different arrangement; by burghal-property-owner in the earlier list (ranked in order of status and size of contribution); and by property-and-occupier in the later list (noted in topographic order).

Burgess draws attention to cases where two or more loops were assigned to the one occupant,<sup>83</sup> and Moffett concludes that

those individuals listed who have multiple loops assigned to them must have had other men, perhaps their servants or tenants, employed in this responsibility as they could not effectively defend these alone.<sup>84</sup>

That surely was the type of arrangement behind the earlier list. Most of the 81 men provided by 44 burgesses will have been junior members of the family and servants, and tenants perhaps. However, there is one outstanding difference. Ideal and actual numbers of defenders in the town were half as many in 1339–41 as they were in 1454–60, despite the fact that Southampton's population was considerably larger in 1339–41, just before the arrival of the Black Death. Platt estimates the pre-plague numbers at around 2,500–2,800 and perhaps 700 or 800 fewer in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> The simplest explanation must be that the number of defenders was calculated according to the number of places to be manned, not the number of people available to man them; and, around the time of the French Raid, Southampton was shielded by roughly half as much defensive wall-and-tower as it later was.

In 1338, taking guard at their appointed positions and preparing to rebuff the enemy, Southampton's defenders will have expected to protect themselves and save their town until help arrived. Those tactics might lose them ships, as in 1321 (a flotilla of galleys hovering offshore was a clear threat of that), but running away could not have seemed an improvement. However, they were about to discover that modern warfare was far more savage than anything they had experienced or anticipated. In the final version of his *Chroniques*, which represents his most considered narrative, if not necessarily his most accurate, Froissart tells how news of the sack of Southampton spread throughout the land. 'Thus the English had it borne home (*sentirent bien*) that the war between France and England had properly begun,' are his final, laconic words.<sup>86</sup> Who taught that lesson?

## **The French**

A French chronicle describes the Norman, Picard and Breton sailors who kept the seas with the Genoese soldiers as those 'who caused much damage to the kingdom of England.'<sup>87</sup> The Normans were foremost in the attack on Southampton. A zealous hatred of the English motivated them<sup>88</sup> and, more importantly, they understood the local seas. They were sailing the Channel as fishermen, as carriers and occasionally as pirates (distinctions that made little sense in the 14<sup>th</sup> century). Among them will have been sailors who had made commercial trips to Southampton, knew the place and had sought out its darker corners. And like Chaucer's shipman they paid no heed to foolish conscience: Harfleur was long known as a base of the most formidable pirates.<sup>89</sup> Those Normans who in 1335 intercepted *la Little Lecheuard* in the mouth of the Seine, killed the master and many of the crew, and stole the cargo of wool that belonged to three Southampton merchants<sup>90</sup> were just the sort of people needed for the 1338 raid. Leure, its trading rival, was quickly becoming the main base of French naval forces in the Channel.<sup>91</sup>



An invasion of England looked increasingly likely after 1336, when Philip VI moved his Mediterranean fleet into the Channel. His uncle, Philip IV, had underwritten the construction of a specialised shipyard and naval base, late in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, at Rouen. Modelled on the great naval centres of the Mediterranean, this *clos des galées* was principally a workshop, arsenal and provisions warehouse for both the land and the naval forces. Several types of ship were also built and maintained there. By 1336, there were 20 galleys and five smaller galliots in the king's service, all of which might have safely overwintered in the galley-houses of the *clos* (there were around 30).

Every type of ship had its peculiarities. 'Each night the galleys make for the land, whereas the sailing ships keep to the main,' says a 15<sup>th</sup>-century biographer.<sup>92</sup> However, this apparent handicap fitted the galleys well for transporting large numbers of combatants over fairly short distances like the English Channel—200 men in a galley and 100 in a galliot.<sup>93</sup> We are warned not to overestimate the ambition of the French kings or the striking power of their ships:

Indeed it would be wrong to interpret the creation and maintenance of the *clos des galées* as the desire to have a fleet always ready to set to sea. In the first place, the ships at the *clos des galées* were never more than a flotilla, at best. Secondly, in the absence of ship-builds [*constructions*] or even repairs carried out during peacetime or during a simple truce, these ships were unseaworthy without advance warning, especially since they had no permanent crews.<sup>94</sup>

Yet the conclusion is still that, though we may be tempted to belittle this shipyard, 'we need to remember that these boats and galleys of under 100 tons ... made England tremble for all of a century.'<sup>95</sup> Relative to the opposition they faced from the English ships, those specialist weapons were a powerful threat. And Edward III knew it. In 1336 and 1337, he was already attempting to concert action against the fleets based in Normandy.<sup>96</sup>

Figure 12 marks those ports stretching along the Channel coast that contemporary records indicate were being used as galley bases. A chronicler details the army that raided Southampton, saying that it comprised those from Leure and from Dieppe.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, in his final version of the *Chroniques*, Froissart writes that the naval forces were stationed at Harfleur and Dieppe, ready for action;<sup>98</sup> all places in Haute Normandie. That concentration was especially ominous. Peaceably trading or aggressively raiding, throughout the Middle Ages a 'natural' destination of ships sailing from there was the English coast around the Solent (returning the compliment, of course, Henry V embarked his army at the Solent ports before crossing to besiege Harfleur in 1415).

## The Genoese

The naval forces that Philip commanded in this sector of the English Channel were about to be massively strengthened as a result of an agreement that was made with Ottone Doria of Genoa on October 25 1337. An earlier attempt to hire Genoese and Sicilian galleys had been

frustrated through Edward's counter-diplomacy and his readiness to pay compensation of 8,000 marks of silver.<sup>99</sup> This time Philip succeeded: Doria undertook to serve with 20 galleys against Edward and Edward's allies for at least three months, longer if the king wished.<sup>100</sup> In the event, one galley was wrecked en route.

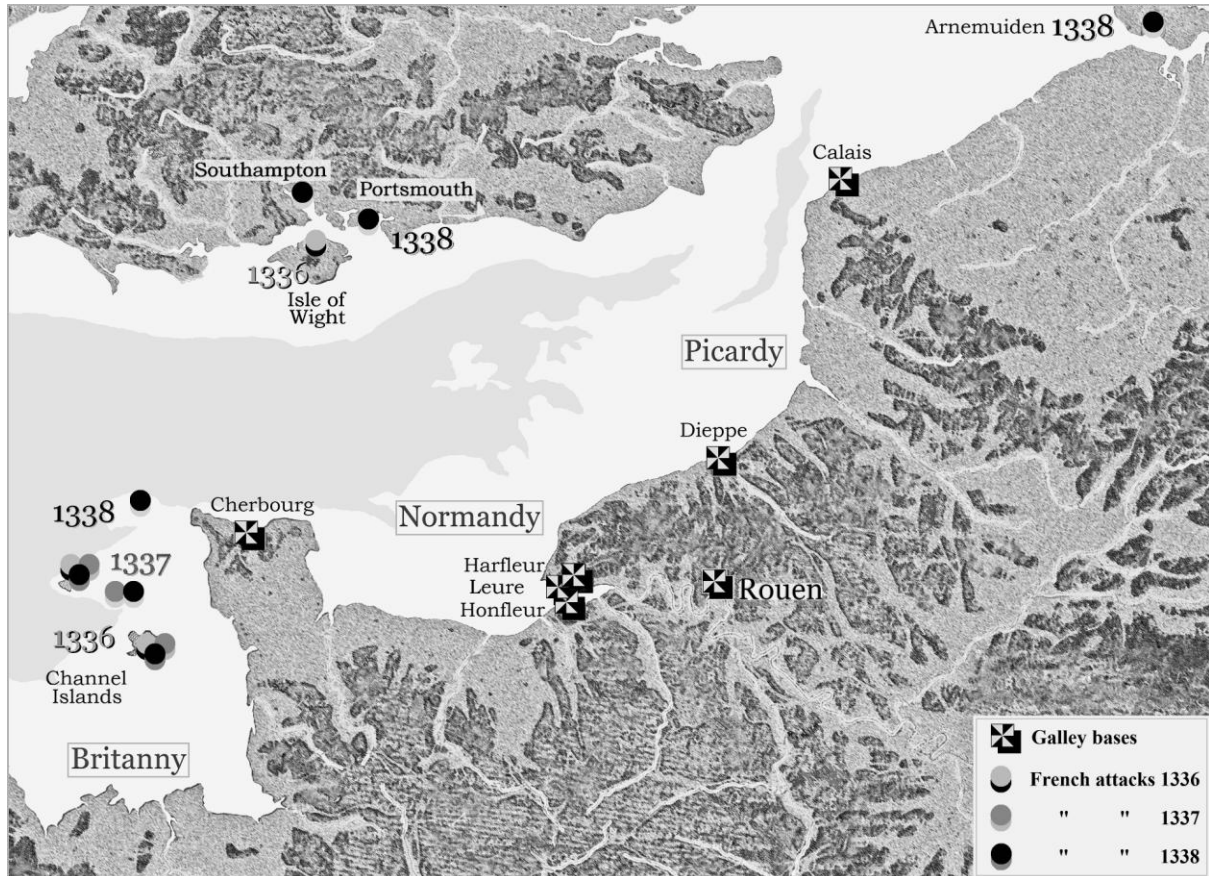


Figure 12. French bases and raids.

Envoys to Monaco secured another 20 galleys, but there would be two desertions before that squadron arrived.<sup>101</sup> The leader of the Monegasques was Carlo Grimaldi, called ‘messire Charles’ in the wage accounts and accompanied by his personal chaplain.<sup>102</sup> The agreement must have been similar to that made with Doria, but no detail now survives. The fact that there would be 20 armed galleys from Monaco was added as a rider to Doria's agreement. There was no reason for doing so, except to remind the Genoese and Monegasque forces that they were on the same side. For decades, their families had struggled for power in Genoa. At this point the balance had tilted momentarily in favour of the Ghibellines, who were now in control—Doria and his captains were some of those blessed by fortune—and their opponents, the Guelphs, were exiles. Grimaldi, for instance, had now installed himself as ruler at Monaco, which theoretically was a Genoese possession.<sup>103</sup>

One of the 20 principals named in Doria's agreement is Lanfranquin Grimaldi. That is a surprise, for he was the son of Carlo, the Monegasque commander. He may have been included in Doria's squadron as a pledge of good behaviour. Whatever the reason for Lanfranquin's appearance there, it seems that money had persuaded all sides to find a

workable arrangement. Ottone Doria had carried out violent attacks (*oppressiones fecerat*) on Mediterranean seaports of the kingdom of France, presumably in his pursuit of Guelphs, but now he was working for Philip.<sup>104</sup> Meanwhile, Edward III was himself employing one Giovanni Doria (*Johannes de Aurea*), who in 1338 was captain of one of two galleys sent to Scotland with men-at-arms and all the necessities of war.<sup>105</sup>

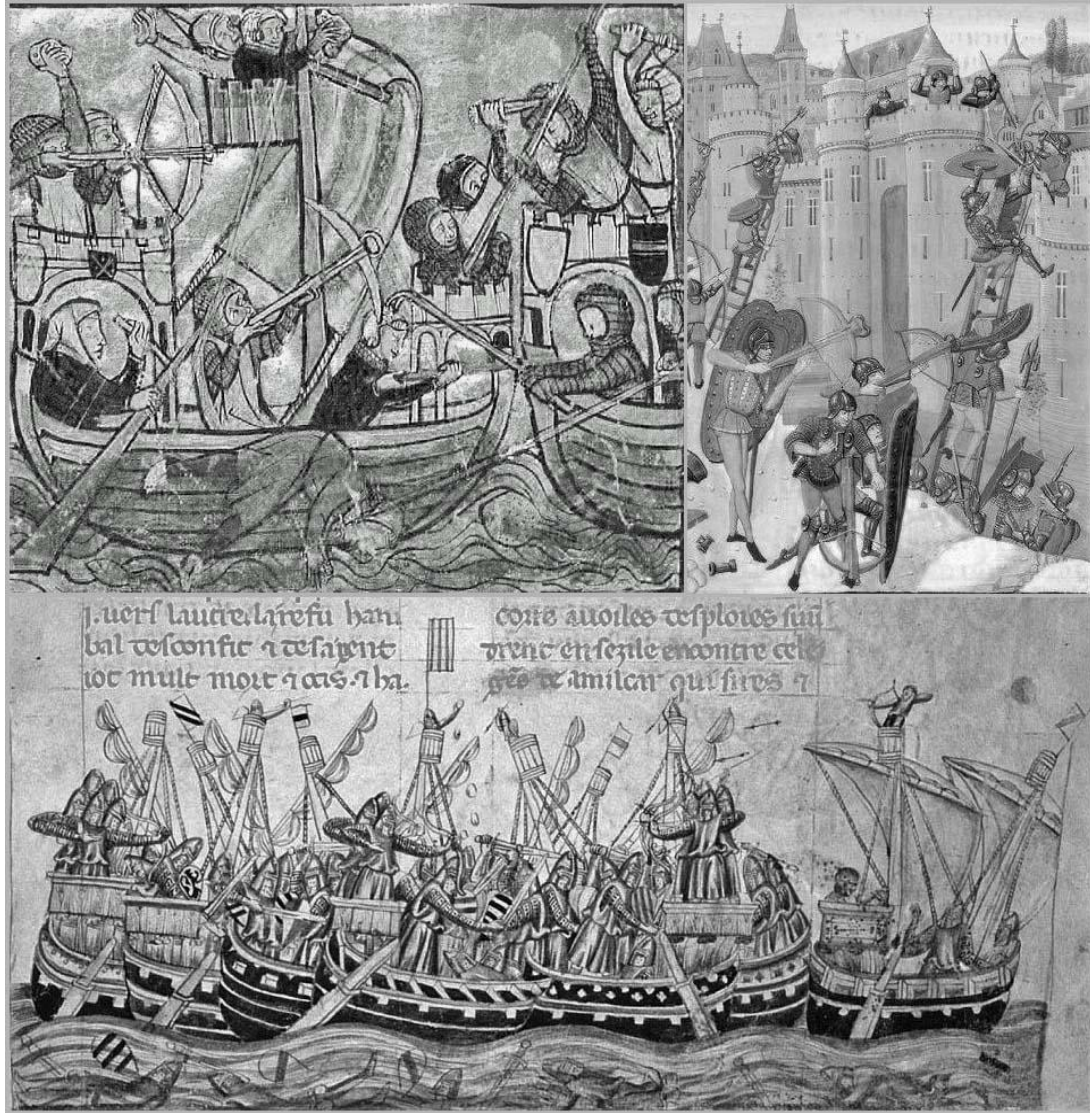


Figure 13. The profession of arms at sea and on land.

For the sum of 900 gold florins per galley per month, and with a few extra expenses also being met by the French treasury, Doria would provide 20 galleys, each with 210 men, each of whom was to have armour for the head, neck, and torso, and 25 of whom would be crossbowmen. Each galley was to be furnished with 6,000 crossbow bolts, 300 *lances*, 500 *dars*, pavises, long *lances*, and whatever else befitted a well armed galley in time of war. Some of these words must be glossed. Pavises, as already stated, were the large shields that protected crossbowmen: see figure 13 (top right, foreground) for two examples, one held on the ground, one strapped to the back. *Dars* were darts of a size and weight to cause serious injury: three soldiers shown on top of the wooden tower at Troyes (figure 9, top) are holding

flighted spears, or very large arrows, that must have been made for throwing. No historian ever offers a translation of *lances*, apart from ‘lances,’ which is unhelpful. We ought to think of them as spears, evidently shorter than the *lances longues*, or pikes. Illustrations of around this period often show short spears being used wherever a soldier mans a high place, sometimes where others are throwing large stones or similar missiles. In figure 13 (top right), one of the soldiers on the gatehouse is about to throw a piece of masonry and next to him a soldier is stabbing downwards with a short spear. We should see them also as projectiles: putting 300 aboard each ship can only mean that allowance was being made for a high rate of loss. In a battle between soldiers on several galleys, shown in figure 13 (bottom), one of the topcastles is occupied by an archer, one by a man hurling stones, and three by men grasping a short spear in the one hand and aiming to throw it. *Lances longues*, however, were held on to and did not have to be provided in their hundreds: they were pikes, eight to ten feet long; 2.4–3.0m.<sup>106</sup> At about this time—it has been suggested—the deployment of groups of pikemen was emerging as a battlefield tactic,<sup>107</sup> but we should probably interpret these as individual weapons, handy where adversaries were still separated by a short distance. Pikes are two or three of the ten weapons shown in use during the fight aboard two hulks, for instance (figure 13, top left).

Mastery of their weapons, especially the crossbow, was one of the reasons why the Genoese were so highly esteemed in war. Ramón Muntaner, a Catalan knight who fought against them earlier in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, records that

the Genoese were well provided with sharp arrows and would shoot off many. They have a fashion of shooting ceaselessly and they shoot more quarrels in one battle than Catalans would shoot in ten.<sup>108</sup>

He records also their constant pressure of numbers. When fighting ashore, the Genoese would deliver half the ship’s complement. The other half formed a reserve that would be used to replace casualties or substitute for those who withdrew themselves for a time from battle.

Another reason was the high calibre of the leaders and their closeness as a group. The Dorias would command nine of the galleys, the Spinolas four, the Squarciafico two;<sup>109</sup> which is to say that thirteen of the twenty galleys were commanded by two of Genoa’s principal Ghibelline families and two more by a rising Ghibelline family. The accounts of wages paid in 1339<sup>110</sup> add a Casan Spinola to the list of galley-captains, and a ‘Jehan Spinole’ appears as treasurer for his group. Another Doria (Raffaele) was admiral to the king of Sicily,<sup>111</sup> where the family Squarciafico was also strong. Baker’s description of the death in Southampton of a son of the king of Sicily, leading a band of raiders,<sup>112</sup> perhaps is a dim reflection of those arrangements.

When Edward learned about the agreement, he did what he could to nullify it. On January 8 1338, he requested the commonalty of Genoa to halt the sailing of certain galleys that had been equipped for his enemies.<sup>113</sup> As late as September 24, he was still attempting to ‘hire ...as many armed galleys as shall be expedient, to engage mariners and sailors for his service, to detach them from the service of his enemies.’<sup>114</sup> However, money that he sent ‘for

obtaining galleys at Monaco, in the district of Genoa' was intercepted and sequestered on the orders of the king of Sicily (at Philip's prompting, one supposes) and a year later Edward was still trying to get it released.<sup>115</sup> Though he failed to repeat his success of two years earlier, the departure of the Genoese ships was delayed until late in the season and they did not arrive in the Channel before late August or early September 1338, which perhaps indicates that Edward managed to buy some time. Their tardiness certainly unsettled Philip: he wrote at least one letter to Doria to that effect, and despatched his admiral, Hue Quiéret, to intercept the Genoese galleys.<sup>116</sup> Almost as soon as they arrived, Southampton would be raided.

## Gun Mad

Before we look at the several stages of the raid, we have to devote a few paragraphs to dealing with a new myth that is proving to be remarkably popular. In a letter dated July 2 1338, Guillaume de Moulin, stationed at Leure, acknowledged the arrival of a small cannon called a pot-de-fer for throwing arrows or darts (*garros*), sent from Rouen, along with 48 arrows or darts and the two rarer ingredients of gunpowder; a pound of saltpetre and half a pound of sulphur. The third ingredient, charcoal, presumably was sourced locally. Though it would be discovered eventually that the best mixture for military gunpowder is 75% saltpetre, 10% sulphur, and 15% charcoal, we can assume that in 1338 the entire consignment of saltpetre and sulphur was meant to be used in the one mix. With the addition of about as much charcoal as sulphur, the resulting two pounds of gunpowder would have exploded after a slow burn:

The powder charge for this dread engine of war was about seven tenths of an ounce of the ill-proportioned powder of the day [which is 2lb divided by 48]. When all was prepared and fire was applied, the bolt of destruction no doubt emerged, but certainly with extreme reluctance.<sup>117</sup>

Lacabane, who first drew attention to Moulin's letter, made a number of important points. He demonstrated that gunpowder-weapon technology was available at such an early time to the French. He speculated, reasonably enough, that the pot-de-fer was to be carried on a ship and then had been employed in the raid on Southampton, but he declined to guess how it was used, pointing out that nothing is written on the subject by the chroniclers.<sup>118</sup> Their silence was a warning, for if nobody thought this new weapon worth a mention, perhaps that was because it was never used at Southampton. The surviving records of the *clos des galées* contain no hint of any gun being shipped for use on the raid. Nor does any other medieval document. In Lacabane's defence, those points would have been more obvious later in the century, when considerably more documents had been edited and printed (Dana, for instance, avoids any reference to Southampton or a shipboard gun), but more recent historians cannot make that excuse.

Concentrating only on the later English-language texts that derive from Lacabane—sometimes very tenuously—we find that Oman was remarkably slapdash:



the French fleet which raided Southampton in June [*sic*] 1338 was furnished by the royal treasurers with the modest provision of one *pot de fer*, three [*sic*] pounds of gunpowder, and forty-eight large bolts ... . Clearly this ‘pot’ can only have been intended for use on special occasions—*e.g.* for the breaking in of a castle gate—since forty-eight bolts would be used up in a few hours.<sup>119</sup>

Oman’s massive authority as an historian of warfare clearly influenced Ruddock, who pushed the ideas one or two stages further. We learn from her that the Genoese (*sic*)

had with them a novel engine of war, a *pot de fer*, with gunpowder and forty-eight iron bolts, presumably to be used for breaking in the gates of the town. Panic seized the townsmen and they fled into the surrounding countryside, leaving the town undefended.<sup>120</sup>

There the matter largely remained for decades until DeVries wrote several articles that all began with the early history of European guns, of which the French Raid was seen as a fine exemplar. From the supposition that ‘the artillery piece ... was transported to the site of the battle [at Southampton] by ship and there was unloaded to be used on the land’<sup>121</sup> to the observation that first French guns were almost always used singly, ‘for instance at the attack of Southampton in 1338’<sup>122</sup> to the suggestion that, at Southampton and elsewhere, ‘it may have been their sound that was more impressive than their effectiveness as weapons,’<sup>123</sup> his interpretations of the function and deployment of the early guns are very persuasive, except that the French Raid is wholly irrelevant to the argument. The same criticism may be made of Bradbury, who writes of ‘early references to the French use of *pots de fer* as, for example, against Southampton in 1338.’<sup>124</sup>

Wild enthusiasm was next to be published as hard fact. Kelly writes:

A French raiding party sacked and burned Southampton ... in 1338, bringing with them a ribaudekin [*sic*] and forty-eight bolts. Since their supplies included only three pounds of powder, they must have been more interested in showing off their new armament than in doing any serious damage.<sup>125</sup>

Ponting writes that ‘the French employed them [*sic*] during a raid on Southampton in 1338.’<sup>126</sup> The guns are unspecified, but he probably meant pots-de-fer, which he had just been describing. The same story of several guns is told by Livingstone and Witzel ‘ship-mounted weapons called *pots de fer*, which apparently fired iron lances or spears [*sic*], were used on at least one occasion during French raids on the south coast of England’ (Southampton must be where they mean).<sup>127</sup> Then Osborne writes:

The French who raided Southampton in 1338 mounted guns on their ships, a startling innovation. They used a *pot de fer*, which fired a bundle [*sic*] of 48 arrow-shaped bolts using a charge of only 3lb (1.8kg) of powder, and this had come as a shock to the citizens of Southampton.<sup>128</sup>

Most recently, Eddison tells us that simply the prospect of gunfire was sufficient to unnerve and scatter the defenders of Southampton:

a fleet of some fifty French, Scottish [*sic*] and Genoese galleys was seen advancing up Southampton Water. They had with them an experimental military ‘machine,’ a *pot au feu* [*sic*] equipped with gunpowder and forty-eight iron bolts, which was almost certainly more frightening than dangerous. Whatever effect this invention may have had, however, when the leaders in Southampton saw what was coming, they panicked, abandoned the town defences, turned tail and fled with all their men.<sup>129</sup>

The sudden proliferation—five times in the last ten years—of essentially the one fiction, variously spun, coincides with the rise of the Web, where such versions of the tale are freely cut-and-pasted. Of the most recent authors, only Eddison references her sources (or some of them, at least), which is a serious problem if only because there should be no confusion between a ribaudekin, by which Kelly means a gun with multiple barrels, and a pot-de-fer, which resembles its name, a high-necked iron pot turned on its side. Not that there is reason to suppose that a gun of any sort was taken on the raid, nor is there any value in guessing at its purpose or psychological effect.

### Warnings

On September 6, as the Genoese forces were arriving on station at last, Edward warned that ‘foreign enemies are at sea with a strong force of men in large ships and galleys, ready to land in England and do their worst;’ and each county was ordered to maintain a force of men-at-arms, armed men, and archers, ready to beat them back.<sup>130</sup> Southampton was threatened most grievously by the disruption of its sea-trade, not by invasion. In that respect, by far the greatest prize was the Isle of Wight, possession of which might also have been the first stage in a second Norman Conquest. Its protection was ever a worry, even 250 years later, when the descent of the Spanish Armada was anticipated:

There is no doubt to be made, but landing in the Isle of Wight—which with an army of 8,000 men, divided into four parts, he may easily do, the force of the Island being unable to resist them with that force—in very short time they may so fortify themselves and possess those parts and places that lie convenient for passing over our supplies, and are by nature more than three parts fortified, that he may keep in safe place his galleys to make daily invasions into the firm lands, where they shall perceive the standing of the wind will impeach Her Majesty’s ships to come to their rescue.<sup>131</sup>

Edward I had based his defence of coastal Hampshire around a strongly garrisoned island, with secondary points on the mainland side of the Solent,<sup>132</sup> an arrangement that influenced his grandson’s thinking. Before taking his army to Flanders, Edward III had sent an unusually long letter setting out what was needed to bolster the island’s defences.<sup>133</sup> Two years earlier, in 1336, acting as allies of the Scots, the French had mounted an expedition against the Isle of Wight which ended with their galleys attacking some of the king’s ships at anchor there. They killed many of the sailors, threw the others overboard, and sailed the ships with their cargoes back to Normandy.<sup>134</sup> Such disturbing news perhaps contained one piece of cheer for

the people of Southampton: like the raid they had endured in 1321, it again showed that defended towns defied amphibious assault.

The Isle of Wight and Portsmouth were Southampton's buffer zone, but Portsmouth was pillaged and burned in March 1338 and would not be worth a visit for a while. The destruction was extensive. On December 8 1338 Edward granted four places 'which have been burnt by the enemy' a respite of the wool they owed; namely Portsmouth, Portsea, Froddington and Eastney.<sup>135</sup> The raid features in two chronicles, both of which state that, on the eve of the Annunciation of the Virgin (March 24), strong forces came over in galleys from France to Portsmouth, set fire to the town and returned with their spoil to their ships. Despite some differences in their choice of detail—in the *Anonimale Chronicle*, the raiders do their work unhindered (*saunz male ou molest*) and in the *Historia Aurea*, later copied by Walsingham in his *History*, everything is burned except the parish church and hospital—they seem to derive from a unique source where the raid on Southampton does not subsequently appear in the text.<sup>136</sup> Perhaps a similar dislocation appears in Lescot's chronicle, which dates the burning of Portsmouth to 1337 and the burning of Southampton to 1338.<sup>137</sup>

Otherwise, the goings-on at Portsmouth scarcely trouble the chroniclers. Most ignore them and there is the briefest of mentions in the *French Chronicle of London*.<sup>138</sup> Curiously, the *Anonimale* version is replaced in the *Lanercost Chronicle* with the statement that, a little before the feast of St Mary Magdalene (a *very* different Mary whose feast day is July 22), the king and queen left from Portsmouth to cross to Flanders.<sup>139</sup> In fact, Edward sailed from Orwell, in Suffolk, but it seems that that story made better sense to this chronicler than the notion that Portsmouth had been razed. Portsmouth, as a much-used place of embarkation for expeditions to Aquitaine, merited attacking, but we cannot rate it at this time as much more than an easy target, adjacent to the Channel, isolated from land-based support, and almost without formal defences. It was unlikely to embarrass Nicolas Béhuchet on his first active command—he was a king's treasurer who had just been made Captain of the Sea-Army.

Béhuchet completed his work by crossing back and launching an attack on the Channel Islands, which, as figure 12 shows, were almost constantly threatened around this time; by full-scale invasion, complete with sieges, down to brief raids, and always by piracy at sea. Six months later, when the French made a far more ambitious and risky attack on Southampton—which caught the attention of many more chroniclers—the annihilation of Portsmouth must have seemed an object lesson in what to expect if a town's inhabitants failed to defend their own.

### **The Extent of the Attack**

Hughes begins his essay on the French raids of the period with a few sentences from Brereton's translation of Froissart describing how 1,000 combatants descended on Southampton.<sup>140</sup> But no copy of Froissart gives that number. Nearly all of the manuscripts include no estimate of size. Some read



Then they set out with their army, which comprised some 20,000 combatants of all types of men (*bien vint mille* [or *bien XX mille*] *combatans de toutes manieres de gens*), and they sailed to England; and, one Sunday morning, they came to Southampton harbour;<sup>141</sup>

and two other variants refer to a band of corsairs (*escumeurs*) of some 20,000 or 30,000.<sup>142</sup> In his final version of the *Chroniques*, Froissart settles on some 20,000.<sup>143</sup> Brereton, who has drastically toned down the original, without ever saying so, must have supposed that 20,000 or more was a ridiculously exaggerated number. So it is, but the French had stationed extensive forces in the Channel by the end of September 1338 (roughly 55 galleys with 11,000 men; *bien X mille combatans* perhaps). Murimuth and Baker appear to have assumed that almost the entire force was loosed on Southampton: they write of 50 galleys, full of armed men.<sup>144</sup> However, that would have meant the Genoese and Monegasque squadrons working closely together, which cannot have been advisable. According to tradition (which may be recent; it has not proved possible to trace it back farther than 50 years), the two were kept apart and assigned bases separated by most of the English Channel; Grimaldi's squadron around Calais and Doria's around Leure.<sup>145</sup> Besides, the French had no reason to commit so many to a raid. As we have seen, the population of Southampton numbered something over 2,500 and those bearing arms cannot have been much more than around 150. A greater force of enemy soldiers was carried in two galleys. Fifty galleys would just have got in each other's way.

We know that there were at least three galleys present because Hue Quiéret made a point of mentioning two of them and he must have been on the third. He had encouraged the different crews under his command by offering a prize to whichever was the first into Southampton, which probably means that there were more competitors than just the two he mentions. Two 14<sup>th</sup>-century chronicles that favour the French (using the one source) both state that the town was attacked by four galleys, which is a small number but not impossibly so.<sup>146</sup> In July 1339, when he assumed military command at Southampton, Thomas de Beauchamp complained that the town could have been forced anywhere by 200 men-at-arms,<sup>147</sup> the numbers that would have been released initially from two Genoese galleys. In 1339, when the Normans returned to Southampton for a second bite, there were said to have been 4,000 men in twelve galleys and eight *spynachiis*.<sup>148</sup> Though they retreated without landing when they saw that they were opposed, they must have been reasonably confident when they first set sail that the job could be done with a force that size. (A Latin *spinachium* translates as an Old French *spinace* or *pinasse*, a term that might indicate one of several types of ship. In this case perhaps it was a large ship's boat equipped with mast and oars. If so, the numbers carried by the entire flotilla cannot have far exceeded 2,500.) We might take those as the limits of the force that attacked Southampton in 1338; no fewer than four galleys and no more than a dozen, along with some other, small craft.

The Anonimale and Lanercost chronicles (written in York and Carlisle, largely using the one source) include descriptions of attacks by the French as allies of the Scots on the Channel Islands and the English south coast. They describe a cross-Channel attack, carried out in 1335, not in 1338, by an impossibly enormous armada, out of which eight ships put in

an appearance at Southampton; and only two of which landed men.<sup>149</sup> That part is roughly plausible: allowance has to be made for galleys detailed to other duties, including keeping the lines of retreat clear. A force heading up Southampton Water risked being trapped, especially when the harbours of the Isle of Wight could shelter an enemy fleet. The biographer of Pero Niño tells us that when his galleys appeared before Bordeaux, no attempt was made to pursue the enemy's ships farther up the Garonne

for the banks approached each other, and arrows and darts reached the galleys from both shores. Furthermore, the ships could have taken the galleys from behind, coming up with the wind and tide, so that the galleys could not do all that they might have wished.<sup>150</sup>

Another detail suggests that they were recounting a basically correct story. They tell us that the raiders burned two *villes* near the river, as well as Southampton. Though *ville* or *villa* has usually been translated in this essay as 'town,' wherever the context supports that interpretation, in fact the word was applied to many villas or units of occupation, and in this case (for once) the term is downgraded in one version to *duas villas innotas*, two tiny or lowly villas.<sup>151</sup> We know that St Denys' Priory, next to the Itchen, suffered at their hands (see figure 14). Beside considerable damage to its properties in the town, the priory suffered some burning of its church;<sup>152</sup> and the loss of important documents was often blamed on that event.<sup>153</sup> The year after the raid, a substantial garrison was stationed there,<sup>154</sup> surely to prevent another raid, or to intercept and impede hostile movements further upstream, or both. Other candidates for raiding might include the village of Millbrook, to be reached on the same tide: in 1339 it was expected to provide a small ship for the protection of the port.<sup>155</sup>

The two chronicles find a quantum of support in one version of Froissart, where the raiders are said to have burned some small settlements close to Southampton (*aucuns hammiaux dallès Hantonne*). Alas, the text that contains this unique detail, the Amiens Manuscript, is highly problematic. There is some dispute over whether it was written by Froissart, or concocted by the scribes, disagreement also about when in the evolution of the *Chroniques* it was written. This particular section of the manuscript starts with an impossible 30,000 attackers and ends by dating the raid to roughly a month before it happened, *environ le Nostre-Dame en septembre*, around September 8, the feast of the Birth of the Virgin Mary.<sup>156</sup> There are parallels with the Anonimale and Lancercost chronicles, both in the types of error and in the possibly correct detail, though clearly they originate in different sources—and to that limited extent the Amiens Manuscript supports the two chronicles.

### The Attack Develops

The French Raid was the subject of a report in the 'Weatherwatch' section of *The Guardian*<sup>157</sup> that remains in the paper's internet archive, and is hopelessly wrong. So far it has not been repeated by anyone else so this is a chance to neuter it before it goes feral and breeds (as the *pot-de-fer* story has succeeded in doing). The raid on Southampton did not begin when an 'overwhelming force entered the town under the cover of a sea fog.' That is

muddling events with the raid carried out on Boulogne by the men of the Cinque Ports, in 1340, ‘under the cover of a heavy mist.’<sup>158</sup>

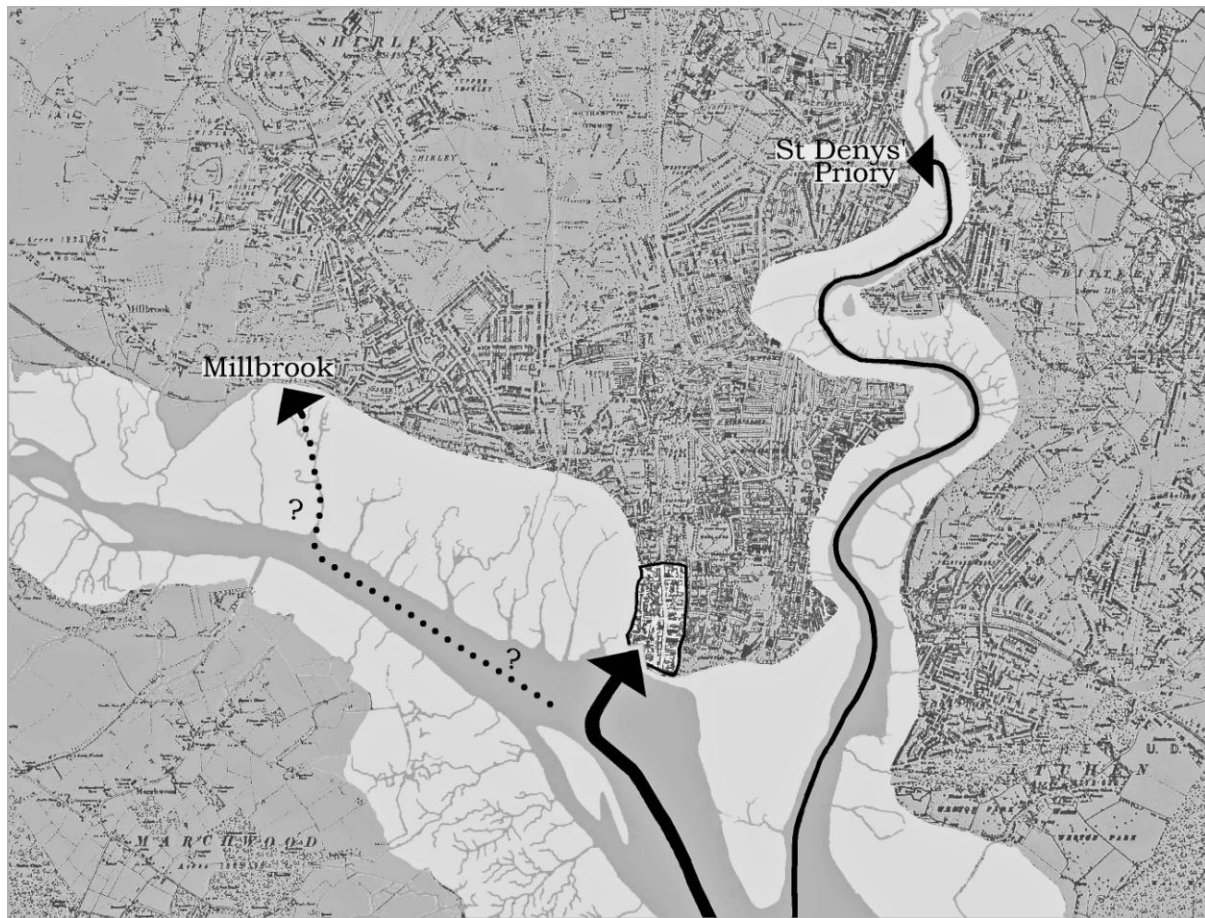


Figure 14. Water, mud, dry land and the French (based on the 1907 OS map).

Unbefogged, the force sailing up the Solent and along Southampton Water would have been under observation for around two hours. Churches probably rang their bells, there probably were beacons lit on some hilltops—in March 1338, and again in August,<sup>159</sup> Edward had repeated his order of 1337 that signal beacons were to be readied on hilltops—and by one means or another the county and Southampton would have been alerted. Edward, even at his most deeply suspicious, accepted that warnings had been given.

To begin with, doubtless, there had been confusion. The warnings may have been difficult to interpret—six weeks after the raid, Edward was ordering that one bell only might be rung on church business,<sup>160</sup> so that the full peal would therefore be a clear warning of danger—and the officials will have had to spend time seeking confirmation before they ordered anyone to go anywhere. They will have had to anticipate where the raiders meant to begin the attack, out of the many places in the vicinity that were threatened by galleys taking advantage of the tide. That will have caused delay and a dissipation of strength. A defect in their intelligence gathering is pointed up, perhaps, by the decision taken early in 1339 to station two *spinaces* at the port, for its protection.<sup>161</sup> As we have just seen, several different types of ship might have been these *spinaces*. Here they probably were sailing craft equipped

with oars, considerably smaller than a galley, intended to give advance warning of an approaching enemy flotilla, not principally to engage it in battle.

Of the 150-or-so defenders that had allotted positions, perhaps 40 were distributed between various strongpoints on the side of the town where the raiders came ashore. Was there a *schwerpunkt* through which the raiders concentrated overwhelming force? In support of his argument that parts of the riverside defences were later than the French Raid, Englefield wrote, two centuries ago:

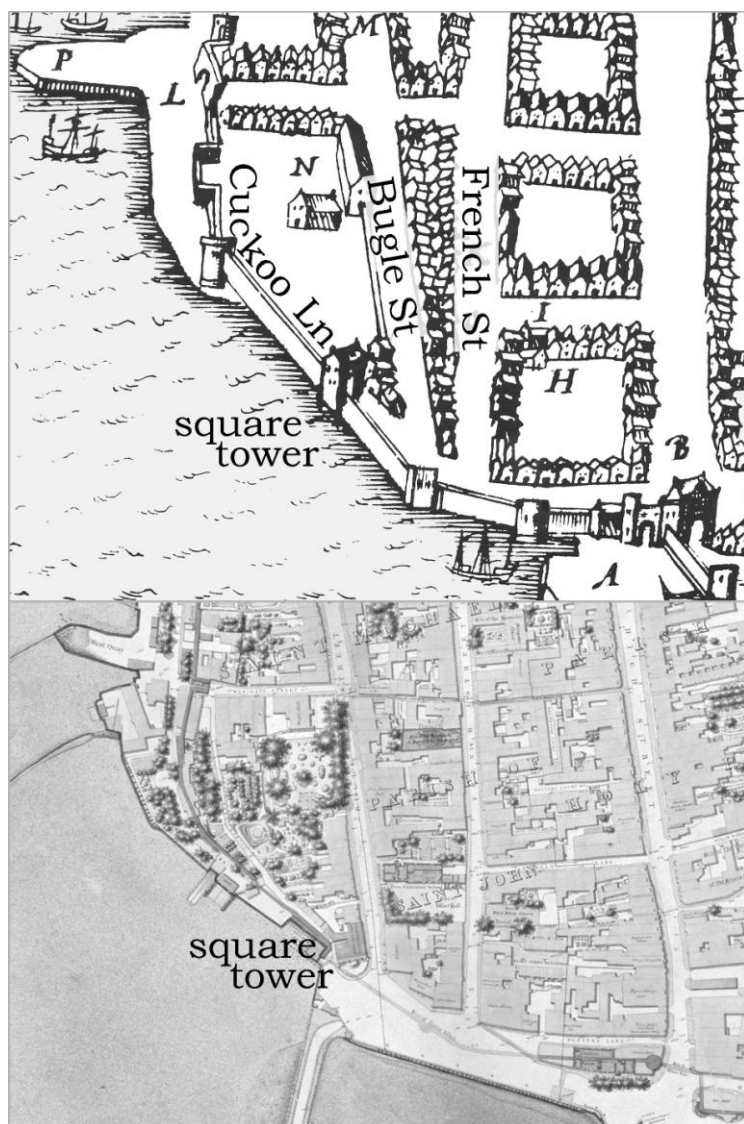
This conjecture receives considerable strength from the appellation of ‘the Gravel,’ mentioned before [p 58] to have been given to the lower end of Bugle-street, and which can scarcely be referred to any other origin but this part of the town having been long open to the sea and free from buildings. ... At this part I conceive the invaders to have attacked and entered the town.<sup>162</sup>

Davies accepted Englefield’s conclusions,<sup>163</sup> and they were not seriously questioned until about 40 years ago when an alternative was suggested that is now the standard version of the story: the raiders landed at West Quay, ran along to Blue Anchor Lane, then up the lane and into St Michael’s Church, etcetera. Both landings might easily have happened, and within minutes of each other, and it is ridiculous to argue in favour of one place at the expense of the other. Nevertheless, there is some value in looking slightly longer at the attractions of a landing at the south end of the town. As we shall see, the pattern of destruction wrought by the invaders is consistent with a managed retreat southwards and an embarkation there; so a disembarkation there seems equally feasible. In the 1330s, a quay extended along the shore from south of Bugle Street to south of French Street<sup>164</sup> and would have provided another landing place. If it did not incorporate the Gravel at that time, it would have sat next to it.

The shoreline around the bottom of Bugle Street, with its extremely narrow strip of intertidal mud (figures 6 & 14), allowed ships to remain afloat and close inshore for nearly all of the day and night. Bugle and French Street offered immediate access into the town; and there was a third way in, which Speed does not show—Cuckoo Lane (figure 15, top). Note should be taken of the square tower, also called the corner tower, which Speed depicts as a gatehouse across the southern end of Cuckoo Lane. It does not give access to the waterside but limits the way in to the land at the back of Bull Hall (marked *N* by Speed). Though this arrangement may postdate the French Raid, it does raise questions about the status and function of the area. Speed shows a similar feature limiting access to the God’s House property.

The space between Cuckoo Lane and Bugle Street, particularly its southern half, ought to provide us with a great deal of circumstantial evidence about the raid. Unfortunately, everything we know about the space at that time concerns the northern half. Excavations at 5 Cuckoo Lane, a short distance below Westgate Street, uncovered evidence of at least two buildings dating to the late-13<sup>th</sup> and early-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, with evidence of destruction that may have been due to the French Raid. At some time before 1500, they were overlain by a thick garden soil. What we are seeing, perhaps, is a change of function occurring in the later-

14<sup>th</sup> century, either directly as a result of the raid or indirectly as a result of the erection of the town wall.<sup>165</sup> Much the same outcome seems to have occurred across much of the area between Cuckoo Lane and Bugle Street. Nearly all of the southern half consisted of gardens by 1454;<sup>166</sup> and Speed maps open ground in 1611. But though the outcome was similar in both halves, was there also a change in the 14<sup>th</sup> century from buildings to gardens, or was the southern half always a stretch of open ground? We learn nothing from the records and there is no archaeological evidence, but at least we know that the ground was very low-lying, may have been subject to occasional floods, and may not have been a preferred place to build. It remained as gardens until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though this was mostly to the credit of successive property-owners, the fact is that, while Southampton was fast accumulating a dense mass of new buildings, this corner of the town remained open (figure 15, bottom). If it had been open in 1338, it would have provided a place to organise the ranks, establish a pavisade, and advance into the town. The escarpment was too low at its this point to have disrupted manoeuvres.



Let us suppose (in the absence of any material evidence) that a hundred or more Frenchmen landed at the Gravel and found a way into the town; for which exploit they were awarded the prize of 100 livres. The first entry one comes to is Cuckoo Lane, which appears to offer a direct and flattish entry, but is really something of a diversion (figure 16:1). Otherwise, the more difficult ascent of Bugle Street might have been attempted. Let us suppose that the swashbucklers outran their support, got into a serious fight, and were hard-pressed until the timely arrival of the Genoese, who had first ‘stormed the gate.’ A shower of crossbow bolts might have been enough to save the day. Then the Admiral’s men landed and the surviving defenders were pushed back to St Michael’s Square and then the castle.

Figure 15. The south-west corner (top after Speed 1611, bottom after RE 1846).

If the people in St Michael's Church were not a congregation, inhumane­ly slaughtered, as Froissart-dependent historians contend, or simply an overspill from the fighting outside, as this writer supposes, they may have been burgesses sheltering in the church, waiting for the opportunity to ransom themselves and their houses, in time-honoured fashion, but discovering too late that the rules had changed. The Genoese had no interest in taking prisoners. There was no profit in it for them; Doria's agreement stipulated that the French king was to take them all. The killing of people who expected to negotiate a deal may also partly explain why many of the burgesses were still around to be caught and hanged in their own homes.<sup>167</sup>

Taking prisoners is mentioned in only one document, the final version of Froissart's *Chroniques*. With wind and tide in their favour the corsairs arrived one Sunday when everyone was at mass, he tells us. And so complete was the surprise that the townspeople had no time to attend to the defence of their town and their harbour. And men, women and children fled for their lives, whoever could flee; and the corsairs killed and captured many people there. Taken back to Normandy as loot were cloth, wool and captives.<sup>168</sup> In his last attempt at writing the history of great happenings, about 1400, Froissart works hard to enrich the narrative, but he is only reimagining the story in plausible ways, like Hilary Mantel. The extra details are the sorts of thing that might have happened; but they cannot have been facts remembered 60 years after the event.

## Consolidation

Whether or not most of Southampton's defenders still were vainly keeping station on the landside, the eruption of an enemy force into the town must have spread panic. The locals were no match for the tough and well-armed combatants and their 'base flight,' as Edward called it, made a great deal of sense in the circumstances. They disappeared into the approaching night.

From this point onwards, the mess that the raiders created leaves its mark, patterns of activity that might be disentangled. The black areas in figure 16:2 represent those parts where it is very likely (at least) that buildings suffered extensive burning. Easily the most numerous of those shown are the God's House properties already identified as 'destroyed or probably destroyed in 1338'.<sup>169</sup> In the few instances where an archaeological excavation has been carried out at one of those properties, the reasoning has been shown to be correct, or at least not shown to be wrong. (God's House properties not destroyed in the raid are shown in dark grey.) Also included on the map are the churches of All Saints, Holy Rood and St Michael, which were acknowledged to have been burned,<sup>170</sup> though we never learn how extensive the damage was. Four archaeological sites are included. Each contained extremely good evidence of destruction about the time of the French Raid (other sites with less clear evidence, such as 5 Cuckoo Lane, are omitted). They comprise a site at West Street, where the house had burnt extensively;<sup>171</sup> the properties at the corner of High Street and Broad Lane, where large amounts of debris had been shovelled into pits;<sup>172</sup> SOU 124, on the north side of Simnel

Street, where the debris still lay thickly over the ruins (unpublished); and a property on French Street, close to Brewhouse Lane, which had been very thoroughly burnt.<sup>173</sup> Of these, the West Street and French Street sites complement the God's House records. Finally, a number of properties have been included that neither are mentioned in surviving documents nor have been investigated archaeologically: these are mostly places whose neighbours on both sides were burned or probably burned in the raid. The only questionable inclusion in that respect is St John's Church, sitting alongside a single property destroyed in the raid. It is not included in the list of burnt churches, which is not a fatal objection as St John's usually manages to avoid mention in documents, but it is admittedly much more of a guess than the other sites.



Figure 16. Possible entry routes for the raiders; properties destroyed (base map after Blake 1981).

The map may underrepresent the damage. In his final version of the *Chroniques*, Froissart says that the raiders set fires in the town in more than 60 places, presumably meaning buildings rather than zones.<sup>174</sup> Such a number is plausible, for we are missing information about the fate of St Denys's properties in the town. At some point before March 22 1339, which was when their grievances were partly addressed,<sup>175</sup> the prior and canons of St Denys complained that they were unable to meet the financial obligations imposed on

them as a result of the war because ‘their rents and tenements in the town of Southampton, which gives them the larger part of their sustenance, have been burnt and destroyed by enemies.’<sup>176</sup> More detailed documentary evidence, in the form of comparable rentals before and after the raid, is completely missing—at least some of it may have been destroyed as a consequence of the attack on the priory itself—so we cannot directly ascertain how much damage was caused.<sup>177</sup> However, the priory’s houses were distributed around Southampton much as those of God’s House were (by and large the two holdings were intermingled in the hard-hit south-west corner of the town, and sat opposite each other in the northern half of the High Street) and a similar pattern of destruction or survival could be expected.



Figure 17. Later developments.

Baker mentions certain parts of the town (*particularem ville*) that were burned. Murimuth tells us that the attackers set fires in Southampton in five separate places before they withdrew. He probably meant zones or streets, and we might see this on figure 16:2. The upper part of the High Street, Simnel Street and French Street make three. A fourth would be the suburb of Above Bar (off the map, to the north) where several buildings owned by God’s House were destroyed presumably along with unrecorded others.<sup>178</sup> A fifth, one hesitantly suggests, was East Street beyond the walls (also off the map). There is no documentary



evidence here, except for four God's House properties that were unscathed, and most of the suburb remains unexplored, so we cannot tell if any fires were started. However, at least two tenements in Newtown were destroyed<sup>179</sup> and East Street would have been on the way there.

Kaye<sup>180</sup> was troubled by this inability to lay waste other areas—‘Why they failed to deal with the prosperous, heavily built-up English Street [High Street] is not clear’—but that is to assume that the burning had no purpose apart from satisfying mankind's delight in flame. On the contrary, it was being used as a weapon and embodies different stages in the raiders' tactics.

When Pero Niño raided St Ives with five ships, each section was given its own task after the town fell:

The captain commanded that the standards and the men-at-arms should remain in good array outside the town, so that they should not be surprised if the English came up in greater force, and that the oarsmen and crossbowmen should enter the city to sack it, the ones fighting, the others plundering.<sup>181</sup>

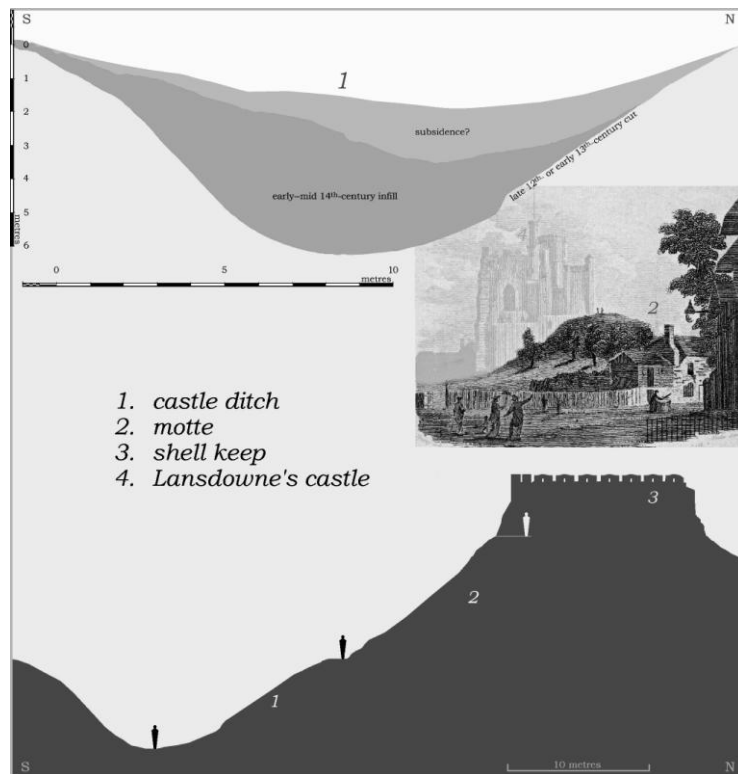
We may imagine a similar arrangement at Southampton, except that St Ives was a smaller target that could be filleted in three hours and Southampton's raiders were detained for longer. Working the night-shift perhaps explains the scattering of fires along the High Street (figure 17:3), the light helping them to stay watchful (Murimuth says that throughout the night they chased and killed anyone who had stayed in the town, and bonfires would have been a big help on this nearly moonless night). None of our sources tells us about the night's fires, but why should they include such a mundane detail? Mention is made only of a final act of destruction before the raiders left. Baker, especially, describes a desperate measure that allowed the last-remaining Genoese to flee to the galleys (*residui Ianuensium, post particularem ville combustionem, ad galeas ... fugierunt*). Certainly there was deliberate burning that aided a tactical retreat, but some of the destruction is most easily interpreted as meeting the problems that arose during the long night.

Beside individual sites along the High Street, what are we to make of the extensive zone of destruction north of St Michael's Church, along Simnel Street and New Corner, and around into the High Street? Burning on such a scale looks as if the castle was being cordoned off, and the intervening no-man's-land brightly illuminated. That would indicate that the castle was perceived as a special concern, at least as a way of infiltrating defenders into the town; none of which is the customary interpretation of its role during the French Raid, when the castle was decayed and ‘certainly no deterrent to an attacker.’<sup>182</sup>

### **Southampton Castle**

In one respect, the position may have been even worse. If we make allowance for the original bulk of layers before they subsided and compacted, the rubbish tipped into the castle ditch in the early-mid 14<sup>th</sup> century (figure 18) may have caused it to dwindle almost to nothing (admittedly, we cannot say whether this mostly happened before the French Raid or after it).

But in other respects, the castle was perhaps in better shape, for we have no documentary or excavated evidence of the raiders destroying any part of it.



If the allegiance of the men of Southampton were suspect, as was alleged at the time of the 1321 raid, might the castle have been retained as some sort of royal presence in the town? In the following reign, trusted and capable people were appointed castle-warden, a pattern that makes best sense if the castle retained some of its power. Soon after the coup of 1330 that ended his minority, the newly empowered teenager, Edward III, granted the keepership of Christchurch and Southampton castles, and of the manors of Lyndhurst and Ringwood, to

Figure 18. The castle ditch and motte (ditch after Oxley 1986; Lansdowne's Gothick castle looking SE, after Young 1805, and fading down the later castle); and a suggested profile.

Thomas West.<sup>183</sup> West was one of the small group directly involved in the coup, not as a plotter but as a household knight, probably in the retinue of Edward's close companion, William Montagu.<sup>184</sup> When Edward further granted those two castles and two manors to his queen, Philippa, during her lifetime, West received the assurance that he would continue to have their keeping should she die before he did.<sup>185</sup> She having demised these properties to West, it was then noted that, out of their rent of £150, she had 'at the king's request ... released to the said Thomas £20.'<sup>186</sup> This is not to claim that West ever put himself to much trouble over Southampton castle—for one thing he spent a lot of time campaigning in Scotland, the Low Countries, and eventually Brittany, where he died in 1343, still castle-warden—but as a professional he knew how to maintain a defence cheaply; and surely it is telling that he lost none of his keepings in the fallout from the French Raid. On his death, 'the lands late of Thomas West' that were to be taken back into the king's hands required work being done by the escheators of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset, and Devon.<sup>187</sup>

Repairing the castle walls, when the need was pressing, may have been a lot easier than is usually supposed, for the *enceinte* at that time was mostly an affair of earth and wood; the same as the town walls, but on a larger scale, with a bank 15m wide at its base and at least 4m high.<sup>188</sup> Whatever the state of the palisade, the earth mound, at least, would have

remained largely intact through periods of neglect. The castle motte was another survivor, described by Speed in 1611 as ‘a hill so topped that it cannot be ascended but by stairs,’<sup>189</sup> and it continued to be a substantial feature for two centuries after Speed, though nothing was done to preserve it (figure 18, 2: William Cooper’s painting of the scene, 1805, shows the same mass as in the engraving but with some slight differences in form). At the time of the raid, it probably was topped by a shell-keep.<sup>190</sup> The reconstructed profile in figure 18, which is modelled after the motte and 14<sup>th</sup>-century shell keep that survive at Totnes, gives a fair idea of the size of the challenge.

That is the main counter to arguments about the weakness of the castle. The raid was only a brief incursion and ‘the French did not hang around,’ *lez Fraunces ... ne firent pas grant demore*.<sup>191</sup> Night was now quickly approaching and the raiders would be leaving early the next morning. No adequate assessment of the castle’s strengths can have been made. Was it not simpler just place it in quarantine?

Nor was there any pressing need to despoil the castle, there being more than enough loot in the town. Edward had 194 tuns of red wine in Southampton when the the raiders struck; more than 40,000 imperial gallons. None of it was in the castle: 152 tuns were aboard the *Nicholas*, about to be carried overseas to the king, and the remainder was ‘in divers houses of the town.’ All but two tuns had been taken by the raiders;<sup>192</sup> which testifies to a thorough pillaging of at least the mercantile district. More grievously still, Edward had lost nearly all of the wool stored at Southampton and awaiting shipment; something over 270 sarplars and 136 sacks, which were pledged as security for his debts.<sup>193</sup> Converting these units into an absolute quantity is really just a matter of opinion, but at that time it amounted perhaps to 180,000lb of wool, of which 150,000lb was lost. Except for the equivalent of one sack, which opportunist locals had taken, all of the lost wool had been ‘burned and carried away by the alien enemies’. We know that the Genoese combatants put themselves to some trouble over the wool, for in 1339, when they were strongly minded to quit the French king’s service at the end of the season, Béhuchet noted that they meant to empty all their galleys, load them with wool, worth some 100,000 livres to the English king, and sail home.<sup>194</sup> We may suppose therefore that, by the end of the raid, they had loaded as much as possible onto the available shipping—which would include whatever ships they had captured in West Bay—but the remainder became fuel to the destructive fires. The pattern of final burning (figure 17:4) would be partly explained if the wool was being stored nearby, in the properties at the lower end of Bugle and French Street. Nothing suggests that it was being stored at the castle.

## The Raid Ends

No-one mentions the natural timetable that governed events. As we saw earlier, the raiders had to leave that morning on the ebb tide. If they waited one more day until the next favourable tide in daylight, they risked being trapped and annihilated.

Edward first alleged that the raiders had left freely, suffering no interference from ‘the men of those parts.’<sup>195</sup> According to one chronicle, the counter-attack came too late. News of the raid had reached Winchester, Salisbury, Guildford and as far as London. Then

all manner of people bestirred themselves and rode as quickly as they could to Hampshire and to the town; but they found that the French had retreated, having burned the town and laid it to ruin (*s’esmurent toutes manières de gens et vinrent à cheval au plus hastivement qu’il peurent en la conté de Hantonne et en le ville; mès il trouvèrent que li Franchois estoient retret, qui le ville avoient arse et reubée*).

That is taken from Froissart’s Amiens manuscript, a rogue document, as we have already seen. The difficulty here is that the narrative, for all that it may be basically correct, is deceptive. It deals with the broader picture, the movement down to the coastal areas of Hampshire of people living well inland and outside the county; and as such, it surely relates more to official orders for the redeployment of county levies than it does to the initial response of the arrayers and keepers of the maritime land. A considerable amount of official frustration and disappointment underpins this selection of the facts.

The archaeological evidence offers a different picture. The pattern of burning that is shown in French and Bugle Street, at their junctions with east–west lanes (figure 17: 4), strongly implies a staged retirement to the ships. In preparation, extra fuel would have been heaped up in the target houses, using what was readily available nearby; such things as doors, shutters and furniture from other houses, hay and straw from their stables, and sacks of grain from their storerooms. So deliberate a retirement would have been necessary only if a counter-force had arrived, in some numbers. That is roughly the story told by most of the chroniclers. According to two accounts that favour the French, when the raiders saw that the Englishmen were moving against them, they set fire to the town, retired to their ships, and sailed off.<sup>196</sup> Among the English chroniclers, Murimuth says that the raiders set fire to the town the next day and retired to the galleys on perceiving that the county forces had gathered (*percipientes quod se patria congregavit*). Knighton lists the many terrible things done by the raiders, including burning the town, but when the people of the county rushed there (*sed accurrentibus compatriotis*), they got back on their ships and made for the high seas.<sup>197</sup>

The translations offered in the previous paragraph deliberately downgrade the chroniclers’ *patria* to county, but probably still overstate the size of the catchment area. Whoever filled the ranks of the counter-force, the arrayers or the keepers of the maritime land had only the hours of the night to assemble them and march them to Southampton. Those ‘certain men of the town and the parts adjacent’ who were alleged to have stolen the cargo and goods of a Catalan ship, ‘after the withdrawal of the foreign enemies’<sup>198</sup> were perhaps members of the force that had appeared outside the town that Tuesday morning. Arriving any later than that, they would have found fewer chances to exploit the confusion. They are not named, but the six men who between them took away the equivalent of a sack of wool ‘after the said burning’<sup>199</sup> are named. They also came from nearby: William Sparewe and Robert Elys both lived in the Newtown suburb of Southampton; William de Damble came from Nursling; John atte Strode was the hayward at Bishopstoke; and ‘Alexander’ was sometime

the hayward of Hugh de Camoys, perhaps at Longstock, north of Stockbridge.<sup>200</sup> The only person who usually lived more than twenty miles away was Elias Farman of Hungerford—presumably the place near Newbury in Wiltshire—and his presence in the district might be explained if he had been seeing to the shipping of his county's wool.

For Murimuth and Knighton, as for the pro-French chroniclers, it was simply the presence of the counter-force that induced a retirement, but Baker describes an actual struggle between the two sides and the death of 300 'pirates.' Just possibly, and far from definitely, a similar fight is described by the poet, Minot (see above). Stow's reworking of Baker's text is forever quoted, to the point of tedium, so only the original will be given here:

*numero trecentorum piratarum, cum eorum duce filio regis Cisilie iuvene milite, fuerunt interfecti. Predicto militi dedit Francorum tyrannus quicquid potuit de regno Anglie nancisci, set ipse, a quodam rustico terre prostratus, clamans: 'Rancoun,' occubuit fustibus mactatus ab eodem rustico reclamante: 'Scio quod tu es Francoun'; non enim intellexit nec eius idioma nec erat doctus captos generosos redempcioni conservare.*

If the English had been following closely on the heels of the raiders, that would have resulted in clashes, but never on a scale of mortality that every other chronicler ignores.

And so the raid ended with a bang or a whimper, depending on who was writing the chronicle. How the mess was sorted out will be the subject of the second part of this essay.

## Endnotes

1. CIM 1307–48, 410
2. CCR 1339–41, 143
3. Thompson 1889a, 87
4. Thompson 1887b, 62
5. Archer 2004, 13
6. Plummer 1896, 238
7. CPR 1334–38, 180
8. TR 1337–9, 217–8
9. Molinier & Molinier 1882, 251–2
10. Lettenhove 1879–80, I, 379 & 574; Moranville 1891–7, II, 93–4
11. Hellot 1884, 178–9
12. Hall 1887, 8
13. Edwards 2006
14. Moore 1920
15. Hall 1887, xi
16. Stevenson 1839, 283; Galbraith 1927, 5
17. CFR 1337–47, 97
18. CPR 1338–40, 180–1
19. Gorski (2003, 102–24
20. CFR *ibid*, 102
21. CPR 1338–40, 180–1
22. Platt 1973, 110
23. CCR 1339–41, 241
24. CFR 1337–47, 97
25. Stubbs 1882, 298
26. RP, i, 413
27. See Heebøll-Holm 2013 for the wider picture
28. CCR 1318–23, 524
29. RP, ii, 413
30. CPR 1321–24, 385
31. RP *ibid*
32. Stubbs *ibid*
33. Platt 1973, 107
34. CIM 1307–48, 256–7; CCR 1327–30, 320
35. Pantin 1955, 205–9 & 274
36. CCR 1318–23, 490
37. *ibid*, 696
38. Lemoine 1896, 45
39. Platt *ibid*
40. RS, i, 446; Parker 1922
41. HA 23/3/1844
42. RCHM, 566–7
43. CPR 1324–27, 252
44. Platt 1973, 107
45. Timbal 1961, 175–200
46. O’Neil 1951, 245–6
47. CIM 1348–77, 154–5
48. RCHM, 566–7
49. Wachter 1975, 146
50. Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975, I, plates 5 & 8
51. Foedera II ii, 1062
52. Anderson 1921, 21
53. CPR 1338–40, 181
54. Davies 1883, 382
55. The text is in Haines 1978, 69
56. CIM 1348–77, 154
57. *ibid*

58. Creighton and Higham 2005, 70
59. Platt 1973, 108
60. SCA SC2/6/2 & SCA SC4/2/47
61. DC B3396
62. Lettenhove 1879–80, I, 379
63. Moranville 1891–7, II, 93–4
64. Burgess (1964)’s numbering
65. Kaye 1976, II, 381, with more examples
66. NA E101/22/7
67. Brown and Hardy 2011, 266
68. Kaye, *ibid*
69. Faulkner 1975, 70
70. CPR 1334–38, 240
71. CPR 1340–43, 136, 312 & 326
72. Platt 1973, 116
73. Brie 1913, 269
74. CIM 1348–77, 154
75. Burgess 1976
76. Moffett 2013, 220–4
77. Saunders 1976, 25
78. Anderson 1921, 21
79. NA C47/2/39/42
80. Ayton 2005, 222
81. Platt 1973, 116
82. Ayton *ibid*
83. Burgess 1976, 8–9
84. Moffett 2013, 227
85. Platt 1973, 262–3
86. Diller 1972, 307
87. Champion 1937, 171
88. Carnel 1839, 52–8; Heebøll-Holm 2013, 115–7
89. Beaurepaire 1865, 37
90. Foedera II, ii, 912
91. Darsel 1970, 268
92. Evans 2000, 45
93. Jal 1840, II, 454
94. Chazelas 1977–8, I, 105
95. *ibid*, 106
96. Foedera II ii, 946 & 956
97. Luce 1862, 13
98. Diller 1972, 306
99. Foedera II ii, 941 & 946
100. The text appears Jal 1840, II, 333–8, and in a slightly different form in Molinier & Molinier, 1871, 210–13
101. *ibid*
102. Delisle 1871, 223–8
103. Canale 1858–64, III, 121–36 & 145–53; Epstein 1996, 201–6
104. Géraud 1843, II, 156
105. Foedera II ii, 1088
106. Livingstone & Wizen 2005, 58
107. Ayton and Preston 2005, 354–5
108. Goodenough 2000, 449–50
109. Jal 1840, II, 338; Chazelas 1977–8, I, 129
110. Delisle 1871, 223–8
111. Canale *ibid*, 135
112. Thompson 1889b, 62
113. Foedera II ii, 1011
114. CPR 1338–40, 190
115. *ibid*, 195 & 404



116. Delisle 1871, 180–1
117. Dana 1911, 152
118. Lacabane 1844, 36–7
119. Oman 1924, 215
120. Ruddock 1951, 32
121. DeVries 1990, 820
122. DeVries 1998, 170
123. Smith and DeVries 2005, 10
124. Bradbury 1992, 283–4
125. Kelly 2004, 29
126. Ponting 2005, 109
127. Livingstone and Witzel 2005, 58
128. Osborne 2011, 49
129. Eddison 2013, 109
130. Foedera II ii, 1070
131. Cited in Usherwood 1978, 52
132. Freeman 1967, 445–6
133. Foedera II ii, 1026–7
134. RS, i, 451
135. Foedera II ii, 1067
136. Galbraith 1927, 13; Hamilton 1848–9, II, 315; Horstmann 1901, I, xlix–l; Riley 1863–4, I, 200
137. Lemoine 1896, 45 & 48
138. Augier 1844, 74–5
139. Stevenson 1839, 298
140. Hughes 1994, 121
141. Besançon 864, 40r; Chicago f37/1 27v; Paris Ms fr 2663, 44r
142. Lettenhove, 1867–77, II, 469–71; Luce 1869, li, 501
143. Diller 1972, 306
144. Thompson 1889a, 87; 1889b, 62
145. Bernady 1960, 8
146. Lettenhove 1879–80, I, 574; Moranville 1891–7, II, 93–4; Lettenhove *ibid*, 379
147. NA SC1/41/171
148. Lumby 1895, II, 8
149. Stevenson 1839, 283; Galbraith 1927, 5
150. Evans 2000, 43
151. Stevenson, *ibid*
152. CCR 1339–41, 332
153. Blake 1981, I, xl–xli
154. NA E101/22/11
155. RP, ii, 108
156. Luce *ibid*
157. 4/10/2011
158. Sumption 1990, 320–1
159. GR C61/50:65; Foedera II ii, 996 & 1055
160. Foedera II ii, 1066
161. RP, ii, 108
162. Englefield 1805, 88
163. Davies 1883, 94
164. SCA SC2/6/2 & SC4/2/47
165. Aberg 1975, 203; Platt 1975, 293–4
166. Burgess 1976, 56–9
167. Lumby 1895, II, 8
168. Diller 1972, 306–7
169. Kaye 1976, I, lii–lx
170. CCR 1339–41, 104 & 332
171. Aberg 1975, 195
172. Platt 1975, I, 245

173. Brown and Hardy 2011, 285
174. Diller 1972, 307
175. CCR 1339–41, 104
176. NA SC/8/142/7079
177. Blake 1981, I, xliv
178. Kaye *ibid*
179. Kaye *ibid*
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181. Davies 2000, 47
182. Oxley 1986, 111
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184. Shenton 2001, 21
185. CFR *ibid*, 275
186. CPR *ibid*, 408
187. CFR 1337–47, 325
188. Oxley 1986, 116
189. cited in Aberg 1975, 178
190. *ibid*, 176
191. Stevenson 1836, 169
192. CCR 1339–41, 143; CIM 1307–48, 411
193. CCR 1339–41, 550–1; CIM *ibid* indicates very slightly smaller amounts
194. The text is in Jusselin 1912, 233–4
195. CPR 1334–38, 180
196. Lettenhove 1879–80, I, 574 & Moranville 1891–7, II, 93–4; Lettenhove *ibid*, 379
197. Lumby 1895, II, 8
198. CPR 1338–40, 183
199. CCR 1339–41, 143
200. Holmes 1957, 67 n3

## Acknowledgements

Figure 3. With endless gratitude for the existence of the website, Old Hampshire Mapped.

Figure 9. British Library, Royal 14 E IV ff 57r & 59v. Available under the Public Domain mark.

Figure 11. British Library, BL Add Ms 47682, f40r. Available under the Public Domain mark.

Figure 13. Top left: with the permission of Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, Ms Marlay Add I f 86r. Top right: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, français 2644 f 9r. Available under the Public Domain mark. Bottom: British Library, Royal MS 20 D1 f 258r. Available under the Public Domain mark.

Figure 14: With the permission of the Comptroller General of the Ordnance Survey.

Figure 15. Bottom: with the permission of Southampton City Council Arts and Heritage, and with the permission of the Comptroller General of the Ordnance Survey.

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Uncredited translations are my own.

Except where otherwise stated, the text of Froissart's *Chroniques* used in this essay is the A-text, specifically that of MS Besançon 864 for Book 1 and MS Besançon 865 for Books 2–3. They are free to read, along with other manuscript versions, at The Online Froissart website. Editions cited are Diller 1972, Lettenhove 1867–77 and Luce 1869.

Other archive sources and texts customarily cited by their initials are:

CCR *Calendar of Close Rolls*

CFR *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

CIM *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*

CPR *Calendar of Patent Rolls*

DC A *Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the Public Record Office, II*

GR *Gascon Rolls* (available online as The Gascon Rolls project, 1317–1468)

HA *The Hampshire Advertiser*

NA National Archives document

RCHM *Historical Manuscripts Commission: sixth report*, London

RP *Rotuli Parliamentorum*

RS *Rotuli Scotiæ*

SCA Southampton City Archives document

TR *Treaty Rolls*

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