



Henry VIII on Tour: Keeping the Show on the Road

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HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

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Abstract: Henry VIII's royal progresses were not all about the whims and pursuits of the royal couple and their courtiers. It is also worth studying the people who made them possible. Progresses were extremely complex enterprises, usually involving hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, affecting the lives of numerous hidden heroes and heroines: the household servants, musicians, carpenters, tailors, stable hands, and carters, among many others. Equally important were the harbingers, purveyors, and messengers who prepared the way. Fleeting glimpses of these vital cogs in the smooth running of the progress come from the royal warrants for payment and surviving expense accounts. Through the analysis of key elements in the logistics of progresses, such as the locations visited, provisioning, repair and preparation of lodgings, transportation, and dress, their vital contribution is evaluated using examples from throughout Henry's reign. Ensuring the success of royal journeys was an enormous challenge, one that these unsung actors generally rose to. Yet, Henry's progresses were never entirely straight forward and for all the organisation and intricate preparations, his officials and servants often experienced a high level of unpredictability and uncertainty when on the road. This arose not just by chance or accident, but also by design when the king decided to depart from existing plans. An ability to pivot and provide alternative arrangements at short notice, making even hasty changes of plan work smoothly is testament to the professionalism and dedication of Henry's household officials.

Key words: Henry VIII; progress; royal household; servants; artisans; harbingers.



Henry VIII's progresses were an established phenomenon in the royal calendar. They usually followed pre-determined routes through designated counties within England, which were within traditional circuits based on royal residences and important shrines. Royal presence in the localities was at once a manifestation of the monarch's authority, but also entailed a careful balancing act between courting or appeasing provincial communities, and fulfilling the caprices of the monarch and his consort. Progresses demanded an exhibition of both kingship and queenship (as the queen frequently accompanied him on progress), yet required close co-operation with the host venues. Royal visitations, therefore, provided opportunities for cementing personal and professional connections, while also building expectations of the king's and queen's presence in the towns and villages in which they stayed or through which they passed.¹

The ambit of the progress altered from year to year and could range widely geographically, depending upon Henry's inclinations, social contingencies, the economic context, and political expediency.² In the earliest years of his reign, he was determined to show himself to his people, undertaking in 1510 a "hearts and minds" progress in the south-west as far as Shaftesbury (Dorset), and another in 1511 through the Midlands to Nottingham. In addition to a spectacular progress to Calais in 1520, he visited East Anglia in 1522, toured Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire towards Bristol then back through Wiltshire and Hampshire in 1535, and travelled along the south coast of England (from Kent across to Hampshire) in 1545, among other examples.³ In other years, the king was content to travel less far, perambulating to venues around the Home Counties. Logistically, progresses were extremely complex enterprises that usually involved hundreds, sometimes thousands of people depending upon the circumstances. Sources differ as to the scale of the royal entourage. The 1541 progress to York, for example, the longest and most northerly one that Henry undertook, was accompanied by a sizeable brigade of troops, perhaps in the region of 2,000 to 4,000 armed men.⁴ The trip's purpose was not only to awe religious rebels in the areas he passed through on the way, but also to impress and prevent

¹ Musson and Cooper, "Reconstructing Royal Journeys," 1–7; Cooper and Hayes-Davies, "Progresses and Personal Monarchy," 21–32.

² Samman, "Progresses of Henry VIII," 59–73; MacCullough, *Cromwell*, 208–209, 292–317, 464–465.

³ For a detailed account of the progress to Calais and its political ramifications, see Richardson, *Field of Cloth of Gold*.

⁴ LP 16:941: Marillac reckoned the company "may number 4,000 or 5,000 horse," though later estimated it was nearer 6,000.

any disturbance from James V, king of Scots, whom he was scheduled to be meeting there.⁵ The French ambassador, Charles de Marillac, commented that for Henry's journey to Dover in 1542, "the King takes no greater company than if he went on progress."⁶ Even on a 'normal' progress, that may have meant upwards of 500 people, perhaps even a thousand.⁷ As such, there was a veritable army of people upon whom responsibility for the progresses' smooth running devolved, and who made all of the numerous activities possible. Yet, their exploits have remained relatively overlooked.⁸

Knowing who was accompanying the king on progress in the absence of ready-made lists is an archival adventure in itself. Cast lists of lordly and knightly retinues, generated as part of the meticulous planning required for journeys involving overseas travel—the military progresses of 1513 and 1544, and the diplomatic progresses of 1520, 1522, and 1532—show the nobles and gentry, officers of the household and their allotted number of servants, assigned on the basis of status. Unfortunately, however, they do not identify the servants by name and in some years, whole departments, including significant ones such as the Chapel Royal, are simply given a global figure. While it may be possible to infer who their members were on the basis of itemised wages and rewards paid to named household staff, this information is available by and large only in the years covered by the Chamber Books and the Privy Purse Accounts. Moreover, lists of monthly wage-earners generally refer to the entire royal household and do not, in themselves, necessarily specify which of its members actually went on progress.⁹

This paper investigates the activities of members of the royal household and their local counterparts who ensured royal progresses were a success both logistically and aesthetically. It explores the way these complicated undertakings mesh together, asking questions relating to the extent of advance knowledge and timings of preparatory work, and evaluates the diverse roles and expectations on members of the royal household. In doing so, it casts the historical magnifying glass on these largely unsung heroes and heroines: the above and below-stairs household servants (including ushers, grooms, and maids), bedmakers, laundresses, cooks, stable hands, and carters. To these we should add the minstrels and players, Chapel Royal and Privy Chamber singers who provided musical and theatrical entertainment; the tailors, seamstresses, and embroiders who fashioned

⁵ Hoyle and Ramsdale, "Royal Progress of 1541," 239–265; Sansom, "Wakefield Conspiracy of 1541," 217–238.

⁶ LP 17:261.

⁷ LP 16:941: Marillac advised the French king that "ordinarily" Henry takes 1,000.

⁸ For a sense of the "progress stuffs" Henry took with him, see: Edwards, "Preparing to Progress," 53–59.

⁹ For example, TNA E 36/215, fols. 10–11 (1509); Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 284–291 (1529).

clothing for the household's livery; the carpenters, joiners, masons, and glaziers who ensured the royal residences were in good repair; and the gardeners and gamekeepers who kept the gardens and parks stocked and fit for royal use. Not to mention the harbingers, purveyors, and messengers who liaised with suppliers and hosts to prepare the way in advance. It is not possible, within the space of this paper, to do justice to the full gamut of the activities of all these essential workers or to provide biographies or backstories. Nevertheless, in providing vignettes from different points in time, it will at least reveal something of the inner workings of the progress machine.

How can we discern these vital cogs at work? There are fleeting glimpses through payments recorded in the Great Wardrobe, the Privy Purse, Chamber Books, Cofferers, and various other types of financial accounts, mainly claims for expenses owed for tasks undertaken or rewards doled out for their efforts. While some of these provide names, in many types of early-sixteenth century records, it is unusual to find anything other than a designation or an amorphous group. Moreover, some of the logistics of the progress were directed from above at varying removes, but their implementation often lay very much at lower levels and in partnership with similar employees in the localities. Here, the civic records can be fruitful, as the mayor's or chamberlain's accounts betray the preparations made in advance of a royal visit and the rewards accorded to members of the royal and noble retinues attending. Where the records reveal who they actually were and what they were doing, they thus permit reflection on what individuals contributed to royal progresses professionally. It is much more difficult to ascertain details of their personal lives and assess how service on progress may have affected these, how they coped with being away from home and family for long periods, how they adjusted to a peripatetic life, and what benefits they derived from it.

Location

"Removing day" when the court was on progress was the day scheduled for packing up and moving on to the next destination. Progress locations were determined by the king in consultation with his leading ministers and courtiers and announced in advance in his "giestes." These were written sheets containing detailed outlines of the routes to be taken (there and back) and not only mention the locations to be visited, but also include the mileage envisaged between these different stages. This advance notification enabled venues to prepare for the king's arrival. Unfortunately, very few of the original "giestes" survive, making it difficult for historians to ascertain Henry's expected itinerary.

The "giestes" were not set in stone, however, and correspondence from ambassadors and members of the king's entourage directed to his leading ministers, Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell (during their respective ascendancy) reveals the unpredictability of progresses, with plans changing sometimes at extremely short notice.¹⁰ Sudden shifts in venue were often determined by news of sickness in the vicinity. In 1526, for example, during his progress from Surrey through Sussex and Hampshire, Henry was scheduled to lodge at the earl of Arundel's Stansted Park and Southwick Priory on the way to Winchester, "as is in the said gieste is expressed." The journey and host venues, however, were altered as "his highness is advised the parish wherein the said house of Stanstyd doth stand is infected with the plague of sickness." This prompted a diversion (with only about two weeks' notice) to the countess of Salisbury's house at Warblington and Porchester Castle.¹¹ Similarly, his proposed visit to Romsey Abbey, scheduled after Winchester, had to be cancelled as a result of it being "where the sickness is."¹²

The unpredictability of the progresses filtered through to the diplomatic community. Indeed, Henry's habit of departing from his published timetable caused the French ambassador, Marillac, to marvel to his master that in undertaking his progress north towards York in 1541, Henry had not exceeded the "escript" (programme) of his journey until "the day before yesterday."¹³ Divergence from the published route that did not obviously result from illness could be viewed more suspiciously. In 1542, with fears of war with France on the cards, the king's progress to Dover had conspiracy theorists at work, as Marillac reported: "There is a rumour that he will cross secretly to Calais to see the fortresses, and how far the work at Guînes is advanced. He himself says he goes only to Dover, and will return immediately, and his ministers confirm this; yet others, who have often truly informed [the ambassador], and are in a position to know, say the contrary."¹⁴

Faced with sudden changes of plan, reliable messengers were crucial for rapid communication of the king's intentions. In 1541, Thomas Tyrell, messenger and pursuivant, claimed expenses of 53s. 8d. for riding 644 miles between venues on the northern progress, as well as additional riding costs of 38s. 10d. six months later, which at an allowance of two pence per mile, indicates he travelled another 233 miles. The different stages of his routes and the type of delivery are itemised, meaning his itineraries can be

¹⁰ For recent biographies, see MacCulloch, *Cromwell*; and Richardson, *Wolsey*.

¹¹ TNA SP 1/39, fol. 1.

¹² Liveing, *Records of Romsey Abbey*, 244.

¹³ LP 16:1130.

¹⁴ LP 17:261.

studied in some detail, reflecting progress concerns and contacts, including "riding with the postes letters" to Ampthill, probably using the English government's new standing post routes.¹⁵ Given the changes of direction and the extended stays of the 1541 progress, deviating considerably in timings and locations from the original "giestes," Tyrell was undoubtedly busy. In recompense for his considerable labours in that year, he received a new livery coat.¹⁶

Royal messengers also channelled the king's instructions for the governance of the realm while on progress, receiving remuneration "for their progress and costs riding with the king's privy seals concerning the king's causes."¹⁷ In 1543, for example, Henry received a series of messages while in Berkshire and Oxfordshire "for certain knowledge" of the rumours concerning the landing of some Frenchmen.¹⁸ Messengers provided a vital service requiring extensive travel at speed, but this entailed clear dangers. Not only did they often carry money in addition to important communications, but their distinctive royal livery with silver escutcheon made them recognisable symbols of royal authority, yet also highly visible targets. Odell, one of the king's messengers, received a payment "in reward" in April 1530 (probably by way of compensation), after "by reason he was robbed riding upon the king's business," stressing that his could be a hazardous occupation.¹⁹

As the role of royal messengers highlights, communication between progress venues was important in enabling the hosts to be in readiness to receive the entourage. Supplementing the king's network of messengers, local communities relied on their own men to send and bring news regarding the proximity of the royal entourage and the intentions of the king. In 1522, the city of Canterbury's messenger, John Haslast, had to ride to and from Dover in one day in order "to bring certain knowledge of the Emperor and the king's coming."²⁰ Reacting quickly enough to reports of the king's movements was vital and required getting the word out. John Goldsmyth, for example, was sent by the Corporation of Dover to Faversham and then into Thanet with letters "to warn them for the transporting of the king's grace into England" on his victorious return from France in 1513. Other unnamed men were paid by the Corporation for riding with letters to nearby

¹⁵ Brayshay, *Land Travel and Communications*, 272–280.

¹⁶ BL MS Add. 59900, fol. 148v; TNA E 314/19, fols. 15, 16.

¹⁷ TNA E 101/416/4, no. 7.

¹⁸ BL MS Add. 59900, fol. 132v.

¹⁹ TNA E 101/420/11, fol. 93v.

²⁰ CCA FA 11, fol. 116v.

Folkstone and Kingsdown, to ensure the inhabitants were ready with "mariners and boats to serve the king in his transporting."²¹

Like good hotel staff in our own time, household officials had to look ahead and be intuitive to the likely needs of the royal party. The keeper of the king's standing wardrobe, William Childisley, together with three grooms and two servants, were in attendance at court for forty-four days "in the progress time" in 1544.²² Those slated to host the king on progress equally had to ensure that everything was prepared to the requisite level. Sir Anthony Browne, for example, left London eight days before Henry started his 1539 summer progress "to get his house [at Cowdray in Sussex] ready against the king's coming."²³ At the end of the stay at a particular location, there were also duties entailed. William Fitzwilliam, treasurer of the household, remained at the king's lodgings in Guildford Priory for two days in July 1526 "for the reformation and ordering thereof."²⁴

The smooth running of the progress machine was potentially disrupted, however, when essential staff were off sick. For instance, in February 1544 arrangements were frustrated when Rowland Rugeley and David Vincent of the wardrobe of the beds were indisposed.²⁵ Changes of date or route also meant household staff had to pivot quickly to find accommodation alternatives. In August 1529, when the king "in haste removed himself from London to Waltham for a night or twain, while his household removed to Greenwich ... the harbingers lodged Dr Stephen [Gardiner], secretary, and Dr Foxe, almoner ... in the house of the said Master Cressy where the said Dr Cranmer was lodged and resident." It also appears that Henry either visited or spent the night there, too, since Foxe reminded the king that "[it] chanced us to be lodged at Waltham in Master Cressy's house this other night, your highness being there."²⁶

Such examples indicate how the supposed certainty of the king's "giestes" was undermined in reality. Indeed, the element of chance or accident (as highlighted by Foxe) not only underlines the progresses' lack of predictability, but exposes, too, problems faced by the royal harbingers and gentlemen ushers of the wardrobe of the beds whose careful preparations could come to nothing. This, in turn, may have resulted in loss of face with their local contacts and, as exemplified above, the need to pivot and make alternative

²¹ BL MS Egerton 2092, fols. 68v-69.

²² BL MS 59900, fol. 82.

²³ LP 14:1181-2.

²⁴ TNA SP 1/39, fol. 1.

²⁵ BL Add. MS 59900, fol. 82.

²⁶ Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Book 11, 2072.

arrangements, perhaps calling in favours from others within their networks. Their ability to make even the hasty change of plans work smoothly is testament to the professionalism and dedication of Henry's household officials.

Provisions

Extravagant displays of hospitality that were part and parcel of progresses were logistically complicated undertakings requiring careful advanced planning. Anything that went wrong in terms of etiquette, or a failure to provide sufficient food and drink, could reflect badly on the king, if he was hosting, and in itself provoke a diplomatic incident, or at least have a detrimental impact on negotiations and relations with other princes. It was especially the case in 1522. In anticipation of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V's visit to England in May, officials in the English household were tasked to ensure that "every thing may be honourably and plenteously provided."²⁷ There were concerns, however, that the itinerary proposed by Charles's advisors did not give enough time for preparation. The English ambassadors in the imperial court were asked to politely convey to the emperor that the king needed at least a month's warning to make the necessary arrangements, and that the former's plans to arrive on 10 April (during Eastertide) would not be convenient. As Cardinal Wolsey himself stressed: "Time is needed also for the preparation of transports for the Emperor and his train, and to get ready the King's ships to guard the Channel, and furnish them with victuals, fish being at present scarce." He further emphasised that they should convince the emperor to defer his arrival as "the furniture also of Dover, and [the] towns betwixt the sea side and London, with victuals, carriages and all other things necessary, will require a good tract of time."²⁸ Fortunately for the English preparations, Charles V acquiesced to the requested delay, arriving at Calais on 25 May and into the port of Dover on 26 May.²⁹

The numbers of participants in the joint progress of 1522 was set at 2,000 on each side. Just as "forests, parks, field, salt seas, rivers, moats and ponds [had been] searched and sought through countries" for the feeding of the 6,000 guests expected at the Field of Cloth of Gold near Guînes in 1520,³⁰ two years later, an army of harbingers, chandlers, and other officials were given money on account "toward their expenses out of court" to secure

²⁷ Jerdan, *Rutland Papers*, 76.

²⁸ LP 3:2127.

²⁹ Gachard, *Voyages des Souverains*, 2:32.

³⁰ Hall, *Chronicle*, 615.

necessaries so that the emperor's train and the royal retinue may be "plenteously provided and furnished with all manner of victuals for horse and man."³¹ On an almost similar scale, the 1541 progress necessitated the supply of vast amounts of food and drink to cater for the upwards of 4,000 in the royal retinue, the numbers and scale of which were comparable to a military expedition. According to the French ambassador, "provisions of wine come daily from London," suggesting existing metropolitan supply chains were working overtime.³² There was also a reliance on local production, for which harbingers would be expected to liaise with local hosts, farmers, and tradesmen. The spotlight was on Sir Ralph Ellerker when hosting the king at Risby Hall (Yorkshire) in 1541 to get hold of the produce as the king's officials directed. Bold instructions ("ye shall have") specify 288 fine manchet loaves, 144 fine chet and sixteen dozen "other bread," while an array of red and white meat is specified, including four bucks, six muttons, ten swans, at least ten dozen capons, pullets, and chickens, twelve dozen pigeons, four dozen conies, and twelve dozen gulls. Additionally, it is advised ("I trust ye shall have") that dozens of various types of game birds and waterfowl should be rounded up as well as ten dozen larks or sparrows. On the dessert front, forty pounds of butter, 400 eggs, 300 apples, and three gallons of cream were required.³³ We do not know how many people were being entertained but, judging by the amounts requested, this number could have ranged between 250 and 500. Local landowners (or their huntsmen and gamekeepers) would have had to work together to supply such a volume of animals and birds from their estates. This would have been no mean feat, especially when Ellerker's own reputation would have been judged on his hosting of Henry VIII.

Purveyance, which consisted in levying goods and foodstuffs for the king's use under the royal prerogative, was generally disliked. Although the clerks of the market were supposed to act in accord with the "custom of the county" and pay "reasonable" market rates, they could charge slightly below the normal rate and profits could easily be made from bulk buying.³⁴ Unpopularity also arose from delays in payment or failures in the chain of compensation. In order to limit the potential for financial shortcomings and guard against improper levies, purveyors were normally granted in advance appropriate sums to

³¹ Jerdan, *Rutland Papers*, 72, 77.

³² LP 16:1130. In 1522, the eleven wine merchants in the city could raise just over 180 tuns (a tun being the largest type of cask for wine), while the twenty-eight taverns (one of which was run by a woman, Elsbeth Goswell) had 224 tuns in their cellars (Jerdan, *Rutland Papers*, 68–69).

³³ ERA DDCC/153/43B/29.

³⁴ TNA E 101/425/8; Woodworth, "Purveyance," 37–38.

enable them to undertake their duties. However, payment in advance was not guaranteed, which put purveyors themselves at a disadvantage. In the early years of Henry VIII's reign, William Hathcliffe, for example, sent a pair of indentures (one of which was for £40, the other for £30) to John Heron, the king's cofferer, complaining that Lord Howard told him the money he should have received "is all spent," with the upshot being that "all is now on my provision and so have I done without any penny received as yet."³⁵ The burden also rested on the hosts. Given the potential impact on the city, both in terms of reputation and financial outlay, the Corporation of Canterbury sent Master Freeman and his man to London in 1543–1544 "to know the pleasure of the king's counsel concerning victuals and other things" in advance of the king's proposed visit to Dover. Since the king had by-passed Canterbury in 1542, the potential for loss of face and wasted economic expenditure still worried them. Canterbury's mayor thus dispatched a representative again, to ascertain for sure "whether [the king] would come through the town or nay."³⁶ Their precautions were borne out as Henry avoided the city, where there were rumours of sickness, and stayed at Ford Palace, the archbishop of Canterbury's residence on the coast near Herne Bay.³⁷

The time-consuming nature of collecting supplies and getting them to the designated destination is illustrated in the costs claimed by Richard Bennett and Robert Donyington in 1532. The two men spent fifty days "riding about England," in the provision of oats "against the King's coming to Calais." The large amount they purchased (400 quarters) had to be freighted to Calais and, once there, taken by cart from the ship to two lofts they had hired. At the end of the fifteen-week hire period, the residue of the provender (amounting to 390 quarters) had to be returned to the king's residence at Greenwich.³⁸ Provisioning the royal party was also inhibited or delayed when claims of exemption from the burdens of purveyance were made. Surrey, for example, maintained that it "was discharged of all provisions in the time of King Henry the Eight" because it was "a very little and poor county," and the sovereign was "lying continually either in the said county or near adjoining to the same." Given the number of royal residences in Surrey itself had expanded considerably by the 1540s, it is likely the contention—made in an undated petition from Mary or Elizabeth's reign (as it blames "her majesty's household")—

³⁵ TNA E 101/417/7, no. 20 (1511–1513).

³⁶ CCA FA 13, fol. 236v.

³⁷ BL Caligula MS E IV, fol. 57v.

³⁸ LP 5:1494.

was genuine.³⁹ If exemptions were obtained, they placed burdens on adjoining counties or on the royal properties themselves to provide the necessary foodstuffs, as well as wood and charcoal for cooking and heating.

The immediate demands of the royal household when entertaining on progress unfortunately had a broader knock-on effect for military supplies that threatened the efficacy of foreign policy initiatives. At the time of the joint progress with Charles V, for example, the army and navy needed to take onboard supplies for the new offensive against France. In a letter of 18 June 1522, a few days after the combined royal and imperial courts had passed out of the capital and on to Windsor, Thomas, Lord Darcy, who was responsible for military provisioning, was told that in spite of attempts at purchasing it in London, "There is little good wine there. Some is coming to [South]Hampton, but [his agent] will be unable to send any now."⁴⁰ The troops were also seriously lacking beer. It was estimated that some ships only had enough for about a week, others merely a fortnight's supply. The earl of Surrey himself later informed Henry VIII that the purveyors "had no money to pay the brewers, without which they refused to work," and that he had to provide 200 marks out of his own pocket. It was not just a problem with supplies of drink: he also complained to the king that officials were "hindered about the beer for want of casks, but are as far behindhand with flesh, fish and biscuit as with beer; which I think comes from negligence. We cannot do what we intend unless we are better furnished, both from London and Portsmouth."⁴¹

The success of royal progresses was thus reliant on household officials and their local contacts being able to source and supply provisions for the king and his entourage, whatever its size and intended extravagance. This put burdens on those responsible for ensuring they materialised (often at their own expense or to the detriment of their suppliers) or face royal displeasure. A further drawback, also apparent on the ground, stems from the way the logistics of demand and supply for the diplomatic 'soft power' of the progress appears to have taken precedence over provisions for military action, or at the very least provisions for the progress were authorised with little or no thought for the wider repercussions. Demonstrable shortages of food and drink and corresponding delay

³⁹ SHC 643/1/4. The Crown's Surrey residences during Henry VIII's reign included Hampton Court, Oatlands, Nonsuch, Richmond, West Horsely, Chobham, Mortlake, Chertsey, Esher, Woking, and Guildford.

⁴⁰ LP 3:2332.

⁴¹ LP 3:2337.

for the troops and sailors, waiting for these before they could get underway, was directly linked to the king's progress.

Royal Lodgings

In many instances, the king (and the queen when she accompanied him) were accommodated in royal residences. Prior announcement of the king's "giestes" thus enabled royal carpenter and chief surveyor, John Needham, who from 1531 oversaw the king's building works, to ascertain in advance the nature and extent of repairs that would be needed "against the king's coming." This could reveal structural faults requiring urgent attention, like replacing joists, rafters, boarding, and worn lead, or entail provision of new amenities, such as a "new jaques house [latrine] of timber to serve the king's bedchamber," as undertaken at Ampthill in 1543, "at the king's being there."⁴² In 1540, "the porvayar," William Wells, was responsible for "making provision of all such stuff as is needful to be had there [at Ampthill] for the foresaid work."⁴³ In addition to securing workmen for building work to be carried out there during July, August, and September 1536, purveyors were active "providing board, lime, sand, bricks, tiles, stone, lead, nails and other necessities" and arranging their carriage.⁴⁴

The scope for dilapidation and, thus, the necessity for repairs was particularly acute if there had not been a royal visit to the region for a while. When visited in 1511, Nottingham Castle had not hosted the monarch for eight years (Henry VII stayed there in August 1503). Lack of royal use in the intervening years meant several hundred pounds' worth of repairs had to be carried out at the Castle, warrants for which were issued in March and July 1511, prior to Henry VIII's progress there in August of that year.⁴⁵ In 1541, in preparation for the progress to Yorkshire, Clement Throckmorton, a surveyor from the Court of Augmentations, was dispatched to inspect "certain castles, places, manors and other capital houses of the king, to perceive the ruin of them with a view to their speedy repair." There was clearly a concern about the structure and safety of certain intended venues. Before the king's visit to his manor of Enfield in the same year, two old timber "shoyrys" (shorers) were pulled down and replaced, and timber tressle frames fashioned to support two great arch buttresses (made of brick stone) "for savegarde."⁴⁶ Given the

⁴² TNA E 101/504/2, fol. 55; BL Add. 59900, fols. 43, 48.

⁴³ Bodleian, MS Don C 206, fol. 227.

⁴⁴ NUL NE/O/1.

⁴⁵ TNA E 36/215, fols. 108, 129, 131–132.

⁴⁶ Bodleian, MS Don C 206, fol. 234.

preponderance of progresses in the Home Counties, the monarch had surprisingly not stayed at Hertford Castle since 1498, so nearly a quarter of a century later, in 1522, it was necessary to check that the castle and the houses of officers "be staunch and dry ... against the time that the king's pleasure shall be to lodge there for any reason."⁴⁷

Needham or his subordinates needed to have money "in prest" (advance) from time to time in order to hire masons, carpenters, joiners, glasiars, and assisting labourers to ensure work was carried out on the particular royal residences "whereas the king's highness shall resort in his progress this present summer season."⁴⁸ Henry's desire to convert former monastic houses into royal palaces gave leading craftsmen and artists fresh opportunities to contribute their skills. The royal painter John Hethe of London, for example, is likely to have gilded the stone heraldic beasts (a lion and a dragon) that occupied a position on the "halpace" (landing area) on the stairs leading to the new royal apartments at Dartford, as well as the vanes on the roofs in advance of the king's arrival in March 1541.⁴⁹

On the basis of warrants addressed to Needham, he might have had around two or three months before the king's arrival at a given venue to get the work completed. Part payment of £225 was made to him by a warrant of 28 May 1543 towards repairs at Petworth, Otford, Knole, and the More prior to Henry's appearance at Petworth on 27 July, at Knole on 14 September, and at Otford on 21 September.⁵⁰ George Lovekyn, clerk comptroller of the king's works, was granted money by a warrant dated 8 July 1530 to defray charges for repairs to be made at Ampthill. This only gave workers about six weeks, though, as the king was due to visit on 20 August.⁵¹ Work at Pyrigo Park, a property a mile from the queen's residence of Havering-atte-Bower, was the focus of attention in 1543 when workmen were employed "aswell against the king's majesty's first acoming to Harwich as at his grace's return there home again." It is lucky that nothing too substantial was required, since a marginal entry states "the beginning of this work was the xix day of May" and the work force were paid on 3 June, the day before the king's arrival, giving only about a fortnight for completion of their various tasks.⁵²

⁴⁷ TNA E 101/465/16.

⁴⁸ TNA E314/22/4.

⁴⁹ Howard, "Monastic Lodgings," 95, 97.

⁵⁰ BL MS Arundel 97, fol. 23; TNA E 101/422/10, fols. 25v–26r, 29r–v.

⁵¹ TNA E 101/420/11, fol. 115; LP 4:6654/1.

⁵² TNA E 314/22/14, "Pyrigo."

In keeping with the unpredictability of royal movements, financial provision was sometimes made only very shortly before or just after the king's arrival. On 18 September 1541, for example, Throckmorton acknowledged he had received £200 "to be employed in repairing and emending the king's grace's manors of York, Leconfield, Hull and other places."⁵³ Since Henry had arrived at Leconfield on 7 September, either the payment was largely retrospective, or they cannot have lived up to his expectations and the work had been ordered immediately. Leconfield and Wressle Castle had both previously belonged to the earl of Northumberland, while Hull was formerly in the possession of the duke of Suffolk. In any event, depending upon what was required at these venues, which unfortunately is not recorded, pressure would have been on the royal workmen, or on the carpenters and masons hired locally, as the renovations would have needed to have been completed at pace.

The scale of the king's demands in advance of his progresses (or miscalculations as to the time they would take to complete) was such that workmen were sometimes still present at the site while the king was in residence. Renovation and repair works were ongoing at Woking Palace, for example, during the summer of 1536 (from 30 July to 27 August) while Henry was staying there (13–17 August) and at Grafton Manor in the summer of 1539 (10 August to 7 September) for at least a week of his visit there (29 August to 9 September). Indeed, labourers working at Ampthill (23 August to 19 September 1540) were specifically noted by Needham as present "all the time of the king being there."⁵⁴ Although conversion of the former priory at Dartford into a royal palace had been initiated in time for Anne of Cleve's procession through Kent to Greenwich in January 1540, more permanent reconfiguration continued during the early 1540s (1541–1544).⁵⁵ Unless the workmen went temporarily off-site, they would have been in evidence when Henry stayed at Dartford for the second and final time in his reign during Ascensiontide (13–15 May) 1542, having previously shown off the revamped building to his new queen, Catherine Howard, in early 1541.⁵⁶

Henry VIII's determination to control or influence his surroundings, and especially his own residences, can be seen in his "hands-on" approach to both the exterior and interior of his lodgings. Coincidence of the royal visit and workmen being on-site may

⁵³ TNA E 314/22/9, no. 3.

⁵⁴ Bodleian, MS Don C 206, fol. 226; TNA E 101/422/17 fols 29–30v.

⁵⁵ NUL NE/O/3; Bodleian, MS Rawlinson D 783–784; Howard, "Monastic Lodgings," 90–95.

⁵⁶ TNA E 101/423/2, fol. 17; TNA E 101/423/4, fol. 19v.

therefore have been intended, as the king's presence at a venue provided an opportunity for the king to give instructions directly or to be consulted about plans and designs. Even upon arrival at Nottingham Castle, which Henry had sought to have repaired in advance,⁵⁷ the state of the internal furnishings in the castle was clearly not to the king's satisfaction, something he ordered to be corrected immediately. In a signet warrant dated 12 August 1511 issued at Nottingham, Cornelius, "our arras maker," was engaged to mend tappets and counterpoint in the castle for which 1,000 ells of canvas was ordered "for lining divers tappets of tapestry" depicting hunting and hawking, and "as much flat lyer [binding for the edges of fabric] as shall suffice for the same." Warner, "our bedmaker" or servant, was instructed to bring the materials up to Nottingham, presumably from London.⁵⁸ Although it was a long way to bring replacement furnishings, the king's comfort and pleasure was paramount.

Within the royal lodgings, privacy and security were of great concern to Henry. Therefore, his locksmiths were fully engaged at various locations, providing new locks and their requisite keys. In 1536 Richard Ludder, smith of Petworth was required to replace "21 locks and keys ... in diverse places within the said manor," including some external ones, such as a lock and key for the garden door, a hanging lock for the great gate into the park, and a lock for the gate by the churchyard.⁵⁹ It could clearly be no small task. Blacksmith Robert Atwood of Ampthill had to mend sixteen old locks and make fourteen new stock locks (which had a wooden back), with corresponding keys, for buildings at Ampthill. This work necessitated a day's ride to Dunstable.⁶⁰ The locksmith even went abroad with the king, carrying locks over to Calais to ensure his security there in 1532.⁶¹

The king's visits to certain royal residences on progress thus enabled the buildings to be renovated and refurbished in order to accommodate the royal household. Given the brevity of notice or time within which to complete the work required, it is not clear to what extent their structure or design was enhanced or, in turn, compromised by frequent alterations and hurried repairs. The crown's employment of local craftsmen and labourers, in addition to royal masons and carpenters, was no doubt important for the local economy, especially where regular visits to the same venue led to further engagement. Progresses

⁵⁷ TNA E 101/417/7, no. 73.

⁵⁸ NCA M104/1; TNA E 101/417/4.

⁵⁹ NUL, NE/O/2 (Sunday 20 July to 3 August 1536).

⁶⁰ Bodleian, MS Don C 206, fol. 228.

⁶¹ Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 271.

(and Henry's dissatisfaction with existing or previous designs) were thus beneficial in some aspects.

Room Preparations

Repairs to the fabric of royal buildings, whether internal or external, was only part of getting those residences ready for their occupants. Gentleman usher William Lee was instructed to set "seven men a worke about the making clean of divers lodgings in Windsor Castle," a two-day task for which they each received half a shilling per diem.⁶² Once the rooms were clean, they needed to be aired and scented with rose leaves and lavender flowers. Preparation of rooms for their occupants or for going on tour involved officers such as John Reed, keeper of the king's standing wardrobe at Westminster, who supervised "washing of sheets, pillowovers and fustians" (blankets), got out the wicker hampers used as packing cases, made sure there were "hooks, crochets, thread, linen and cords" available, and paid the tailors' wages "for tucking and mending of hangings." He also had to ensure there were brushes, firewood, and the necessary implements for drying out "sparvers" (bed canopies) as well as hanging items within the wardrobe.⁶³

As one might expect during a progress, advance parties were despatched to inspect and make the necessary arrangements at successive non-royal venues. Depending upon the size and pre-existing layout of the host residence, the space would be reconfigured and colonised accordingly by the gentleman ushers for the use of the king and queen, in line with their intentions. Indeed, ordinances specifying "How the King's and the Queen's lodgings shall be made at every time of the King and Queen removing" instructed that four gentleman ushers were required

to go before and to prepare the King's Lodging and the Gentleman Usher that is in this manner warned by the Lord Chamberlain shall resort to the king to know his further pleasure in that behalf how and in what manner he will have his Lodging prepared and made for him, the Queen and for how many Lords and of his council, and how for other Lords and Ladies⁶⁴

The king expected the layout of the place to mirror the configuration of rooms he and the queen were used to in their "standing houses." The queen was thus accorded the same number of chambers as the king (or more). As befitting her status and gender, they had to

⁶² TNA E 101/420/11, fol. 51.

⁶³ BL Add MS 59900, fol. 127v.

⁶⁴ BL Add MS 71009, fol. 19r-19v.

be "the fairest and the largest rooms."⁶⁵ Further in preparation, the gentleman ushers and various grooms needed to bring with them "all such Stuff that shall be necessary for such a remove," which included straw and rushes for the floors and "arras to hang the chambers... [and] also a cloth of Estate with a Chair and Cushions."⁶⁶ The latter enabled them to simulate a presence chamber for the king to give audience while on progress.

The accounts reveal the complexity and duration of advance preparations, as well as the importance of liaison between different sets of wardrobe servants and officials within the household. When in 1539, the king was scheduled to travel to residences in Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire, sources not only provide confirmation of the tasks that needed to be done, but also the dovetailing of responsibilities between different groups of royal servants. Gentleman usher of the Chamber, William Rainsforde, together with three yeomen and three grooms, were instructed to organise everything for the king at his manor of Grafton. Richard Greenway, another gentleman usher with four yeomen and four grooms, spent four days similarly making ready the king's lodging at Ampthill Castle, the next location on progress.⁶⁷ These preparations necessitated some juggling of royal possessions from one to another, as Humphrey Orme, from the Wardrobe of Beds, had to ride with his man from Grafton to the Manor of the More (near Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire) "for stuff to serve the King at Ampthill."⁶⁸

In order to better accomplish their tasks, fast transport was desirable, if not expected. Expenses claimed when the royal party was going on progress from Greenwich to Canterbury in the early 1540s emphasise that these royal servants were hiring post horses to speedily ride back and forth from Rochester to Dartford and from Rochester to Gravesend, so as to get the king's bed and lodgings ready and prepare a chamber for him to dine in at the designated locations.⁶⁹ A fast mount was particularly necessary if additional, unplanned journeys were required, either for things left behind or that had to be fetched from other premises. In October 1543, for example, the ubiquitous Humphrey Orme of the Wardrobe of the Beds had to ride the 60 odd miles from Grafton to London and

⁶⁵ BL Add MS 71009, fol. 20.

⁶⁶ For a description of the appearance and provenance of this manuscript and a transcription of certain earlier and later parts, see Kisby, "Royal Household Regulations," 1–33.

⁶⁷ BL MS Arundel 97, fol. 88v; TNA E 101/422/12, fols. 28–29v. Henry was due at Grafton on 29 August 1539 and at Ampthill on 9 September, reaching the More on 19 September.

⁶⁸ BL MS Arundel 97, fol. 89.

⁶⁹ TNA E 314/22.

then back again "for hooks and notches to serve the king's mats and walls."⁷⁰ Later that winter, when the king was still on progress, Humphrey was further called upon to travel from Oatlands, where Henry was then staying, to collect from the Tower of London "stuff to serve the king at Westminster" in readiness for the latter's brief stay at Whitehall before the court spent Christmas at Hampton Court.⁷¹

The identities of those members of the household and courtiers who regularly travelled to the king's own "out of town" residences can be gleaned from references to particular chambers accorded to senior officials, such as the Lord Privy Seal, the clerk comptroller, the king's secretary, and his physician, as well as members of the royal family like Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, and the nobility, including the duke of Norfolk, the marquess of Exeter, and the countess of Wiltshire.⁷² Not everyone in the royal entourage could be accommodated in the same venue as the king at smaller mansions, however, so lodgings were sought for some accompanying the progress at nearby gentry residences, monastic granges, and local taverns. In 1522, when journeying through Kent from Canterbury up to Gravesend, "convenient places" and "seemable lodgings" were found for many of the entourage in "gentlemens' houses," but "discreet folks" had to be called upon "having experience and knowledge of the country, for the devising and appointing of the said lodgings."⁷³ Lodgings were also rented for important administrative purposes: in 1538, payments were made "for hire of divers houses to pay wages in" at venues from Guildford to Dover "in his grace's progress."⁷⁴

Those who could not find lodgings or chose not to sleep inside were accommodated under canvas: John Travers, serjeant of the Tents, was reimbursed for his expenses relating to the king's tents that were sent up from London for use at Grafton, Amptill, and elsewhere in 1539.⁷⁵ Even if more familiar in military settings, a tented encampment was also a feature of progresses, especially on the 1541 progress to York which, because of the size of the retinue (enlarged as it was by the accompanying troops), by estimate utilised over 200 tents.⁷⁶ Elaborately conceived with gables, round houses, and porches, and decorated with large "gorys" (heraldic beasts), detailed records of the tents used at York

⁷⁰ BL Add. MS 59900, fol. 48v; LP 18.2:327/17, 19, 22.

⁷¹ BL Add. MS 59900, fols. 54, 55.

⁷² For instance, BL Add. MS 10109, fols. 187, 193.

⁷³ Jerdan, *Rutland Papers*, 74.

⁷⁴ BL MS Arundel 97, fol. 46v.

⁷⁵ BL MS Arundel 97, fol. 91.

⁷⁶ LP 16:941.

reveal both the king and queen had a bed chamber and privy chamber, with an additional withdrawing chamber and closet for the king, and a "tresauce" (corridor) going between them. On the outside, tents were brightly coloured, some green and white, others yellow and white or blue and red, garnished with roses and H and R in gold letters. The inside was furnished with tapestries and painted cloths resembling brickwork.⁷⁷ The king and queen may have slept in them on occasion, but the tents themselves provided a suite of apartments in a convenient location that was both controlled and controllable, a place where they could receive people in relative comfort, change their clothes, eat and rest if necessary. Significantly, these ornamented tents conveyed and manifested royal presence, being "the perfect vehicles for princely magnificence" when the king was on progress.⁷⁸

The provision of temporary accommodation at progress venues did not always rest solely on the Office of Tents and Revels: local carpenters sometimes shared the responsibility for constructing these in wood or canvas. On the occasion of the king's visit to Canterbury in 1514, for example, when escorting his sister Mary to Dover, before she embarked ship for France where she would shortly become queen, the city paid various craftsmen to prepare a "tent" for the advent of the king. Erected on Blean Common at Harbledown, two miles from the city, this was probably a temporary wooden shelter or pavilion where the royal party was formally welcomed.⁷⁹ Such a pavilion offered a place for Henry in which he could relax or change his clothes upon arrival, prior to the formalities of a civic welcome—as also occurred at Lincoln in 1541.⁸⁰ A royal "tabernacle" was similarly erected by his civic hosts at Reading in 1516 and "tested" there in advance by the royal painter.⁸¹

The Office of Tents and Revels was not only responsible for accommodating those on progress, but also in assembling and transporting the costumes, scenery, and other materials for various forms of royal entertainment to the progress venue. In 1519, for example, with about two weeks' notice, Richard Gibson arranged the tailoring and carriage of all the masking garments for guests, actors, and musicians from London to Henry's new palace at Newhall, in Essex, for a masque on 3 September.⁸² The Office does not appear to have balked at having to bring equipment relatively quickly over long distances. Brightly-

⁷⁷ SHC, LM 4, 48. These may be of similar type to those displayed in BL MS Augustus III.

⁷⁸ Gregory, "Timber Lodgings," 309–311, 319–321.

⁷⁹ CCA FA 10, fol. 84v.

⁸⁰ Stokes, *REED: Lincolnshire*, 1:169–170.

⁸¹ RBA Reading Churchwarden's Accounts, 91.

⁸² TNA E 36/215, fol. 68v; TNA SP 1/19, fol. 5. Instructions issued on 23 August 1519.

coloured painted cloths for the rooves of the pavilions (red, blue, yellow, green, white, and gold) were transported the forty-four miles to Henry's residence at Petworth in Sussex, "for the banquets there," in August 1545.⁸³

The elaborate preparations undertaken inside the various progress venues, which included installing the king's furnishings and furniture, were intended to ensure the king and queen were properly accommodated with the suite of rooms expected and to the level of comfort and opulence they desired.⁸⁴ While this was more easily achieved in larger residences visited (such as Hampton Court under Wolsey, the bishop of Winchester's palace at Farnham, or Sir Anthony Browne's Cowdray), smaller manor houses and even some castles would have struggled. At the bishop of Lincoln's palace at Lyddington (Rutland), for example, only Henry, his consort (Katherine of Aragon in 1511; Catherine Howard in 1541), and the immediate royal household could have been accommodated. Unless the progress venue had separate suites of guest apartments, the lord and lady hosting would be displaced from their normal living quarters. When Henry came to Wolf Hall (Wiltshire) on progress in August 1539, the earl of Hertford and his family gave up the use of their house to the king. While Lady Seymour's mother and their children stayed at nearby Tottenham Lodge, the earl and countess were relegated to the large old barn on the estate "wherein my lord lay and kept house during the king's abode."⁸⁵

Transportation

Progresses only functioned if there was adequate transport for all, whether by road or water. Choice of routes and calculation of the tides (where necessary) would have been significant aspects of the logistics, but having the physical means for conveying persons and baggage over distance, with the requisite number of animals and carts, was equally phenomenal. At times royal travel may have been more conveniently undertaken on horseback across open countryside. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know whether a given day's travel or overnight stop was likely to have been undertaken by the monarch at the head of his baggage train or detached from it. This possibility undoubtedly added to the opportunities for royal whim and the unpredictability of the king's movements.⁸⁶

⁸³ SHC LM 1; LM COR/2/1.

⁸⁴ There is no space to discuss here the extent to which "privacy" (in terms of intimacy or security) was an issue, but see Clark, "Queen Katherine Howard," 89–103; and Richardson, "Gendered Space," 805–818.

⁸⁵ Jackson, "Wolf Hall and the Seymours," 145–146.

⁸⁶ Descriptions of the topography of the land he was passing through were recorded by the antiquarian John Leland during his travels around England, c. 1535–1543: Toulmin Smith, *Leland Itinerary*, xxxiv.

Moreover, except where there were obvious arterial Roman roads or pilgrimage routes being followed, it is hard to discriminate between journeys undertaken along such established ways and those that were traditionally made (or may have been easier) by water-carriage. Again, assessing the commonness of river navigation is challenging (except on well-researched rivers). Questions remain as to the distances involved and whether royal baggage travelled by river or went separately.⁸⁷

Travel by ship or barge when on progress is rarely mentioned, outside of journeys up the River Thames from Gravesend (which Henry and Charles V took in 1522) or between Dover and Calais (for meetings with Francis I in 1520 and 1532), where the king and queen were also rowed from the land to their ship.⁸⁸ In October 1541 the royal party sailed from Hull across the River Humber to Barton-upon-Humber and then travelled by land via Barrow to Thornton Abbey.⁸⁹ We know from payments to the master of the barge, John Carter, and eighteen watermen in October 1532, that the king's party was rowed from Maidstone to Sheppey before travelling on to Canterbury and Dover,⁹⁰ while in October 1535, the journey by boat from Southampton to Porchester Castle was mooted.⁹¹

The cofferers' accounts reveal purchase of horses on a regular basis for deployment within particular departments (including the pantry, the kitchen, and the mail) and for use with "le car" (the closed cart) and "le chariette" (the large cart) respectively.⁹² Mustering sufficient horses in particular regions to enable onward transport also required the cooperation of local owners, who had to know if their animals were being supplied on the basis of hire or purchase.⁹³ Since the expense accounts are undated, it is not clear whether the horses were specifically required for a progress, but the vast number provided for the king in certain counties (for example, 558 in Oxfordshire and Berkshire alone) may suggest they were either destined for the 1541 progress or the French campaign that followed.⁹⁴ Supplies of "horsemeat," oats, or other feed such as "horsebread" (bread made of beans and bran) and hay had to be carried with them or acquired for the horses en route. Farriers

⁸⁷ Langdon, "Inland Water Transport," 110–130. This is an area for which research using reliable data sets and an appropriate methodology is sadly lacking for Tudor England. I am grateful to Dr Stephen Gadd for discussing his work in progress.

⁸⁸ Hall, *Chronicle*, 604–605, 790; Jerdan, *Rutland Papers*, 74–75; Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 272–273.

⁸⁹ TNA E 101/423/4, fol. 5.

⁹⁰ Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 262; LP 5:1354.

⁹¹ LP 9:525.

⁹² For example, TNA E 361/8, mm. 27–31.

⁹³ TNA E 101/107/29.

⁹⁴ TNA E 101/107/17.

were on hand to provide new shoes, while local grooms and stable hands at progress venues were undoubtedly kept busy, especially as they needed to clean the stables “against the king’s coming thither.”⁹⁵

The financial accounts of saddlers are scarce but reveal the types of animals involved, their feeding, and stabling arrangements, as well as the pieces of horse equipment necessary and the wear and tear on those items used in transporting the royal party. Richard Masyn was responsible during the late 1520s and early 1530s for ensuring the correct saddles and tack during progresses and arranging repairs when necessary. This included repairs to the shaft of the litter and the queen’s chair which, on one occasion, entailed setting the seat with girth web and providing new pillows, made of red leather and fustian stuffed with fine down. The detail and exuberance of royal saddles can be observed in the description of Queen Anne Boleyn’s side saddle, which was set with down and covered with a velvet slopehouse fringed with silk and gold.⁹⁶ The riders of specific saddles requiring attention or ones whose horses needed girths, surcingles, or other bits of tack replacing are occasionally mentioned, providing an idea of who was riding on that particular progress. Intriguingly, when the court was at Petworth in August 1545, we can see that among those present was “Jane the Fool,” Queen Katherine Parr’s fool—as she needed her saddle mending and re-stuffing—along with the “man fool” (probably Will Somer), whose harness required attention.⁹⁷

The work of the saddlers on progress was complemented by the largescale preparations undertaken by other household servants and associated artisans within the king’s stable department. It is not possible within the scope of this paper to elaborate in detail, but the sheer number of different items of tack, that either had to be made or bought in (stirrups, stirrup leathers, bits, girths, surcingles, countercingles, double reins, trammels, halters, harnesses, saddle houses, saddle covers), together with grooming implements (sponges, brushes, combs, dusting cloths) for such a large number of horses, meant getting them ready for progress was a major enterprise.⁹⁸ For ceremonial processions, the royal coursers were given impressive trappings (pendants, buttons, fringes, tassels, bells, and buckles) including, in 1511, a tappet with the king’s arms, beasts, and badges. Even the horse-houses (portable stables) received a “powdering” of copper and

⁹⁵ TNA E 101/107/26, fols. 14–15.

⁹⁶ TNA E 101/107/20.

⁹⁷ TNA E 101/107/25. For a recent examination of Will Somer’s time at court, see Andersson, *Fool*.

⁹⁸ For discussion of such details and illustrations of warhorse trappings, see Creighton et al., *Medieval Warhorse*.

gilt fleur-de-lys (244 of which were large and 136 small), while a further fifty-seven were embroidered with "a greyhound and a dragon."⁹⁹

It would be an understatement to say that Henry VIII did not travel light. His baggage train was extensive, comprising an array of "chariots" (large carts) and smaller "cars" (carts) pulled by a mixture of horses, mules, and oxen.¹⁰⁰ "Barehyde" (tanned animal hide) and "carte canvasses" were used for covering the chariots and carts transporting all the "diverse necessities as the king journeys."¹⁰¹ These "necessaries" comprised items such as the king's bed, bolsters, counterpoints, and canopies.¹⁰² Further, one of the carts would have carried the king's jewels and plate.¹⁰³ William Grene, the king's coffermaker, was invaluable in this respect, including supplying barehide "to cover the carte that carrieth the king's Treasure to and fro as his grace removeth."¹⁰⁴ In 1537, Cromwell himself bought new coffers from Grene and had John Herry hire carts to carry his bed and other belongings when on progress.¹⁰⁵ As well as ensuring safe removal of beds, folding chairs, and other furniture, coffers were specially made to protect the king's lutes and virginals in transit. A leather case, lined with yellow cotton, was fashioned to truss one of the queen's coffers.¹⁰⁶ Other less bulky receptacles were also used to carry progress gear. In June 1510, two black leather cases lined with white blanket were commissioned for two new chariots carrying baggage on Henry's first West-Country progress.¹⁰⁷ The following year, Steven Jasper was asked to make a case of red buckram for one of the king's crimson satin gowns "to keep it during transport."¹⁰⁸ Equally, a group of royal huntsmen were supplied with three brushes, palet (mattress) cases, and canvas trussing cloths for packing their newly made garments.¹⁰⁹

Royal transport was not wholly reliable, however, and repairs to elements of the baggage train were sometimes necessary during the king's journeys. The closed cart, for

⁹⁹ Hayward, *Wardrobe Accounts*, 139–140.

¹⁰⁰ For an illustration of a chariot used under Elizabeth I, see BL MS Egerton 3320, fol. 4, printed in Edwards, "Preparing to Progress," 66.

¹⁰¹ TNA E 101/417/3, no. 63; E 36/215, fol. 234.

¹⁰² TNA E 101/417/3, no. 63.

¹⁰³ TNA E 36/215, fol. 9v. For example, Richard Alee of the Jewel House hired a cart for the fifty-four miles from London to Woodstock in 1518.

¹⁰⁴ TNA E 101/420/11, fol. 75.

¹⁰⁵ LP 14.2:782.

¹⁰⁶ TNA E 315/456, fol. 42; Bodleian, MS. Eng. hist. b. 192/1, fol. 58.

¹⁰⁷ TNA E 101/417/3, no. 63.

¹⁰⁸ Hayward, *Wardrobe Accounts*, 149.

¹⁰⁹ TNA E 101/417/3, no. 22.

instance, needed fixing when the king was at Reading in July 1510.¹¹⁰ In 1520, a new iron bolt was required for Queen Katherine of Aragon's closed cart, it "being broken at Windsor." Not long after, a cart had to be hired (at 12d) to enable her possessions to reach the royal palace at Eltham (near Mile End), as the closed cart had broken down again somewhere between Windsor Castle and London.¹¹¹ Such unforeseen events produced delays and inconvenience that undermined the wardrobe's efficiency and the progress timetable. They also underline the unpredictability of royal journeys, and of the progresses in general.

Progress Clothing

Dress (and a ready supply of clothing) was important both for the practicalities and varying demands of being on progress, as well as projecting externally a powerful image of the monarchy. The sovereign and his consort's sumptuous clothing, jewels, and accoutrements were supplemented by the impression of uniformity and elegance afforded by his accompanying courtiers in their robes and the household (including Henry's footmen, henchmen, trumpeters, heralds, and yeomen of the Guard) in their smart liveries. The Wardrobe accounts, not surprisingly, offer a significant insight into how the mammoth task of ordering, making, and packing garments for progress was organised and funded.¹¹² Clothing can be assumed to have been tailored in readiness for a progress on the basis of the warrant dates. From these, we can not only see the skilled clothworkers who were providing the various types of garment "pro equitatione," but also, where the recipients' names are mentioned, we are afforded a clue as to who was actually travelling with the king.¹¹³ In readiness for the 1511 progress to the Midlands, for example, "riding clothing" was granted to various musicians including minstrels and leading members of the Chapel Royal. William Botry supplied the black velvet and black damask that was tailored into a coat destined to William Cornysh, for instance, while Francesco Pansano was paid for the black camlet that was transformed into a riding gown for Robert Fayrfax. Cornysh and Fayrfax's seniority and compositional prowess undoubtedly earned them a place in the

¹¹⁰ It needed two pairs of axle trees over two years and also its hooks mending in July 1511. Hayward, *Wardrobe Accounts*, 146–147.

¹¹¹ JRL Latin MS 239, fols. 9v, 10v.

¹¹² See especially the "Introduction" to Hayward, *Wardrobe Accounts*; and Hayward, "Clothing and Livery," 72–83.

¹¹³ TNA E 315/456, fol. 12.

“riding chapel.”¹¹⁴ Edward Metcalf, one of the king’s trumpeters, was allowed a new white and green damask coat on 27 June 1530, prior to the progress a month later.¹¹⁵

Although we might assume items required for the progress were usually made in advance, instructions for new garments were sometimes issued during a progress. In readiness for sport during the summer progress of 1534, orders were issued from Guildford to ensure William Nicholson, the yeoman of the huntsmen, and his fellows (Francis Knolles, Thomas Wyat, Robert Tailboys, Robert Tyrwhit, Thomas Kempe, and Benet Lee) had appropriate garments tailored (with major contributions from Steven Jasper, Elizabeth Worsop, and Lewis Harpesfield), including a green coat lined with Irish “frise” (coarse woollen cloth), two doublets each (one of crimson velvet, the other of tawney velvet) lined with fustian and canvas, four shirts with “draught work” (decorated with drawn thread work), four pairs of hose of white kersey (coarse cloth), two of crimson, a pair of buskins (foot and leg coverings) made of Spanish leather, green hat bands, silk girdles, and double soled shoes.¹¹⁶ When staying with the king on progress, and rather than having a new one made, Cromwell had a servant bring one of his shirts all the way from London to Grafton.¹¹⁷

With long periods away from base when on the road and short turnaround times in some places, ensuring the royal party had clean clothes was crucial. Predominantly a female role, “the laundress” is unfortunately rarely identified by name, although Beatrice ap Ryse fulfilled it as part of the royal household—initially for Henry's daughter Mary—for at least quarter of a century.¹¹⁸ Washing the clothes of the court on progress must have been a considerable task that required appropriate facilities and careful organisation. While we may be correct in assuming they travelled on progress, it is not clear how frequently it was done (and for whom) or whether it was saved up. Cromwell’s accounts show how he could rack up a considerable laundry bill “for washing my lords [dirty] linen all the progress.” In 1537, he deposited fifty-five dozen pieces of clothing for “the launder at the Court,” costing him forty-five shillings.¹¹⁹ The role of court launderer nevertheless epitomises the largely unseen nature of much of the vital back-room services that fuelled royal progresses.

¹¹⁴ Hayward, *Wardrobe Accounts*, 137.

¹¹⁵ TNA E 101/420/1, no. 55.

¹¹⁶ TNA E 101/417/3, no. 22.

¹¹⁷ LP 14.2:782.

¹¹⁸ BL Add. MS 59900, fol. 58v; TNA E 101/420/11, fol. 40v.

¹¹⁹ LP 14.2:782.

Conclusion

By exploring the challenges imposed on different elements of the royal household when on the move and their efforts (with varying degrees of success) to "keep the show on the road," this paper has brought fresh ways of thinking about the royal court and its relationship with its own internal departments, as well as with a host of external "moving parts" encountered in the regions. In particular, this discussion has highlighted the vast logistical exercise and the importance of planning and preparation in advance of royal visits. It has demonstrated not only the considerations and complexities involved, but also how individuals in the various teams invariably rose to the challenges presented.

That progresses were generally carried off with aplomb, therefore, was down to the combined and co-ordinated efforts of the many household officials and servants working behind the scenes in a multiplicity of roles, along with myriad supporting characters from the localities, all of whose contributions aimed at providing the desired magnificence. If the dates of the warrants roughly coincided with the reception of royal orders by the mercers, craftsmen, embroiders, silk women, and tailors, there was often (what may seem to us) a comparatively short lead-in time in which to produce the objects and garments needed for the progress. Time was probably never on anyone's side during the progress, especially if items suddenly needed to be fetched from elsewhere or new instructions were issued. Similarly, staff could be robbed, assaulted, get sick, or worse, die in harness. Their loyalty, experience, and efficiency in serving the king (accidents, illness, or worse aside) was thus crucial in preventing the progress machine from being derailed.

Successful accomplishment of a royal progress, however, was not simply about ensuring adequate supplies and preventing social or political embarrassment. The royal household on tour was a slimmed down version of what was available in the "standing houses," with fewer staff and possessions, probably in the interests of fiscal frugality and overall manoeuvrability. Despite the self-imposed limitations on the size of the royal retinue, there was nevertheless still an issue of practicalities, especially at smaller venues. Some followers had to be accommodated nearby in inns and private houses, or under canvas in an encampment of tents. Moreover, wherever the king and queen were billeted, their accommodation arrangements entailed a manifest attempt to harness and control the environment into which they were entering so as to provide a level of continuity with what they were familiar with in the "standing houses." This was a way of maintaining the king's majesty, keeping an air of normality, and ensuring the royal family's security in sometimes unfamiliar surroundings.

Scrutinising the progresses in this way enables us to glimpse the personality of the monarch as well as the complex interplay between those choreographing the progress and those performing it. Henry's attempt to escape the pressures of politics and the diplomatic world, except where progresses had diplomatic intent (as in 1520 and 1522) or were reactions to political events (as in 1511 and 1541), led to his avoidance of foreign ambassadors, save when he deliberately courted them and allowed them to travel with him. Henry's insecurities about sickness and personal safety, his "hands-on" approach to interior design and renovation of buildings, and his desire to spend considerable periods of time away from the public gaze (especially out hunting) are all apparent in his attitude towards his itinerant life. Comments and reflections of both ambassadors and his close staff are thus invaluable to historians in revealing something of life on tour.

Finally, this paper reveals the significant role played by uncertainty and accidental factors. From transport breaking down to Henry's anxiety about outbreaks of plague, causing sudden diversions from published routes, coupled with delays or altered plans of his own making, no progress ever went smoothly or entirely according to its meticulous devising. Some aspects, such as the weather, were beyond even Henry VIII's control. The royal entourage and its baggage during a summer progress were sometimes impacted by unusually inclement weather.¹²⁰ Rain particularly affected the journey northwards in 1541 when "the carts and baggage could not proceed without great difficulty."¹²¹ Both wet and overly dry weather could cause harvests to fail and bring the ruination of crops with attendant problems also for livestock. The upshot was shortages and rising prices that threatened the economy, affected the ability to obtain supplies (even at the king's behest), and made the king unpopular with the people he was trying to charm. There was a tension, therefore, between the drawbacks and ultimate benefits of the king's progresses, recognition of which may have depended upon the nature and purposes of the various progresses themselves, and upon the extent to which they drew direct complaints or were subsequently evaluated (if at all) by the king and his advisers. While failings may be obvious in hindsight to historians, it may only have been those on the ground who were truly aware of the effect of such shortcomings. They were probably unable or unwilling to voice their worries, however, for fear of incurring the king's displeasure or facing reprisals from superiors, which in turn no doubt made operations on the road more difficult and downright nervy.

¹²⁰ Hamilton, *Chronicle of England*, 141, 148.

¹²¹ LP 16:1011.

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