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## The Waits of Lincolnshire

Most research into the history of entertainments in Lincolnshire, driven by the groundbreaking work of Hardin Craig and Stanley Kahrl to locate a home for the N-Town plays, has concentrated on religious drama in Lincoln and a few other locations.<sup>1</sup> But much else of interest – civic-sponsorship of waits, for example – is also to be found in the records, and a lot of it has remained essentially unexamined. One of the signature features of Lincolnshire is its numerous substantial towns, present in each part of the county. At least six of those towns, plus the city of Lincoln, kept companies of waits, who seem to have been an important element of civic identity. Five of the places left corporation minute books or court books, and one other left a civic account book which, together with parish records, guild accounts, and family papers, plus civic and personal records from locations outside the county, show the waits to have been involved, either officially or entrepreneurially, in religious, civic, and privately sponsored entertainments of almost every kind. Given the longevity of waits as an institution (in some towns they were still being sponsored in the early nineteenth century), the relative stability of their sponsors, and the variety of their contributions, it could be argued that waits constitute one of the best (but least utilized) keys to understanding the history of performance traditions in early England.

The seven locations for which evidence of waits has emerged are the city of Lincoln; the incorporated towns of Boston, Grantham, Grimsby, and Stamford; and the market towns and seigneurial boroughs of Barton-on-Humber and Louth (see Appendix 1). In number, duties, and livery the Lincolnshire waits seem generally consistent in their practices with those found elsewhere in the country, as described in such standard sources as Woodfill and the REED volumes.<sup>2</sup> That is, they ranged from three to five in number; wore badges, collars, and other elements of livery; received pay in some form; had specific duties and obligations to the towns who sponsored them; also travelled to perform elsewhere (see Appendix 3); and were members of companies or –

in the case of Lincoln – a guild that exercised some degree of control over other musicians wishing access to the town. The presence of the waits in so many locations suggests a significant presence of civic-sponsored entertainments in the county; and the waits' range of activities suggests that they had a complex performance life – including involvement in drama, custom, and ceremony – well worthy of further study. The discussions that follow proceed clockwise around the county, starting with the port town of Barton and ending with the city of Lincoln.

#### THE WAITS OF BARTON-ON-HUMBER

Barton was a seigneurial rather than an incorporated borough (meaning that it had received its earliest charter from an earl or lord rather than from the Crown), and was an ancient port and market town. By 1066 it had a burgess community and was an important port during the earlier Middle Ages, with a borough court by the thirteenth century and a guild merchant by the fourteenth; indeed, the fourteenth-century Gough map shows two of the county's main roads as being from Barton to Boston, and from Barton to Lincoln. However, with the emergence of a better port at Hull, Barton rapidly declined as a port town in the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Thus one might assume that its tradition of sponsoring waits probably had earlier rather than later origins, coinciding with its early importance as a port and market town.

The only certain reference that has yet emerged to the waits of Barton occurs in chamberlains' accounts from the city of Nottingham for 1571–2, when a reward of 10d was given 'the 6 of Ianuary vnto the weytes of ledes and vnto the weyttes of 'Barton vppon' humbar'.<sup>4</sup>

But household accounts in the Clifford family papers contain a number of payments to a company of five (sometimes six) musicians from 'Barton' for performances at Londesborough in the East Riding of Yorkshire between 1610 and 1613 (see Appendix 3).<sup>5</sup> It is not possible to say with certainty that these musicians were from Barton-on-Humber but most likely they were; though south of the Humber, Barton is not many miles from Londesborough.<sup>6</sup> It seems unlikely that they were from Barden Towers, a Clifford residence much further from Londesborough, since the scribe never spells Barton as Barden, and since there was little at Barden Towers except the residence itself. Nor do they seem likely to have been household musicians of the Cliffords. They are never referred to in those terms, but rather as a single company led by one musician, Stephen Griggs, and living under his authority at Barton.

On balance then, the small evidence that survives suggests that the waits

of Barton travelled regionally and had a level of skill comparable to other civic waits in that they performed in a civic venue with the waits of Leeds (as did those from Boston, Grantham, and Lincoln) and apparently before important private patrons too. That they performed far from their home on the feast of Epiphany in 1571–2, and on a number of other important seasonal religious feasts before the Cliffords, apparently shows that they bore no official obligation to be present in their own town during those particular feasts but instead were free to seek income on their own.

#### THE WAITS OF GRIMSBY

Grimsby, like Barton, is an ancient port town on the Humber and one of the oldest boroughs in the country. It received its first two charters in 1201, and genuine status as an independent borough by 1227 during the reign of King John. It had a mayor by 1218 and a common hall before 1286. During the Middle Ages it was one of the most economically important towns in the county but declined, as many other towns did, during the sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

Information about the waits of Grimsby is sparse but they appear to have been an ancient institution in the town. In fact Grimsby civic records contain the earliest reference to a specific wait in the county. A chamberlain's account from 1396–7 includes a payment for the purchase of cloth for the livery of Walter Wayte ('Et in panno *pro* vestura Walteri Wayte iij. s. x. d.') plus a payment of 2s for another item for him, the nature of which is illegible on the manuscript.<sup>8</sup> The account for 1424–5 has another payment for his livery ('Item solutis *pro* toga Walteri Waite histrionis ville vj. S iij. D').<sup>9</sup> And in 1441–2 the town paid 11s 5d for the same thing ('*pro* vestura eiusdem Henrici & Walteri wayte').<sup>10</sup> Henry was an officer of the town. The entries seem to show the continuous presence of a wait (presumably the three entries all refer to the same person) during an entire half century. They also give the impression that the town may have kept one wait only – or at least provided livery for only one – during those particular years. However, it may be more likely that he alone was mentioned because he was the master of a company with servants or apprentices whom he paid, as occurred at Stamford and elsewhere.

Early Grimsby apparently mounted an array of traditional customs, games, and ceremonies of the kind that one might expect in any English town, including those at Christmas, Whitsuntide, and Midsummer, and ranging, according to local antiquarians, from processions and May games to bullbaiting and cockfighting. Writing in the early nineteenth century, the Rev George Oliver

claimed (as have several since), but without supporting evidence, that the waits were obliged to play at a Whitsuntide festival that included a Robin Hood bower, a lord and lady of the feast, a jester, and dancing.<sup>11</sup> Oliver also claims that the waits accompanied the plough ship pageant sponsored by the Mariners' guild on Plough Mondays, which he says included the pageant itself, morris dancing, and extravagantly costumed characters who 'repeated a kind of dialogue'.<sup>12</sup> A reckoning and account book of the Grimsby Mariners' guild does contain payments to a drummer and a piper at the time of the pageant in 1583 and 1586 but whether those performers were the town waits is not indicated in the records.<sup>13</sup> Another nineteenth-century antiquarian, the Rev George Shaw, in describing the elaborate Whitsun games and play royalty traditional in Grimsby, says that 'the borough minstrels were also bound to attend with their instruments of music'.<sup>14</sup> And a resident of Clee (formerly a village adjoining Cleesthorpe and Grimsby) reported in 1878 that annually at Christmas 'we had Waits who sang outside the house'. Another source describes 'wait-singing by the younger folk'.<sup>15</sup> So on the testimony of local antiquarians, the institution of the waits seems to have continued into the nineteenth century, though the only documentary evidence of the waits' earlier presence remains the three payments described above.

#### THE WAITS OF LOUTH

Somewhat more information survives about the waits of Louth. Like Barton, Louth was a seigneurial borough, its medieval lord of the manor the bishop of Lincoln, who had numerous mills, tenants, and a personal residence there. But it was also an ancient and important regional market centre and wool-trading town, described by one historian as 'the capital of the Wolds'.<sup>16</sup> By 1086 it had a 'burgess community' and in 1551 received a charter from King Edward VI that allowed it a warden and six assistants 'to be one body incorporate and politic'. By 1605 members of that group were also justices of the peace.<sup>17</sup> So there was a strong sense of self-governing corporate structure within the town.

Local records also show that Louth had rich musical, dramatic, and civic traditions ranging from boy bishops to Corpus Christi plays to ceremonies and customs. Additionally, the town made payments to travelling players, both amateur and professional. Names in the parish register and the churchwardens' accounts of Louth St James parish church indicate that numerous musical performers of various kinds lived in the town. Those local musicians, including waits, made significant contributions to several of the traditions, including both the Corpus Christi play and civic activities.

The earliest musical reference in the records – a payment of 12d to pipers – occurs in the Louth Trinity guild account for 1422–3, the guild listed first as being responsible for financing the Corpus Christi play. Other references in local records make it clear that town, guilds, parish church, and grammar school all contributed to the production of local religious drama, including a Corpus Christi play with pageants, and a Passion play.<sup>18</sup> The schoolmaster had a major responsibility in producing the Corpus Christi play because the town warden ordered that he be paid for furnishing a play on Corpus Christi Day in 1557–8 and for similar expenses in 1555–6 and 1567–8. Local musicians too were involved in the production of religious drama because in 1555–6 the town also paid William Jordan and two other minstrels for their ‘pains’ at the play.<sup>19</sup> Whether the three named in 1555–6 and other musicians who appear in the records before 1605 were also the town’s waits is unclear, but the proprietary wording of the entry in 1555–6 suggests that they were.

Unambiguous references to the waits of Louth begin in 1605. From then through 1686 (when the book of town wardens’ accounts ends), the waits received an annual wage, usually 12s, for performing at dinners held during each of the quarter sessions and at ‘the Grave’s Feast’, a dinner held annually for the town’s elected officials. They were usually paid 2s for each of the five performances, plus 2s for ale. Sometimes they received more or less, and occasionally the wording suggests that only one wait may have been present. Sometimes they were paid in a single payment at year’s end but more often they were paid after each performance. Sometimes in the records they are called waits, sometimes ‘the Musicke’, or the ‘musicians’, or ‘owr musike’, terms that were interchangeable in the Louth records. Between 1625–6 and 1680 the accounts include numerous payments for the waits’ livery coats, and one payment for ribbons.<sup>20</sup> Payments to waits cease between 1642 and 1649 (a time when the town would have been distracted by the civil war), but otherwise no significant gap in payments to the waits occurs through 1686.

The musical relationship of harpers, pipers, minstrels, musicians, and waits in Louth is not clear, but an interesting chronological pattern in the use of those terms can be seen in the records. Churchwardens’ accounts for the parish church of Saint James include receipts from three separate harpers in 1507–8, 1508–9, and 1509–10, and refer to a person who owed the parish 20d for a harp in 1512–13. Thereafter the term does not appear. The parish register uses the term ‘minstrels’ in 1570, 1572, and 1575 (as do the Town Wardens’ Accounts in 1553) and the term ‘pipers’ in 1583, 1584, 1591, 1592, and 1598. From 1600 on, the register uses only the term ‘musician’, with the

exception of references to Clark, identified at different times as musician and wait.<sup>21</sup> Wardens' Accounts use the terms 'musician', 'wait', and 'music' interchangeably during the same period. Since none of the terms overlap, they appear to reflect a chartable change of usage in Louth during the sixteenth century, and one assumes that at least some of those harpers, pipers, minstrels, and musicians before 1600 (in addition to Clark) were also waits.

Local antiquarian R.C. Dudding claims that the waits were obliged to accompany the worthies of the town on Corpus Christi Day, on muster day at the butts, and at night-long watches (presumably at Midsummer). On great occasions, he further claims, 'they stood next to the vicar', but for neither statement does he offer any documentary support.<sup>22</sup> What is certain is that Louth had waits by the start of the seventeenth century, and a great number of resident musicians in earlier times as well, some of them probably waits.

#### THE WAITS OF BOSTON

Though Boston was not incorporated until 1545, it was an important port town with a strong civic identity long before that. Surviving records show the presence of elaborate religious and civic playing traditions and participation in them by town waits by the early sixteenth century. The principal evidence for those traditions survives in the copious accounts of Boston's guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary from 1514 through 1526, and 1538–9. Accounts of the guild's bailiff and collectors contain payments for maintenance and operation of a sizeable pageant called the Noah Ship, paraded through the town during the feasts of Pentecost and Corpus Christi.<sup>23</sup> But immediately relevant to this article are payments to 'histriones', 'mimi', minstrels, and waits (the relationship among the terms not always being clear) in the accounts of the guild's alderman and chamberlain. In every year between 1514–15 and 1521–2, the chamberlain's expenses for the feast of Corpus Christi included payments to both 'histriones' and 'mimi', plus additional payments to both in a section of expenses for wax and other work between 1514–15 and 1516–17. During four of those years, the alderman also paid 'mimis' and (in 1520–1) trumpeters as well.<sup>24</sup>

The first evidence that the town was sponsoring waits occurs in the alderman's accounts, starting in 1521–2 with payments to purchase cloth for 'le mynstrelles' livery, plus velvet, Venice gold, and embroidery cloth for their garments and the making of their badges. In 1522–3, similar expenditures occur for 'le waytes', further described in this entry as '*mimis alias waytes*', thereby creating the impression that earlier references to 'mimis' might well

have referred to minstrels, and that some or all of them may have been waits as well, since the payments occurred as customary annual expenses in connection with Corpus Christi. In 1523–4, the alderman ordered payments for crowns or insignias to be embroidered on the coats of the waits and sewing silk velvet and Venice gold for the same. In that same account, the alderman also paid expenses for an interlude played on Good Friday and Easter, and for maintenance of the Noah Ship – all in separate expense sections of the account. So it is apparent that the guild sponsored an elaborate array of entertainments as part of religious feasts and at guild dinners, and that waits were prominently involved in more than one aspect of their production.<sup>25</sup>

Evidence of even more elaborate entertainments at Corpus Christi, including payments to groups of waits from elsewhere, occurs in 1523–4, 1524–5, and 1525–6. In all three of those years, the alderman also made payments to the king's minstrels ('mimis *alias* mynstrelles') three times in 1525–6, including at Corpus Christi. In 1524–5 he also paid the waits of London, and in 1525–6 the trumpeters of the earl of Arundel, with the king's minstrels at Corpus Christi. In 1525–6, both the alderman's and the chamberlain's accounts also contain payments for Boston's own waits (in the alderman's account called the minstrels of Boston). The chamberlain's account for that year (separated from this volume of accounts and now preserved at Lincolnshire Archives) has further payments: to unnamed harpers, to the waits of Nottingham, the 'Baynerdes de Swyneshed play', and to John English and his associates, the players (*lusoribus*) of the king.<sup>26</sup> In addition to suggesting that Boston's Corpus Christi entertainments were at their most elaborate early in the sixteenth century, accounts for those three years also show various companies of waits performing at the same venue, perhaps together – a pattern that would continue for the waits of Boston for at least a hundred years after (see below). The level of communication, understanding, and networking among waits generally must have been very high.

After 1526 the number of references to Boston's waits in its own records sharply declines, mainly because few guild and other accounts survive. However, the references that do occur in the Council Minute Books show continuing sponsorship by the town. The next reference to Boston's waits after 1526 occurs in March 1573 with the appointment of Edward Astell and his 'seruauntes and apprentizes' as 'the waytes of this Borough'. The wording indicates that this group was a company under the authority of Edward Astell. His annual pay included 4s from each alderman, 2s from each of the eighteen burgesses, and unspecified amounts to be assessed for each inhabitant annually. Presumably he in turn paid his own servants and apprentices.

The order in 1573 also mandated that the waits were to play throughout the borough every morning, except Sundays and holidays, from Michaelmas to Christmas and from Epiphany to Easter; so at this point their primary responsibility for part of the year was to perform locally.<sup>27</sup> But, as discussed below, they certainly also travelled during the sixteenth century, especially during other parts of the year.

After the order in 1573 there follows a period of about sixty years in which no mention of waits occurs in the corporation's minute books. This lengthy gap, plus the fact that officials made several payments to players during those years either 'to ridd them out of the towne' or for their 'forbearinge to play' or by way of 'preventing their playing' has caused some to infer that Puritan Boston had stopped sponsoring waits or other entertainers, but that is not true. In 1567 the waits of Cambridge had received 10s from Boston for a performance there, twenty-two years after Boston's incorporation. Records from Nottingham in 1576–7 record payments to the Boston waits on 20 July and 30 October 1576 (the latter with the waits of Derby) less than five years after Astell and his men were appointed. They were also paid on 11 January 1577, 23 May 1579, 10 April 1580, after 4 January 1586, 4–7 January 1588, 20 or 22 April 1590, and in 1591–2. They were paid by the city chamberlain in far distant Carlisle in 1621–2. Dated entries show that the waits of Boston sometimes travelled in early January, but also between April and October, and sometimes both in the same year. A Boston chamberlain's account for 1609–10 includes a payment of £4 18s 3d to purchase livery for the town's six waits, the first such reference since 1573.<sup>28</sup> So, silence in the minute books notwithstanding, it is clear that Boston's waits were certainly active from the 1570s through the 1620s, though during those years the town may have been providing little financial support beyond livery and the protection afforded by sponsorship.

After the sixty-year silence in the corporation minute books, an order in 1634 appears to signal a new and/or an augmented financial commitment to the waits, decreeing that

the waytes shall haue yearly paid them by this house towardes their maintenance the summe of sixe poundes thirteene shillings & four pence ouer & aboute their lieries & such ordinary allowances as they vsually haue from priuate men the said wates finding from time to time such sufficient musicke as this house shall appointe or approve of & there is xiiij s. iij d. paied out of the treasury towardes the chardges of the two new wates comeinge./.

The entry seems to be saying that earlier waits had only received livery but now they would receive an annual wage as well. The phrase 'as they vsually



haue' clearly implies that the waits had already been finding work with private patrons, but the sentence also retains the town's right to continue approving such performances. Whether the two new waits mentioned in the order were coming as replacements or as additions to increase the number of waits is unclear. But the town does seem to have honoured at least part of this commitment because the minute books record a number of subsequent payments to the waits between 1634 and 1670, mainly for livery. Wording of an entry in 1670 suggests that the town had once again found it necessary to reaffirm – perhaps to reinstitute – its commitment to the waits. This order describes the number of waits as five, each with 'Ancient badge & cognisans ... formerly used by the ancient waites'. The order also gives a detailed description of the waits' duties 'as usually hath beene done'.<sup>29</sup>

On balance, the evidence shows that Boston certainly sponsored waits from the beginning of the sixteenth century through the mid-eighteenth century. According to Boston's most knowledgeable local historian, the waits were discontinued in 1734, though the mayor continued to pay for musicians' performances, especially on May Day, until at least 1782.<sup>30</sup> The degree of early civic support may have varied along with the fortunes of the waits, but the fact that they performed at important venues where other companies of waits and travelling players were present shows that they must have been comparable to those other civic musicians in ability and skill.

The supposed official aversion to entertainers in Puritan Boston does not seem to apply in the case of the waits and other musicians, a view further undercut by the high number of resident musicians named in the parish registers, together with Boston's support of a singing school for choristers and clerks. As William Page has said, 'singing and music therefore was highly praised in Boston in the sixteenth century'.<sup>31</sup> While it is true that some players were paid not to play in Boston during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is equally true that other players were paid *to* play. Forbidding a performance could have involved an aversion to that particular troupe, or to the play that it proposed, or a problem with timing, or fear of the plague in a given year. What is clear is that, Puritan town or not, the corporation of Boston found the waits (and music itself) to be an important and useful component of their civic identity.

#### THE WAITS OF STAMFORD

The consensus among local antiquarians is that the waits were an ancient and valued institution in Stamford, and the records bear them out; waits continued

to be present in the town until the mid-nineteenth century (see note 49). In 1427–8 a payment of 6d to the ‘histrionibus’ occurs in the churchwardens’ accounts of the parish church of St Mary. Given the frequency with which ‘histrionibus’ is used to mean musical performer or wait, this may be a payment to the town waits.<sup>32</sup> The earliest certain reference to waits occurs on 30 September 1472, the same date when the town elected its officers, when three minstrels were elected for the year.<sup>33</sup> Groups of three minstrels, who clearly were waits, were also admitted at the time of annual elections in December 1479 and December 1482.<sup>34</sup> That these groups were waits is further confirmed because three of them were given silver collars and scutcheons by the town in December 1486.<sup>35</sup>

A decade later, in May 1495, the Hall Book records that three collars and scutcheons were returned to the custody of the town. At least two of them seem to have been the same ones handed out in 1486 because the town accepted them back from the same senior aldermen or their successors who had been named as guarantors in 1486. The entry in 1495 says that the items were ‘in keyng for oon of the waytes’, the first time that the word ‘wait’ is used in the Hall Books.<sup>36</sup> The wording of the entry appears to suggest that the three waits, obviously now gone, may not yet have been replaced as of 1495.

Between 1494 and 1588, only five musicians turn up in the Hall Books, each for being admitted singly as tax-paying freemen of the town in 1494, 1540, 1554, 1570, and 1588, all but one at the time of the annual civic elections. The records do not identify them as waits. In fact, the Hall Books make no mention of waits during these years, so their status as a performing entity during those decades is entirely unclear from these entries. But four musicians (presumably waits) from Stamford were paid in Nottingham by the chamberlain in 1588–9. And at least one group of musicians was indeed present in the town during the late sixteenth century, built around the musician Thomas Willoughby (himself admitted to the town as a tax- and rent-paying resident in 1588).<sup>37</sup> In 1587, the year before his admission, a William Willoughby (presumably his son) became Thomas’ apprentice. Thomas took another apprentice, Robert Powner, in 1589 and two more, Henry Bolton and John Waters, in 1594. Willoughby was a man of substance in the town; he was listed in several years as one of the two collectors for St George parish but he was never described in the records as a wait, although certainly he and one or more of his apprentices would have performed from time to time as a consort.<sup>38</sup>

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, three more musicians were admitted as freemen: Francis Benyson in May 1603, presumably the son of Robert Benyson, who had been admitted in 1570; Henry Pearse (see below)

in April 1625, having completed an apprenticeship with someone who is unnamed in the records; and Francis Coyney in December 1625.<sup>39</sup> Although no use of the word 'wait' occurs in the Hall Books during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, they certainly were present and performing because household accounts of the Slingsby family of West Yorkshire include payments to the 'mussicke' (a term for waits) in Stamford in 1614 and 1619.<sup>40</sup>

Waits are most copiously documented in Stamford between 1627 and 1685, a presence initiated by a most unusual event in the records. On 4 October 1627 the corporation, acting on a request by Henry Lord Grey, admitted six of his 'searauntes' (see Appendix 4) plus musician Henry Pearce of Stamford, who were 'alowed to be & sworne in the place of the tounne waightes of Stamford' with coats and badges 'as waightes in other tounes are accustomed to doe and shall begine their searuice daiely att the Aldermans feast'.<sup>41</sup> The ambiguous wording could mean either that this group was replacing the present town waits or that the institution, perhaps in decline, was now being revitalized. According to the *DNB*, Grey (1599?–1673) was created first earl of Stamford on 26 March 1628, 'having by his marriage become possessed of the castle, borough, and manor of Stamford'. Earlier his seat had been at Bradgate, Leicestershire, where he was described as having a 'haughty, irritable disposition [that] made him an unpleasant neighbour'.<sup>42</sup> Apparently at the time of the request concerning his musicians, Grey was resident in Stamford but had not yet been named earl. Whether the musicians also continued as his household servants while serving as waits is unclear, though that seems unlikely.

The fact that Grey had six household musicians to offer is in itself interesting. As seven is an unusually high number of waits for a town the size of Stamford, so their acceptance by the town may reflect its feeling that it could not refuse the offer by Grey. None of the six had been named in the records as former apprentices of Thomas Willoughby or any other local musician, and one wonders why only one local musician was accepted as part of this new company. Given their surnames, two members of the new troupe may have been father and son. One other, William Knewstubbes, eventually moved away from Stamford (his final appearance in the Stamford records was 9 May 1633).<sup>43</sup> In October 1633 he and three other musicians in Grantham were admitted as the town waits there, where he remained until at least 1643 (see under discussion of Grantham).

Though these seven musicians were admitted as waits of Stamford in October 1627, the number quickly shrank. One year later – in October 1628 – only four of them (Edward and Thomas Troupe, Nathan Ashe, and Knewstubbes) were admitted as freemen paying local taxes and rents; Pearce was already a

resident.<sup>44</sup> Whatever their number, the Stamford waits were certainly performing during these years because on November 1631 household accounts of the Sheepscar family of West Yorkshire record a payment to the 'musicke' in Stamford, a term often used in referring to waits.<sup>45</sup> On 9 May 1633 an order making provision 'for the Towne musicke to waite vpon the Kinge' during his visit mentions five waits (three of Grey's former servants – Thomas Troupe, Ashe, and Knewstubbes – plus Pearce and a new wait, John Palmer). These five were ordered to attend 'with their winde Instrumentes'.<sup>46</sup>

The only certain evidence of travel by Stamford waits occurs with this particular generation, who must have been highly skilled musicians. In 1634 they stayed for twenty-two days (March 24–April 14) at the earl of Cumberland's residence in Londesborough, East Yorkshire, receiving food each day and £6 13s 4d plus other sums when they departed. The entry in the Clifford accounts says that they played when Lord Dungarton (soon-to-be husband of Clifford's daughter) was there. On 26 July in that same year they were paid a further £15 by Lord Clifford for 'service done here at my lady Dungarvans marriage: 9. weekes', plus an additional 10s when they departed.<sup>47</sup> The wording appears to suggest that the Stamford waits were present at Londesborough for nine weeks. If so, then they would have spent much of the summer far from Stamford. The obvious favour in which they were held by important patrons may have something to do with the exit of some from the Stamford records shortly thereafter, perhaps for greener pastures.

By 1637 a new company of waits seems to have been generating itself, coinciding with the reappearance of local musicians in the records. On 25 February 1637 William Mewes, a former (and previously unrecorded) apprentice of the late Thomas Willoughby, was admitted as a rent- and rate-paying freeman, with security provided by Nathan Ashe (one of Grey's former servants) and Simon Fisher, otherwise unidentified. Two years later, on 26 October 1639, Mewes and 'other younge men of his company' were chosen to be Stamford's waits and were given possession of the town's scutcheons.<sup>48</sup> So, twelve years after their arrival in 1627, nearly all of the servants of Lord Grey were gone, or at least were no longer serving as the town's waits.

Between 1639 and 1680, only three more musicians, none identified as waits, are named in the Hall Book: Robert Mitchell, admitted on 18 May 1647, and Robert Peck, former apprentice to William Campton (apparently, the wording of the entry suggests, not a local journeyman musician), admitted on 26 August 1680. The waits seem to have been reconstituted a third time in 1685 when two musicians, Robert Norwood and Mark Fleming, were admitted to the town as freemen and appointed, together with their servants,

as town waits, with badges and cloaks provided by the town. That sponsorship continued until the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup>

#### THE WAITS OF GRANTHAM

The earliest reference to the Grantham waits may be *c* 1541–6. A local antiquarian quotes a claim made in about 1740 by yet another local antiquarian that ‘old acts [now lost] of the churchwardens of the Parish Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary, in Spalding’ describe a lavish three-day event sounding much like a morality play or tournament, at which the waits of Grantham (and many other people) performed. Unfortunately no document by which to verify the event has yet turned up.<sup>50</sup> But it is certain that the Grantham waits were established as a travelling company by the mid-sixteenth century. The chamberlain of Nottingham paid them eleven times between 1558–9 and 1589–90: in 1558–9, 6 May 1569 (the waits of York also paid), 23 August 1572 (Mr. Cotton’s musicians also paid), 12 January 1576 (Sir Thomas Cockyn’s musicians also paid), 9 January 1577, 3 January 1578, 4 January 1579, 18 May 1586, after 1 January 1588, in 1588–9, and on 14 June 1589–90.<sup>51</sup> About half of their visits (as was the case with the Boston waits in Nottingham) occurred in early January, the other times between May and October.<sup>52</sup> They played for a week at Chatsworth in April 1597;<sup>53</sup> and they were hired six times between 1607 and 1638 by the earl of Rutland to perform at Belvoir Castle, two of those performances occurring at Christmas (for one of which they received £3), and three during August or September – once during the visit of Lord Newbrooke to Belvoir.<sup>54</sup> Thus, they continued to travel during the first half of the seventeenth century and, given the rarefied venues at which they played, they must have been musicians of high and reliable quality. The evidence that survives shows them travelling no further than about forty miles from Grantham.

The earliest reference to the waits within the town’s own records does not occur until 1633, the first year for which a corporation minute book survives. But other records make it clear that the waits were present and performing in Grantham throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. The Slingsby family papers (of West Yorkshire) include payments to the waits at Grantham in February and December 1614, in April and August 1619, and in February 1620. Another Yorkshire family, Savile, paid them at Grantham in August 1640.<sup>55</sup> So evidence of their performing before important private patrons spans the greater part of a century.

The recurring and formulaically-written nature of the orders in the Grantham

Corporation Minute Book makes clear that as of 1633, the pattern in Grantham was that the mayor's court admitted the waits each October for one year's service as 'the Common musitiens of this Borough' (in 1635 called 'Townes waytes').<sup>56</sup> In 1633 the town accepted four waits – Richard Sentons, Thomas Seemly, Peter Leacock, and William Stubbes (i.e. Knewstubbes) – at their 'auncyent and accustomed Sallary', further corroborating the view that waits (though not necessarily this particular group) were already a long-standing institution in Grantham.<sup>57</sup> At these annual courts the waits were given 12d each and were also to be paid quarterly wages.<sup>58</sup> It is possible to know more about one of the four waits, William Knewstubbes. Before 1633 he had been a household musician in the service of Henry Lord Grey, first earl of Stamford, and then he was briefly a civic wait of Stamford (see discussion under Stamford above). Why he left Stamford for Grantham is unclear but his familiarity with important private patrons is consistent with what seems to have been true of the waits in Grantham.

The membership of the Grantham waits was relatively stable between 1633 and 1640 but in 1641 some disruption occurred – perhaps having to do with the civil war. A similar disruption occurred at Louth but in other places the waits seem to have flourished throughout the war, suggesting that some towns found the waits useful during the conflict. In 1641 these Grantham musicians refused to receive their livery and were dismissed. Eight months later Knewstubbes, now described as 'a stranger' and a poor man, petitioned for freedom of the town and was readmitted after paying £5. The following October (1642) he and another former wait, plus two of Knewstubbes' own servants (perhaps apprentice musicians), were reappointed town waits. The two were reappointed a final two times in 1643 and 1647. However, when they reapplied in 1648, the council, because of the civil war, dismissed them until times changed for the better. Thereafter, no waits were paid.<sup>59</sup>

Though laconic, the entries in the minute book make it appear that the town, which owned the livery and made the bonds for the waits, was very much their patron. That the waits themselves had musician servants suggests a company. In any event, the fortunes of the waits seem to have risen or fallen with the financial and political fortunes of the town.

#### THE WAITS OF LINCOLN

Not surprisingly, the city of Lincoln had what seems to have been the oldest, certainly the best recorded, tradition of sponsoring waits in the county. By 1389 Lincoln had what Westlake describes as a minstrels' and actors' guild,

which was listed among those groups who carried a candle to the cathedral in the city's procession on the Tuesday after Pentecost.<sup>60</sup> Presumably this was the guild to which the waits belonged because in later years no other organization except the waits had the authority to regulate and tax musicians (see below).

The records clearly indicate that the immediate patron of the waits was the mayor. It is in orders specific to him that the waits are usually mentioned. In 1514 the outgoing mayor delivered to the new mayor silver keys and collars for three waits (that number also affirmed in 1515 and 1516); the entry in 1516 says that the mayor should have three waits 'as yat other Maiers hath had'. In 1524 the number of waits was two. In 1523, according to ancient custom, the new mayor was to receive £10 to maintain his house and 36s 8d to reward the minstrels, a pattern repeated formulaically nearly every year thereafter into the seventeenth century, suggesting specific annual obligations for the waits in service to the mayor.<sup>61</sup>

The corporation mandated additional annual salary as well. In addition to livery provided by the common chamber, waits were supposed to receive 12d from every alderman, 6d from every sheriff, and 4d from every chamberlain. In 1528 the set amount for the mayor was specifically designated as being 'for other rewardes To Mynstrelles & strangers'. Between 1532 and 1537 a disruption occurred and that annual allocation disappeared from the accounts. In 1538 the chamber ordered that quarterly every town official pay the waits amounts ranging from 2d to 6d, and in 1540 the chamber found it necessary to make an order giving waits freedom of the city and restating the obligation of all city officials to pay the waits a set amount.<sup>62</sup>

In 1560 the city issued an order that seems designed to reaffirm a pattern that may have been lost for a time. Waits were now to be hired each year for an entire year, and their obligation to the city was described as being from All Hallows (1 November) to Candlemas (2 February).<sup>63</sup> The order was made at a time shortly after the accession of Elizabeth I when the city was also reestablishing other customs, including a stage play.

References to waits in a book of the Lincoln Cordwainers' guild tend to confirm the pattern found in corporation minute books during the first half of the sixteenth century. In 1529, 1530-1, and 1531-2 the guild made payments to 'histrionibus istius ciuitatis' or to 'histriones' but made no payments in years when such payments also disappeared from the corporation minute book; the Cordwainers resumed payments when the city did and continued to do so intermittently through 1642-3.<sup>64</sup> The amounts paid by the Cordwainers were constant and seem a fixed amount (depending on the number of waits who performed); the waits were paid for performance, food and wine,

and for accompanying the guild's procession on St Anne's Day (26 July). In this respect, the Cordwainers' accounts record waits' participation in guild activities of a kind that is suggested but not confirmed in other surviving guild records (as at Grimsby, Louth, Boston, and Stamford).

By the 1590s the waits were experiencing financial difficulties and facing competition from other musicians. In response to a suit by the waits, the assembly issued an order in 1590 forbidding any 'foreign' musicians from playing at marriages or other events within the city unless they paid the waits 2s for the privilege. The assembly also ordered all office holders to meet their traditional obligation by contributing twice yearly to the waits' wages. In 1599 the assembly raised the four waits' wages to 100s per year. The order giving the waits a monopoly was repeated in 1599, this time also specifying that the order included inns, alehouses, and victualling houses except at 'the assise time', clearly suggesting thereby that a variety of 'foreign' musicians periodically assembled in Lincoln – probably including the companies of great lords – when the courts were in session. The order was renewed again in 1617, extending the prohibition to include the 'Citie suburbs or liberties therof'. But this time the order explicitly excepted 'the musitions of some noblemen to their owne maister [playing] at his house or lodging', once again suggesting that the presence of such patrons and their players, not surprisingly, was common in Lincoln. This order also gave the waits the right to assess house-keepers 2s for every offending musician, to assess the foreign musicians themselves 5s, and to sue them. In this order the town's musicians were specifically referred to as 'the maisters felowes & Company of wates of the Citie of Lincoln'.<sup>65</sup>

The number of waits that the city had is neither clear nor consistent in the records (see Appendix 4). In 1541–2 three waits newly appearing in the records were appointed and in 1545 the formulaic annual subsidy to the mayor for minstrels began again. As of 1546 they were called 'Minstrels of the Common Chamber'. But between 1541–2 and 1552 seven were named at different times (only two names recurring during those years). In 1551 livery was ordered for the two waits and in 1552 two men were named as waits. From that pattern it is difficult to conclude how many waits there were – three, five, or six – but the most frequently recurring number is three, and in 1563 the number was formally set at three, superceding any previous act or custom. In 1575 the chamber again affirmed that the number of waits to receive livery would be limited to three, perhaps suggesting that others were present and wanting to perform under the protection of the corporation. However, in 1585 the number of waits to receive livery was set at four. The waits flourished during the Restoration, seemingly as part of a revitalized company, and in 1662–3



five were appointed. In 1695 the town recorded various expenses for the waits who, together with the waits of Newark, plus drummers, trumpeters, and hautboys, led a procession to Bargate in Lincoln to celebrate the king's visit.<sup>66</sup>

That the waits of Lincoln also had a theatrical dimension is demonstrated by the text of a 'cry' (a set of speeches for three waits) to be performed by them at Christmas. The text survives in the third City Council Minute Book. In 1571 the Minute Book contains a reference to the robes formerly used to cry Christmas now being made into cloaks. But no other particulars of their dramatic activities have come to light.<sup>67</sup>

Touring was a major part of the Lincoln waits' performance life. The earliest record of a performance outside Lincoln is for Ascension week of 1446, when they played at York; the last that has yet emerged was August 1636 at Coventry.<sup>68</sup> Several features stand out in the entries related to travel (see Appendix 4). The first is that the company travelled widely outside the county, ranging as far as Cambridge (to the south), York (to the north), Carlisle (to the northwest), and Coventry (to the southwest), but that – based on the evidence that survives – they (and all Lincolnshire waits) appear to have been essentially regional performers.<sup>69</sup> With the exception of one mid-December payment and several in November (all at Carlisle), the recorded travels of Lincoln's waits occurred between March and September, outside the months during which the waits were obligated to perform in Lincoln itself. Furthermore, all payments were made by important private patrons such as Elizabeth Cavendish (Bess of Hardwick), the duchess of Suffolk, the earl of Cumberland, or the earl of Rutland; or by a Cambridge college; or by city officials at Cambridge, Carlisle, Coventry, Nottingham, or York – such payments often made specifically at the mayor's order. The company was clearly composed of superior musicians who were comfortable in rather rarified settings. There is no evidence that they performed at smaller venues within the county (other than before the Cordwainers' guild in Lincoln), but surely they must have, given their seemingly perpetual need for money. Some evidence of networking among waits also can be seen in their hiring of a former household musician of the earl of Rutland and of Ferdinando Gibbons, from Cambridge, a musician of high skill and reputation, and the brother of Orlando Gibbons and son of William Gibbons, master wait of Cambridge between 1567–8 and 1576.<sup>70</sup> The waits of Lincoln seem to have been a formidable group of performers.

#### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The first impression arising from a study of the Lincolnshire waits is that,

while waits are included in REED volumes and are otherwise generally recognized to have been skilled musicians, they have not been sufficiently appreciated as professional companies capable of making diverse contributions to the performance life of the town in at least three major areas. They contributed to Corpus Christi and other religious drama, ceremonies, and processions mounted by town, parish, and guilds; they provided music at a wide range of civic and legalistic functions; and they found additional income performing at private venues, whether for great lords or local worthies.

Nor has their role in the development of towns been sufficiently explored, specifically their relationship with the mayor or comparable official, who seems to have been their principal patron. Woodfill comments that 'nearly every town had waits, valued and nourished them, and often increased the size of the group', but the evidence does not support that view in Lincolnshire.<sup>71</sup> Though the county had thirty-seven towns in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, all the evidence for the presence of waits comes from records for the city of Lincoln and six other important towns (though minstrels seem to have been present nearly everywhere). Four of these towns were chartered boroughs, and the fifth and sixth were important market towns attempting incrementally to free themselves from the control of medieval landlords. Though waits had been major contributors to parish religious drama and ceremonies, the abolition of parish guilds and Corpus Christi drama in the 1540s did not also destroy the waits as an institution. Indeed, the granting of new charters to towns, their assumption of responsibility for schools, and their ever-increasing sense of civic identity and rights, seem to coincide with an increased presence of waits in the records, notably at the sessions and assizes, at tax time, and during progresses or gatherings of important people.

As a corollary, the records create the impression that the civic agenda of the town was a more important factor in determining the fortunes of the waits than was the town's religious or moral attitude toward entertainments, Boston providing the prime example. Though in 1578 it forbade the staging of plays or interludes in the church, the common hall, and the school house; and though it several times paid players not to play; yet there is not the slightest indication in the records that the waits were themselves suppressed. Indeed, they seem to have been most active in representing the town at complex political moments when important personages were assembled there.<sup>72</sup> The evidence that survives indicates that the waits in Lincolnshire, rather like canaries in a coal mine, provide useful clues for understanding the growth, development, and civic prospects of certain important towns in the county.

The second observation concerns the town as patron. Woodfill observes

that 'towns that gave musicians chiefly livery and the right to use their names were not merely like nominal private patrons; they were better, for while the protective power of barons and others of greater degree waned during Elizabeth's reign, that of towns remained undiminished'.<sup>73</sup> That observation seems to apply in Lincolnshire. The impression arises from wording in the records that mayors as patrons were comparable to lords or barons, and in general that the waits survived unimpeded through numerous social, economic, political, and religious upheavals up to and often including the time of the commonwealth.

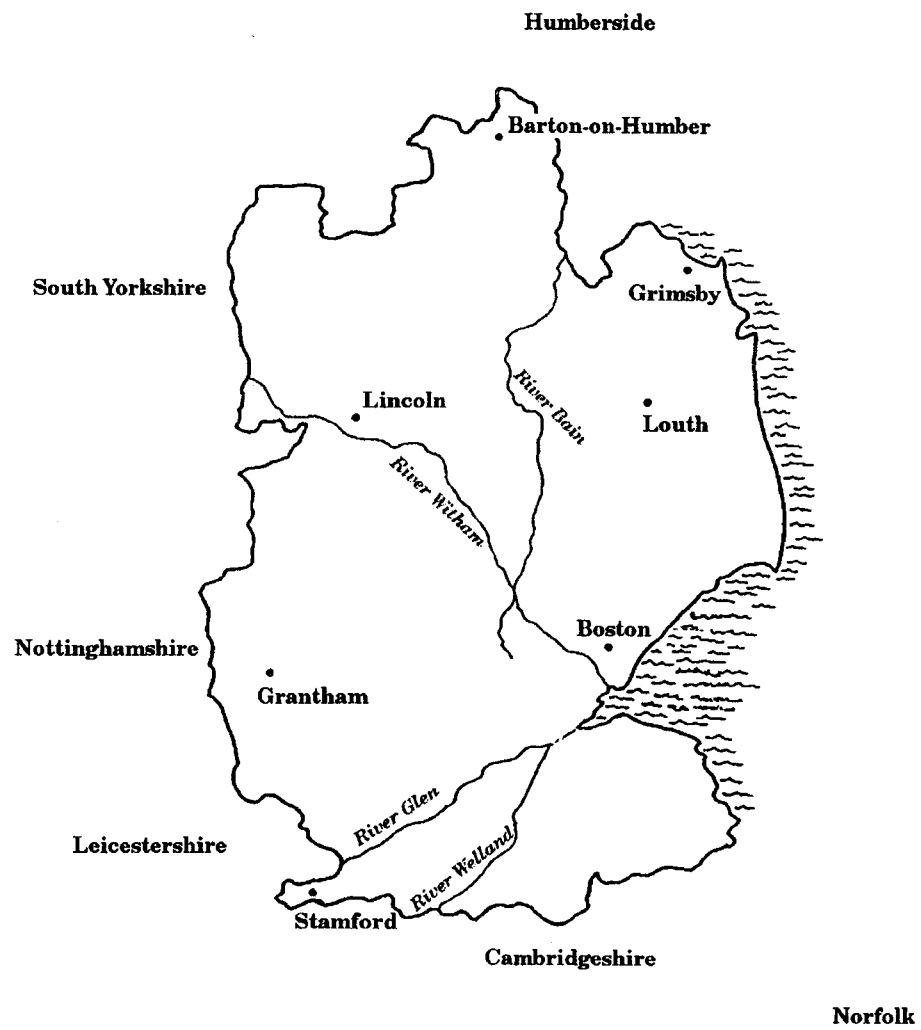
The third impression concerns the waits as travelling professional companies. Evidence suggests that there was considerable networking among waits. They played for common patrons; they assembled and jointly performed at important civic events in cities and large towns; they called on each other for assistance on such occasions; they hired from the ranks of other companies of waits. The rules and structures of companies of waits seem to have mirrored each other in their essential features in cities such as Lincoln, Nottingham, Leicester, Coventry, and York. Thus there seems to be much more evidence for the common conventions, practices, and organizational structure of waits than is possible for other travelling professional companies.

Finally, the resilience of the waits as an institution in Lincolnshire, together with the great number of musicians who appear in parish registers, gives testimony to the rich musical tradition for which that county is known, beginning with the famous musicians of Lincoln Cathedral but permeating the county. It seems no accident that three of the richest musical traditions were at Louth (where the bishop had a residence and was landlord), at Stamford (with its great number of parish churches and religious houses), and at Boston (with its powerful socio-religious guilds and Corpus Christi productions).

**Appendix 1**

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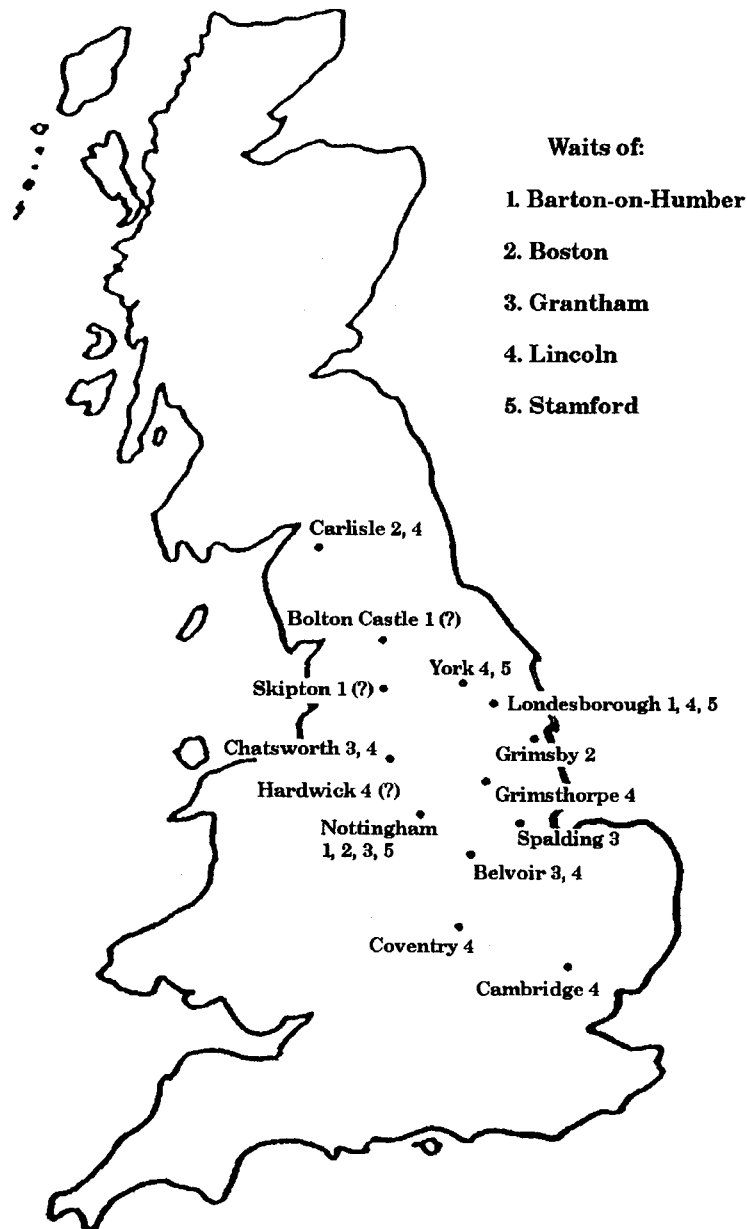
*Places in Lincolnshire for Which Evidence of Local Waits Survives*



**Appendix 2**

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*Places to Which Lincolnshire Waits are Known to Have Travelled, 1446–1638*



### Appendix 3

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#### *Travel by Lincolnshire Waits*

Group of Waits	Travel Location	Source of Information
<b>Barton-on-Humber</b>		
1572 (6 January)	Nottingham, with waits of Leeds	civic accounts
1610 (23 December)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1611 (7 January)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
(18–19 March)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
(8 January)	Skipton	Clifford accounts
1612 (26 February)	Londesborough, Skipton (?)	Clifford accounts
(24 December)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1613 (31 March)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
<b>Boston</b>		
1575–6 (20 July)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1576 (30 October)	Nottingham, with waits of Derby	civic accounts
1576–7	Grimsby	civic accounts
1577 (11 January)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1579 (23 May)*	Nottingham; earl of Derby bearward paid the same day	civic accounts
1580 (10 April)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1585–6 (around 4 Jan)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1588 (after 1 Jan)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1590	Nottingham	civic accounts
1591–2	Nottingham	civic accounts
1621–2 (bet. 5 Nov– Christmas)	Carlisle	civic accounts
* <i>Nottingham waits visited Boston in 1525–6, as did Cambridge waits on 9 May 1567.</i>		
<b>Grantham</b>		
bet. 1541–6	Spalding, large civic entertainment/play	Antiquarian book
1558–9	Nottingham	civic accounts
1568–9 (6 May)	Nottingham, same day as waits of York	civic accounts

Group of Waits	Travel Location	Source of Information
<b>Grantham (cont)</b>		
1572 (23 August)	Nottingham, same day as Mr Cotton's musicians	civic accounts
1576 (12 January)	Nottingham, same day as Sir Thomas Cockyn's musicians	civic accounts
1577 (9 January)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1578 (3 January)	Nottingham, same day as Mr Bradley's musicians	civic accounts
1579 (4 January)*	Nottingham, same day as waits of Chesterfield	civic accounts
1586 (after 18 May)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1588 (after 1 January)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1588-9	Nottingham	civic accounts
1589-90 (14 June)	Nottingham, same day as waits of Pomfret	civic accounts
1597 (10-16 April)	Chatsworth or Hardwick	Cavendish accounts
1607 (Christmas)	Belvoir	Rutland accounts
1637 (Christmas)	Belvoir	Rutland accounts
1638 (3 [?] August)	Belvoir	Rutland accounts
1638 (17 August)	Belvoir	Rutland accounts
1638 (17 September)	Belvoir, when Lord Newbrooke was there	Rutland accounts

*\*Nottingham chamberlains' accounts are missing from 1591 to 1614; no waits were paid in 1616-17 and 1623-4.*

### Grimsby

No travel by the waits of Grimsby is recorded, but Grimsby was visited by the minstrels of Hull in 1514-15 and 'lusores' from Boston in 1576-7.

### Louth

No travel by the waits is recorded.

### Lincoln

1446 (Ascension Week)	York; 3 musicians	civic accounts
1541 (18 February)	Belvoir	Rutland Accounts

<b>Group of Waits</b>	<b>Travel Location</b>	<b>Source of Information</b>
<b>Lincoln (cont)</b>		
1542 (30 April)	Belvoir	Rutland accounts
1549–50	Cambridge	Christ College accounts
1550	Cambridge	civic accounts
1558–9	Nottingham	civic accounts
1561 (12 March)	Grimsthorpe	duchess of Suffolk accounts
1561 (post-Easter)	Cambridge	civic accounts
1562 (21 July)	Grimsthorpe Castle	duchess of Suffolk accounts
1577 (25 July)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1583 (22 May)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1588 (2 Apr, undated)	Nottingham	civic accounts
1599 (29 June–6 July)	Hardwick or Chatsworth	Cavendish accounts
1600 (August)	Hardwick or Chatsworth	Cavendish accounts
1601 (16 June)	Chatsworth or Hardwick	Cavendish accounts
1610–11 (July)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1612 (22 May)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1612 (10 August)	Belvoir (for the king)	Rutland accounts
1615 (November)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1616 (summer)	Coventry	civic accounts
1617 (17 May)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1617 (November)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1618 (September)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1619 (4 June)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1619 (31 August)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1620 (near November)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1622 (March)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1623 (10 June)	Coventry	civic accounts
1625 (mid-December)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1625 (June-July)	Carlisle	civic accounts
1634 (August)	Coventry	civic accounts
1636 (2 August)	Coventry	civic accounts
1636 (29 August)	Coventry	civic accounts
<b>Stamford</b>		
1588–9	Nottingham (4 musicians)	civic accounts



Group of Waits	Travel Location	Source of Information
<b>Stamford (cont)</b>		
1634 (24 Mar–15 April)	Londesborough	Clifford accounts
1634 (26 July)	Londesborough, gates of Castle	Clifford accounts
	Londesborough for reward and service 9 weeks at marriage of Cumberland's daughter £15	Clifford accounts
1634	Londesborough at waits' departure	Clifford accounts

**Appendix 4**

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*Waits and Other Musicians in Lincolnshire: An Interim List*

The names below are variously spelled as they occur in the manuscripts.

**Barton-on-Humber**

1610–13      Stephen Griggs, musician

**Boston**

1573          Edward Astell, musician and wait

**Grantham**

1633          Richard Sentons, wait  
                  Thomas Seemly, wait  
                  Peter Leacock, wait  
                  William Stubes, wait  
 1634          Richard Sentons, wait  
                  Thomas Seemely, wait  
                  William Stubbes, wait  
 1635          Richard Sentons, wait  
                  Thomas Seemely, wait  
                  William Knewstubbs, wait  
                  Peter Leacock, wait  
 1636          Richard Sentons, wait  
                  William Knewstubbes, wait  
                  Peter Leacock, wait  
 1637          Richard Sentons, wait  
                  William Knewstubb, wait  
                  Knewstubb's servant (unnamed), musician and wait  
                  Peter Leacock  
 1638          Richard Sentons, wait  
                  William Knewstubbes, wait  
                  Peter Leacock, wait  
                  Knewstubs' former servant, wait  
 1639          Richard Sentence, wait

**Grantham (cont)**

- 1639 (cont) William Knewstubbs, wait (servant has departed)  
Peter Laicocke, wait
- 1640 None named
- 1641 former waits refuse livery and are dismissed
- 1642 (July) William Knewstubbs, musician (admitted as  
freeman of the town)
- 1642 (October) William Knewstubbs, wait  
two servants of Knewstubbs (unnamed), musicians  
Richard Sentance, wait
- 1643 William Knewstubbs, wait  
Richard Sentance, wait

**Grimsby**

- 1396–7 to 1441–2 Walter Wayte, histrio (wait)

**Haydor**

- 1638–9 William Keale, piper

**Lincoln**

- 1541–2 Richard Cogyll, wait  
John Lambert, wait  
Richard Abelson, wait
- 1547 Richard Cogyle, wait  
Alexander Cogle, wait  
Thomas Calbeck, wait
- 1549 Richard Cogle, wait  
Alexander Cogle, wait  
Edward Liberd, wait
- 1552 Edward Liberd, wait  
William [blank], wait
- 1554 Edward Liberd, wait  
John Fowler, wait  
Thomas Corbeck, wait
- 1597 Richard Bell, wait

**Lincoln (cont)**

- 1610 Richard Bell, wait  
Fernando Gibbys, wait  
[blank] Lockington, wait
- 1616 Thomas Becket, wait (son of Jacob, apprentice to Bell)
- April 1624 George Moone, new wait from service of earl of Rutland  
Thomas Becket, wait (admitted freeman)
- 1662-3 William Deepin, wait  
Thomas Compton, wait  
George Udall, wait  
John Gibbins, wait  
Peter Rogers, wait

**Louth**

- 1555 William Jordan, musician
- 1571 Leonard Knowlles, minstrel
- 1573 John Grestiose, minstrel
- 1580 Patrick Skipwith, minstrel
- 1584-90 John Bradley, piper
- 1590 Edward Waight, musician ?
- 1591 Richard Pell, piper
- 1599 Richard Waight, musician ?
- 1601-8 Nicholas Tennyne, musician
- 1606-22 John Clark, musician 1606, wait 1622
- 1609 Richard Shiels, musician and bachelor
- 1613 Anne Wayte, servant (probably not musician)
- 1614 John Cheales, musician
- 1644 John Fryier, musician
- 1648 Robert Fryier, musician

**Stamford**

- 1472 William Barton, minstrel  
Christopher Totyll, minstrel, wait in 1486  
Richard Pinder, minstrel, wait in 1486
- 1473 Henry Haynes, minstrel  
Richard Pyndell, minstrel, wait in 1486  
William Johnson, minstrel

**Stamford (cont)**

- 1482 Henry Hede (perhaps same as Hayne(s)?), minstrel  
Richard Pynder, minstrel, wait in 1486  
William Smyth, minstrel
- 1486 Henry Hayn, minstrel and wait  
Richard Pynder, minstrel and wait  
Christopher Totyll, minstrel and wait
- 1494 John Brandon, minstrel
- 1540 William Skelton, minstrel
- 1554 John Morrice, minstrel
- 1570 Robert Benyson, minstrel
- 1587 William Willoughby, apprentice to Thomas  
Thomas Willoughby, musician
- 1588 Thomas Willoghbie, musician (admitted)
- 1589 Robert Pownder, apprentice to Thomas Willoughby
- 1594 Henry Bolton, apprentice to Thomas Willoughby  
John Waters, apprentice to Thomas Willoughby
- 1603 Francis Benyson, musician (born in Stamford)
- 1625 Henry Pearse, musician (former apprentice)  
Francis Coyney, musician
- 1627 Edmund Troupe, wait  
William Knewstubbes, wait  
Nathan Ashe, wait  
Thomas Troupe, wait  
William Smyth, wait  
Henry Beuisse, wait  
Henry Pearce, wait
- 1628 Edmund Troupe, wait  
William Knewstubbes, wait  
Nathan Ashe, wait  
Thomas Troupe, wait
- 1633 Thomas Troupe, wait  
Nathan Ashe, wait  
Henry Pearce, wait  
William Knewstubbes, wait  
John Palmer, wait
- 1637 William Mewese, musician (former apprentice)  
(his surety by Simon Fisher and Nathan Ashe)
- 1639 William Mewes and his company of young men, waits

**Stamford** (cont)

- |      |                                                                                  |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1647 | Robert Mitchell, musician                                                        |
| 1680 | Robert Peck, musician (former apprentice to William Crampton, otherwise unknown) |
| 1685 | Robert Norwood, musician and wait<br>Mark Fleming, musician and wait             |

## Notes

- 1 Craig's efforts to locate the N-Town plays in Lincoln spanned half a century. See his 'News for Bibliophiles', *The Nation*, July–December 1913, 308–9; 'Notes on the Home of Ludus Coventriae', *University of Minnesota Studies in Language and Literature* 1 (1914), 72–83; 'An Elementary Account of Miracle Plays in Lincoln', *The Lincoln Diocesan Magazine* 30 (September, 1914), 135–9; 'The Lincoln Cordwainers Pageant', *PMLA* 32 (1917), 605–15; 'Mystery Plays at Lincoln – Further Research Needed', *The Lincolnshire Historian* 2.11 (1964), 37–41. For Kahrl, see *Plays and Players in Lincolnshire, 1300–1585*, Malone Society Collections 8 (Oxford, 1969 (1974)); and with Kenneth Cameron, 'The N-Town Plays at Lincoln', *Theatre Notes* 20 (1966), 61–9; 'Staging the N-Town Cycle', *Theatre Notes* 21 (1967), 122–38, 152–65; 'Teaching Medieval Drama as Theatre', *The Learned and the Lewed*, Larry D. Benson (ed) (Cambridge, Mass, 1974), 305–18.
- 2 Walter L. Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society from Elizabeth to Charles I* (New York, 1969); the seventeen collections that REED has published all contain significant evidence of and discussion concerning the waits in areas covered by each volume.
- 3 Graham Platts, *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire, vol 4 (Lincoln, 1985), 187, 215, 224; P. Dover, *The Early Medieval History of Boston*, History of Boston Series, no 2 (Boston, Lincs, 1972) 16–19.
- 4 Nottingham Chamberlains' Accounts, Nottinghamshire Archives (hereafter NA): CA 1612, f 2v. For this and other references in the Nottingham borough records to visits by Lincolnshire waits, I would like to thank John Coldewey, editor of the REED volume for Nottinghamshire forthcoming, where references to the waits' visits will be transcribed in their entirety. For references to some entries, see also W. H. Stevenson, James Raine, and W. T. Baker (eds), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham* (London, 1882), 137.
- 5 For references to musicians from Barton in the Clifford papers, I would like to thank Barbara Palmer and John Wasson, editors of the forthcoming REED volume for West Yorkshire, where the entries will appear in full.
- 6 Woodfill also concludes that these entries refer to musicians from Barton-on-Humber, *Musicians in English Society* 120 n 10.
- 7 Edward Gillett, *A History of Grimsby* (Hull, 1970), 11–12, 2.
- 8 Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire Archives (hereafter NELA): 1/600/5/1, mb 1. I would like to thank John F. Wilson, Archivist, NELA, and Archives Assistant, Mrs Carol Moss, for facilitating access to the Grimsby records and for numerous considerations during my visit.

- 9 NELA: 1/600/12, mb 1. The terms 'wait' and 'histrion' were often used interchangeably during this period. An account from Hickling Priory in 1517–18 includes a payment to 'Regiis histrionibus vocatis waytes' (the king's entertainers called waits); see J.C. Bridge, 'Town Waits and Their Tunes', *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 54th Session (1928), 81. See also Abigail Ann Young, 'Plays and Players: The Latin Terms for Performance', *REED Newsletter* 9.2 (1984), 56–62; David Galloway and John Wasson (eds), *Records of Plays and Players in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1330–1642*, Malone Society Collections 11 (Oxford, 1980), xvi, for the interchangeable use of the terms in Lynn; Alan H. Nelson (ed), *Cambridge, REED*, vol 2 (Toronto, 1989), 1314 for their use in Cambridge; and John C. Coldewey, 'Plays and "Play" in Early English Drama', *RORD* 28 (1985), 181–8.
- 10 NELA: 1/600/13, mb 1.
- 11 E. Gutch and Mabel Peacock, *County Folk-Lore*, vol 5, *Lincolnshire* (London, 1908), 194–5.
- 12 Quoted in Gutch and Peacock, *County Folk-Lore*, 223.
- 13 NELA: 261/1, f B2 (1582–3); NELA: 261/1, ff B14v–15 (1586).
- 14 George Shaw, *Old Grimsby* (London, 1897), 101.
- 15 Quoted in Gutch and Peacock, *County Folk-Lore*, 217–18.
- 16 Platts, *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*, 200, 212, 224.
- 17 Platts, *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*, 187; R.W. Goulding (comp), *Louth: Old Corporation Records* (Louth, 1891), 3, 10.
- 18 Lincolnshire Archives (hereafter LA): Goulding 4A/1/2/1, Louth Trinity Guild Compotus, 1422–3, single sheet. Concerning references to the Corpus Christi play and other religious drama in Louth records, see LA: Louth Parish 7/1, St James Churchwardens' Accounts, 1500–24, p 267; Parish 7/2, 1527–59, ff 3–4, 30; Monson 7/2, Trinity Guild Accounts, 1489–1528, ff 232, 236–8v; Louth Grammar School Records, B III/1, Wardens' Accounts, 1551–1686, p 29.
- 19 LA: Louth Grammar School Records B III/1, pp 29, 16, 126, 24.
- 20 For example, Louth Grammar School Records B III/1, pp 339, 341, 385, and 420 (quarter sessions); 449 and 458 (Grave's Feast); 483 (single wait); 498 ('the musike'); 555 ('the Musicions'); 518 ('owr musike'); 595, 619, 734, 745 (livery).
- 21 LA: Parish, Louth St James Parish 7/1, Churchwardens' Accounts 1500–24, pp 141, 167, 173, 211 (harpers); Parish Register of St James, Louth, 1538–1653, pp 257, 261, and 265 (minstrels); 283, 286, 313, 321, and 339 (pipers); 348, 367, 371, 373, 387, 475, 482 (musician or wait).
- 22 R.C. Dudding, *Notitiae Ludae* (Louth, 1834), 236–7.



- 23 The accounts of the guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary survive in a single volume, BL: MS Egerton 2886, which contains the detailed accounts of the guild's alderman, chamberlains, and bailiff and collectors for the years 1514–15 to 1525–6, lacking 1518–19; plus LA: Misc. Don. 169, f 7v, which is the account for 1518–19; LA: 4/C/1/1, ff 14v, 24v–6 for 1525–6; and LA: 4/C/1/2, f 14v for 1538–9. For a transcription and discussion of entries concerning the Noah Ship, see Cameron Louis, 'The *Nauculum Noie* of Boston', RORD 21 (1992), 91–100, though Louis missed entries concerning the Noah Ship for 1520–1 and 1523–4, on ff 162 and 239. LA: 4/C/1/1 (above), the chamberlain's account for 1525–6, contains essentially the same entries (f 14v) as those in the same year's alderman's account in BL: MS Egerton 2886, ff 294–302v, but with several additional details that clarify the entries. For the officers and administrative organization of the guild, see 'A Boston Guild Account', [Lincolnshire] Archivist's Report 16 (1964–5), 40–3.
- 24 BL: MS Egerton 2886, ff 16, 24, 42v–3, 51, 72v, 82v, 97, 99v, 117, 119, 142, 152v, 169, 179, 204v, 234, 238–9, 263, 296v–8.
- 25 BL: MS Egerton 2886, ff 179, 204v, 238–9, 234.
- 26 BL: MS Egerton 2886, ff 234, 263, 296v–7; LA: 4/C/1/1, ff 24v–5.
- 27 LA: Boston Borough 2/A/1/1, Council Minute Book 1545–1607, ff 58v, 128v.
- 28 For payments to prevent playing, see LA: Boston Borough 2/A/1/2, Council Minute Book 1608–38, ff 146, 155v, 191; for the waits of Cambridge, LA: 2/A/1/1, Boston Borough 2/A/1/2, Council Minute Book 1545–1607, f 58v; for payments in Nottingham, see NA: CA 1615, f 3; CA 1616, f 2v; CA 1618, f 3v; CA 1619, f 3; CA 1625, f 10v; CA 1627, p 12; CA 1631, p 37, courtesy of John Coldewey, and Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 104, 106; for Carlisle, see Audrey Douglas and Peter Greenfield (eds), *Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire*, REED (Toronto, 1986), 100; LA: Boston Borough Chamberlain's Account Roll, 1609–10, 4/B/1/1A, mb 3d.
- 29 LA: Boston Borough 2/A/1/2, Council Minute Book, 1608–38, f 284v. For example, the town paid £4 in April 1635 (Council Minute Book II, f 289); £6 9s in December 1635 to buy cloth for the waits and two others (II, f 293v); £1 3s 10d in 1648 (III, f 365v); £5 for coats for waits and the pavor in 1650 (III, f 381); £6 6s in 1651 for coats and a carpet (III, f 390v); £4 4s for coats in 1652 (III, f 400); and £4 19s for coats for waits and pavors in 1654 (III, f 414v). In 1670 the five waits appear in III, f 539.
- 30 Pishy Thompson, *The History and Antiquities of Boston* (London, 1856), 70. M.R. Lambert and R. Walker, *Boston Tattershall & Croyland* (Oxford, 1930) 69, claim that waits' coats cost £1 10s in 1552 and 1553, but I have found no support for those dates in the borough records. The first mention of waits'

- coats is in 1648 when they cost £1 3s 10d (Council Minute Book III, f 365v), perhaps the entry to which the authors were referring.
- 31 Mark Spurrell, 'The Puritan Town of Boston', *History of Boston Series*, no 5 (Boston, 1972), 7; *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Lincolnshire*, William Page (ed), vol 2 (London, 1906), 452.
  - 32 BL: Cotton Vespasian A xxiv, Stamford St Mary's Churchwardens' Account, 1427–8; see also note 9 above.
  - 33 Stamford, Town Hall: Hall Book, 1461–1657, f 16. I would like to thank Mr Denis Seward, Mayor's Officer, for making it possible to study Stamford's civic records and for his many considerations during my stay.
  - 34 Stamford: Hall Book, ff 29, 34v.
  - 35 Stamford: Hall Book, f 40v.
  - 36 Stamford: Hall Book, f 59.
  - 37 Stamford: Hall Book, ff 57, 131, 161v, 199v, 235v.
  - 38 Stamford: Hall Book, ff 231v, 238v, 253, 259v, 272.
  - 39 Stamford: Hall Book, ff 273v, 342v, 344v.
  - 40 Leeds, Claremont House, Yorkshire Archaeological Society: DD56/J/3/3, ff 48, 115v, 69. For these references I would like to thank Barbara Palmer and John Wasson, editors of the REED volume for West Yorkshire forthcoming, where the entries from the Slingsby papers will appear in full.
  - 41 Stamford: Hall Book, f 348v.
  - 42 *DNB*, 630.
  - 43 Stamford: Hall Book, f 371.
  - 44 Stamford: Hall Book, f 352. One member of Grey's troupe, Nathan Ashe, in a recognizance in 1630, admitted to keeping a common alehouse in his dwelling, thereby giving one clue as to how at least one of the musicians was creating income. For the reference, see Joan Varley, *The Parts of Kesteven: Studies in Law and Local Government* (Lincoln, 1974), 64. Another of the seven named waits – Henry Pearce, musician – is named in the Stamford quarter sessions records for 1629–30, where he was ordered to appear at the sessions of 10 April 1629. The reason is not given in the order (LA: Stam QS 1629–30, item 8).
  - 45 Sheepscar, Leeds, West Yorkshire Archive Service: TN/EA/13/19a.v, f 1, courtesy of Barbara Palmer and John Wasson. See also note 9 above.
  - 46 Stamford: Hall Book, f 371.
  - 47 Chatsworth House: Bolton Abbey Manuscripts 85, ff 17–19v, 20v–7v; 167 [no ff nos.]; 172, ff 32v, 78, courtesy of Barbara Palmer and John Wasson, REED collection for Clifford family forthcoming.
  - 48 Stamford: Hall Book, ff 384, 400.

- 49 Stamford: Hall Book, f 423; Hall Book II, 1658–1835, ff 89, 117. Local antiquarians agree that as late as the nineteenth century, Stamford still had four waits, who at that time wore silver badges, cocked hats, scarlet cloaks, and gold lace; were paid 50s per year, plus Christmas gratuities from residents; and were obliged to play in the streets three nights each week from 28 October through Christmas. They performed in processions at important civic events including mayor's day, SS Simon and Jude fair, and the king's birthday, and they also performed 'the bull tune' at the time of Stamford's ancient tradition of bull running. See Martin Smith, *The Myths and Legends of Stamford in Lincolnshire* (Stamford, 1991), 84–5; MacKenzie E.C. Walcott, *Memorials of Stamford: Past and Present* (London, 1867), 25; and George H. Burton, *Guide to Stamford and Neighbourhood* (Stamford, 1896), 38. Their common source appears to be William Harrod, *The Antiquities of Stamford and St Martin's* (Stamford, 1785), who seems to have been writing from personal observation. With some pride, the town hall today still holds six waits' badges (four from 1691, two from 1823). For a summary of documentary references to the waits in the Stamford Hall Books between 1486 and 1830, see Justin Simpson, 'The Stamford Waits and Their Predecessors: An Historical Sketch', *The Reliquary* 26 (July 1885), 1–6. He cites references (beyond the scope of this article) to waits in the Hall Books, civic accounts, and local histories in 1692, 1695, 1705–6, 1708–11, 1713, 1718–20, 1729, 1752, 1772–3, 1788, 1819, 1822, 1827, and 1830.
- 50 E.H. Gooch, *A History of Spalding* (Spalding, 1940), 128–9.
- 51 NA: CA 1610b, f 8; CA 1611, f 3; CA 1612, f 4; CA 1615, f 2v; CA 1616, f 2v; CA 1617, f 2v; CA 1618, f 3; CA 1625, f 12v; CA 1627, p 11; CA 1629, p 11, all provided courtesy of John Coldewey; see also Stevenson and Baker, *Nottingham*, p 133.
- 52 Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 104, 106.
- 53 Chatsworth House: ms 7 (H), f 180, courtesy of Barbara Palmer and John Wasson.
- 54 Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 270, 272.
- 55 Leeds, Claremont House, Yorkshire Archaeological Society: DD56/J/3/3, ff 85, 121v; DD/J/3/4, ff 48v, 60v, 83v; and Nottingham DD.SR. A4/43, f 35, courtesy of Barbara Palmer and John Wasson.
- 56 LA: Grantham Borough 5/1, Corporation Minute Book, 1633–1704, ff 2, 27.
- 57 LA: Grantham Borough 5/1, Corporation Minute Book, f 2.
- 58 LA: Grantham Borough 5/1, Corporation Minute Book, f 68.
- 59 LA: Grantham Borough 5/1, Corporation Minute Book, ff 99, 102v, 107v, 112v, 177, 181.

- 60 H.F. Westlake *The Parish Gilds of Medieval England* (New York, 1919), 173.
- 61 LA: City Council Minute Book, L1/1/1/1, 1511–41, ff 35, 50v, 69v, 162v, 172v.
- 62 LA: City Council Minute Book L1/1/1/1, ff 172v, 207v, 277v, 283.
- 63 LA: City Council Minute Book, L1/1/1/2, 1541–1564, ff 163, 158v.
- 64 Lincoln Central Library: MS 5009, Cordwainers' Guild Account and Minute Book, 1527–1772, ff 29v, 38, 46.
- 65 LA: City Council Minute Book, L1/1/1/3, 1565–99, ff 192v, 250; City Council Minute Book L1/1/1/4, 1599–1638, ff 56, 136v.
- 66 LA: City Council Minute Book L1/1/1/2, ff 2, 30v, 39v, 89, 97v, 184; City Council Minute Book L1/1/1/3, ff 93, 154; City Council Minute Book L1/1/1/6, 1655–1710, f 35 and p 514 (the book shifts from foliation to pagination); City Chamberlain's Roll 57, 1695–6, mb 4.
- 67 LA: City Council Minute Book L1/1/1/3, ff 1, 61v. For other discussions of participation in drama by waits see Carole A. Janssen, 'The Waytes of Norwich and an Early Lord Mayor's Show', *RORD* 22 (1979), 57–64; Bridge, 'Town Waits and Their Tunes', 80–2; and Galloway and Wasson, *Plays and Players*, xvi–xvii.
- 68 Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (eds), *York*, REED, vol 1 (Toronto, 1979), 66; R.W. Ingram (ed), *Coventry*, REED, (Toronto, 1981), 439.
- 69 For published evidence of travel by the waits of Lincoln (as outlined in Appendix 4), see Alan H. Nelson (ed), *Cambridge*, REED, vol 2 (Toronto, 1989), 164, 166, 210; Johnston and Rogerson, *York*, vol 1, 66; Douglas and Greenfield, *Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire*, 72, 81, 83, 89, 95, 101, 103–4; Ingram, *Coventry*, 397, 417, 436, 439; and Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 234, 258, 267–8, 271, 284–5. For references below to performances by the Lincoln waits in Nottingham, and in Derbyshire and Yorkshire (delineated in Appendix 3), I would like to thank, respectively, John Coldewey, and Barbara Palmer and John Wasson. For Nottingham, see NA: CA 1610b, f 8v; CA 1616, f 3v; CA 1622/23, ff 5, 19; CA 1627, p 15; CA 1627, p 18. For references to performances elsewhere before private patrons, see Chatsworth House: Bolton Abbey Manuscripts 61, f 4; 94, f102v; 97, f 104v; 98, ff 133, 136; 168, f 14v; Chatsworth House: MS 8 (H), ff 42 (55), 87v (99v), 122 (134). Several REED editors report finding no evidence (as yet) of visits by any Lincolnshire waits to their areas of current research interest: Elizabeth Baldwin, Cheshire; Anne Brannen, Cambridgeshire other than Cambridge University; Jane Cowling, Winchester and Winchester College; Audrey Douglas, Salisbury; Peter Greenfield, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, and Hertfordshire; Meradith McMunn, Scotland; and Alan Somerset, Shropshire and Warwick-

shire. I would like to express great thanks to those editors for taking time to respond to my queries. While realizing that negative evidence does not prove anything, the absence of payments does tend to support the impression that the Lincolnshire waits were regional performers. The one exception is the earl of Lincoln's players (whether they were actors or musicians is not always clear), who show up in Bristol, Cheshire, and Ipswich, among other places.

70 Nelson, *Cambridge*, vol 2, 738, 740–1; Bridge, 'Town Waits and Their Tunes', 63–92.

71 Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 108.

72 LA: Boston Borough 2/A/1/2, Council Minute Book, f 180; 2/A/1/2, f 146.

73 Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 104.