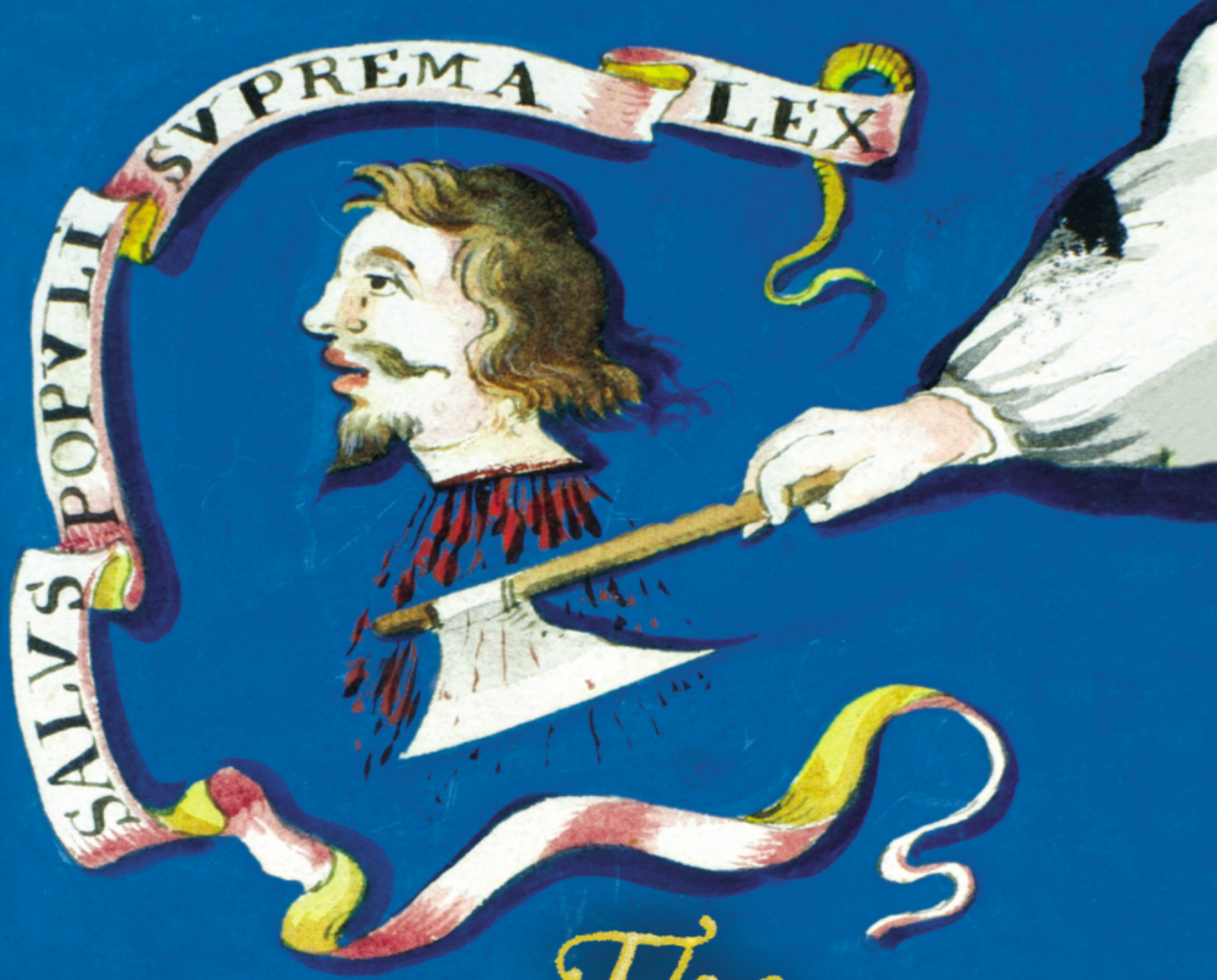


ADRIAN
TINNISWOOD



The
Rainborowes

Pirates, Puritans and a
Family's Quest for the Promised Land

Contents

Cover

About the Book

About the Author

Also by Adrian Tinniswood

List of Illustrations

Map of the British Isles

Map of Massachusetts

Family Tree

A Note on Names

Dedication

Title Page

Preface: Their Earthly Canaan

1. Between Worlds and Worlds
2. That Proud City
3. Whom Shall We Send?
4. Such An Enemy We Have
5. From Afric Shore
6. In Freedom Equal
7. Safe Towards Canaan
8. Better Thou Belong
9. Dispersed in Foreign Lands
10. Hard Liberty
11. They On the Trading Flood
12. The Brandished Sword of God
13. War Then, War
14. And Get Themselves a Name

15. They Fierce Were Coming
16. This Avenging Sword
17. By Battery, Scale, and Mine
18. The Wasteful Deep
19. My Sect Thou Seest
20. Of Rebel Angels
21. War In Heaven and Battle Proud
22. The Great Consult Began
23. Disobedience
24. In Mutiny
25. The Rebel King
26. The Dire Event
27. Loud Lament and Furious Rage
28. My Other Self
29. Their Solitary Way
30. A Land and Times Obscure

Notes

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

Bibliography

Index

Copyright

About the Book

The Rainborowes bridges two generations and two worlds as it carries the reader back and forth across the Atlantic, weaving together the lives of different members of the Rainborowe clan as they struggle to forge a better life for themselves and a better future for humankind in the New World and in the Old, as colonists, entrepreneurs and idealists. The narrative unfolds between 1630 and 1660 – a time which shattered England and shaped America – and follows the fortunes of William Rainborowe, a prominent merchant-mariner and shipmaster, and his equally formidable sons and daughters. The reader comes to understand not only the lives and loves of a single family, but the dreams of an entire culture – confused and chaotic, catching hold of hope and losing its grip on old certainties. *The Rainborowes* explains America and mourns England's failed revolution. It spans oceans and ideologies and encompasses personal tragedies and triumphs, the death of kings and the birth of nations.

Using rare printed material from the period and unpublished manuscripts from collections in Britain and America *The Rainborowes* recreates, more vividly than ever before, day-to-day life on both sides of the Atlantic during one of the most tumultuous periods in Western history. In their efforts to build a paradise on earth, the Rainborowes and their friends encounter pirates and witches, prophets and princes, Moslem militants and Mohican Indians. They build new societies. They are ordinary men and women, and they do an extraordinary thing.

They change the world.

About the Author

Adrian Tinniswood is the author of twelve books of social and architectural history including *His Invention So Fertile*, his acclaimed biography of Sir Christopher Wren and The Verneys, which was shortlisted for the 2007 Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction.

By the same author

Historic Houses of the National Trust

Country Houses from the Air

Life in the English Country Cottage

Visions of Power: Ambition and Architecture

The Polite Tourist: A History of Country House Visiting

The Arts & Crafts House

The Art Deco House

His Invention So Fertile: A Life of Christopher Wren

*By Permission of Heaven: The Story of the Great Fire of
London*

*The Verneys: A True Story of Love, War and Madness in
Seventeenth-Century England*

*Pirates of Barbary: Corsairs, Conquests and Captivity in the
Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean*

List of Illustrations

St Katharine by the Tower and Wapping, seen from the south bank of the Thames.

An early view of Sallee from the west. (© Courtesy of the National Library of Israel, Shapell Family Digitization Project and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Geography - Historic Cities Research Project)

William Rainborowe senior's fleet stationed at the mouth of the Bou Regreg.

William Rainborowe senior's last command: the *Sovereign of the Seas*. (© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK)

Travel between England and Massachusetts took anything between five weeks and five months. (© Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto)

Several dozen Puritan settlements sprang up around Boston Harbour in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. (© Getty Images)

John Winthrop, the authoritarian governor of Massachusetts and the second husband of Martha Rainborowe. (© Peter Newark American Pictures/The Bridgeman Art Library)

The Irish rising of 1641 spawned a new genre of hate literature. (© Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

Stephen Winthrop, husband of Judith Rainborowe and 'a great man for soul liberty'. (Courtesy of Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Harvard University Portrait Collection, Gift of Robert Winthrop, representing the Winthrop family, to Harvard University, 1964, H606; Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College)

Thomas Rainborowe: 'a joy to the best, and a terror to the worst of men'. (© Thomas Rainsborough (engraving), English School, (17th century)/Private Collection/The Stapleton Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library)

The signature of Thomas Rainborowe.

Laying siege to a town. (© Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

Hugh Peter, one-time minister of Salem and the Puritan that English royalists loved to hate. (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

Sir Thomas Fairfax chairs a meeting of the Army Council, 1647. (©The British Library Board/G.3861)

The deaths by firing squad of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle after the fall of Colchester in August 1648. (© British Library, London, UK/The Bridgeman Art Library)

The Glorious day of the Saints' Appearance, the sermon preached at Thomas Rainborowe's funeral by his old chaplain, Thomas Brooks. (©The British Library Board/E.474(7))

Major William Rainborowe's battle standard, depicting the severed head of Charles I. (Reproduced by kind

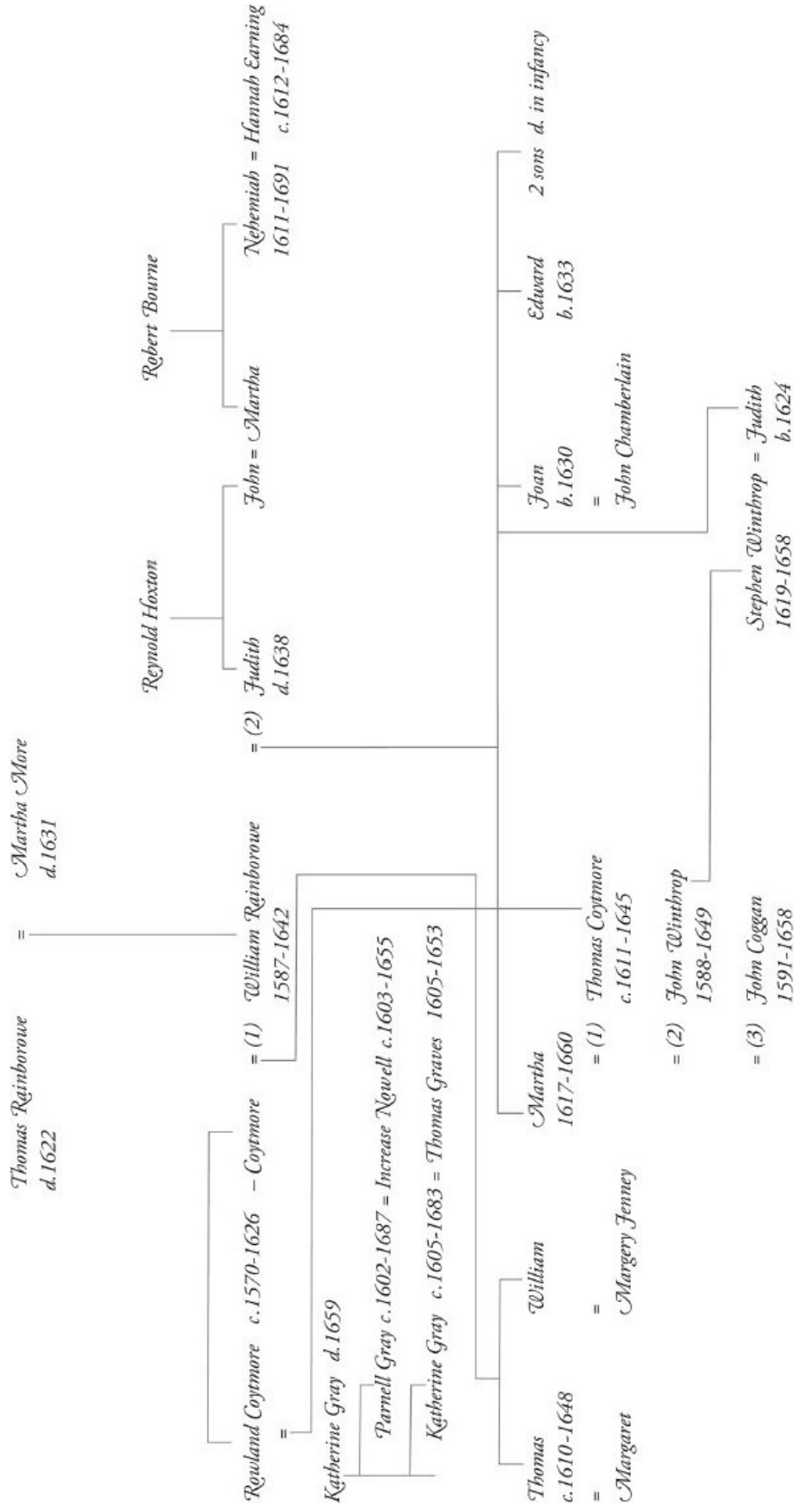
permission of the Trustees of Dr Williams's Library,
London)

The 'damnable and diabolical opinions, their detestable lives
and actions' of the Ranters fascinated Commonwealth
England and proved the ruin of Major Rainborowe. (©The
British Library Board/E.618.(8))

THE BRITISH ISLES







A Note on Names

I've encountered more than a dozen spellings of 'Rainborowe' - everything from 'Rainbow' to 'Rainsborough' to 'Raynesburrow'. I have settled on 'Rainborowe' because this is how the Rainborowes always spelled their name. It seems presumptuous to correct them.

For my wife

The Rainborowes

Pirates, Puritans and a Family's Quest for
the Promised Land

Adrian Tinniswood



Jonathan Cape
London

Two worlds.
One dream.
A new England.

Preface

Their Earthly Canaan

It started, as these things often do, with a couple of lines in someone else's book.

I was leafing through an old edition of John Winthrop's journal of the beginnings of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, when I came across this entry from 1645, three years into the English Civil War:

Mr Israel Stoughton, one of the magistrates, having been in England about merchandise, and returned with good advantage, went for England again the last winter, with divers other of our best military men, and entered into the Parliament's service. Mr Stoughton was made lieutenant colonel to Colonel Rainsborow, Mr Nehemiah Bourne, a ship carpenter, was major of his regiment, and Mr John Leverett, son of one of the elders of the church of Boston, a captain in a foot company.

I already knew a little about the Rainborowe family. The father, William Rainborowe, was a powerful figure in English naval circles in the 1630s, an adviser to Charles I and the leader of a spectacular raid to free captives from a Moroccan pirate base in 1637. His eldest son Thomas, the 'Colonel Rainsborow' in Winthrop's journal, was well known to students of the English Civil War as a brilliant siege-commander on the Parliamentary side, and a man of advanced political views. His passionate speech in favour of universal male suffrage – 'I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as [much as] the greatest he' – is frequently quoted as a landmark in English political history. But why should a bunch of New Englanders, a merchant, a shipwright and the son of a church elder, travel

3,000 miles to fight for Thomas Rainborowe? Was the English Revolution of the 1640s nourished by radicalised Americans?

That chance encounter with Governor Winthrop's journal led back and forth across the Atlantic, as I tried to track the lives of the Rainborowes and their clan. They drifted in and out of history, sometimes standing right at the heart of things, sometimes hovering in the shadows. I discovered that when Winthrop made that entry in his journal, one of the Rainborowe girls was living in his house, the wife of his own son Stephen; that in 1647 John Winthrop himself would marry another Rainborowe girl; that so many members of the Rainborowes' extended family emigrated to Massachusetts from their Thames-side homes in Wapping, that the place where they settled in Charlestown was named Wapping Street. All enthusiastic Puritans, the Rainborowes belonged to the first generation of New England settlers. They helped to build the city on a hill.

And then they built it all over again in the land of their birth, seizing the freedoms that were being held out to Puritans in the old England of the 1640s. The Rainborowe clan epitomises an unfamiliar side of early colonial life: the unsettled nature of settlement, the willingness of so many New Englanders to leave their brave new world in search of something better.

As I delved into the complex web of relationships which defined the Rainborowes and their friends and relations, watching it stretch from Salem and Charlestown to the battlefields of the English Civil War and beyond, to the deserts of North Africa and the islands of the Mediterranean, it became obvious that the middle decades of the seventeenth century are perceived very differently on each side of the Atlantic. In England, the period is dominated by the violent struggle for power between King Charles I and his Parliament. Even now, 370 years later, mention the English Civil War and most Brits will declare an allegiance.

Everyone is a Cavalier or a Roundhead, wrong but romantic or right but repulsive. Everyone still takes sides in the English Revolution.

America, on the other hand, is not quite sure what to *do* with the seventeenth century. Once the Pilgrims have landed and the remnants of the first Thanksgiving have been cleared away, colonial history fast-forwards to the Sons of Liberty and the Boston Tea Party, intent on the glorious cause of forging a nation, a little uncomfortable at the repression and intolerance which shaped and informed the New England way (unlike old England, where distance lends enchantment and historic repression and intolerance are celebrated as part of life's rich pageant).

That's a travesty, of course, and it neglects the insightful research on early colonial America and the Atlantic world which has been carried out by historians on both sides of the Atlantic in the past ten years or so. But the sense persists that for America, the seventeenth century was a prelude, while for England it was a defining moment.

And this masks a different truth. In both Massachusetts and England the period 1630 to 1660 was a quest for identity, a time when both communities sought to define the nature of government, the nature of representation and – most importantly of all – the rights of the individual in relation to the state. No matter that the journey would last for centuries. This is where it began.

The Rainborowes witnessed these events. Some of them played leading roles. If things had turned out differently, they might have lived out lives indistinguishable from those of thousands of hard-working, God-fearing entrepreneurs and artisans who made their homes by the Thames in seventeenth-century London. Just another English sea-captain and his wife, with a gaggle of children and a tribe of like-minded relatives.

But something in the Rainborowes' make-up set them apart, turned them into adventurers, made them pirate-

hunters and revolutionaries, visionaries and pioneers. The Thames was not wide enough, the London sky was not big enough, England was not good enough for them. So the Rainborowes went in search of the promised land. They built new societies. They were ordinary men and women, and they did an extraordinary thing.

In their own small way, they changed the world.

1

Between Worlds and Worlds

ELEANOR ROE WATCHED from the deck of the *Sampson* as four sleek war-galleys slipped through the narrow entrance to the harbour and rowed out to meet them. They flew the distinctive red and white colours of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, and that should have reassured Lady Roe. From their base on the tiny Mediterranean island of Malta the Knights of St John waged a crusade against Islam, attacking Muslim shipping, raiding villages along the North African coast, enslaving the Turk wherever they found him. In theory, as defenders of the faith they protected all Christians whose business took them into the dangerous waters of the eastern Mediterranean.

In theory.

It was ten o'clock on the morning of 8 August 1628. The *Sampson* was making its slow way home to London from the Levant with a cargo of silks and wool and a passenger list which included Lady Roe and her husband, Sir Thomas, who had just served a grim six and a half years as English ambassador at Istanbul. The ship had left the Ottoman capital on 1 June and, after putting in at Smyrna for a month, she was now bound for the Tuscan port of Livorno, where the Roes and their household planned to continue their homeward journey overland while the *Sampson* and its valuable cargo - 'goods to the value of half a million',

according to Venetian intelligence sources – sailed on to England.¹

On this particular morning the *Sampson* found herself becalmed a few miles off the coast of Malta. The sea was ‘as smooth as glass’, recalled Sir Thomas later; ‘not a breath of wind’.² It must have been with some trepidation that the Roes watched the four Maltese galleys take formation and advance towards their ship; the more so when they were near enough for the couple to make out that in addition to their complements of oarsmen the galleys were crowded with hundreds of armed men.

Shortly after midday, without any warning, the leading galley opened fire. It was a ranging shot from a cannon mounted on a fighting platform in its prow, and it fell short. The galley edged closer and fired another, which almost reached the English ship. A third shot from one of the other galleys went high, whizzing over the Roes’ heads and passing between the *Sampson*’s masts. Then the Knights of Malta stopped and waited.

If they expected the Englishmen to strike their colours and surrender, they had made a big mistake. The *Sampson* was a large ship of 500 tons, and she was well armed for a merchantman, with thirty-two iron guns. Six at least were culverins, heavy cannon capable of throwing a 40 lb ball more than a quarter of a mile.

But the *Sampson*’s most potent weapon was its master, the London merchant-mariner William Rainborowe. Forty-one years old and with more than a decade of experience in these waters, Captain Rainborowe had fought off pirate attacks before.³ And he had a lot to lose if he yielded to the Knights of St John – not only the Levant Company’s vast and vastly valuable cargo which, because he had been trading with the Turks, the Knights would consider fair game; but also his ship. And in a very real sense it *was* his ship; he was co-owner of the *Sampson* as well as her master.

There was a standard procedure to follow when you were facing an attack at sea. If you were carrying bales of cloth, as the *Sampson* was, you dragged them out and positioned them so they would absorb the impact of the enemy's shot and take the lethal splinters of wood which flew around the deck like shrapnel. Rope netting was suspended above the deck to entangle boarders; canvas drabblers were laced to the bottoms of the sails to give extra speed when the ship was manoeuvring or, in the *Sampson's* case, if the wind got up and Rainborowe was able to manoeuvre her. Small arms and swords were distributed among the crew and handed to any passengers who cared to join in. Cannon were lashed into place, and gunners organised everything that was needed to use them: powder measures and ladles and rammers and sponges, baskets to carry the shot to each gun, barrels to carry the powder, wedges to adjust the elevation of the guns, fuses to fire them.

Captain Rainborowe ordered this done as soon as he realised that the galleys were making for his becalmed vessel. Their appearance, recalled Roe, was enough for him 'to fit sails and selves for fight, not knowing their purpose'.⁴ So he was ready for them. After their final ranging shot he ordered his gunners to return fire. A cannonball from one of the *Sampson's* heavy guns grazed their captain general's starboard bow; and the fight began.

The Maltese galleys – all painted a bright red except for the captain general's, which was a sinister black – lined up facing the *Sampson's* starboard side. Mediterranean war-galleys had their heavy armament mounted in the prow, usually with wooden fighting platforms above where members of the fighting crew stood at swivel-mounted anti-personnel guns. They thus presented the smallest possible targets to the *Sampson's* guns, while the merchantman's broadside presented a sitting target.

The captain general's galley had a demy-cannon, two demy-culverins and five smaller cannon mounted in the

prow, and when they were loaded and ready she rowed up to within 150 or 200 yards of the *Sampson* and blasted away at her with all eight pieces at once. Then she fell back and another galley took her place, turn and turn about. In all the smoke and confusion it was hard for the Knights' gunners to see what impact their salvos were having, so each vessel kept a man hanging out on the end of one of their oars to observe where their shots fell.

For three hours Captain Rainborowe exchanged fire with the Knights, taking hits and giving them. A passenger was killed when a ball from a demy-cannon smashed through the cabins next to the *Sampson's* main mast. A shot went through the forecastle and into the 'furnace', where the cooking was done, and hurt two men, while another hit in the same area killed two sheep, and two more went through the great cabin and killed a parrot, perhaps William Rainborowe's pet.

Eleanor Roe remained remarkably composed throughout. According to her husband she sat on the deck among the guns and watched the action, except every now and then when that action came a little too close for comfort and she was forced to retreat to the other side of the ship. 'She showed no fear nor passion', said Sir Thomas proudly.⁵ Great shot fell around her and she remained unmoved. Only once, when her husband came to see how she was faring and he was knocked to the deck by a falling timber, did she show any emotion; and even then 'when I rose, and had no harm but pain, she said the chance of the day was past' and the bullet that had Sir Thomas's name on it had missed him.⁶

In mid-afternoon a gentle breeze got up, enough for Rainborowe to take the *Sampson* round so that she presented a smaller target to the Maltese galleys, and could bring her stern guns into play. Still the battle raged on, until around five o'clock, when the Knights decided they would board the *Sampson* or sink her. All four galleys came up

abreast until they were within pistol-shot. Their men crowded on deck with swords drawn and trumpets sounding, and called on Rainborowe to lower his topsail in surrender. His response was to invite the Knights to come aboard if they dared, and he ordered one of his crew to beat the point of war on his drum from the poop deck. The galleys came on until they were only yards away from the *Sampson*, pouring shot into it all the time, but Rainborowe held his nerve and held his fire.

It wasn't until they were almost under the ship that he gave the order. 'And then', said Sir Thomas, they 'poured in two culverin, and two demy-culverin, and one saker with a round shot and a case, that raked them fore and aft'.⁷ The captain general's black galley lost its poop, which was blown into the sea. Another shot from the *Sampson* snapped off his foremast at the deck and a third pierced his bow and came out of his stern, causing carnage among the banks of rowers. He fell back and played no further part in the battle. After another desultory bombardment the other galleys followed his example, and all four hoisted sail and retired to Valletta harbour to lick their wounds.

It was half-past six in the evening; the battle had lasted nearly seven hours, and the *Sampson* had received more than 120 hits in her hull, masts, yards and rigging. Her main mast was shot through, and she was hit in eight places between wind and water, some of the balls passing through nineteen inches of plank and timber and burying themselves in the bales of silk and wool. The Knights' final parting shot had been one of the most damaging, coming into the *Sampson's* gunroom and injuring three sailors. But casualties were miraculously light, with fatalities confined to that single passenger, the two sheep and the parrot.

Rainborowe got his battered ship to the tiny island of Lampedusa, a hundred miles west of Malta. His crew spent the next five days making running repairs to the sails, the masts and rigging and, of course, to the damaged and

leaking hull. 'The carpenter', said Roe, 'was forced to hang like a tortoise upon the water, and drive many nails under the sending of the sea, washing him over continually.'⁸ The *Sampson* eventually reached Livorno eighteen days after the attack. While they were there, reports came in that the captain general of the galleys had been killed in the battle (he hadn't), and that thirty-six Knights had died with him, and 264 slaves, oarsmen and soldiers.

Sir Thomas Roe praised the *Sampson's* captain as a man 'who behaved himself with brave courage and temper'; and, ever the diplomat, celebrated his miraculous deliverance from the Knights of St John with a letter to England about the need to maintain peaceful relations with all the nations of the Mediterranean, or 'our poor merchants suffer'.⁹ His wife Eleanor, when she reached her parents' home at Stanford in Leicestershire after an absence of seven years, commemorated 'God's great mercy, goodness and protection in a long and dangerous voyage' by donating a Book of Common Prayer and a carpet for the Communion table to her parish church.¹⁰

Captain William Rainborowe took his courage and his temper back to his wife in the close-knit little community by the Thames which was his home. His voyage was over. But the adventure had only just begun.

2

That Proud City

STAND WITH YOUR back to the Tower of London, so you have the brown waters of the Thames to your right. You're at the eastern edge of the City of London. The shadow of Tower Bridge flicks out across the cars as they flash by. The curving glass bubble of City Hall gleams on the opposite bank and the corporate high-rises of Canary Wharf puncture the distant skyline.

Now walk east, following the Thames Path past the ugly bronze and concrete hotel complex in St Katharine Docks, and in ten minutes you'll find yourself on Wapping High Street, zigzagging in and out between canyons of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century warehouses, reinvented as fashionable riverside apartment buildings. To the north is Whitechapel, where tour companies vie with each other to offer the most ghoulish Jack the Ripper walk. To the south, the occasional container barge chugs past, weaving its purposeful way through the armada of sightseeing cruisers which waddle up and down between the Houses of Parliament and Greenwich.

Now retrace your steps and take that journey again. Your starting point is the same place, but a different time. Say it is early November 1628, when William Rainborowe and the *Sampson* reached home after their bloody encounter with the Knights of Malta. The only tall buildings for miles around

are the White Tower, popularly (and wrongly) said to have been built by Julius Caesar; and the medieval St Paul's Cathedral, whose massive outline had been more massive still until 1561, when its spire was struck by lightning. William Rainborowe's London is a low-rise city, with the exception of these two buildings – and the towers and steeples of 109 churches which cluster together so closely that they seem to fill the sky.

There is no Tower Bridge, of course. In William Rainborowe's day the only fixed crossing over the Thames for miles is the medieval London Bridge, a few hundred yards upriver. Its stone arches are built over with 200 shops and houses, and above the gatehouse on the south bank there is a cluster of thirty or so skulls and withered heads on pikes, a warning to the curious that treason against the state rarely ends well.

The Thames Path now runs through St Katharine's by the Tower, the densely packed neighbourhood immediately to the east of the Tower of London. This tiny suburb of around twenty-four acres is home to nearly 4,000 people – 'more in number than in some cities in England', according to John Stow's *The Survey of London* in 1603¹ – and they have come from all over England and Protestant Europe, drawn by the fact that St Katharine's lies just outside the jurisdiction of the City of London, so they can trade and work unhindered by the authorities and unencumbered by the restrictions imposed on artisans by the livery companies who control commerce and manufacture within the city walls. But there are also plenty of sailors and river-watermen here; and that means there are hundreds of lodging-house keepers and tavern-keepers and whores who offer their services to mariners and take their money.

Within a few hundred yards St Katharine's gives way to Wapping High Street, dismissed by Stow as a 'filthy strait passage, with alleys of small tenements, or cottages'.² Wapping is a comparatively new hamlet in 1628. For several

centuries it was the traditional place of execution for pirates, who were hanged by the low-water mark and left until three tides had washed over them as a warning to others. But towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign the gallows were moved upstream, and after that clusters of cottages and tenements sprang up to house the sailors, shipwrights, chandlers and victuallers who make their living from the port. No doubt there are plenty of small tenements and cottages, as Stow says, some of them scarcely more than one-room lean-to shacks; the fact that apprentice-boys could pull down four houses at Wapping during a riot in 1617 suggests a certain impermanence. But there are also some substantial houses with ten or twelve rooms, the homes of prosperous merchant-mariners. William Rainborowe owns several houses in one of the dozens of little alleys and courts which lead north off Wapping High Street, and this is where he lives.

The marshes of Shadwell, to the east of Wapping, have been drained in William's lifetime; and as a result this area is also developing into a sizeable community, with marine industries, smithies, roperies and wharves (thirty-two along a 400-yard stretch of waterfront by the mid-century). Next door to Shadwell is Ratcliffe, another Thames-side hamlet which is growing rapidly; 'of late years', says Stow, 'shipwrights, and (for the most part) other marine men, have built many large and strong houses for themselves, and smaller for sailors'.³ Ratcliffe is the first landfall downriver from London to have a decent road leading into the City; as such it is a popular embarkation point for travellers and mariners. William Rainborowe sometimes leaves his ship twenty miles downriver at Gravesend and travels the last leg of his journey by barge or lighter. When he does, Ratcliffe is where he will come ashore, if he can't persuade the barge to land him at one of the dozens of busy wharves in Wapping itself.

Spenser's 'silver-streaming Thames' is everything. It defines the landscape. It provides a living. It carries people away, and sometimes it brings them home again. It is a highway, the biggest and most reliable in England. And it is busy. 'Here for almost two miles', wrote a German visitor to Wapping in 1609, 'we saw an infinite number of ships on the river, gallant in their beauty and loftiness.'⁴ Above London Bridge there might be fifty or more vessels in sight at any one time: wherries and ferries and rowing boats, fishing skiffs and eel-ships, barges carrying everything from civic dignitaries to bales of hay. Below the bridge in the Pool of London there are all of these vessels; but this is the heart of the busiest port in the kingdom, and they are joined by a fleet of heavy two- and three-masted ocean-going craft, dozens of vessels riding at anchor in midstream, or working their way slowly down towards the lower reaches of the river, or tied up at the wharves while their cargos are loaded or unloaded. The clerks and comptrollers in the Custom House welcome and inspect and charge duty on goods from almost every part of the known world – pitch, tar and hemp from the Baltic to supply the naval dockyards, timber and tobacco from the plantations of Virginia, raw cotton and sugar from the Caribbean and spices from the Dutch East Indies. And every one of the vessels that ply their trade out of London need crew, they need ropes and sails and masts, they need victuals and munitions.

The extramural neighbourhoods of St Katharine's by the Tower, Wapping, Shadwell, Ratcliffe; Limehouse and Poplar a little further east; Rotherhithe on the south bank of the Thames; these riverside hamlets form a tight community of interests, with the making and fitting and supplying and sailing of ships at its core. Between them, they house 80 per cent of London's population of seamen, watermen and fishermen, and 86 per cent of the capital's shipmasters.⁵ Small though it is, Wapping is home to more than 370 mariners, Ratcliffe to over a thousand. And this world,