

Hende, John

(d. 1418)

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Hende, John (d. 1418), royal financier and mayor of London, is of unknown origins, but by 1368 he was active in the drapery trade and had made the first of three prudent marriages. His first wife, Isabella, was the daughter of John Southcote; her mother, Margaret St Edmund, came from a family of rich drapers with city property. Hende may have been Southcote's apprentice. His marriage settlement in 1368 endowed him with a shop and solar in Candlewick Street, which he had previously rented from the Southcotes. In the 1370s he may have been finishing cloth and he had links with the Lucchese in London. Hende's role in his livery is obscure; early drapers' records are fragmentary. His unsuccessful attempt in 1384 to secure the future site of the Old Common Hall in St Swithin's Lane may have been on behalf of his first wife's family, to whom he remained close for the rest of his life, rather than the livery.

An expanding network of rich clients marked his increasing success in the next decades; Hende bought real property and acted as banker as well as draper. Traces of his efficient business methods survive in a cancelled bond with John, Lord Cobham (d. 1408), in 1393, on security of plate. By 1392–4 Hende dominated the supply of cloth to Richard II's wardrobe. His sales of scarlet, long cloth dyed in grain, russet, and blanket, amounted to nearly £4150 in these years, more even than the value of the silks sold by his only near competitor, the mercer Richard Whittington (d. 1423). Hende continued to supply cloth on a smaller scale to Henry IV and Henry V, but by this time his real interests lay outside drapery.

Hende's rise in city government kept pace with his success as a draper. He served as a commissioner for the first time in 1369, as alderman of Candlewick ward in 1379, 1381, and 1384–92 and of Walbrook from 1394–1409. He was sheriff in 1381–2, during the mayoralty of the populist draper, John Northampton, and acquiesced in Northampton's condemnation in 1385. In October 1391 Hende was elected mayor. Conflict with Richard II over the city's refusal to lend money to the crown came to a head in May 1392. Richard moved the centres of government to York, and the city oligarchy was summoned to Nottingham before the king and council. On 25 June Hende and the sheriffs were stripped of office and imprisoned, Hende in Windsor Castle. The prisoners appeared before a commission of inquiry headed by the dukes of York and Gloucester at Aylesbury on 10 July, and at Eton eight days later, with the mayor and sheriffs of 1389–90. On 22 July the city was fined and lost its liberties, though the prisoners were freed on bail. The city conciliated Richard by a lavish civic reception and gifts of money and jewels. On 21 September Hende and the others were pardoned and the city liberties were provisionally restored on payment of a corporate fine of £10,000. It was not until 1397 that the liberties were fully confirmed. It is against this background that Hende's vast sales on credit to the royal wardrobe took place. Nearly £4350 for cloth supplied to Richard II's wardrobe remained unpaid until 1403 and 1404.

During Henry IV's reign Hende became the leading royal financier. Between 1402 and his death in 1418, he lent a total of £14,514 to the crown. As security he controlled the London wool customs between 1403–10; his fellow collector in 1407–10 was Richard Whittington, another major crown financier. Unlike Whittington, Hende does not seem to have exported wool. His only known agent was based in Bordeaux, but could have been a partner in a syndicate. He lent smaller but still substantial sums to Henry V. In 1426 his executors accepted partial repayment and returned crown jewels pawned to Hende.

Hende's second wife, by 1380, was Katherine, widow of Thomas Baynard, an Essex landowner; Katherine held a life interest in the inheritance of her son, the lawyer and MP, Richard Baynard. By 1407 Hende had married as his third wife, Elizabeth, perhaps daughter of Sir John Norbury. Besides her jointure, Elizabeth enjoyed in her own right city properties settled on her by Sir Adam Francis and a manor and lands in Essex. By 1419 she was the wife of Ralph Boteler, Lord Sudeley. The two sons of the third marriage were Hende's only surviving children. Both were called John and both were later sheriffs of Essex. At his death on 2 August 1418, besides property in London, Hende held twelve manors, and other lands, advowsons, and reversions in Essex and Kent. He had acquired the first of his eight Essex manors, Mascallsbury in White Roding, as early as 1370. In 1381 he began the disputed purchase of his chief manor, Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall, securing title in 1383 and 1385. Geoffrey Chaucer and Ralph Strode, no doubt the common serjeant of the city and the 'philosophical Strode' (*Troilus and Cressida*) of the dedication of Chaucer's *Troilus*, acted as mainpernors over Bradwell, a possible indication that Hende had literary tastes. Hende consolidated his Essex holdings through his second marriage. Hende bought three further manors in Essex and his four in Kent from the estate of Maud de Vere, countess of Oxford. In 1412 the value of his own lands, excluding his wife's, was declared at approximately £200 p.a., in 1418 at over £250 p.a., both no doubt underestimates. Besides his real property, Hende left his widow and sons £4000 in cash, to be recovered from his debtors, plate, and jewels; he left a further sum of approximately £420 in pious bequests, to his *familia* and executors.

Hende's marble armorial monument in Holy Trinity Church, Bradwell, was lost before 1768, but fragments of armorial glass survive. According to John Stow, Hende rebuilt St Swithin's, the drapers' church, where his arms could be seen in glass. The stained glass arms at Drapers' Hall are modern. Thomas Middleton included Hende as one of the nine drapers' worthies in the civic pageant, *The Sun in Aries' Worlds*, written to honour the new draper mayor in 1621.

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Wealth at Death

approx. £4420 in cash bequests (incl. debts to be recovered); jewels and plate; real property worth (declared) £37 6s. 8d. (London), £41 (Kent), and £172 17s. 10d. (Essex), totalling £251 10s. 6d. p.a., incl. land held in right of third wife: will, TNA: PRO, PROB 11/28, sig. 42; inquisition post mortem