

THE HOWARD INTEREST IN SUSSEX ELECTIONS 1529 to 1558

by R. J. W. Swales

For most of the sixteenth century the nobility were the dominant force in Sussex local politics. An anonymous writer even suggested in 1583 that some of the five noble families then living in Sussex should be moved into counties 'whear they ar not native nor landed and should haue lesse authoritie'.¹ In 1529 there were six magnates with substantial estates in Sussex and between 1525 and 1547 they owned at least 146 manors there; over 200 manors if one includes the estates of noblemen who entered the county or were ennobled between those dates. This rough total of 200 manors owned by noblemen in one shire was surpassed only in Yorkshire. And in Sussex it is noteworthy that those families with property in the county were all at some-time resident there.² For some years, however, in the 1530s and 1540s the rising courtiers and government officials from the families of Gage, Sackville and Browne partially eclipsed the nobility's influence which was undermined by several pressures. In the late 1520s the Percy Earls of Northumberland surrendered much of their Sussex property in an exchange with the Crown. George, Lord Abergavenny, concentrated his interests in Kent until his death in 1535, after which the family endured a lengthy minority. The foolish assault by Lord Dacre of the South upon the tenants of Nicholas Pelham led to his execution in 1541 and the Dacre estates were not restored until 1558. William, Earl of Arundel (d. 1544) was apparently a political nonentity 'of little wit and less experience.'³ Thomas, Lord de La Warr suffered the disability of adherence to the old religion without the compensation of relatives close to the king or a role in government. Both the de La Warr and Arundel families reasserted themselves under Edward VI and Mary and the entry of the Brownes as Lords Montagu added further to the nobility's role in local politics in the middle years of the century. Prominent among the noble landowners in Sussex throughout the period, the Howards stood a little aloof from local politics in which they were principally engaged in East Anglia. But the influence which they exercised for long periods between 1529 and 1558 over the elections to the parliamentary boroughs of Bramber, Horsham, Lewes and Shoreham gave them a political role in the county and a larger share of the parliamentary patronage there than any other Sussex figure.

The baronies of Bramber and Lewes formed the core of the Howard estates. The former comprised properties in the boroughs of Bramber, Horsham and Shoreham and seven manors with adjacent parks; the latter included property in the borough of Lewes and about eleven manors. In addition the Howards owned iron works in Sheffield and the Forests of Worth and

¹ Public Record Office (hereafter P.R.O.), SP, 12/165/22. For dating the document to 1583 see SP 12/164 pp. 122, 124.

² Helen Miller, *The early Tudor peerage 1485-1547*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London (1950), Additional Appendix.

³ *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, Brewer, Gairdner, and Brodie, eds., (hereafter LP Hen. VIII), xiii (ii), 732.

St. Leonard.¹ Recently it has been suggested that the family's Sussex property, as well as their lands elsewhere, formed a liberty which no royal official could enter. The Duke's bailiffs had the right to return all writs and precepts whether from the Crown or from the judges and commissions, the Duke might keep all fines imposed in any court in the kingdom upon men residing in the liberty and might enjoy all the goods and chattels of felons, fugitives and outlaws.² There can be no doubt that such privileges were granted to the third Mowbray duke in 1468 and that this charter was confirmed for the fourth Howard duke in 1559, but there is no evidence that the Howard estates formed a liberty between those dates. Despite the frequent leasing and resale of Howard property no reference to the ducal liberty has been found before 1559. The parliamentary returns from boroughs subject to Howard influence have no special character.³

The boroughs of Bramber, Shoreham and Horsham were easily dominated by the local lord. Bramber was a very small, unincorporated township governed by a constable chosen annually at the court leet. After John Howard's attainder in 1486, his property came to the de La Warrs but it reverted to the Howards in 1495 and the third Howard duke consolidated his holdings nearby through an exchange with the King in 1540.⁴ A flourishing port in the thirteenth century, Shoreham had declined by the early sixteenth into a community not above petitioning for relief from the subsidy. Like Bramber it had been out of the Howards' hands from 1486 to 1495 but thereafter it was they who doubtless influenced the annual appointment of the two high constables.⁵ Horsham, with a population of five or six hundred in the 1520s, was a larger town but still firmly under Howard influence. One mile to the southeast lay the residence of the family in Sussex. In 1547 Chesworth House was described as:

“a maner and a goodly pryncely howse with a goodly mott and a very grett pond and many fayre stwes or small ponds within the compass of the gardyn about the place and a fayre parke adioynnyng to the same by estymacon about a myle and a half about of very good lond and a gret pond new made therein.”

The poet Earl of Surrey may well have been born where Catherine Howard spent her youth under the eye of the dowager Duchess Agnes.⁶ It was from Horsham and its neighbourhood that the estate officials of Howard property came in the middle years of the century. Henry Voyce, keeper and understeward of Chesworth House and receiver of the baronies of Bramber and Lewes, was a burgess of Horsham, as was Thomas Bradbridge, the bailiff of Bramber; Edward Michell, steward of Lewes barony, and John Allen, steward of Meeching, were also Horsham men. The most distinguished of the Howards' servants in Sussex, John Caryll, lived nearby: and it was no great distance to Clayton where Thomas Colstock, bailiff of the barony

¹ The descendents of the manors in the barony of Bramber are set out in D. G. C. Elwes and E. J. Robinson, *Castles and mansions of western Sussex* (1879). For accounts of the barony of Lewes see Victoria County History, Sussex, vol. vii, pp. 1-6; J. H. Cooper, 'The manor of Cuckfield,' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter S.A.C.) vol. 11 (1859), pp. 79-94. For manuscript sources see British Library (hereafter B.L.). Additional MS. 5701; PRO C142/69/192; SC 6 Hen. VIII, 3496, 6305; SC 6 Ed. VI 453-7; SC 6 Ph.M. 285, 286; SC 6 Eliz. 3354; L.R. 1/42 f. 401; E178/2274.

² Neville Williams, *Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk* (1964), pp. 63, 104-5; his view is accepted by A. Hassell Smith, *County and court: government and politics in Norfolk 1558-1603* (Oxford, 1974), p. 24.

³ The confirmation of Edward IV's charter in 1559 took no account of alterations in the estate.

⁴ Elwes and Robinson, op. cit., p. 48.

⁵ Burton Green, 'New Shoreham,' S.A.C., vol. 27 (1877), pp. 69-109, B.L. Additional MS. 5686 ff 78-9.

⁶ W. H. Albery, *A millenium of facts in the history of Horsham* (1947), pp. 39-43, 50, 60, in which is printed an important survey of 1611; J. C. K. Cornwall, 'English county towns in the 1520s,' *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 15 (1962), p. 60; P.R.O. E315/479 f. 19; S.P. 10/6 ff 5-10; D.N.B. *sub* Howard, Henry, Earl of Surrey; Lacey Baldwin Smith, *A Tudor tragedy* (1961), chap. 3 *passim*. References to Norfolk's presence in Horsham are rare; he seems to have spent Christmas there in 1522 and 1542, *LP Hen VIII* i(ii), 2772 (4); *State Papers Henry VIII*, v. p. 216.

of Lewes and crown receiver of Howard possessions under Edward VI, lived. Most of the burgesses of Horsham seem to have been Howard tenants.¹

By far the most important of the parliamentary boroughs where Howard influence was felt, Lewes had occupied a central place in the administration and the economy of Sussex for centuries. Situated on one of the most active rivers in the county and supplied by the downland, the Weald and the coast, this flourishing market had a population in the region of two thousand and doubtless prided itself on its self-governing character. The corporate identity of the town, the importance of the local Gage family, and the complexity of the descent of the barony of Lewes all probably played a part in limiting the influence of the Howards.² There is evidence that the third Duke was actively interested in the affairs of Lewes priory and of his own property near Lewes. His 'servant' Sir Edward Bray frequently sent reports of incidents on the coast. In April 1537 Norfolk himself viewed the condition of the Levels near the priory during a survey by the commissioners of sewers and it was doubtless at his suggestion that Bray and the prior travelled to Flanders from where they returned with two drainage experts. Certainly the Duke put the sewer commissioners in touch with some experienced men at Dover. Sir John Gage described him as

' a great lord within the level [who] toke the payn to cum vewe and se the same at the whiche tyme ther was assembled meny noble folke and other wise and well expert men bothe of knowledge of the see and lond.'³

Both in the later fifteenth century and the 1530s the dukes of Norfolk claimed that they could nominate members of parliament for the borough.⁴ Certainly the other interests in the barony, the earls of Derby, the lords Abergavenny and the descendants of the Everard family, were not apparently active at parliamentary elections. However, the adjacent borough of Southover not only maintained a separate government under its constable and burgesses but also claimed in 1553 'of old Antiquity and Custom out of time beyond the memory of man,' to nominate one of the two parliamentary burgesses from Lewes to each alternate parliament.⁵ The independence which such a declaration implied was hardly able to withstand very strong outside pressure.

The parliamentary patronage within the Howard interest was the largest in the county and was probably at least as considerable as the influence the family could wield in Norfolk elections. The difficult and puzzling relations between the Howards and Thomas Cromwell, the third Duke's attainder and the acquisition of the parliamentary interest first by Thomas Seymour, the Lord Admiral, and then by the Crown; the Duke's restoration and the conflicts over his lands; his death and the minority of his grandson and heir—all these political circumstances altered the nature of the influences playing upon these Sussex boroughs. Furthermore, the evidence about members is often fragmentary and confusing.

¹ P.R.O. SC 6 Edward VI 457; W. Comber, *Sussex genealogies (Horsham)*, pp. 27, 231; Sussex Record Society (hereafter S.R.S.) xiii, (1911) pp. 24, 336.

² V.C.H. Sussex, vii (19..) pp. 1-7; W. H. Godfrey (ed.) *The Book of John Rowe*, S.R.S., vol. 34 (1928), p. 120.

³ LP Hen VIII, iv (ii) 3277, 4162; x 1078; P.R.O. SP 1/24 f 59. The ascription of this last undated document to 1536 is doubtful since the 'Mr. Gifford' who assisted Bray was almost certainly George Gifford of Poyning, at that time surveying monasteries in the Midlands. He had moved to Buckinghamshire in the early 1530s, LP Hen VIII, x, 858, 916, 1166, 1191, 1215.

⁴ Sir Gerald Ryan and Lilian Redstone, *Timperley of Hintlesham* (1931), p. 12; B.L., Cotton Caligula B. vi, f. 373.

⁵ Barbican House Library, Lewes, Elliott Papers, G. 1, p. 1. The manor and borough of Southover, which had belonged first to Lewes priory and later to Thomas Cromwell, was granted to Anne of Cleves for life from January 20 1541. It was acquired by John Stempe of Lewes in September 1557; LP Hen VIII, xvi, g. 503 (32); CPRPM, iv, p. 198.

The third duke of Norfolk was never higher in the king's favour than at the time the writs were issued for the parliament of 1529. Several parliamentary writs are known to have been despatched by him, and when Thomas Cromwell was seeking a seat he was advised to use Norfolk as his intermediary with Henry, 'so that you wolde order yourself in the said Rowme according to suche instructions as the saide Duke of Norfolk shall gyue you from the king.'¹ One might expect to find the Howard interest exercised on the king's behalf if Edward Hall was right to aver that 'the moste parte of the commons were the kynoges servantes.'² But the Duke did not fill the Sussex boroughs with members of the household or administrative and legal figures; most of those returned were his own servants or clients. Shoreham elected in John Michell a man whose father had been understeward and whose uncle had been receiver of the barony of Lewes for the second Duke and who himself lived but one mile from Horsham. And his fellow member, John Covert, who lived seven miles north east of Horsham, seems to have been in the Duke's household. At Horsham itself both members were local men one of whom, Alfred Berwick, may still have been exercising the surveyorship of Reigate that he had held since at least 1514. Although the other member, Henry Hussey, cannot be directly linked with the Howards in 1529, his son was later to be one of their household. One of the Lewes members was a townsman, but Sir Edward Bray was a servant of Norfolk's. Only Bramber returned members not resident in Sussex.³

William Roper and Henry See shared accommodation at Lincoln's Inn and both men had personal interests in the coming parliament. The Roper family had a bill for the first session by which a five year old dispute occasioned by his father's will was to be settled in William Roper's interest. See was an active parliamentary lawyer: he represented the city of York in their dispute with the Earl of Rutland which was to be resolved by an Act of Parliament in 1536, and he is known to have drafted other private bills and worked on parliamentary committees. Their personal initiative most probably brought Roper and See into the Commons, though it is possible that they saw themselves as part of a circle of Sir Thomas More's relatives. Roper was not alone among More's sons-in-law: William Dauntsey and Giles Heron sat for Thetford, and John Rastell, his brother-in-law, sat for Dunheved.⁴ Exactly how Roper and See came to sit for Bramber is unknown but the relations between More and Norfolk were amicable at the time and the Duke later regretted the Chancellor's failure to acknowledge the royal supremacy.⁵ Despite the appearance of these outsiders at Bramber it is clear that Norfolk had not used the Sussex boroughs to return prominent royal servants to the parliament of 1529.

The absence of the returns makes it impossible to assess whether the king's request in 1536 that the same members should be elected as had sat in the Reformation parliament was observed in Sussex, but for the next parliament in 1539 there is evidence that Thomas Cromwell supervised some of the elections in Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex.⁶ From 1536 to 1539 Cromwell was him-

¹ BL., Cotton Cleopatra B iv, f 178, A. F. Hattersley, 'The real position of the Duke of Norfolk in 1529-30,' *History*, vol. 3, (1914), pp. 203-8; F. R. Grace, *Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Nottingham (1961), pp. 115-23.

² Edward Hall, *Chronicle* (1809), p. 767. Hall sat for Much Wenlock.

³ BL., Additional MS. 5701; LP Hen. VIII, iv (ii), 3277, where Norfolk sent a letter from Herefordshire to Wolsey by the bearer his 'servant' Sir Edward Bray in July 1529.

⁴ 27 Hen. VIII, c. 23, c. 32, c. 43; *Roper's Life of More*, edit., E. V. Hitchcock, Early English Text Society, orig. series 197 (1906), p. 71; LP Hen. VIII, viii, 856 (2); ix, 705; *Yorkshire Archaeological Society*, vol. 106 (1942), *passim*; cviii, (1945) pp. 4, 13.

⁵ The continuing relationship between the More and Norfolk circles may perhaps be illustrated by marriage alliances: Thomas Elrington, son of More's step-daughter, had become Sir Edward Bray's son-in-law by 1549; William Roper's daughter was married to Sir Edward's son by 1547.

⁶ LP Hen. VIII, xiv (i), 520, 573, 662.

self buying land in Sussex, notably within the barony of Lewes; one might see in this a reflection at the local level of the conflicts at court between him and Norfolk. However, the two men appear to have worked together closely and amicably on several occasions in these years not only on royal business but on more personal matters. Their joint purchase and division of the lands of Lewes priory in 1537, by which those in Sussex came to Cromwell and those in Norfolk to the duke, have left no hint of rancour in the record. By 1538 Cromwell had not only purchased over thirty manors and at least twelve rectories in the county but he had also established his son Gregory in Lewes as a landowner and justice of the peace.¹ At the time of preparations for the elections Norfolk was sent into the north of England to survey the coastal defences and a note, apparently from the Duke, survives among Cromwell's papers referring to his parliamentary patronage. Headed 'the name of such townes as in tymes past I coulde haue made burgeses of parliament of in the Shire of Sussex,' it names Horsham, Shoreham, Steyning, Lewes and Gatton 'where Syr Roger Copley dwelleth' and continues,

'as for Reigat I doubt whither any burgeses be theire or not. In all the Shires in my comission sauf Lancashire, I haue put such order that such shalbe chosen that I doubt not shall serue his highness according to his pleasyr, and in likewise I did in Norffolk and Suffolk before my last cumming thens.'

It is surprising that Norfolk should have named Steyning and not Bramber, and even more striking that he was ignorant of Reigate's status as a parliamentary borough. To include Gatton and Reigate in Sussex is perhaps, pardonable, if erroneous.² It rather looks as if this note was intended to inform Cromwell, or his agents, of boroughs into which men in the king's interest could be placed in view of Norfolk's absence from the centre of affairs. In most cases the outcome is unknown, but it is clear that Cromwell, through his confidant the Earl of Southampton, attempted to influence Gatton, as well as the county elections in Sussex and Surrey.³ Our information on the preparations for the elections made by Norfolk and the Earl of Southampton largely comes from the reports they made as commissioners for surveying the coasts. These and similar commissions covered a wide area of the country and may well have been one of the means by which Cromwell effectively influenced the returns to the parliament of 1539 in counties and boroughs.

The parliament of 1542 met under the shadow of Queen Catherine Howard's disgrace for she was arrested in November 1541 shortly before the elections. The dowager Duchess of Norfolk was accused of presumptive treason for having destroyed letters which might have furnished evidence of her grand-daughter's guilt, and Chesworth was officially locked up on 6 December by the solicitor-general. Duchess Agnes was found guilty at the end of the month and the Howard property in Sussex came into Crown hands.⁴ Whether these events prevented the Duke from influencing the elections must remain unknown in the absence of all but one parliamentary return, but he was granted at an unknown date, the farm of the Howard property retrospective to 1 Oct. 1541.⁵ The damaged and undated indenture for Bramber records the return of Sir John Clere and one Richard Wa—.⁶ Although described by an enemy as 'of covetous appetite and ungodly dispo-

¹ G. R. Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall,' *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 10 (1951), pp. 150-185; LP Hen. VIII, xi, 214, xii (ii) 1030, 1151 (2), 1154, 1159, g. 1311 (30); xiii (i), 1059, (ii) 201; xvi, g. 503 (32); P.R.O. SC 6 Hen. VIII, 3498.

² B.L. Cotton Caligula B vi f 373, misdated to 1536 in LP Hen. VIII, see LP Hen. VIII, x 816; xiv (i) 398. The double shrievalty for Sussex and Surrey presumably led those dealing with parliamentary returns to see the two counties as one.

³ LP Hen. VIII, xiv (i), 645.

⁴ L. B. Smith op. cit., chap. 8 *passim*; LP Hen. VIII, xvi, 1413; *Proceedings and ordinances of the privy council*, edit., Nicholas, vii, p. 279.

⁵ LP Hen. VIII (i), 1383 (104); PRO SC 6 Hen. VIII 3496.

⁶ PRO C 219 / 18 B m. 95.

sitions' Sir John was the leading member of a Norfolk family intimate with the Howards. The Duke had been overseer of his father's will. His younger brother, Thomas, was a friend of Surrey who in 1545 wrote a sonnet to the younger Clere's memory. Sir John had himself attended Norfolk at the reception of Anne of Cleves and in 1543 was to be one of a group around Surrey arrested for contravening Lent.¹ The name of Clere's fellow member cannot be recovered from the damaged indenture, but he may have been Richard Watkins of London and Somerset, prothonotary of the court of arches, collector of customs for Bristol and registrar of the Admiralty court.² Watkins' deputy at Bristol was to sit for Bramber in the last parliament of the reign and if Sir John Clere was already a naval captain, as we know him to have been in 1543, Watkins' Admiralty associations may have brought him to Norfolk's attention. Whether Watkins was the member or not, Clere's return suggests that Norfolk was exercising his customary patronage at Bramber.

A group which included some notable courtiers was returned for the Howard boroughs at the next elections in December 1544. At Horsham sat no less a figure than Sir Anthony Wingfield, who was not only vice-chamberlain and captain of the Guard, but also a very active privy councillor usually to be found sitting in parliament as one of the knights of the shire for Suffolk. Returned with him was Francis Knollys, master of the horse to Prince Edward, whose wife was a cousin of Princess Elizabeth and whose father had been a household figure for nearly forty years. Knollys was to introduce a private bill into parliament. The ambitious opportunist and skilful gentleman of the privy chamber, John Gates, was returned for Shoreham with his brother. Sir John Clere again found a seat at Bramber, this time with Watkins' deputy at the Bristol customs, John Gilmyne. But Gilmyne's connections stretched much further for he was joint keeper of Bristol Castle and serjeant of the Woodyard, while his wife had been the first lady-in-waiting to Anne of Cleves whose chamberlain was the leading Sussex gentleman Sir William Goring.³ Apart from Clere, none of these members was in Norfolk's close circle though he would obviously have been familiar with them all at court. In terms of the factions in the government in 1544 and 1545 Wingfield, Knollys and Gates might be associated with the Parr and Seymour groups rather than with Norfolk, but the Duke, especially in view of his recent service in command of the army in France, was still a central figure close to the king. It seems unlikely that anyone would have been nominated for these Sussex boroughs without his approval. Certainly by the 1540s, and perhaps in those parliaments in the 1530s for which no returns survive, the invasion of the Howard boroughs by outsiders was evident: not one of those returned in 1545 had more than marginal Sussex connections.

The grant of the larger share of the baronies of Bramber and Lewes to Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley, on 19 August 1547 reflected the fall of the Howards in the previous year. The Earl of Surrey was executed for treason, a fate avoided by his father only with the king's death on the day before the expected execution. Until the accession of Mary, Norfolk remained in the Tower. Seymour acquired most of the Howards' lands in Sussex and, as befitted a former master of the ordnance, he leased the iron works.⁴ His hand may be seen clearly in the elections

¹ R. J. W. Swales, *Local politics and the parliamentary representation of Sussex 1529-1558*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Bristol (1965) ii, pp. 94-97.

² I owe this information to Mr. Alasdair Hawkyard.

³ Swales *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 199-211, 228-32, 277-82, 497-501.

⁴ CPR Ed. VI (i), pp. 27, 29, 33; PRO SC 6 Ed. VI, 453 m. 64v. Seymour took a close interest in the iron works which were very active under his ownership and continued to be administered by Norfolk's former chaplain, the archdeacon of Lewes, PRO SP, 10/6 f 12; SP 46/124 f 41. See also M. S. Guiseppi, 'The accounts of the iron works at Sheffield and Worth 1546 to 1549,' *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 69 (1912), p. 279.

for the first parliament of the new reign, in which he had a strong personal interest. After Seymour's fall the Marquis of Dorset deposed that 'at the first Session of this parliament (Seymour) spake these words vnto me, my Lorde Clynton Beinge behinde my backe and hering the same. They speke, said the admyrall of a black parliament; by Godd's pretious soule, if it be thus used, I woll make this the blackest parliament that euer was in Englande.'¹ An uncle of the king, Seymour aspired to be governor of his person, and thereby to share authority with the Lord Protector. He showed Sir George Blagg a bill which he intended to introduce

to haue the kynge better ordered and not kept kloss that no man may se hym, and so entrid wythe sundre myslikynges of my Lord protector's prosedinges touchinge the bringinge vp of the kynge his maieste.²

Seymour's designs were presumably unknown in the autumn of 1547 when preparations were being made for the election and assembly of parliament: with his brother in the north campaigning against the Scots the Lord Admiral must have been free to exercise great influence. His personal adherents and men close to the king are to be found sitting for his Sussex boroughs.

From among his Wiltshire dependants the inept and irresponsible, if scholarly, Andrew Baynton was returned for Horsham and the corrupt under-treasurer of the Bristol mint, Sir William Sharrington, for Bramber. From the household and council of Catherine Parr came Anthony Bouchier, her principal auditor and one of the auditors of the remodelled court of augmentations, who sat for Shoreham with a man well known to Edward. William Fitzwilliam, an Irishman by birth, had been a familiar figure in Sussex as secretary to the Earl of Southampton. Afterwards principal gentleman in Prince Edward's privy chamber, he may well have become an associate of Seymour's when the Lord Admiral purchased Southampton's London residence. Other household men were John Vaughan, who may already have been married to the widow of a Wiltshire Knyvet, and Edward's tutor, Sir Anthony Cooke. The latter sat for Lewes, but it is not certain that Seymour was responsible for his return since the Lord Admiral's interest there was not extensive. Cooke's fellow member, Walter Mildmay, was Bouchier's brother-in-law, but he was also a general surveyor of the court of augmentations which was administering those Howard estates not in Seymour's hands.³ But the balance of probability is that their return was approved by Seymour. The indentures of the borough elections exhibit some interesting features. The names of Anthony Bouchier at Shoreham, Sir William Sharrington and John Fylde at Bramber and John Vaughan at Horsham are all entered over erasures, and all three indentures have the appearance of blank returns. That for Shoreham was originally headed Bramber and the burgesses who appear in the body of the return are still erroneously described as residing in that borough.⁴ Seymour may also have had a hand in the county election. If we may trust the names listed on the election indenture this county election excited more than usual interest. Alone among the surviving lists of county electors this group came from both the west and east of the county.⁵ Of the knights of the shire, Sir William Goring looks a likely Seymour candidate.

¹ P.R.O. SP 10/6 f 19v. There is some evidence of the pressure Seymour brought to bear upon the House of Lords. Clinton reported him as saying 'I do intend to pott a byll into the parlement hous whych shalbe bot resonabyll as I am sewar it shall apere to all indiffrent men, which I pray you grant me your consent unto and gett me as many of your frends in the hous as you can.' To the young Rutland he said 'he was glad that I shuld be of the house for that he trusted to have my voyce with him.' P.R.O. SP 10 / 6 ff. 29, 30.

² P.R.O. SP 10 / 6 f 47.

³ Swales op. cit. (ii), pp. 24-29, 42-46, 100-103, 154-64, 299-304, 413-21, 471-74. A file of Bouchier's correspondence including details of Seymour's sons and estate officials is in P.R.O. E 163/12/17.

⁴ P.R.O. C 219/19 m. 106, m. 107, m. 108.

⁵ The indentures have survived for seven of the county elections from 1529 to 1558: in Sept. 1547 thirty-nine persons signed the indenture. Eighteen persons signed the only other complete indenture; that for Oct. 1554. P.R.O. C 219/19 m. 105, /20 m. 126, /21 m. 150, / 22 m. 82, /23 m. 125, /24 m. 157, /25 m. 114.

His wife—or possibly his daughter—was one of Catherine Parr's gentle-women in 1547, while he was himself a noted court figure as former chamberlain to Anne of Cleves and a gentleman of the privy chamber. Furthermore it was to him that the keepership of Howard property had been granted before Thomas Seymour's entry into the lands.¹ Whether or not he owed his return to Seymour he was probably among the Lord Admiral's adherents.

Thomas Seymour's tenure of the Howard estates abruptly ended with his trial and execution for treason in the spring of 1549. Of the Sussex members of parliament only Sharrington was closely implicated in his schemes and he avoided total disgrace by confessing all he knew of his patron's reckless adventures. He, Vaughan and Mildmay were to be associated with the future Duke of Northumberland. Before the final session of the parliament in 1552 by-elections were held in some of the boroughs in Sussex.² Bouchier died in 1551, Sharrington lost his seat on attainder, the unknown John Fylde was replaced and John Vaughan became a knight of the shire for Surrey after the last session had begun, although his seat at Horsham apparently remained vacant. At Bramber Lord Chidioc Paulet and Richard Bunny replaced Sharrington and Fylde. Both were receivers for the court of augmentations which was once more administering the Howard interest in the borough. One of the principal Hampshire gentlemen and the third son of the Marquis of Winchester, Paulet had enjoyed some military distinction at the end of Henry's reign, but his Catholic views may have discouraged him from sitting in the second Edwardian parliament. Bunny had received his post in augmentations at the suit of Sir Edmund Peckham, who had received a reversion of some of the Howard property near Horsham in 1550, and Bunny was to be entrusted with the key post of treasurer of the town and castle of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Unlike Paulet he was soon to be noted for his protestantism.³ The man who replaced Bouchier at Shoreham was Sir Henry Hussey, one of only two Sussex men to sit for the Howard boroughs in the Edwardian parliaments. Hussey's return in 1551 or 1552 is surprising for one who had been a servant of both Norfolk and Somerset, but his election at Horsham for the second Edwardian Parliament and his successful purchase in 1553 of Howard property suggests he was accepted as a prominent local figure by the new regime.⁴

For the parliament of March 1553 the government might have been expected to nominate reliable and prominent men for the Howard boroughs, especially in view of the Duke of Northumberland's active intervention elsewhere. Although several of those returned were in the royal household or were related to the Duke himself they were not among his most reliable and prominent supporters. Two Sussex men sat for Horsham, both former clients of Norfolk, both owners of some of his former property and both protestants. One of them, Edward Lewkenor, was to be designated in May 1553, a 'king's servant.' If he were in the royal household he could be counted with both Shoreham members. John Fowler was not only a gentleman of the privy chamber, but he had also been a deponent against his former master Thomas Seymour; Thomas Harvey was a gentleman pensioner later to reveal a devotion to Catholicism. Lawrence Owen (Bramber) was probably a first cousin of the duchess of Northumberland and his fellow member was George Rithe of Petersfield, a protestant lawyer important in Hampshire local government like the most recent member for Bramber, Lord Chidioc Paulet.⁵ While none of these men, save Fowler, was prominent at court, several had local connections; Fowler

¹ P.R.O. E 101/426/2; APC 1547-50, pp. 15-19.

² Hatfield House MS. 207, transcript in the History of Parliament Trust files.

³ CPR Ed. VI, iii, p. 350; Swales op. cit. (ii), pp. 79-84, 347-52.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 272-76.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 170-74, 240-46, 288-91, 323-24, 368-70.

had secured his keepership of Petworth Park from the Earl of Arundel; Harvey, Owen and Lewkenor were associated with Lord de La Warr and Sir Anthony Browne. Whether or not they nominated any of these members the Earl of Arundel and Lord de la Warr were jointly lord lieutenants of Sussex at the time of the elections. Whichever influence at court or in the locality secured the return of the members for Bramber, Horsham and Shoreham it is clear that the practice of returning officials of the court of augmentations ceased.

At Lewes an indenture was drawn up on 2 February 1553 confirming the apparently ancient practice whereby the borough of Southover nominated one burgess for every two elections. The constables of the respective boroughs bound themselves in a sum of £100 to observe the custom in future.¹ The burgesses of Southover perhaps had good reason to fear that the recent changes in the ownership of Howard property, and the influence of the government especially, might erode their rights. They may also have wanted to secure the return of a man of local standing. Thomas Gravesend, whom they chose, was a client of Sir John Gage. Living in London he was nonetheless well known locally as the farmer of the land of Lewes priory which had been situated in Southover. The member returned by Lewes twenty-three days after the local agreement had been drawn up had the appearance of a government nominee. A Middle Temple lawyer, later to be returned for the Crown borough of Steyning, John Southcote had no known connection with Sussex.²

There are then traces of Northumberland's influence in the elections for the Howard boroughs for the parliament of March 1553 but the strength of local interests and opinion is also evident. Certainly the leading county figures gave him no active support at the time of Edward's death. Not only was the Duke of Norfolk released from the Tower on Mary's accession but also the leading county figures received rewards for their loyalty. Lord de la Warr was granted an annuity of 200 marks for 'service against Northumberland.' The Earl of Arundel was appointed Lord Steward of the household and was given extensive privileges over his lands 'on account of his service against the traitor Northumberland.'³ Sir John Gage became Lord Chamberlain of the household, and in 1555 Sir Anthony Browne, or Lord Montagu as he had become, received manors in Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Sussex for his loyalty during the rebellions of Northumberland and Wyatt. With such prominent figures at court resident in Sussex and loyal to both her person and her religion Mary had little to fear from the county.⁴ The now aged Duke of Norfolk was neither required, nor perhaps inclined, to play a crucial role in local politics.

At first glance the Duke's parliamentary patronage in Sussex at the elections in September 1553 was more extensive than it had ever been. The two knights of the shire, John Caryll and John Covert, had been his servants. It is especially notable that Caryll sat for boroughs outside Sussex while Norfolk was in the Tower, and Covert, who had sat for a Howard borough in 1529 and perhaps in later parliaments of Henry's reign for which no returns survive, was not returned to parliament under Edward despite his becoming head of the family in 1547. Although named on the three sheriff rolls between 1550 and 1552 he was not pricked as sheriff until 1554. Other servants of the Howards like Sir Henry Hussey and John Michell were returned for Lewes and

¹ See note 14 above.

² Swales, pp. 237-79, 431-33.

³ CPRPM, i, pp. 69-70, 82. The privileges granted to Arundel were almost exactly those said to have been enjoyed by the duke of Norfolk in his 'liberty.' S.A.C., xxiii, p. 240.

⁴ CPRPM (ii), p. 314. A group of prominent Kentish figures, including Lord Abergavenny and Sir Thomas Wyatt wrote to Sir Nicholas Pelham 'and all other the gentlemen of the shere of Sussexx' on 14 July 1553 reporting that they had 'denousid the ladie Jane (a queene of a new and pretie Invention).' BL. Add MS. 33230 f 26.

Horsham. Sir Henry's cousin, Anthony Hussey, who had been appointed a judge of the Admiralty court under Norfolk's aegis in 1540 and had fallen foul of Somerset in 1547, sat for Horsham. A son of the William Roper who had represented Bramber in the Reformation Parliament sat for Shoreham with Thomas Elrington, who had spent the first twenty years of his life in the More household, and was now a Surrey iron master and relative of Norfolk's old client Sir Edward Bray. The chancellor of the Exchequer, who was Norfolk's old friend Sir John Baker, was returned for Bramber with one of the Duke's Suffolk grandsons. Midhurst, a borough normally reserved for the servants or relatives of Sir Anthony Browne, returned a man from Norfolk. Sir Thomas Lovell had evidently been an active supporter of the Queen in the summer but his patron at this election cannot be identified with certainty.¹

The formidable array of legal talent representing the Duke's boroughs no doubt reflects his need to obtain an act reversing his attainder and restoring to him the Howard lands sold by the Crown in the preceding reign. But Caryll, Hussey and Michell were themselves patentees of pockets of Howard property. Indeed Hussey and Michell were in a dispute with him which required the privy council's intervention: their desire for seats may represent an attempt to safeguard their own interests.² Strong opposition was offered in the Commons to 'the bill to avoid the Act made for the attainder of the Duke of Norfolk' which received a first reading on 30 November 1553. On the following day several persons 'exhibited a Bill for Preservation of their Interests in the late Duke of Norfolk's lands.' Their lawyers entered objections and the bill received a second reading. When it came forward for a third reading it was not passed until further arguments had been heard.³ The imperial ambassador noted late in November that parliament should have risen but was delayed because Norfolk insisted upon the restoration of all his property. In fact there were many important bills awaiting final passage including that confirming the Duke of Northumberland's attainder. Norfolk's affairs were probably not wholly responsible for parliament's continuing.⁴ Although this Act declared the previous act of attainder illegal because it had been signed by stamp, a proviso was introduced that grants of Howard property by patent under Edward VI should stand and that the Duke could claim no rents from the Crown during his imprisonment. No mention was made of arbitration, but in his will the Duke was to record that the bill had been debated and reasoned at length in parliament until he had agreed to abide by the decision of eight councillors.⁵

Full of years and moving into the last months of his life, Norfolk seems to have allowed a number of influences to play upon his patronage for the elections to the parliament of April 1554. The steward of the barony of Bramber and the distinguished attorney-general of the Duchy of Lancaster, John Caryll may have proposed his soldier relative Sir Henry Palmer and the fervent catholic lawyer John Story. Yet both would have been remembered by Norfolk

¹ Swales *op. cit.* (ii), pp. 91-94, 108-12, 139-42, 265-69, 291-94, 297-99, 373-75, 460-63. George Darrell, one of those returned for Lewes, appears to be linked with the Gages.

² APC, iv, p. 381. By his will of February 1555 Hussey bequeathed the manor of Washington which he had purchased in March 1553 to his brother, but it does not appear in his inquisition *post mortem*; CPR Ed. VI, v, p. 157; PCC, 34 Wrastley; PRO C 142/114/24/.

³ *Commons Journal*, vol. i, p. 32. The duke's bill was first introduced in the Lords and arrived late in the Commons. Several patentees were peers:

Lords Clinton, de la Warr and Grey of Wilton held former Howard land as did the Earls of Arundel and Derby. Norfolk brought an action in Chancery against Derby's servants for occupying his lands and iron works in Worth Forest. It is interesting that John Caryll, John Covert and John Michell were among those of Derby's servants who received fees in Sussex, PRO C1/1440/43; Lancashire Record Office, Preston, D.D.K. 6/3 f 17.

⁴ CSP Spanish 1553, p. 401; *Commons Journal*, *op. cit.*

⁵ PRO C 65/162 no. 34; PCC. 14 More.

for their valuable work with him in the last great service he had performed, the Boulogne campaign of 1544, when Palmer was master of the ordnance, a member of the council at Boulogne and a friend of Surrey's, and Story was the most outstanding advocate in the Earl Marshal's court. Sir John Baker doubtless requested Norfolk for seats at Horsham for two of his sons, but at Shoreham both members were closely linked with Lord de la Warr; Leonard West was his fourth son and William Modye his servant. At Lewes Sir John Gage's influence prevailed, with the return of his third son and his client George Darrell.¹

The period of minority which followed the old Duke's death and during which two parliaments were held, led to similar dilution of Howard control. The Queen issued a circular letter to the sheriffs for the election in October 1554 urging the return of 'wysest graue and catholycke' members, as far as possible resident within the boroughs.² Two townsmen were returned for Lewes for the first time since Henry VIII's reign, but elsewhere in the Howard interest five of the six members were not even residents of the county.³ Thomas Elrington and the younger John Baker at Bramber had previously represented Howard boroughs and one may speculate that Sir John Baker once again acted as their patron. The return at Horsham, of William Tooke, an auditor of the court of wards, may reflect the wardship of the young Duke, but his Hertfordshire neighbour and friend John Purvey, who sat with him, was the auditor for the south parts of the Duchy of Lancaster; these two may, therefore, have been nominated by John Caryll, or, perhaps, by the Earl of Arundel in his capacity as steward of Duchy lands in Sussex. For the second time William Modye was returned at Shoreham, though his master had recently died, and Lord Montagu may have shared the patronage since the prominent merchant taylor who sat with Modye seems to have been associated with him.⁴

The question of the patentees of Howard property was not raised again until the parliament of 1555. By this date the marriage of the Earl of Arundel's daughter to Norfolk may have complicated matters further. The bill for the Patentees of the late Duke of Norfolk's lands received a first reading on 9 November but immediately William West, a nephew of the late Lord de la Warr, led a group in a petition for their interests. Five days later a first reading is again recorded, suggesting that some alteration of substance had been made. This bill passed by a narrow majority with 152 for and 125 against, but the lords rejected it.⁵ Several patentees were sitting in Sussex. John Caryll was again a knight of the shire; Francis Shirley, who had received the manor of West Grinstead, and Thomas Hogan, who occupied the manor and iron mills at Sheffield, were returned for Shoreham, probably with the help of William West who claimed his uncle's title and was to be sued by the young Duke of Norfolk for wrongfully detaining Howard property. Hogan's brother sat for Horsham with a rising young lawyer who may be linked with the Earl of Arundel. And Thomas Gravesend who occupied Keymer, sat for Lewes. Finally, the patentee Sir Henry Hussey found a seat outside Sussex for the first time.

¹ Swales, ii, pp. 16-20, 121-3, 198-9, 303-6, 329-33, 439-43, 483-5.

² On 12 Oct. 1554 Francis Yaxley wrote from the court to inform Cecil 'that parliament is summoned to begynne the xiith of the next. And for the better elecion of knightes and burgesses her majestie hathe addressed forth her letters to the sherieffs of the shires.' BL. Lansdowne MS. 3 f 93; HMC, xiv, Appendix 8, p. 255.

³ Residents were also returned at Arundel, Chichester, East Grinstead and Steyning. So far

as the record shows neither Arundel nor Steyning had returned a resident since before 1529, nor East Grinstead since 1529. Chichester had not returned a resident since 1547. PRO SP 11/11/61.

⁴ Swales, ii, pp. 294-47, 365-68, 466-69.

⁵ *Commons Journal*, vol. i, pp. 43-44; *Lords Journal*, vol. i, p. 506. The young duke brought actions against John Michell of Stamerham and William West, 'naming himself Lord La Warr,' for wrongfully holding the property of his grandfather, PRO C 1/1360/57; /1480/42.

His return for Gatton might have been secured through another patentee, Edward Lewkenor, whose grandmother owned the borough.¹ These members were unsuccessful in their attempts to secure a private bill, but it is a measure of the decline of the Duke's influence during his minority that they found seats in boroughs of the Howard interest.

None of the patentees sat in Sussex for the last parliament of Mary's reign. Indeed the emphasis was weighted in favour of men resident in Norfolk rather than in Sussex. Whereas in the parliament of 1555 only one Norfolk resident with no Sussex connection was returned there,² several prominent Norfolk figures closely allied with the Duke were returned at the first elections after he had attained his majority. John Blennerhasset who was returned for Horsham with Richard Fulmerston, had been employed by the Howards as a lawyer since at least 1546. Following the old Duke's restoration in 1553, Blennerhasset was to be found on the Suffolk commission of the peace and was in receipt of an annuity for his services against Northumberland. Early in Elizabeth's reign he was to succeed Fulmerston as the fourth duke's treasurer. Fulmerston had also rallied rapidly to Mary's support in 1553, not only because of his long-standing service to the Howards, but also perhaps because one who had been comptroller of Somerset's household could expect little from Northumberland. Probably by the time of his return for Horsham Fulmerston was once more in the Howards' service as the fourth duke's treasurer.³ Two men of the duke's Norfolk dependants sat for Bramber. The employment of Nicholas Mynn of Great Fransham in Norfolk to negotiate the papal dispensation for Norfolk's second marriage suggests that he was a canonist, and we later find him as collector of the duke's revenues in Norfolk and London. His relative Henry Mynn was common clerk of Norwich at the time of his return and an important figure in the duke's East Anglian patrimony.⁴ The election of Anthony Hussey and Richard Baker for Shoreham brought back men who had earlier sat in the county under Howard patronage, but the fourth duke had not supplanted the now firm control of the Gage family at Lewes. The young duke did not possess his grandfather's political might; for this parliament as for those under Elizabeth his nominees tended to be gentlemen servants and dependants rather than such notable government officials as Sir John Baker or Sir Anthony Wingfield. Nonetheless it was some time since the influence of the Howards had been so firmly re-established in their Sussex domain.

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¹ The property acquired by these patentees may be found in CPR Ed. VI, v. pp. 73, 102, 115, 157, 261.

² Sir Thomas Knyvet for Bramber.

³ Swales, ii, pp. 35-39, 174-80.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 316-19.