

ELECTION CORRESPONDENCE OF SIR JOHN HOLLAND OF QUIDENHAM, 1661

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SIR JOHN HOLLAND copied a series of letters written during the spring of 1661 about his election for Aldborough in Suffolk into the back of a volume of his speeches, and entitled this section *secreta mea mihi*.¹ The correspondence thus preserved affords a most interesting illustration of electioneering in the reign of Charles II, the kind of pressure brought to bear on patrons of constituencies, the influence these patrons exerted, the motives of candidates standing for Parliament, the methods used to ensure success and the existence of opposition to powerfully supported candidates by the less wealthy amongst the constituents. Aldborough elections continued to be fought with some feeling, and although Sir John Holland's seat was not challenged in the Cavalier Parliament, later contestants were not so fortunate and a whole series of petitions and investigations can be traced. During one such inquiry the 1661 election was mentioned and its methods discussed, all witnesses being agreed that the return was made by bailiffs, burgesses, and commonalty under the common seal, but contradictory testimony being offered about the persons actually voting. One woman, Sarah Hills, maintained that then and thereafter none but inhabitants voted, and three men, two of whose names appear below as town officials, testifying that "outburgesses" had always voted "without refusal" both in parliamentary and municipal elections. The evidence of Holland's correspondence seems to support the latter view.² Aldborough, it may be added, was disfranchised in 1832.

Holland's public career was long and varied, but only his other election contests need be noticed here. His father, Sir Thomas Holland, had sat for Norfolk and had to face an inquiry in 1624, though it was perhaps his partner's status that was then challenged rather than his own.³ Sir John was created a baronet in 1629 and was active in county affairs throughout the thirties. Among his papers are preserved copies of what appear to be his first electioneering and his first parliamentary speech, both delivered during the spring of 1640. His address to the electors of the county of Norfolk promises that he will accept no wages as member, and defends himself from a charge of popery, perhaps for the first but certainly not for the last time. Holland's only speech in the Short Parliament was on behalf of the weavers of Norwich.⁴ Apparently he wished

¹ Bodleian Library, MS., Tanner, 239. The speeches in this volume range 1640-78.

² T. Carew, *Historical Account of the rights of elections of the several counties, cities and boroughs of Great Britain*. (London, 2 volumes in one, 1755) I, 16-18. Some notes on Aldborough elections may be found in Add. MSS, 22248, ff. 1-2. See letter 6 for the names of Willis and Wall whose testimony is cited above, and letter 18 for Denny on what seem to be freeholders' votes.

³ Carew, *op. cit.* 11: 19-20. The diary of Sir Thomas has been printed in *Commons Debates*, 1621 (New Haven, 1935) ed: Notestein, Relf and Simpson; a note on the family appears *ibid.* I, 90-4.

⁴ Tanner MSS, 321, f. 3. Holland himself says the speech was his only utterance in this Parliament: later he became a very active speaker. Lady Holland was a Catholic, hence the charges of popery made against her husband from time to time. She was born Alethea Panton and at the time of her marriage to Holland was the widow of Lord Sandys.

to represent the county again in the next Parliament, but suffering some "injuries and discourtesies"¹ eventually sat both in that and the Convention Parliament for Castle Rising.

Holland early distinguished himself in the Long Parliament, and seems, in spite of a lack of enthusiasm for the war and many voyagings abroad, to have retained the confidence of all and to have escaped seclusion in 1648.² There is evidence of his friendly relations both with Cromwell and with the exiled court during the fifties, and he was appointed, not surprisingly, to the Council of State in February 1660. His politics might be described as moderate parliamentarian. He does not appear to have sat in the Barebones or Cromwellian Parliaments, nor to have preserved papers about his election in 1660, though his record in the Commons may be traced in the *Journals* and in the *Old Parliamentary History*. His election in 1661 is amply illustrated below. Perhaps the only comment necessary in this connection is that in this Parliament as in the Long Parliament, Sir John Holland's record shows him a moderate, upright, and independent member of the House. He may have had few scruples as to the methods employed to secure a successful candidature, but he shows no signs of corruption or unscrupulousness once in the House: a fact which may show how ordinary his sort of electioneering has already become.

Holland's most notorious attempt to influence the electorate took place in the Norwich election of 1675³ when he and his friend Horatio, now Lord Townshend, used the militia forces of the county to intimidate opponents. Perhaps scandal caused by this, perhaps the clean sweep of the Townshend faction in the county militia, the commission of the peace, etc., and its replacement by the "courtier" Paston group, or perhaps a general political reaction in Norfolk, caused Holland's withdrawal from public life after 1678. At any rate he does not seem to have stood again for Parliament, although he lived until 1702.⁴ He served briefly on the Commission of the Peace under James II, was dropped from it in 1688 and reinstated under William III.⁵

Letter 1 (no date):

To my honoured friend Sir Horatio Townshend.⁶

Since my coming into Norfolk I have been privately laboured by some persons to appear for the county in this parliament, to whom my answer was that I had formerly had the honour to serve in parliament for my country and I would no more attempt that, besides there were two noble and deserving persons that Sir Horatio Townshend and other the chief gentlemen of the county had resolved amongst themselves to set up, which was my Lord Richardson and Sir Ralf Hare, and that I would be entirely for them.⁷ Then they pressed me, that I would serve myself at Rising, for they told me

¹ *Gawdy Papers*, 176.

² Holland's life is not noticed in the *D.N.B.*, but an amazing amount about his career can be gathered from his own papers in the Bodleian, some of which I have printed in an appendix to *The Diary of John Milward, 1666-8* (Cambridge, 1938), and from nearly all records of the period 1640-60. His name does not appear in the list of secluded members given in the *Old Parliamentary History*, 18, 467-71. A brief notice of Holland's life appears in *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (New Haven, 1942) ed. W. H. Coates, xxxiv-xxxviii.

³ *Hist. MSS. Comm. report VI*, 370. Carew, *op. cit.*, does not mention this incident.

⁴ Unless a reference in the *Townshend Papers*, p. 329, implies extraordinary vigour in this Sir John Holland in 1701.

⁵ Coates, *op. cit.*, xxxvi.

⁶ Townshend as a young man sat in Richard Cromwell's Parliament and there played some part in bringing about the Restoration. He was rewarded by a title, but found himself out of sympathy with court policy in the seventies, and was displaced from the Lord-Lieutenancy at that time.

The spelling in these letters has been modernized throughout.

⁷ See letter 16, below.

that there was like to be some banding in point of the election there and that Mr. Steward would certainly be one by the recommendation of Mr. Howard and his own interest in that corporation, and that Sir Robert Paston did at his last being at Norwich, assure himself to be elected there. Though Sir I could find reasons enough to persuade me not to be of this parliament; yet considering the importunity of my friends, the consequences of the issue of this parliament, and the noise that have been of my serving for that place, I would not now be willingly left out, and therefore I do desire you will be pleased to mind Mr. Howard of me, and of that favourable declaration he was pleased to make me not long since that he would serve me there. I had addressed to him myself but hearing imperfectly of some accession of honour that the King have been pleased to confer upon him, I knew not how to fit my address to him. I pray Sir by yours in answer inform me and I shall immediately do it.

J. H.

Letter 2:

15 March 1660 (61). To the right honourable Henry Howard¹ of the House of Norfolk, Arundel House.

Honourable Sir,

About ten days since I desired Sir Horatio Townshend to attend you and put you in mind of your former declared favourable intention in the recommendation of me to the choice of the Mayor and burgesses of Castle Rising, a borough I have now twice served for, once by the recommendation of my lord your grandfather, and lastly by your favour. Whether Sir Horatio have had an opportunity to attend you or no I know not, I having as yet received nothing in answer from him, wherefore I now presume to address my humble desires immediately to yourself, that you will be pleased to pursue your former favourable intention to me by sending down to me your letters of recommendation to that borough which will be so great an engagement as will oblige me by all the ways I can to endeavour to express myself.

Sir, Your most humble servant

J. H.

I humbly beseech you Sir that you will be pleased to cause your servant to direct your letters to me to Quidenham where I shall wait for them and after shall go over in person to Rising to signify your pleasure to them there.

Letter 3 (no date):

To the right honourable Henry Howard of the House of Norfolk, Arundel House.

Honourable Sir,

Since my last of the 15 of this instant March I have received assurances that you have been pleased to waive the nomination of me to Rising and have expressly recommended Sir Robert Paston and Mr. Steward, two very worthy persons. Yet I confess it is a change that comes very unexpectedly to me, finding my name not only at London before coming down, but here since in the country in the list of those to serve in the next parliament by your favour, and now this laying me aside, cannot but be looked upon by some as a mark of your displeasure, which I should as unwillingly deserve as have; it being of necessity, that I must lose so much of my reputation as your favour was to me.

And truly Sir, it is all that troubles me in this business, for my liberty is of much more advantage to me in relation to my health, and mine own particular affairs, than my attendance in parliament can be, where I have never sat with any other design than to serve my friends and country, and ever with a heart to promote to my utmost the interest of you and your noble family; a family to which my ancestors had long the honour of a near relation, the memory whereof I shall never forget; and I hope it will

¹ Henry Howard was brother and heir to that Duke of Norfolk whose claims Holland supported in the Convention Parliament (*Old Parliamentary History*, 23 : 31, 35, 36). Howard succeeded to the title in 1677. The Hollands had served the Howards for generations (*Common Debates*, 1621 (1935), Introduction: I, 90-94. Sir Thos. Holland).

yet be as little within your pleasure, as it is within your power, to make me one whit less, then I have ever been, and still resolve to be.

Sir, your most humble and faithful servant,

J. H.

Letter 4:

March 9, 1660 (61). For my honoured friend Sir John Holland.

Sir,

I thought that Mr. Howard and yourself had perfectly understood one another as to the business of Rising, which made me much wonder when I received yours, upon which account I waited upon Mr. Howard, who gave me this answer for you, that when he spoke with you about it, you seemed to decline it, as not being desirous to serve in this parliament, and so not hearing anything to the contrary from you all this time, he has so far engaged himself for Sir Robert Paston and Mr. Steward as he cannot quit them, but your letter came in pudding time¹ before he was engaged for any body at Aldeburgh in Suffolk, so as he hath writ down thither positively for you, and doth make no question of your election there, this is all he commanded me to return to you, but if I find if you had been clear in your resolve and answer to him when you were together, he would rather have had you been chosen than anybody at Rising. Wherefore really Sir, if I might be so bold, I could chide you heartily for this over modesty of yours.

I intend to be at Stowe the next week and as soon as possible to lay hold of the first opportunity of giving myself the satisfaction of waiting on you as

Sir, your most faithful humble servant,

H. Townshend

Letter 5:

21st March. For Sir John Holland these at Quidenham with speed.

Sir,

I received yours this day dated the 15th and to give you a full account of your commands at large now I conceive will be but tautology, since I am sure ere this Sir Horace have waited upon you, and related all I gave him in commission, I shall only therefore repeat in short, how much more mindful I have been in your concerns than yourself have been, for ere you went last out of town, when we spake together, though I readily offered my service to you, as in order to the election against next parliament, you then seemed rather to decline it, and at least irresolute and indifferent when I pressed you to a resolution, which never since hearing a word from you, even to the time the writs were ready to issue out, made me fear you had resolved against it, yet lest (as it hath since happened) that your mind might alter, and fix upon a desire of being chosen, I thought good to make sure for you in case I should hear from you, which would however shew you, what a constancy and value I have for my old friends, and those of my family, to whom you have ever behaved yourself with great kindness respect and favour, and in order thereto, having a free offer and assurance from the town of Aldeburgh to recommend one at least, I took them at their word for you, and by Ned Parker long since made it sure for you there which is a place more considerable, honourable for you, and that you see it is sure I have enclosed send you their letter to me, which I have at large answered and so fully recommended you as I am sure you cannot fail in it, and therefore I pray instead of Rising go thither as soon as this letter comes to you and see if I have not deserved that opinion that I am more than a man of my word to serve my friend even before he asks or desire it. For Rising I am engaged to Sir Robert Paston and Mr. Steward though there be factions and others I hear will stand for it, and make a disturbance and the event uncertain and my interest you may clearly see is so fallable there as I have done you no disservice in putting you to a place where you shall be sure of it without difficulty. I have no more at present but to subscribe myself as I am really

Your affectionate humble servant,

H. Howard

Pray take Ned Parker and go speedily over and present my service to your brother Sir Ed: Duke.²

¹ i.e., at a fortunate moment.

² Duke was Lady Holland's brother-in-law.

Letter 6: (apparently enclosed with Letter 5, and addressed from Aldeburg, 14 March 1660 (1) to the Right Honourable Mr. Henry Howard, Arundell House, London):

Right Honourable,

We have received your Honour's desire by Mr. Parker in order to the election at our town of Aldeburg for this ensuing parliament and do in our own names and in the behalf of many others well affected to your honour (tho now absent) humbly present that as for the election of Sir John Holland upon your Honour's account, we make no doubt but to perfect it. And for the other burgess we hope for the present to obtain your Honour's pardon, in regard of a general pre-engagement formerly passed by our town to a worthy person of our county, Sir Robert Brooke, who in the last parliament performed the trust in him reposed, not to us only but to the public concern of his Majesty with a loyal faithful and unwearied labour. And who had long since presented himself to your honour had not a visitation of the small pox in London happened to him. We humbly beg your honour's favour to your own town which shall ever oblige us to be your honour's most humble servants,

Will Shipman	John Burwood
James Burwood	Thom Howlett
Richard Browne	Thom: Elliot
	Thom: Wall
	Thomas Willis

Letter 7:

25 March 1661. For the right honourable Henry Howard of the House of Norfolk, Arundel House.

Honourable Sir,

I received this morning yours of the 21st instant and with much thankfulness I acknowledge the excess of your favour, and now let your recommendation of me to Aldeburg have what success it will, it cannot trouble me since you have been pleased to do it in that manner that all the world may see that you did not waive the nomination of me to Rising out of any displeasure which both stuck with me and a little upon me. It is very true Sir when you were pleased even before the dissolving of the parliament to propose to me again to serve for Rising in this (then expected) Parliament I expressed very much indifferency and this temper remained with me until at the Assize, where meeting with some friends they proposed to me to stand for knight of the shire and were very importunate with me, but this I positively refused. They then pressed me to secure my election at Rising some of them hearing that there was like to be some banding there and reasoned me into a desire to be of this parliament. Upon which I wrote to Sir Horatio Townshend to mind you therein, and then I thought it early enough I confess, no writs being issued out, but it seems you were then pre-engaged, yet with such a reserve for me as enhanceth the value of the favour. You are pleased to advise me to go over presently to Aldeburg which as affairs stand with me here is not possible for me. I have already appointed my musters¹ this week and having no officers as yet to carry on that work without me. And some disputes having fallen out between the captains of horse and foot, touching the laying of arms wherein I myself have been a little concerned and the deputy lieutenants having already appointed a meeting at Norwich the beginning of the next week to set some such rules as may prevent all such disputes for the future, and in regard that there are none amongst them that were employed in the service of the lieutenancy besides myself, in the times of my lord your grandfather or father, they have importuned and engaged me to be there amongst them, but Sir I do not conceive that the election will depend anything upon my sollicitation, but singly upon your recommendation, they having so fully and freely engaged themselves to observe you herein. Nevertheless as soon as this public work is over, I shall go to Aldeburg and caress the burgesses in your name.

¹ Sir John took a great interest in the militia at all times, as his papers in the Bodleian bear ample witness—Speeches on the Militia Bill, Tanner 239, Letters and notes of militia business, Tanner 177.

And now Sir I have received herein so assured a testimony of the continuation of your good opinion and favour, let the election go what way it will, I shall remain with very much content and faithfulness,

Sir your most humble servant,
J. Holland

Letter 8:

Sturston 31 March 1661. To the right worshipful Sir John Holland these humbly present.

May I please you Sir,

I have received the warrant from the High Sheriff of Suffolk for the election at Aldeburg and intend to send it away tomorrow morning being 1st April to the bailiff there and withall to intimate to them that your intentions are to be at Sir Ed: Duke's on Wednesday next as you were pleased to inform, and that the fittest day for the election will be on Thursday 4th April in respect of your presence which is much desired by the chief of the town. My Lord's courts are this next week otherwise I would not have failed to have awaited you thither. Mr. Shipman one of the twelve is he that stands most for his honour's interest, whom I desire may await you at your first coming to town.

The Bailiffs, Mr. Burwood and Mr. Howlett¹ are wholly for your election, Captain Eliot, Mr. Brown, Captain Wills and divers others of the twelve and four and twenty are much engaged and have promised their utmost assistance in their own persons and by their friends so as I hope Sir your work will be facile Tuesday and Wednesday next I shall be at Kenninghall at the Court and if you please to give me any further commands I desire to have them there. I hope to have answer from Aldeburg Tuesday night which I have ordered to be brought to Kenninghall to me. One Mr. Vener one of the twelve intends to stand. But I am assured your presence will facilitate and take away all obstructions. I humbly desire your pardon for my haste, and to be esteemed as I am Sir,

Your most humble and faithful servant,
Edward Parker

Letter 9:

March 30 1661. For Sir John Holland these present at Quidenham.

Sir,

I suppose as well the matter as style of your second letter would have been somewhat different from what came to me had you first received mine, which this day by the receipt of your third to me I find is in your hands and you thereby satisfied to see that even before you could resolve to serve in the next parliament or consequently thought my service therein worth the looking after I had made a certain provision for you in case your mind led you that way.

This I hope will show you that it is both in my desire as well as power to serve you and so long I shall not despair of your favourable and charitable opinion and esteem of me. Sir Robert Brooke bearer hereof hath promised to deliver this himself to you and to advise with you, which way you two may win to oppose any other if need be though I believe the opposition will not be considerable, however, since your occasions admit not of your presence at the election, I pray send some persons over to declare your desires and willingness to serve the town, in which and all other your concerns you have the hearty wishes of

Sir,
your humble servant

H. Howard

Letter 10:

Benhall, 3rd April 1661. To the right worshipful the Bailiffs, Burgesses and Freemen of the town of Aldeburg.

Mr. Bailiffs, the Burgesses, and Freemen of the town of Aldeburg;

Upon an intimation given me lately by the right Honourable Mr. Henry Howard

¹ See Letter 12.

of the House of Norfolk that he had recommended me to your favour to be elected by you to be one of the representatives in this ensuing parliament, I am come this evening hither to the house of Sir Edward Duke my brother and your neighbour with intention to be with you about two of the clock tomorrow in the afternoon to make offer of my service to you in this parliament, of which I thought fit upon my first arrival here to acquaint you and have purposely sent this messenger this evening. I presume Sir Robert Brooke will meet me there I having acquainted him with my intentions. I shall add nothing further to your present trouble but subscribe if you shall think me worthy

Yours faithfully to serve you

J. H.

Letter 11:

3rd April 1661. To the right honourable Henry Howard etc.

Honourable Sir,

After the determination of our public business at Norwich I took my journey upon Wednesday last towards Aldeburg and took Sir Robert Brooke in my way from whom I received the favour of your letter. And truly sir, had I received your first before my second address to you, the matter and style (as you were pleased to apprehend) had been somewhat different from what it was. But (believe me Sir) whatsoever it was in either I had no other design therein than to let you see the apprehension I had of your displeasure and the esteem and value I set of your good opinion and favour. Sir upon Thursday last I met with Sir Robert Brooke at Aldeburg according to appointment with him, where I entertained the Bailiffs burgess and many of the freemen in your name and declared my desire to serve them in this Parliament and endeavoured to make it appear to them how much more it was to their interest to elect me upon your recommendation than it was either yours Sir or mine. I minded them of those ancient relations and obligations their predecessors had to your ancestors, what patrons and protectors they had been formerly to the inhabitants of that Corporation and did assure them of your power through that interest you had in his Majesty's favour and your desires to promote all things of advantage for that Corporation as well out of parliament as in parliament in case you found that they would yet have the same regard to you and your noble family that their predecessors had to your ancestors. I told them likewise that of late years through the distempers of the times that there had been some neglect of respect both to my Lord your Grandfather, my Lord your Father, and yourself by them. Nevertheless you had given them this opportunity to recover their interest in your favour and protection and that if they did take hold thereof, that they should oblige me to be their solicitor to you upon all occasions and I did not at all doubt but that they should find you as ready to take care of them and to express your good affections toward them as any of your ancestors had formerly done for their predecessors. Which they seemed to take so well that they generally thereupon declared for me, though Mr. Vener one of the twelve, our competitor was present amongst them and is said to have such a strength among the Freemen as will shake either Sir Robert Brooke or me to prevent which we have agreed with Shipman and Elliot two of the most active amongst the burgesses to conceal the precept for the election until there comes a south wind to carry away the seamen upon whose votes we hear Mr. Vener depends. I have promised to be present at the Election in case they give me timely notice, I hope (in gratitude to you Sir) so to manage the business with these people, that if we can carry it now upon your interest, to secure the nomination for the future. And if there be any faith in christians of these men's breeding and temper (which some men suspect) we cannot miscarry. Whatsoever the issue be, I beseech you entertain not the least suspicion that I either am, have been, or ever will be other than your most faithful and most humble servant

J. Holland

Letter 12:

Aldeburg, April 7th 1661. These present to the right worshipful Sir John Holland, Norfolk.

Sir,

The seamen being gone we think it most convenient to have our election for burgesses upon Monday the 15th or on Tuesday the 16th present. We shall leave either day to consult your own conveniency to yourself. We shall desire your presence at the election, but in case extraordinary business prevent you we have empowered the bearer Mr. Baker to present you with the oath of a Freeman. Sir, we shall defer the proclamation of the writ until the return of the messenger. We question not but to affect your desires together with our own who are

your assured friends to serve you
John Burwood
Tho: Howlett

Letter 13:

Quidenham 12 April 1661 to The right worshipful the Bailiffs of the town of Aldeburg.

Mr. Bailiffs,

I return you thanks for sending Mr. Baker your town clerk to me who have by virtue of that authority you have given him administered to me the oath by the taking of which I am become a member of your body and will be faithful to the town of Aldeburg under this obligation whether I be elected your representative in this parliament or no. But if you and your town shall think me worthy to be entrusted I shall be ready and industrious to serve them in parliament and be their solicitor to that honourable person, your lord Mr. Henry Howard out of parliament in all things wherein he can by his interest be of any advantage to your town and I assure myself that you will find him as solicitous to promote your interest as his ancestors have formerly been, you continuing the same towards him that your predecessors had towards them. I know you will be so wise for yourselves to engage him by your respect of him by the election of me to be your servant in this parliament, for I can pretend no merit from you, but under his recommendation. And truly Mr. Bailiffs I am very much troubled that I cannot attend in person at the time of your election as I resolved, but it is so fallen out that it is not possible for me, the occasion that hinders I have acquainted the town clerk with. I am therefore enforced to desire your pardon. Howsoever I do no ways doubt of your and the rest of the Corporation's favour in the election of me to be

your servant in this Parliament
J. Holland

Letter 14:

Quidenham, 12 April 1661. To my respected friend Mr. William Shipmen one of the burgesses of the town of Aldeburg.

Mr. Shipman,

I am extremely troubled that I cannot come over to you at the election as I resolved at parting. Howsoever I know out of the respect you bear to Mr. Howard and the interest of that Corporation in the continuation of his favour, that you will contribute all you can to secure me in the election. You will be able the night before the election to find the temper of the freemen and if you discover the least danger I am confident you will judge it advisable to make new freemen in the morning to secure us which both the bailiffs being entirely for us will be very easy for you to do.¹ I refer all to your discreet conduct and the advice of Captain Elliot to whom I commend my respect and so I remain

Your very ready friend
J. Holland

Letter 15:

To my honoured friend Sir Robert Brooke.

Sir,

I am not a little troubled that I cannot attend in person at the time of the election at Aldeburg, I having sent away my servant and horses this very morning before the

¹ Cf. Letters 8 and 12 above.

coming of Mr. Baker upon extraordinary and unexpected business to Norwich. Howsoever I cannot at all doubt of success where I am embarked with you, as I take myself to be in this business. And I assure myself that you will give me the same assistance by your interest that you would if I were present and equally secure me with yourself. What hath been and shall be disbursed in the entertainment of the bailiffs burgesses and freemen we will equally bear as brethren and from this time forward whatsoever the issue of the election should be own one another under that title and it is some satisfaction in the disappointment I have in not coming now to you that have the first opportunity to subscribe

Your most affectionate brother and servant

J. Holland

Letter 16:

Buckenham Ferry, March 20th 1660 (1). For Sir John Holland Knight and baronet Quidenham near Banham speed.

Sir,

The County of Norfolk had once the honour of you for one of their representatives by giving in their suffrage for your election. I do not perceive but they have the same value for you still having not in the least made a forfeiture whereby they should either abate or retract it; though it is much to their satisfaction that you will be a member the next approaching parliament and one of theirs too, yet I suppose will not be satisfied in the title to you, unless from a borough they translate to the shire (such knight upon knight is no false heraldry) neither can they give themselves any other reason why it should not be so, but what your modesty and commands may dictate to the contrary. Ability and integrity are two qualifications upon which the sobrest eyes are fixed; it is but to superarrogate to declare your excellency in the first and but an honourable and due acknowledgement in the last, were I worthy either to beg or persuade your appearance, it should be done with confidence proceeding from that sense yourself hath created in me, I am sure will be construed only the discharge of that duty and respect I owe you; I shall not despair (so many besides myself having the same obligations from you) but that some of them more powerful in the desire may obtain your consent. At present you have my vote and have my voice where you please only wish it (what you cannot want) a casting one; At this time it may be the fashion to be troublesome in this nature, my only authority for being so, except your goodness to which I submit for my offence, resolving though I have never the honour to be commanded by you to remain

Sir, your faithful and obedient servant

Edw: Denny

Letter 17:

Quidenham, 12 March 1660 (1). To my worthy friend Edward Denny esq: at Buckenham Ferry.¹

Sir,

I had once (I confess) the honour to serve my country² as one of their representatives in parliament, a burden I found then too heavy for me when I had fewer years and so consequently more strength of body and parts to carry me through. But besides there are two very worthy persons of great merit, upon whom very many of those of the greatest interest in the country have fixed their thoughts and for whom my vote shall go and the friends I can make. Amongst whom I presume to number you, and so desire whensoever the day of election shall come that you will appear for the Lord Richardson and Sir Ralf Hare and I hope the country will generally without any contestation fasten their thoughts and choice upon them. Howsoever I must acknowledge your favour in the continuance of your good opinion and remain

Your very ready friend to serve you

J. Holland

¹ Sir John's sequence is maintained here though this is obviously an earlier letter. Buckenham Ferry is about twelve miles from Norwich. Edward Denny appears on the list of Norfolk Commissioners of Militia, 1650—see *Acts and Ordinances* (1911) II, 1439—and was possibly connected with Sir William, sometime recorder of Norwich and a royalist sympathizer.

² County.

Letter 18:

For Sir John Holland present these. This present electing morning.

Sir,

There is much murmuring (and not without cause) amongst the people, that they do not already hear of your election. They wonder what frenzy is got abroad once more that their hopes all on the sudden have such an alloy of fear and discontent mixt with them. I perceive it proceeds from such elections as do not please and that ability in many places are like to be set aside upon the anvil of that interest which more fits men's bellies than convinceth their reasons to the prejudices of more competent judges to provide for the country's service and security. Sir your vote will do us more good in the Parliament House than Castle Hill can say but amen to it and truly I think the hundreds of Blowfield and Walsham, East and West Flegg are for the two [H. H.]¹ And I think amongst others, such a sober sense will reign, that you cannot miscarry. Do not speak of an engagement. Can you fix the wind, then; and haste.

Your faithful servant

Ed Denny

¹ H. H., i.e., Holland and Howard. This letter would seem to suggest that the "outburgesses" voted.