

## A NORWICH TAXATION LIST OF 1451

by Roger Virgoe

### SUMMARY

*The assessment of 1451 for an income-based tax survives for Norwich and it gives an indication of the landed wealth of the richest inhabitants of the city. 163 persons with incomes ranging between £2 and £200 p.a. are listed. Of the provincial cities with county status, Norwich's assessment was highest, followed by York and Bristol, a fact that may reflect Norwich's special role as a centre where county gentry resided part of the year and where in consequence they chose to be taxed. The assessment is printed and the taxpayers identified, and a list of 1453 of aldermen and common councillors is included for comparison.*

In September 1449 King Henry VI summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster on 6 November. Since the summer the conquests of Henry V in Normandy had been crumbling to the resurgent French armies and taxation was needed to send reinforcements to the hard-pressed garrisons. The urgency of the situation was emphasised to the Lords and Commons assembling in early November when the news came of the fall of Rouen, Normandy's chief town. Parliament, however, undoubtedly reflecting the mood of the country, was more concerned to overthrow the government dominated by William, Duke of Suffolk, and members of the Royal Household than to grant the money which might allow them to maintain their position. During the first two sessions of the parliament demands for taxation were resisted; Suffolk was impeached early in 1450 and murdered on his way to exile; Household finances were reformed; a new Chancellor was appointed and an act of resumption cancelling all royal grants made since 1422 was passed — though weakened by many exceptions. Only then, in May 1450 when Normandy was almost lost, did the Commons agree to consider the grant of supply.<sup>1</sup>

The normal form of direct taxation in the Late Middle Ages was the 'fifteenth and tenth' assessed on personal property, not income. Long before 1450 this had become standardised, with townships paying fixed amounts, and, with certain reductions allowed, each grant would bring in about £31,000 to the Treasury.<sup>2</sup> Such a grant had been made in the previous parliament and was still being collected.<sup>3</sup> The Commons in May 1450 refused to make a similar grant — the people, it was claimed, were too poor to be further burdened in this way. Instead they revived a form of subsidy granted in 1435 at another period of military crisis, a tax on income from lands, offices and fees, with a minimum threshold and graded assessments. Such a tax would bear less heavily upon townsmen and peasantry and should have tapped more effectively the wealth of the landowners.<sup>4</sup>

The form of such a subsidy was approved by parliament and the King by early June and arrangements made for its collection during the summer, but the unrest associated with Jack Cade's Rebellion prevented anything being done before December 1450 when the next parliament ordered its collection in a somewhat modified form.<sup>5</sup> By that time Normandy was lost and the French threat had moved to Calais and the King's possessions in Aquitaine. Assessments were made and most of the money collected during the first half of 1451 but the returns were very disappointing, considerably lower than in 1435-6, in spite of a considerable widening in the number of potential taxpayers, and constituting only about one-fifth of the money brought in by a fifteenth and tenth. Although further experiments with taxation on incomes were made in the late fifteenth century it was not until 1523 that an efficient, directly assessed subsidy became a regular feature of national taxation.<sup>6</sup>

The form of the subsidy act as revised in December provided for the examination on oath in each county of those whose income from all kinds of land-holdings was £2 a year or more or those with fees, annuities and wages that had been granted for life or term of years to the value of £3 p.a. or more. For incomes up to £20 the rate of tax was set at 6d in the pound; for incomes from over £20 to £200 at 1s in the pound; and for incomes over £200 at 2s in the pound. Ecclesiastics, who were separately taxed through Convocation, were to be assessed only on landed property acquired since 1291. It was a system based upon self-assessment but no provision was made for punishing false returns, for the penalties of perjury, both in this world and the next, were seen as sufficient to deter fraud. Commissioners were appointed in each county to examine those liable and to note their income and the consequent tax payable and to return the assessments to the Exchequer. The sheriffs were made responsible for the collection and for payment of the money to four treasurers appointed in parliament who were to ensure that it was used for military purposes.

As is well-known the records of most later medieval taxation, apart from the poll-taxes of 1377-81, are of limited value to the local historian because of the standardisation of assessment which made the return of names of those paying unnecessary. Various returns which include names do survive for some of the experimental taxes of the fifteenth century but the most useful are those from the subsidies on incomes granted in 1435 and 1450. These, too, have their limitations, of course, covering only a small proportion of the population, but for the landed wealth of the richer inhabitants they are a valuable source, though to be used with caution. Unfortunately, many of the county assessments do not survive and the Norfolk returns both for 1436 and 1451 are among those that have disappeared. Norwich, however, having county status, made a separate assessment and return and that made in 1451 has survived and is printed below.<sup>8</sup>

The commissioners to assess the tax in Norwich comprised the Mayor, Thomas Aleyn, the sheriffs, John Chittock and Robert Machon, the recorder, John Damme, two of the wealthiest aldermen, Robert Toppes and Gregory Draper, and the Prior of Norwich Cathedral. Neither the Prior nor Draper, however, was present at the two sessions held at Norwich on 4 and 5 February 1451. As a result of these sessions a total of 163 persons were assessed as having taxable incomes of £2 p.a. or more. Another five, whom the commissioners thought liable to pay, did not appear, among them the Prior who was, however, later noted as having been assessed at the Norfolk sessions. Of the 163 assessed none swore to an income of over £200; fourteen only to incomes of more than £20 p.a., the rest to incomes of £20 or under, most of these at or near the minimum £2 p.a. The total to be paid was £63 11s. Of this £53 had been received by the treasurers by the end of the year.<sup>9</sup>

It would clearly be unwise to take these assessments at their face-value. The fact that they are consistently given in whole pounds shows that there was no attempt at absolute accuracy and there is a suspiciously large number (seven) who returned incomes of exactly £20, just below the higher-rate tax-band. It is rarely possible to check such assessments against other sources but Lady Morley's account-roll of 1463-4 shows her with an income from land of about £200 compared with the £82 she declared in 1451.<sup>10</sup> The allowable deductions under the terms of the subsidy can hardly have reached £50 so it would seem that she declared only about half of her true income. There can be little doubt that this is also true of some of the other leading gentry on the list. In this Norwich was not unique: it has been shown elsewhere that the under-assessment already evident in 1436 was considerably greater all over the country in 1451.<sup>11</sup> Deliberate perjury is probably unlikely, as the reluctance of parliament to grant taxes assessed on oath suggests that perjury was not taken lightly. Rather it was due to squeezing the most out of allowances and deductions, like any modern taxpayer. That there was some flexibility

in what was declared is evident from the attempts made by John Paston in 1451 to find out the assessments of his neighbours, presumably in order to decide what he should declare. His chaplain, James Gloys, writes on 2 March that 'as for the subsidy that Ser Herry Inglos and the Lady Felbrygge shuld payn, the meyr knowe not yet veryly what thei shuld pay, for thei have not cast the vawew of here londes. The bill cloyd in this letter maketh mensyon of the vawew of divers gentilmens londes that ben examyned in Norwhich. We can not know what (William) Calthorp payth, for we can not speke with the shereffe (of Norfolk) ner the under-shereffe, ner no man that gadered that hundred there as Calthorp dwellyth'.<sup>12</sup>

Gloys's letter is interesting also in showing that the dating of the commissioners' return is deceptive, as is true, of course, of a good many such documents.<sup>13</sup> Nearly a month after the sessions held by the commissioners Inglose and Lady Felbrigg had not yet made a firm declaration of their income, even though they appear near the head of the list on the return. No doubt the commissioners' sessions in February were used primarily to compile a list of taxpayers and the return not formally drawn up until these had had a chance to consult their accounts and officials — and, like Paston, to do some investigations into what others were paying. The oath they no doubt swore was to return an accurate valuation not to confirm a declaration already made.

When these reservations to the accuracy of the returns as a reflection of the wealth of those assessed have been made, it remains reasonable to assume that the subsidy return does indicate the comparative wealth of those assessed — at least that part which was derived from land, office and annuities. For most of the 'gentlemen' on the list this would constitute the major part of their total income but clearly this would not be true of merchants, tradesmen and lawyers, whose income would derive mainly from the profits of trade and from legal fees, neither of which was within the scope of the subsidy. It is probable, of course, that the richer merchants acquired more real property and therefore drew a larger income from land than did their lesser fellows but only in this very general way is the list a guide to the relative standing of Norwich citizens in 1451.

Of course, the most notable feature of the list is that most of the richer people assessed are not citizens at all. All of those paying at the higher rate of 1s in the £1 are 'outsiders' and there are a considerable number of gentlemen among those with incomes of £20 or less. It is possible that some of these were in Norwich accidentally and chose to be assessed there for the sake of convenience, even though they were normally resident on their country estates — as the whole income was declared wherever assessment took place this was quite acceptable and large numbers of lords and gentlemen were clearly assessed in Middlesex or Surrey because they were attending parliament.<sup>14</sup> But it is probable that a considerable number of these gentry were normally resident in Norwich for at least part of the year — a number of them are known to have possessed houses there.<sup>15</sup> The gentry on the list are briefly identified in the appendix to this article.

There is no list of the Norwich aldermen, common councillors and officials for 1451 but one does exist for April 1453 and, allowing for the fact that one or two changes may have occurred through death among the aldermen and rather more through new elections among the councillors, it is possible to check these against the subsidy list.<sup>16</sup> Of the twenty-four aldermen of 1453 who are listed below, twenty are assessed to the subsidy: only Boonde, Elys, Penning and Edward are missing. These may have possessed landed incomes below the limit or perhaps were absent from the city and assessed in Norfolk, London or elsewhere — strangely the two parliamentary burgesses, William Ashwell and John Damme, were in Norwich, though the parliamentary session was under way. Incomes of the aldermen range from the £20 of Robert Toppes to the minimum of £2 that four of the aldermen swore to. Of the 60 common councillors elected in 1453, also listed below, only 26 appear on the list. Half of these were assessed at

the minimum rate and none swore to more than £6 p.a. Presumably most of the others were below the threshold. This is not surprising considering both the likely under-assessment and that common councillors were normally of lesser status and wealth. Men from the same wards appear to have tended to appear together for assessment as might, perhaps, be expected. Aldermen and councillors from Conisford and Mancroft only appear at the first session and the first part of the second list; these are followed by Wymer and finally by Over the Water — though the pattern is not totally consistent. It is of some interest that no fewer than eleven of the sixteen councillors for Mancroft Ward appear on the list but only five out of twelve for Conisford, eight out of twenty for Wymer and two out of twelve for Over the Water. As common councillors, unlike aldermen, should have been resident in the ward they represented, this may indicate something about the residences of wealthier citizens in the mid-fifteenth century or about varying rental values.

The assessment for Norwich, whether it be the total of £63 11s or the £55 15s which appears to have been all that was paid, was the largest for any provincial city with county status — the only towns that can be identified from the returns. The next largest were York, at £47 13s 6d and Bristol at £28 16s 6d.<sup>17</sup> This ranking differs substantially from the 1436 subsidy assessments when both these cities returned higher assessments than Norwich. It is impossible, however, to draw conclusions from these figures as to the relative wealth of the citizens of English provincial cities in the fifteenth century as the assessment for Norwich was seemingly more distorted than the others by the presence of wealthy gentlemen from the county.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps this feature of the return does provide some evidence of the role of Norwich as a provincial centre in this period, a place where it was natural for the gentry to have houses and to reside for parts of the year. Otherwise the interest of the list is mainly local to Norwich — as probably the most comprehensive listing of the richer residents of the city that survives from the fifteenth century.

#### The Norwich Subsidy Return, 1451

Public Record Office, Lay Subsidies, E.179/238/78.

[This document forms part of a bundle of returns made to the Exchequer from five sheriffs which are still in the pouch in which they were deposited, presumably soon after being received there. Three documents concern Norwich, the first two being the writs of 8 August and 18 December ordering the assessment and collection of the subsidy. These are not transcribed here as similar writs are calendared elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> The third document is the return made by the commissioners, with the list of names of those assessed. It consists of two membranes: the first records the session of Thursday, 4 February, the second that of the following day. On the dorse of membrane 1 the assessments are totalled for the first session and five non-appearers noted. Nothing similar is done for the second session and, judging from the full records of the tax, it seems possible that knowledge of the £7 15s due from those assessed on the second day was never taken into the Exchequer system and may never have been paid there, though no doubt the cash reached the sheriff's hands.<sup>20</sup>

The Latin text of the heading and of the first two entries is transcribed, but otherwise the text has been translated and Roman numerals turned into Arabic. Christian names have been anglicised but surnames have been left as in the original.]

#### *Rot. 1 Civitas Norwici*

*Examinacio diversarum personarum commorancium et residencium in civitate Norwici ibidem facta die Jovis proximo post festum Purificationis Beate Marie Virginis anno regni Regis Henrici Sexti post conquestum vicesimo nono coram Thoma Aleyn maiore civitatis predictae Roberto Toppys et Johanne Damme ac Johanne Chittok et Roberto Machon vicecomitibus eiusdem civitatis commissionariis domini Regis in civitate predicta virtute cuiusdam commissionis eiusdem domini Regis eisdem commissionariis et aliis directe pro quodam subsidio levando eidem domino Regi in ultimo parlamento suo apud Leycestram tento per communitates regni sui Anglie concessio etc.*

#### City of Norwich

Examination of diverse persons staying and residing in the City of Norwich, made there on Thursday after the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of King Henry the Sixth after the Conquest (4 February

1451) before Thomas Aleyn, mayor of the aforesaid city, Robert Toppys and John Damme, together with John Chittok and Robert Machon, sheriffs of the same city, commissioners of the Lord King in the aforesaid city by virtue of a certain commission of the same king directed to the same commissioners and others for the levying of a certain subsidy granted to the same Lord King by the communities of his realm of England at his parliament lately held at Leicester etc.

*Isabella Domina de Morley tenet terras et tenementa infra regnum Anglie annui valoris ultra reprises ex sua recognitione propria per suum sacramentum coram prefatis commissioneribus personaliter constitutum secundum formam et effectum antedictae commissionis que extendit ad summam lxxxii li.*

Isabella, Lady Morley, holds lands and tenements within the realm of England by her own recognition, personally made on oath before the said commissioners according to the form and effect of the aforesaid commission, of an annual value, net of expenses, which extends to the sum of . . . . . £82

*Johannes Wodehouse, armiger, juratus, tenet terras et tenementa in Anglia annui valoris ultra reprises xxvi li.*

John Wodehouse, esquire, sworn, holds lands and tenements in England of an annual value net of expenses . . £26

(The following entries are all phrased similarly).

Katherine, late wife of Sir Simon Felbrigge, knight	£100	William Thurston	£2
John Ferrerys, esquire	£40	Adam Aubre	£3
John Bacon, esquire	£33	John Dunnyng	£3
Henry Inglose, knight	£66	John Tasburgh	£20
John Heveningham, knight	£66	John Folcard	£8
William Rokewoode, esquire	£50	William Wyllys	£2
John Wyndam, esquire	£66	Dame ( <i>Domina</i> ) Margaret Wetherby	£20
Agnes, late wife of William Paston	£40	Robert Blyklyng	£13
Elizabeth Clere, widow	£45	John Buklee, cook	£6
John Paston, esquire	£66	Edmund Staley	£2
John Pagrave, esquire	£33	John Brewyn, baker	£3
Thomas Gurnay, esquire	£50	Robert Barbour	£2
Total £763, from which the subsidy is £38 3s		Richard Poryngland, clerk	£2
Richard Elsy, esquire	£3	Thomas Blythe, baker	£4
Ralph Harpley, clerk	£10	William Multon	£2
The Dean of St. Mary in the Fields, Norwich	£13	Robert Hawys	£2
John Lyhert, esquire	£20	John Folvyle	£2
Richard Poley, gentleman	£5	Robert Hynton	£2
Thomas Wace, gentleman	£7	John Botiller	£10
Thomas Dengayn, esquire	£10	William Atkyns	£4
Walter Nyche	£12	John Sexteyn	£2
The Master of the Hospital of St. Giles in Norwich	£12	Benedict Joly	£2
The Alderman of the Fraternity of St. George in Norwich	£4	Robert Werketon	£2
Robert Mortimer, esquire	£10	John Colton	£4
John Groos, esquire	£10	William Sweyn	£2
Robert Lethum, esquire	£20	Bartholomew Splyt	£2
Ivetta Bumpstede, widow	£5	Richard Botiller	£2
Isabella Astley, widow	£6	Alice Lovell, widow	£10
Robert Warner, gentleman	£3	Beatrix Balle, widow	£4
Katherine Sturmer, widow	£20	Margaret Londesdale, widow	£3
John Hauk	£5	Robert Faulkys	£3
Edmund Turnour	£2	<i>Dorse</i>	
John Balyngate	£2	Thomas Aleyn	£10
John Gerard, 'bocher'	£2	Robert Toppys	£20
John Thurton, 'candeler'	£2	John Chittok	£4
Thomas Stalon	£5	Robert Machon	£2
Simon Trusse	£2	J. Damme	£13
Richard Bere	£5		

In witness of which the aforesaid commissioners have appended interchangeably their seals to these indentures.

Total of the value of lands, tenements, possessions, fees, wages and other premises within the annual sum of £21 in these two rolls £704

Total of the subsidy from this, viz at 6d in the £1	£17 12s
Total of the value of lands, tenements, possessions and other premises exceeding the sum of £20 per annum and within the sum of £200, per annum in these said rolls	£763
Total of the subsidy from this, viz at 12d in the £1	£38 3s
Total sum of the aforesaid subsidy	£55 15s

The names of the persons resident in the aforesaid city and liable to pay the said subsidy but not appearing before the aforesaid commissioners of the Lord King according to the form of the above grant are these: John Heverland, Prior of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Norwich — cancelled since he appeared and was examined before the king's commissioners in the county of Norfolk.

Katherine Dunnyng, widow

John Helyer, brasyer

Robert Cade, baxter

John Pertryk, senior

*Rot. 2*

Examination of diverse persons (exactly as in rot. 1) on Friday after the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of King Henry VI after the Conquest (5 February 1451).

John Pert, mercer, holds lands (etc as Lady Morley)	£2	Robert Syred	£2
Thomas Bokenham, senior	£3	William Knapton	£4
Robert Lound	£3	Walter Crumpe	£2
John Rolham	£2	Richard Yemmys	£2
Peter Brasyer	£6	William Wyrmoode, chaplain	£3
John Thurward	£2	Goda Trewlove, widow	£2
John Gosselyn	£3	Edward Coteler	£2
Richard Brasyer	£10	Laurence Felmyngham	£2
Geoffrey Joye, notary	£4	John Wylbey	£2
John Causton	£3	John Gerard, gentleman	£10
Nicholas Calwe	£2	Robert Hay	£2
John Hynde	£2	John Dighton	£2
Robert Broun	£2	Thomas Ingham, senior	£5
Thomas Holle	£3	Thomas Ingham, junior	£4
William Legard	£3	Ralph Segryme	£5
John Ode	£3	Richard Brown	£5
Richard Aylfeld	£2	Thomas Veyl	£3
Thomas Kyngeseye, notary	£3	Roger Cook	£2
Dame ( <i>Domina</i> ) Margaret Purdaunce	£4	William Henstede	£6
William Asshwelle	£6	Simon Postyll	£3
Katherine Pylly, widow	£12	Thomas Caumbrigge	£6
John Drolle	£6	Edmund Colman	£2
Nicholas Lyncolne	£3	John Talbot	£3
John Blake	£2	John Bussh	£2
Nicholas Newman	£3	William Oldbarly	£4
John Oldbarly	£2	John Dynne	£3
Robert Roo	£2	John Goos, rafman	£3
John Stanhowe	£2	Margaret Ampulford	£4
John Becclys	£2	John Newman, baker	£3
John Belton	£2	John Hervy, senior	£2
William Bowde	£2	William Norwych, junior	£20
Richard Playter	£2	John Colman	£2
Richard Davy	£2	Geoffrey Quynce	£2
John Hervy	£2	William Gladon, notary	£2
Robert Herman	£2	Richard Ferrour	£2
Peter Lawrence	£2	William Sherwynd	£2
William Sayve	£2	Robert Furbysshour	£2
William Okys	£2	John Wyghton	£2

John Hemmyng	£2	Gregory Draper	£14
Wilham Norwich, senior	£2	Richard Alderych, notary	£2
Thomas Oudolf	£4	John Gylberd	£7
Henry Oudolf	£4	John But	£6
<i>Dorse</i>		John Gegge	£2
John Clerk, mercer	£3	Edmund Seggeford	£5
John Howard	£3	Richard Albon	£2

In witness of which the aforesaid commissioners have appended their seals interchangeably.

**Brief notes on those assessed at above £20 p.a. and other gentlemen on the list.**

*Isabella, Lady Morley* (d. 1467). Sister of William, Duke of Suffolk and widow of Thomas, Lord Morley (d. 1435). Her estates brought her in some £200 in 1462-3. She seems to have lived in her later years at Norwich or at her son-in-law's home at Gressenhall but was buried near her husband at Hingham.<sup>21</sup>

*John Wodehouse*, esquire (d. 1465). Of Kimberley, Norf. and Crossfield, Suff. 2nd son of John Wodehouse, an important royal servant, he inherited much property from his father, including a house in Norwich, and eventually became head of the family on the death of his elder brother.<sup>22</sup>

*Katharine, widow of Sir Simon Felbrigge* (d. 1459). 2nd wife of the wealthy landowner and former courtier who died in 1442. She held most of his estates for life but seems to have frequently resided in her house in St. Etheldreda's, Norwich, and was buried in the Blackfriars.<sup>23</sup>

*John Ferrerys*, esquire (d. 1451/2). 2nd husband of Katharine, daughter and co-heir of Edward Burnell and widow of Sir John Radcliffe, K.G. She inherited manors in Docking and elsewhere and no doubt had a considerable dower from her first husband. She died in 1452 and Ferrerys seems to have predeceased her.<sup>24</sup>

*John Bacon*, esquire (d. 1460). Of Baconsthorpe and Loddon, but seems to have resided mainly in Norwich, where he was buried in the Austin Friary.<sup>25</sup>

*Henry Inglose*, knight (d. 1451). Of Dilham. Noted soldier and friend of Sir John Fastolf.<sup>26</sup>

*John Heveningham*, knight (d. 1454). Of Heveningham, Suffolk and mainly active in that county but apparently had a house in Norwich where he seems to have died in 1453.<sup>27</sup>

*William Rokewode*, esquire (d. 1474). Of Warham and Norwich. There were father and son of the same name: this was probably the son. He was made captain of the Norwich contingent to the King's army in 1461.<sup>28</sup>

*John Wyndham*, esquire (d. 1475). Of Crownthorpe etc. Origins obscure but he married before 1440 Margery, widow of Sir Edward Hastings, and thus acquired her dower land which included a house in Norwich from which he assaulted the Pastons' chaplain in 1448. He did not secure Felbrigg until 1461.<sup>29</sup>

*Agnes, late wife of William Paston* (d. 1479). Widow of the judge, she held much of his lands and her own inheritance for life, but seems to have frequently resided in Norwich.<sup>30</sup>

*Elizabeth Clere*, widow (d. 1492). Widow of Robert Clere of Ormesby (d. 1446), she held all the Clere lands during her son's minority and normally resided at Ormesby though she was buried in the Cathedral. She was a family friend of the Pastons.<sup>31</sup>

*John Paston*, esquire (d. 1466). Son and heir of the judge, he held — with difficulty — Gresham as well as his wife's Mautby estate but had a house in St. Peter Hungate and is styled 'of Norwich' in 1453.<sup>32</sup>

*John Pagrave*, esquire (d. 1467). Held lands in Pagrave but married the daughter and co-heir of Henry Sturmer of Norwich and thus no doubt acquired property in the city. He was buried in the Blackfriars.<sup>33</sup>

*Thomas Gurnay*, esquire (d. 1470). Of West Barsham and Harpley but also styled 'of Norwich' and had a house in St. Gregory's. There were apparently a father and son of the same name — this is probably the one who died in 1470.<sup>34</sup>

*Richard Ely*, esquire. Of Great Melton.<sup>35</sup>

*John Lyhert*, esquire. Kinsman — probably nephew — of Bishop Lyhert and no doubt a member of his household.<sup>36</sup>

*Richard Poley*, gentleman. Of Stoke Ash, Suffolk.<sup>37</sup>

*Thomas Wace*, gentleman. Unidentified.

*Thomas Dengayne*, esquire. Of Yarmouth and formerly bailiff there.<sup>38</sup>

*Robert Mortimer*, esquire (d. 1465). A cadet of the Mortimers of Attleborough, he held land in the county but is styled 'of Norwich'.<sup>39</sup>

*John Groos*, esquire (d. 1487). Of Irstead. Younger son of Oliver Groos of Sloley. Held a capital messuage in Norwich and was buried in St. Laurence's Church there.<sup>40</sup>

*Robert Lethum*, esquire (d. 1480). Of Witton. A lawyer and during 1452-3 bitterly at odds with John Paston and other Norfolk gentlemen.<sup>41</sup>

*Robert Warner*, gentleman (d. 1480). Of Besthorpe.<sup>42</sup>

*Katharine Sturmer*, widow. Widow of Henry Sturmer, attorney and sheriff of Norwich.<sup>43</sup>

*John Tasburgh* (d. 1473). Of South Elmham but an active attorney and held property in St. Peter Parmentergate.<sup>44</sup>

*Dame Margaret Wetherby* (d. 1457). Widow of Thomas Wetherby, former mayor and notorious in the disorders of the 1430s. She lived at Carrow and in 1455 was lodging in the nunnery there.<sup>45</sup>

*John Gerard*, gentleman. Alderman of Norwich and five times M.P. for the city.<sup>46</sup>

*William Norwich*, junior (d. 1469). An attorney. Alderman from 1455 and mayor 1461-2. Buried in St. George's Colegate.<sup>47</sup>

#### List of aldermen and common councillors elected February 1453

N.R.O., Norwich Assembly Book, I, f.21.

##### A. Aldermen

Conisford	:	Ralph Segryme, William Barley, John Folkard, Peter Boonde, Richard Brasyer, Thomas Elys.
Mancroft	:	Robert Toppes, William Ashwell, Thomas Aleyn, Robert Syred, John Gilbert, John Edward.
Wymer	:	John Pennyng, William Henstede, Richard Brown, John Drolle, John Chittok, Richard Albon.
Ultra Aquam	:	Gregory Draper, John Wyghton, Thomas Ingham, Robert Machon, Robert Furbershaur, Edward Coteler.

##### B. Common Councillors

Conisford	:	John Edward, James Goldbeter, John Caly, Robert Fulburne, Simon Trusse, Thomas Stalon, John Bukle, Walter Geoffrey, John Gerard, John Loveday, John Holyer, Robert Hinton.
Mancroft	:	Robert Lounde, Thomas Bokenham senior, Nicholas Calowe, Thomas Blithe, John Skowe, John Causton, William Swayne, John Shotesham, John Pert, Godfrey Joye, William Attkeyn, John Sexteyn, John Brusierd, John Colton, Andrew Brown, William Multon.
Wymer	:	John Haneworth, Peter Lawrence, William Bowde, John Barly, William Sayve, Thomas Pecok, John Goos, William Reyner, Simon Postell, John Bekklis, Robert Aleyn, Thomas Cambridge, Henry Clerkes, Nicholas Newman, John Elgar, Roger Cook, Edmund Brandon, Roger Best, John Cok, William Coye, smith.
Ultra Aquam	:	John Westerne, Robert Wode, John Rose, John Bertram, Edmund Segefurd, Roger Griggs, Geoffrey Qwyney, John Fitz, Nicholas Aldewyn, William Elmham, John Bramel, Thomas Wacy.

#### April 1987

1. For the political crisis of 1449-50 see R. L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, (1966), 43-68; R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, (1981), chapters 12, 14-18. The record of the parliament is in *Rot(uli) Parl(iamentorum)*, 7 vols. (1832), V, 171-205.
2. For a survey of late medieval taxation see M. W. Beresford, *Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes*, Canterbury, (1963). There are fuller analyses in *Surrey Taxation Returns*, ed. H. C. Johnson, Surrey Rec. Soc. XXXIII, (1932), introduction; and in R. S. Schofield, 'Parliamentary Lay Taxation 1485-1547', unpublished Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis, 1963.
3. *Rot. Parl.* V, 142.



4. The subsidy granted in 1435 and collected in 1436 is discussed by H. L. Gray, 'Incomes from Land in England in 1436', *English Historical Review*, XLIX (1934), 607-39; and by T. B. Pugh and C. D. Ross, 'The English baronage and the Income-Tax of 1436', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, XXVI (1953), 1-28. For a discussion of the background and nature of the 1450 subsidy see R. Virgoe, 'The Parliamentary Subsidy of 1450', *Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.*, LV (1982), 125-38.
5. *Rot. Parl.*, V, 172-4, 211; and see Virgoe, *espec.* 131-2.
6. For later developments in methods of taxation see Schofield, 'Parliamentary Lay Taxation'.
7. See Gray, 'Incomes from Land', and Pugh and Ross, 'English Baronage'.
8. Public Record Office, E.179/238/78.
9. P.R.O. E.359/29. This account is a summary of subsidy payments paid and owed by sheriffs of each county. The Norwich entry seems to ignore the assessments made on the second rotulet of the document printed below and gives the total liability of the sheriffs as £55 15s, the total of the assessments listed on 4 February.
10. British Library, Additional MS. 34122.
11. See Pugh and Ross, 'English Baronage', and Virgoe, 'Parliamentary Subsidy'.
12. *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Davis, 2 vols., Oxford, (1971, 1976), II, 474.
13. See, for instance, J. G. Edwards, 'The Huntingdonshire Parliamentary Election of 1450', in F. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (eds), *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, Toronto, (1969), 383-95.
14. See Virgoe, 'Parliamentary Subsidy'.
15. In April 1452 a group of Norfolk gentlemen sent a letter from Norwich to the sheriff, complaining of the activities of one Charles Nowell. John Paston drafted the letter and those associated with him were Sir John Heveningham, John Ferrers, Thomas Gurnay, John Groos, William Rokewood, John Bacon, senior and junior, John Pgrave, Robert Mortimer and Nicholas Appleyard. Apart from the younger Bacon and Appleyard all were on the Norwich subsidy list, so it looks as though they were normally resident there — *Paston Letters* 1, 42.
16. Norfolk Record Office, Norwich Corporation Records: Assembly Book, I, f.21.
17. See table in Virgoe, 'Parliamentary Subsidy', 138.
18. The particulars of the subsidy return for York list over 240 liable to pay the subsidy, some seventy more than in Norwich. Some of these are outsiders but there were fewer wealthy landowners — those assessed at over £20 p.a. contributed £24 to the York subsidy compared with £38 at Norwich — P.R.O., Exchequer, Lay Subsidy, E.179/217/56.
19. *Cal. Fine Rolls, 1445-52*, 167-71, 223-4.
20. P.R.O., E.359/29. As the later records of the subsidy are far from complete and the Exchequer records have not been thoroughly searched there can be no certainty on this point.
21. *Complete Peerage*, IX, 218-9; B. L. Addit. MS.34122; N.R.O., N.C.C. 50 Jekkys.
22. F. Blomefield (and C. Parkin, *An Essay towards a topographical history of the county of Norfolk, 2nd ed. (1805-10)*), II, 549; J. S. Roskell, *The Commons in the Parliament of 1422*, Manchester (1954), 238-9; *The Register of Henry Chichele*, ed. E. F. Jacob (Canterbury and York Soc. 4 vols. 1938-47), II, 436-45.
23. Blomefield, VIII, 109; P.R.O., PROB 11/1, f.14; N.R.O., N.C.C. 185 Brosyerd; N.R.O., WKC 4/1; J. D. Milner, 'Sir Simon Felbrigge, K.G.' *Norfolk Archaeol.* XXXVII (1978), 84-91.
24. P.R.O. C.139/150/36; Blomefield, VII, 158, VIII, 282.
25. N.R.O., N.C.C. 214 Brosyerd.
26. J. C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament 1439-1509; Biographies* (1936) 492-3; Blomefield, X, 30; N.R.O., N.C.C. 62 Betyns.
27. He was a J.P. in Suffolk, but not in Norfolk — *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1446-52*, 592, 595; *Paston Letters*, I, 26, 136, 147.
28. Blomefield, III, 162; N.R.O., N.C.C. 78 Gelour; N.R.O., WKC1/304/8.
29. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament*, 976-7; *Paston Letters* 1, 129; P.R.O., K.B.9/265/3, 272/2.
30. *Paston Letters, passim*. Of the ten surviving letters from her dated between 1445 and 1453 six are addressed from Norwich.
31. *The Visitation of Norfolk in the year 1563*, ed. G. H. Dashwood and others, *Norf. & Norwich Arch. Soc.*, 2 vols. Norwich (1878-95), II, 316-7; *Paston Letters, passim.*; N.R.O., N.C.C. 117 Wilbye.
32. *Paston Letters, passim*; *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1452-61*, 103; N.R.O., Dunston MSS DUN(A). 9.
33. *Visitation of Norfolk*, II, 23-5; N.R.O., N.C.C. 64 Jekkys.
34. D. Gurney, *The Record of the House of Gournay*, 2 vols. (1854-58), 286-7.
35. P.R.O., C.67/45, m.31; Blomefield, V, 20.
36. P.R.O., PROB 11/6, fo.7; Blomefield, VII, 243, IX, 119.
37. *Visitation of Suffolk*, ed. J. Howard, 2 vols. (1866), II, 273, 293-5 etc.
38. Blomefield, XI, 324-5.
39. N.R.O., N.C.C. 59 Jekkys; *Cal. Close Rolls 1441-47*, 297-8; *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1429-36*, 270.

40. Blomefield, XI, 10-11; N.R.O., N.C.C. 186 Aleyn.
41. Blomefield, VII, 265; *Paston Letters*, I, 40, 48 etc.; P.R.O., K.B.9/272/52.
42. *Visitation of Norfolk*, I, 17-18; P.R.O., C.140/79/7.
43. *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1441-6*, 179.
44. N. Evans, 'The Tasburghs of South Elmham', *Proc. Suffolk Institute of Archaeol.*, XXXIV (1980), 269-80; N.R.O., N.C.C. 27 Gelour.
45. W. Hudson and J. C. Tingay, *Records of the City of Norwich*, 2 vols. (1906-10), I, 328-53; 'Three Carrow Account Rolls', ed. L. Redstone, *Norfolk Archaeol.* XXIX (1946), 54; N.R.O., N.C.C. 83 Brosyerd.
46. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament*, 371.
47. N.R.O., Norwich Assembly Proceedings 1434-91; P.R.O. PROB 11/5, fo.30.