

ITINERANT, ROGUISH ENTERTAINERS IN ELIZABETHAN AND EARLY STUART NORWICH

by Phillip V. Thomas

In the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603) Norwich's magistrates dealt with an army of social and economic outcasts. Unemployed retainers; servants; jobless or under-employed workers in recession-hit industries; ex-soldiers; beggars; misfits; copyholders and their families made landless or homeless by enclosures — all were 'victims' of the great, though regionally uneven, economic changes occurring as a result of feudalism's demise and the rise of a capitalist market economy.¹ These people trekked the roads to and from Norwich. They were labelled, rightly or wrongly, as vagrants or seditious-minded 'masterless people'. Increasingly, people connected with dramatic and theatrical arts — actors, minstrels, interludes, jugglers, bearwards *etc.* — were also labelled vagrants according to various Tudor laws, statutes and proclamations. As Andrew Gurr states:²

The authorities were frightened of the companies of players. Their travelling habits made them comparable to vagabonds. Their freedom to roam the country was menacing. They might carry infection from the outside world in ideas as well as the plague. They attracted large crowds, and their insistence on being paid for their work of 'play' made them dangerous as well as seductive².

Since the late 19th century, historians have analysed the origins, treatment and legal status of entertainers in London and the shires during the Tudor and Stuart periods. They have examined and debated the development of royal proclamations, statutory laws and the actions of the Privy Council and local communities with regard to censoring and regulating religious and secular plays, places of entertainment and the performers themselves.³

While this article hopes to contribute to the genre by discussing vagabond entertainers in Norwich it should be recognised that dramatic presentations there, though not necessarily focusing on the itinerant, 'roguish' sort, have featured prominently in earlier studies. A few relevant articles have appeared in *Norfolk Archaeology*. Leonard Bolingbroke contributed two articles in the 1890s.⁴ In 1933 G.A. Stephen wrote about Norwich's 'official' entertainers, the town waits, who performed to honour important civic officers and were financially supported by the townspeople.⁵ Events at Norwich were emphasised in John Tucker Murray's two-volume *English Dramatic Companies 1558–1642* (1910), and by E.K. Chamber's four-volume *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923) which relied to some extent on the former. Since their publication these histories have, despite the valid criticisms of Giles Dawson and David Galloway⁶, been mined as sources for later works on theatre. In particular Galloway — instrumental in establishing the research project known as the Records of Early English Drama (REED)⁷ — incorporated Norwich's records into *Records of Early English Drama: Norwich 1540–1642* (1984).⁸ Norwich emerges as a community providing facilities not only for professional or licensed troupes and town waits, but also for 'ministrelli', tumblers, bearwards, rope-balancers, jugglers and buskers whose status and role were ambiguous. The clown and actor Will Kemp's morris dance from London to Norwich in February–March 1600 is the most famous event of this kind.⁹ This article will explore why and how sundry entertainers in Elizabethan and early Stuart Norwich — even 'official' licensed touring individuals and companies who could have expected better treatment — felt the wrath of officials' increasingly Puritan sentiments and directives. Who were these entertainers? Where did they come from? How long did they stay? And what did they do to offend the local authorities?

In the first half of the 16th century Norwich and its vicinity acted as magnets for various kinds of travelling performers, and indeed were quite willing to accept them. During the late 1530s and throughout the 1540s mayors of Norwich rewarded (*ie.* paid) minstrels belonging to the King, 'certain gamepleyers', various noblemen's 'mynstrelles' and performers of interludes.¹⁰ Similarly the Cluniac Priory at Thetford, from the late 15th century until 1540, made payments to entertainers. These included actors (referred to as 'mimes', 'lusores', 'histriones', 'jocatores' or 'players') officially patronised by members of the royal family and those of the nobility; town waits (musicians who were normally engaged for six winter months by their municipality but also travelled for the other half year); and professional companies. Furthermore, there were itinerant and amateurish tumblers, jesters, bearwards; and minstrels ('minstrellis' or 'menstrellis') such as 'a blynde menstrell' who entertained there in 1537.¹¹

There was another reason for Norwich's popularity with players and professional or amateur musicians. It lay in the fact that although Norwich — unlike Chester, York and Coventry — lacked the complete cyclic form of plays running from Creation to Doomsday, its thirty-one city guilds profited from people who came to watch religious pageantry, processions and enjoy associated entertainments such as the Norwich Grocers' Play.¹² For example, it had long been the proud custom of the Gild of St. Luke to hold, in Pentecost or Whitsun Week:

many and divers disguisings and pageants, as well of the lives and martyrdoms of divers and many holy saints, as also many other light and feigned figures and pictures of other persons and beasts, the sight of which pageants, as they went a great circuit of the city, was sore coveted by the people of the country, who used therefore abundantly for to resort to the said city, to the great profit of the citizens.¹³

Similarly, the record for the Feast day of St. Matthew the Apostle (1528) refers to Norwich as:

sore coveted, specially by the people of the countre; beforse wherof yerly at that time more than any other tymes in the yeer the people of the countre have used abundantly for to resort to the said citie.¹⁴

By the late 1530s the interrogation of a wandering musician named John Hogan (or Hogon) indicates that such toleration was coming to an end. In February 1537 Hogan, an oft-cited and notorious fiddler who moved 'abought the Cuntre wyth a Crowde or a ffyddylle', was prosecuted for singing, at Diss, a ballad about land-grabbing lords of the realm and 'the Masteres of Arte, & Doctoures of Dyvynte [who] haue brought this realme ought of goode vntye'.¹⁵ In April that year Ralph Rogerson, who had been a 'singing man' at the priory of Walsingham, complained that he would lose his livelihood with the closure of the abbeys. Rogerson, inspired by the example of the Pilgrimage of Grace, wanted to rouse local people at Shepcotes Heath and bring their grievances to Henry VIII's personal attention.¹⁶ Kett's Rebellion in 1549, the culmination of a decade of unrest amongst the 'lower orders' over prolonged economic stagnation, outbreaks of plague, high food prices, religion and enclosures, led to a greater suppression of perceived vagrants by the Privy Council in Norwich and Norfolk generally. The Privy Council responded to disturbances by ordering the Sheriff and justices of the peace in March 1547 'for advoyding of Egipcions wandring there, and punishement with extremitie to be made of such as shuld offende the lawe'.¹⁷ In 1548 the Privy Council sent orders not only for the maintaining of beacons, but also 'to have a good eye and a special regard to ... any misdemeanours, &c., to give order for the stay and reformation of the same, with all diligence'.¹⁸ It appears that the performance of a play and interludes during the first weekend of July 1549 at Wymondham to celebrate St. Thomas Becket (who was struck from the calendar by Henry VIII) inspired and provoked the rebels' riotous and hedge-breaking activities.¹⁹

Under Mary censorship proceeded along much the same lines, but now performers suspected of peddling anti-Catholic sympathies caught her government's attention. Specifically, the Privy Council felt compelled to target strolling players in London and other parts of the country as

spreaders of heresy and sedition.²⁰ On occasions in Norwich during 1554 the authorities punished entertainers to varying degrees. The mayor and aldermen questioned James Wharton of East Winch on 20 May about Ralph Grene and Robert Marche, his apprentices. The songs they had sung 'against the mass and the godly proceedings of the Catholic faith of the Church', came from a song-book given to their employer by a minstrel at Wymondham.²¹ Willelmus Mason was pilloried on 26 May 'with a paper vppon his hedd for devysing of vnfitting Songes'; Robert Gold had his ear nailed to the same pillory on 9 June 'for devysing of vnfitting songes against the quenes maiestie'.²² These episodes suggest that successive Tudor administrations were not irresistibly Puritan in their thinking, nor did they conduct a consistent campaign against players and their like. Rather, they used drama and theatrical presentations for their own propaganda purposes to bolster current religious and political orthodoxies.

For the first twenty-five years of the Elizabethan era there appear to have been no punishments for thespian transgressions or illicit attendance at plays in Norwich. Indeed, from 1559 to 1565 there is no evidence of criticisms being levelled at minstrels and players belonging to the Queen, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Leicester, Lord Oxford, Lord Ambrose and Lord Willoughby, or in other towns for that matter. They were allowed to perform and receive payment for their efforts.²³ The demise of the productions of Corpus Christi, Whitsuntide and other feast days between 1565 and 1570 does not solely indicate an intolerance of supposed Catholic ritual either. Preoccupied with municipal projects, the state of local wool manufacture and the poverty of the city, its crafts and working people, Norwich simply allowed once-popular religious celebrations like Corpus Christi and the Grocers' Play to slide into oblivion.²⁴ As well as gild-associated musicians, the town waits were also affected. As servants of the corporation, professional music makers and show or pageant presenters they were entitled to certain 'fringe benefits', but had now been deprived of an important source of legitimate and sanctioned income. To survive they hired themselves out as performers at private dinners, anniversaries, family functions and weddings. Norwich's corporation was not unduly alarmed by this because the waits generally obeyed the restrictions of the night watch and rarely left the town in any case. Two developments, however, aroused concern.

One was the waits' tendency to combine music with other occupations, and none was more lucrative or mutually supportive than entertaining clients in alehouses and inns.²⁵ These in turn attracted other players and minstrels and their hangers-on from out of town, leading to many instances of deliberate flouting of rules about where and for how long they could perform. The second development concerned certain political intrigues in Norwich during 1569–70 which propelled Norwich into a decidedly Puritan direction. Firstly, the fourth Duke of Norfolk was incarcerated in the Tower of London on 11 October 1569, following the revelations of his involvement with Mary, Queen of Scots and the northern revolt of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland.²⁶ Secondly, in May 1570 some substantial office-holders and gentlemen of the county, their supporters including gentry with strong Catholic sympathies, conspired to link up with the northern rebels, using as a 'cover' the idea of ridding Norwich of its foreign population. However, nothing came of it and those involved were arrested and executed soon enough.²⁷ The most alarming aspect of this attempt was its success in rallying some support at Harleston fair, in the parish of Redenhall on the Norfolk/Suffolk border.²⁸ As A.L. Beier points out, market days and fairs were 'magnets' for vagrants and, in the midst of looking for work, trouble, entertainment, alms, or stealing goods, these people also peddled dangerous gossip.²⁹ Their access and movement to and around Norwich was made easier by the good state of the roads linking East Anglian fairs.³⁰ Perhaps with this in mind, Burghley demanded vigilance 'for

beacons, for suppressyng of Rogues and vacabondes, for orders for peace in fayres and marketts', and 'sharp and spedy punyshment of carriers and spreddors' of stories and rumours.³¹

These events had repercussions for itinerant entertainers who went to Norwich, and brought to prominence not only those Protestant justices whom the Privy Council wanted, but Puritan ones at that. They acted to remove all vestiges of Catholic ceremonial in church services and punished wilful absentees from church. They also punished what they reckoned to be manifestations of vagrancy and related disorders: idleness, drunkenness, dissent, adultery, bastard-bearing, profanity and blasphemy. The measures implemented in Norwich by Puritan magistrates were all-encompassing:

... blasphemers of the Almighty God, adulterers, fornicators, bauds, or receauers of such pesons ... Any dronkardes, ribldes, common slaundersers of their neighbors, raylers or scolders, sowers of discorde between neighbours ... any Innkeepers or Alewives, that admit any resort to their houses in tyme of common prayer. Any that commonly absent themselves from theyre owne Church or otherwise idely or lewedly prophaneth the Sabbath daye ...³²

Throughout the 1570s, Norwich magistrates imposed restrictive rules on people liable to be accused of vagrancy, particularly travelling entertainers and their ilk. Furthermore, the authorities could be counted on to implement the 1572 'Acte for the Punishment of Vacabondes and for Relief of the Poor & Impotent' (Eliz. I, c.5). This much-quoted law, the main one that the Elizabethan government implemented to regulate entertainers, stipulated that all players could be cited as vagrants unless they wore the livery or insignia, of a patron, a senior nobleperson.

The ravages of the plague which followed Elizabeth I's well-documented visit to Norwich in 1578, and the outbursts of infection in 1591, 1602 and 1625, also awakened a strong feeling of distrust in the minds of civic officials against strolling players. Even properly licensed and disciplined companies which were not tainted with itinerancy felt the wrath of Norwich's administration. Two events in 1583 confirmed suspicions that entertainment encouraged the vice of idleness, promoted brawls and quarrels, profaned the Sabbath, spread the plague and even encouraged murder. The Earl of Worcester's players, who would gain further notoriety by terrorising Leicester in March 1584³³, flouted the Norwich authorities' directions in June 1583. They were not permitted to play, but when they received money as recompense they played anyway and were told to leave town.³⁴ Then on the afternoon of 15 June 1583 the Queen's Players were scheduled to perform a play in the yard of the Red Lion Inn. Shortly after the start a gatecrasher threatened the players' gate-keeper and in retaliation three of the players, all armed with swords, pursued the man into the street. Matters got out of hand. Sir William Paston's servant mortally wounded with his sword a person who had assaulted one of the players.³⁵ Whether the corporation used this particular incident to justify its hardening attitude towards players is yet to be resolved, but the tone of future records is unmistakable. Between 1585 and 10 February 1589, the day when the Norwich Assembly passed a law punishing illicit attendance at plays ('no ffreeman of this Citie shall go to, or bee present at any playe or enterlude within the seid Citie or lybertyes therof'), many patronised companies were paid not to play and troupes which did not comply with this edict were punished. When they did play, their performances were permitted only under very strict conditions.³⁶

One of the most significant developments to engage the attention of Norwich's authorities during the 1590s and after, was the practice of various touring companies carrying 'patents' with them on their travels. Patents marked an effective method of regulation in that they presented a town mayor not only with a legitimate licence to play, but also the patron's livery and prestige. Unfortunately patents could be easily forged, sidestepped or simply mismanaged. While the Lord Chamberlain began circulating letters (1616) concerning forged patents, some

local authorities, Norwich included, did not even necessarily accept valid patents as an entitlement for players to set up their 'bills'. As far as Norwich is concerned, the record shows that the patience — if not gullibility — of mayors and their officials was sorely tested when two companies, using the same patent, appeared within a few weeks of each other.³⁷ In fact, on 4 August 1606, the Chief Justice, Sir Edward Coke, appears to have told local justices of the peace that they could have the last word in remedying perceived abuses: 'they hauing no commission to play in any place without leaue: and therefore, if by your willingnesse they be not entertained, you may soone be rid of them'.³⁸ Subsequently Thomas Swynerton, claiming to be one of the Queen's players, was gotten rid of in 1616 for 'bringinge with him no patent'. So was Robert Lee in 1617, a man caught with a duplicate of Queen Anne's patent who then reappeared on 29 August 1618 as leader of a new group.³⁹

In the last years of Elizabeth I and in the early Jacobean period it became harder and more time-consuming for the mayor's court to monitor visiting troupes' activities. The 'legitimate' theatre was flooded with a host of itinerant but persistent and resilient people trying to earn their livings by skill, cunning, audacity and sometimes sheer bluff. Roguish minstrels, balladeers and their families were told to leave Norwich. If they were caught again they risked being whipped out of the city or incarcerated in Bridewell, the local house of correction for moral or work-shy delinquents.⁴⁰ On other occasions it appears that Norwich's governors' sense of tolerance and tastes defined what was considered to be disorderly⁴¹: a Turk is paid forty shillings for going 'vpponn Roppes at newhall' (1589–90); a group of players armed with fake licences masquerades as players of Lord Chandos (1590–91); a London weaver, John Wheately, is registered as able to show 'a beast called A Basehooke' (12 July 1600); John Watson, ironmonger, and Roger Laurence have the king's warrant to display 'two beastes called Babonnes' (5 October 1605); the Frenchman Jacques Babell is licensed by the Privy Council 'to play vppon A Roape' (24 December 1608); and Ralph Reeve, claiming to be 'Phillipp Rocester', kept a Boys' Company in Norwich until he 'was enjoyned to departe the City...not to play at all upon paine of punishment' (10 August 1611). Finally, even the performances of the licensed players representing Lady Elizabeth had degenerated into 'many outrages & disorders Commytted As fightynges whereby some were wounded, and throweing about & publishinge of sedicious Libelles' (21 March 1614).

By the mid-1620s it is evident that strolling, roguish players — despite Norwich's increasingly grim attitude to, and censure of, such manifestations of 'idleness' or 'masterlessness' — were not in the least discouraged from going there.⁴² This was a period, more so than the Elizabethan one, when Norwich's authorities were infused with a kind of Puritanism demanding a zealous religious attitude towards daily life and worship, strict observance of moral commandments and standards. They looked to the town magistrates to enforce discipline on errant sinners. The mayor's court operated as a moral policeman, punishing swearers and drunkards, and tried to empty the alehouses of entertainers, gamesters, drunkards and gamblers.⁴³ One particular incident dated 27 May 1623, however, indicates that the Jacobean Privy Council, more so than its Elizabethan predecessor, could influence Norwich's handling of the problem. In a letter the point was made that working people were likely 'to be drawne a way from their works, and labour, by this sorte of loose, and wandering people...several companies of players, tumblers, dancers upon the ropes and the like', and 'manufactures are in the meane tyme in such sorte neglected, as causeth dayly...dammage to that City [and] noe small hurt and priudice to the Comon wealth in generall'.⁴⁴ Then in April 1624 the Norwich authorities used a letter from the Privy Council that sympathised with the bans on public playing as their pretext to ban the next company from performing there.⁴⁵ These incidents

suggest that the absence of letters from the Elizabethan Privy Council means that it had more confidence in Norwich's ability to distinguish between legal and illegal players. It is also significant that by the Caroline period local officials put more store in the Privy Council's authority than the king's signet on his licence to any given company.

It is at best naive, and at worst misleading, to generalise about travelling acting companies and individual entertainers on the basis of evidence from one town, and Elizabethan/early Stuart political and social attitudes toward them. The Norwich evidence confirms that under aristocratic, civil and ecclesiastical patronage hundreds of actors and players travelled the length and breadth of England by the end of the 16th century, despite growing pressures against their doing so. In fact, Norwich proved to be a centre of dramatic activity well after the Restoration.⁴⁶ Entertainers were involved in a complex social struggle with their enemies and detractors in London and the provinces. Attacked as immoral and for inciting disorder in their audiences, the creation of the Theatre and the Curtain in London as legitimate establishments was not enough to suggest that players had a fixed, secure place in the commonwealth. The dilemma after the 1570s rested on two matters: who had the right to control strolling entertainers; and — since patronised, licensed and therefore legitimate players were often as idle and footloose as illegal ones — could they be subjected to the same range of controls?⁴⁷

The attitude and policy of Elizabeth I's regime to the treatment and punishment of entertainers is hard to pin down. Elizabeth's government did not wish to suppress theatrical activities *per se* but in an atmosphere of economic uncertainty and religious and doctrinal tumult, the performance of pageants, plays and other kinds of popular entertainment in parish communities and shire towns gave vent to breaches of the peace and civil disorder. While the Privy Council suppressed actors' groups and theatres, this does not necessarily mean it was hostile to them. Under the earlier Tudors the Privy Council knew that players made a good vehicle for propaganda in winning the 'hearts and minds' of the monarch's subjects, at the risk of public comment on taboo subjects.⁴⁸ Under the terms of the 1572 poor law they could authorise them to play without fear of prosecution as vagabonds.⁴⁹ The 1570s and 1580s witnessed the unfolding of a fundamental clash between the Privy Council and town governments. While actors received the patronage of Elizabeth I, her courtiers and noblemen, local administrations, deliberately or misinformedly, lumped legal acting troupes with the lowest vendors of the profession. Officials built a maze of legal and economic obstacles to either keep them out or discourage them from performing in their communities. Puritan-leaning town mayors and their supporters among the citizenry and executive arm learned to exercise great patience and tact when a form of entertainment subsidised by a court aristocracy based in London, imposed itself on their provincial urban environments. If there were inconsistencies in the way minstrels and their kind were treated in relation to vagrancy laws — some escaping its application but others not — it is because as Peter Womack suggests, they symbolised a political paradox; 'actors were affiliated [to] the nation — an invisible collective, too numerous and diffused ever to be literally present — while on the other hand they had disaffiliated from the immediate urban body in whose neighbourhood they happened to work'.⁵⁰

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- 1 Tudor Norwich's economic troubles and how they contributed to these forms of vagrancy, particularly in the period 1565-80 and including the famous 1570 census and 1571 *Book of Orders*, have been analysed elsewhere: E.M. Leonard, *The Early History of English Poor Relief*, Cambridge, 1900, 101-107; Margaret Pelling, 'Healing the Sick Poor: Social Policy and Disability in Norwich 1550-1640', *Medical History* 29, 1985, 115-37; *idem.*, 'Old Age, Poverty, and Disability in Early Modern Norwich: Work, remarriage and other expedients', in

- Margaret Pelling and Richard M. Smith (eds.), *Life, Death and the elderly: Historical perspectives*, London, 1991, 74-101; Paul Slack, *Poverty & Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*, Harlow, Essex, 1988, 73-75, 82-85; Charles Moreton, 'Mid-Tudor Trespass: A Break-in at Norwich, 1549', *English Historical Review* CVIII, 1993, 387-98. J.F. Pound's research is required reading: 'An Elizabethan Census of the Poor: The treatment of vagrancy in Norwich, 1570-1580', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* VII, 1962, 135-61; *The Norwich Census of the Poor 1570*. Norfolk Record Society, XL, Norwich, 1971; *Poverty and Vagancy in Tudor England*, London, 1971, 60-68; and 'The social and trade structure of Norwich 1525-1575', in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Early Modern Town: A Reader*, London, 1976, 129-47.
- 2 Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, Oxford, 1996, 9.
- 3 For example: Frederick G. Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the London Stage 1559-1642*, London, 1890; J.T. Murray, 'English Dramatic Companies in the Towns Outside of London, 1550-1600', *Modern Philology* 2, 1904-5, repr. 1965, 539-59; Virginia C. Gildersleeve, *Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama*, New York, 1908; Alwin Thaler, 'The Travelling Players in Shakespere's England', *Modern Philology* XVII, 1920, 489-514; *idem*, 'The Elizabethan Dramatic Companies', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, New Ser. XXVIII, 1920, 123-59; *idem*, 'Strolling Players and Provincial Drama after Shakespere', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, New Ser. XXXVII, 1922, 243-80; Louis B. Wright, 'Variety Entertainment By Elizabethan Strolling Players', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* XXVI, 1927, 294-303; William Ringler, 'The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage, 1558-1579', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5, 1942, 391-418; William J. Griffin, 'Notes on Early Tudor Control of the Stage', *Modern Language Notes* LVIII, 1943, 50-54; Muriel C. Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player: A Study of Actor and Society in Shakespeare's England*, London, 1962; Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300 to 1660. I. 1300 to 1576*, London, 1963, esp. 51-190; W. Carew Hazlitt (ed.), *The English Drama and Stage Under The Tudor And Stuart Princes 1543-1664*, New York, repr. 1967; Ian Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558*, Cambridge, 1984; John Wasson, 'Elizabethan and Jacobean Touring Companies', *Theatre Notebook* XLII, 1988, 51-57; Barbara D. Palmer, 'Early Entertainment Patterns in Northern England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 74, 1992, 175-87; and Gurr, *passim*.
- 4 'Pre-Elizabethan Plays and Players in Norfolk', *Norfolk Archaeology* XI, 1892, 332-51; 'Players in Norwich, from the Accession of Queen Elizabeth until their suppression in 1642', *Norfolk Archaeology* XIII, 1898, 1-20.
- 5 'The Waits of the City of Norwich through Four Centuries to 1790', *Norfolk Archaeology*, XXV, Part 1, 1933, 1-70.
- 6 Giles E. Dawson (ed.), 'Records of Plays and Players in Kent 1450-1642' in *The Malone Society, Collections VII*, Oxford, 1965, vii; David Galloway, 'Records of Early English Drama in the Provinces and what they may tell us about the Elizabethan Theatre', *The Elizabethan Theatre* VII ed. G.R. Hibbard, Hamden, Conn., 1980, 87-89.
- 7 Alexandra F. Johnston, 'A Medieval and Renaissance Dramatic Records Project', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* XVII, 1974, 105. REED's editorial policies and practices were debated by Theresa Coletti and Peter H. Greenfield in *Envoi*, vol. 3 (1991). Read their respective articles, 'Fragmentation and Redemption': Dramatic Records, History, and the Dream of Wholeness', 1-13; "'But Herefordshire for a Morris-dance": Dramatic Records and the New Historicism', 14-23.
- 8 Abbreviated here as REED: Norwich.
- 9 Alexander Dyce, *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder: Performed in a Daunce From London to Norwich*, London, 1840; REED: Norwich, 331-38.
- 10 REED: Norwich, 3, 6-10, 12, 20, 24-25.
- 11 Bolingbroke, 'Pre-Elizabethan Plays and Players in Norfolk', 339; John Wasson, 'Visiting Entertainers at the Cluniac Priory, Thetford 1497-1540', *Albion* 9, 1977, 128-34; Richard Beadle, 'Plays and Playing at Thetford and Nearby 1498-1540', *Theatre Notebook* XXXII, 1978, 4, 8.
- 12 REED: Norwich, 9-11; Osborne Waterhouse (ed.), *The Non-Cycle Mystery Plays, Together with the Croxton Play of the Sacrament and The Pride of Life*. Early English Text Society, London, 1909, xxix-xxxii; Norman Davis (ed.), *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, London, 1970, xxxvii-viii; Lawrence M. Clopper, 'Lay and Clerical Impact on Civic Religious Drama and Ceremony', in Marianne Briscoe and John C. Coldewey (eds.), *Contexts for Early English Drama*, Bloomington, 1989, 123-25; John C. Coldewey, 'The non-cycle plays and the East Anglian tradition', in Richard Beadle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, Cambridge, 1994, 192, 201-2.
- 13 Bolingbroke, 341.

- 14 Henry Harrod, 'A Few Particulars Concerning Early Norwich Pageants', *Norfolk Archaeology* III, 1852, 7.
- 15 James Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, XII, Part I*, Vaduz, repr. 1965, 206; R.H. Mason, *The History of Norfolk, Part I*, London, 1882, 129; T.H. Swales, 'Opposition to the Suppression of the Norfolk Monasteries. Expressions of Discontent. The Walsingham Conspiracy', *Norfolk Archaeology* XXXIII, Part III, 1964, 255; J.M. Ward, 'The Hunt's Up', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 106, 1979-80, 7-8.
- 16 Swales, 256.
- 17 John Roche Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Ser., 2, London, 1890, 452.
- 18 Frederic William Russell, *Kett's Rebellion in Norfolk...*, London, 1859, 13-14.
- 19 Russell, *Kett's Rebellion in Norfolk...*, 25; Joseph Clayton, *Robert Kett and the Norfolk Rising*, London, 1912, 50; Stephen K. Land, *Kett's Rebellion: The Norfolk Rising of 1549*, Ipswich, 1977, 41-42; REED: Norwich, 348.
- 20 See references in John Roche Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Ser., V, London, 1892, 234, 237-38; VI, London, 1893, 102, 110-188-19, 148-49, 168, 169, 260-62.
- 21 REED: Norwich, 34-35; Walter Rye (ed.), *Depositions Taken Before the Mayor & Aldermen of Norwich, 1549-1567...*, Norwich, 1905, 55.
- 22 REED: Norwich, 33, 34.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 45-52.
- 24 Covered in more detail in: Waterhouse, xxvii-xxxiii; Alan H. Nelson, 'On Recovering the Lost Norwich Corpus Christi Cycle', *Comparative Drama* IV, 4, 1970-71, 41-52; and Jo Anna Dutka, 'The Lost Dramatic Cycle of Norwich and the Grocers' Play of the Fall of Man', *The Review of English Studies*, New Ser. XXXV, 1984, 1-13; John C. Coldewey, 'Some Economic Aspects of the Late Medieval Drama', in Briscoe and Coldewey, 89.
- 25 REED: Norwich, xxxvii-xxxix.
- 26 *Ibid.*, xviii.
- 27 W.C. Ewing, 'The Norwich Conspiracy of 1570', *Norfolk Archaeology* V, 1859, 74-76; Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History, Biography and Manners*, I, London, 1838, 511-16.
- 28 Neville Williams, *Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk*, London, 1964, 181-82.
- 29 A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The vagrancy problem in England 1560-1640*, London, 1985, 74-75.
- 30 Margaret T. Hogden, 'Fairs of Elizabethan England', *Economic Geography* 18, 1942, 398.
- 31 State Papers Domestic/12, LXXI, folio 155.
- 32 William Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Norfolk*, II, Folkestone, Kent, 1975, 265-66.
- 33 Thaler, 1920, 494-95; Murray, 'English Dramatic Companies in the Towns Outside of London, 1550-1600', 541-42, 545-46, 549, 553-54, 556; J.O. Halliwell, 'Dispute between the Earl of Worcester's players and the Corporation of Leicester...from the records of that City', in *The Shakespeare Society's Papers* IV, London, 1849, 145.
- 34 REED: Norwich, 65-66.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 70-76; Galloway, 104-10.
- 36 Thornton S. Graves, "'Playeng in the Dark" During the Elizabethan Period', *Studies in Philology* XIV, 1917, 103; REED: Norwich, 80-91, 96, 107, 109, 113, 117, 120; and Alan Somerset, "'How Chances it they Travel?": Provincial Touring, Playing Places, and the King's Men', in Stanley Wells (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey* 47, Cambridge, 1994, 51.
- 37 REED: Norwich, xxxiii-xxxiv; Gurr, 248-49.
- 38 E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, I, Oxford, 1923, 306.
- 39 Gurr, 128, 333.
- 40 REED: Norwich, 107, 115, 126, 128, 140-43, 147.
- 41 For the following see: REED: Norwich, 96, 98, 115, 126, 133; Thornton S. Graves, 'The Elizabethan Trained Ape', *Modern Language Notes* XXXV, 1919, 248; Gurr, 205, 363, 413.
- 42 REED: Norwich, 180, 188; Gurr, 6, 50, 137.

- 43 This was a problem that did not abate in the 1630s. See William L. Sachse (ed.), *Minutes of the Norwich Court of Mayoralty 1630-1631*. Norfolk Record Society, XV, Norwich, 1942; and idem, *Minutes of the Norwich Court of Mayoralty 1632-1635*. Norfolk Record Society, XXXVI, Norwich, 1967.
- 44 E.K. Chambers and W.W. Greg (eds.), 'Dramatic Records from the Privy Council Register, 1603-1642', in *The Malone Society, Collections Parts IV and V*, Oxford, 1911, 378-79.
- 45 Gurr, 6.
- 46 Bernard M. Wagner, 'George Jolly at Norwich', *Review of English Studies* VI, 1930, 449-52; Sybil Rosenfeld, 'The Players in Norwich, 1669-1709', *Review of English Studies* XII, 1936, 129-38; and Jeremiah S. Finch, 'Sir Thomas Browne and the Strolling Players in Norwich', *The Review of English Studies* XV, 1939, 468-70.
- 47 William Ringler, 'The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage, 1558-1579', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5, 1942, 394, 406, 411, 417-18; Muriel C. Bradbrook, 'The Status Seekers: Society and the Common Player in the Reign of Elizabeth I', *Huntington Library Quarterly* XXIV, 1961, 111-14.
- 48 Bradbrook, 115.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 117; Peter Womack, 'Imagining Communities: Theatres and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century', in David Aers (ed.), *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, New York, 1992, 109.
- 50 Womack, 110-11.

SPORT AS A POLITICAL MEDIATOR: THOMAS COKE AND THE LAYERS OF BOOTON

by Mary-Anne Garry

SUMMARY

As well as illuminating the domestic sphere, the 18th century Household Accounts at Holkham illustrate the early days of fox hunting in Norfolk and the shared passions of those who took part. These included both Whigs and Jacobite-sympathising Tories, united by a mutual love for field sports at a time when their respective political opinions were more than usually distanced.

Christopher (Kit) Layer junior is remembered as the young Norfolk lawyer who became a Jacobite, squandered his inheritance in high living and suffered the grisliest of fates at Tyburn where he was hung, drawn and quartered. This unhappy tale has already been told by R.W. Ketton-Cremer in *A Norfolk Gallery*. It was a surprise therefore, while studying Household Accounts at Holkham Hall, to come across scattered entries for 'Mr Layer' at an establishment to which Layer had no obvious connection. The majority appear under Hunting Expenses; others refer to board and lodging, clothes (including a peruke), and one for seven places to hear Mr Layer's trial in London. It gradually became clear that the Layer referred to was in fact Kit's uncle, but this was of little help. At a time when politics were more deeply divided than today, why should Thomas Coke of Holkham — a young man in his early twenties on the threshold of his political career and an ardent Whig seeking a position in Walpole's government — have made payments to Christopher Layer senior, a none-too-successful Tory squire and close relative of a Jacobite rebel ?