

THE DEATH OF WILLIAM DE LA POLE, DUKE OF SUFFOLK

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ON 2 May 1450 William de la Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk, on his way to exile in France, was intercepted by sailors in the Straits of Dover and there murdered. His exile was the result of an attempt to save him from the wrath of the Commons in Parliament and outside who regarded him as a traitor, and thus his murder might seem to need little explanation.¹ It could be seen as the deed of a resentful and restless people—the second of the four political murders which in 1450 eliminated those lords considered most responsible for the disasters in France and misgovernment at home.² However, the problems of who the killers were, why they were willing to take the risk of violating the king's safe-conduct, and whether they had any other motive than simply hate for a supposed traitor have never been satisfactorily solved. These questions are of some importance for they are connected with the growth of social and political discontent in the years 1449 to 1450, the decline of the Lancastrian regime, and the rise of Richard, Duke of York, as a danger to the dynasty. The discovery of an important new document bearing upon the death of Suffolk gives the opportunity for a re-assessment of the evidence for his last days and death and for some new suggestions as to where it fits into the general pattern of the events of the year 1450.

The main sources used by previous historians in re-constructing the episode have been the following: (1) The letter written by William Lomner to John Paston on 5 May 1450, the day after

¹ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, v. 176-82. See C. L. Kingsford, *Prejudice and Promise in Fifteenth Century England* (1925), pp. 166-71, for a fairly full account of these proceedings.

² The other three being Adam Moleyns, Bishop of Chichester, killed on 9 January, William Ayscough, Bishop of Salisbury, on 29 June, and James, Lord Say, on 3 July.

the news reached London.¹ Detailed, and presumably taken at first or second hand from the sheriff of Kent's servant who brought the news to London, this is clearly by far the most important source for the incident. Another letter to John Paston from Leicester on the following day adds nothing to Lomner's story.² (2) The so-called "Annals of William Worcester", which Mr. McFarlane has shown to be a composite work constructed by Thomas Hearne from miscellaneous notes and memoranda in an Arundel Manuscript, only a fragment of which is by Worcester.³ Whoever wrote the later sections, however, the notes on the years 1449-50 constitute an independent and useful source and add several important details to the story of Suffolk's last days. (3) "Robert Bale's Chronicle",⁴ almost contemporary for these years, which adds one or two valuable facts. (4) "The Brut", in the version edited by F. Brie,⁵ mainly confirms but also adds something to Lomner's account. (5) All the other chronicles which cover this period give their versions but few differ in any important respect from Lomner's and none is so trustworthy.⁶ (6) The Tudor historians—Polydore Vergil, Hall, Stow and Holinshed—also narrate the incident, but their versions, which sometimes differ materially from those of the fifteenth-century writers, do not appear to be based upon any independent evidence. (7) Several French writers of the fifteenth century mention the murder and two of them name the persons they think responsible.⁷

¹ *Paston Letters*, ed. J. Gairdner (1900), i. 124-6.

² *Ibid.* i. 126-7.

³ College of Arms, Arundel MS. 48. This was printed in *Liber Niger Scaccarii necnon Willelmi Worcestrie annales rerum Anglicarum*, ed. T. Hearne (ed. 1771), ii. 469, and also by J. Stephenson, *Letters and Papers illustrative of the wars of the English in France* (Rolls Series, 1861-4), ii. 767. See K. B. McFarlane, "William Worcester, a Preliminary Survey", *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (1957), pp. 196-221, especially pp. 206-7.

⁴ *Six Town Chronicles of England*, ed. R. Flenley (1931), p. 129.

⁵ *The Brut*, ed. F. Brie (E.E.T.S., Orig. Ser., 131, 136), p. 517.

⁶ E.g. *Six Town Chronicles*, pp. 105, 153; *An English Chronicle* [from 1377 to 1461], ed. J. S. Davies (Camden Soc., 1856), p. 69; *Collections of a London Citizen*, ed. J. Gairdner, (Camden Soc., 1876), p. 190; *Chronicles of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (1905), p. 159; C. L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (1913), p. 344.

⁷ Thomas Basin, *Histoire de Charles VII*, ed. C. Sarraman (*Les Classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge*, 1944), ii. 166-68; *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, trans. Thomas Johnes (1853), 181.

All these sources were known to the chief modern historians who have discussed the murder of Suffolk in any detail, C. L. Kingsford and J. H. Ramsay, and more recent writers on the fifteenth century have been generally content to take the outline of the story from the versions that they gave.¹ The document printed in the Appendix below and the subsidiary references in the public records have not been used before and throw a slightly different light on the affair.

The Duke of Suffolk was impeached in January 1450 during the second session of the parliament that began in November 1449. The accusations against him were in two groups, and ranged from treason and the selling of Anjou and Maine to the French to interfering with the course of justice and local government. After a long-drawn-out process delayed by the reluctance of the king and a large section of the lords to let Suffolk go to his death as the Commons demanded, he was brought on 17 March before the king in his "innest chamber" at Westminster where were gathered "all his lords Spiritual and Temporal thenne being in Towne". There Suffolk submitted himself, as no doubt had been arranged, to the judgement of the king, waiving his right to trial by his peers. The king declared that he found the first group of charges not proved, and for the second he banished Suffolk from all his dominions for five years from the following 1 May.²

That night the duke was secretly let out of the Tower at Westminster where he had been in custody. It was hoped that he would thus avoid the angry and violent Londoners, but nevertheless some 2,000 of them pursued him as far as St. Giles without Holborn, and, though he managed to escape, his horse and some of his servants were seized and manhandled.³ Suffolk reached his estates in East Anglia and during the next few weeks

¹ J. H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York* (1892), ii. 121 ; C. L. Kingsford in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xvi. 50-56 and in *Prejudice and Promise in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 172-3.

² *Rot. Parl.*, v. 176-82.

³ *Wars of the English in France*, ii. 767. The anger of the Londoners at Suffolk's escape was clearly the main cause of the abortive rising in the city on 21 March led by John Frammesley, a vintner's servant, who proclaimed "By this toun, by this toun, for this array the king shall lose his crown", and was executed for it (P.R.O., Ancient Indictments, K.B. 9/73/1).

remained at his house at East Thorp near Bury St. Edmunds, preparing for his departure and awaiting safe-conducts from the king and from the Duke of Burgundy to whose lands he was going.¹ On 6 April a commission was issued to John Houghton, king's serjeant at arms, to arrest ships and sailors in the ports of East Anglia for the transport of the duke and his servants, and at the end of April Suffolk moved to Ipswich where the necessary shipping was assembled.²

At Ipswich, on 30 April, before a number of the leading gentlemen of the shire, Suffolk took the sacrament and swore on it that he was guiltless of the treasons imputed to him.³ On the same day he wrote the well-known letter to his young son, full of conventional, though no doubt sincere, advice, which in the eyes of some later historians has atoned for many of his faults and follies.⁴ The same day he and his servants left Ipswich in two ships and a pinnace.⁵

Suffolk was prohibited from going to France and the fact that he procured a safe-conduct from the Duke of Burgundy shows that he was bound for the Netherlands. He had in his company Henry Spenser, a yeoman of the Crown, who carried letters from the king to the commanders of the garrison at Calais—perhaps, among other things, ordering them to give assistance to the duke.⁶ However, although the commanders may have been friendly, Suffolk was clearly doubtful about the attitude of the garrison and citizens, and when his ships reached the Straits of Dover either late on the same day or early on the 1st May they sent the pinnace ahead to Calais to find out how he would be received.

¹ *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 129.

² *Calendar of Patent Rolls (C.P.R.), 1446-1452*, p. 380.

³ *Wars of the English in France*, ii. 767.

⁴ *Paston Letters*, i. 121.

⁵ Among these servants may have been Jacques Blondell, the queen's avener, who on 10 April sought licence "to awayte and attend upon my Lord of Suffolk in such . . . places as be your noble ordonnance and commaundement he is appointed and assigned to go and abyde in" (P.R.O., Privy Seal Office, 1/18/920 (a) and (b)).

⁶ I owe this reference to Dr. C. W. Richmond. Spenser, who lost 44 marks when Suffolk's ship was seized by the *Nicholas*, was also unlucky enough to be sent to the West Country during the risings of June 1450 and was robbed of another £10 by the Wiltshire rebels (P.R.O., Exchequer Warrants for Issues, 68/13).

The pinnacle was intercepted by a ship called the *Nicholas of the Tower*.¹ The master of this vessel who is, unfortunately, not named by any of the sources, learned from the sailors on the pinnacle of Suffolk's whereabouts and plans and sailed to intercept him. Having come upon the ships he sent a boat to inquire who they were. The Duke himself spoke to the sailors and said he was sent to Calais by the king's command, but they insisted that he must speak to their captain. Suffolk was probably in no position to disobey as the *Nicholas*, even if alone, was far superior in strength, and his own followers were, no doubt, comparatively few, while the sailors on his ships were pressed men and, as events showed, unlikely to support him in a fight. No doubt, too, he relied upon his safe-conduct. On coming aboard the *Nicholas*, however, he was greeted by the master with the words "welcome traitor", and he must have realized then what his fate was likely to be. He was held captive during that day while the master made sure that Suffolk's sailors would not support him.²

William Lomner writes that "some sey he was arreynd yn the shippe on here maner upon the appechementes and fonde gylty" and the *Brut* also states that "he was examined and judged to deth".³ It is, indeed, very likely that there was a form of trial. Suffolk, of course, would not have pleaded before such a tribunal except to show his safe-conduct and this was scorned and destroyed.⁴ He was found guilty and given until the following day to prepare himself for death, being allowed to have his chaplain with him. According to Lomner he used some of that time in writing letters to the king, but if he did none has survived.⁵

On the following day, 2 May,⁶ he was taken from the ship

¹ The authorities are quite unanimous as to the name of the ship, and two independently mention the prophecy of Suffolk's astrologer that he would live if he got out of "the Tower" (Thomas Gascoigne, *Loci de Libro Veritatum*, ed. J. Thorold Rogers (1881) p. 7; *Paston Letters*, i. 125). ² *Ibid.* i. 125.

³ *Ibid.* i. 125; *Brut*, p. 517.

⁴ See below, p. 501.

⁵ *Paston Letters*, i. 125; *An English Chronicle*, p. 69.

⁶ The chronicles differ on the date of Suffolk's capture and death but the variants need not be discussed here in the face of Lomner's explicit statement that he was captured on Thursday and killed on the following Saturday, 2nd May. This is confirmed by Suffolk's inquisition *post mortem* and by the document here printed (P.R.O., Chancery Inquisitions Post Mortem, C. 139/139/25).

into a small boat and in Dover Road "in a place called Scaleshif"¹ he was beheaded on the gunwale with half a dozen strokes of a rusty sword. The executioner was, according to Lomner, "oon of the lewedest of the shippe", according to another chronicle "a knave of Ireland", but the document printed here identifies him as one Richard Lenard, a sailor from Bosham in Sussex. Afterwards Suffolk's body was thrown on Dover Sands and his head stuck on a pole, while his servants were put on shore unharmed but despoiled of their goods.² No doubt it was from them that the Sheriff of Kent learned the details of the murder which he at once forwarded to London. The news arrived there on 4 May and at Leicester before the 6th.³

Contemporaries did not know who were really responsible for the murder except that they were shipmen of the *Nicholas*, nor do any English chroniclers suggest an explanation for the incident save the general hatred for Suffolk in the country. Monstrelet, however, states that the murderers were servants of the Duke of Somerset, a suggestion which will be discussed below. Thomas Basin, on the other hand, says that Suffolk fled with treasure and was intercepted by a pirate fleet,⁴ and this hint has been taken up by a number of modern historians,⁵ although there is no other evidence that Suffolk had treasure with him or that this was the motive for his murder. However, it is indisputable that there were many pirate and privateer ships in the Channel, often, indeed, indistinguishable from the royal ships, themselves mainly privateers. Ramsay, noting the mention of the name "Robert" in connection with the episode in the "Worcester Annals", suggested that the man responsible for the murder might have been Robert Wennington, who, a year earlier, as naval commander in the Channel, had seized the Bay Fleet.⁶ This idea was taken up by Kingsford, though with some caution, in his two accounts of Suffolk's death, and much more enthusiastically by Wedgwood in his biography of Wennington in the *History*

¹ Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 344.

² *Paston Letters*, i. 125.

³ *Ibid.* i. 124, 126.

⁴ Basin, ii. 166, 168.

⁵ Including Professor Jacob in *The Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1961), p. 495.

⁶ Ramsay, *op. cit.* ii. 120-1.

of *Parliament*.¹ Wedgwood's reference, however, seems to be based upon a mis-reading of Ramsay's original suggestion, and the whole theory, in any case, is vitiated by the fact that it is based on a mis-understanding by Ramsay of the original reference to "Robert" in the "Worcester Annals".² There is no evidence that Wennington was connected with the murder and from what is known of his affiliations with the Court party (though admittedly not with Suffolk) it would seem very unlikely.³ Kingsford's remark that the murderer was "no doubt an unscrupulous person, one who would have readily undertaken a commission from anyone who could have paid his price" is, of course, based on no evidence whatsoever.⁴

It might seem that the likeliest clue to the identification of Suffolk's murderers and their motives lay in the ship, the *Nicholas of the Tower*, which all authorities agree was the vessel that intercepted the Duke.⁵ Unfortunately it has not proved possible to discover with any certainty who was in control of this ship in 1450. The *Nicholas* was not the balinger of that name built by Henry V and sold to Dartmouth merchants in 1423.⁶ It was not, indeed, a royal ship: the appellation "of the Tower" does not imply a connection with the Tower of London but appears to have reference to the permanent "castles" built fore and aft for military purposes, most merchantmen erecting only temporary structures when needed for fighting. The *Nicholas* was originally a Bristol ship and references in the Patent Rolls show that in 1435-6 it was owned by some Bristol merchants and was active as a privateer.⁷ In 1442 it was one of the ships appointed to keep the sea and thenceforward it may have been a member of the

¹ Kingsford, *Prejudice and Promise*, pp. 172-3; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xvi. 555; J. C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament: Biographies* (1936), p. 933.

² The manuscript of these collections abruptly breaks off its account of the murder with the name "Robert", as in the printed version: the context gives no support to Ramsay's interpretation (College of Arms, Arundel MS. 48).

³ *History of Parliament: Biographies*, p. 933.

⁴ Kingsford, *Prejudice and Promise*, p. 173.

⁵ For much of this information about the *Nicholas* I am indebted to Dr. C. F. Richmond and Dr. R. W. Dunning, whose general ideas on the whole incident have also been very helpful.

⁶ M. Oppenheim, *A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy* (1896), pp. 12, 13, 22.

⁷ *C.P.R., 1429-1436*, pp. 433, 472, 515.

semi-official, semi-privateering fleets busy in the Channel during the last stages of the war with France.¹ No further reference to it has been discovered, however, until 3 April 1450, when Gervase Clifton, lieutenant of Dover and one of the "keepers of the sea", was ordered to seize the ship, its master and mariners, for the king's service.² It seems unlikely that Clifton succeeded in carrying out this order. By the latter part of 1450 the *Nicholas* was engaged in piratical activities in the Channel and similar references to it are found as late as 1455, after which it disappears from sight.³

Edward Hall's suggestion that the *Nicholas* was under the authority of Henry, Duke of Exeter, Constable of the Tower and Admiral of England, as well as son-in-law to the Duke of York, was based partly upon the erroneous theory about its name mentioned above. In any case Exeter was a minor who did not enter upon his inheritance until 23 July 1450: during his minority his offices, granted in fee to his father, were held by Lord Say and the Duke of Suffolk respectively.⁴ Another clue—the bequest made by the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1453 of his third share in the *Nicholas of the Tower*—is interesting but not very conclusive: there is no evidence that he held this share in the ship three years earlier.⁵ Whoever formally owned the ship it seems probable that by April 1450 its crew was completely out of control, disgruntled and angry like the sailors who murdered Adam Moleyns earlier in the year,⁶ and affected by the feelings of disgust with the failure of the French wars, hostility to the "traitors" in the government and contempt for the weakness of the Crown that were shared by so many, at least in the south-east of the country, and were to be the main themes of Cade's revolt two months later.

This does not exclude the possibility that some of Suffolk's higher placed enemies made use of the popular discontent

¹ *Rot. Parl.*, v. 59, 60.

² *C.P.R.*, 1446-1461, p. 380.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 381, 435, 470; *C.P.R.*, 1452-1461, p. 258.

⁴ Edward Hall, *The Union of the two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York*, ed. H. Ellis, p. 219; *C.P.R.*, 1446-1452, pp. 84, 85, 219.

⁵ Lambeth Palace: Archbishop's Registers, 311 Kemp.

⁶ It is not impossible that some of those responsible for the death of Moleyns were on the *Nicholas*.

against him to plan the murder. In Lancastrian circles this theory was certainly in the air, for three years later in February 1453 there were indicted before a grand jury of the county of Suffolk a number of followers of the Dukes of York and Norfolk. They were accused of plotting in March and April 1450 to raise the south-eastern counties in rebellion, of disseminating anti-government poems written at Bury St. Edmunds, of conspiring to put the Duke of York on the throne and of planning the murder of the Duke of Suffolk. Their conspiracy is said to have taken place at Bury St. Edmunds.¹ It would be unwise to take this document at its face-value. The indictment, before what seems very like a packed jury, was clearly a weapon in the struggle for mastery between the Dukes of Somerset and York. However, it is circumstantial and not implausible. It would explain how the *Nicholas* was able to be in the right place at the right time—for at Bury the conspirators would be in a position to keep a close watch on Suffolk's plans and movements. It would also explain why the shipmen were bold enough to ignore the king's safe-conduct; the sailors did not need orders to kill Suffolk but they did need information, encouragement and promises of immunity. The indictment also ties the death of Suffolk more closely with the revolutionary movement of the summer of 1450. It seems unlikely, however, that the truth about these charges will ever be known.

The document printed below does not throw any direct light on the connection between the murderers and the Duke of York's followers. It is also an indictment and consequently its allegations also must be treated with caution. But in this case the accused men, two in number, were of no importance and their trial had no direct political implications. Also, one of them appears to have made a confession to the king's coroner before his indictment.² The details of the indictment are, again, so circumstantial and in places so unusual that they are hardly likely to have been invented. Unfortunately the Latin reported speech of the document obscures the action and speech mentioned, but that is a defect of most records of this type.

¹ P.R.O., Ancient Indictments, K.B. 9/118/30.

² C.P.R., 1446-1452, p. 475.

Although the government in the confused rebellious atmosphere of 1450 had been unable to take any steps to discover and punish the murderers of Suffolk, the enormity of the crime and Suffolk's intimate relations with the king and queen ensured that when the power of the Duke of York waned in the spring of 1451 and the Duke of Somerset and the Court set about the work of restoring the royal authority in the south-east and punishing the rebels and rioters of the previous twelve months, the action of the shipmen of the *Nicholas of the Tower* was not forgotten. In many pardons issued to rebels in 1451 the proviso is made that it should not extend to "offences committed on the sea against the king's honour", a clear reference to the murder of Suffolk and the scorning of the king's safe-conduct involved.¹ Some time in May or June 1451 one Richard Lenard was captured, possibly on account of some other offence, and, it was alleged, made a "cognisance" before the coroners of the king and of the liberty of Westminster concerning the death of Suffolk, perhaps hoping to turn the king's "approver".² On 18 June a commission of oyer and terminer was issued to the Duke of Buckingham and others concerning treasons and other offences committed by Richard Lenard and Thomas Smith; on the 26th a similar commission was issued to the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham and others touching the cognisance made by Richard Lenard; and two days later John Prisot, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was instructed to deliver the gaol of Canterbury of Richard Lenard.³ On 30 June Lenard and Thomas Smith were indicted at Tonbridge for complicity in the death of Suffolk before the Duke of Buckingham and others, probably under the commission of 18 June.⁴ Smith is styled "late of Calais, yeoman alias wool-packer, alias late of Dover, shipman", and Lenard as "late of Bosam, Sussex, shipman". Both are accused of being present at Suffolk's capture and death, while Lenard is also alleged to have been the actual executioner of the duke. A true bill was found, and both Smith and Lenard pleaded "not guilty" and placed themselves upon their country. Smith was ordered to be brought

¹ E.g. *C.P.R.*, 1446-1452, pp. 469, 497.

² *Ibid.* p. 475.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 475, 476.

⁴ *P.R.O.*, Ancient Indictments, K.B. 9/47/13: see below p. 502.

before the justices at Tonbridge for trial on the following day, 1 July, but no mention is made of Lenard, presumably because he was already being dealt with under Priset's commission of gaol delivery. Unfortunately it has not been possible to discover any account of further proceedings against the two men in the records of the King's Bench.¹

The indictment, except in so far as it concerns Lenard's active part in the execution of the duke, is, in fact, a general indictment of all those who took part in the capture and death of Suffolk. They are accused not only of murder but also of high treason in ignoring and destroying the king's safe-conduct and in accusing Henry of being unable to govern the realm properly and punish traitors. Indeed, the destruction of the safe-conduct, the contemptuous references to the royal power and the length of time that elapsed before anyone was punished for these heinous offences illustrate in themselves the truth of the sailors' allegations. The complaints of lack of governance were, of course, the stock criticisms of the opponents of the regime and are echoed by Cade's rebels.

The most interesting part of the indictment, however, is the reply said to have been given by the shipmen when Suffolk showed them his safe conduct from the king. They apparently asserted that "they did not know the said king, but they well knew the crown of England, saying that the aforesaid crown was the community of the said realm and that the community of the realm was the crown of that realm". These are such astonishing words to be put into the mouths of fifteenth-century sailors that they should probably be accepted as an accurate reflection of what was said, though no doubt distorted by memory and translation. The information could have come both from Suffolk's servants and companions like Blondell and Spenser and from Richard Lenard's confession. No similar words or sentiments are to be found in the many other indictments for treason of this period. The contention that the crown of England symbolizes the community of the realm and that the king's claim to it is not absolute shows that even among the common people it was becoming quite

¹ The plea rolls and indictments have been searched as far as 1455.

possible to distinguish between the crown and the person of the king.

The reference to "another person then outside the kingdom" whom the rebels threatened to bring over and make king raises another important question. The threat might seem to support the statement of Monstrelet that followers of the Duke of Somerset, then at Caen, were responsible for Suffolk's death.¹ But this possibility can certainly be dismissed. All the evidence suggests that Somerset, under whose rule in Normandy nearly all the English possessions in France had been lost, was almost as unpopular among the lower classes in south-east England, and especially the soldiers, as was Suffolk. There can be little doubt that the words refer to the other great absentee duke, Richard, Duke of York, then lieutenant in Ireland; it is one of a number of similar references to York as the saviour of the kingdom which appear in indictments for treason and rebellion and in the polemical literature of these years.² As has been shown above, the Lancastrian government certainly believed that followers of York were involved in planning the agitation and risings against the king's government in the spring and summer of 1450, and though the problem of "Yorkist" involvement in the unrest cannot be entered into here it does seem that the allegations may have been substantially true. York's servants seem to have made use of the general feeling against the government of Henry VI and Suffolk to whip up enthusiasm for their master as the saviour of the country. Suffolk's murder was certainly an expression of the hatred of large sections of the people for him and for the weaknesses of the government, but it may possibly also be considered as the first step in a wider plan for the overthrow of the government, if not of the dynasty itself.

¹ Monstrelet, pp. 150, 180.

² E.g. P.R.O., Ancient Indictments, K.B. 9/265/21; *Political Poems*, ed. T. Wright (Rolls Ser., 1861), ii. 223.

APPENDIX

Ancient Indictments of the King's Bench 29 Henry VI: K.B. 9/47, no. 13.

Inquiratur pro domino rege si Thomas Smyth,¹ nuper de Cales, yoman, alias dictus wolleporter ibidem, alias dictus Thomas Smyth, nuper de Dovorre in Comitatu Kancie, Shipman, et Ricardus Lenard,¹ nuper de Bosam in Comitatu Sussex,¹ Shipman, ac quamplures alii naute et rebelles domini Regis ignoti, proteccionem et salvam conduccionem² Christianissimi Principis Henrici Regis Anglie Sexti post conquestum ac leges et consuetudines eiusdem Regis in regno Anglie hactenus usitatas et approbatas perimpedentes et adnichilantes, secundo die Maii anno regni dicti Regis vicesimo octavo apud Dovorre predictam insimul felonice et proditorie congregavere ad numerum ducentorum hominum et amplius armatorum et modo guerrino rebellionis et proditorie insurreccionis arraiati et de diversis partibus regni predicti aggregati, Willelmum de la Pole, Ducem Suffolchie, fidelem ligeum dicti Regis, iter suum versus partes transmarinas de mandato dicti Regis et sub eius proteccione et salva conduccione pacifice arripientem, felonice et proditorie quasi proditorem et inimicum dicti Regis et regni, postquam idem Dux adtunc et ibidem eis noticiam passagii et salve conduccionis sue versus partes predictas fecerit et eas eis aperte monstraverit et legi fecerit, ceperunt, et ipsum sub custode sua ibidem ut prisonarium eorum detinuerunt, salvum conductum dicti Regis defidentes, et asserentes quod ipsi nesciebant Regem predictum, set bene sciverint coronam Anglie, dicentes quod corona predicta fuit communitas regni predicti et communitas eiusdem regni fuit corona illius regni. Et vexillum de Sancto Georgio et guerram erga dictum Regem tunc et ibidem felonice et proditorie facienda levaverint, proclamacionem publicam facientes quod omnes illi qui cum eis et communitate predicta tenere voluerint sequerentur vexillum predictum, et omnes alii proditores ibidem tunc existentes starent per ipsos ut ipsi cognosci potuerint, asserentesque quod ipsi naute et communitas vellent capere et habere omnes proditores in regno predicto existentes et eos decapitare.

Et pro eo tunc dixerint quod Rex ipsos proditores voluntarie nollet castigare nec regnum predictum melius gubernare ipsimet id facere; medio tempore vellent notificantes insuper omnibus et singulis aliis ibidem astantibus quod ipsi noticiam habuerint de altera persona tunc extra regnum predictum que proditores predictos castigare et regnum predictum melius gubernare vellet, et quod ipsi illam personam in Angliam adducerent et ipsum Regem regni predicti constituerent. Et salvum conductum dicti Regis eis pro passagio dicti Ducis ad partes predictas ut predictur monstratum et notificatum felonice et proditorie adtunc ibidem ab ipso Duce ceperint, dampnificaverint et destruxerint, et predictus Ricardus Lenard caput ipsius Ducis felonice et proditorie amputaverit, et sic ipsum felonice et proditorie tunc interfecerint et murraverint etc.

¹ Above each of these names are added the words "po. se", i.e. "ponit se super patriam suam"—the accused pleads "not guilty" and demands trial by jury.

² The clerk appears to use the forms "salvus conductus" and "salva conduccio" indiscriminately.

Dorse.

Per Johannem Doull et socios suos.

Billa vera ut infra.

Capta apud Tunbrygge in comitatu Kancie coram Humfrido, Duce Bukynghammie et aliis Justiciis Domini Regis ad inquirendum de omnimodis prodicionibus et aliis articulis etc. [in dicto comitatu per infra nominatum Thomam Smyth factis]¹ et ad. . . .² audiendum et terminandum assignatis, die mercurii proximo post festum Corporis Christi anno xxix Henrici sexti.

Johannes Doull	Johannes Barbour
Johannes Wodeward	Thomas Gerveys
Johannes Tigherst jun.	Ricardus Salter
Johannes Pertriche	Robertus Tyherst
Johannes Burghessh	Johannes Tyherst
Stephanus Smyth	Stephanus Broker
Johannes atte Hale	Johannes Fichet

Capias Thomam Smyth die Jovis proximo post crastinum Nativitatis Sancti Johannis Baptiste apud Tunbrygge.

¹ The words in brackets are inserted above the line.

² Words illegible.