

# Document Transcript 5

## **Thomas Churchyard's printed account of the entertainments prepared for Queen Elizabeth in Norwich**

*To the Right Worshipful [honourable] Master Gilbert Gerrard, the Queen's Majesty's Attorney General, Thomas Churchyard, gent. [gentleman], sendeth the sign of goodwill, and wisheth increase of worthy fame.*

Having a desire, Right Worshipful [honourable], to continue in your favour and amity [friendship], I devised sundry [various] ways to give you some cause of recreation, amid the multitude of your grave studies and weighty affairs. And knowing that no one thing is more welcome to a worthy wit, than the understanding of matter, wherein the duty of good subjects is expressed, and the greatness of good minds is made manifest, I have presented you with a little Book, that makes not only report of the noble receiving of the Queen's Majesty into Suffolk and Norfolk, but also of the good order, great cheer, and charges [expenses] that Her Highness' subjects were at, during her abode in those parts.

And, because I saw most of it, or heard it so credibly rehearsed [related], as I know it to be true, I mean to make it a mirror and shining glass, that all the whole land made look into, or use it for an example in all places where the Prince [Elizabeth] cometh to our posterity hereafter, for ever. For in very deed, if the dutiful usage [conduct] of Suffolk and Norfolk had not surmounted in greatness and goodness any five shires in England, for hospitality, bravery [fine show], and frank [honest] dealing, I had not [would have not] made mention of these causes, nor written so large a discourse of their behaviours, and bountiful manner of duty. But finding these two shires so well-furnished of gentlemen, and so flourishing and ready to attend in time of triumph on her that is our triumph and earthly felicity [joy], I can do no less, but with immortal fame sound their praises, and use my pen to their great glory and thanks, as a guerdon [reward] due for their worthy and honest deserts. Hoping that every other shire, where the Queen's Highness hath not been, will rather strive to follow this lantern when occasion is offered, than any way think me affectionate [favourably disposed], or that I have partially [one-sidedly] proceeded in this exercise of pen.

And now, Right Worshipful [honourable], if you muse [wonder] why I do interlard [put into] this discourse with some such words or sentences as may seem to digress from my purposed cause, I pray you conceive, both for variety, and for the virtue of the matter, that my judgement is carried by circumstances [fitting occasion], to treat [discuss] at large those things, that shortness of speech will not suffer [allow], and that my cunning [ability] cannot aptly place everything in his order. But yet, as I may, under your correction I will boldly hold [tell] on my matter which I have penned,

for those people that dwelleth far off the Court, that they may see with what majesty a Prince reigneth, and with what obedience and love good subjects do receive her. Not that I think but all the shires of England are most willing to do their duties to the uttermost of their powers, but that indeed the like of this entertainment hath not been seen, I have presumed to set out these things, and namely, because at Norwich I was employed to set forth some shows, which here I have imprinted [printed], as well those that Her Highness saw not, by means of evil weather, as those she saw and heard, and gave gracious thanks for.

And as I mind to write what truly happeneth in my memory, so mean I to touch a little [upon] the manner and inclination of the common people, whose civil sort [conduct] and courtesy is greatly to be commended. Withal [in addition], I have placed at the end of this discourse a few verses, in the honouring of good minds, and travelling bodies, meaning thereby Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Master Henry Knolles, and others, right worthy and honest gentlemen, presently passed towards a happy voyage, as I hope.

These pains and purposes of mine proceed only on the goodwill I bear to all virtuous actions, and so I trust you will take them. And giving my small Book a little countenance [attention] (if it so stand with your pleasure [inclination]), I shall find myself greatly bound unto you therefore. And among the rest that speaketh well (which are not a few) of your upright government [behaviour] of life, I will not be the last [that] shall yield you deserved laud [praise], as knoweth God, who [may] increase his grace and good gifts in you, and make your end as honourable, as your days hath been blessed.

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### To the reader

If I should not, good reader, as well show thee some matter [subject] of delight, as publish to the world these penned discourses, thy wits would wax [grow] a-weary of my frivolous words, and I should gain but little fruit by my labour and travail [hard work]. And greater delight cannot be presented, than here to show thee the good disposition of some people, bred up and nourished out of the bowels of thine own nation. And albeit [although] it seemeth strange that people nurtured far from Court should use [behave with] much courtesy, yet will I prove by the humbleness of the common people, where lately the Prince [Elizabeth] hath passed, that if in a manner all civility were utterly decayed [ruined], it might have been found freshly flourishing in many of those parts and placed specified before. For so soon as the presence of the Prince [Elizabeth] was entered in their bounds, by a mere [noble] motion of homage and fealty [fidelity to their overlord], a general consent of duty and obedience was seen throughout the whole county, and well were they that might first find occasion by any means to welcome a courtier, and not with feigned [false] ceremonies, but with friendly entertainment. And although it be a custom and most laudable manner [habit] for the poor commons [ordinary people] to run in flocks to see their Sovereign, yet there, as me thought, their desire was so great that they had never enough of the sight [of the Queen] so long wished and desired. And such reverence and humility they used [behaved with] towards all the train [Queen's retinue], wheresoever they encountered any of them, that the inward affections of the people were plainly expressed by their outward appearance, and manifest courtesy. In so much, that the meanest [most lowly] persons that followed the Court, stood marvellously contented with what they saw, and wondered [marvelled] at the rare and good manner of the people, especially in Norwich, where the entertainment was so great [splendid], that all degrees [ranks], from the highest to the lowest, were had in such admiration, that it seemed another world to behold.

Which [this] new kind of reverence, and comely [pleasing] custom of the county (as it may be properly applied), makes the old haughtiness and stiff-necked [haughty] behaviour of some places to blush, and become odious [displeasing]. Yea, in soils [areas] that the Prince [Queen Elizabeth] generally keepeth her residence, and most abode in, where proud people will pass by many of the nobility, without moving either cap or knee – a stubborn stoutness [boldness], and an unmannerly disordered boldness, bred up and fostered on [by] the long familiarity had with the noblemen's servants, and daily view of their masters, with which sights they are so cloyed [over-accustomed to] and wearied, that their duty is forgotten and utterly rejected, that ought to be ashamed of abuse, and should use more reverent manners. If they would (to

leave off [abandon] this audacious fashion) but look on divers [various] shires in this land, as Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and other shires far from the Court, they might soon be learned to clap on [adopt] more comeliness [attractive good manners], and use [behave with] less obstinacy. And if they think scorn [scoff] to be taught at home, of our own people, it were good they were shipped into France or Flanders, our near neighbours, where the meaner sort are not only known by their garments [clothing] and going [way of moving], but perceived by their gestures and humbleness of countenance [facial expression] and speech.

Now, gentle reader, think no other [nothing else] of this my discourse in the commendation [praise] of courtesy, but that I rejoice to see such ancient humility as yet held up [continued] and maintained in England, when pride and vainglory [boasting; self-aggrandizement] would overthrow the good dispositions of the people, and breed both to GOD and man a common contempt. And, as I have rehearsed [related] a piece of those things I saw in Suffolk and Norfolk, to further thy delight towards the reading of my simple Book, so look for presently [soon] at my hands the rest of that Progress [Queen Elizabeth's journey] which I am truly instructed of, or may come to my memory. Thus, committing to thy hands and head the boldness of my enterprise, and [to thy] view of those verses and matter [content] I here have set out, I bid thee farewell.

### The Entertainment of the Queen's Majesty into Suffolk and Norfolk

To write of the receiving of Her Highness into Suffolk and Norfolk in every point [detail], as matter may move me, would contain [take] a great time, in making a just rehearsal [account] thereof. Whereof [as a result], I will but briefly recite [relate] it, and commit [leave] the circumstance [general situation] and manner of the same to your discretion and judgement.

The truth is, albeit [although] they had but small [short] warning certainly to build upon, of the coming of the Queen's Majesty into both those shires, the gentlemen had made such ready provision [plans], that all the velvets and silks were taken up [acquired] that might be laid hand on, and bought for any money, and soon converted to such garments [clothes] and suits of robes, that the show thereof might have beautified the greatest triumph that was in England these many years. For (as I heard), there were two hundred young gentlemen, clad all in white velvet, and three hundred of the graver [more serious, older] sort apparelled in black velvet coats, and fair chains, all ready at one instant and place, with fifteen hundred serving men more on horseback, well and bravely [finely] mounted in good order, ready to receive the Queen's Highness into Suffolk, which surely was a comely [attractive] troupe, and a noble sight to behold. And all these

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waited on the Sherriff, Sir William Spring, during the Queen's Majesty's abode in those parts, and to the very confines [borders] of Suffolk.

But before Her Highness passed to Norfolk, there was in Suffolk such sumptuous feasting and banquets, as seldom in any part of the world hath been seen before. The Master of the Rolls, Sir William Cordall, was one of the first that began this great feasting, and did light such a candle to the rest of the shire, that many were glad bountifully and frankly [freely] to follow the same example, with such charges [expenses, arrangements] and cost, as the whole train [retinue] were in some sort pleased therewith. And near Bury, Sir William Drury for his part at his house, made the Queen's Highness a costly and delicate dinner; and Sir Robert Jermyn of Rushbrook feasted the French ambassadors two several times, with which charges [arrangements] and courtesy they stood marvellously contented. The Sherriff Sir William Spring, Sir Thomas Kidson, Sir Arthur Heveningham, and divers [several] other of worship [honour], kept great [grand] houses, and sundry [several], either at the Queen's coming or return, solemnly feasted Her Highness, yea and defrayed [covered] the whole charges [expenses] for a day or twain [two], presented gifts, made such triumphs [processions] and devises [planned entertainments], as indeed were most noble to behold, and very thankfully accepted.

The Norfolk gentlemen, hearing how dutifully their neighbours had received the Prince, prepared in like sort to show themselves dutiful. And so, in most gallantest manner, assembled and set forward with five and twenty hundred horsemen [men on horseback], whereof (as some affirm), were six hundred gentlemen, so bravely [finely] attired and mounted, as indeed was worthy the noting [observation], which goodly company waited on their Sherriff a long season. But in good sooth [truth] (as I have heard credibly spoken), the banquets and feasts began here afresh, and all kind of triumphs [processions] that might be devised, were put in practice and proof. The Earl of Surrey did show [display] most sumptuous cheer [festivity], in whose park were speeches well set out, and a special device [planned entertainment] much commended [praised]. And the rest, as a number of gentlemen whose names I have not [do not know], were no whit [not at all] behind to the uttermost of their abilities, in all that might be done and devised [put on].

But when the Queen's Majesty came to Norwich, the substance of the whole triumph [procession] and feasting, was in a manner there new to begin, for order was taken there, that every day, for six days together, a show of some strange device [entertainment] should be seen. And the Mayor and Aldermen, appointed among [within] themselves and their brethren, that no one person retaining [accompanying] to the Queen, should be unfeasted, or unbidden to dinner and supper, during the space of those six days. Which [this] order

was well and wisely observed, and gained their City more fame and credit [good reputation], than they wot [know] of: for that courtesy of theirs shall remain in perpetual memory, while the walls of the City standeth.

Besides the money they bestowed on divers [several] of the train [retinue], and those that took pains for them (albeit [although] myself but slenderly [meagrely] considered), will be a witness of their well-doing and goodwill, while the report of these things may be called to remembrance. I cannot, nor ought not, considering their great charges [expenses], and discreet government in these causes, but give them due laud [praise] and reputation, as far as my pen or report may do them good, and stretch out [extend] their credit [reputation]. For most assuredly, they have taught and learned all the towns and cities in England a lesson [of] how to behave themselves in such like services and actions.

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## Glossary

**Bury** – Bury St Edmunds, in Suffolk.

**Humphrey Gilbert, Master Henry Knolles... presently passed towards a happy voyage**

– Humphrey Gilbert was a navigator, soldier, and explorer, and Henry Knolles was a minor courtier. Both received permission to set out on exploratory sea voyages in the autumn of 1578, and this is the 'happy voyage' that Churchyard mentions here.

**Light such a candle** – this is a metaphorical way of saying 'did set such an example'.

**Without moving either cap or knee** – refusing to take off your hat as a sign of respect, or to kneel.