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**The Red Lion and the White Horse: Inns Used by Patronized Performers
in Norwich, 1583–1624**

Two inns are mentioned in the civic records of the city of Norwich from 1540 to 1642, both in connection with the criminal activities of the companies performing in them. The Red Lion is notorious for the murder that ensued from a brawl between the newly-formed Queen's Men and certain members of their audience; and the White Horse was the venue favoured by companies with forged or out-of-date licenses. Read in isolation, the documentary evidence about performances in these inns implies they belonged to a distinct category of venue, a category that did not share the social and physical advantages of the other venues used by patronized companies within the city limits between 1540 and 1642. These others were the Norwich Guildhall; the New or Common Hall, which had been the nave of the Blackfriars' priory; the cathedral precincts; the Duke of Norfolk's palace; and the more elusive 'Master Castlydens'.¹ But non-theatrical documentary and material records relating to the Red Lion and the White Horse also survive. They include the sixteenth-century Norwich landgables (or property tax assessments); early deeds, wills, and probate inventories; reports on modern archaeological investigations; and the architecture and layout of the modern city. These sources provide evidence about each inn's location, function, and dimensions; its ownership, status in the community, and relationship to the city government; its popularity as a performance venue; and its fate in later centuries. Read in the context of this non-theatrical evidence, the records of performances at the Red Lion and the White Horse take on altogether different implications. In combination, the sources shed some light on persistent questions about the relative importance of inns as performance venues; players' preferences for indoor vs outdoor and civic vs public playing spaces; and the popularity and success of touring companies in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

1583: The Red Lion

The Red Lion earned the rare privilege of notice from the Norwich city record-keepers earlier than the White Horse, for what would become an infamous performance by Elizabeth I's newly-formed Queen's Men on Saturday 15 June 1583. The company, only a month old at the time, had been hand-picked by the Earl of Leicester, whose long experience and influence in theatrical and political circles had allowed him to head-hunt leading actors from a number of companies, including Richard Tarlton, who came from Sussex' men, and John Bentley and John Syngar, who may have come from Leicester's own company. In addition to their individual fame, personal connections to noble families (Sir Philip Sidney, for example, was godfather to Tarlton's son), and the status of their patron, the Queen's Men may even have been understood to be information-gatherers for the crown.² The second city of the realm, with its large population,³ must have been a promising stop on their inaugural provincial tour and the Norwich audience and city government likely had equally high hopes for a successful visit. It turned out, however, not to be an unqualified success.

During the performance of the Queen's Men's 'play in the yard at the red lyon in St Sephans' on 15 June, there was a 'quarreling' when 'one wynsdon would have intred in at the gate but woold not haue payed vntyll he had been within'. Wynsdon, it seems, 'in Thrustinge spilt the monye out of the gate keepers hand'. Then, 'one Bentley whoe played the Duke in the play havinge a raper in his hand beinge vpon the stage and vnderstanding of the Stryffe at the gate went of the Stage and one Tarleton an other of the Players went of the staige also'. Bentley struck Wynsdon 'vppon the heade withe the hyltes of his Sworde and brake his heade', 'and offered hym an other Strype but Tarleton defended yt'. 'And the sayde wynsdon and a man in a blew cote' – identified later in the account as one 'George', who claimed to be a servant of Wynsdon – 'went from the gate and Stode over the way' while 'the people Standing at the gate dyd Stay the quenes *seruante*' – this was Bentley still – 'and desyred hym to be content wherevpon he havinge his raper drawn out of the Skaberd dyd ^ rput y vt vp and sayde he had doone and withdrawing hym selfe a lyttle frome the peple ran over the way towardes wynsdon and hym that had the blewe cote and they Ran away'. Wynsdon then disappeared, 'but the Player' – still Bentley – 'overtooke hym that had the blew cote' – George – 'at the cockey nere mr Davyes howse with his raper drawn and thrust at hym that had the blew cote into the legg whereat hee that ^ rhad y the blew cote cryed oh you

haue mayned me and at the cockey tooke vp a Stone and therwe at the quenes *seruant*'. At this point, a Henry Browne, servant of Lord Paston, saw George 'Cast Stones at Bentley and brocke his heade beinge one of her *maiesties* *seruantes* wherevpon this examynate' – Browne himself, that is – 'sayed villan wilt thowe murder the quenes man and the fellowe' – George – 'called this examynate' – Browne – 'villan agayne and therevpon this examynate stroke hym with his Sworde and hyt hym on the legg'. Then 'the people cryed out to Browne ^ rmr pastons man sayeng⁷ houghe hym not', 'and with that he' – Browne – 'drew backe hys Sworde'. At this point, one spectator observed: 'he never sawe man bleed so muche as hee' – George – 'dyd after mr Pastons man had pricked hym'. The legal examiners here 'Note this blowe was geven at Bloomes backgate betwne the red lyon & mr davyes howse', and Browne adds that it was at 'the whyte horse gate in St Stephans'. Then 'he that had the blewe cote' – George – 'ran from hym' – Browne – 'vntyll he came almoste at mr Davyes corner'. Meanwhile, the gate-keeper whose money had been spilled, a player named Syngar, 'ran vp into the stayge and brought An Armyngge Sworde and as he was goinge out at the gate he drew the Sworde'. When Syngar caught up with George of the blue coat at Mr. Davy's corner, 'Syngar dyd Stricke the man'. Henry Browne, seeing George's condition, said, 'give hym noe more for he dowted he had ynoughe already' and 'commeng from the hurt man', said again 'that he had sped hym' with his own blow to George's leg. While 'Elizabeth the wyff of Robert Davy of Norwiche Grosser' was becoming aware that 'there was a man hurt and wounded at her gate whome for pyttye sake shee tooke into comfote hym' and 'Margerye the wyff of Thoma<.> Bloome' likewise 'founde a man in a blewe cote ly bleedinge At mr Atkyns backgate and shee went to hym and stopped his wounde', Syngar was reassuring Browne: 'be of good Chere', he said, 'for yf all this matter bee layed on the thowe shalt haue what ffrendshipe we can *procure* thee'.⁴ George would die of his wounds.

At the time of the affray, the Red Lion was a good property contributing to a thriving hospitality industry in a good neighbourhood. It was one of at least five inns within steps of one another in the parish of St Stephens, the second tenement north of Nedham Sloughe (now St Stephen St) on the east side of Wasselgate (later Red Lion Lane, now Red Lion St).⁵ In 1583, it was likely owned by William Buttfeild: he had owned it until 1570 and between 1616 and 1626 it was still known as 'the Red Lyon late William Buttfeild'. Buttfeild was a responsible citizen: he had been a constable of Norwich in 1544 and a councillor from 1558 to 1560 and again in 1563.⁶ The rent for his property



Fig. 1: Location of the Red Lion.⁶ Map: Samuel King, 'New plan of the city and county of Norwich', map, *The History of the City and County of Norwich from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time* (Norwich, 1768), inside front cover. Reproduced with the permission of the Fisher Rare Books Library, University of Toronto.

for the sixty-year period from 1568 to 1626 remained one penny per year, a substantial amount in comparison to the half-penny the assessors charged for the 'white horse' St Stephens, another sizeable inn around the corner. This 'white horse' (not to be confused with John Powles' White Horse in St Martin-at-Palace or the White Horse in St Peter Mancroft) reached all the way across the block from Rampant Horse Street, where its frontage is noted in the 1616–26 landgable, to Rampant Horse Lane, where Henry Browne

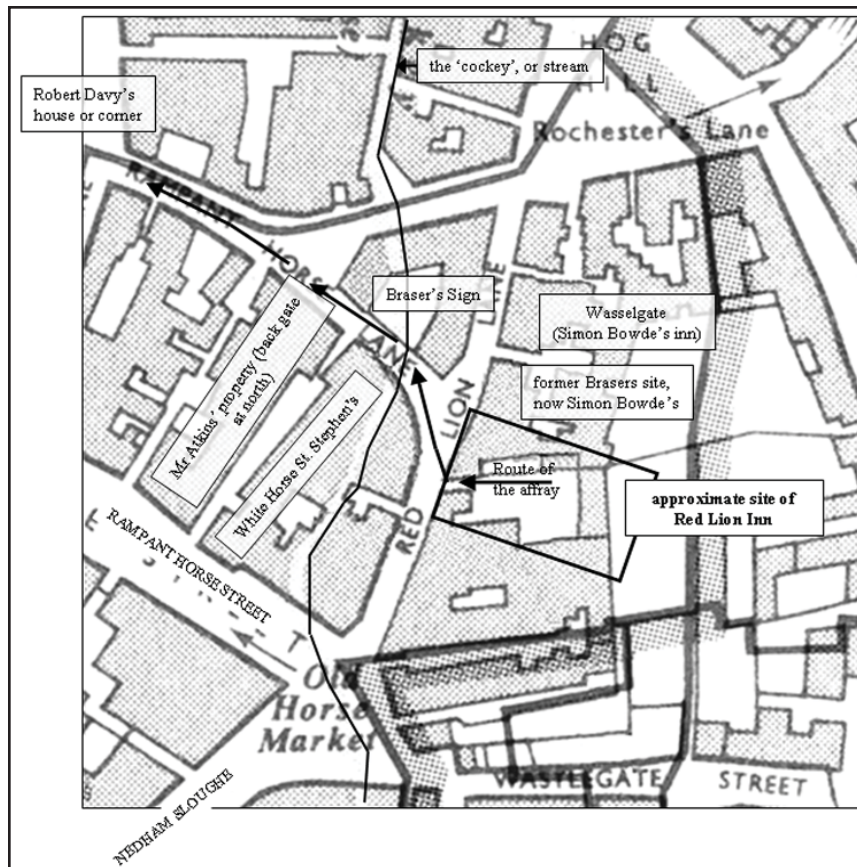


Fig. 2: Route of the Red Lion 'affray'. Map excerpt: M. D. Lobel and W. H. Johns (eds.), 'Map 7: Parishes c. 1789, Norwich', 'Norwich', *Historic Towns, Maps, and Plans of Towns and Cities in the British Isles, with Historical Commentaries from Earliest Times to 1800*, vol. 2 (Baltimore, 1975); based on Anthony Hochstetter, 'PLAN of the CITY of NORWICH, Describing the Streets, Lanes, Public Edifices & Buildings &c. Divided Into its respective WARDS', map (London, 1789), reproduced in *Frostick Printed Plans*, 60. Reproduced with the permission of the Historic Towns Association.

wounded George at its gate.⁸ Buttfeild's next door neighbour to the north, Simon Bowde, had been mayor in 1579. He was a grocer whose property is described as the 'Tenement next late Brassers', a former inn (the original Brasers had moved across the street) that Bowde may have bought in order to expand Wasselgate, the next building to the north. He was only paying a quarter penny for the Brasers site, but Wasselgate was costing him a penny a

year, so it, like the Red Lion, must have been substantial.⁹ The other houses on the affray route being taxed at a penny a year were ‘mr Atkyns’ and Robert Davy’s. Stephen Atkyns, as he is identified in the landgables, may have been a relation of John Atkyns, another property-owner in the parish with a long record of public service that included having been a candidate for mayor in the 1550s. In at least one entry in the 1568–70 landgable, Stephen is called ‘Stephyn Atkyns *generosus*’, or gentleman.¹⁰ Robert Davy was another grocer, probably the son of Mayor Richard Davy, from whom he seems to have inherited some properties. Robert had an impressive career in city politics himself, which culminated in the office of city coroner, a position he held from 1581 until 1588. He was another long-time resident of the parish, having owned his house on the north-east corner of Rampant Horse Lane (now Orford Place) for at least fifteen years.¹¹ If, as Elizabeth Rutledge explains, ‘the amount paid should be a rough indication of the relative size or status of the property’, the Red Lion premises were more or less as large and as lovely as very good houses and inns owned by the foremost citizens in the parish.¹²

The longevity of the Red Lion’s sign and location makes it tempting to speculate that its buildings and grounds might not have changed much in the two centuries after the affray. It was operating as an inn in 1594 and 1595, when the Norwich Innkeepers and Tiplers Book records that ‘Robert Burrow is Lycensed to kepe an Inne at the signe of the Red Lyon in the *parisshe* of St Stephen’.¹³ Between 1616 and 1626, it was owned and operated by Nicholas Emes, a scrivener of Norwich.¹⁴ By the time Emes bequeathed it to his eldest son in 1637, the property was made up of a complex of ‘Tene-ment and houses *with ye groundes* and *appurtenances* therevnto belonging called or known by the name of the Redd Lion scituate lieing & being in the *Parish* of St Stephens in Norwich’. Emes makes particular mention of ‘Copper *fattes*’ among the goods and chattels in his estate; these were large vessels used for brewing or wine-making. If Emes’ personal wealth was any measure of his business skills, the ‘profits and Rents’ from the Red Lion must have been significant. In addition to the inn, his son Robert was to inherit £200. Another £272 was left to other members of the family, and Emes’ oldest son, Edward, was to inherit properties in Pockthorpe, Great Grebbis, Little Grebbis, Colleshall, Horsehead, and Great Yarmouth.¹⁵ The Red Lion was a theatrical venue again (or perhaps it never ceased to be one) by 1676 and performances continued there until at least 1739.¹⁶ Joseph Munday was licensed to operate the inn in 1762 and 1763 and in 1806 Samuel Gurney of the parish of St Stephen was ‘allowed to keep a Common Ale-House in the

House wherein he now dwelleth' called the Red Lion.¹⁷ Its name apparently did not change until later in the nineteenth century, when it became the Yarmouth Bridge and then the Cricketer's Arms.¹⁸ If its structures were as stable as its name, the yard and buildings depicted in Hochstetter's 1789 map of Norwich – substantial enough to warrant its sixteenth-century rents and the description in Emes' will – might represent something like the 1583 layout (see Fig. 2). Unfortunately, no one has yet undertaken archaeological work on the site that could confirm or deny this theory.¹⁹

We do know, however, that the Queen's Men's Red Lion performance took place 'in the yard'. A few other pieces of circumstantial evidence suggest that conditions there were conducive to a disturbance. Although an inn the size of the Red Lion probably had a spacious indoor hall suitable for entertainments, on a June afternoon, when spectators would not mind being outdoors, the possibility of accommodating a much larger audience while still controlling access through the 'gate' made the yard attractive. The gate money that Syngar was guarding could have been a very substantial sum, large enough that when Tarlton and Bentley saw it land on the ground, they might have thought Wynsdon was trying to steal the money rather than merely enter without paying. Siobhan Keenan argues that 'the Stage' Tarlton and Bentley descended from may have been 'an improvised platform made from barrels or forms' like the stages constructed in the Guildhall and New Hall and was probably 'placed opposite the gated entrance', which 'could explain how the actors became so quickly aware that there was a disturbance at the entrance'; she thinks, too, that 'it is likely that the spectators stood'.²⁰ Under these conditions, it is remarkable that no one else was hurt when the actors rushed through the crowd with their weapons. Eyewitness accounts are conflicting as to whether the players had their weapons drawn at first or ran 'of the Staige with there Swordes in there handes being in the scaberdes'; but Bentley would soon draw his 'raper' and use its hilt to strike Wynsdon; and when Syngar, after him, 'ran vp into the stayge' for his weapon, he retrieved a massive, two-handed 'Armynge Sworde' suitable for military combat, with which to strike the unfortunate George.²¹

Perhaps even more remarkable are the accounts of the good behaviour of the audience under these conditions. Far from encouraging the violence, 'the people Standing at the gate dyd Stay the quenes seruante'. Later 'the people cryed out to Browne ^ ƒmr pastons man sayeng ƒ houghe hym not'; that is, do not cut the ligaments behind George's knee, which would cripple him.²² The members of the audience who gave testimony about the incident were,

as Keenan has noted, a fairly respectable group from Norwich and the surrounding areas: Edmund Knee was a yeoman of Yelverton, Edmund Brown a draper of Norwich, and William Kylby a worsted weaver of Pockthorpe.²³ Although they might be suspected of slanting their stories in their own favour before the Quarter Sessions justices, their accounts are corroborated by others who were not inside the inn-yard when the incident began: these were Thomas Holland, a carrier of Norwich, George Jackson, a brewer of Norwich, and Margerye and Elizabeth, the wives of Thomas Bloome and Robert Davy.²⁴ The respectable people mentioned in the records of the affray testimonies are representative of the kind of people who normally frequented English inns as opposed to alehouses during this period. According to Peter Clark, they ‘tended to be drawn from the landed, mercantile and professional classes’.²⁵ However crowded and hot and thrilled by the play – which, as Keenan suggests, based on evidence provided by McMillin and MacLean, might have been *The Famous Victories of Henry V*,²⁶ a rowdy, nationalistic play with plenty of violence and slapstick comedy – the audience inside the Red Lion gate behaved like responsible, ticket-buying citizens.

The character of this audience and the respectable nature of the venue may well explain why the Norwich city record-keepers had never found it necessary to comment upon performances taking place outside of civic auspices before 1583. Such performances had likely been peacefully and reliably contributing to the incomes and reputations of respectable inn-holders in Norwich for decades, through associations with the patrons whose companies performed in them, as well as food and drink sales, and possibly even venue rental fees.²⁷ It would not have been in William Buttfeild’s interest, or the interest of anyone else involved in the hospitality industry, if the Queen’s Men or any other company encountered difficulties continuing to perform in the inn-yards of St Stephen’s parish.

In this context, the parish politicians’ involvement in the legal fall-out from the Red Lion affray is not surprising: they minimized the incident and the Queen’s Men’s role in it as much as possible. Robert Davy, at whose gate George had died, in his capacity as coroner, was one of the officials who examined witnesses to the affray on 17 June. Simon Bowde, the former mayor who owned the inns next door to the Red Lion, was one of the quarter sessions justices who recorded testimony and committed the Queen’s Men and Thomas Browne to prison on 17 June. Bowde may well have been present when his neighbour Thomas Bloome negotiated John Bentley’s bail two days later.²⁸ Bloome, at whose back gate Browne had struck Wynsdon, was

a mercer who had served as constable in 1563 and chamberlain and foreign receiver in 1568–9.²⁹ He was one of two Norwich citizens who posted bail for Bentley, bound on 19 June ‘to the lady queen ... for £20 ... on the following condition, viz: that ... the same John will appear in person before the justices of the said lady queen at the next general sessions of the peace’.³⁰ This gesture of friendship to a member of the Queen’s Men seems not to have hurt Bloome’s prospects in local politics: he was councillor again in 1586.³¹ When the prisoners’ bonds were renewed on 1 July, Bentley and Syngar were allowed to become guarantors for each other, along with Richard Tarlton. Their bail was reduced to half its original amount, and they were released on the promise that they would return to answer their charges at the September meeting of the quarter sessions. Local man Browne, on the other hand, retained his original guarantors (two other Norwich citizens), still owed the original amount of bail money, and was imprisoned.³² Browne’s treatment may have been justified by the widespread impression, including his own, that he had dealt George his death blow before Syngar struck him. But once Browne had answered his charges in September, pleading guilty, he was granted benefit of the clergy and he too was ‘dischardged’.³³ There is no record that the Queen’s Men were ever reprimanded by the Norwich justices for failing to answer their charges, though they were back in Norwich in 1584–5 and they reappear on the city books in 1585–6, in receipt of forty shillings.³⁴ Perhaps, finally, Syngar made good on his promise to Browne that ‘yf all this matter bee layed on the thowe shalt haue what ffriendshipe we can *procure* thee’ but there is no record that the crown interfered in the case; the friendship of the St Stephen’s hospitality industry may have been all the friendship Browne and the Queen’s Men required.

After the Red Lion affray, the Norwich chamberlains and the Mayor’s Court took a more rigorous approach to recording visits from patronized players than they had done for at least forty years. In 1584–5, payments to Leicester’s and Oxford’s players were specifically identified as having been made ‘to thentent they should not playe in the Citie’ and for the rest of the decade, the Norwich record-keepers regularly noted which payments had been made in lieu of permission to play. By 1588, records were being kept of permissions granted without associated payments from the city; these were probably permissions for performances in non-civic venues. Restrictions on the durations of performance runs also appeared. The first of these was a payment of forty shillings to the earl of Leicester’s players on 4 September ‘So as they pley not aboute ij [daies] tymes and then depart *which* they haue

promysed to doo'.³⁵ A decade later, on Saturday 2 July 1597, Lord Huntington's players were licensed to play 'one daye & not vppon the Saboath daye'. This restriction was a change from the previous year, when on 4 December, Lord Beauchamp's and Lord Willoughby's players had been licensed, again without payment, to perform 'vntill wensdaye next behauinge them selues well & Kepingē mete & convenient howers'.³⁶ Since 4 December was a Saturday in 1596, Beauchamp's players could have performed on Sunday 5 December if they had wished. Later, on Wednesday 11 April 1599, a curfew was imposed upon the Earl of Pembroke's players: they were licensed 'to vse their facultie two dayes and two nightes and [^] [rnot] to vse the same after nyne of the Clocke on eyther nighte'.³⁷

This apparent increase in civic anxiety about theatrical performances after 1583 may have been a response to the incidents at the Red Lion. On the other hand, if the city officials were recording payments not to play and permissions to play in non-civic venues, it seems likely that unspecified payments appearing in the accounts between 1584 and 1599, which continued at as healthy a rate as ever, were fees for performances under civic auspices in the city's best venue, the New Hall.³⁸ When players did not play in the years after the Red Lion affray, they were as well compensated as ever: the amounts Leicester's and Oxford's men were given in 1584–5 match the amounts they habitually earned when they played for the mayor – forty and twenty shillings respectively – and the city's routine practise was to pay a compensatory 'gratuity' or 'reward' equal to the payment to play whenever permissions were denied to legitimate companies for the next sixty years.³⁹ Keenan has shown that, of the nineteen regional towns whose records had been collected in REED editions by the time she was writing in 2002, payments not to play were by far more frequent in Norwich than in any other town.⁴⁰ Despite the disturbance at the Red Lion, Norwich continued to be friendlier to patronized players – even when they were not permitted to play – than any other provincial town we can name.

More likely, the increasingly detailed records of permissions for and limitations on theatrical activity in Norwich through the 1580s and 1590s were motivated by a need for the city officials to address the concerns of particular groups of citizens. The events of 1583 probably fuelled objections from an increasingly powerful puritan faction in the city; as Ralph Houlbrooke and Muriel McClendon explain, 'by 1580, it is clear, there was a widespread demand for further [church] reformation on the part of a militant minority of layfolk whose aspirations could only be satisfied by more radical puritan-

ism or separation'.⁴¹ There were additional concerns that the massive campaign the city had implemented in the 1570s to alleviate poverty was losing momentum; in particular, the officials in charge of committing the poor to workhouses were losing confidence in the legality of their actions and that part of the program was stopped. The poor were perceived to be idle and problems with begging and excessive drinking were understood to be related to unemployment.⁴² A theatre-friendly government might have thought it wise to emphasize – in their records, if not as much in their actions – the limitations they were imposing upon opportunities for large crowds to gather at drinking establishments, however respectable, for performances that interrupted the work day.

The city's 1589 proclamation 'against gameplayers' is a case in point. The proclamation was issued on 10 February 1589 by Mayor Simon Bowde – the same Bowde who owned Wasselgate next door to the Red Lion. He placed a ban on attendance at plays in the city as follows:

Whearas heretofore dyuerse gameplayers haue resortyd to this Citie of Norwiche playeng their gamys and interludes vpon the Sabaoth dayes aswell in tymes of preachinges as other dyvyne seruyce to the *prrophanyng* of the Sabaoth daye in great offence of allmightie god and the *common welth* and at the same playes also som *querelles* and *brawlles* haue aysen wherby murder hath insuyd as experyence hath taught to the great displeasure of allmightie god offence of good people and breache of her *Maiestes* peace and also for that the same playes and interludes bee but *provocacions* and *allurementes* to vyces and synnes ffor Reformation wherof ... Bee it this daye ordeyned and enactyd by the whoall Assembly That fromhencefurth no ffreeman of this Citie shall go to, or bee present at any playe or enterlude within the seid citie or lybertyes therof vpon payne of xvj d for euery one offendyng wherof xij d to bee to the poore of this Citie and iijj d to the p{re}senter⁴³

The murder on Mayor Bowde's mind must have been the Red Lion murder, with which he was all too familiar; but the wording of the proclamation and the circumstances surrounding it suggest he was primarily addressing concerns other than his own. One of these concerns was the puritan faction's objection to Sunday performances. As Keenan notes, Sunday playing would not be forbidden by the crown until 1603; this was a local problem.⁴⁴ The need to manage the plague that broke out again in 1589 was another factor.⁴⁵ And the fact that the proclamation banned attendance at plays, rather than the performance of plays, is less odd if we consider that it was politically useful for Bowde to appear to be creating a new source of funds for poor relief. Bowde's own interests lay elsewhere. He had personally fronted the money

for a payment to the Queen's Men, probably for an Advent performance in the New Hall, on 10 December, only two months before the ban. Less than three months after the ban, on 22 April, the chamberlains recorded another payment, this time directly to the Queen's Men 'when the Turke wente vpon Roppes at newhall'. Bowde needed another reimbursement for a payment to the Queen's on 3 June 1589, possibly for the feast celebrating the end of his year-long term as mayor, which would normally have taken place some time in the second half of June.⁴⁶ There is no record of any restriction on the Queen's Men in the year of the ban. On the contrary, their cordial relationship with the mayor – which may have begun more than five years earlier when they had run into trouble next door – was being financially and publicly maintained. Nor does Mayor Bowde's ban seem to have affected the Norwich citizenry, even in 1590, when Lord Beauchamp's players, having been paid a fee of twenty shillings not to play, 'notwithstanding they did sett vpp billes to *pr*ovoke men to com to their playe and did playe in *christechurche*'. Although John Mufford, one of the players, was 'commytted to prison', there is no record of a fine imposed on any member of the audience.⁴⁷

Possibly only canny players from successful companies capable of handling the local political scenario were in favour in the 1580s and 1590s. Leicester's Men, for example, provided information that led to the jailing of one William Storage, a cobbler, who uttered 'leawd woordes';⁴⁸ this testimony must have gratified the puritan faction as much as the city government. But clearly, despite growing pressures from several quarters, patronized players were still on good terms with the city government and could still earn good incomes in Norwich; and the perpetrators of the Red Lion affray were as welcome as, if not more than, any other company. Performances at the Red Lion and other inns were probably continuing as peacefully and successfully as ever.

1601–20: The White Horse in its heyday

At the turn of the seventeenth century, eighteen years after the Red Lion affray, the White Horse first drew comment from the Norwich city record-keepers: on Wednesday, 17 June, when the Mayors' Court wanted for the first time to control the space where a company of players played, the White Horse was their target. Lord Hertford's Men, who had played in Norwich for three days only a month earlier, 'were suters to haue leaue to plaie at the signe of the whight horsse in Tomelland but for this daie'. Permission was not

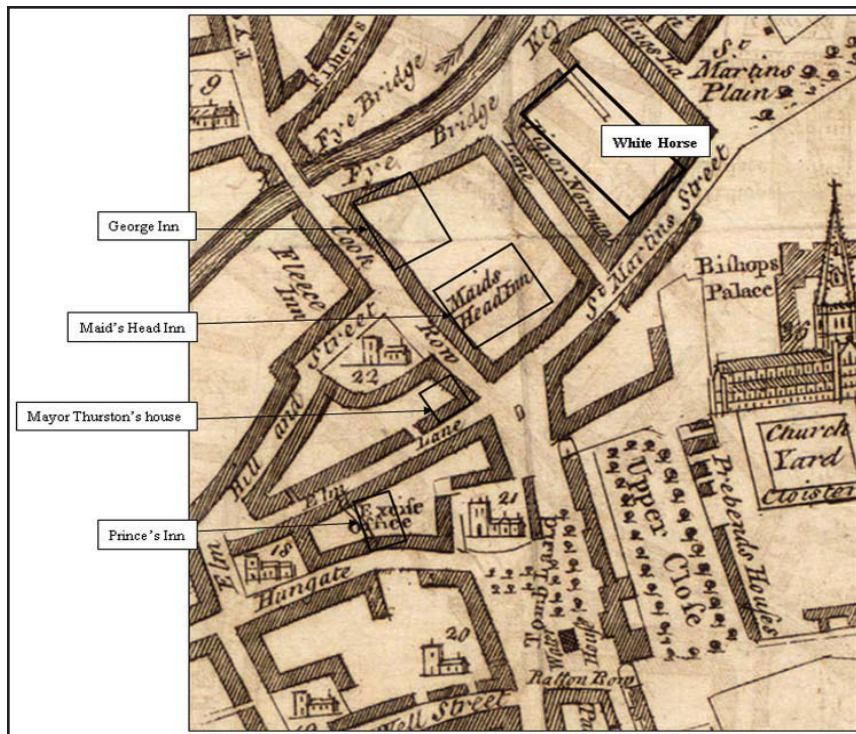


Fig. 3: Approximate locations of the White Horse and buildings nearby. Map excerpt: King, New Plan, 1768; courtesy of Fisher Rare Books Library, University of Toronto.

granted; it was 'ordered that no players or playes be made or vsed in the seid house either now or hereafter'.⁴⁹

No records survive to tell us whether the White Horse had been a popular venue before June of 1601 but it easy to see why Hertford's Men found it attractive. The White Horse was a large, prosperous inn in a district favoured by mayors in the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and especially by mayors with personal or family connections in the hospitality industry. It was located on the north-east corner of St Martin St (now Palace St) and Norman's Lane (now Pigg Lane), just on the St Martin side of the border between the parishes of St George Tombland and St Martin-at-Palace, which probably accounts for the fact that it was sometimes also called 'the signe of the whight horsse in Tomelland'.⁵⁰ The inn next door, the Maid's Head, had been owned until at least 1570 by the widow of Mayor Nicholas Norgate, who had served in 1564–5.⁵¹ The widow of Mayor Henry Croke, who had

served in 1553, had owned the George Inn around the corner until 1570 as well.⁵² By that time, the Prince's Inn, a short distance south-west on Hungate St, had been inherited by Augustine Styward's son William from his father, who had served as mayor in 1537, 1546 and 1556. William was probably the same William Styward who became an alderman in 1588. The Prince's next recorded owner, Augustine Sotherton, would be the son of another mayor, Thomas Sotherton, who served in 1605.⁵³ The mayor just finishing his term in 1601, when performances at the White Horse were banned, was Alexander Thurston. He lived at the north-east corner of Tombland, just across Cook Row (later Fye Bridge St, now Wensum St) from the Maid's Head, only steps from the White Horse gate.⁵⁴

By 1601, the White Horse was long-lived and respectable enough not to disgrace its distinguished neighbours. It had been in operation in 1587, when John Bedyngfyld of Norwich, innholder, was 'lycencyd to keepe an Ynne at the signe of the whight hors in the *parisshe* of St Martyn at the pallace gate'.⁵⁵ In 1570, when the mayors' widows still owned the Maid's Head and the George, the White Horse had belonged to Thomas Jackson. Jackson had been a Norwich constable in 1553, councillor in 1555 and 1566–7, and would serve as councillor again in 1578. He had probably inherited a healthy business from his predecessor, Alyce Loveday.⁵⁶ After selling the White Horse, she had remained in the parish of St Martin-at-Palace until her death in 1574, when she requested to be buried in the chancel of the parish church there. Loveday died a comfortable widow, distributing £50 in major donations to her family and to the poor of Norwich, as well as a number of small donations to the poor of various towns near the city and to individual friends. She distributed clothing, silver, and linens among friends and family members, she had at least two books of religious commentary in her possession, and she left money for a serious sermon to be preached by a good preacher at her funeral.⁵⁷

In 1568–70, the inn complex Loveday had sold to councillor Jackson was very large, reaching all the way back through the block to the quay. The 'fore part' on St Martin St was relatively narrow: there were three small tenements between the White Horse gate and Norman's Lane to the West, taxed at one half, one quarter, and one quarter penny each; to the east there were another five small tenements between the White Horse gate and Baddings Lane, taxed at half a penny each. But the White Horse's narrow St Martin St frontage was taxed together with more buildings to the north on Fye Brige Quay (now Quayside) for a total of four pence per year, about four times the average tax

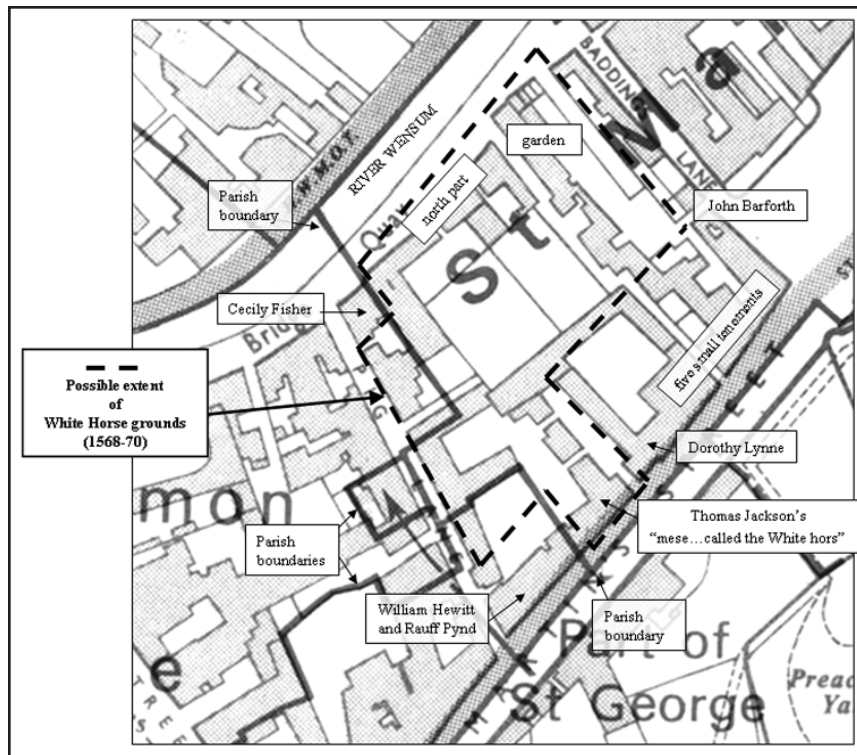


Fig. 4: White Horse grounds and surrounding buildings, ca. 1568-70. Map excerpt: Lobel and Johns, Map 7; based on Hochstetter, Plan, 1789; courtesy of Historic Towns Association

in the neighbourhood. There was also a garden east of the quayside buildings billed separately for a total of four shillings over twelve years, large enough to cost as much as the inn's buildings did in property tax.⁵⁸ No owner east of the White Horse garden on this block is recorded in the landgables but a fifteenth-century timber-framed warehouse stood there until 1963, when it was still operating as the New Star Inn.⁵⁹ It seems unlikely that this building was ever part of the White Horse complex, however, since it is not identified as such in the landgables; probably it was one of John Barforth's 'tenements', which fronted on Bedding Lane.⁶⁰ To the west of the White Horse's quay side buildings, only one other owner is mentioned: Cecily Fisher had a tenement on the north-west corner of the Quay and Norman's Lane. Fisher's property was as inexpensive as the properties on the south-west corner of Norman's Lane and St Martin St so it was likely also small.⁶¹ The area between the two

corners on Normans Lane, then, may also have been part of the White Horse complex.

Recent archaeological excavations of some parts of the White Horse site give further clues about the buildings and other features of the inn complex. A layer of garden soil containing pipe fragments dating from 1600 to 1670 suggests that the inn's gardens reached all the way to the north-west part of the site and that at least two areas in the garden were favourite smoking places until the late seventeenth century. Two wells uncovered near the St Martin St frontage contained deposits of fifteenth-century pottery that probably pre-date the abandonment of the wells. They may still have been in use in sixteenth century. A flint-rubble wall between them probably dates from the late medieval or early post-medieval periods. If the wells were still in use when the wall was standing, both sides of the wall must have been outdoors; possibly this outdoor wall divided the White Horse yard from Rauff Pynd's yard one door west. The remains of a series of other flint-rubble walls were uncovered a little farther north, very close to the walls of buildings on Hochstetter's map along this section of Norman's Lane. Their material suggests that, like the southern wall fragment, they date from the late medieval or early post-medieval periods. A layer of crushed chalk, apparently the remnant of a floor surface at the same level as the wall remains, suggests that one of these walls was an interior wall. Roofing materials have been found near both sites where flint and rubble walls have been uncovered. These include six fragments of daub with wattle impressions and traces of whitewash. A substantial quantity of late sixteenth-century pottery fragments – mainly from earthenware jugs and pancheons (large bowls used for separating cream and other purposes) and stoneware flasks, typical of the domestic dishes used in Norwich – have also been found near the southern flint wall and wells.⁶² The pottery confirms that this part of the inn site was used for domestic or hospitality purposes until at least the end of the 1500s. In the north-east section of the White Horse site, the remains of medieval buildings, flooring, and another well suggest that the inn's buildings may have extended about two-thirds of the distance across the northern end of the complex in an orientation again similar to that shown on Hochstetter's 1789 map.⁶³

It may not be coincidental that the walls and other archaeological remains uncovered on the White Horse site are so close to the walls of buildings depicted in Hochstetter's 1789 map. The property was as large as ever throughout the first quarter of the sixteenth century. George Gardyner and Christopher Marshall were billed for gardens and buildings which are described in

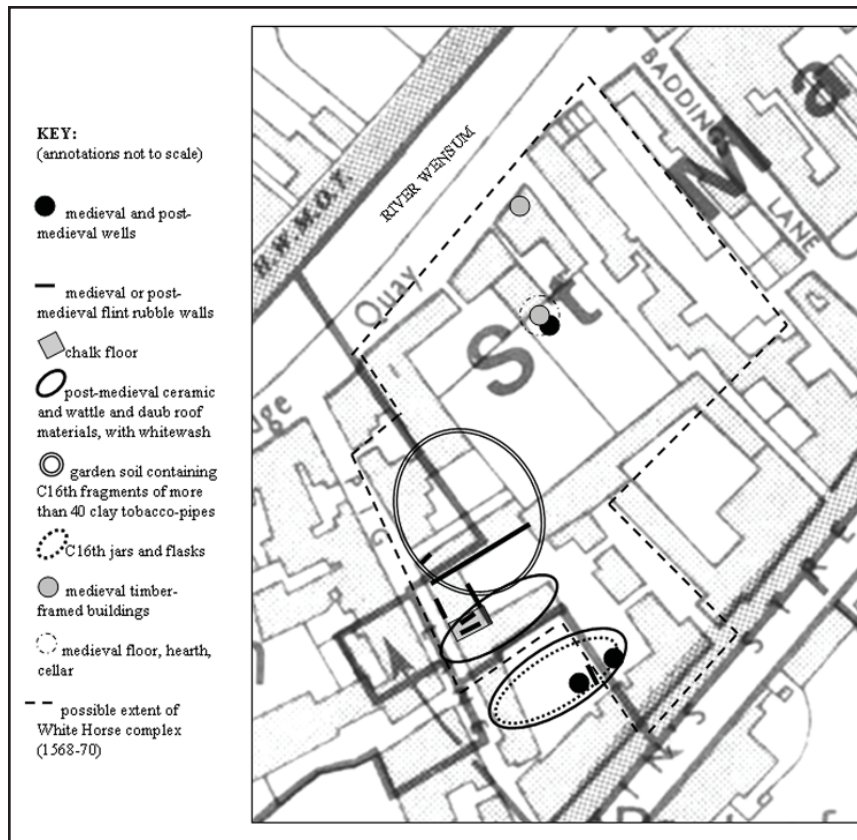


Fig. 5: White Horse Inn site and approximate locations of relevant archaeological remains, ca. 1568-70. Map excerpt: Lobel and Johns, Map 7; based on Hochstetter, Plan, 1789; courtesy of Historic Towns Association.

the 1616-26 landgable exactly as they are in the 1568-70 landgable.⁶⁴ In 1711, a Thomas Gibson bequeathed the White Horse to his wife, describing the inn as 'All That Messuage or Tenement lately used for a Common Inn & called or known by the name of the White Horse Scituate & being in the Parish of St Martin at the Palace or in any other Parish thereunto adjoining in Norwich aforesaid And all the Tenements Yards Gardens & Grounds thereunto belonging or appertaining with their appurtenances which I purchased of Mr William Crabbe'.⁶⁵ If the wording of this bequest can be taken literally, it confirms the archaeological evidence that part of the site was still in use as a garden throughout the seventeenth century, that the site included more than

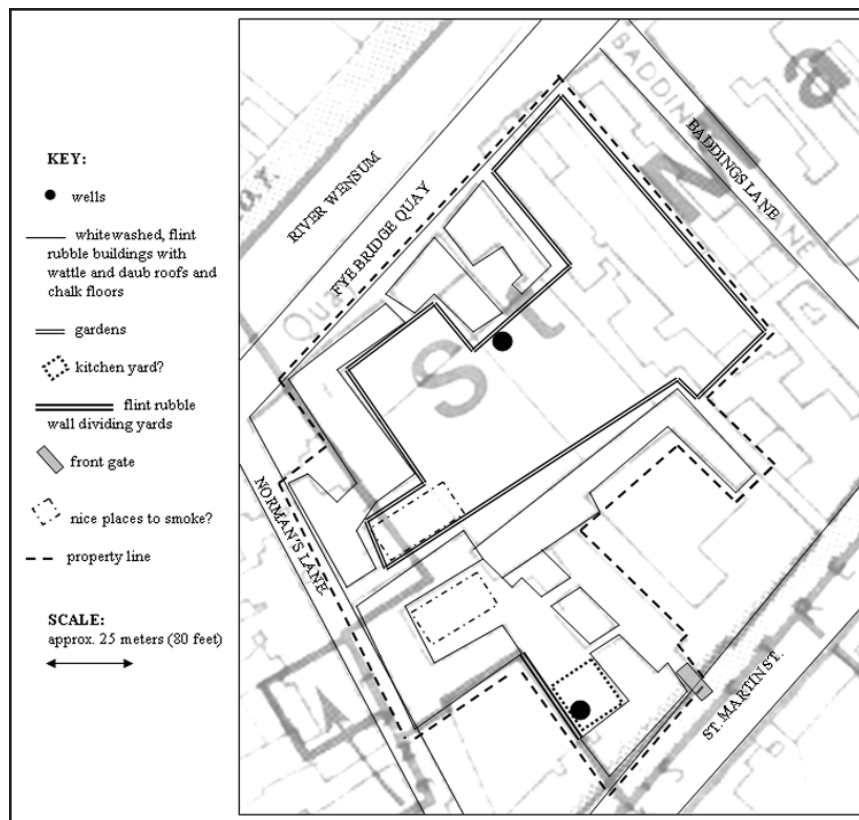


Fig. 6: Speculative reconstruction of White Horse complex, late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. Map excerpt: Lobel and Johns, Map 7; based on Hochstetter, Plan, 1789; courtesy of Historic Towns Association.

one building and more than one yard, and that it still crossed or seemed to cross parish boundaries. In 1750, John Starre and Thomas Coye leased the 'Messuage called the White Horse', which included 'Buildings Stables Yards Gardens' – apparently still an extensive complex.⁶⁶ Starre continued to operate the White Horse as an inn until at least 1763, though some time between 1760 and 1763, his partner Coye left the business and Thomas Key took his place.⁶⁷ It seems possible, then, that some parts of the inn complex changed very little between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, perhaps even surviving until Hochstetter surveyed the property in 1789. The name of the inn must have changed by 1806, however: there is no entry for the White

Horse St Martin-at-Palace in the Norwich Alehousekeepers' Recognizances for that year.

All things considered, when Hertford's men wanted to play at the White Horse in 1601, the inn's advantages must have been substantial. Its north buildings and grounds formed part of the quayside hub of Norwich community and trade activities: in addition to the river's transportation routes, butchers' stalls stood there, as did the 'ducking stool', which was used to reprimand unruly women by ducking them in the river.⁶⁸ The inn's gardens may well have supplied its kitchens with fresh produce and its two wells ensured a reliable supply of water for a large number of people. There was clearly ample space for stabling horses, as well as outdoor areas suitable for recreation (smoking seems to have been a favourite activity). If a company of players wanted to perform outdoors in a yard with controlled access, there were at least two suitable areas on the south side of the complex. On the other hand, one of the buildings at the north end of the site could conceivably have housed a reasonably spacious hall, say seventy-five by fifteen feet or so. The inn's whitewashed walls and wattle and daub roofs likely made for an attractive street presence at front and back. Like many large inns of this period, the White Horse probably also had an elaborate sign, perhaps even one that arched all the way across St Martin St, an appropriately conspicuous place to post play-bills announcing performances.⁶⁹ The neighbourhood was populated by the powerful and well-to-do, so the prospects for attracting a moneyed audience were good and the inn was large enough that a company of players could work, eat, and sleep in the same venue, as Worcester's Men had done when they 'dyd play in their hoste his hows'.⁷⁰

The ban on performances at the White Horse in 1601 can probably be explained by the same need for political tact that had governed earlier restrictions on playing in the city. In 1600 and 1601, the city seems to have been reluctant to allow performances not only in the White Horse, but in the New Hall as well: there were no civic payments to players recorded in either year. Performances in non-civic venues other than the White Horse were not prevented, however: licenses to play, without payment, were granted in both years.⁷¹ If the White Horse was as high-status a venue as it seems to have been, the city officials may have been making a distinction between venues associated with the city government and those that were not. This would make a certain amount of sense, given the level of anxiety about poverty, unemployment, and crime in those years. Public pressure to solve Norwich's

social problems had resulted in an enormous effort to catalogue the extent of the problems:

weekly searches were ordered in Norwich parishes in 1600 to take stock of a string of public disorders by characters who troubled both the peace and purse: most notably 'inmates or borders' with less than a full year's settled residence; 'maids or singlewomen' younger than forty who 'goe to thir owne hands' keeping 'chambers by themselves'; pregnant 'naughty packs' seeking 'to laye their bellies in this cytie'; workshy paupers wasting their time in bowling alleys and pubs; unlicensed tipplers letting 'lewd' loiterers drink at all hours of the day; landlords lodging 'ydle vagrant people' for a few pennies each week; and workmasters putting country journeymen to work at sweatshop rates.⁷²

It may have been necessary for the city officials to appear more concerned about social issues than business and cultural interests for a time.

The White Horse was probably already an established performance venue by 1601; by 1616 at latest, it was the most popular one. On 30 March of that year, the next time the White Horse appears in the Norwich civic records, it had become known by the name of its proprietor, John Butcher, alias Powle,⁷³ and more than one company presenting themselves before the mayor were requesting permission to play there. Queen Anne's and the Prince's servants were given 'leau to play ffower dayes this next weke but not at Powles'; they were 'restreynd' to 'the Chappell nere the newhall' instead. A negotiation followed, however, and 'that restreynt was afterward mittigated & thay had leau to play two of the fower dayes then graunted vnto them at Powles howse & the other two at the newhall'.⁷⁴ Later that year, in June, Lady Elizabeth's servants lodged and tried to perform at the White Horse;⁷⁵ and the following year the servants to Queen Anne were again 'licenced to play in this Cytty in whitson weeke next, Monday Tuseday & wednesday in Powles howse & no longer'.⁷⁶

If the inn's new moniker, 'Powles', is any indication, its continued success as a performance venue was a testament to its new proprietor's business skills. John Powle was a hospitality professional, an innholder of Norwich who had been admitted to the freedom of the city without apprenticing in 1607.⁷⁷ When he made his will on 1 January 1618, he bequeathed to his wife, 'Christian, the howse which I nowe dwell in, Comonly Called or knowne by the name off the white horse with the groundes and thappurtenances therevnto belonging Scituate lying and beinge in the parish of St martines of Pallace within the said Cittie of Norwich'. Although Powle acknowledges debts owed

by him and owing to him, his personal wealth was sufficient to guarantee a legacy to his eldest son John of 'fiue poundes yearely ... after he shall accomplishe the age of thirty yeares, and not before, and soe to Continewe vnto him duringe his naturall lyfe.' His younger sons Henry and Benjamin and his daughters Martha and Cicely were left twenty pounds each.⁷⁸ In all likelihood, the absence of the White Horse in the Norwich records between 1601 and 1616 is an indication of peaceful and successful operation as a performance venue.

The city government's attempt to move performances from the White Horse to the less desirable Chapel near the New Hall in 1616 is clearly associated in the records with their continuing attempts to regulate rogue companies wanting to play in the city. The Mayor's Court Books record that only two of Queen Anne's players had arrived in Norwich by the time they were requesting permission to play on 30 March and only one of the Prince's players presented himself before the Mayor's court that day. The implication is that both companies had divided and were playing in more than one town at a time, a reasonable enough business strategy but one which was prohibited by crown regulations. So few members of each company arrived in Norwich that they ultimately combined for performances. Perhaps the Norwich officials saw restricting performances to the Chapel near the New Hall as a way of limiting the companies' ill-gotten gains.⁷⁹

Lady Elizabeth's players, who were also denied permission to play at the White Horse in June of 1616, had an even more serious history of disruptive behaviour in the city. In March 1614, they had 'attempted to play without leave from *Master Maior*, At *which* their said playes were many outrages & disorders Commytted As *ffightynges* whereby some were wounded, and throwynge about & publishinge of *sedicious Libelles* much tendynge to the disturbance & breach of his *Maiestes* peace.' The Mayors' Court had resolved that 'ffor the *preventynge* therefore of the like abuses and disorders hereafter, Yt ys this day agreed that the Lawe made in the tyme of *Master Bowdes Maioraltie* for restraynyng of Cittizens from goeynge to stage playes & *enterludes* shall from henceforth be putt in *execucion*'. This was the law of 1589 that referred to the Red Lion murder. The following year, they were 'tollerated to play' in Norwich although the patent they bore was a duplicate dated '31^o Maij Anno xj^o', 1613, of an original made in 1611. Strictly speaking, only original patents were acceptable evidence of license to perform. In 1616, the Norwich officials refused to accept Lady Elizabeth's old patent, citing the fact that the company had 'bene formerly here vpon the xxvijth of May 1615'

with that same patent in hand. They were, however, paid a substantial ‘gratuity’ of forty shillings and Mayor Bowde’s law prohibiting attendance at plays was not enforced in 1614 any more seriously than it had been in 1589: no fines are recorded for attendance at plays that year or any time that decade.⁸⁰ All of the restrictions on the Norwich venue favoured by players, then, were strictly associated in the records with restrictions on rogue companies; these were probably exceptional incidents in the White Horse’s continuing career as a desirable performance venue.

1620–24: The White Horse in decline

In 1620, however, the year the White Horse’s proprietor, John Powle, died, the balance between welcome and suspicion tipped out of players’ favour in Norwich. When Joseph Moore, who claimed to be leading the troublesome Lady Elizabeth’s players, appeared in Norwich on Tuesday 8 February bearing their old patent of 1611 once again, the Mayor’s Court must have been suspicious. They nonetheless granted Moore and his companions permission to play for up to five days ‘till Saterdag next,’ 12 February. The company must have extended that run without permission because on Wednesday 16 February, two men, Stephen Hovell and Edmund Cawston, were fined sixteen pence each ‘for beinge present at the Stage play yesterday’.⁸¹ This is the first and only recorded occasion on which the Mayor’s Court enforced the 1589 law prohibiting attendance at plays. On 22 April, Francis Wambus appeared with a more recent patent for Lady Elizabeth’s dated 1617 that named Moore as a member of the company. Wambus’ claim ‘that Ioseph Moore ... hath not played with them this last yeare, & that the said moore nowe kepeth an Inn in Chichester’ was clearly absurd; but it must have been impossible to fault Wambus and his company for what appeared on the surface at least to be Moore’s fraud. Wambus was consequently allowed to play for four days.⁸² The following year, however, the Mayor’s Court refused to license John Townsend on behalf of Lady Elizabeth’s players because ‘none of the said Company but onely the said Towneshend are nowe in Towne’.⁸³ According to the records, only the King’s Men were permitted to play in the two years following this incident with the Lady Elizabeth’s patent. They played once in May 1620 when Suffolk’s players were turned away in the same month; in 1621, the Prince’s players were also turned away; and by 1622, Queen Anne’s, Lady Elizabeth’s, and even the King’s were forbidden.⁸⁴ On 4 May 1623, Lady Elizabeth’s were

again permitted to perform a limited run of four days – much less than the fourteen that their updated license of 20 March 1621 granted them – but this was probably a token gesture made by the Mayor’s Court while they waited to hear from Alderman Gleane, who had gone to London to request permission from the Privy Council to ban all plays in the city. The language used in the Mayors’ Court records from 24 and 31 May, in which licenses are denied to Queen Anne’s and the Prince’s players, echoes the language of the Privy Council’s eventual letter supporting the prohibition; so although the letter itself, which was dated 27 May, had not yet arrived, the Mayor’s Court must have been confident by 24 May that their request had been granted. By the time Nicholas Hanson presented the King’s Men’s patent to play on 24 June, ‘the Letters of the Lordes of his *Maiesties* most honourable privie Counsell was redd vnto him’ by way of dismissal.⁸⁵

Problems with players were compounded through this period by the fact that poverty and homelessness were still felt to be acute problems in Norwich, as the foundation of the boys’ hospital in 1621 attests. Its founder, Thomas Anguish, a former mayor, wrote of his concern for poor children ‘borne and brought up in this City ... and specially such as for want lye in the streets ... whereby many of them fall into great and grievous diseases and lameness, as that they are fittinge for no profession ever after’. Paradoxically, the textile industry was simultaneously booming, attracting unprecedented numbers of apprentices, and increasing the city’s dependence upon it.⁸⁶ It must have seemed logical to try to get people off the streets, out of the playhouses, and into the workshops. The 1623 ban on performances in Norwich makes it clear that in his approach to the Privy Council, Alderman Gleane had argued the Norwich government’s concern for the poverty of its citizens in the context of a general national dependence on the Norwich industries. According to the letter, ‘the purses of pore seruantes and apprentizes and of the meaner sort of people are drayed and emtied ... which pinshes soe much soe much the more in thes tynes of Scarsetye and death.’ The difficulty with players in Norwich, the letter says, ‘is alledged to bee more inconuenient and *preiudic*-all to that Cytty more then other places by resone it Consistes alltogether of much & seuerall manufactures wherein multitudes of people & families are set one worke whoe beeing apt to bee drawne away from ther buisnes & labour by their occasions the sayd manufators are in the mean tyme in such sort neglected as Causeth dayly very great & aparent Losses & damage to that Cytty in *particular* and by Consequence noe small hurt & *preiudice* to

the Commonwellth in generall'.⁸⁷ Reduction of poverty may genuinely have been a motive for this ban on playing.

Even after the Privy Council ban was implemented, however, companies continued to defy orders not to play and they were still associated – if only by necessity – with the White Horse. Ironically, the ban seems to have acted as a goad to players, who were affronted by the conflicting authorities of their patents and the Privy Council's order. The King's Men offered the first resistance, Nicholas Hanson responding to the Privy Council's letter with the 'answer that he will play vnles he see the Kinges hand to the contrary', though an undated payment of forty shillings to 'his Maiestes Company of Players' recorded in the Chamberlains' Accounts for 1622–3 suggests that Hanson and his company relented and accepted the gratuity.⁸⁸ The following year, Francis Wambus caused considerably more trouble when the Privy Council's letter was used to deny him a license for Lady Elizabeth's players. On 24 April 1624, Wambus 'peremptorily affirmed that he would play in this City & would lay in prison here this Tweluemoneth but he would try whether the kinges Command or the Counsell'es be the greater'. The following day a note was brought to the mayor which had been fastened by Wambus 'vpon the gate of the howse of Thomas Marcon being the Signe of the white horse nere Tomeland in Norwich wherein was written these wordes, Here within this place at one of the Clocke shalbe Acted an exelent [new] Comedy Called the Spanishe Contract By the Princesse Servantes/ vivat Rex'. When Wambus reasserted his intention to play in person and refused to provide assurance of his good behaviour he was arrested until he could post bail. He was held until 26 May, when the justices took pity on his situation, lacking friends and resources in the city, and released him without bail on his own promise to appear at the next quarter sessions. The Quarter Sessions Minute Books for 1624 are missing but Wambus seems to have been imprisoned again when the sessions met. On 18 September, he was before the Mayor's Court with a letter from the Lord Chamberlain dated the previous June, which requested that he be released and allowed to 'giue his owne security for payment of his Chardges in the begininge of August followinge'. Although Wambus' jailer is on record as saying 'that vpon his receipt of the warrant for discharginge of the said wambus ... he the said gaolor was contented to dischargde them', Wambus seems to have been trying to dispute the jailer's word. He and John Townshend were now in Norwich because they 'desired recompence for the imprisonment of wambus'. Their demand was dismissed by the Mayor's Court after a hearing on 25 September, 'because yt was remembred & conceiued that what was

done concerninge them was by consent of the whole Court and that nothinge was done any way iniurious to them but that their imprisonment was occasioned by their owne miscariage'.⁸⁹

In 1624, 'the howse of Thomas Marcon being the Signe of the white horse nere Tomeland in Norwich' where Wambus had threatened to play was in disgrace parallel to that of its client. Its new operator may have been in residence as early as 1620: John Powle's wife Christian could have sold the inn as early as the fall of that year if she had wished, since Powle's will, in which he bequeathed the White Horse to her, was proved on 28 September 1620.⁹⁰ By 1624, however, the business cannot have resembled Powle's thriving operation very much. Thomas Marcon was in serious financial trouble. His will, which was made in 1624 (although he did not die until four years later) shows that he had very little cash – about six pounds in total – to distribute among his immediate family, the poor of his home parish of St Martin-at-Palace, and to pay for his funeral. He had two suits of clothes for his brother Daniel and two gold rings worth twenty shillings each, which he bequeathed to his parents. His wife Elizabeth would inherit no more than his household effects. Marcon's only other asset was his share in a house in the parish of St Mary Coslany that his parents owned and had rented out. At their deaths, it was to revert to his sister Anne and her husband Robert Stockton, who were to pay Marcon his share in the property – a sum of one hundred and fifty pounds to be delivered in two instalments – from which Marcon's financial bequests to his wife Elizabeth and two sons Thomas and Robert were to be drawn. As Marcon's will explains:

for that in respecte my debtes are greate and my *personall* estate smale and hardlie sufficiente to paie my debtes vnlesse my debtors be of good abilitie ... I have not other meanes to aduance my poore poore wief and children other then by the saide somme of a hundred and fiftie poundes before specified.⁹¹

This income, however, would not have paid more than half the debts for which Marcon's wife, as sole executrix of Marcon's will charged with the task of 'satisfyinge of all my debtes', was responsible. The probate inventory made when his will was proved in 1628 includes, among its assessment of his possessions, an 'Item in desperate debtes CCC li' – three hundred pounds.⁹² Marcon's debtors had turned out not to be 'of good abilitie' and his wife and children were penniless.

Thomas Marcon's will and probate inventory suggest that between 1620 and 1624, the White Horse was reduced from a large inn-playhouse to a tiny one-room alehouse fronting on St Martin St. There is, conspicuously, no White Horse mentioned in Marcon's will. Since the Norwich landgable of 1616–26 names George Gardyner and Christopher Marshall as the inn's owners, Marcon was probably renting it from them in 1624 and hoping to pay his landlords as well as support his family from the inn's takings. Inn-keepers usually lived in the inns they operated and the presence of a 'flagon pott' among Marcon's possessions suggests that he, his wife, and his two sons were indeed living at the White Horse when Marcon died; certainly no other residence is mentioned. The family seems, however, only to have occupied a single room of the premises: Marcon's probate inventory does not classify his meagre personal effects according to the rooms in which they were found. Since Marcon's business was still known as 'the Signe of the white horse' in 1624, their room must have been in the front section of the inn on Palace Street where the sign would have hung.⁹³

These reduced facilities would not have prevented Thomas Marcon from selling alcohol or accepting lodgers at the White Horse, and his probate inventory suggests that that is exactly what he was doing. Peter Clark explains that during this period, 'only the larger [alehouses] appear to have had anything approaching guest-rooms. Frequently strangers wanting to stay the night would bunk down on the kitchen table or move into the land-lord's room, sometimes joining him and his wife in bed'. 'The internal fittings of the small alehouse,' he says, 'were generally cheap and basic, little different from the ordinary furniture of a poor household. Trestle tables, benches, stools and a few chairs were the most any customer could expect. Inventories suggest that the furnishings of a typical alehouse drinking room were worth only a few shillings. The array of drinking vessels was also limited and inexpensive ... Most pots held a pint or a quart, though alehouses sometimes kept one or two larger vessels for communal drinking such as the "huge great stone pot, containing ... very near two gallons" ... which we find at one Essex establishment'.⁹⁴ At the time of his death, Marcon's household effects consisted of the following (I have omitted the individual valuations):

Imprimis one Truncke
 Item one Close stoole
 Item one old Table
 Item one old Cubberde

Item one litle presse for <...>
 Item three picktures in Cloath
 Item one warminge panne
 Item one bedsted
 Item one old seeled bedsted
 Item one frame of a Table
 Item five Trundle bedstedes
 Item one deske
 Item one peelee
 Item two old formes & an old hamp{er}
 Item two old Tables
 Item one flagon pott
 Item vj Cushions and one windowe Cushion

Their total value was estimated at four pounds, three shillings, and ten pence.⁹⁵ Conceivably, then, when Francis Wambus nailed his note to the White Horse gate, he and the other three members of Lady Elizabeth's players named in the records had been sleeping on tables or benches in a one-room alehouse they shared with the Marcon family.

It must have been difficult to perform indoors in these reduced circumstances. The note fastened to the inn's gate announcing a performance 'here within this place' probably referred to the southernmost of the inn's yards, 'within' meaning within the gate rather than within the buildings. Marcon might plausibly have had access to this yard, one of the wells, and possibly also to some of the stables along with the small portion of the buildings he occupied. Another large Norwich inn – the White Horse in St Peter Mancroft by Bark Lane – had been divided along similar lines in 1619 when its owner, Henry Fulches, and his wife Alice leased all but two chambers to Roger Fulches, who was probably Henry's brother, reserving access for themselves to the inn's well plus the right to stable one horse. In this case, Roger, the lessee, probably continued to operate the inn in the larger portion of the premises. He was a career innholder, described as such when he was admitted to the freedom of Norwich in 1627, and his will indicates that he was a successful entrepreneur. He died a wealthy man, living in a large house with five bedrooms, a kitchen, and a parlour, and leaving what sounds like a good deal of Norwich property to his eldest son.⁹⁶ Although the proportion of the property Marcon occupied was apparently much smaller than Roger Fulches' proportion of the inn in St Peter Mancroft, it would have been practical for Marcon, like Fulches' brother, to have access to the White Horse yard, stables

and at least one of its wells. An outdoor performance by Lady Elizabeth's would not have disturbed the alehouse clientele's routine: their habit was to gather outside the alehouse door as well as inside its rooms.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the weather at the end of April might not have made the White Horse yard the most attractive venue for a performance of Lady Elizabeth's *Spanish Contract*. Outdoors and in, Francis Wambus and his company seem to have been far enough out of favour in Norwich that they were taking whatever they could get.

It is difficult to know how much Lady Elizabeth's or other companies and the White Horse might have affected one another's decline. Possibly the hospitality industry as a whole was changing: at least one other large Norwich inn – the Prince's, which had been Mayor Augustine Styward's – had been divided along the lines of the two White Horses by 1626.⁹⁸ Perhaps the White Horse and other inns had relied so heavily on business from patronized players and their audiences that the Mayor's Court's increasing restrictions, especially the 1623 ban, were crippling their businesses. The regulations on alehouse-keepers imposed by the new Act of Parliament in 1623–4 cannot have made things easier.⁹⁹ Thomas Marcon's mismanagement may also have been a factor in the inn's decline. As Peter Clark explains, because brewers often provided beer on credit and selling drink on credit 'was endemic and an essential way of building up and keeping a network of "regulars"', debt was an industry hazard. In the probate inventories of Canterbury tipplers that Clark surveyed, 'there is a high incidence of debts owing by customers, many of them irrecoverable. ... These debts represent approximately 43 per cent of the total inventorial wealth of the alehouse-keepers; among poorer victuallers (those with total inventories worth less than £20) uncleared debts amounted to half their personal estate'.¹⁰⁰ Marcon, with his debts amounting to two hundred percent of his personal estate, provides an extreme example of a common phenomenon. He, in turn, may also have been a victim of his inherited association with players, who had become a liability to his reputation. Wambus' threat to perform an outlawed play at the White Horse cannot have improved Marcon's relationship with the Norwich authorities or its more influential citizens. On the other hand, the White Horse's commercial premises may have been reduced by its new proprietors, Gardyner and Marshall, immediately after John Powle's death in 1620, contributing to players' difficulties in Norwich by seriously reducing the facilities of what had apparently been the most popular non-civic venue in the city for twenty years. One way or another, although the White Horse's fortunes seem to have recovered

enough that it thrived again in the later seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, its host, its premises, and the players at the inn all reached their nadir in 1624.

Inn-playing in Norwich

Despite the nature of the incidents at the White Horse and the Red Lion that attracted attention from the Norwich city record-keepers, these inns were, at their height, at least as desirable as any of the venues used by patronized companies in Norwich in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. They were respectable, lucrative, reliable venues, well-managed, well-appointed, and individually stable for decades. Their proprietors were well-connected enough that we cannot say the inns belonged to a class distinct from civic or cathedral venues, nor were performances in them necessarily attended by distinct clienteles. Restrictions on inn-playing recorded by the city chamberlains and Mayor's Court are clearly associated with acute and usually short-lived social pressures or with difficulties caused by crown restrictions on the licensing of players. The hospitality industry was at worst well-represented on city council; at best (as the Red Lion affray vividly illustrates) they were practically bedfellows; as long as performances were orderly and beneficial to both town and clown, there was no reason for them to appear in the civic records and they may well have been considerably more frequent than performances in the city's civic halls. Even in the third decade of the seventeenth century, when the city government felt a more sustained pressure to limit the activities of patronized players, old sympathies died hard. Patronized companies prevented from playing were well compensated; and those that played could rely on good audiences at inn-performances in Norwich until at least 1620.

Notes

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fice, my reviewers for *Early Theatre*, and all those who responded to my presentations at CRRS (May 2005), MRDS (July 2005), and SAA (April 2006).

- 1 David Galloway (ed), *REED: Norwich* (Toronto, 1984), 3, 7, 8, 12, 14–15, 20, 21, 24–5, 33, 51–2, 96.
- 2 Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998), 11–12, 18–27.
- 3 The population in 1575 was near 17,000; in 1578–9, plague killed about one third and in 1583–4 and 1590–3 another 3,500 or so; but by the 1620s, the population had increased again to around 20,000. See M. D. Lobel and W. H. Johns (eds), 'Norwich', *Historic Towns, Maps, and Plans of Towns and Cities in the British Isles, with Historical Commentaries from Earliest Times to 1800*, vol. 2 (Baltimore, 1975), 17–18.
- 4 The account of the Red Lion affray is taken from the Controlment Roll, Public Record Office: KB29/219 mbs 150–2. See Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 70–6.
- 5 Siobhan Keenan, following D.F. Rowan, proposes the 'roughly cruciform yard' depicted in Joshua Manning's 1835 map of Norwich as the Red Lion site. See D.F. Rowan, 'The Players and Playing Places of Norwich,' *The Development of Shakespeare's Theatre*, John H. Astington (ed.) (New York, 1992), 89; and Siobhan Keenan, *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2002), 103. I have not seen a copy of this section of Manning's map, but if the yard is in the same position as the cruciform yard on Hochstetter's earlier map, it is farther north than the location implied by the 1616–26 landgable and was more likely part of Simon Bowde's properties. See Landgable Rents and Assize Accounts 1616–26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 17v; and M.D. Lobel and W.H. Johns (eds), 'Map 7: Parishes c. 1789, Norwich', *Historic Towns*, based on Anthony Hochstetter, 'PLAN of the CITY of NORWICH, Describing the Streets, Lanes, Public Edifices & Buildings &c. Divided Into its respective WARDS' (London, 1789), reproduced in Frostick, *Printed Plans*, 60. The other four inns nearby were the White Horse St Stephens, Wasselgate, Brasers (see below), and the Coke. See Mary Rodgers and Mary Wallace (eds), Elizabeth Rutledge (intro), *Norwich Landgable Assessment 1568–70* (Norwich, 1999), 52–58.
- 6 *Landgable 1568–70*, 57; Landgable 1616–26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 17v; Timothy Hawes (ed), *An Index to Norwich City Officers 1453–1835*, Norfolk Record Society (Norwich, 1986), 31. Elizabeth Rutledge cautions, however, that the former owners identified in the landgables are not always the most recent owners. See Rutledge, 'Introduction', *Landgable 1568–70*, 11.
- 7 A larger version of this map was published separately in 1768. See Raymond Frostick, *Printed Plans of Norwich 1558–1840* (Norwich, 2002), 56.

- 8 Landgable 1616–26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 17; Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 71.
- 9 Basil Cozens-Hardy and Ernest A. Kent, *The Mayors of Norwich 1403–1835* (Norwich, 1938), 62–3; Percy Millican, *The Register of the Freemen of Norwich 1548–1713* (Norwich, 1934), 122; *Landgable 1568–70*, 57, 120, 72; Landgable 1616–26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 17v.
- 10 Hawes, *City Officers*, 6; *Landgable 1568–70*, 58.
- 11 Davy was constable in 1562 and councillor from 1565–79, when he also served as clavor from 1572–3 and sheriff in 1579; in 1581 he became councillor again and held the office until his death in 1590. See *Landgable 1568–70*, 63, 57; Hawes, *City Officers*, 49; Landgable 1616–26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 22v.
- 12 *Landgable 1568–70*, 57, 65; Rutledge, ‘Introduction’, *Landgable 1568–70*, 9. Of fifty-four properties that owed landgable rents in the parish of St Stephens in 1568–70, twenty-nine were assessed at less than one penny per year; nineteen at one penny; and only six at more than a penny. See *Landgable 1568–70*, 52–8.
- 13 Norwich Innkeepers and Tipplers Book 1587–97 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 14e, 19r.
- 14 Landgable 1616–26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 17v.
- 15 Will of Nicholas Emes (1637, proved 1638) Norfolk Record Office: NCC Will Register, Smythe, 103; OED ‘fat’ n. 2.
- 16 Sybil Rosenfeld, ‘The Players in Norwich, 1669–1709’, *The Review of English Studies* 12 (1936), 132–4; John Chambers, *A General History of the County of Norfolk* (Norwich, 1829).
- 17 Norwich Alehousekeepers’ Recognizances 1760–1807 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 14e.
- 18 Deed for Cricketers Arms, Red Lion St (1878) Norfolk Record Office: N/TC/D741; Walter Wicks, *Inns and Taverns of Old Norwich* (Norwich, 1925), 51. A nineteenth-century photograph of the Cricketer’s Arms can be seen at *Picture Norfolk*, Norfolk Online Library Services, <<http://norlink.norfolk.gov.uk/cgi-bin/image-viewer-web.sh?enqtype=PHOTO>> (accessed 26 February 2007). Search for Cricketer’s Arms.
- 19 Jan Allen, the Records Officer at the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, was kind enough to search for archaeological reports on the Red Lion site (email message to author, 31 August 2005). The buildings that stand there today offer no clues about the sixteenth-century inn: the site is now mainly occupied by an outdoor pedestrian shopping mall. Sally-Beth MacLean’s 2004 photograph of the approximate location of the Red Lion gate can be seen on the *Patrons and Performances Web Site*, Records of Early English Drama, University of Toronto, <<http://link.library.utoronto.ca/reed/>> (accessed 26 February 2007). Search for Norwich Red Lion.

- 20 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, 103–4; Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 6, 7, 12.
- 21 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 71–3. Thomas Thomas translates ‘Xiphomachæra’: ‘A two handed sword, an arming sword’. See Thomas Thomas, *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae Et Anglicanae* (Cambridge, 1587), in *The Lexicons of Early Modern English*, ed Ian Lancashire, University of Toronto (2004), <<http://leme.library.utoronto.ca/>>. The OED entry for ‘arming’, vbl. n., sense 1.b. is ‘forming part of arms or armour, used in military accoutrement’ with a 1603 citation ‘With their lances and arming swords’.
- 22 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 72, 76; OED, ‘hough’, v. 1.
- 23 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, 104.
- 24 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 70–5.
- 25 Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse, a Social History, 1200–1830* (London, 1983), 7.
- 26 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, 104–5.
- 27 McMillin and MacLean note that the Queen’s Men paid rental fees for the Sherborne church house in Dorset on at least two occasions; perhaps this practise extended to inns (McMillin and MacLean, *Queen’s Men*, 186–7).
- 28 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 75, trans. 378.
- 29 Hawes, *City Officers*, 19. The only surviving record of the location of Bloome’s back gate is the affray testimonial that describes it as ‘betwne the red lyon & mr davyes howse’; see Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 71. The landgables do not mention him.
- 30 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 66, trans. 378–9.
- 31 Hawes, *City Officers*, 19.
- 32 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen’s Men*, 42–3; Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 67–8, trans. 378–9.
- 33 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 68–9, trans. 380–1.
- 34 Galloway, 82, trans. 382, 84.
- 35 Galloway, 80–1, 90.
- 36 Galloway, 109.
- 37 Galloway, 113.
- 38 Lord Morley’s, Oxford’s, and Arundel’s Men probably played at the New Hall in 1583 and 1584; as did Oxford’s, Arundel’s, the Queen’s, the Admiral’s, Cecil’s, Leicester’s, and the Children of the Queen’s Chapel between 1585 and 1587; and Cecil’s and the Queen’s likely played there again in 1588. See Galloway, 77–93. There are records of such payments for every year of the 1590s except 1593 and 1599; 1591 and 1594 were particularly busy, recording seven and five payments respectively. See Galloway, 96–111.
- 39 Galloway, 80–1. With only two exceptions, the only companies denied licenses and not paid between 1583 and 1642 were rogue companies with forged or expired licens-

es, companies that had already been licensed or paid within weeks of their request, or companies who refused the gratuity. The rogue companies were Raph Reeve, who was trying to impersonate Philip Rochester, the master of the Children of the Queen's Chapel but was discovered in 1611; the Prince Palatine's Players in 1617 and 1623; and Lady Elizabeth's Servants in 1624. Those already licensed were Hertford's Players in 1602 and Queen Anne's Players in 1616. The company that refused payment was Prince Charles's Men in 1623. See Galloway, 78 et passim. The exceptions were the Earl of Derby's Men in 1602 and Princess Elizabeth's in 1614. There is no record of a payment to Derby's Men in 1602 but sufficient concern at the possibility that they might play made the Mayors' Court decide in advance that Derby's Men would be committed to prison if they did perform; see Galloway, 120. There is no record that Princess Elizabeth's Servants were given any money when they came 'not to aske leaue to play But to aske the gratuetie of the Cytty' on 2 March 1614, but despite their claim, they 'attempted to play without leave from Master Maior'. See Galloway, 140–1.

- 40 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, 170–1.
- 41 Ralph Houlbrooke and Muriel McClendon, 'The Reformation,' *Medieval Norwich*, Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (eds) (London, 2004), 276.
- 42 Paul Griffiths, 'Inhabitants', *Norwich Since 1500*, Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (eds) (London, 2004), 69–70.
- 43 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 91.
- 44 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, 34.
- 45 John F. Pound, 'Government to 1660', *Norwich Since 1550*, 55.
- 46 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 96; and xxi.
- 47 Galloway, 96.
- 48 Galloway, 90.
- 49 Galloway, 117.
- 50 *Landgable 1568–70*, 104; Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 117.
- 51 *Landgable 1568–70*, 103; Cozens-Hardy and Kent, *Mayors*, 58.
- 52 *Landgable 1568–70*, 103; Hawes, *City Officers*, 45; Cozens-Hardy and Kent, *Mayors*, 58.
- 53 *Landgable 1616–26* Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 46; Cozens-Hardy and Kent, *Mayors*, 68; Hawes, *City Officers*, 143.
- 54 Cozens-Hardy and Kent, *Mayors*, 67; Hawes, *City Officers*, 152; *Landgable 1568–70*, 103–4.
- 55 *Norwich Innkeepers and Tiplers Book* Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 14e, f 41v.
- 56 Hawes, *City Officers*, 88; *Landgable 1568–70*, 104.

- 57 Will of Alice Loveday (1574) Norfolk Record Office: NCC Will Register, Fairechilde, 418.
- 58 *Landgable 1568–70*, 101–105.
- 59 Brian Ayers and Mark Leah, ‘Trial Excavations at Quayside, Norwich 1993’, Norfolk Archaeological Unit Report (1993), 2. Photographs of the New Star Inn from the nineteenth century and from just before its demolition in 1963 are available online at *Picture Norfolk*, <<http://norlink.norfolk.gov.uk/cgi-bin/image-viewer-web.sh?enqtype=PHOTO>> (accessed 26 February 2006). Search for New Star Inn.
- 60 *Landgable 1568–70*, 105; *Landgable 1616–26* Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 48.
- 61 *Landgable 1568–70*, 102.
- 62 Upson-Smith, ‘Bussey’s Garage’, 10–14. Ceramic and stone roof tiles were also uncovered but other ceramic building materials on the site are dated to the eighteenth century. See Upson-Smith, 10.
- 63 Andy Hutcheson, ‘Norfolk Landscape Archaeology Monument Summary with Full MORPH Report: Pigg Lane; Quayside; Bedding Lane and Palace Street – UAD Entries’ (2005); Andy Hutcheson, ‘Pigg Lane and Quayside: Map of UAD/NHER’, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (2005).
- 64 *Landgable 1616–26* Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 48, 49v. Neither Gardyner nor Marshall is listed as having served on the Norwich city council, though Marshall may have been a constable in the parish of St Peter Mancroft in 1615. See Hawes, *City Officers*, 65, 103.
- 65 Clause of will of Thomas Gibson (1704, proved 1711), ‘The White Horse Public House in parish of St Martin at Palace 1704–1804’ Norfolk Record Office: N/NT/D1/863.
- 66 Lease for White Horse (1750), ‘The White Horse Public House in parish of St Martin at Palace 1704–1804’ Norfolk Record Office: N/NT/D1/863.
- 67 Norwich Alehousekeepers’ Recognizances 1760–1807 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 14e.
- 68 The butchers did not move to the market in St Peter Mancroft until 1699; there are records of ‘duckings’ in 1562 and ’97. See Ayers and Leah, ‘Quayside’, 2.
- 69 Clark, *Alehouse*, 6.
- 70 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 65–66.
- 71 Galloway, 115–17.
- 72 Griffiths, ‘Inhabitants’, 73.
- 73 Will of John Butcher, alias Powle (1618, proved 1620) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Will Register, Williams, 127. The evidence from Powle’s will confirms David Gallo-

- way's theory that Powles and the White Horse were the same venue. See Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, xxx.
- 74 Galloway, *Norwich*, 145–6.
- 75 Lady Elizabeth's 'craved leaue to play within this Citty they haveinge bene formerly here vpon the xxviith of May 1615 are required to accept of a gratuity to be sent vnto them to the whyght horse in Tombeland'. See Galloway, 146–7. The implication is that they were lodging at the White Horse.
- 76 Galloway, 151.
- 77 Galloway, 146; Will of John Butcher, alias Powle (1618, proved 1620) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Will Register, Williams, 127; Millican, *Freemen*, 89.
- 78 Will of John Butcher, alias Powle, (1618, proved 1620) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Will Register, Williams, 127.
- 79 The Chapel near the New Hall was operating primarily as a church at this time. Its doors and windows were not placed conveniently for performances, and its main entrance was (and is still) relatively inconspicuous. See Helen Sutermeister, *The Norwich Blackfriars* (Norwich, 1977), 10–12. Sutermeister's ground plan and a twentieth century photograph of the lower end of the Chapel can be viewed online on the REED: Patrons and Performance Site <<http://link.library.utoronto.ca/reed/>> (accessed 26 February 2006). Search for Norwich Blackfriars.
- 80 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 146–7, 140, 143..
- 81 Galloway, 161.
- 82 Galloway, 162.
- 83 Galloway, 165.
- 84 Galloway, 162, 169–71.
- 85 Galloway, 175–6.
- 86 Pound, 'Government', 53, 45.
- 87 Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 175, 177.
- 88 Galloway, 176, 172.
- 89 Galloway, 180–3 and lvii.
- 90 Will of John Butcher, alias Powle (1618, proved 1620), Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Will Register, Williams, 127.
- 91 Will of Thomas Marcon (1624, proved 1627) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Original Will, 1627, no. 439.
- 92 Will of Thomas Marcon (1624, proved 1627) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Original Will, 1627, no. 439; Probate inventory of Thomas Marcon (1628) Norfolk Record Office: DN/INV/34/61.
- 93 Will of Thomas Marcon (1624, proved 1627) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Original Will, 1627, no. 439. Peter Clark notes that from the late middle ages, alehouses

had been required to keep some kind of sign 'near the front door;' inns typically had elaborate signs (*Alehouse*, 67).

94 Clark, 66.

95 Probate inventory of Thomas Marcon (1628) Norfolk Record Office: DN/INV/34/61. The 'peeel' was probably a shovel of some kind, either a baker's shovel for putting loaves in and out of an oven, or a fire-shovel (OED 'peeel, n.1' senses 1a and 1b).

96 Deed for White Horse, 'Messuage, buildings and land called the White Horse leased by Henry Townelye, Richard Dudley and Roger Fulches of Henry and Alice Fulches or Fuller' (1619) Norfolk Record Office: BRA 773/1-15; Will of Roger Fulcis (1623) Norfolk Record Office: NCC, Will Register, Morse, 33; Probate inventory of Roger Fulcis (1632) Norfolk Record Office: DN/INV/38/41; Millican, *Freemen*, 89.

97 Clark, *Alehouse*, 67.

98 Landgable 1616-26 Norfolk Record Office: NCR Case 18d, f 46.

99 Clark, *Alehouse*, 175.

100 Clark, 82, 85, 86.