

ELECTION OF MAYOR AT SUDBURY IN 1665.

BY WILLIAM WALTER HODSON.

CEREMONIE TO BE PERFORMED AT Y^E COURT ; AT Y^E ELECTION
OF MAIOR AND SWEAREYNG IN OF OFFICERS, WITH
Y^E OATHES TAKEN BY THE SAME, 1665.

The following hitherto unpublished extracts from "The Town Clark's Book of Sudbury, in the County of Suffolk," relative to the ancient quaint ceremonies laid down to be observed at "y^e makeing of y^e newe Maior," and the Oaths to be administered to the numerous borough officials from the Mayor and Recorder downwards, to the Bedell and Hogwarden, may probably prove somewhat interesting after the lapse of two and a quarter centuries. Both the ceremonial and the official oaths were evidently of much earlier origin, but were collected together and entered for future guidance and use at the date given. The primitive and archaic "ancient oath of a Petty Constable" must have come down from early times, as may be gathered from its phrasing and verbiology. The names, dates, and most of the particulars given below, are copied almost *verbatim et literatim* from the Town Books and Documents, the spelling being frequently modernized. For convenience sake, and to make this paper more attractive to the general reader, the setting has assumed the form of a contemporaneous historical narrative.

It is the first week of the month of April, in the year of Grace, one thousand six hundred and sixty-five, and the seventh year of the reign of "His Most Sacred Majesty," King Charles the Second, and the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Sudbury, have been summoned to assemble at the Moot Hall, on the Market Hill, to swear in the new Mayor, and the several officials of the ancient Corporation. The day is to be kept as a holiday, and there is to be a "Love Feast" in the afternoon, at which, on account of the dignity and eminence of some of the guests, many rare dainties will be provided, with much spiced ale, and choice vintages. The bells of St. Peter's are ringing merrily, and flags are flying from the steeple, the old Moot Hall, the principal hostels, and "Wool Halls," and the houses of the chief burgesses. Clustering round the posts and rails that mark out the Cattle Market are many of the principal tradesmen, the clothiers, drapers, and milliners; while animated groups of say-weavers, warpers, winders, fullers, and combers, are discussing the situation round the Corn Cross in the old Market Place. The blue smocked, bare headed, butcher boys, have ceased for a time their harsh monotonous cries of "Buy! Buy!" at the Shambles on the north sides of the church and hall, and at their chartered stalls in the Corn Market; most of the wheels and looms in the weaving shops are as still as on good Bishop Blaise's day; and the buxom dames and rosy cheeked maidens are gossiping and flirting with the idle apprentices or their masters on the door steps, or exchanging jokes from the pleasant solar windows. The Town Band strikes up, and heads a procession to the Hall, followed by the town soldiers—*two* in number—fully equipped, with their newly "blackened corselettes," and freshly "scoured" swords and pikes, which have done duty in the town and on Babergh Heath time out of mind.

The "Balliūs" or Chief Constable is present with his men, and the night watchmen are doing day duty on this auspicious occasion, being gleeful at the thought that they will be well fed and will have a double draught of strong ale before they commence their night ward. Boys and girls, grotesque miniatures of their parents as regards dress; are in full force, eager to see all the day's frolic and fun.

We will enter the old picturesque gathering place of the "Motes," and ascend the broad staircase, the steps hewn by axe and adze out of solid balks of oak from the neighbouring Acton ("Oak town") woods, into the long Council Chamber, with its leaded diamond-paned casements, panelled walls, oaken settles, and "stooles," fitted up with green cushions, raised dais, long table covered with its faded green "carpet," and coat of arms of one of the Edwards on the wall behind the high-backed chair, carved with the borough arms. This seat is occupied to-day by Mr. John Catesby, the Mayor, who has filled that office on several occasions in trying circumstances. His Worship is in great favour with many of the townspeople, but much disliked by others, because he hindered the surrender of the Charter given to the town by His Highness, the late Protector ("Oliver"), and persists in officially protecting, as far as may be, the numerous Dissenters in the town, many of whom are wealthy and influential, who meet for stated worship in a barn. He wears his scarlet gown and velvet tippet, and on the table before him are the two Maces, re-made and enlarged by the late Mr. Alderman Skynner, when he was Mayor, about fifty years ago. On the right of His Worship sits the Borough Recorder, "Henricus Dux de Grafton," who takes his title of "Baron" from our Borough of Sudbury. On either side are the Aldermen, seated according to precedence, clad in black gowns faced with scarlet velvet. These important personages are Sir John Cordell, Bart., one of the "Chief Burgesses" (or M.P.'s) for the borough, Sir John Poley, Knt., Sir Thomas Waldegrave, Knt.,

Samuel Hasell, Gent., the Mayor elect, Daniel Cook, Gent., John Holton, Gent., Samuel Abbott, Gent., and three others, all men of local note and several of more than county importance and influence. Below the dais are ranged, next the walls and in front of the table, the 24 Burgesses (or Town Councillors) wearing their "murrey" gowns. These various official robes have all been provided at the wearers' own expenses, in pursuance of a local statute in that case made and provided. Each member of the corporate body occupies his allotted seat, designated by a copper plate let into the "stoole" or "chayre," engraved with the name of the prescribed occupant. The Burgesses, who will answer to their names, all at the first call thereof, are John Jones, Thomas Griggs, Benjamin Carter, Robert Gainsborow, Isaac Brackett, Jacob Sudbury, Wm. Cook, John Garrod, Robert Gurling, Ed. Smith, Daniel Gibbon, Thos. Lilly, Burton Underwood, Thos. Dansey, junr., Luke Leake, Thomas Hall, Eusebius Barwick, Thos. Coleman, junr., Joseph Kingsbury, junr., Robt. Payne, Thos. Ling, Thos. Pettitt, and Martimus Harris. All the numerous officers of the court are also in attendance, sitting or standing in their accustomed places according to their office and rank.

And now, the Town Crier or Bedell, dressed in the livery of the Corporation, with cocked hat and bell in hand, steps forward, and in stentorian tones makes proclamation, and opens the Court as follows:—

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All manner of persons that have anything to do at this Court, holden here this day for y^e Borough of Sudbury, before John Catesby, Mayor of the same Borough, and the Aldermen and Steward thereof, now draw near and give your attendance, every man at the first call, upon pain and penalty of the refusal thereof."

The loud-tongued bell then gives forth a second triple peal, and the Bedell's voice is again heard:—

"Oh yez! All manner of persons that have anything to doo at y^e Court of Orders and Decrees for the swaingne of Officers, houlden on this day, drawe near!"

The Serjeants respond by advancing to the Dais,

and to the chair on which the Mayor is seated, reverently bowing, to deliver up their Maces, with the ceremony of kissing the same, as they have done heretofore, time out of mind. And the old Mayor now rises, and accepts the said Maces, taking them in his hands and kissing them. He next comes down from his seat with the Maces in his two hands to the accustomed place where the Oaths are taken, and stands there in front of the Court. And the Steward of the Court rises, and bowing to His Worship and to the Aldermen and Court, addresses the Mayor as follows :—

“Sir, you have supplied the place and roome of a Maior of this towne during one whole yeare, now past, wherein, as you have behaved yourselfe wisely, discretlie, and like a good Justice in punishing of Offenders, and Protecting of the Good, so accordynge to your Desert the whole Corporation doe thankfully accept of the same. And, whereas at this p'sent Mr. Samuel Hasell, now elected Maior for this yeare following, is now to take upon him his Office and Chardge of the mayoralitie, I question not, but that you will willingly surrender upp the Maces to bee comitted unto him, and consent that hee shall take his Oath nowe, and place as heretofore hath been used and accustomed.”

Whereunto the said old Maior solemnly answers, “Yea !”

And this done he reverently delivers up the Maces into the hands of the Steward, who receives them with the like ceremony of kissing them severally and lays them on the table before him. The which being done the said Steward thus addresses the newly-elected Mayor (who has been previously chosen) :—

“Sir, you are now to come down and to take your Oath and Chardge.”

Whereupon the new Mayor, having come down from the Dais, the old Mayor takes and holds the book (the New Testament or Gospels), upon which the new Mayor is to take his oath. And then the said new Mayor having laid his hand on the book, the Steward gives his oath, either absolutely or with exception in the end thereof, if the cause shall so require, saying as followeth :—

“Sir, it is not unknown unto you, that at the last Court Day for

Election of new officers for the Government of this Towne of Sudbury, you were then, according to the purport and effect of y^e Charters and Liberties graunted to the said Towne, duly elected and chosen to bee the Mayor to the same Towne for this year following, and therefore inasmuch as you are here p'sent, I am nowe to administer unto you an Oath for y^e trewe p'formance of your office and dutie in that behalf; and therefore, I pray, lay your hand on the Booke."

The newly-elected Mayor having laid his hand on the Book, which is held by the Steward, the latter proceeds to administer the oath as follows:—

"You shall swear that you shall well and truly serve His Sovereigne Lord the King (in the time of the Commonwealth the words ran—"His Highness the Lord Protector"); the People of this Town, and this Corporation in the Place and Office of the Maior of this Towne of Sudbury: And in the Offices of Justice of the Peace, Escheator, and Clarke of the Market, within the P'cincts and Liberties of this Towne: And accordynge to y^r power, will, and knowledge, you shall maintayne and defend the Lawfull Rights, Liberties, Priviledges, Charters and Hereditaments, graunted or belonginge unto the same Towne; And shall doo Legall Right and Justice unto the Rich and the Poore accordynge to y^r cunning, will and power, and after the Laws and Customes of this Kingdom (or Commonwealth) and of the Statutes thereof made. You shall not be lett or hindered by any guift, reward, dreade, favour, affection, mallice or evill will, Butt well and truly, you shall doo and execute your said Offices, and every of them, and all things to them, and every of them belonginge, duringe the time that you shall continue or remayne His Majestie's (or His Highnesse's) Officer on that behalf. So helpe you, God.

"Saving and Allwayes excepting the Service, Dutye and Faith which you owe and ought to beare unto other His Majestie's Courts, and to your Clients, accordynge to your former oathe, for y^e p'pose made, and y^r vocation and duty otherwise in their behalfe. Soe helpe you, God."

The Oath of Supremacy of the 1st year of Elizabeth, and the Oath of Allegiance of the 3rd of James the First are then taken.

The newly-made Mayor then exchanges seats with the Ex-Mayor, whom he appoints his Deputy, and who takes the same oath the Mayor has taken.

The chief officers are then sworn; the minor officials will take the oaths on a following day before the Deputy-Mayor and Steward. They come up one by one to the

table, mostly dressed in some kind of borough uniform or livery, or wearing or carrying some badge of office. Here we see quite a levee of functionaries, viz. : the Bailiff, Attorneys, Collector of Rents of Assize, the Chamberlain, Chief Constable, Sergeants of Mace, Crier or Bedell, the Coroner and Deputy of the Coroner, Surveyors of Weaving, Overseers of the Corn, Flesh, Fish, and Poultry Markets, the Leather Scalers, and Overseers of the Commons, the Sizar and Sealer of Weights and Measures, the Ale Tasters and Bread Weighers, the Constables and Night and Day Wardsmen, and the Hogwarden; there being mostly two wardens or overseers for each of the three parishes of All Saints, St. Gregory, and St. Peter.

The two Attorneys in wig, gown, and bands, are addressed as follows :—

“You shall swear that you shall not do any falsehood, nor consent to any to be done within this Court; And if you shall Know of any to be done, you shall give Knowledge thereof to the Mayor and Aldermen of this Town, or to the Steward, or to the Deputy Steward of the same, or to some of them, being Judges of this Court, how, that it may be reformed. You shall delay no man for Lucre or Malice; you shall increase no fees, but you shall be content with the old fees accustomed. You shall plead no foreign plea, nor sue no foreign suits unlawfully to hurt any man, but shall stand with the order of the Court and your conscience. You shall seal or cause to be sealed all such Process as you shall sue out of this Court with the seal thereof, or see the Mayor of this Town satisfied for the same. And further you shall use your self in the Office of Attorney within this Court, according to your learning and discretion. So help, &c.”

Then follows the oath :—

“I, A B, do swear that I will truly and honestly demean myself in the Practice of an Attorney according to the best of my Knowledge and ability. So help me, God.”

The Bailiff is sworn to collect all Rents of Assize of all free tenants, of lands of the Manor of Sudbury, and of all and singular “p’quissites and p’fitts of Tolles, Marketts, Ffayres, Stalls, Comon Ffynes, Escheats, Waiffes; Strayes, and all other Casualties and hereditaments within the same Towne,” as by the ancient Bailiffs have been

usually heretofore received and gathered and accounted for to the Mayor.

The Balliūs or Chief Constable now steps forward and swears that the peace shall be well and truly kept; that he will arrest such as he shall see making riots, debates, or breaking the peace; that the statutes for watching and punishment of rogues shall be observed and put in execution, and that presentment shall be made "of all blood sheddes, affrayes, leasings (lyings)."

The Chamberlain takes oath "to gather all Rentes, ffines for admission of ffredomes, revenues, and comonages, fforeine ffines and all other ffines, amerciaments and giffts."

The Sergeants at Mace are to execute processes and warrants. The Bedell to impound "stray'd cattell."

An important and ancient officer, the Coroner, is thus reminded of his powers and duties, and swears that he will discharge them faithfully:—

"You shall goe to suche place within this Towne and the Liberties thereof, where anie man is slayn, strangled, drowned or otherwise suddenly dead to bee found, and make inquiry; And also by whom treasure is found by Oath of Men according to the Lawes and Statutes in this case provided. You shall not take anie ffee or rewarde for the execution of your office, but in case where the Law alloweth it."

The Petty Constables take their "Aunciente Oath," which consists of the several express particulars following:—

"Barratours to apprehend.	Night walkers to punish.
Blood Shed to prevent.	Peace to Keep.
Felous to apprehend.	Rescuers to present.
Gaming-houses and	Riot to be suppressed and
Gamesters to present. }	Rioters apprehended. }
Hue and Crye to be made.	Rogues to punish.
Idle persons to punish.	Vagabonds to arrest.
Men arm'd to arrest.	Warrants to execute."

They have also to swear that they will use their best endeavours that the Watch in and about the Town shall be duly kept for the apprehending of rogues, vagabonds, night walkers, &c., and that "Hue and Crye" be duly raised against Murtherers, Thieves, and other Felons; also to present Unlawful Houses, apprehend "typpers," &c.

The Surveyors of Weavers are important functionaries, and have onerous duties in connection with the Guild statutes and Borough ordinances and bye-laws respecting the Weaving Craft and Cloth Trade. The nature of their duties is partially shown by the terms used by the Borough Steward in administering their oath :—

“You shall sware that you will make diligent search for the findeing out of all such Clothiers or Saymakers as shall use more than twoe broad Loomes or three Say Loomes or narrow Loomes wthin this towne, and of all such weavers as shall use above y^e number of Twoe Broad Looms or Five Say looms or narrow looms, and of all such Clothiers or Weavers or other Artificer Inhabitant as shall take and retayne as an Apprentice the Sonne of any Husbandman or Labourer, inhabiting with in the town or else where, unlesse such Apprentice shall be bound by y^e Churchwardens or Overseers of y^e Poore with y^e consent of the Mayor for seaven yeares. And y^t no Clothier shall take three apprenticeses except he keep one Journeyman.”

According to a resolution passed a few years previously, no inhabiting Saymaker or tradesman is to employ Country Spinners or Weavers, or send them yarn, wool, or web to be spun or woven by “Foreigners,” but to employ townspeople only, under a penalty of Five Pounds.

The Overseers of the Poultry Market are to present persons for selling poultry, butter, cheese, bacon, oatmeal, or any other commodity with false balances, “wayts,” or measures.

Those of the Flesh Market are to see that butchers do not “sell rotten mutton, measled pork, morryn flesh, or unwholesome meate of any sorte.” They are to “p’sent all such p’sons as shall kill, or allow to be killed, or offer to selle any bull’s flesh which hath not before been well and sufficiently bayted accordynge to the aunciente orders, decrees, and customs of this Kingdom.” They are also to “p’sent all such fforrayne butchers sellinge fflesh within this markt as shall not brynge wth them their hides and tallow, or compound wth Mr. Maior, of this towne, for y^e dispensing therewith.”

Corn is to be sold by true measure, and bakers are to be presented who buy corn before market hours, or

buying corn for seed corn without bringing it to the market, also sellers of corn or grain not fit for man's body.

The Overseers of Fish are to present fishmongers selling any unwholesome or corrupt fish not fitting for man's body; also those selling sprats, oysters, &c., by pecks, half-pecks, &c., not lawful measure; also those who shall *regrate* and *ingrosse* any fish contrary to the statutes.

Engrossing, which is the buying up of large quantities of corn or other dead victual, and *Regrating*, which is the buying up of such commodities in any market and selling them again in the same market, is looked upon as injurious to the public, as tending to enhance the price of provisions. These practices have been accordingly made highly penal by several statutes.

The Ale Tasters and Bread Weighers are next sworn to use their best cunning, wit, and knowledge to search and see that all victuallers, beer sellers, &c., shall sell only such victuals and drink as be "sweet and wholesome for man's body," and to present offenders. The Assize or Assay of Bread, Wine, Beer, and other Victual, and the amending and correcting of all weights and measures was granted by our gracious King in his Charter.

The next oath taken is an important and responsible one, especially in this dread year of the Great Plague, when our authorities have wisely ordered the erection of a Pest House in the old clay pits, on Gallows Hill (our Saxon town had the rights of "Gallows)," for the recovery of infectious p'sons that by y^e providence of Almighty God shall happen to fall out of y^e sicknesse of y^e plague or pestilence":—

"An oath for Searchers of Infected P'sons":—

"You and either of you shall swear that you shall and will justly and truly execute the place and office of searchers and examiners of all P'sons whatsoever w^h in this town of Sudbury, as either of themselves, or otherwise can inform you of touching and concerning the Infectious Sicknesse or Disease, which at present is, or shall happen to be within this Town. You shall go to the Houses and Dwellings of the sick and also of Dead P'sons and carefully view their bodies, whether they are

infected with the Plague or any other infectious disease. And if you shall upon such search and view of the body or bodies find such of such P'sons' bodies to be infected as aforesaid, you shall forthwith disclose and make the same known, the truth thereof unto Mr. Mayor of this town. You shall not take any reward of any P'son infected as aforesaid to conceal the same, but well and truly according to the law in this behalf made, and according to the best of your wit and knowledge, you, and either of you shall do and perform during the time Mr. Mayor shall appoint for you to continue this Office. So help, &c."

The Hayward, or Hogwarden, has to swear that he will keep the common herd of the Town in common field, and pasture without bounds, and take care that they neither break nor crop the hedges of Inclosures, and that he will keep the grass from hurt or destruction, and also that he will impound cattle that stray and do trespass, and present at the Leet Pound breaches.

One of the Bye-Laws made 15 Novr., 1515 (7 H. VIII.), had this prohibition:—

"That no mañ þsone inhabitant in the same towne shall suffere anie mañ of Swyn to goo in the Street ther without they bee suffycient rynged nor suffer them to goo abroad on anie Sundaie nor on anie other þcession daie nor in any feir tyme nor on any market daie, nor to be abroad in the street on Nighyt tyme for the noyance of the neighbors under payne to forfete for evy Sweyn as often as it is soo taken, 2d. Whereof 1d. alwayes to the taker of them, and the other peny unto the coñon chist."

The following oath is taken by all Freemen depasturing cattle on the Common Lands:—

"You do swear that the Gelding, Mare, or Cow, which you now offer and mean to depasture on the Common Lands is your own sole property, that you have fairly bought it and that you have entered into no collusive agreement to return the same. And that you have an absolute right to dispose thereof to whom and when you may think proper, without being accountable to any person whomsoever."

And now the Court is closed in ancient form, and the members depart in due order, each walking in his allotted place, agreeably with the special minute made several years ago, when a dispute arose respecting precedence:—

"Ordered that y^e newe elected Maior ymediately after his election for y^e ffuture shall take y^e place and head of y^e Aldermen. And that

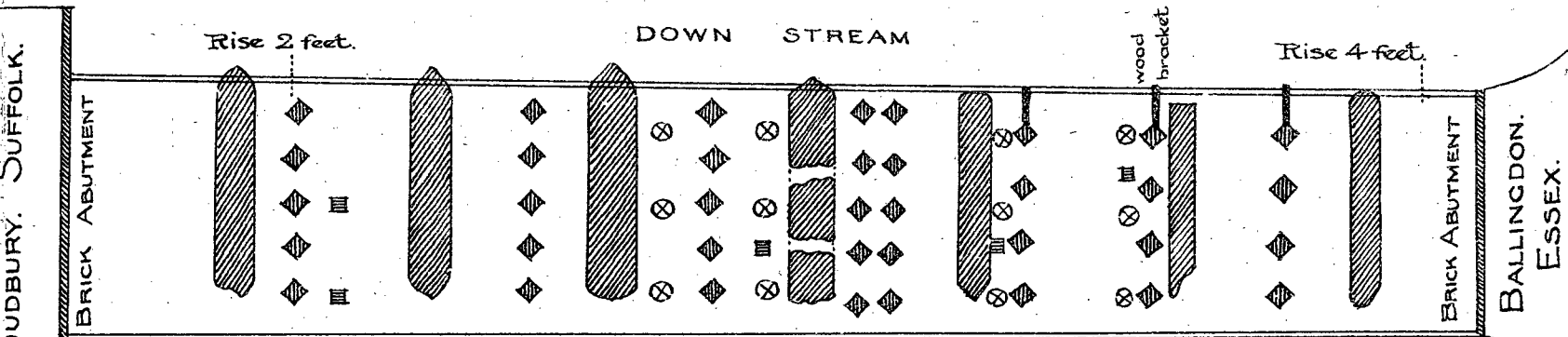
ye Bayliffe shall take y^e head of all y^e Chiefe Burgesses and walk next after the Aldermen."

As the party break up near "The Bushell" (where are the stocks, whipping post, and dipping stool), largesse, in the shape of tradesmen's "tokens," pennies and half-pennies minted for the principal traders, is distributed among the small boys by the newe Mayor and others. In the afternoon there will be bull baiting on the Croft according to the Bye-Laws, as the sport not only amuses the people and pleases the hounds, but it is considered that it improves the flesh of the beast. There will, too, be plenty of sport in the cockpits at "The Black Boy," "The Exchequer," and other inns on and near the Cattle Market. The "Restoration Day," when there will be great rejoicings, is already in part anticipated by the green oaken boughs planted in the principal streets and the garlands of spring flowers hung on the projecting swinging Inn signs. In a few days the May pole will be set up near the Corn Cross, and the sweeps will trip it on the light fantastic toe. To-day will end with fireworks, the firing of small cannon, and a bon-fire in the centre of the Hill, which will shed its ruddy light on the noisy crowd and on the grey St. Peter's steeple, the cupola and pargeted front of the timbered Moot hall, and the houses and shops built in such picturesque irregularity and disorder round the old Market Place and new Market Hill. "The Mayor's Day" will doubtless end with lusty cheers for their Worships, the new and the old Mayor, and with the strains of "God save the Queen," which is now again become very popular and may be designated the National Anthem. The loyal burghers will retire to their rest with satisfied consciences, forgetting the troubles of the past and not anticipating those of the future.

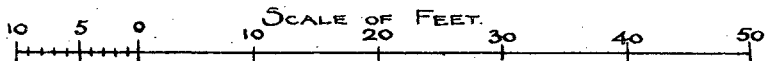
On Sudbury side, piers tied by lateral braces.

On Essex side most of piers tied by longitudinal iron braces

Length of Bridge 120 feet. Width 20 feet to 22½ feet. Width of Stream 104 feet.



- ◆ Piles of present Bridge.
- ⊗ Piles of 2nd wooden Bridge, a 4 piled structure.
- ▤ Piles of 1st wooden Bridge, a 3 piled structure.
- ◆ Foundations of original stone Bridge, with 'cutwaters'.



PLAN OF BALLINGDON BRIDGE, SUDBURY.

W. W. HODSON. fecit.

Thos. Ekey delt.