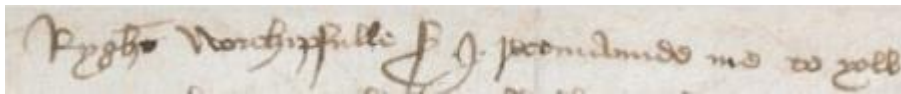


Below is a copy from the book “Paston Letters” of letter 28, by John Fenn and Alexander Ramsey, produced in 1859. This can be found online if you look it up Google books. I believe no copyright is infringed in reproducing this as I claim no ownership and have reproduced one letter (including footnotes) for the purpose of education only.

The Paston family was an up and coming family based in Norfolk. What makes them special is that there are a wealth of letters originals/copies that they sent or received, which gives a valuable historical insight into the lives of medieval people. Below is one such letter written with the news of the Duke of Suffolk’s death plus some other information.

The originals were written in English, although I must say the script is hard to decipher ([online source](#) see Volume 1, page f.13r)

For Example, The below script reads “Right worshipful sir. I recommend me to you



All letters started this way to show your deference and respect to the recipient of the letter. Today we might address a letter, “Dear, I hope you are well,” instead of the complex introductions of the middle ages.

The letter has been replicated in a hand writing style and there have been comments added (which I have highlighted in a different style) but to help the reader make sense of what is being written.

- The word “Weet” means to “know and is also still a Dutch word meaning the same thing.
- &c. (or &c. in the handwriting font) the modern equivalent is written etc.

Other explanations are in brackets.

I have also reproduced the footnotes of the original book which will appear of the last page.

Right worshipful sir, I recommend me to you, and am right sorry of that I shall say, and have so washed this little bill with sorrowful tears, that unethoⁱ (scarcely) ye shall read it.

As on Monday next after May day (4th of May) there came tidings to London, that on Thursday before (30th of April), the Duke of Suffolk came unto the coasts of Kentⁱⁱ full near Dover with his two ships and a little spinner; the which spinner he sent with certain letters, by certain of his trusted men, unto Calais ward, to know how he should be received; and with him met a ship called Nicholas of the Towerⁱⁱⁱ with other ships waiting on him, and by them that were in the spinner the master of the Nicholas had knowledge of the duke's coming.

When he espied the duke's ships, he sent forth his boat to meet what they were, and the duke himself spoke to them, and said, he was by the king's commandment sent to Calais ward, &c., and they said he must speak with their master; and so he, with two or three of his men, went forth with them in their boat to the Nicholas; and when he came, the master bade him, "Welcome, Traitor," as men say.

And further the master desired to meet if the shipmen would hold with the duke, and they sent word they would not in no wise; so he was in the Nicholas till Saturday (2nd May) next following.

Some say he wrote much thing to be delivered to the king, but that is not verily known.

He had his confessor with him, &c.; and some say he was arraigned in the ship on the manner upon the Impeachments^{iv}, and found him guilty, &c.

Also he asked the name of the ship, and when he knew it, he remembered Stacy that said, if he might escape the danger of the Tower he should be safe, and then his heart failed him, for he thought he was deceived.^v

And in the sight of all his men he was drawn out of the great ship into the boat, and there was an axe and a stock, and one of the lowdest (meanest) of the ship bade him lay down his head, and he should be fairly ferd (dealt) with, and dies on a sword; and took a rusty sword and smote off his head within [in less than] half a dozen strokes, and took away his gown of russet, and his doublet of velvet mailed, and laid his body on the sands of Dover: and some say his head was set on a pole by it; and his men set on the land [with] great circumstance and prey [parade and robbery].^{vi}

And the sheriff of Kent doth watch the body,^{vii} and (hath) sent his under-sheriff to the judges to meet what to do; and also to the king (to know) what shall be done.

Further I wot not, but thus far is it, if the process be erroneous let his counsel reverse it, &c.

Also for all the other matters they sleep, and the fryar also, &c. Sir Thomas Keriel^{viii} is taken prisoner, and all the leg-harness, and about 3000 Englishmen slain.

Matthew Gooth^{ix} (q. Gough), with 1500 fled, and saved himself and them. And Peris Brusy was chief captain, and had 10,000 Frenchmen and more, &c.

I pray you let my mistress, your mother, know these tidings, and God have you all in his keeping.

I pray you (that) this bill may recommend me to my mistresses, your mother and wife, &c.

James Gresham hath written to John of Dam, and recommendh him, &c.

Written in great haste at London, the 5th day of May, &c.

By your wife,

William Lomner^x

Footnotes

ⁱ [Uneth is uneasily – i.e., with difficulty.]

ⁱⁱ Some of our historians say that he put to sea from the coast of Norfolk.

ⁱⁱⁱ This ship belonged to Bristol in 1442, 20 H. VI., and was a great ship, with fore-stages, and carried 150 men.

^{iv} Impeachments by the Commons; this shows that these ships were sent out on purpose to take him, &c.

^v [Shakespeare, who gives the details of his death with great historical accuracy, varies the nature of the prophecy. It is more probable that the greater number of these predictions were formed after and made to fit the event, and Shakespeare may have even varied it to suit his scene; he could not so well have introduced the St. Nicholas of the Tower. Suffolk, on the sea-shore, says to one of his captors:-

“ Thy name (Walter) affrights me, in whose sound is death;

A cunning man did calculate my birth;

And told me that by water I should die;

Yet let not this make thee be bloody minded;

Thy name is Gualtier, being rightly sounded.”

Henry VI., Part ii]

^{vi} [Fenn translates- “ and his men sit on the land by great circumstance (q. by great numbers) and prey” He then suggests another reading- “ and his men (were) set on the land (together with) great circumstance (wealth) and prey (booty).” The original is – “ and hes men sette on the londe be grette circumstance and preyye.”

^{vii} His body was taken from Dover Sands, and carried to the collegiate church of Wingfield, in Suffolk, where it lies interred under an altar tomb, in the chancel, with effigies in armour, painted, gilt, &c. carved in wood lying on it. It is remarkably well executed, as is that of Alice his wife, likewise, which lies at his right hand. [This is a mistake of Fenn’s. There are three monuments in Wingfield church to other members of the same family, but there is no memorial for him. They are engraved in Stothard’s ‘Monumental Effigies’.

^{viii} He was taken prisoner at the battle of Formigny (my correction of spelling), fought on the 18th April, 1450, where he defended himself with great bravery. He was beheaded by Queen Margaret’s order, after the second battle of St. Albans, in 1460.

^{ix} Query if the brave Matthew Gough, who was afterwards slain in Cade’s rebellion, fighting on the citizen’s part, in July 1450, at the Battle of the Bridge.

^x [This singular subscription is explained by Mr Fenn to have risen from the fact of W. Lomner having been frequently employed as amanuensis by Marg- Paston, many of her letters being in the same handwriting, and that he had here forgotten at the instant in what capacity he was writing.]