

Chapter 3 Norwich

When Celia Fiennes visited Norwich in 1698 she described how from Castle Hill:
“you see the whole City at once, being built around it, it’s a vast place and takes up a large tract of ground, its 6 miles in compass, here is the County hall and Gaol; nothing of the Castle remains but a green space and under it is also a large space for the beast market and 3 tymes in the year is there very great faires kept, to which resort a very great concourse of people and wares a full trade; the whole City looks like what it is, a rich, thriveing industrious place; Saturday is their great market day; they have beside the Town hall a hall distinct which is the Sealeing hall where their stuffs [worsted cloth] is all measured and if they hold their breadth and lengths they are sealed but if they are deffective there is a fine layd on the owner and a private mark on the stuff which shows its defficiency....here there is a fine large Cathedral....by it is 3 Hospitalls for boys, girls and old people who spinn yarn, as does all the town besides, for the Crapes, Callimanco and Damaskes which is the whole business of the Place; they are arrived at a great perfection in their worke so fine and thinn and glossy; their pieces are 27 yards in length and their price is from 30 shillings to 3 pounds as they are in fineness; a man can weave 13 yards a day, I saw some weaveing; they are all employed in knitting spinning weaveing dying scouring fulling or bleaching their stuffs”

Norwich was the second largest city in England in 1600, with a population of about 11,000; by 1680 this had grown to about 28,000. In fact the textile industry was expanding so fast at the beginning of the century that there was a shortage of labour and attempts were made to recruit more apprentices. In Lowestoft, however, a serious outbreak of plague in 1603 had killed a fifth of the population and probably led to a decline in trade. It may be this combination of events that led to Richard and Samuel Puckle coming to Norwich as apprentice hosiers or dealers in knitted worsted stockings, although Richard was apprenticed to the Tailors’ Company and Samuel to the Grocers’. It seems that the Norwich Gilds like the London Livery Companies were no longer exclusively linked to one trade. Since the Reverend William Lee had invented the stocking knitting frame in 1589 stockings could be produced quickly and cheaply, although their production was still largely a cottage industry in which the whole family participated. Worsted yarn was made from the long-staple woollen fibres and was supplied in hanks which children could wind onto cones for their fathers to knit on the frame, while the women did the sewing up of the finished stockings. Woollen cloth was made from the short-staple fibres and needed to be stretched and fullled until it resembled felt, whereas worsted cloth was in general of higher quality and more expensive. Norwich was famous for its worsteds especially its “new draperies” made of mixed fibres such as silk or linen and worsted, which had been introduced by refugees from Flanders in the previous century.

Richard Puckle

Richard was the elder of the two brothers but received his freedom on 3 May 1611 a year later than Samuel. He was apprenticed to Giles Cousins of the Taylors’ Company who lived in the parish of St Andrew. Richard married Elizabeth Loveland in about 1618. She was the daughter of John Loveland Alderman of Wymer Ward, who had Puritan sympathies, like many of the aldermen of the city. In 1636 when a group of six aldermen loyal to the Laudian Bishop of Norwich, Matthew Wren, wrote him a letter of support, John Loveland was among the larger group who wrote expressly

disassociating themselves from such sentiments. Several of John Loveland's children later emigrated to New England where the religious climate was more congenial. Elizabeth bore Richard one son, John, probably named after her father, but she was buried in the church of St Benedict only 8 months later, on 3 March 1619/20.

Richard now began to take on some civic duties: in 1621 he was appointed Constable of West Wymer Ward and served again in 1625. The popular view of constables in 1600 can be seen in Shakespeare's portrayal of Constable Dogbery and the watch in "Much Ado About Nothing":

Dogbery: ...You shall also make no noise in the streets: for, for the watch to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

Second Watch: We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.....

Dogbery:...you are to call at all the alehouses and bid those that are drunk to get them to bed.

Watch: How if they will not?

Dogbery: Why then let them alone till they are sober.....

Second Watch: Well masters, we hear our charge: let us go and sit here upon the church bench till two and then all go to bed.

In 1633 Richard became Collector for his own parish of St Benedict. The post of Collector probably involved collecting the poor rate, a rather thankless task, like that of Constable. In about 1626 he took a second wife, Deborah, who bore him seven more children: Richard, Sarah, Nathaniel, two Daniels and Samuel. Between 1643 and 1649 Richard was a common councillor for Wymer Ward where his former father-in-law was Alderman. After this he held no further municipal offices but he obviously identified with the city's government and saw things from their point of view. In 1627 the aldermen appointed Henry Lane as Sheriff but the freemen retaliated by electing John Kettle, who was a thorn in the flesh of the aldermen, accusing them of corruption. On 12 September of that year an argument between Michael Medcalfe and Richard Puckle was reported in the Mayor's court, in which Richard was supposed to have said that John Kettle had showed himself rebellious against the government of the City. Eventually the Mayor and Aldermen succeeded in getting the rules changed so that only the common councillors could elect the sheriff, not the freemen in general.

In 1633/4 Richard was rated at 11d in his parish of St Benedict where he was a churchwarden. Thereafter he makes no other appearance in the records apart from being a witness for his brother in his dispute with Adrian Parmenter in 1639, and a witness to the will of his brother-in-law, Leonard Gleane in 1653. He was left forty shillings by Leonard but by the time the will was proved in October 1658 Richard was already dead. He was buried in the church of St Benedict. His will mentions that he owes money to his eldest son, John and wishes his executors, to sell his property in St Benedict's parish, so that his debts can be paid. The remaining money is to be given to his children, with equal shares for all: "*except to my sonne Richard whoe shall have noe part thereof*". There is no mention of his wife who is presumably dead by this date.

John Puckle

Richard's eldest son, John, had been apprenticed to George Sallye, a baker in Norwich in 1634. and on 17 September 1637 he and his master were recorded as passengers sailing from Great Yarmouth to Holland. This is not likely to be a business trip: they were probably part of the great exodus from Norwich which resulted from Bishop Matthew Wren's actions in his diocese:

“The suspending and silencing of divers godly ministers and the persecuting of godly men and women, caused divers of the godly in Norwich and Yarmouth and other places to remove; and to passe over into Holland to enjoy the liberty of their consciences in God's worship”.

These Norwich exiles formed a church in Rotterdam but in November 1640 with the calling of the Long Parliament, they realised the tide was turning in their favour and many of them returned home. It is likely that John did return about this time and he may well be the Captain John Puckle who in the 1640s was an officer in Colonel Robert Hammond's Regiment of Foot, which was part of Cromwell's New Model Army. Several of John's cousins served in the Cromwellian Army in the 1650s and Miles Corbet, the MP for Yarmouth, whose family had links with the Puckles, was largely responsible for forming the army of the Eastern Association, many of whose troops later joined the New Model Army. There is a mention of John, now apparently no longer an officer, in 1655, when he received money due to him and his cousin, Captain Edward Puckle, by then he seems to have been living in London. After that there are no further records, apart from the mention in his father's will made in December 1657 when Cromwell was still in power. John may have left the country at the Restoration, as Miles Corbet himself was forced to do.

Richard Puckle Junior

Richard Puckle was the eldest child of Richard and Debora Puckle, born in 1627. He was made free of the Worsted Weavers' Company in 1653 but he seems to have been already married, as there is a record of a marriage of Richard Puckle and Jane Bucke in St Michael at Plea on 23 October 1651. Apprentices were forbidden to marry before their seven year apprenticeship was completed and it may be that this marriage was the reason Richard was disinherited in his father's will. There seem to be no children of this marriage, nor of the second one, for an “Elizabeth wife of Richard Puckle” was buried in St Margaret, Norwich on 27 November 1673. Richard took on an apprentice: John Hardy, in 1667. In September 1672 he was exempted from paying the Hearth Tax in St Mary Coslany. In 1678 he and his uncle Martin, were cited in an Equity Pleading. Richard's cousin, Elizabeth Mann nee Armitage, had been declared bankrupt after the death of her husband Robert. Richard and Martin along with other friends were accused of privately settling debts with Elizabeth and giving her various household items, after the declaration of bankruptcy and behind the creditors' backs. Such actions are understandable, but of course the creditors had every right to object, since any assets should have gone to paying them. Richard is recorded as taking two more apprentices, towards the end of his life: John Ruston (freedom 1703) and John Mann (freedom 1706). By 1706 Richard would have been nearly 80 but I have not found a burial for him.

Sarah and Samuel Puckle

Richard's children Sarah and Samuel are mentioned in two wills of the Gleanes, the

family of their aunt, Anne Puckle who had married Leonard Gleane. This suggests they remained in Norwich but I have found no marriages or burials for them unless the burial of Sarah Puckle in St Martin at Palace in 1690 is Richard's daughter and not Samuel's. There is a burial of a Daniel Puckle in Bunhill Fields, the non-conformist burial ground in London, in 1724 which could be Richard's son. Nathaniel went to London and I will deal with him and Debora in later chapters. The only grandchild of Richard I can find is Nathaniel's son who died without male issue in America.

Samuel Puckle

Richard's younger brother Samuel had completed his apprenticeship in June 1610 when he was 20. In the following April, when he was 21, he married his first wife, Elizabeth, in St Michael Coslany but there are no children of this marriage and Elizabeth probably died in childbirth as she was buried in St Michael Coslany on 23 Apr 1612. Samuel married again on 10 April 1615 at St Andrew, Norwich. His bride's name was Mary Halback and she bore him 4 children: Ann, Martha, William and Mary, all baptised in the parish of St Mary Coslany.

Samuel began a lifetime of public service with his appointment as Collector for West Wymer Ward in 1611. West Wymer comprised the parishes of St Benedict, St Gregory, St Lawrence, St Margaret and St Swithin so Samuel is likely to have been living in one of these parishes. In 1614 he was Constable of Coslany Ward and in 1616 Collector for the same ward. By this time he was living in the parish of St Mary Coslany.

Many people took their duties of this kind fairly lightly but Samuel was aiming higher and knew that they were the path to advancement, so he was probably quite conscientious. Norwich, unlike Bristol or Exeter (or even Lewes), had a very democratic local government in which all the freemen of the city had a right to vote. Many of the senior officers were, like Samuel, engaged in the cloth trade. By 1627 he had succeeded in getting himself chosen as a Councillor for the Northern Great Ward which included Coslany Ward. There were 60 men of the Common Council who each represented the ward in which they lived. The 24 Aldermen were elected from the common councillors but only from those who had already served as Sheriff, so service as a sheriff was an essential step to becoming an alderman. From 1628 to 1631 Samuel served as Surveyor which may have meant "official inspector" rather than land surveyor in the modern sense, in this case it was likely to be concerned with weights and measures and would have involved checking that no one in the market was selling goods under the required weight or size, as Celia Fiennes described.

In 1623 Samuel took William Fawcett as an apprentice; later his sons William, Edmund and Martin were apprenticed to him. His second wife having died in December 1623 Samuel married for the third time on 3 April 1625 at St Andrew, Norwich. His new bride was Margaret Calthorpe, who cannot have been much older than 16, and came from a well-known Norfolk gentry family: her great-grandfather had been Lord Mayor of London in 1588, but by the time of her marriage the family were in financial difficulties. Her grandfather Martin had been forced to sell some of his land in 1603 in order to provide a jointure for his wife. Although Margaret Calthorpe's mother, Elizabeth Riches, was an heiress in her own right, her husband had to apply to the House of Lords again in 1623 for a private act enabling him to sell more land "for the preferment of his younger children and payment of his debts". In

1639 Samuel was a witness for Martin Calthorpe in his defence against Edward Haylett's claims to the manor of [Sea] Palling. These depositions were made "*at the sign of the Dolphin in the City of Norwich*". This manor seems to have been part of the jointure of Elizabeth Calthorpe nee Smith, Margaret Calthorpe's grandmother, as, according to the witnesses, Elizabeth Calthorpe was accustomed to collect the rents of the manor herself, or send her son George to do it for her. She also presided over the manor court.

In the early 1630s Samuel was in trouble with the law himself. There was a shortage of grain in England and indeed all over Europe as a result of bad harvests. The harvest of 1630 was a particularly poor one. The regulations in Charles I's Book of Orders empowered local Justices of the Peace to restrict the export of corn and to lower the price if necessary, in times of shortage. In February 1630/1 Samuel appeared before the Mayor's Court charged with selling "*6 & 7 score coombes of wheat to Thomas Hardwyn a baker in Cornewell... & between 6 & 7 hundred coombes of Bucke [wheat] which he thought to have transported*". A coombe was 4 bushels; 5 bushels of flour was the contents of one sack. Samuel was ordered to bring 30 coombes of wheat into the city granary and was paid 22 shillings per coombe – presumably much below the price he would have got from his other customers. In March 1631 Samuel applied to the bailiffs of Yarmouth for permission to export some of his buckwheat but was refused as "*the scarcity having been discovered to be far greater than expected, so that many families of good sort have no other bread than such as is made of buckweed & that not plentiful, yea & the poor people laying violent hands on boatmen suspected of bringing in corn for exportation*". The Justices of the Peace for Suffolk were also concerned about his activities and requested "*punishment of Puckle for his false pretences*" – Samuel had claimed that the poor were not reliant on buckwheat for their bread. By December 1631 when Samuel again applied for permission to export grain, he claimed that he had only exported 60 lasts (4,800 bushels) and the bailiffs would not permit him to export the remaining 40. This time permission was granted. This episode does not show Samuel in a very good light; the only thing that can be said in his defence is that there was a severe slump in trade during this period and the textile trade was particularly badly affected; however one cannot escape the conclusion that he was exploiting the grain shortage.

In 1634 Samuel was elected one of the two Sheriffs of Norwich. This was a considerable step up: sheriffs had their own court which dealt with petty offences, and they were responsibly for the judiciary of the city administration and for the payment of fee farm rent (a feudal tax) to the Crown. From 1637-8 and 1640-2 he was Councillor for Northern Great Ward again. In 1639 he was involved in a Chancery case against a fellow member of Norwich Corporation, Adrian Parmenter, who had been a sheriff in 1632 and was to be Mayor in 1642. Samuel's brother Richard, and his eldest son, William, were witnesses on his behalf, when the case was heard at the sign of the Angel at Norwich. In the 1630s there had been a collapse in the value of farthings, mainly due to the number of forgeries in circulation, and as the House of Commons later reported "*the poor are in great straits not knowing what to turn unto*". In 1634 Adrian Parmenter had borrowed £200 from Samuel Puckle in the form of Bills of Exchange. The money was paid to him by Gregory Booty, Samuel's factor in London. When it came to repaying the debt, Parmenter had offered £55 of it in farthings, agreeing to change them if Samuel was unable to "*put them away*" [get rid of them]. Samuel rejected the coins and claimed some of them were "*false farthings*"

but when he sent his brother Richard and servant Thomas Booty to Parmenter's house with the coins "*in a great bag*" Parmenter's wife (the only one at home) had said: "*Carry them away again for I will not meddle with them*". Thomas Booty deposed that his master never paid any sums in farthings but various other witnesses testified that, as they dealt with "*petty chapmen*", they were obliged to accept farthings in part payment of debts, otherwise they would lose their custom. It was claimed that a "*great quantity of farthings [was] now dispersed and vented by the Complainant [Samuel Puckle] & other hosiers in Norwich in the market where they buy their hose*". Presumably this dispute was settled amicably as both men continued to serve the Corporation, sometimes sitting on the same committee. In November 1643 Adrian Parmenter used his own house as a base for the collection of the unpopular Excise Tax – a tax similar to VAT, imposed upon basic necessities whose imposition led to riots in the city. The farthing problem continued in the 1640s and was further complicated by the setting up of the Farthing Token Office. In December 1643 Miles Corbet, then MP for Yarmouth, was appointed to the House of Commons Committee looking into the affairs of the Farthing Token Office and the importing of counterfeit farthings. Miles Corbet is now remembered for one thing: he was a regicide – one of the signatories to the death warrant of Charles I – but he had also played a leading role in organising the Parliamentary army in Norfolk.

In April 1639, according to Samuel Puckle's evidence in a later Chancery case, he went into joint partnership with William Corbet "*as traders in buying & selling stockings & other matters*". William was the brother of Miles Corbet, and by this agreement managed the business in London, presumably replacing Gregory Booty in this role, while Samuel ran the Norwich trade. It is interesting that Gregory Booty's children were baptised in the 1620s in the parish of St Benet Fink and that William Corbet's children were later baptised in the same parish, as was one of Samuel's grandchildren by his eldest son William. There is also a PCC administration in 1626 of a William Harcourt of St Benet Fink in which Mary Harcourt, the widow of William, renounced her right to administer her husband's affairs in favour of Samuel Puckle, to whom her husband was indebted. It may be that Samuel had the lease of a house in St Benet Fink which was used to accommodate whoever was working as his London factor. Later on his son William lived in Broad Street in the same parish.

In 1649 Walter Bening brought a case against Samuel Puckle, on behalf of his son in law, Alexander Power, a London hosier. From the detailed account of Power's purchases from William Corbet in London we learn that women's worsted stockings could vary in price from 6s 4d to as little as 23d a pair, men's were usually 3s to 4s a pair, and children's 15d or 16d. Since it was customary to allow other traders to buy on credit, eventually Alexander Power's debt amounted to £76 8s 0d and realising that he was "*much declyning in his estate*" William Corbet succeeded in impounding some of Power's goods "*for the better securing*" of the debt. Walter Bening now agreed to enter into 4 bonds of £19.2s each to cover his son in law's debt. In December 1647 William Corbet died and his accounts came into the hands of William Puckle, as his father's agent. The books revealed that only two of the bonds had been redeemed, whereas Walter Benings claimed he had settled the entire debt and accused Samuel Puckle and his son William of being in a "combination or confederacy" to extort money from him. Walter Bening clearly resented being responsible for his son in law's debts, as Samuel describes meeting him in Smithfield in London: when asked for the money Bening replied it "*would not be long before he paid it & it was very*

hard with him to give so much money with his daughter & yet to keep him & his child & to pay that besides". Alexander Power had married Elizabeth Bening in 1644 and it seems likely he was now bankrupt or possibly even imprisoned for debt so Elizabeth was being kept by her father.

In 1642 Samuel became a clavor. Clavors were assistants to the Chamberlain who was in control of the city's Treasury. The clavor's chief role was building up financial reserves for the city to use in emergencies and paying the incidental expenses of aldermen when they were on city business. Samuel served on the Chamberlain's council from 1649 to 1653. By now he must have had considerable expertise in the financial affairs of the City as well as opportunities for lining his own pocket, which was to some extent expected of people in public service at this time. In 1643 Samuel was elected Alderman for St Giles' parish. This was an essential step to becoming mayor. Aldermen held their posts for life and did not have to reside in the ward they represented. He was Auditor for the City three times and in 1645 a candidate for Mayor. The mayor was elected from two aldermen nominated by the freemen of the city. In 1656 Samuel was elected Mayor. The mayor's election took place on May Day and the day of the Mayor's inauguration was usually attended with great festivities according to Celia Fiennes:

"all the streete in which this major elects house is very exact in beautifying themselves and hanging up flaggs the coullours of their Companyes and dress up pageants and there are playes and all sorts of shows that day, in little what is done at the Lord Major of London show; then they have a great feast with fine flaggs and scenes hung out, musick and dancing"

It is doubtful whether such jollifications would have been allowed during the Commonwealth: in 1648 the Mayor and Sheriffs had decided not to keep their feasts because of the *"sad distractions of the kingdom"*. Norwich's mayor acted as chief magistrate and clerk of the markets and remained a JP for the rest of his life. It is not surprising that Samuel was elected mayor during this time as he was a prominent supporter of Cromwell, and several of his sons were even more active in support of the Parliamentary cause. The Norwich Assembly was in any case strongly Parliamentary. In 1643 it had decided to recruit a company of 50 dragoons to fight for Parliament's cause and Samuel was involved in the consultations about the raising of two troops of volunteers for the city defence, to be led by Sergeant Major Livewell Sherwood and Captain Thomas Ashwell, both aldermen. On 24 January 1643/4 the Mayor's Court issued an order for a committee (which included Samuel Puckle) *"to repayre to the severall churches in this City to view the same & take notice of such scandalous pictures, cruceyfixes & images as are yet remayning"*. They were then instructed to destroy the images. This was the period when Cromwell's supporters destroyed statues, pictures and stained glass up and down the country, and Samuel appears to have been an active iconoclast. In 1643 and 1644 books, pictures and other *"images from the city's churches were burnt in the market-place in Norwich. Also in 1643 Samuel, together with Adrian Parmenter, sat on the Committee for the Weekly Assessments and for the Sequestering of the Estates of Papists and other Notorious Malignants in the County and City of Norwich.*

Edward and Samuel Puckle Junior

Samuel had 11 children by his third wife. Margaret: Thomas and John died in infancy.

Samuel, born in 1628, lived long enough to be admitted a pensioner of Caius College, Cambridge and to be made Bachelor of Arts in 1649, but there seem to be no further records of him. His brother Edward received the freedom of Norwich on 16 December 1648, having completed his apprenticeship to his father, and during the Commonwealth period appears to have become a captain in the Cromwellian army. He is mentioned twice in the Calendar of State Papers Domestic in 1650 as being charged along with Captain William Disney with raising two companies of foot to join Colonel Fowkes' regiment in Ireland. In 1655 Edward is described as "*of St Benet Fink*" so was probably living with his half-brother William in Broad Street: his cousin John was in trouble for accepting money on Edward's behalf to which he was not entitled, so Edward was probably still alive at this date but there are no further records of him. Most of Samuel and Margaret's children were baptised in the parish of St Michael Coslany where Samuel was rated in 1633. The children whose lives can be traced as adults were: Elizabeth, William, Martin, James, Thomas and Daniel.

In 1652 Samuel brought a Chancery case against Henry King of Norwich who had invested £400 initially in the Puckle and Corbet stocking business. This sum had gradually been increased to £700. The agreement was that the partners would invest the money and take a share of the profits for their pains. According to Samuel, King had repeatedly been offered his money back but had always wished it to continue in the business. By 1647 Samuel wanted to end the partnership and asked Corbet to produce an account and split the stock. It took Samuel considerable time and effort to achieve this, and meanwhile Henry King: "*perceiving the stock was being wasted by William Corbet & he being much decayed in his estate*" had come to a secret agreement with Corbet and had retrieved his stake without paying Samuel the agreed share of the profits. This sort of problem must have been common in business partnerships when the partners were in two different cities and communication was so poor. Daniel Defoe in his book of advice "*The English Tradesman*", published in 1726, warns of the dangers of partnerships:

"It is certain.....rumour will break a tradesman almost at any time. It matters not at first whether the rumour be true or false. What rumour can sit closer to a man of business.....than such as this – that his partner is broke?"

In 1655 Samuel was a witness in a case involving another of Miles Corbet's brothers: Edmund, who was Rector of North Repps in Norfolk, but claimed Michael Read owed him money from the 1640s when he was Rector of Syderstone. Samuel deposed that he had received two sums of £100 and £54. 4s 0d for the use of Edmund Corbet which were to be paid at London by William Corbet. In his statement Samuel confirmed that he had known both Edmund Corbet and Michael Read "*for twenty yeares & upwards*". The Puckle and Corbet business appears to have sometimes functioned as a bank so that money could be transferred without the need to carry around large sums in cash.

In the late 1650s Samuel was involved in a long-running case about the estate of the bankrupt tradesmen William Playford and Richard Johnson who were described as "*traders in stuffs, wares & divers other merchantable commodities*". Samuel and three other colleagues had sat on the Commission for Bankrupts in July 1651 which had administered the affairs of this business. The case was brought by William Brooke and his former ward, Martha who had married Edward Beast in Norwich in

1655. They claimed that when all the assets of the Playford and Johnson business were realised they amounted to a sum of about £6000 which should have enabled the Commissioners to pay back a larger proportion of their debt of £122 than the £22.5s.0d they received. The money was owed on a purchase of "*worsted castillions*" which was probably a cloth made of mixed worsted and Spanish merino wool. Martha Beast also claimed she was owed £52.00. Samuel and the other defendants were accused of colluding with the bankrupts to ensure that their own debts were settled in full while other creditors received only a small proportion of the money owed to them. It was suggested that the bankrupts benefited from this by being allowed to "*enjoy ...part of their estates*". Obviously the task of selling up a bankrupt business, collecting the debts due, paying the money owed and realising all the assets, was very open to abuse and to some extent commissioners were expected to be paid for their efforts by helping themselves to a share of the money but they were meant to keep this within reasonable limits which the plaintiffs considered had not been done in this case.

The restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660 meant that the Puckles' fortunes were in decline. The network of business colleagues, fellow aldermen, friends and Puritan sympathisers Samuel had built up during his life was now suspect, and every one would have to prove their loyalty to the new regime. He had reached the great age of seventy and probably he felt he was too old to change. He died on 22 August 1661 at his property at Stalham and was buried in the parish church on the following day. In 1662 all the aldermen with Cromwellian sympathies, including Adrian Parmenter, were ejected from the bench. In November Robert Swallow was thrown into the Tower of London. He had been captain of Cromwell's "Maiden Troop" drawn mainly from the Norwich area in 1643 and partly funded by the "godly maids of Norwich".

The inventory of Samuel's goods was taken at Stalham by John Tofts and Richard Puckle, Samuel's nephew. It is clear that Samuel had ceased trading in worsted stockings and was living as a yeoman farmer. The inventory lists a good deal of furniture, farm stock and farming equipment as well as brewing and dairy equipment. There is quite a lot of silver: a tumbler, two bowls, two cups, a salt, a porringer and 21 spoons and the only book is the Bible. Although there are cushions, hangings for one chamber, "*furniture*" (hangings) for 8 beds and even "*a carpel of pictures*" the impression given is of a working household that did not spend much time on leisure pursuits perhaps considering them "ungodly".

Ann Puckle

Samuel's wife, Margaret, is sole executrix of his will, she is left the bulk of his estate for her lifetime. She died of plague in 1666 when the plague that had devastated London reached Norwich. In his will Samuel lists all his surviving children, of whom the eldest was Ann Goose. She seems to have married Ambrose Goose of Thorpe next Norwich, whose family came from Ormesby, but from his will (proved in 1660) one gets the impression she may be his second wife and not the mother of his children. His heir is his grandchild Isaac Craske, at present a minor. His daughter Jane Robins is the executrix of his will and not his wife, who is only left five pounds and the feather bed in the Middle Chamber and "*all the furniture to the same belonging*". This may not be as miserly as it seems: it is quite likely that this will, written three years before Ambrose died, was made around the time of his second marriage and that he had already provided a jointure for Ann to give her an income in the event of his death. It

seems that Ann had no children and as she is not mentioned in the wills of any of her brothers or half-brothers, she may have died in the 1660s or 1670s. I have no information about Martha Puckle, Samuel's second child: she is not mentioned in any wills and may have died in infancy. William, Samuel's third child and eldest son, was apprenticed to his father and received his freedom of the Hosiers' Company on 20 January 1641. He moved to London some time within the next ten years to work as his father's factor so I will deal with him in a later chapter.

Mary Puckle

Mary Puckle is referred to as "my daughter Marshall" in her father's will. She married Francis Marshall at St Dunstan Stepney in East London on 11 November 1652. He was a member of the Tallow Chandlers' livery company, and possibly known to her father through his business contacts in London. The couple had three daughters: Mary, Sarah and Judith, whose baptisms I have not found. None of them seem to have married, as they are all mentioned in their uncle Thomas Puckle's will, made in March 1723, and left small sums of money. Thomas, who was Mary's half-brother, had been apprenticed to Francis Marshall in September 1655 so one might have expected him to be a bit more generous.

Elizabeth Puckle

"*My daughter Armitage*" is Samuel's eldest daughter by Margaret Calthorpe. Elizabeth was probably named after her maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Calthorpe nee Riches. She married the Reverend Timothy Armitage in about 1646. He was a Puritan but had been studying at St Catherine's College Cambridge during the religious upheavals of the 1630s. In 1633 William Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury and tried to impose religious conformity throughout the kingdom. From 1635 in the Diocese of Norwich he had an enthusiastic ally in Matthew Wren, Christopher Wren's uncle. Wren tried to put a stop to preaching on weekdays, and stress the music, ritual and beauty of the Anglican service, but to most Puritans this was Roman Catholicism under another name. He ejected many clergy from their parishes if they refused to conform to his changes. Norwich was a strongly Puritan city and many clergy and their supporters were driven abroad. Wren became Bishop of Ely in 1638 but the Norwich Corporation still felt strongly enough in 1640 to petition Parliament that the "*tyranny & oppression of Dr Wren*" had forced many in "*that great trade of weaving*" to leave the country and this was "*impoverishing the kingdome*" [and] "*drawing away a maine portion of its native wealth*". Among the clergy driven overseas were the Reverend William Bridge who had been rector of St Peter Hungate in Norwich, and the Reverend Thomas Allen who had been rector of St Edmund's.

In 1640 after the Long Parliament had been called and the political climate was changing, William Bridge returned from Rotterdam with a group of exiles. They formed two separate congregations, in Great Yarmouth and Norwich (where Timothy Armitage was a member) and both were led by William Bridge). From 1643 to 1648 Armitage was lecturer at St Michael Coslany, Norwich. In addition to Sundays, lectures were normally delivered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The appointment of the lecturers was made by the city authorities so they were outside the control of the bishop and the sermons were frequently very critical of the church hierarchy. Laud and Wren, now languishing in the Tower of London, had been unsuccessful in suppressing lectures. In February 1643 Bridge and his group founded an Independent

Church in Great Yarmouth, and in September of the same year, one in Norwich. Timothy Armitage now became Minister of the Norwich church which met in private houses at first, then in a granary belonging to the old Blackfriars' building and then in a room converted to a chapel in a house in St Edmund's parish. Armitage remained minister until his death in December 1655. He was succeeded by Thomas Allen. It was not until 1693 that the Independents felt sufficiently secure and free from persecution to erect a purpose-built meeting house.

Timothy and Elizabeth Armitage had six children, most of them baptised in St Michael Coslany where he was a lecturer. Only four appear to have reached adulthood: Sarah who married Jonathan Ellatson in 1676; Elizabeth who married Robert Mann in about 1669 and Timothy and Samuel who were both apprenticed to Elizabeth's nephew, Daniel Puckle of the Ironmongers' Livery Company in London. Timothy became a merchant but died unmarried in 1683. His will mentions his two married sisters and his mother but his brother Samuel appears to have died. Timothy may have died on a journey abroad, since, when he made his will in April 1682, he was in good health. "Widow Armitage" was exempted from paying Hearth Tax in 1670 in North End Ward and this is the last record I have of her.

Sarah Puckle

Samuel's youngest daughter, Sarah, was alive in 1661 when he made his will. She appears to have remained single. In March 1671 when she was living in the parish of St Margaret Norwich she obtained exemption from the Hearth Tax, presumably on the grounds of poverty. She died in 1690 and was buried in the church of St Michael at Palace on 2 September.

Martin Puckle

Samuel's son Martin was baptised in 1632 in St Michael Coslany and named after his grandfather, Martin Calthorpe. In 1655 Martin was sufficiently prosperous to buy land in the parish of Scottow in Norfolk from Richard Hutchinson, a London Ironmonger, who was his brother William's father-in-law. He was granted the freedom of the Hosiers' Company of Norwich on 3 April 1661, by which time he was already married to Margaret Riches, the daughter of John Riches, then Vicar of Stalham and a relative of Elizabeth Riches, Martin's maternal grandmother. Martin made his living as a dealer in worsted stockings. He is treated as Samuel Puckle's heir in the 1664 Visitation of Norfolk so presumably his brothers Edward and Samuel were dead by then. His half-brother William was still very much alive in London but would not have inherited anything that came from the Calthorpes. The Visitation gives the names of Martin's older sons: John, Samuel and Thomas. In 1689 Thomas married Mary Peecke at St Michael at Thorne and John married Susan Thrower in 1692 at St Giles, Norwich. They are not mentioned in any family wills and I can discover no more about them.

The baptisms of Martin's other children were recorded in the register of the Independent Meeting House, Norwich, where his brother-in-law, Timothy Armitage had been a minister. The baptisms of Martha, Sarah, Daniel and Margaret were probably entered retrospectively and in most cases only the year is given, without their father's name. The incumbent minister during this period was Thomas Allen, but the Independents still had no building of their own. Martin remained a convinced non-conformist after the Restoration and in 1689, when James II was planning to pass the

Toleration Act for both Catholics and non-conformists, a "*Martin Puckle hosier*" appeared on a list of Dissenters in Norwich. He was then living in the parish of St Gregory where he was rated in 1660, 1661 and 1679. In 1659 and 1660 he was rated in St Michael Coslany and St George in Tombland. For the baptisms of his children their place of residence is given as Postwick, a parish just outside Norwich. Since his wife Margaret was the sole heir of her father, he probably inherited a lot of property through her, although as we have seen, he also bought property. In 1701 when he voted Whig in the election of that year, he had a hosier's shop in St Peter Mancroft, probably the most prestigious part of the Great Market of Norwich.

As a dealer in worsted stockings trading in Norwich and London, Martin was involved in a number of Chancery cases mostly over debts. In 1670 John Webb, who in 1662 had spent some time in Yarmouth Gaol for a debt he owed to Martin, claimed he had paid the £35 bill which was a condition of his release on bail. Martin however in his statement said that Webb had bought large quantities of worsted stockings from him, and had not settled these outstanding debts nor repaid loans Martin had made him. Various independent witnesses had examined Martin's books and testified that Webb owed him much more than £35. The total debt was estimated to be £470 8s 7d and all Martin had received were several hundredweight of prunes and hogsheads of wine on which he had already paid the excise duty for John Webb. Webb was clearly a slippery customer: he owed money to other people and had also been incarcerated in Norwich Gaol from which he had escaped.

In June 1677 Martin's niece, Elizabeth Mann was declared a bankrupt. Caleb Westbrook, a Norwich grocer accused Martin and his sister Elizabeth Armitage of paying a £400 bond into a trust for Elizabeth. 12 hogsheads of tobacco and a £50 debt owing to Elizabeth from William Puckle had also been handed over without the knowledge of her creditors. The only accused whose answer survives in the Equity case is Thomas Flatman, grocer, whose name appears on the same list of Dissenters as Martin's in 1689. Elizabeth's father, of course, had been Minister at the Norwich Independent Meeting House.

In 1679 Martin was Sub-Receiver of Taxes for the County of Norfolk and in March of that year he needed to transfer £300 to London. Thomas Crane, a Norwich merchant, issued him two bills of exchange drawn upon Henry Dudgeon, a London merchant and Zachary Shute, a London draper, both of whom later got into financial difficulties, as did Crane himself. Crane claimed that Dudgeon and Crane had signed and accepted the bills but delayed paying the money to Thomas Price, the London goldsmith acting as banker. According to Crane, Martin had colluded with the other parties in delaying payment, despite the meeting he had with him on 9 November 1680 when they had agreed to settle their differences out of court. Martin had prosecuted him on a statute of bankruptcy on 10 November. No doubt Martin was anxious when what he described as "*the proper money of His Majesty King Charles II*" had not been paid to the Exchequer but his version of events has not survived.

In 1683 the Government decided to prosecute all the wool merchants who were not paying "aulnage and subsidy" a tax on wool and woollen products dating back to the middle ages. In every county the offending merchants were examined in court. Four or four and a half pence was due on every 65 lbs weight of stockings and Martin was one of the traders who had failed to pay. The witnesses' evidence makes amusing

reading, as one after another they depose that they have never heard of an aulnage on stockings or have only heard of it since the trial began. Some of the older witnesses however, such as Robert Nevell, a worsted weaver aged 79 who had formerly been a servant to a previous Aulnager, claimed that the defendants, including Martin Puckle, had paid this duty to his master, Mr Bentley, or his widow, who had collected it after her husband's death. Paul Canham, who at only 36 had now been given the unpopular task of trying to collect the aulnage, claimed that the merchants had banded together to fight this tax and would not pay until it was tried at law.

However their efforts had been worthwhile, as in June 1689 the House of Commons declared "*worsteds or Norwich stuffs are not liable to aulnage duty & the collection of duty on these items is illegal*". This ruling was presumably on the basis that such types of yarn and fabric were not in existence when the duty was first imposed, because clothiers in other parts of the country such as Gloucestershire, Essex and Suffolk were less fortunate and still had to pay. By 1700 the government had abandoned the uphill struggle and the office of Aulnager was abolished.

The last case Martin was involved in was an Equity Pleading as a trustee for Christian Langley. Christian was probably the son of Joseph Langley of St Peter Mancroft and in 1684 he had borrowed £200 from John Albertson of Lowestoft using property consisting of several warehouses "*at the foot of the north end of Whitefriars' Bridge*" in Norwich, as security. Since Martin was trustee for this property he was joint partner in the mortgage. In May 1688 Martin and Christian Langley together with John Albertson raised a further loan of £414 with Roger Crowe. Roger Crowe having since died, his nephew, also called Roger, was unable to execute his will because of the mortgages on this property (which included a distillery). As no repayments had been made on the mortgages the property should now belong to Roger Crowe but he could not gain access because he had no title deeds, as the defendants were refusing to hand them over. Martin claimed he had no interest in the matter except as a trustee whereas Christian claimed Roger Crowe had already entered the premises and done a lot of damage to the distilling equipment. He would not give up his title until he was reimbursed for this.

By this time Martin was an old man of 63 but apparently still in possession of his faculties. His wife having died in 1678, sometime between 1702 and 1721 he left Norwich and went to live near or with his son Samuel in Whitechapel. Samuel was also a hosier, like his father. Martin died aged 90 at a house in Whitechapel High Street on 10 April 1727 and was buried in St Mary Matfellow on 16 April. As he left no will Samuel was granted administration of his estate.

James Puckle

Martin's younger brother James was born in 1633 and apprenticed to William Burton, a merchant of Great Yarmouth in about 1650, receiving his freedom in 1657. Burton was a prominent supporter of Cromwell who had given his own silver in support of Parliament. In 1647 he had signed the solemn League and Covenant and in the following year Cromwell put him in charge of the ordnance at the haven bridge. He was made a Major and in 1656 he was entrusted with raising 300 men. He was MP for Yarmouth in 1656 and 1659, and was one of those who invited Cromwell to accept the crown. From 1653 James Puckle's name appears in the Calendar of State Papers

Domestic, acting as a deputy for Burton and reporting to the Navy Commissioners on naval ships coming into Yarmouth, which from 1656 were in action against the Spanish. He had to arrange for hemp to be converted to cordage, report on damaged ships, on the progress of vessels under construction and even mediate between the captain and his crew in a mutiny. He also had to victual ships leaving the port to go into action and an autograph letter survives in the State Papers, from James to the Navy Commissioners complaining that he had had to victual "The Tyger" out of his own pocket. Burton was a key figure in James's life, and their fortunes were linked even more closely after James married Burton's daughter Elizabeth in May 1658. The couple had six children, one of their sons was called Burton. William Burton was twice a bailiff of Great Yarmouth (two bailiffs carried out the functions of a mayor in Yarmouth) and a Common Councilman for the town during the Protectorate. He was also a member of the Independent Church founded in Middlegate Street, Great Yarmouth in 1642. His younger children were baptised there as were James and Elizabeth Puckle's children.

Another worshipper at this church was Miles Corbet who was Recorder of Great Yarmouth in 1640 and MP for the town 1639-53. He was the last signatory of the death-warrant of Charles I. He was also Cromwell's lawyer and promoted by him to become Chief Baron of the Exchequer for Ireland where he rapidly amassed a personal fortune from confiscated Irish estates. Imprisoned for corruption, on Corbet's release early in 1660 William Bridge, the minister of the Independent Church wrote him a conciliatory letter and offered him the services of "bailiff Burton's son Puckle". By May 1660 King Charles II had returned to take the throne and Corbet was in Yarmouth. James Puckle and Thomas Ellis (William Burton's servant) hired a vessel and arranged his escape to Holland. The House of Commons Journal reported on 31 May that Puckle and Ellis had been arrested but on 13 June it was resolved that they "*be set at liberty*". William Burton, however, was expressly excluded from the Act of Indemnity which pardoned many former supporters of Cromwell. He was dismissed from Yarmouth Corporation in September 1660 but had probably already fled to Holland, where he spent some years, before returning to Yarmouth where he died in 1673. Two years later his son John married Ann, the daughter of John Desborough, a general in the Parliamentary Army and Cromwell's brother in law. Miles Corbet was eventually tracked down and hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. In his final "confession" he claims his "*belief & conscience*" led him to support the trial of the king and later, concerning his religion, states: "*having been formerly joyned in fellowship with that [congregational] church in Yarmouth that professed that way, can not now repent thereof but do rejoice therein and do repent that I joyned not sooner with them*". In the burial register of this church the entry for 8 April 1673 reads "*Mr Miles Corbett suffered at London*".

James Puckle was dismissed from Yarmouth Corporation on 9 July 1660. After the upheavals of his youth, James's later life was more uneventful except in the area of litigation, the usual weakness of his family. In 1662 he sued his half-brother, William, because he claimed their father had settled £1000 on him at his marriage to Elizabeth Burton, and promised that he would inherit property in Stalham. Unfortunately Samuel's will, while leaving the property to James, did not specify that it was "to have and to hold" by him and his heirs forever. William, as Samuel's heir, was therefore within his legal rights in claiming the property as reverting to him or his heirs after James's death. William claimed that he was already living in London at the

time the marriage treaty was made and did not know his father's intentions. He had done nothing to bar James from the lands but believed he was only seized of them for life. It was not his job to execute his father's will. This case reveals what one might have expected: that there was ill-feeling between the children of the previous marriage and those of the present one. In support of William it must be said that none of the legacies in the will of land or property to the children of Margaret Puckle (the executrix of the will) were left to them in perpetuity, yet James is the only person to take his brother to court over the will. One cannot escape the conclusion that James is cast rather in the same mould as his great-uncle Robert Puckle, someone determined to win at all costs and sometimes employing dubious means to do so.

James had a house in Middlegate Street, Yarmouth, but seems to have been often in London. He was described as a merchant of the City of London in September 1663 when he signed a contract or "charter-party" with John Arnold and Isaac Miles who were joint owners of a ship called "The Lemon" of Yarmouth. According to the contract the ship was to sail to Maryland in Virginia and take on a cargo of tobacco, staying no more than 60 days, stop for no longer than 6 days at a port in the West of England in order to pay customs duty on the tobacco and then sail to Rotterdam where the cargo was to be discharged, after which James or his factors would pay Arnold and Miles. They would be paid 40s for each day they were in port (demorage) and the rest of their money would be proportional to the weight of their cargo. James took the two men to court in 1666 claiming that he had completely fulfilled his side of the bargain but couldn't get the two partners to cancel the contract. Miles and Arnold claimed they were still owed £64 for demorage as they had had to stay 32 days over and above the time appointed. They had agreed on £7 17s 6d per ton of tobacco but were only paid £7 10s per ton. Isaac Miles stated that James Puckle knew he was a Quaker and therefore could not swear oaths, but he was ready to aver the non-performance of the contract.

James's business interests reached as far as the New World. It appears from a case in 1669 that his brother-in-law, John Burton, had been apprenticed to him and later acted as his factor in Barbados. In 1667 John appointed Henry Sergeant to act as his attorney during his absence from the island. Sergeant was to deal with other merchants including James Puckle whom he had never met but was now suing for money owed. In April 1668 Sergeant stated he had informed James by letter that he had agreed a price for the transport of 8 butts of sugar to England. When John Burton returned Sergeant told him about the 8 sugar butts but Burton decided to send only 3 butts to England, using a different ship, and not making it clear to James Puckle that they were part of the original cargo of 8. James was now claiming that Sergeant had kept the sugar himself and was threatening him with an action for fraud. James Puckle in his reply claimed that Burton was only his apprentice and did not deal with his business affairs but Henry Sergeant was his official factor. He believed Sergeant had sold the sugar elsewhere when he found the price was rising and he was bringing an action in the Court of the King's Bench against Henry Sergeant for misbehaving himself in his employ. Given the difficulties of communication in those days and the obvious issues of trust and reliability when employing someone as a factor whom you had never met, it seems quite likely that Henry Sergeant was trying to take advantage of the absence of both James Puckle and John Burton. If so he probably found that he chosen the wrong man to cheat, as James mounted a vigorous defence.

In 1671 James brought a case against Robert Wilch and George Stile, his factors in Genoa. In 1667 James's ship "The Dexter" of Yarmouth, was lying in Genoa, and he asked his factors to insure her for a voyage for \$1000. The premium was \$94 but James claimed that Wilch and Stile made themselves the beneficiaries of the policy instead of himself so when the ship was lost they received the insurance money. All he had received from his factors was about £600 worth of goods for which they were now suing him for payment, claiming they were not part of what they owed him. When asked to give their version of events Wilch and Stile claimed they had insured the vessel with Cosimo Fabiano for \$1000 dollars for James Puckle and \$466 for Thomas Burton, the master of the ship. It was the custom in Genoa to always nominate a resident of the city as the beneficiary of the policy so it was made in Burton's name, not in James Puckle's or his factors'. They never charged James for the premium and Cosimo never paid them the insurance money as he was declared insolvent. They had asked James several times to depute someone to take the policy and recover his part of the money but they never sent him any goods. They did accept bills of exchange to the value of £600 drawn on them by James to pay his brother, Thomas Puckle. They hoped he would repay them as promised but he still owed them \$530.

Apart from tobacco and sugar it appears James also dealt in herrings, the chief export of Great Yarmouth since Elizabethan times. In December 1666 he made an agreement with James Johnson of Yarmouth for 900 barrels of red herrings (kippers) which Johnson was to supply at a price of £1 3s 4d per barrel. Each barrel was to contain 1000 herrings. According to James the first instalment of the order was unsatisfactory as many of the barrels were short and contained fish that "*were for the most part rotten, damaged, defective and not merchandisable*". Unaware of this he had already paid Johnson £500. In 1667 Johnson brought an action against James, claiming he had had great difficulty in getting James to pay for the first 501 barrels (which James had examined himself), eventually getting a bill of exchange from him drawn upon his factor Giles Wakeman, a draper of Yarmouth. James was now refusing to pay for the second instalment of 400 barrels even though Giles Wakeman was given an opportunity to inspect them. It does rather look as if James had concocted the story about the rotten herrings in order to avoid paying for them.

The last surviving Chancery case that James was involved in concerned a mortgage on a property in Middlegate Street, Yarmouth. In 1666 James mortgaged this property to Sarah Warde, a widow in exchange for a loan of £150. There were fixed dates on which he was supposed to repay the money and interest in instalments. In June 1674 Sarah died and should, by the terms of the agreement, have been the owner of the property as James had repaid none of the money, but he was contesting this and claimed he would take action against Joseph and Roger Cotman, Sarah's sons and executors of her will. They brought the action in the hope of clarifying the situation and being able to execute their mother's will.

This case in 1674 is the last record of James. I do not know when or where he died. He was referred to in some cases as being a merchant of Yarmouth and in others as a merchant of London. His son, also called James, certainly lived in London all his adult life; his daughter Elizabeth is the only other child whose marriage is recorded. She married Stephen Bunn in 1703 at St Mary in the Marsh, Norwich. Their three children were all baptised at the Octagon Presbyterian Church in Norwich.

