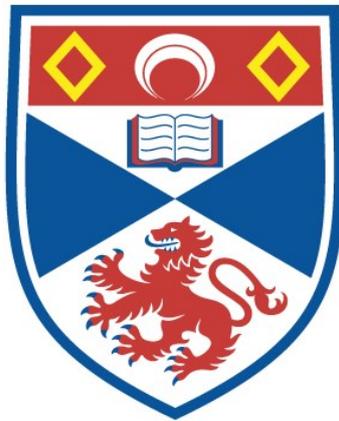


**ROGER MORRICE AND HIS *ENTRING BOOK*
'ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT'**

Richard William Bide

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews**



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Richard William Bide



University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the
degree of MPhil

at the

University of St Andrews

Date of Submission - June 2017

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Abstract

It is a reasonable assumption to make that anyone with a passing knowledge of British history will have heard of Samuel Pepys, the seventeenth-century ‘man about town’. His diary has been the subject of extensive research by scholars over three centuries and represents a spectacular primary source which is testament to a life lived to the full, in one of the most turbulent periods in British history.

However, there is now competition for the title of most influential news-gatherer of the seventeenth century, in the form of Roger Morrice, a Presbyterian minister who acted as what today might be described as a political or investigative journalist for the period 1677-1691. His reporting activities serviced the informational needs of a network of Presbyterian patrons through manuscript newsletters which eventually he termed his *Entring Book*. The edited version of the *Entring Book* was published in 2007 under the auspices of Mark Goldie.

Described by Goldie as a political work, there is no doubt that the emphasis of the *Entring Book* is distinctly politico-religious in nature and successfully captures the forces at work during the second half of the seventeenth century, ranging from the Restoration, the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis to the Glorious Revolution. Notwithstanding this strong political bias and in spite of allusions to what today’s historians might describe as ‘social history’ in the

edited *Entring Book*, much of the Book's content can properly be termed as 'social' in nature, embracing significant subject-matter as wide-ranging as duelling, mortality, playhouses and the sexual mores of the period, alongside subjects such as diverse as child kidnap, urban violence, fire, weather and cases of suicide, to name but a few.

With the political angles of the *Entring Book* well covered by Goldie et al, the purpose of this dissertation is two-fold. Firstly, to review the culture in which Morrice practised information-gathering for his patrons and, secondly, to shed more light on the so far neglected social dimensions of the *Entring Book*.

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Acknowledgements

It is said that on the evening when he completed the final sentence of *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon commented ‘after lying down my pen...I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom...but my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion...’ After two years of pursuing my own quarry, Roger Morrice, I know how Gibbon must have felt. My newly-found academic freedom is similarly tinged with more than a little regret.

At the end of academic study there are, as always, people to thank. Firstly, to all the academic staff the University of St Andrews Department of History who have re-kindled my love of History as a subject and who have enabled me to experience the subject at both Undergraduate and now Postgraduate levels, albeit separated by 38 years. In particular, I would like to thank my Supervisor, Professor Rab Houston, for his support over those five years and also the staff of the Main Library, Valerie Dickson in particular, who have always been so helpful and who have made possible ‘distance learning’ between my St Andrews and Manchester bases. My thanks also go to Dr Alexia Grosjean who proof-read the final draft of my dissertation.

Finally, I would like to thank my long-suffering wife, Doranne, and my children, Kirsty, Catriona and Jamie for all their support and understanding during my studies. There were times when I came close to walking away and the support of my family played a significant role in encouraging me to 'stick at it'.

St Andrews 2017, Richard Bide

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Uncovering the *Entring Book*

In July 2003, The Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) organised a conference in Cambridge entitled ‘*The World of Roger Morrice: Politics, Religion, Law and Information, 1675-1700.*’ This eagerly-awaited gathering laid the groundwork for the publication by The Boydell Press in 2007 of an edited text of Roger Morrice’s ‘*Entring Book Being an Historical Register of Occurrences from April, anno 1677 to April 1691*’ which the conference conveners, Mark Goldie and Jason McElligott hailed, with little fear of contradiction, as the most important unpublished record of British history during the second half of the seventeenth century. The *Entring Book* project, as opposed to the 2003 conference, was not, however, conducted and championed by Goldie and McElligott alone, and the editorial board which was established to guide and support the project comprised a number of the leading historians of the early modern period, in particular specialists in British history of the second half of the seventeenth century, namely: Tim Harris, Mark Knights, John Spurr and Stephen Taylor. The 2007 edited version of the *Entring Book* attracted widespread acclaim from the community of academic historians.

In its advance publicity materials, the CRASSH conference characterised the *Entring Book* as a chronicle of public affairs and a work which touched upon:

many aspects of Restoration society: its social structure, urban growth, institutions and personalities, theatre, the royal Court, the judges' courts, military and colonial affairs, foreign relations, London politics and commerce, worship, piety and blasphemy, the governance of Scotland and Ireland, and the flow of news across Continental Europe.¹

Given the issues raised later in this dissertation, it is interesting to note the breadth of issues espoused by the terms of the conference, which were intended to cover both the political and the social aspects of the *Book*.

In advance of the edited version of the *Entring Book* being published in full, selected conference papers, edited by McElligott, were published in 2006 under the title '*Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s*.'² Of these papers, four dealt primarily with the religious issues of the period, three focused on the political dimensions of the decade and the remaining five essays addressed various aspects of the press throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. In order to make sense of the *Entring Book* and establish a semblance of order to its otherwise sprawling wordcount (around 925,000 words) Goldie, in his preface to volume 1 of the *Entring Book*, helpfully identified and elaborated upon ten

¹ CRASSH Conference, *The World of Roger Morrice: Politics, Religion, Law and Information, 1675-1700*, 10 July-12 July 2003, Cambridge.

² Jason McElligott, *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s* (Ashgate, 2006).

overarching themes. These, in Goldie's view, would have dominated Morrice's intellectual world-view and guided the direction of his news-gathering activities and interests over the fourteen years 1677 to 1691, during which the contents of the *Book* were written. Goldie's ten themes comprised: Catholicism; dissent; 'hierarchists', Tories and Jacobites; parliament; place, office and patronage; litigation and the courts; city politics; the military; Scotland and Ireland and, finally, the European balance of power. The reader of Goldie's themes might note at this juncture, the preponderance of political and religious content at the expense, it may be argued, of the social.

Any modern-day reader of the *Entring Book* - whether academic or lay - would be hard-pressed simply to dismiss what might be construed as Goldie's political bias, given that many of Morrice's manuscripts repeatedly referred to these core themes, albeit among others, which clearly reflected the interconnected political and religious world that he and his contemporaries were witness to. Morrice lived through and was therefore expected to incisively comment on the widest range of news by his Presbyterian patrons. Perhaps surprisingly, given the scale of the *Entring Book* project and Goldie's statement contained therein that its potential as a basis of historical research was yet to be realised in full, modern-day historians still appear to regard the *Entring Book* almost entirely as a work of politico-religious history, consigning any 'social history' to merely a supporting role in editing the manuscript. Indeed, since publication of the *Entring Book* in 2007,

consequential academic study of Morrice and his *Entring Book* has been surprisingly sparse, for what would appear to be no particularly good reason.

The role of the *Entring Book* can, however, still be recognised as a work of social - as well as political - history, warranting further research into this important portion of the *Entring Book's* contents. The continued absence of analysis reflecting the social aspects of the *Entring Book* represents a significant omission when considering the totality of the work, its impact and its historical importance.

1.2 Roger Morrice and the Genesis of the *Entring Book*

Born in 1628. Educated at Cambridge University and ordained a Minister to a poor Peak District parish. Ejected in 1662 as a result of the Act of Uniformity. Prominent Dissenter. Died 1702.

As described later in this dissertation, the Puritan approach to death in seventeenth-century Britain was plain and matter-of-fact, with only a spiritually-privileged few accorded an extensive eulogy upon death. The majority of dissenters' passing was captured in only the briefest of obituary notices, often comprising little more than a half dozen words (for example, 'The Duke of Norfolk is dead'). It comes as no surprise, then, that Roger Morrice and his passing are marked by neither eulogy from his contemporaries, nor any epitaph. In fact, his life was probably one predisposed to be unremarkable, in common with most Presbyterian ministers

living in the second half of the seventeenth century. What makes Morrice stand out from the crowd of contemporary news-gatherers and secures his niche in seventeenth-century British history is his creation, the *Entring Book*.

A weighty tome, the *Entring Book* does not lend itself to easy analysis or categorization. It could be termed a documentary scrapbook, a personal diary, a newsletter or even a form of parliamentary journal. Although labelled as such by some historians, the *Entring Book* is not a document of the kind kept by diarists of the period; Morrice is no Samuel Pepys (who is too revealing and light-hearted in his diary-keeping), nor is Morrice a Narcissus Luttrell (whose over-reliance on newspapers as his primary source of information coloured his entries.)³ Morrice is also not a John Evelyn, nor a Philip Henry.⁴ In reality, the *Entring Book* does not represent a static document at all and it assumes different forms over the fourteen years of Morrice's writing, tracking the important issues of the day and accounting for the confusion, at least in part, as to the genres described above. If pressed, the consensus among modern scholars probably favours classifying the *Entring Book* as a form of political journal and Morrice as an early political journalist, with particular reference to its tone and contents covering the 1680s.

³ Robert Latham, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection* (Penguin Classics, 1985). Also (Oxford) Dictionary of National Biography (DNB). Samuel Pepys 1633-1703 and Narcissus Luttrell 1657-1732. DNB.

⁴ Philip Henry 1631-1696 and John Evelyn 1620-1706. DNB.

Similar confusion stalks any description of Morrice himself. Was he a minor intelligencer, a political journalist, or a confidential reporter? Perhaps he was even a ‘man of business’, or simply a politically-motivated Presbyterian divine on a mission. All the evidence - and there is frustratingly little, it must be admitted - points to Morrice being a man of strong religious (Presbyterian) and political (nascent Whig) convictions who, during his lifetime, expressed what might be characterised as his insights and his biases through the vehicle of a personal news and information-gathering service to a metropolitan network of primarily non-conformist patrons (‘the Puritan Whig Nexus’ described by Mark Goldie).⁵ Were it not for a deep-seated reticence on his part (almost certainly shared by his patrons) Morrice might have become well-known simply for being well-known in the second half of the seventeenth century, given the wide-ranging and elaborate social circles in which he mixed and the gathering of news which distinguished his trade.

It might have been expected that, during the years of compiling his *Entring Book*, an image of Morrice, a portrait likeness perhaps, might have survived to sit alongside Morrice’s name and, as a result, better define him both in the eyes of his extensive network of London contacts and beyond into the counties. On the contrary, Morrice appears to have consciously adopted and nurtured a persona of tight-lipped discretion in support of his sometimes

⁵ Mark Goldie, *Roger Morrice and the Puritan Whigs, The Entring Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691* Volume 1 (The Boydell Press, 2007), p.65.

rarified news-gathering activities, avoiding becoming any centre of attention in an intimate London and its environs, perhaps as importantly, successfully undermining the willingness of the government to characterise Morrice's manuscript bulletins as seditious, a status from which many of his contemporary news-mongers (such as John Starkey) fell foul, paying the legal price for transgression as a result.⁶

Until recently, the *Entring Book* has been treated by historians primarily as a work of politics, albeit an eclectic one, not without its own in-built complexity (for example, the use of shorthand cipher in certain sections, in order to maintain confidentiality of sources). The resultant image of Morrice might be one of a solitary figure lurking in the shadows of Westminster Yard or the Exchange, occasionally questioning in hushed tones an informant in his quest for the latest, most up-to-date news and gossip. This would have been a role perhaps more analogous in certain respects to that of a spy, as opposed to that of the more mundane and prosaic news-gatherer. In this sometimes secretive role, Morrice could, it is argued, gain the widest access to information flows around town (factual, gossip and rumour, both oral and aural), in particular that around the royal Court, Westminster Hall and the Exchange, to name but a small cross-section of Morrice's favoured news-gathering locations. Morrice inhabited uncertain times and both he and his contemporaries must have sensed that the times were changing, albeit

⁶ John Starkey 1630-1690. DNB.

often in subtle and unpredictable ways. The printed word was gradually supplanting manuscript; a government-backed newspaper was emerging in the form of the *London Gazette*; censorship was becoming a point of contention among publishers and government, and coffee-houses were springing-up across London from the 1650s onwards, representing a fresh and rich source of gossip and news to supplement the role of taverns and other more traditional spaces for discourse. In addition, there were the first stirrings of the emergence of political parties and Roman Catholic and Puritan ‘plots’ (both real and imagined), all of which fed the paranoia of the population at large and at all levels in society. There was, then, an excess of what might loosely be termed ‘politics’ in and around the metropolis in the second half of the seventeenth century, on which Roger Morrice was expected regularly to report for his patrons.

And yet, for the modern-day scholar to define the *Entring Book* based on its political content alone, would be to impose an arbitrary parameter on the work and to exclude the social aspects of Morrice’s reporting, which are rich and varied and which are, in their own fashion, as important as the political and religious aspects of the *Entring Book*, both to the modern-day academic and to the inhabitants of seventeenth-century Britain. The political history of the period, so cherished by modern-day historians, may encompass appealing and exciting political issues such as the Restoration, the Popish Plot, the Exclusion Crisis, the Glorious Revolution and European politics and religion

in general, among others, but researching the social dimension of the *Entring Book* brings its own challenges and rewards, bringing into sharp relief important aspects of everyday life in seventeenth-century Britain, particularly in and around London, such as duelling, the treatment of mortality, sexual mores and the functioning of the playhouse genre, alongside subjects of arguably less intrinsic significance, but potentially of as much interest to modern-day historians, such as the weather of the period, child kidnap, fires, executions and violence on the streets. Whether such social issues originated merely as a means of filling what otherwise would be embarrassing gaps in early newsletters' contents and layout, or whether the coverage of social matters was intended to address a genuine gap in the market for information among Morrice's clientele - the latter almost certainly was the case in respect of the coverage of the adultery of the Duchess of Norfolk in 1684, less so, one suspects, in Morrice confirming the name of a card game (Comet) for his patrons - this dissertation will explore further.

1.3 Roger Morrice

The image of Roger Morrice portrayed by modern-day historians therefore is neither flattering, nor particularly endearing. Goldie labels Morrice as 'curmudgeonly' and describes his later years as ones in which he published nothing and died in obscurity. Three hundred years after his death, Morrice

remains, according to R. C. Richardson, ‘a very shadowy figure.’⁷ Perhaps the most striking image of Morrice among scholars is that offered by Grant Tapsell, who portrays Morrice as a furtive figure, probably dressed in black Puritan garb, moving invisibly between his favoured multiple London news-gathering haunts, ‘ever-present without being the centre of attention.’⁸ In the absence of a reliable description of the self-effacing Morrice bequeathed either by Morrice himself or by his contemporaries, the *Entring Book* has to make do with the little which historians can infer on this subject.

To the extent that Morrice’s beliefs and values, including his biases, are reflected in the *Entring Book*, one might infer that suitable adjectives to describe Morrice would be comparable to those reflected by his manuscript writings: cautious, practical, serious, unemotional, perhaps erring toward the judgemental. Thus Morrice, the ex-Presbyterian minister, conducted his extensive news-gathering activities against the dull but deadly backcloth of post-Restoration politics. This is, after all, the same Roger Morrice who may have avoided the temptation to frequent coffee-houses, notwithstanding the

⁷ R. C. Richardson, ‘Roger Morrice: an Epic Re-entering’, *Literature & History*, Volume 18 (2009), pp.70-77.

⁸ Grant Tapsell, ‘Weepe Over the Ejected Practice of Religion’: Roger Morrice and the Restoration Twilight of Puritan Politics’, *Parliamentary History*, Volume 28 (2009), pp.266-294.

increasingly rich source of gossip and news these represented for news-gatherers and inhabitants of London alike from the 1650s onwards.⁹

As often proves to be the case with the ultra-discreet Morrice, the picture presented is incomplete. Looking back over his news-gathering activities and the manner in which he discharged them, Mark Goldie recognises that Morrice: ‘was an unusually assiduous news gatherer but he was not a senior figure or outsider.’¹⁰ He was, as Tapsell points out, too well-connected to Presbyterian networks and godly laymen of influence in and around the City and Westminster, such as Lord Holles and Sir John Maynard. The techniques Morrice employed to gather information - mainly oral and aural hearsay for news in London and letters from the provinces outside London - evidence that only limited use was being made of the emerging genre of the newspaper, although these were available to any contemporary prepared to devote themselves to news-gathering (and there were many, albeit not with the range and depth of Morrice’s *modus operandi*.)

1.4 Dissertation Format

As described at the beginning of this dissertation, much of the edited version of the *Entring Book* focuses on the politico-religious nature of that work, to

⁹ Brian Cowan, ‘The Rise of the Coffee-house Reconsidered’, *Historical Journal* Volume 47 (2004), pp.21-46. Also Brian Cowan, ‘Publicity and Privacy in the History of the British Coffee-house’, *History Compass*, 5 (2007), pp.1180-1213.

¹⁰ Mark Goldie, ‘Roger Morrice and his *Entring Book*’, *History Today*, (Nov 2001), pp.39-43.’

the diminution of the social, perhaps also implying that Morrice himself was in some way a unique practitioner of the dark arts of post-Restoration information-gathering. This dissertation challenges the established views of the role performed by Morrice and the climate in which he operated and, by so doing, exposes the credentials of the *Entring Book* as a work of social history, alongside that of a work of high politics. In terms of the structure of the dissertation, Chapter 1 (*Introduction*) describes the origins of recent work on Morrice and his *Entring Book*, moving from this to review the extensive historiography of political and social history of the second half of the seventeenth century, as is described in Chapter 2 (*The Historiography of the Entring Book*). In the literature, much is made of Morrice's 'secretive' nature and the quality of his contacts, a perspective which is not entirely misplaced but which deserves to be challenged in light of London's evolving topography throughout the seventeenth century and the access, up to and including the monarch, that this facilitated. Chapter 3 addresses this subject (*Continuity Versus Discontinuity in News-Gathering*). On a similar point, there is a temptation among historians to define Morrice's news-gathering *modus operandi* as in some way unique to him. This perspective is partly accurate, since Morrice nurtured a remarkable network of contacts, particularly in and around the metropolis, which he accessed for the benefit of his patrons in his search for truthful reports. Chapter 4 of the dissertation addresses this perspective (*Roger Morrice and his Contemporaries – the 'Uniqueness' of*

Morrice?). Chapter 5 addresses the positioning of the *Entring Book* as a work of social history, as opposed to one primarily political (*Social History and the Entring Book*.) Chapters 6 and 7 of the dissertation address a number of the *Book's* more important social themes in greater detail (*The Life of Man is Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish and Short* and *The Entring Book - Duelling*, respectively). Chapter 8 (*Conclusions*) seeks to draw together the arguments presented in the dissertation to a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE **ENTRING BOOK**

2.1 Introduction

After reading the six volumes that comprise Goldie's edited version of the *Entring Book*, together with the various (but limited) follow-up reviews and occasional monographs on the subject published by historians since 2003, the modern-day historian might find Morrice's work to be both uplifting and surprising. 'Uplifting' because the *Entring Book* is self-evidently a unique primary source for historians, the like of which has not previously been found (Samuel Pepys' diary is perhaps the closest comparator, but he is clearly a diarist, not a political commentator and the subject matter in which he dealt, often of a highly personal, occasionally raunchy nature, was very different to that of Morrice). 'Surprising' in respect of the sheer range of subjects ('Occurences') mentioned in the *Entring Book* manuscript, parts of which (inevitably the more sensitive) were protected by a shorthand cipher, a practice quite common in seventeenth-century Britain, but only recently cracked as part of the *Entring Book* project.

Roger Morrice's original *Entring Book* manuscript gathered dust in Dr Williams's Trust in London for over three centuries, under-valued and under-researched except by niche historians of the late-Restoration period, in

particular Douglas Lacey, Robert Beddard and Henry Horwitz.¹¹ Only at the 2003 CRASSH conference and in subsequent years were Morrice and his *Entring Book* subject for the first time to the full glare of academic scrutiny, much of which emanated from the editorial approach taken to the *Entring Book* itself, whereby a senior academic wrote an introduction to each of the six volumes. The longest introduction, recognised by many historians as the *tour de force* of the edited *Entring Book*, is that authored by Mark Goldie in volume 1. Following CRASSH, comprehending post-Restoration Britain would never be quite the same again.

2.2 The Historiography of the *Entring Book*

British historiography of the second half of the seventeenth century may be likened to the fabled curate's egg: good in parts. Other periods in history have their academic detractors and advocates (Tudor history springs to mind here, with its academic jousts over the sixteenth century between Geoffrey Elton, Lawrence Stone and Christopher Hill), but few have attracted the stridency and diversity of academic opinion that post-Restoration historiography has given rise to among modern-day historians. For example, Victor Stater describes the Restoration as 'the neglected stepchild of early-

¹¹ Douglas R. Lacey, *Dissent in Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661-1689. A Study in the Perpetuation and Tempering of Parliamentarianism* (Rutgers University Press, 1969), pp.24-355. Also R. A. Beddard, 'The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives' *Journal of Modern History*, Volume 67 (1995) and Henry Horwitz, ed, *The Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell 1691-1693* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1972).

modern English history and those who have nurtured it' and Steven N. Zwicker has proclaimed: 'In the writing of political history, the Restoration has been, until recent years, the great wasteland that divides the brilliant work done on early Stuart politics from the study of eighteenth-century history and society.'¹² More recently, Jonathan Scott has joined this debate with the pithy observation that the post-Restoration political climate represented:

the most complex, the most important and the most violent century in English history. It is equally the most formidable and savage historiographical terrain. Entire historians have disappeared, leaving only a rent garment and the colour of blood in the water to show us where they had been.¹³

Changing the subject matter away from analysis of the politics of the period, C. John Sommerville comments on the nature of journalism in the seventeenth century, suggesting that histories of English journalism should 'pass rapidly over the period 1655 to 1695 as a dead spot.'¹⁴ No doubt this was largely because this accurately reflected the prevailing political climate of the period which, by common consent among modern historians, was one riven with destabilising plots (both imagined and real), strident anti-Catholicism at all levels of society, an almost pathological fear of European absolutism and the

¹² Victor L. Stater, 'Reconstructing the Restoration', *Journal of British Studies* Volume 29 (1990), pp.393-401. Also Steven N. Zwicker, 'Lines of Authority: Politics and Literary Culture in the Restoration' in *Politics of Discourse, The Literature and History of Seventeenth century England* by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds, (University of California Press, 1987), p.232.

¹³ Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles. Seventeenth Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.3-56.

¹⁴ C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England, Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.14-136.

first signs of ‘faction’, to name but a few of the forces acting on the inhabitants of London during this period. In the spirit of restoring academic balance, Kevin Sharpe has more recently suggested that: ‘the historiography of seventeenth-century England has produced some of the finest, the most important, historical scholarship of any period or country, be it political, religious, or social history.’¹⁵ Against the background of ongoing politico-religious unrest in the second half of the seventeenth century, it is perhaps unsurprising that the work of modern-day historians, both in their writing and in their research, reflects what might be construed as a collective political bias on their part, unconscious perhaps, but certainly present. Even when the reader includes core members of the *Entring Book* project, in particular Harris, Goldie, Knights, McElligott, Spurr and Taylor, the modern historian is left with relatively few recent contributors to the academic development of Morrice and his work since the heady days of the years 2003 to 2007. Stephen Taylor perhaps represents an exception to this view, with his recently published research exploring Morrice’s interest in European (specifically Huguenot) Protestantism.¹⁶ Examples of academics researching the twin subjects of Morrice and his *Entring Book* are few and far between, but they do exist and would include Grant Tapsell’s impressive contributions to the

¹⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England. The Culture of Seventeenth Century Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.392.

¹⁶ Stephen Taylor, ‘An English Dissenter and the Crisis of European Protestantism: Roger Morrice’s Perception of European Politics in the 1680s’ in David Onnekink, ed, *War and Religion after Westphalia, 1648-1713* (Ashgate, 2009).

whole Morrice debate, together with R. C. Richardson's thoughtful contribution on the same subject, both of whom published reviews of the *Entring Book* in 2009.¹⁷ It is interesting to observe that Tapsell and Richardson are also not afraid to challenge some of the assertions made by the *Entring Book's* editorial contributors, although it must be acknowledged that their mild academic criticism falls short of representing serious acts of historical revisionism. More recently still, work by Steven N. Zwicker, Jason Scott-Warren and Joad Raymond have contributed to an enhanced understanding of Morrice (interesting to note that two of these academics, Scott-Warren and Raymond, are not what the reader might term 'career historians', their backgrounds being fashioned in the English Faculties of their respective universities.)¹⁸

2.3 Political Versus Social History

There is, of course, at least one alternative to political history, namely so-called social history. In his work *English Social History* published in 1944, G. M. Trevelyan memorably, if somewhat simplistically, proposed that:

¹⁸ Stephen N. Zwicker, 'Why are they Saying These Terrible Things about John Dryden?', ¹⁸ Grant Tapsell, 'Weepe Over the Ejected Practice of Religion: Roger Morrice and the Restoration Twilight of Puritan Politics', *Parliamentary History*, Volume 28 (2009), pp.266-294. Also R. C. Richardson, 'Roger Morrice: An Epic Re-entering', Volume 18 *Literature & History* (2009). The Uses of Gossip and Scandal', *Essays in Criticism*, Volume 64 No2 (Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.163-169. Jason Scott-Warren, *Early Modern English Literature* (Polity, 2005). Joad Raymond, 'The History of Newspapers and the History of Journalism: Two Disciplines or One?' *Media History*, Volume 5 (1999), pp.223-232.

‘Social History might be defined negatively as the history of a people with the politics left out.’¹⁹ Trevelyan’s obvious bias, as revealed in this quotation, was accepted uncritically by a subsequent generation of historians but who, some forty years after Trevelyan’s rebuke, played their part in re-opening the debate on social history which, according to Peter Burke:

might be defined as the history of social relationships; the history of social structure; the history of everyday life; the history of private life, the history of social solidarities and social conflicts; the history of social classes; the history of social groups ‘seen both as separate and as mutually dependent units.’²⁰

Burke’s perspective is similar to that of Ralph Houlbrooke, who, in 1989 suggested that:

social history has been one of the great success stories of the academic world in the past generation. Historians have been recreating the past with a much greater emphasis on the way societies work and on how they are structured.²¹

Tim Harris, one of the most influential historians of Britain in the seventeenth century and coincidentally also a contributor to Goldie’s *Entring Book* project, recognises in his own research the potential limitations of the traditional emphasis on what might today be characterised as ‘top-down political history.’ In Harris’s view, undue emphasis has been placed for too

¹⁹ G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, (Longman, 1944).

²⁰ Peter Burke, *Sociology and History* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1980). Also, John Walter, ‘Kissing Cousins: Social History/Political History Before and after the Revisionist Moment’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Volume 78 (2015), pp.703-722.

²¹ Ralph Houlbrooke, ed, *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (Routledge, 1989), p.vii.

long on the role and importance of the upper echelons of society in seventeenth-century Britain, observing that: ‘If the recent advances in Restoration historiography have taught us anything they have alerted political historians to the need to develop a social history of politics.’²² Beat Kümin makes a similar plea in relation to the evolution among historians over recent years from ‘the narrow confines of the historical sciences moving their emphasis from ‘hard facts’...to ‘softer’ issues such as identities, perceptions and representations.’²³ However, the question remains: if social history has been emerging from the shadow of its older and more all-pervasive political cousin, why does the emphasis of historians with regard to the *Entring Book* remain primarily political in nature? What might be described as the biases of the *Entring Book* outlined in the succinct analyses above prompt important questions: Where have the ‘social’ aspects of the *Entring Book* gone, even though some are noted (albeit almost in passing) by modern Morrice-related historians? What are the enduring ‘social’ themes present in the *Entring Book*?

As highlighted by Goldie and McElligott, so-called social themes are present in abundance in the *Entring Book*, albeit often subordinated to be the poor relations of the political biases present in the work of many modern-day historians. Stimulated in part by the *Entring Book*, and extending Tim

²² Tim Harris., ‘What’s New About the Restoration?’ *Albion*, Volume 29 (1997), pp.187-222.

²³ Beat Kümin, ed, *Political Space in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Ashgate, 2009).

Harris's earlier quotation below, Harris proclaims a fresh approach to the subject, advocating the social dimension of history and commenting on the need to: 'do justice to the various social, cultural, and ideological forces within society as a whole that placed constraints on those who held the reins of power and had a decisive impact in shaping developments and influencing their outcome.'²⁴

So rich and varied are the examples of social history in the *Entring Book* that it would be a significant undertaking to focus on all of these in this dissertation and, as with the 'political' aspects of the *Entring Book*, some ordering of contents is therefore required. Once this analysis has been undertaken by the historian, however, important social themes begin to emerge from the pages of this work. Such themes are varied, quite idiosyncratic in nature even. The more important or the more extensive of these themes in the *Entring Book* can be identified as mortality, duelling, the role of playhouses and, for good measure (if somewhat surprisingly given these background and probable prejudices of the *Book's* author) sexual mores. In addition to the core social themes which are present throughout the *Entring Book*, there are also innumerable minor social episodes recorded, including reports of kidnap, suicide, fire, weather and executions.

²⁴ Harris, 'What's New About the Restoration?', p.192.

Goldie perhaps senses the political historiographical ground recently shifting subtly from under his academic feet when he recognises in his preface to volume 1 of the *Entring Book* that:

The *Entring Book* is a laboratory for one of the most lively of current developments on the study of early-modern history: the exploration of the politics of information, or, more fundamentally, the history of public knowledge, its acquisition, control and verification, and transmission.²⁵

The informed reader cannot fail to notice, as they turn the pages of the *Entring Book*, the emphasis on what might be termed ‘political history,’ as opposed to the ‘social’ aspects of the news Morrice also gathered, witness even Harris’s cursory nod in the direction of the social elements of the *Book*, noting that ‘many of the stories Morrice has to tell are quite gruesome’,²⁶ through to Goldie’s preface to volume 1 of the *Entring Book*, which highlights more extensive ‘social’ subjects. Thus, according to Goldie:

[the *Entring Book*] provides an intricate account of metropolitan life and urban development in London rising phoenix-like from the ruins of the Great Fire. It offers closely-observed accounts of spectacle, ceremony, celebration, and demonstration. There are descriptions of firework carnivals, lord mayor’s shows, ‘masquerades’ and puppet shows; fires and hurricanes, duels and executions, murders and suicides.²⁷

²⁵ Mark Goldie, *A Darker Shade of Pepys: The Entring Book of Roger Morrice* (Dr William’s Trust, 2007), pp. 4-27.

²⁶ Tim Harris, *The Entring Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691* Volume 3 (The Boydell Press, 2007), p. xxvi.

²⁷ Mark Goldie, *The Entring Book of Roger Morrice, 1677-1691* Volume 1 (The Boydell Press, 2007), p.xiii.

Notwithstanding the fact that Goldie has identified potentially interesting examples of ‘social history’ in the *Entring Book*, he nevertheless refrains from building upon these social foundations. The existence of such social chatter is not unique to Morrice and his *Entring Book*. Pamphleteers or so-called intelligencers operating as early as the 1620s and 1630s in Britain, such as Marchmont Nedham, often published ‘social’ information, if only to fill what would otherwise be blank spaces in the embryonic newsletters and pamphlets of the period.²⁸ The *London Gazette* started what the modern reader would call ‘personals’ in its pages and this was to prove to be the thin end of the wedge of entry for domestic news of the gossip-related variety, aided and abetted on one occasion by the Queen appealing for the return of a lost spaniel with liver-coloured spots and furry feet in the *Gazette* of 21 September 1671.²⁹ On a similarly frivolous note, a month later the *Gazette* alerted its readers: ‘One of the cranes being flown out of St James’s Park, whoever can bring the same, or finding where he is, to Mister Chiffrens at Whitehall, shall be very well rewarded.’³⁰ It is such ‘social history’ and its like contained in the pages of the *Entring Book* that remains under-researched when compared with the wide-ranging coverage of the more mainstream and recognisable political subject matter.

²⁸ Marchmont Nedham 1620-1678. DNB.

²⁹ *Entring Book* 21 September 1671.

³⁰ *London Gazette* Number 1393.

Almost as dynamic as the historiography of the English Revolution through to the Glorious Revolution is the nature and the effectiveness of censorship and licensing in seventeenth century England, which has been the subject of considerable debate among historians.³¹ In particular, Cyndia Clegg's research into the early seventeenth century:

destabilises the previous view (upheld by Christopher Hill and Annabel Patterson) of a monolithic, oppressive and interventionist State apparatus intimately involved in the printing practices of early Stuart England, and offers instead a multi-faceted and dynamic censor matrix, one that evolved and changed over the course of the two decades of James VI/I's rule.³²

There was sometimes more continuity than discontinuity in events in seventeenth-century England and in respect of the actuality of censorship McElligott argues convincingly that: 'the number of men and women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who were imprisoned or suffered corporal or capital punishment for use of the press was relatively small, but only a few people needed to be imprisoned, logged, mutilated or executed in order for the State to send a message to potential wrong-doers', adding that:

³¹ Anthony Milton, 'Licensing, Censorship and Religious Orthodoxy in Early Stuart England', *Historical Journal*, Volume 41 (1998), pp.625-651. Also F. S. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776*, (Urbana, IL, 1952) and Sheila Lambert, 'State control of the Press in theory and Practice: the Role of the Stationers' Company Before 1640' in Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds, *Censorship and the Control of Print in England and France, 1600-1900* (Winchester, 1992).

³² Cyndia S. Clegg, *Press Censorship in Caroline England* (Cambridge, 2008). Also Christopher Hill, 'Censorship and English Literature' in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, Volume 11 (Brighton, 1984) and Annabell Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation. The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

‘it is clear that the traditional model of an all-pervasive, draconian censorship needs to be replaced with an account which accommodates the ad hoc reactive and sometimes chaotic nature of early modern censorship. It is less clear, however, that this necessarily involves ignoring the dangers faced by transgressive authors, printers and publishers, discounting the ability of the State to impose its will upon the press when it chose to do so.’³³

Over much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England the government would appear to have had only a limited desire to implement comprehensive and consistent censorship activities; even if the government wished to adopt this posture (which, as has been suggested above, might be doubtful), it did not necessarily have the resources to implement such a policy.

Where does this debate on censorship leave the *Entring Book* and Roger Morrice, a figure recognisable in the popular news-monger haunts of London, in respect of the theoretical exposure of himself and the *Entring Book* to the accusation that such manuscripts represented potentially seditious material and the consequences of this for Morrice’s safety and activities? References to licensing, or ‘censorship’ as it would be described today, in the *Entring Book* are few, but one reference indicates that, however infrequently, the government could still choose to persecute for treason aberrant printers. Thus, Morrice reports in the *Entring Book*:

On Monday 15 [1685] The printer was apprehended neare Lambeth by about fifty Souldiers that Compassed the house, who had printed Monmouth’s Declaration and was then printing his manifesto

³³ Jason McElligott, *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (The Boydell Press, 2007), p.196.

consisting it is said of 12 or 20 sheets. It is said now that two more printers are apprehended in London, and one Mr Disney and Mr Manning about said treasonable papers.³⁴

A more normal occurrence was perhaps captured in the *Entring Book* to describe a more mundane breach, namely: '[Richard] Janeway and another are indicted for printing some Pamphlets.'³⁵

Philip Hamburger's work on the law of seditious libel delineates the various sanctions open to the English government which could be applied to those who transgressed press censorship or licensing laws, pointing out that the Stuart Crown had inherited many different laws, each of which might be suitable for dealing with a particular category of offensive writing, one of which was seditious libel (also known as written defamation.) Hamburger opines:

prior to the eighteenth century the law of seditious libel was a relatively insignificant means of restraining the printed press and was the basis of a relatively small number of prosecutions...the law of seditious libel was heavily relied upon and regularly used against the printing press only after other means of restraining the press, such as licensing and treason, became unusable in the 1690s, and that the severe doctrine of seditious libel enunciated in eighteenth century press prosecutions developed only around 1700.³⁶

³⁴ *Entring Book* 18 June 1685.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1681.

³⁶ Philip Hamburger, 'The Development of the Law of Seditious Libel and the Control of the Press', *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 37 (1985), pp.661-765.

The issue of sedition then, is an important one for news production and transmission in the seventeenth century. Goldie maintains that the writing of the *Entring Book* ‘placed him [Morrice] in acute personal danger’ and elsewhere opines: ‘the purpose of Morrice’s newsletter was to arm the leadership of the Whig Party with confidential information.’³⁷ The writing of the *Entring Book* was thus an act of sedition.³⁸ Goldie also expresses the view that the *Entring Book* ‘was the voice of the Puritan Whigs, subversive in its sentiments and intentions.’³⁹ Tapsell joins the chorus of Morrice’s activities being seditious and cites Morrice as: ‘close to the centre of events, yet beyond the pale of religious and political respectability’ as well as asserting that: ‘There is something extraordinary about squaring Morrice’s capacity to gather news and his ability to not fall foul of the authorities.’⁴⁰ Roger Morrice was never arrested as far as modern historians are aware and yet, as contemporaries may have witnessed, news-mongers such as John Starkey were prosecuted, subject to arrest and sometimes imprisoned for ‘sedition’.

Morrice was clearly sensitive to the environment in which he was operating and the *Entring Book* records the impact of legislation on the print industry and those operating in and around it. One example from the *Entring Book* is that of one Mrs Cellier who:

³⁷ Goldie, *Darker Shade of Pepys*, p.4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁴⁰ Tapsell, ‘Weepe over the Ejected Practice of Religion’, pp.266-294.

at the Sessions at the Old Bayley...was found guilty by the Petty Jury for printing or publishing a seditious and Scandalous Libell against the King and Government.⁴¹

Alternatively, the *Entring Book* describes:

Mr Batson the Coffee man in Walbrook was accused of receiving and spreading of Seditious and facetious Letters in his coffee house, and was this weeke carried before Sir James Smith...it was urged very strongly against Batson that all the coffee-houses in town did receive and spread such kinde of dangerous letters, but no particular proof being brought against him the Magistrate could not punish him, and so he was discharged.⁴²

Morrice clearly also has sufficient powers of recall in the *Entring Book* as shown in the case of Stubb and Page who in 1579 paid the price for meddling in Queen Elizabeth I's potential marriage plans, who 'had their right hands cut off upon a Scaffold for publishing a writing intituled 'The gulph wherein England will be swallowed up by the French marriage.'⁴³

Turning to the more specific themes of social history contained in the *Entring Book*, since the 1970s there has been considerable interest shown by historians on the subject of duelling in Britain, in particular by Donna Andrew, Robert Shoemaker, Lawrence Stone, Markku Peltonen, Sharon Howard and, most recently in 2013, by John Jeremiah Cronin, all of whom

⁴¹ *Entring Book* 7 September 1680.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 14 August 1686.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 8 November 1683.

have made valuable contributions to comprehending this subject.⁴⁴ There is a broad consensus among these historians that the early modern duel of honour represented an import from the Continent, only being practised in England towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, with Andrew attesting that, despite half-hearted royal Proclamations against the practice, duelling remained a recognisable feature of the culture of the period. From his perspective in the 1960s, Lawrence Stone maintained that the primary function of the duel represented both a safety-valve and regulator of upper-class aggression while Andrew, some fifteen years later, describes the stimulant for duelling to be driven more by the desire for honour and recognition among the nobility. Shoemaker highlights the historically prevalent standards of behaviour revolving around hunting, drinking, gambling and womanizing in the late sixteenth century and draws attention in his work to how these evolved over the seventeenth century with the nobility and gentlemen beginning to value the attribute of

⁴⁴ Donna T. Andrew, 'The Code of Honour and its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850', *Social History*, Volume 5 No3 (2002), pp.409-434. Also Robert B. Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence in London, 1660-1800', *Historical Journal*, Volume 45 No3 (2002), pp.525-545. Also F. Billacois, *The Duel: Its Decline and Fall in Early Modern France* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990), p.5 and Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, (Oxford University Press 1965), pp.242-250. Markku Peltonen, 'Francis Bacon, The Earl of Northampton and the Jacobean Anti-duelling Campaign,' *Historical Journal*, Volume 44 No1(2001), pp.1-28 and Sharon Howard, *Icons and Iconoclasts: The Long Seventeenth Century, 1603 to 1714, Conference Paper* (August 2006, Aberdeen). John Jeremiah Cronin, 'Honour, Duelling and Royal Power in Exile: a case study of the Banished Caroline Court, c.1649-1660', *Crime, History & Societies*, Volume 17 No2 (2013), pp.47-69.

‘politeness’ as a virtue to be displayed at the expense of more traditional behaviours and indirectly to the practice of duelling itself.

Addressing the subject of mortality as a social theme, there is little in the historiography of the period to undermine Thomas Hobbes’ salutary assertion that life in seventeenth-century Britain was anything other than the much-quoted: ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.’⁴⁵ According to David Stannard, the life expectancy of English noblemen by the third quarter of the seventeenth century was less than thirty years and Clare Gittings suggests that what she terms ‘the facts of death’ have changed since the early modern period, with today’s men and women frequently living into their seventies and beyond.⁴⁶ Against this background, Lucinda McCray Beier suggests pithily that the emergent social history of medicine, being a relatively young field, ‘might more correctly be called the social history of suffering.’⁴⁷ The fact that plague, small pox and other diseases were endemic and epidemic, particularly around the metropolis, is commented on by most historians, representing a relatively uncontentious position on this subject. Houlbrooke, however, asserts that plague was the most terrifying epidemic killer, due to the speed with which it despatched people, closely followed by small pox.

⁴⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part 1, Chapter 13 (London, 1973), p.65.

⁴⁶ David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death. A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford University Press, 1977). Also Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (Croom Helm, 1984), p.8.

⁴⁷ Lucinda McCray Beier, *Sufferers & Healers, The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth Century-England* (Routledge, 1987), p.5.

Sommerville argues intriguingly that the Bills of Mortality might represent another example of early ‘factual news’ in London and might themselves be characterised as simply another source of gossip for inhabitants of the metropolis to talk about and share. Alternatively, the Bills could be conceived as an early form of public service, alerting gentry and nobility alike as to when it might be timely to quit a disease-ridden metropolis and take refuge in a country estate.⁴⁸ Related to this, much of the analysis connected to social history describes the deaths of notable inhabitants in the seventeenth century in London. James Sutherland maintains that such deaths were often reported, albeit briefly, and that extended obituaries were the exception, not the rule, longer obituaries frequently drawing upon first-hand knowledge of the deceased (witness the deathbed scene of Charles II and how Morrice reported this).⁴⁹

Apart from the examples of social history gleaned from the *Entring Book*, there remain many more mundane and arguably less significant examples which can be identified by the modern-day reader, such as the role of playhouses in seventeenth-century London and the condition of the weather. In particular, the role of playhouses and the London theatres in the milieu of the period has attracted academic attention and warrants inclusion

⁴⁸ Sommerville, *News Revolution in England*, pp.66-67. Also Stephen Greenberg, ‘Plague, the Printing Press and Public Health in Seventeenth Century London’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Volume 67 (2004), pp.508-527.

⁴⁹ James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.81-90.

in the historiography of the century. Harold Love describes the London playhouses of the second half of the seventeenth century and the theatre pit, along with the coffee-house, as representing ‘a social laboratory of vital importance to the evolution of that free and reasonable manner of discourse, uniting men and women of sense from widely ranging backgrounds...’⁵⁰ Helen Berry proclaims London to be ‘the national arbiter of taste’, where theatres flourished and people congregated in the pleasure gardens at Vauxhall, attended public balls, or paraded down Pall Mall.⁵¹ Against this background, Thomas N. Corns asserts that the ethos of the Restoration stage:

was largely determined by the rich louts who were its most influential patrons, who strutted its theatres, bedded its actresses, intimidated its actors and at times fell to deadly quarrelling among themselves.⁵²

2.4 Conclusions

The historiography of the second half of the seventeenth century in Britain is well-travelled by modern historians and extensively written about, but much of this writing has been dominated by the politics and religion of the period, not surprising perhaps given that the decades of British history in question and the historical shocks to the body politic in England, comprise more than enough politics to occupy an army of modern political historians of the

⁵⁰ Harold Love, ‘Who Were the Restoration Audience?’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Volume 10 Special Number 1 (1980), pp. 21-44.

⁵¹ Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury* (Ashgate, 2003), p.13.

⁵² Thomas N. Corns, *A History of Seventeenth Century Literature* (Blackwell, 2007), p.333.

period. This chapter highlights the growing importance of social history in explaining the forces at work in the second half of the seventeenth century in Britain, particularly London. Such forces ranged from major social themes (mortality and duelling, for example) to the more mundane and personal, such as the number of stool movements passed by Sir John Maynard, one of Morrice's most influential patrons, when the former was ill. The contents of Morrice's *Entring Book* combine the political with the social, but the community of today's historians, having given somewhat cursory recognition to the existence of social history in the *Book*, do not carry this through to a rigorous analysis of this dimension of the work. It is against this background that there exists the historiographical gap between the politico-religious and the social in relation to the *Entring Book*, hence the opportunity to explore the social dimension of Morrice's work in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3: CONTINUITY VERSUS DISCONTINUITY IN NEWS-GATHERING

3.1 Introduction

Three centuries have elapsed since Roger Morrice frequented his various London haunts and these have been noted and explored by both today's historians and Morrice's contemporary news-gatherers. Oral news was paramount for much of the seventeenth century, enabling Bishop John Earle in 1628 to describe St Paul's Walk as having 'the noyse in it like that of Bees, a strange humming or buzze-mixt of walking, tongues and feet; it is a kinde of still roare or loud whisper.' More recently, Elizabeth Horodowich has referred to 'beehives of noise' relating to the same subject.⁵³ In a society where both gossip and news were primarily spread by word of mouth and not written, sources of news assumed multiple forms, from meeting at the alehouse among the poor and at the tavern among more genteel folk and from contacts among influential friends to visiting coffee-houses from the 1650s. Yet a sense remains among some scholars of the period that the *modus operandi* of communication remained relatively traditional and fixed and that, for example, the king was hidden from the populace at large and that the

⁵³ Elizabeth Horodowich, 'Speech and Oral Culture in Early Modern Europe and Beyond,' *Journal of Early Modern History*, Volume 16 (2012), pp.301-313.

nature of news-gathering was hard-won in a world where secrecy was the norm, recognised and vigorously enforced as such by the authorities. However, there is mounting evidence that (counterintuitive as it might at first sight appear) access to Charles II, his family, members of the aristocracy and senior members of the government, was actively promoted by the monarch, defining the character of his regime post-Restoration and that ‘secrecy’ and ‘access’ in the period were actually more fluid and difficult to enforce than some scholars credit. In addition, the evolving fabric of the centre of London, in particular the building of more prestigious palaces in town by the nobility, a less peripatetic royal Court and a parliament meeting more regularly at Westminster, created fresh impetus for those who gathered news and gossip. In short, there were forces at work in the second half of the seventeenth century which facilitated - and did not necessarily serve to block or to undermine - sources of news for the metropolis’s various news-gatherers. This chapter further explores these issues.

3.2 The Changing Topography of London

One theme to emerge from the study of Morrice and his *Entring Book*, now receiving more attention, is the increasing importance and the evolving shape of the metropolis for seventeenth-century news gatherers, resulting in what some historians have asserted to be a more open and less secretive society. Deborah E. Harkness articulates what probably now remains a prevailing

view among today's historians, albeit from the position of the late sixteenth century where, she suggests:

A visit to the Royal Exchange, St Paul's churchyard, or the theatres on the Southbank of the Thames provided any Londoner, literate or illiterate, high or low, foreign or native born, with easy access to news and information.⁵⁴

From the perspective of three centuries, the primacy of informational 'secrecy' and 'access' has become almost the academic orthodoxy and the working assumption on the subject among many modern-day historians. Chris R. Kyle admits as much when, in relation to his own work, he aspires to:

challenge the historiographical construct of a secretive, private and unusual world and within the framework of topography, print, culture and anecdote, to offer an articulation of the centralization of political discourse.⁵⁵

It would be misleading to claim that open access to opinion-formers or members of the social and political elites was the established norm in the world inhabited by Morrice, even with his extensive range of contacts and Paul Griffiths argues persuasively that this was not necessarily the case when examining, for example, the secrecy which covered sensitive conversations

⁵⁴ Deborah E. Harkness, *The Jewell House, Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (Yale University Press, 2007), p.3.

⁵⁵ Chris R. Kyle, 'Parliament and the Palace of Westminster: An Exploration of Public Space in the Early Seventeenth Century', *Parliamentary History*, Volume 21 (2002), pp.85-98.

of the mayor and aldermen of the city in the 1650s. Brian Weiser observes that Charles II's father, probably as an act of policy, practised 'the politics of distance', as opposed to his son's more open style.⁵⁶ Eveline Cruickshanks suggests that Charles II 'actively cultivated accessibility throughout his reign...indeed, Charles II often took walks where virtually anyone could meet, talk and deliver Petitions to him.'⁵⁷ There are, however, sufficient examples of either formal or informal access to authority figures, particularly post-Restoration, culminating with the monarch himself (supported by the ongoing practice of Petitioning the king and the open monarchical style of Charles II), his immediate family and senior politicians described in the work of Jason Scott-Warren and Robert O. Bucholz and Joseph P. Ward, to enable historians plausibly to argue that access to authority was not uniform across the metropolis.⁵⁸ Morrice reports examples of behaviour enabled by this more relaxed access and there are others contained in the work of Pepys, Evelyn and other diarists of the period who frequented Westminster Hall and its environs. The House of Commons may have sought to guard jealously the long-established practice of note-taking by Members of Parliament when the House was in session, but what hope was there for the confidentiality of

⁵⁶ Brian Weiser, *Charles II and the Politics of Access* (The Boydell Press, 2003).

⁵⁷ Eveline Cruickshanks., 'The Stuart Courts' in Brian Weiser, ed, *Charles II and the Politics of Access* (The Boydell Press, 2003).

⁵⁸ Jason Scott-Warren, *Early Modern English Literature*, p.65. Also Robert O. Bucholz and Joseph P. Ward, *London, a Social and Cultural History 1550-1750*, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.113.

debates, when those same Members were dining in and around Westminster, their tongues loosened by good food and wine?

The changing social topography of the post-Restoration metropolis served to lubricate the circulation of news and gossip. London's population grew rapidly from some 375,000 inhabitants in 1650 to at least 490,000 in 1700. Vanessa Harding describes this period as one when significant numbers of the gentry and aristocracy, together with their retinues, expected to travel to the metropolis on a regular basis, in recognition of the royal Court becoming more formally based in and around Westminster, one witnessing the emergence of a metropolitan culture. Morrice, for example, lived in Covent Garden in the fashionable West End where he could keep his finger on the pulse of current affairs. Harding further points out that by the late seventeenth century 'a number of fundamental changes had taken place in London's economy, effective government and appearance. In short, a nascent kind of urban, metropolitan culture was beginning to emerge.'⁵⁹ London's ballooning population in the half century between 1650 and 1700 was matched by the number of landed households in the metropolis rising to around one thousand by 1700, based on two major trends which demonstrated the consolidation of London's hold over national life in the period. The first trend was the increasing scope of activity relating to political, administrative and

⁵⁹ Vanessa Harding, 'Early Modern London, 1550-1700', *London Journal*, Volume 20 (1995), pp.34-45.

legal institutions based in and around the metropolis (exemplified by the role of Parliament), the second trend representing the expansion of London's role as a centre of commercialised leisure. Reflecting these forces, politically and socially, the Jacobean period witnessed the consolidation of a pattern whereby significant numbers of gentry and aristocracy, together with their retinues, expected to travel from the provinces to the metropolis on a more regular basis, reflecting how the royal Court had become less peripatetic by the end of the sixteenth century and how, with the building of Whitehall Palace, the royal Court became based in and around Westminster. Apart from viewing Parliament as a physical space, in the fashion advocated by Kümin, Parliament in its various guises also represented a major institutional event for London, introducing into the already heady mix of groupings and networks in and around the city (specifically around Westminster) some 459 MPs, a handful of bishops and some 50 to 70 peers.⁶⁰ Nor was Westminster Hall occupied solely by a select group of judges, individual counsel and a few defendants. On the contrary: 'it was thronged with sightseers, barristers, clerks, termers, knights, students of the inns of court, for whom attendance at court was an integral part of their training.'⁶¹ In short, the population of parts of London swelled during a parliament; the number of people attracted in this way to the capital not only had a socio-economic effect on the metropolis, but

⁶⁰ Kümin, *Political Space in Pre-Industrial Europe*, p.9.

⁶¹ Kyle, 'Parliament and the Palace of Westminster', pp.85-98.

also provides the historian such as Kyle with an opportunity to challenge the simplistic characterisation of early modern Parliaments as an institutionally secretive and closed world in which matters of high state remained the prerogative of the elite few. The public nature and accessibility of the Palace of Westminster was one of the most important elements and an intrinsic part of Westminster culture. Julia Merritt echoes Harding's analysis, characterising the royal Court as a magnet, particularly for those seeking royal patronage or largesse.⁶² Aristocrats and gentlemen alike were drawn to the hub represented by the royal Court, reflecting the increasing frequency with which Parliament met, and for longer. Such topographical changes were resisted by the Crown during the first half of the seventeenth century, in particular by Charles I who sought to allow only those whom he declared respectable to live in close proximity to the emerging royal Court, but with only moderate success. The topographical dimension of news transmission is, however, contested by Malcolm Smuts who suggests that historians have:

...too often simply equated the Court and its surroundings with royal power and an aristocratic society attracted by royal largesse, without pausing to examine carefully the relationship between the king's household, the peers, the gentry who settled near it and the surrounding urban community.⁶³

⁶² J. F. Merritt, *The Social World of Early Modern Westminster, Abbey, Court and Community, 1525-1640* (Manchester University Press, 2005,), p.141.

⁶³ R. Malcolm Smuts, 'The Court and its Neighbourhood: Royal Policy and Urban Growth in the Early Stuart West End', *Journal of British Studies*, Volume 30 (1991), pp.117-149.

3.3 The Mental World of Morrice: Secrecy and Access

One of the features of the *Entring Book* and the commentary on it by today's historians, is the range of information sources identified and exploited by Morrice. Goldie writes that Morrice was proud of his illicit access to state secrets and his network of confidantes, for example the 'secret' discussions of the Privy Council shared with Morrice by the notoriously indiscreet Secretary to the Privy Council, Richard Collings, who was the source of the king's deathbed scene on 6 February 1685. Perhaps not a 'secret' in the conventional meaning of the word, but Morrice nevertheless dedicated some thirty-seven lines of *Entring Book* text to the graphic account of Charles II's death, in stark contrast to the majority of deathbed scenes of the period, which typically took the form of only a few brief words to celebrate a life lived. According to Collings' insider insight, the king suffered:

very exquisite paines for about five hours before he departed. He had much vigour of nature to spend, and therefore the greater Conflict with death. He said very little about his Kingdome or his own Condition. He dyed on Friday the sixth of February about a quarter of an hour before 12 in the morning Memorandum, all this I had from an eye and eare witnesse, [Collings] who was as much with him throughout his whole sickness, as any person, and was constantly with him from Thursday no one (that halfe hour excepted) they all went out till he dyed.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ John Spurr, *The Entring Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691* Volume 2 (The Boydell Press, 2008), p.511.

For the reader of Morrice's manuscript newsletter describing the king's death, the reference to 'eye and eare witnesses' and Morrice's first-hand source being 'constantly with' the dying king, would serve as a valuable reassurance to Morrice's readership in an informational world otherwise rife with inaccurate rumour, gossip and speculation.

Collings was not alone in this kind of activity and, unsurprisingly, Privy Councillors were acknowledged to regularly leak information, often of a sensitive variety, in what was recognised as a quite calculated and regular fashion. Had Narcissus Luttrell's *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* provided the basis of marking such a momentous event, his readers would have had to make do with:

The 6th, being Fryday, his majestie King Charles the 2d died at Whitehall about three quarters after 11 at noon; the news of which putt the town in a great consternation, and the gates of Whitehall were shut up, and the guards drawn out: the privy council met, where his majestie king James the Second, at his first sitting there, was pleas'd to declare that he would maintain the government as establish'd both in church and state...⁶⁵

Any impartial reading of these two descriptions would have to acknowledge the superior detail in Morrice's reporting and this, to a great extent, was attributable to the quality and quantity of Morrice's primary and secondary sources, which might be termed today as 'secret'. Other, more personal,

⁶⁵ Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affaires from September 1678 to April 1714, Volume 1* (Oxford University Press, 1857, repr.1969).

contacts such as those of Denzell Holles and Sir John Maynard would also have represented primary sources for 'secret', or at least confidential information, such as the proceedings of Parliament, particularly in respect of the House of Lords (whose proceedings were looser than those of the Commons which more jealously guarded its privileges and its reporting of proceedings). In practice, of course, debates in Parliament could never be entirely secret, no matter how hard the authorities tried, since there was little that could be done about note-taking in the confines of both Houses or about informal conversations which might take place in and around Westminster Hall.

Notions of 'secrecy' (and the related notion of 'access') as they developed in the metropolis have been the subject of a measure of recent academic revision, suggesting that secrecy as practised in seventeenth-century London formed a valuable part of the discussion of the dissemination of the news:

a veil of secrecy covered the sensitive conversations of the mayor and the 'public' places of the city and the formation of opinion, suggesting that: aldermen, company elites and vestrymen. The governors of the city, guild and parish preferred to meet behind closed doors, and the exclusive nature of proceedings helped to institutionalize inequality by restrictions access.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Paul Griffiths, 'Secrecy and Authority in Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century London,' *Historical Journal*, Volume 40 (1997), pp.925-951.

That some sensitive matters were successfully discussed behind closed doors is undoubtedly true, but does not serve to undermine conversation and speculation emanating from this knowledge. In fact, the imaginative content of opinion may have been stimulated by the clandestine nature of official conferences. Chris R. Kyle and R. Malcolm Smuts have each adopted a different posture in relation to access to information in the period. Kyle challenges: 'the historiographical construct of a secretive, private and unusual world and within the framework of topography, print, culture and anecdote, to offer an articulation of the centralization of political discourse.'⁶⁷ Smuts describes the difficulty the Crown encountered in slowing the development of London's West End and the increasingly intrusive presence of the nobility and gentry in the western suburbs, in close proximity to the royal Court: 'which were becoming the focus of Court news and gossip that percolated to the countryside, encouraging a kind of political awareness the Stuarts would have preferred to avoid.'⁶⁸ Morrice did not stand aloof from the geography of gossip, rather he was located at its heart.

Goldie suggests it is possible to detect Morrice's principal venues for information-gathering in the fashionable West End of town, ideally placed as it was for news-gathering activities, gossip and hearsay in and around Paul's Walk, Westminster Hall, the Inns of Court, churches with their sermons,

⁶⁷ Kyle, 'Parliament and the Palace of Westminster', pp.85-98.

⁶⁸ Smuts, 'The Court and its Neighbourhood', p.130.

markets, newspapers, pamphlets, ale houses, taverns and coffee-houses. Taken together with access to first-hand gossip of the aural and oral varieties, such spaces represented the gossip-rich milieu in which Morrice and his information-gathering activities took place. There was nothing particularly new in such perambulations, with Samuel Pepys recording in his *Diary* of 1 January 1663: ‘And to Whitehall, where I spent a little time walking among the Courtiers, which I perceive I shall be able to do with great confidence, being now beginning to be pretty well-known among them.’⁶⁹

Grant Tapsell suggests that:

the heart of early modern London was still comparatively small and intimate and hunters after news necessarily become known to many whilst in pursuit of their quarry. Surely Morrice must have been a recognisable figure in his regular haunts, not least Westminster Hall, that key fount of legal judgements and political gossip?⁷⁰

If he sought anonymity and security for his various news-gathering activities, then it is even more perverse that Morrice apparently wore conspicuous black garb as he visited his preferred haunts and contacts. Morrice perhaps dodged arrest by the authorities for his news-monger activities by refraining from publishing the *Entring Book*, by which act that work might have avoided being treated as a ‘seditious libel’ by the authorities, with the potentially serious consequences attendant on this, namely arrest, imprisonment, or

⁶⁹ Latham, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, p. 249.

⁷⁰ Tapsell, ‘Weepe Over the Ejected Practice of Religion’, p. 270.

worse.⁷¹ Views differ among historians about the nature of the news-gathering practised by Morrice, in particular why, if his activities were so ‘secret’, the full force of post-Restoration government was not brought to bear aimed at curtailing this work. Goldie is of the view that the *Entring Book* could have been deemed by the authorities to represent a ‘single master project’ of a strongly Presbyterian hue (which it was, according to both Goldie and Tapsell) and, as a result, potentially defined as seditious by the authorities with the serious judicial consequences that this might entail.⁷² Alternatively, the authorities may simply have trusted ‘the better sort’ (of which Morrice would have counted as one) to handle such information with due care and attention, as compared with the rude multitude whose motives and capacity to digest such information were more questionable. The debate among historians as to the nature of censorship in the seventeenth century has its advocates and, rather than describe its form as representing a consciously activist approach being adopted on the part of the authorities, the mundane reality could have been that those same authorities simply lacked the policing resources to tackle the issue on a more systematic basis. Morrice was perhaps fortunate to be an integral part of a communication and information-sharing

⁷¹ Philip Hamburger, ‘The Development of the Law of Seditious Libel and the Control of the Press’, *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 37 (1985), pp.661-765.

⁷² Mark Goldie, ‘Roger Morrice and the History of Puritanism’ in William Gibson and Robert G. Ingrams, eds, *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832*, Volume 2 (Ashgate, 2005), pp. 9-27. Also Cyndia S. Clegg, *Press Censorship in Caroline England* (Cambridge, 2008) and Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation, The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984) and Christopher Hill, ‘Censorship and English Literature’ in the *Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, Volume 1 (Brighton, 1984).

Puritan network which not only provided him with potentially rich, if not unique, sources of information and news, but also represented a network which could, if called upon, provide protection to one of its own in the event that the government of the day sought to take a keener interest in Morrice's activities, in particular the production and distribution of the *Entring Book*.

McElligott suggests:

If Roger L'Estrange had ferreted out Morrice, as he had others, Morrice's proffered defence might have been that he was not a public enemy open to punishment because he had not published. Roger L'Estrange's retort would no doubt have been that he [Morrice] had 'published', in the relevant sense of culpable expression within the sphere of public political authority.⁷³

Morrice was not alone in gathering information for onward transmission to a circle of friends and patrons, greedy for news and gossip. John Rous and Marchamont Nedham in the years before the Revolution and John Starkey in the 1670s employed similar news-gathering techniques to Morrice whose activities and offerings, as already demonstrated, were not unique, notwithstanding that some of the news he gathered through his various oral and aural activities was distinctive, potentially qualifying for the term 'secret.'⁷⁴ It can also be surmised, however, that Morrice's capacity to interpret accurately the information he circulated marked him out among contemporaries as what today might be described as an investigative

⁷³ McElligott, *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution*, pp.74-75.

⁷⁴ John Rous 1584-1644, Marchamont Nedham 1620-1678 and John Starkey 1630-1690. DNB.

journalist, one whose manuscript newsletters were insightful, accessible (to the degree possible), value-adding and deemed truthful to a discerning readership, as compared with the ill-founded gossip of many contemporary news-mongers.

Commenting on post-Restoration Britain - specifically the activities of the Hilton Gang - Howard Nenner suggests that: 'The apparently easy access to the king, although not unique to Hilton during the Restoration era, still is to late twentieth-century observers as astonishing as the king's go-ahead'.⁷⁵ Albeit focused on the example of Hilton, Nenner's intellectual position is an interesting one in the context of Morrice, in particular, and seventeenth-century information-gathering in general, since sources of information in the period, such as the Inns of Court or Westminster Hall, could be characterised as fixed and accessible to only a select few news-gatherers, many of whom would have been recognisable to contemporaries. There is a growing body of evidence emerging from among present-day historians, however, that such restricted (or 'secret') access to sources of news was far from representative of the norm in the period, as Merritt points out in relation to the peripatetic habits of Pepys who:

travelled all over London, from government offices, the Court, and the theatre in Whitehall and Lincolns Inn Fields to his house near Tower Hill (and City shops and the Royal Exchange in between); eastwards to the docks; south of the river to pubs and pleasure gardens

⁷⁵ Howard Nenner, ed, *Politics and the Political Imagination in Later Stuart Britain*, (University of Rochester Press, 1997).

for sexual dalliance; and west of the metropolis for similar purposes. Pepys experienced the full geographical extent of the metropolis.⁷⁶

Excluding the sexual dimension of Pepys' journeying around London and Morrice's hinted at aversion to coffee-house politicians and their gossip, there is no reason why Morrice's information-gathering activities should not conform to a pattern similar to those of Pepys, or even exceed it⁷⁷. This dissertation has already characterised the period in question as intimate, face-to-face and interpersonal, and such characteristics create a context for information-gathering and gossip. Londoners of all ranks frequently had encounters, in the church or the street, at the market or over the shop counter, standing nearby at an outdoor sermon, play or bear-baiting. One of the less discussed political roles of the royal Court itself was as a focus for the exchange of news, and it was the royal Court in particular that provided much of the political information, factual and scandalous alike, which news-mongers in London and beyond were so desperate to receive. That the royal Court performed this role was no recent phenomenon invented by Charles II and his acolytes. David Coast suggests, in relation to the Jacobean court (which, he argues, was particularly rumour-prone during the latter part of James VI and I's reign) that it was a source of news about a wide range of

⁷⁶ J. F. Merritt., *Imagining Early Modern London. Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.149.

⁷⁷ Steve Pincus, 'Coffee Politicians does Create': Coffee-houses and Restoration Culture, *Journal of Modern History*, Volume 67 (2012), pp.807-834.

topics, ranging from reports of the behaviour of the king, his ministers, foreign diplomats, news of court scandals, as well as foreign news.⁷⁸ It is difficult to credit that the gossiping and news-mongering forces at work in and around the Jacobean court were markedly different from those practised in the court of the ‘Merry Monarch’, particularly bearing in mind the political and religious challenges confronting the post-Restoration Court and its accompanying moral excesses, which could become - and often did become - the talk of the town.

Kyle comments that: ‘the public nature and accessibility of the Palace of Westminster was one of its most important elements and an intrinsic part of the culture of Westminster.’⁷⁹ The openness and accessibility of the post-Restoration royal Court is mentioned by Morrice on a number of occasions, who, by way of an example, observed on 5 September 1678, during the early days of the Popish Plot, that: ‘one Mr Kirby went to Windsor to acquaint his Majesty with the [Popish]Plot’, an interesting perspective on access to the monarch.⁸⁰ On the subject of access, Morrice records on 31 October 1683 that: ‘as his Majesty was walking in the park, a certain person brought to him a booke containing a full Narrative of the [Popish] Plot, Saith his Majesty

⁷⁸ David Coast, ‘Misinformation and Disinformation in Late Jacobean Court Politics’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, Volume 16 (2012), pp.335-354.

⁷⁹ Kyle, ‘Parliament and the Palace of Westminster’, p.92.

⁸⁰ Spurr, *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691*, p.75.

I've had too much trouble about Plotts already[.] I will be concerned no more about any Plotts.'⁸¹

Access to the king of a more troubling variety, at least in respect of his personal safety, is described by Morrice on 11 December 1683, when the king was reported:

walking in the Park, as he past by one Mr Johnson, said to be a Derbyshire man, who said God save King Charles, followed after him crying Charles, Charles, Charles, King Charles, King Charles, King Charles, wilt thou not heare one that has hazarded his life so often for King Charles the first and for thee. I will have satisfaction, thereupon he was seized upon as a disordered man.⁸²

'Disordered man' this inhabitant of the metropolis might have been, but it is his easy access to the king that is notable in this extract, as was a similar episode, from Pepys' *Diary*, in which he records: 'And while I am waiting there, in comes the King in a plain common riding suit and velvet capp, in which he seemed a very ordinary man to one that had not known him.'⁸³

Whatever the downsides of relatively relaxed and open access to the king and his court in the period, it was nevertheless a time-honoured activity-reflecting the traditional game of 'who's in, who's out, who's up, who's down' - and is the staple of much of the content of the *Entring Book*, on Morrice's informational agenda, frequently prompted by the death of a

⁸¹ *Entring Book* 31 October 1683.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 11 December 1683.

⁸³ Latham, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, p. 149.

member of the nobility, gentry or Puritan nexus. Such jockeying for position at Court and the jealousies aroused by this are neatly exemplified by the circumstances of one Mr Grant who, in 1689, according to Morrice:

has now a great freedom of access to his Majestie and takes a greater liberty of discourse with him then I thinke any Subject of England in so much that his Patron hearing him Speake so much and with so great freedome behind the chaire to the King, told him afterwards that he thought no subject of any condition whatever talked so frankly with his Majestie he knew surely very well why he did so. Grant tooke this as testimony of great respect and honour from his Patron, and told him he had stood 40 and 40 times behind the Chair, and had heard his Majestie discourse with persons of all qualities, and of all perswasions of parties in this Kingdome, and thereby found out the tendency of his Majestie's discourse, and if he did not perfectly understand his Majestie's sense it was because he was uncapable therof &c.⁸⁴

On such evidence, seventeenth-century London was a surprisingly open culture, so much so that Jason Scott-Warren opines that: 'rather than going to see a fictional court in the theatres, many post-Restoration Londoners would have been able to ogle the real thing; palaces were a common destination for natives enjoying a day out.'⁸⁵

Outwith Morrice, John Evelyn saw the queen during one of his frequent visits to the capital; similarly, on a September Sunday in 1662, Pepys paid a visit to the court of the Queen Mother, Henrietta Maria, at Somerset House. In addition, Bucholz and Ward could observe that: 'People loved the

⁸⁴ Stephen Taylor, *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691* Volume 4 (The Boydell Press, 2008), p.89.

⁸⁵ Scott-Warren, *Early Modern English Literature*, p.65.

spectacle of the royal family dining formally at the mid-afternoon meal, the king hatted, sitting under the canopy of state...served by their bedchamber staff on bended knee from the royal plate.’⁸⁶

3.4 Conclusions

Surprising as such access and intimacy might appear to the modern reader of the *Entring Book*, it surely must have represented an ever-changing source of ‘social’ history and entertainment for the news-mongers of the period, including Morrice. Whether news-gatherers operated at the gossip-oriented end of the news spectrum or, like Morrice, at the factual end, the basic approach for gathering information of all kinds was essentially the same: identify and collect information (where possible, from multiple sources), vet the news received, publish this in the form of the printed or manuscript medium and, finally, share the news, ideally with a network of regular readers, in a manner least likely to affront the authorities. What today’s historians may not have paid adequate attention to was the surprisingly benign news environment pertaining from the 1670s, in terms of collecting such ‘secrets’, ease of access to opinion-formers (often around Westminster Hall), and the topographical developments which enabled greater proximity to the seat(s) of information in and around the metropolis. The above perspective does not seek to deny that information-gathering in the period could be both

⁸⁶ Bucholz and Ward, *London, a Social and Cultural History*, p.113.

dangerous and difficult, but the analysis contained in this chapter cautions against overly simplistic positions being adopted by scholars, in particular perceiving 'secrets' as being invariably jealously guarded and accessible, and recognising forms of 'access' to be a regular feature of news-gathering from the beginning of the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER 4: ROGER MORRICE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES – THE ‘UNIQUENESS’ OF MORRICE

4.1 Introduction

As the reader digests the *Entring Book*, it is tempting to infer, consciously or otherwise, that the role Morrice performed for his clients was one unique among contemporary news-gatherers or, if not unique, then unusual at least. Post-Restoration Britain was certainly awash with endless rumour and gossip, which assumed numerous formats, from notebooks and pamphlets, to word of mouth and the written word, the last of these evidenced by the pen of Viscountess Falkland who wrote to her friend, Lady Hastings that:

the news of the execution of the Earl of Stafford will come to you in so many ways that I do not trust this for your first intelligence...the manner of it is so differently related that I believe your ladyship will find very little truth amongst a great deal of falsehood.⁸⁷

Tapsell moves beyond inference, however, when he proposes that Morrice's news-gathering technique was 'for the most part available to any contemporary prepared to devote energy to it.'⁸⁸ Morrice was, in Tapsell's

⁸⁷ David Cressy, *England on the Edge, Crisis and Revolution 1640-1642* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p.318.

⁸⁸ Tapsell, 'Weepe over the Ejected Practice of Religion', pp.266-294.

view, only one of a number of intelligencers operating across the seventeenth century. This chapter sets out to evaluate the evidence for this position.

4.2 The ‘Uniqueness’ of Morrice

Since the early seventeenth century, so-called intelligencers and other news-gatherers in Britain were prepared to collect and distribute (and frequently sell) news to their clients, either individually or in groups, such news frequently including the latest gossip and rumours, as well as *bona fide* news which was factual. The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, for example, a London wood turner of the 1620s, describe: ‘vivid accounts of the ways in which, and the speed with which, rumours about parliamentary proceedings could spread through the City, even if they were based on misinformation and misunderstanding.’⁸⁹ Similarly, the news-diary of Walter Yonge in Devon, started in 1604, contains plenty of second-hand news, but he: ‘was well aware of the possibility that the information would be deformed in its passage from hand-to-hand and Yonge went to extraordinary lengths to verify what he heard.’⁹⁰ Continuing this example, Ian Atherton adds that: ‘The news was read with an eye to discovering the truth: Yonge...went over the entries in his news diary noting which later proved false and, occasionally, which true.’⁹¹

⁸⁹ David Booy, ed, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654* (Ashgate, 2007). Also, Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington’s World, A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth Century London* (Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁹⁰ Fritz Levy, ‘The Decorum of News’, *Prose Studies*, Volume 21 (1998), pp.12-38.

⁹¹ Ian Atherton, ‘The Itch Grown Disease,’ *Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century*, *Prose Studies*, Volume 21 (1998), p.27.

Yonge was not alone in his fastidiousness. The Norfolk news-diarist John Rous, whose diary spanned the years 1625 to 1640, was minded to validate the accuracy of rumours he heard, wherever possible, sometimes finding the time to walk to the neighbouring town to consult proclamations or to seek advice from acquaintances. Likewise, John Pory in the 1640s, recognised by many modern-day historians as a character with a rich and colourful past (which, for the purposes of this dissertation, included acting as a news-monger) had a list of clients willing to retain his services as a source of news and gossip. For example, Lord Scudamore paid Pory a £20 annual retainer in 1632, to supply him with up-to-date news.⁹² As with the later example of Morrice, Pory was well-connected at both the royal Court and Parliament, developing a manuscript news-service for his clients. He may well have made a living off his wits, but: ‘the image implied by the factually precise appearance of most of his letters is that of a dependable empirical observer whose general news is as reliable as his financial information.’⁹³

Andrew Mousley cites Pory’s account of Sir Walter Raleigh’s death as ‘consciously placed within and against other accounts and reports which... might have heard’, the clear implication being that Pory’s account was more informed and more reliable than others then in circulation.⁹⁴ Not everything

⁹² William Powell, *John Pory, 1572-1636* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1977).

⁹³ Andrew Mousley, ‘Self, State and Seventeenth Century News’, *Seventeenth Century*, Volume 6, Issue 2 (1991), pp.149-168.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.159. Also William S. Powell, ‘John Pory on the Death of Sir Walter Raleigh’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Volume 9 (1952), pp.532-538.

in the period was straightforward, however. For example, the diary of Philip Henry was:

definitely inhibited in its record-keeping after a friend's diary was seized by the authorities as he travelled to London and Henry learned that the warrant was also for seizure of his [Henry's] own diary, large erasures having been made in the text he had written and he wrote that into the future he would 'take warning and be more cautious.'⁹⁵

Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington illustrate how Pepys' movements reveal the workings of a society still predominantly intimate and face-to-face, with networks of influence and information, as characterised by Pepys, connecting city and royal Court, and how these were critical for the circulation of news and gossip, with the prevailing model of politics continuing to rely on both patronage and informal connections - some deep, others more superficial - which made leaks inevitable.⁹⁶ Almost every page of Pepys' *Diary* refers to 'discourse' and it is estimated that he met on a monthly basis with roughly twice the number of contacts in the metropolis as compared with the Yorkshireman Adam Eyre. Thus, during those times when Pepys and Adam Eyre were both fairly sociable, Pepys met nearly twice as many Londoners a month as Eyre did, an unsurprising outcome perhaps given Pepys' sociable nature and his wide-ranging circle of metropolitan friends, as

⁹⁵ Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661-1689*, pp.24-355.

⁹⁶ Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington, eds, *Communities in Early Modern England, Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p.18.

compared with Eyre's more limited Yorkshire base.⁹⁷ By comparing Pepys' social network with that of Morrice, McElligott calculates that Morrice mentions in excess of 6300 individuals⁹⁸ in the *Entring Book* - a remarkable figure. No significant biographical information can be found for some 2300 individuals; a further 2830 are dealt with in the footnotes to the core volumes of the *Entring Book*. McElligott offers detail on 1175 individuals, defining Morrice's social horizons as 'metropolitan, male and elite in character.' The quality and quantity of Morrice's contacts and his ability to question rigorously when he met them were distinctive characteristics of the way he gathered information for the *Entring Book*. This was nothing new and inhabitants of early seventeenth-century London, such as Pory, could describe a milieu similar to that of Pepys and associated forms of patronage some forty years before Pepys commenced writing his own diary. Such a *modus operandi* could accurately have described Morrice and his various activities, except for the financial annual retainer basis of news-mongering practised by contemporaries which, one assumes, Morrice may have spurned in light of the religious basis of his activities on behalf of his clients. There were plenty of charlatans peddling half-truths and downright untruths, but in their seeking

⁹⁷ Karl E. Westhauser, 'Friendship and family in early modern England: The Sociability of Adam Eyre and Samuel Pepys,' *Journal of Social History*, Volume 27 (1994), p.517.

⁹⁸ Jason McElligott, *The Entring Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691* Volume 6 (The Boydell Press, 2007), p.3.

after 'truth', Pory, Yonge, Rous and Wallington, among others, were as one with the *modus operandi* of many news-gatherers of the time and earlier.

The gathering and analysis of news in seventeenth-century London may have initially been spontaneous, as inhabitants of the metropolis moved around the city, but there is evidence of an emergent structure to news-gathering. This was particularly true with reference to detecting information of a more sensitive kind and to the more elevated among the close circles of the royal Court, the nobility and the county gentry who had, since the early part of the century, kept themselves well-informed by subscribing to manuscript newsletters as a preferred means of communication. Such newsletters were distributed by so-called intelligencers to select 'country friends' for an annual subscription of c.£5. In the 1670s those of a Whig persuasion, including Morrice, began to circulate their own manuscript newsletters among the wealthy elite in the provinces and the professional classes in and around London. Morrice was not alone in seeking to capture and make sense of contemporary events. Henry Muddiman in the 1650s, Samuel Pepys, John Evelyn, Narcissus Luttrell, Edmund Bohun, Sir John Reresby and Ralph Josselin, together with John Starkey in the 1670s, Henry Care and Roger L'Estrange in the 1680s, alongside many others, were all

contemporary commentators, to varying degrees of accuracy, on the events of the second half of the seventeenth century.⁹⁹

As described earlier in this dissertation, newsletters emerged from the offices of the Secretaries of State whose clerks engaged in regular correspondence around the country and who also supplied third-parties with news when they had the time. Harold Love maintains that Secretary Williamson's newsletters from Whitehall 'were not, as historians have suggested, a commercial enterprise...they were nearer to being secret dispatches, restricted to special intelligencers, certain civil and military offices, and persons of power and authority in the counties.'¹⁰⁰ Thus, in 1678 Speaker Seymour wrote to Secretary Williamson imploring him in frustration to 'command one of your servants to send me some intelligence, that I may barter with my neighbours, who are well furnished from the coffee-houses.'¹⁰¹ A year earlier, Secretary Coventry, despite suffering from gout, hobbled to the Exchange to deny in person persistent rumours that the Madrid government had threatened to seize English ships in Spanish ports.¹⁰² As

⁹⁹ Henry Muddiman 1629-1692. DNB. Latham., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (2000). E. S. De Beer, *The Diary of John Evelyn* (Everyman's Library, 2006). Henry Horwitz, *The Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell 1691-1693* (Clarendon Press, 1972). *The Diary and Autobiography of Edmund Bohun Esq.* (Beccles, 1853). Andrew Browning, ed, *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, (Glasgow University, 1936). Alan Macfarlane., *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin. A Seventeenth Century Clergyman*, (Cambridge University Press, 1970). John Starkey 1630-1690, Henry Care 1646-1688, Roger L'Estrange 1616-1704. DNB.

¹⁰⁰ Harold Love, 'The Look of News: Popish Plot Narratives 1678-1680' in Cambridge History of the Book.

¹⁰¹ John Miller, 'Public Opinion in Charles II's England', *History*, Volume 80 (1995), p.365.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.365.

Melinda S. Zook argues, the client/patron relationship in news-gathering, often involving aristocrats who patronised like-minded men of lesser standing, entailed the provision of services to the patron which might involve, according to Zook, ‘serving as their master’s spy, informer and messenger, gathering and passing information along London streets and in book stores and coffee-houses.’¹⁰³

Much (perhaps the majority) of Morrice’s news-gathering was predicated on addressing the hard-edged political and religious issues of the day, in particular popery and its associations, with the political implications of this non-conformist backcloth in Protestant Britain. On the evidence few, if any, of Morrice’s contemporaries were prepared to pursue single-mindedly a non-conformist news agenda as assiduously as Morrice in the service of his Puritan network. What his various patrons received *par excellence* in return over the course of Morrice’s writing was access to the most up-to-date news, combined with both interpretation and analysis, based on discreet access to primary sources wherever possible, sifted by Morrice’s personal insight and his underlying Presbyterian outlook. Responding to pent-up reader demand, there were forms of intelligencers operating from the early part of the seventeenth century who can be characterised as offering a similar (but perhaps more embryonic) service to that of Morrice from his vantage point of

¹⁰³ Melinda S. Zook, *Radical Whigs and Conspiratorial Politics in Late Stuart England* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp.xv-13.

the second half of the century, and the mechanics of his news-gathering were clearly not unique to him. What might reasonably be characterised as ‘unique,’ however, was the bespoke Presbyterian slant of Morrice’s news-gathering and analysis and the almost ‘professional’ insight accompanying this, as the distinctive news ‘value added’ he offered to his circle of patrons. Unlike many of his news-gathering contemporaries, Morrice sought to deliver insightful news, as free from error or ‘false rumour’ as he could manage. If the service Morrice provided for his clientele bore only some comparison with that of other London contemporaries, he should perhaps be forgiven; after all, none of Morrice’s news-gathering contemporaries possessed the range and depth of contacts required to confirm when the queen went into labour on 9 June 1688 or provided an intimate account of the birth itself, culminating in confirmation that the after birth ‘was perfectly warm.’¹⁰⁴

4.3 Conclusions

It might be tempting for the modern-day historian to assume that the quality of the *Entring Book* as a document might imply that the method by which Morrice performed his role as what today might be described as an investigative journalist was pervasive, with the commoditisation of information-seeking activity among the news-gatherers. In fact, Morrice’s *modus operandi* was similar to those of other intelligencers of the period, in

¹⁰⁴ *Entring Book* 16 June 1688.

particular the contacts which such news-gatherers had to nurture in order to fashion the news being circulated, but the dissimilarities surrounding Morrice's activities are also pronounced. Morrice's stunning range of contacts - based on their quality and quantity - mark him out as unusual among contemporaries, as does his alleged disinclination (akin to him not entering coffee-houses) to charge his client-base fees for services rendered, possibly for religious reasons. John Spurr observes in relation to the range of Morrice's contacts, as compared with other sources, that the role Morrice cast for himself was self-effacing, which was not always the case with other contemporary and even well-connected intelligencers such as John Starkey, Henry Care and Roger L'Estrange. Tapsell maintains that:

Morrice is a powerful example of the 'thirst for news' which gripped many of the Stuart's subjects across the seventeenth century and which was, in part, a damaging consequence of their inept management style. Misgovernment bred mistrust, which, in turn, led to deep-seated fears of misinformation.¹⁰⁵

Morrice went to unusual lengths to ensure the veracity of the intelligence he passed to his network and to protect the names of his sources, if required, through coded shorthand notes in his manuscript submissions. As a dedicated Presbyterian, Morrice set out to be scrupulous in the advice and insight he deployed; if he was not prepared and willing to provide it, then who would

¹⁰⁵ Tapsell, 'Weepe Over the Ejected Practice of Religion', p.271.

volunteer to perform this essential role, in such dangerous times for non-conformists?

As with many of his contemporaries, Morrice had access to a diverse and extensive range of social, religious and political contacts which, as Mark Mugg suggests, might have represented: 'a distinctively modern attempt to create impartiality through a wide range of sources.'¹⁰⁶ However, reading the *Entring Book*, the historian is left with the sense that Morrice's contacts were sometimes 'hit or miss' ones gleaned, for example, through a casual walk through Westminster Hall. Morrice's familiars included Richard Collings, Clerk to the Privy Council (it would appear that for Morrice the random Privy Council 'leaks' - of which there were many derived from other less influential Members of the Council - would not do) and Sir John Baber, the go-between for dissenters at Court. If Britain in the seventeenth century was awash with news, it was also awash with a wide variety of contacts to report and discuss that news.

¹⁰⁶ Mark Z. Mugg, 'Ben Jonson and the Business of News', *Studies in English Literature*, Volume 32 (1992), p.334.

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE **ENTRING BOOK**

5.1 Introduction

Any attempt by the modern historian to categorise the subject matter of the *Entring Book* would quickly focus on the ten ‘core themes’ identified by Mark Goldie in volume 1 of the *Book*, with their particular focus on the religion and politics of the period post-Restoration. There is no doubting that the *Entring Book* is a singular political work, both from the perspective of Morrice, the political journalist located in the seventeenth century and from the analysis of subsequent, more recent generations of political historians in England. Looking beyond these themes, however, the reader of the edited *Entring Book* uncovers a number of additional and important themes, which might collectively be termed ‘social history’ and which - when viewed in combination with the political themes championed by Goldie - enable the present-day historian reasonably to describe the *Entring Book*, not only as a work of ‘political history’, but as one of ‘social history’ too. As Goldie observes, the *Entring Book* constitutes: ‘a rich source...valuable for what it reveals not only about politics and religion, but also about manifold aspects

of Restoration society, its social structure and public spaces, its institutions and personalities, its theatres and law courts, its manners and mores.’¹⁰⁷

In these comments, Goldie clearly begins to paint on the potentially broad canvas represented by the *Entring Book* but, having recognised this potential in its contents, he and his academic peers involved in editing the *Entring Book* retreat somewhat onto the well-trodden ground of the ‘hard’ themes of politics and religion. It is Joad Raymond who, among modern-day academics, has sought to uncover the breadth of Morrice’s *Entring Book* contents, encouraging modern-day historians of the post-Restoration period to spend more time addressing what Raymond terms ‘the whole cloth of the newspaper’ (this definition encompassing the *Entring Book*), memorably characterising the seventeenth-century newspaper as:

an intestine, in which the grand and the quotidian - the political commentary, the report of a disaster, the news of an election, of a lost cat, of a musical performance, of a battle, an advertisement for an escaped criminal, for coffee or cocoa, for a book - all are digested into elements which both resemble their origins and offers something new. Like a digestive tract, it absorbs and expels, and demands a frequent fresh supply. The process of consumption and digestion gives the newspaper its identity, and so it needs to be studied as a whole system, as well as a series of intricate micro-processes.¹⁰⁸

Whilst the *Entring Book* might be representative of many genres, classic seventeenth-century diary or newsletter it is not. It assumes more (at least

¹⁰⁷ Mark Goldie., ed, *The Entring Book of Roger Morrice 1677-1691* Volume 1 (The Boydell Press, 2007), p.xiii.

¹⁰⁸ Raymond., ‘The History of Newspapers’, pp.223-232.

during the 1680s) the shape of a manuscript-based parliamentary journal of the time. When analysing the content and style of Morrice's work, it can be argued that there are, in fact, multiple layers of news and insight being created. Firstly, there are Goldie's ten 'core themes' with which the reader is already familiar; secondly, the notable social themes manifest in the *Entring Book* (where duelling, sexual mores, playhouses and the treatment of mortality stand out) and, thirdly, those themes which might be categorized as 'tittle tattle' or gossip, among which can be found the minutiae of Morrice's news, including topics such as robbery, kidnap, suicide, cases of violence or assault, and fires. As the author of the *Entring Book*, Morrice no doubt exercised what present-day journalists might term 'editorial control' over the coverage of news events. Thus, to the extent that news which might be termed titillating or 'amiable gossip' (the latter description employed by Sutherland)¹⁰⁹ was shared through the medium of the *Entring Book*, today's historian must assume that such detail was procured by Morrice as part of the service he rendered to his clients and that there was obvious demand for such news among his readership, ranging from tough political commentary at the one extreme to, at the other, coverage of 'softer' social subject matter.

¹⁰⁹ Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper*, p.81.

5.2 Beyond Political History

Before exploring the extent of social news reflected in the *Entring Book*, it is important to recognise that some newspapers of the period already carried stories about what was going on in and around London and that Morrice was not alone in gathering such news. For example, Benskin's *Domestic Intelligence* reported violent or unusual incidents such as tavern quarrels, street robberies, duels, rape, or the attempted suicide of a young lady. The *Loyal Protestant* newspaper of 14 May 1681 reported a fire in a confectioner's shop in Fetter Lane and, among other news in the *True Protestant Mercury* of 18 January 1681, the paper published a long report of a double drowning. Against this background, Sutherland suggests that at least some of the readers of a seventeenth-century newspaper could be described as 'persons of leisure', even among the (one assumes) more serious-minded readers of the *Entring Book* and that there was a 'good deal of evidence to suggest that the main body of newspaper readers in the late seventeenth century belonged to the trading and commercial class' who digested such news with relish.¹¹⁰

Apart from the main themes and subject matter referred to above, the *Entring Book* describes much of what might be characterised as throw-away gossip, which is, to the present-day reader, apparently neither significant nor

¹¹⁰ Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper*, p.81.

particularly relevant to the scope of the *Entring Book*, but must have been of interest to Morrice's readers. Examples of such gossip located in the *Entring Book* include the incident in May 1685 when: 'a Maypole suddanly [sic] down, killed three horses in two Coaches, that were going by, broke the thigh of one of the Coachmen, hurt one Mr Norton (of the Temple), that was in one of them, and another Gentleman.'¹¹¹ Morrice records this episode with what might be construed as barely concealed glee, possibly for reasons similar to William Shakespeare's friends who, in the early part of the seventeenth century, saw the taking down of a maypole 'as a Puritan attack on the ancient and laudable custome of Merry England' and a sly way of getting rid of the maypole in fair-time, when it flourished as the focus of dancing and cudgel-play.¹¹² Morrice would have been aware of such festivals (in particular, May Day) when men, women and children went into the woods and where, as a late sixteenth-century description puts it: 'they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes' returning with birch boughs and a maypole; 'in other words, the rights of spring involved sexual licence.'¹¹³ Whether this incident, apparently an unforeseen and unforeseeable accident, reflected a degree of schadenfreude on Morrice's part (as a Presbyterian, viewing such an episode as an act of divine intervention, or one with sexual overtones), the modern-

¹¹¹ *Entring Book* 7 May 1685.

¹¹² Leslie Hotson, 'Maypoles and Puritans', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Volume 1 No 4 (1950), pp.205-207.

¹¹³ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Ashgate, 2009), p.274.

day reader will never know. Alternatively, Morrice reports on another subject to one of his clients:

I suppose you will heare a very great storey about the breaking of Stables and Stealing of Horses in London of late. I have been the more curious in this matter because it finds such universal credit [Luttrell reports the same story] I am fully satisfied they were taken for highwayman's Uses and for no higher purposes.¹¹⁴

Eclectic as ever in his news-gathering, Morrice also reports in May 1688 that:

On Monday night about 9 a clock was found the Trunk of a man (his head and armes and legs cut off) in Parkers Lane on a Dunhill betweene Little Queeneestreete [sic] and Drury Lane, his Legs and armes were found on Tuesday in a house of office in the Savoy upon or neare the Thames. Its commonly reported the Trunke was carried into the aforesaid Lane by men in Labourers habits neare 9 a clock that evening.¹¹⁵

Insofar as early newspapers of the second half of the seventeenth century might be construed as representing competition for the *Entring Book*, the fact that Morrice elects to seek out and to include in his reporting such 'tittle tattle' as highlighted above, is relevant to defining the mental world inhabited both by Morrice and his readership. The challenge for the present-day historian then is to identify those subjects which Morrice reported in the *Entring Book* and which fall into the category of 'social history'.

¹¹⁴ *Entring Book* 8 March 1681.

¹¹⁵ *Entring Book* 4 February 1688.

5.3 Sexual Mores in the *Entring Book*

Perhaps surprisingly, given his strongly-held religious convictions, the sections of the *Entring Book* which attract some of Morrice's longest reports and commentary relate to sexual encounters and the sexual mores of the period. Morrice records, for instance, the treatment of the Ambassador of the King of Fez at the hands of 'some of our English Gentlemen' who 'urged him to receive a Whore into his bed...much to our rebuke and shame. The offer was refused.'¹¹⁶ More salaciously (and surely an episode of which many of Morrice's contemporary metropolitan readership were already aware), the *Entring Book* entry of 12 October 1685 described the scandalous behaviour of the Duchess of Norfolk, albeit Morrice cautions that his report is second-hand, representing hearsay and salacious gossip, as opposed to Morrice's preferred currency of 'fact', thus:

It having been reported (its said clearly proved) the Dutches of Norfolke has prostituted her Honour with Mr Germane, it is resolved she shall be put into a Nunnery and to that end the Duke is gone with her (for she would escape if she could) beyond seas and when he returns its said he will break-off house-keeping.¹¹⁷

Later in that same month, Morrice updates his readers on developments relating to this story, namely:

¹¹⁶ *Entring Book* 19 January 1682.

¹¹⁷ *Entring Book* 12 October 1685.

The Dutches of Norfolke is left in a Nunnery, the Duke I suppose comes to town this night (Saturday 31). There is a common report that the Duke's nails and haire are come off &c as if he were poisoned, but I believe it to be utterly false.¹¹⁸

Whatever the motive(s) for Morrice publicising this episode (perhaps a scandal of particular interest to his metropolitan news networks?) Luttrell mentions the same incident, but in a shorter form, namely: 'The dutchesse of Norfolk, daughter of the earl of Peterbrough, hath been lately (as is said) found in bed with one Germin, to her great scandal.'¹¹⁹ That Morrice chose not to adopt a more censorious or scandalised tone in reporting this sorry tale is testament to the plain, dispassionate writing style he practised, perhaps also to his desire to service the breadth of interests among his readership. As with the Castlehaven scandal of 1631, which similarly involved members of the English aristocracy, sexual mores and notions of 'honour', it is interesting that Morrice's language some fifty years later describes the Duchess of Norfolk as having 'prostituted her Honour', albeit in different circumstances.¹²⁰ The *Entring Book* refers to another incident that indirectly bears comparison with that of the Duchess of Norfolk, which relates to one

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1685.

¹¹⁹ Brief Historical Relation 26 October 1685.

¹²⁰ Cynthia Herrup, 'Honour and Reputation in Early Modern England: To Pluck Bright Honour from the Pale-faced moon: Gender and Honour in the Castlehaven Story', *Transactions of The Royal Historical Society*, Volume 6 (1996), pp.137-159. Also Faramerz Dabhoiwala, 'The Construction of Honour and Reputation in Early Modern England: The Construction of Honour, Reputation and Status in Late-Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century England,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Volume 6 (1996), pp.201-213.

Lady Montgomery who: ‘Was put into a Nunnery, but she has with great difficulty made her escape into the Isle of Jersey.’¹²¹ There is no further mention in the *Entring Book* of either of these incidents, but the two cited are interesting. It is perhaps surprising that they are recorded at all by Morrice, given his strictly non-conformist background.

Another salacious incident reported by Morrice, probably again reflecting out of town gossip, as opposed to metropolitan chatter, recounted how:

Mr Hart a Minister of Northamptonshire...was sent for up into custody in the time of the Popish Plott had a housekeeper that he married to his Butcher, who in a little tract of time grewed jealous of his wife, the Butcher went to Mr Hart’s house, and found his wife naked in his bed, and with his Cleever clove Mr Harts head and he immediately died, and then the Butcher rendred hiself to the Constable.¹²²

When Morrice chooses, he describes events for his readership in all their sordid detail. For example, the case of one Andrew Farmer’s candidature for the position of President of Maudlin College [Magdalen College, Oxford]. John Dryden, the well-known poet and playwright, was in competition with Farmer for this appointment, but was ultimately unsuccessful in his quest.

¹²¹ *Entring Book* 11 September 1686.

¹²² *Entring Book* 30 January 1686.

Among allegations as to his suitability as President, Farmer stood accused by Morrice of frequenting:

Taverns, Alehouses, and the conversation of women of ill fame at suspicious places and ill hours, and some women came in and did witness matters of a very ill sound against him for his immodest and rude carriage, particularly that when he came to salute one of them, he put his tongue into her mouth &c, so that they have blacked him with a brand of reproach and Scandall, and herein they acquiesced very well pleased.¹²³

Foreign observers of early modern England noted that the country was remarkably free in its kissing habits but, as Karen Harvey suggests, there was a dividing line between social and sexual kissing. Farmer's behaviour transgressed the boundary into the 'wanton' or 'lascivious' variety, contributing to his demise and explaining Morrice's ongoing pursuit of this appointment.¹²⁴

The *Entring Book* is full of news relating to what today might be classed as the 'Births, Marriages and Deaths' section of a modern newspaper. Morrice's news-gathering certainly encompassed these subjects primarily, one assumes, on account of the financial and inheritance issues they raised, usually as a result of the existence of a dowry or a will, or the wider well-

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 6 August 1687. Also Zwicker, 'Why Are They Saying These Terrible Things about John Dryden?', pp.165-6.

¹²⁴ Karen Harvey, ed, *The Kiss in History* (Manchester University Press, 2005), pp.81-82.

being of minors. The House of Commons clearly had institutional concerns about such subjects, which Morrice cites in June 1685, namely:

They [Members of Parliament] also have before them a Bill (which will be past) against Mariages, without consent viz. That if anyone under 18 years of age marry any person under 16 without consent that they shall neither of them, nor their posterity have any benefit by one another's estate. That It shall be a felony in any one not in Orders to marry any such. That it shall be felony (or great crime) in any servant to be abetting, concurring &c or privy to any such Marriage &c They go on with business as fast as they can.¹²⁵

Such sentiments must surely have been grounded in multiple contemporary examples of marital complications, among which Morrice cites the circumstances of one 'Lady Elizabeth Obryan (about 14 of 16 years of age) daughter to the Erle of Thoumand, is fallen distracted some say for my Lord of Scarsdale.'¹²⁶

5.4 The Playhouse in the *Entring Book*

Apart from the endemic low-level violence which might be expected in a capital city the size of late seventeenth-century London, one source of unruly behaviour post-Restoration was represented by the two London theatres where gentlemen who had dined too well sought further entertainment and where the heated atmosphere of a crowded playhouse did nothing to alleviate their intoxication.

¹²⁵ *Entring Book* 11 June 1685.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 June 1685.

Elizabeth A. Foyster describes how:

Audiences at London's playhouses were rarely quiet during a performance, but instead exchanged the latest gossip...play going was a social occasion which provided the opportunity for ostentatious show and defence of honour and sexual chatter, in addition to any discussion of the matter on the stage.¹²⁷

The *Entring Book* highlights similar behaviour, when Morrice comments: 'Some commoners &c and severall other gentlemen on Tuesday last went into the play house and there fell a talking about some Ladyes, and some other persons, so that there was a little kind of a hubbub whereupon the Play house is shut up.'¹²⁸

Where alcohol-inspired brawling ended among theatre-goers and ritualised duelling began in the second half of the seventeenth century is moot, but examples of violence or rowdy behaviour associated with the playhouses are faithfully recorded by Morrice, Pepys and Luttrell, even if such incidents were not particularly common in the *Entring Book*, Pepys's *Diary* or Luttrell's *Brief Historical Relation* respectively. Luttrell records episodes of violence in the context of the playhouse, the first being on 26 February 1680 when:

Mrs Ellen Gwyn being at the dukes playhouse, who was affronted by a person who came into the pitt and called her a whore; whom Mr

¹²⁷ Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England. Honour, Sex and Marriage*, (Longman, 1999), p.19.

¹²⁸ *Entring Book* 12 February 1679.

Herbert, the earl of Pembroke's brother, vindicating there were many swords drawn, and great hubbub in the house.¹²⁹

Morrice does not report the Gwyn example - a genuine act of omission, or perhaps he chose not to celebrate someone of her lascivious notoriety - but he does report an incident which took place on 10 April 1684 on which he comments briefly, namely:

On Tuesday the 8 Mr Kirk in the Playhouse did aloud say the Earle of Dorset was a Rascall many times over, the said Earle being in a Box in the Playhouse then. And afterwards Kirk sent Mr Macartey to the Earle to tell him Mr Kirk commanded him to tell his Lordshippe he said he was a Rascall.¹³⁰

On 10 June 1685, another incident occurred at a metropolitan playhouse, again reported by Morrice:

Yesterday being Wednesday 10th At the Playhouse Captain Goreing (son to Sir Henry Goreing), and Mr Charles Dearing (son I think to Sir Edward Dearing), fell out in the Playhouse, or Dressing-roome there, and the former was wounded so that he dye immediately.¹³¹

Lest the modern-day reader of the *Entring Book* imagine that violence focused on the playhouses was the preserve of the upper echelons of post-Restoration society, Morrice goes some way to correcting that perception:

The last weeke there had like to have been a great deale of mischief at the King's Playhouse betweene the footmen and the Guards, for the footmen use to go in the fifth Act, but now are Prohibited by Order of

¹²⁹ Brief Historical Relation 26 February 1680.

¹³⁰ *Entring Book* 10 April 1684.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 11 June 1685.

the House. The Guards by Command fired upon them, and its said there was a soldier and a footman killed.¹³²

Thomas N. Corns has recently suggested that:

It [the Restoration stage] was largely determined by the rich louts who were its most influential patrons, who strutted its theatres, bedded its actresses, intimidated its actors and at times fell to deadly quarrelling among themselves. The section of the audience that had to be satisfied was nostalgically cavalier and fiercely hostile to the values attributed to the Puritan regimes of the mid-century decades; it was courtly but not genteel, and effectively unshockable.¹³³

The ‘nostalgically cavalier’ climate of the playhouses, no doubt accounts for Morrice’s views on the subject, bearing in mind his strong Presbyterian leanings. That the upper echelons of society were an influential party among the playhouse audience is not in question, but whether this designated the theatre as ‘theirs’ is open to challenge, particularly if, as Harold Love calculates, average theatre-going numbered only perhaps 20,000 attendees per annum for one theatre operating in the metropolis, possibly half as many again when two or more theatres were operating.¹³⁴ Some of the behaviour described by Corns in London’s playhouses was mirrored in uncanny detail in the *Entring Book*. In December 1685, a dispute took place involving one

¹³² *Ibid.*, 3 May 1690.

¹³³ Thomas N. Corns, *A History of Seventeenth Century English Literature* (Blackwell, 2014), pp.333-334.

¹³⁴ Harold Love, ‘Who Were the Restoration Audience?’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Volume 10, Number (1980), pp.21-44.

Mr Smith ('a principall Share in the Playhouse') and Mr Stafford ('the late Viscount Staffords's son'.) According to Morrice, the latter:

had often of late affronted Mr Smith when he was acting his Part by hissing and Whistling &c Smith not long since mett Mr Stafford in the Street and said Mr Stafford I am a Gentleman as well as you, and if I have offered you any indignity I am ready to give you satisfaction with my Sword, Mr Stafford declined fighting, and upon Tuesday last brought Mr Gage and many other Papist Gentlemen and placed them in severall parts of the Playhouse with Cattcatchers in their pockets, and when Mr Smith came to his Act his Part they all sounded with their instruments, which makes a very loud shrill noise above that of Catterwouling from severall parts of the Playhouse which begat a great Surprize and Consternation.¹³⁵

Upon this premeditated disruption, Mr Smith immediately withdrew 'and took down the Curtain, and said I speake to you gentlemen that have carried out yourselves civilly, you shall have all your money restored, but there will be no more Playes until Royall authority protect us from such affronts, and so they were all dismiss.'¹³⁶

5.5 Violence in the *Entring Book*

Violence of one sort or another, particularly in London, always made good copy and was never far from the lives of Londoners. Sutherland points out that 'public disturbances, offering sudden glimpses of a disorderly society, always had considerable news value.'¹³⁷ In fact, careful reading of the *Entring*

¹³⁵ *Entring Book* 26 December 1685.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26 December 1685.

¹³⁷ Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper*, p.75.

Book highlights the steady and unremitting drumbeat of low-level metropolitan violence; Londoners lived in a society in which almost every activity might be related to - if only tangentially - violence of some sort. Duelling, fighting, assault, gaming, playhouses and drink, to identify but a few post-Restoration pastimes, all represented vehicles for violent behaviour and Morrice reflects this in his various news-gathering activities.

Apart from the kind of low-level violence captured by Morrice in relation to playhouses, the *Entring Book* cites many other examples of the violence pervading post-Restoration society. He describes cases of robbery and assault, although in aggregate the number of instances reported by him remains relatively small, for example the case of Mr Thomas Thynn who:

having left the Duke of Monmouth, between 7 and 8 a clock in the evening neare St Albans street end that entereth into the Hay Markett ws mett by 4 men on Horseback one of whome Shott Mr Thynn (sitting in his Coach) into the Body with 4 Bullets, which made 4 distinct large orifices and a 5th Bullet into this thigh, whereof On Lord's day...Mr Thomas Thynn of Wiltshire just come out of the hee dyed about 7 or 8 a clock the next morning.

Apart from a few more details relating to the alleged murderers, Morrice's commentary stops at this point, in contrast to that of Luttrell whose coverage is more detailed and who captures the 28 February 1682 denouement to the incident, when the suspects were arrested and finally found guilty of Thynn's murder.

Charles II issued a Proclamation on 17 May 1681 for the apprehending of robbers and highwaymen, promising a reward for every such offender apprehended and convicted before 5 May and this no doubt had its origins in concerns among the population at large. The reality, however, was that perception of robbery was divided among the populace in early modern England who tended to define the highwayman, on the one hand, as party to courageous and entertaining exploits (a romantic Robin Hood-type figure) yet, on the other, someone castigated for threatened or actual violence.¹³⁸ The case of Lady Susan Lort reported in the *Entring Book* is illustrative here, since she:

Not long since came up to London, and had with her in her Coach her only son and only daughter, her daughter was taken away by force out of the Coach upon the road, about nine miles from her own house by Mr Baro and 8 or 10 Companions of his, but the daughter being very impatient when they had carried her away about a Mile to a house, they delivered her againe to her Mother upon the mother and daughters signing a Release and pardon as to all Trespasses and Misdemeanours in that case &c.¹³⁹

The experience of Susan Lort illustrates an enterprising outcome to an attempted kidnap, if nothing else.

¹³⁸ Robert B. Shoemaker, 'The Street Robber and the Gentleman Highwayman: Changing Representations and Perceptions of Robbery in London, 1690-1800', *Cultural and Social History*, (2006), pp.381-405.

¹³⁹ *Entring Book* 27 October 1673.

5.6 The Minutiae of Gossip

5.6.1 Fires

The modern-day historian might have expected reference to low-level street violence (whether outside a playhouse or not) or references to sexual misdemeanours and innuendo at the different levels of Restoration society, but disparate subjects are also mentioned in the *Entring Book* which, at first glance, might appear strange to the modern eye. One example is that of fires, a subject no doubt close to the heart of all Londoners, given that Morrice must have experienced the Great Fire of London which caused such devastation to the city in September 1666. Sutherland suggests that fires, which were numerous at the time: ‘Must have been especially welcome to the hard-pressed journalist, for they were easy to locate in the maze of London streets and lanes, a pillar of smoke by day and a glowing blaze by night.’¹⁴⁰ The *Entring Book* is full of brief references to fires and their multiple causes. For example, on 10 March 1679 Morrice reports:

Lord’s Day the 9th about 4 a clock in the Afternoone a fire (how kindled not known) is part wasted, and utterly defaced 2 houses in [St] Pauls Church Yard, it was Extinguist about 6. A chimney was on fire within Ludgate at the same time, which raised men’s apprehensions to Great terror.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper*, p.78.

¹⁴¹ *Entring Book* 10 March 1679.

The causes of a fire would have been many and varied, often due to the carelessness of home owners or servants, but also involving drink, for example:

‘A fire began in the Earle of Bridge Waters house in the Barbican about ten a clock on Monday night last which burnt two of his sons and its also thought their Tutor or Gentleman in their beds [,] very few rooms of the house were burnt down. The Earle did yet abide at his house at our end of the Town. Imputations are laid upon the Tutor or Gentleman as if he came home full of drinke and so let his candle carelessly.’¹⁴²

Was this a Presbyterian homily about the evils of drink on the part of Morrice perhaps?

Fires as a subject of news represent a mundane commentary on the times which early modern man inhabited. At another level, however, they represent a valuable source of multi-faceted gossip (akin to that of the Bills of Mortality) for a news-gatherer such as Morrice and his readership, constituting a vehicle for discussing legal matters arising out of incidents of fires, rehearsing the lineage of those affected and, occasionally, the financial implications of a fire for the affected citizen(s).

5.6.2 Weather and Other News

One of the more unusual aspects of the *Entring Book* and the various subjects referred to in it is that of the weather, a subject now receiving increasing attention from academics. Joyce Macadam suggests that the diarist Ralph

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 16 April 1687.

Josselin (and, by implication, Roger Morrice) wrote at a time of unusually severe weather conditions, the so-called ‘Little Ice Age’, a period when many historical records highlight the occurrence of exceptionally cold winters, late springs and wet summers.¹⁴³ In the context of subjects for gossip, Alvin Snider suggests that: ‘Daily weather might seem quintessentially English, yet, as climate became the object of sustained theoretical attention and growing anxiety in the later seventeenth century, a new repertoire of techniques for representing and measuring it came into existence.’¹⁴⁴ Of particular relevance to the *Entring Book* are the winters in the 1680s and 1690s which witnessed unusually low temperatures, the winter of 1684 standing out in its severity and still figuring in many histories as the year that transformed the frozen River Thames into an ice fairground and carriageway. John Evelyn vividly registered the odd combination of festivity and alarm engendered by the frigid weather experienced among Londoners in his diary entry for 24 January: ‘the frost still continuing more & more severe, the Thames before London was planted with bothes in formal streetes, as in a Citty, or Continual faire.’¹⁴⁵ The deep winter of 1684 invited more than routine curiosity among the populace, in part because of the fairground which sprung up overnight on the ice. Contemporary accounts describe bull and bear baiting on the ice,

¹⁴³ Joyce Macadam, ‘English Weather: The Seventeenth Century Diary of Ralph Josselin,’ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Volume 43 (2012), pp.221-246.

¹⁴⁴ Alvin Snider, ‘Hard Frost, 1684’, *Journal for Modern Cultural Studies*, Volume 8 Number 2 (2008), pp.8-32.

¹⁴⁵ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed, Austin Dobson (London, 1906), p.361-362.

coaches, cook's shops, taverns and other aspects of urban life usually located on the shore. There were also the unseemly aspects of urban life transposed onto the frozen Thames, such as examples of conspicuous consumption, casual sex and public drunkenness. Narcissus Luttrell mentions the frost fair only briefly, commenting: 'About this time was a great frost, so that the Thames in some places was frozen, that severall persons walk't over the ice.'¹⁴⁶ Morrice reports on the Frost Fair for the *Entring Book*, but in a more generous thirty-three lines. Among other events, he captured the:

Bear Garden and Booths built, and many thousands of people walking sometimes together at once, and many Tradesmen there. An Ensurance Office set up and five or six coaches did carry people over upon Monday...and severall days before.¹⁴⁷

Even the king was seen to venture onto the ice. Morrice perhaps allows the Presbyterian killjoy in him to surface when he complains that: 'The concourse and all manner of Debauchery upon the Thames continued upon the Lords day and Monday the 3rd and 4th of this instant.'¹⁴⁸ Six years after the Frost Fair, Morrice adds another edifice to his catalogue of 'debauchery' when he highlights the bricks and mortar of Tunbridge [Wells] as a town of ill-repute, reporting that on 6 September 1690, a 'great number' of the English nobility and gentry descended upon the town, together with elements of the Scottish nobility. Morrice describes events, in particular 'the most horrid

¹⁴⁶ Brief Historical Relation January 1681.

¹⁴⁷ *Entring Book* 12 February 1684.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12 February 1684.

Debaucherys' exceeding those of the Playhouse' and adding that it [Tunbridge] is a 'nyrsery of all kinds of Debaucheries, sufficient to corrupt a whole Kingdome, and the company of Debaucheries increase daily.'¹⁴⁹

5.7 Conclusions

Apart from the more high-profile cases of gossip mentioned in this chapter by Morrice, he also shares with his readers disparate and eclectic episodes such as juvenile kidnap, fights among gentlemen and Lord Berkley's killing of a man, to name but a few. All of these reports, and many others, receive attention from Morrice, varying in length from one line to one page in the *Entring Book*. Morrice's eye for a story is consistently sharp and even apparently insignificant incidents are captured alongside the significant, for example, the report of a lawyer who, on Coronation Day in April 1685, fell to his death from a balcony at the Inns of Court ('Mr Benedict Manuel...who was reported to be full of drinke got into a Balconey... about 2 or 3 a Clock on Thursday morning, and so fell over it or off it and killed himselfe')¹⁵⁰ and the Chancellor's drinking habits ('The Chancellour drinks continually and is altogether senseless of his Condition, or of death it selfe, though he is likely to dye a Naturall death even before a violent death can reach him'). Apart from representing news of interest to his patrons, these two examples of Morrice's information-gathering can also be construed as moralising pieces

¹⁴⁹ *Entring Book* 6 September 1690.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 25 April 1685.

on his part about the evils of drink, written no-doubt from his perspective as a committed Presbyterian.¹⁵¹ More akin to gossip, Morrice also comments on an incident involving the queen slapping Lady Peterborough ('the Queen...gave her a slap on the lipps, My Lady said She had not been used to that kind of discipline...')¹⁵²

Morrice's emphasis in the *Entring Book* tends to address primarily the more high-profile social themes and events of the period, alongside the political, and the present-day historian will struggle to dispute or deny the existence and importance, based on this, of 'social history' to the *Entring Book's* narrative. It is not clear where the demand for such social discourse originated. Perhaps it was instigated by Morrice's readership of the *Entring Book* as his patrons' appetite for 'news' developed over the 1680s, or perhaps the coverage of such social subjects represent the natural development of Morrice's news-gathering activities. Morrice had developed the capacity to collect such news from his unique network of confidantes, therefore he collected and used it for the edification of his patrons. This chapter exposes the breadth of social history, as evidenced by the *Entring Book*, with particular attention paid to the less high-profile examples. In chapters 6 and 7, the more significant themes of social history found in the *Entring Book* (death and duelling) are explored.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19 January 1689.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 13 February 1686.

CHAPTER 6: ‘THE LIFE OF A MAN IS SOLITARY, POOR, NASTY, BRUTISH AND SHORT.’

6.1 Introduction

Psalm 90 reminds the modern-day historian that: ‘The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.’ Pursuing a similar theme, Thomas Hobbes in 1651 reminded contemporaries that ‘the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.’¹⁵³ Both quotations stress the same point, namely that in the absence of what today’s historians might term a medical profession, life expectancy among those generations living in England before the middle of the nineteenth century was significantly shorter than that enjoyed today. High mortality at all levels in post-Restoration society, however, served to reinforce cases of old age, for example, the death of Thomas Hobbes himself ‘who died the middle of this month [December 1679], being 92 years old’ as reported by Narcissus Luttrell.¹⁵⁴ Another example, ‘Eleanour Countess of Terconnell aged about 80 yeares dyed upon Friday 25 of March about 5 of the clock in the afternoon’ as reported by Morrice, who also noted that Lord Arundell dyed ‘very ancient about 80 years of age.’¹⁵⁵ Or there was the case

¹⁵³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p.65.

¹⁵⁴ Brief Historical Relation December 1679.

¹⁵⁵ Entring Book 22 October 1687.

of Sir Thomas Foote, who ‘dyed very lately at his son in Lawes...he was 98 years of age.’¹⁵⁶ Long life was noteworthy, whereas short life expectancy was an unremarkable and accepted feature of the early modern period - there were, after all, no means of extending lifespan - but the net effect was that in pre-modern society: ‘there were huge numbers of young people, all eager for power and property, and not many old people to be either respected or despised.’¹⁵⁷ This chapter explores the manifestation of death in the *Entring Book*.

6.2 Mortality in Seventeenth-Century England

The small minority of our ancestors who lived to a ripe old age, as noted earlier in this chapter, prompted D. E. Stannard’s calculation that the life expectancy of English noblemen of the third quarter of the seventeenth century was less than 30 years.¹⁵⁸ Taking stock of the mortality landscape in seventeenth-century England, Clare Gittings suggests: ‘The ‘facts of death’ have changed since the late mediaeval and early modern period: ‘Natural death’ is now closely associated with old age; modern men and women can reasonably expect to live into their seventies.’¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 Oct 1687.

¹⁵⁷ Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (Routledge, 1981), p.385.

¹⁵⁸ D. E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death, A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹⁵⁹ Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, (Croom Helm, 1984), p.8.

Life expectancy at birth was never lower than 37 or 38 years in seventeenth-century England; at age 30 it was about another 25 years on average and around 8% of the population were aged 60 or above in the later part of the period. Against this background, Lucinda McCray Beier claims that: ‘because [the social history of medicine] is a young field, it has the advantage for the historian of being relatively uncharted territory’ adding that ‘the social history of medicine might more correctly be called the social history of suffering.’¹⁶⁰ This perspective is apt and prompts Ralph Houlbrooke to declare:

that plague (its outbreak in 1665 being the last great epidemic of bubonic plague in England) was the most terrifying epidemic killer - particularly in the metropolis - because of the speed with which it despatched its victims and the ways in which it disfigured them.¹⁶¹

Plague was closely followed by the incidence of small pox which was endemic in London during the seventeenth century but remained epidemic elsewhere, causing high mortality among children and adolescents alike, often carrying off several members of the same family. In an age when disease and illness were rife, together with an accompanying low life expectancy, both Roger Morrice and Narcissus Luttrell were able to obtain information as to the medical causes of death, often originating from the London bills of mortality, published weekly from 1603 for a subscription of

¹⁶⁰ Lucinda McCray Beier, *Sufferers & Healers, The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth Century England* (Routledge, 1987), p.5.

4 shillings a year, distributed among London's 130 parishes, then broken down by cause of death and the number of persons dying per illness. In the context of exploring post-Restoration news-gathering in this dissertation, it is not inappropriate to conceive of the bills of mortality as an early form of journalism in their own right, their readership using the bills as a source of everyday 'factual' news (which, in great part, the bills were) thereby representing yet another form of gossip to talk about and share. Sommerville treats the bills in this way, imagining gentlemen reading them in order to establish whether an outbreak of plague in London meant they should quit the city for healthier climes (an example of how Samuel Pepys used them), or for the reader just to learn more about 'the sad reality of others' lives.'¹⁶² Thus, Morrice records on 14 June 1684 that 'Mr Coates of Bridgeford [in Nottinghamshire] dyed very suddenly of an apoplexie (intestate) the first week of June instant.'¹⁶³ In similar vein, Luttrell reports on 12 December 1681: 'The Countess of Suffolk was seized with an apoplexie the 12th and died the next day.'¹⁶⁴ The personal devastation wrought by disease in the period is occasionally glimpsed. Take, for example, Morrice's report of 1 January 1684 in which:

The Lady Inchiqueene Daughter of the Erle of Orarey, dyed of the Small Pox about ten days since. The Lady Wiltshire... is dead I think

¹⁶² Sommerville, *News Revolution in England*, pp.66-67. Also Stephen Greenberg, 'Plague, the Printing Press, and Public Health in Seventeenth Century London', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Volume 67 (2004), pp.508-527.

¹⁶³ Entering Book 14 June 1684.

¹⁶⁴ Brief Historical Relation 12 December 1681.

of the Small Pox. Mrs Pawlet daughter to the late Lord Pawlet led by the Earl of Pembroke's sister dyed latly of the Small Pox. And so did Sir Edward Car upon Friday last also of the Small Pox.¹⁶⁵

Based on analysis of the *Entring Book* for this dissertation, 320 deaths were recorded by Morrice between 1677-1691, of which 39 were female. The vast majority of deaths recorded by Morrice (some 277) did not reveal a cause of death, with short obituaries representing the norm, as described earlier in this dissertation. Of the total number of deaths recorded in the *Entring Book*, 83 might be classed as nobility, 61 were knights, 21 were of a religious persuasion, and 38 were professional or academic by background. Where specific cause of death was disclosed, the largest number by far was attributable to small pox, followed by apoplexy and then fever. Single cases of thrush and spotted fever are reported by Morrice over the period in question, as are three cases of death 'suddainly'. Morrice refers to 'sickness by drinking a little bad claret' on 18 December 1686 relating to one Mr Osborne. No cases of plague were found in this sample, but two cases of drowning and falling were recorded. The reasons given for the balance of deaths in the *Entring Book* were varied, but included thrush in the throat, 'cut his own throat', palsy, stone and the generic ailment 'sickness'. It is interesting that cases of plague do not feature strongly in the *Entring Book*, certainly as compared with cases of small pox - perhaps most of the 'better sort' retreated to their country estates before cases of plague took hold.

¹⁶⁵ *Entring Book* 1 January 1684.

There were also, of course, deaths recorded in the *Entring Book* and *A Brief Historical Relation*, which were not due to disease, such as the untimely demise of Sir Humphrey Ferrers who, on 5 November 1678 ‘was drowned by attempting to ride through Trent.’¹⁶⁶ Or the case of the death of the Earle of Thanet who: ‘died suddenly upon the road almost before he could be carried into an Inne.’¹⁶⁷ Although relatively rare in the period, cases of suicide were often recorded and Morrice was no exception in this. He highlights the case of Major Richard Sallaway:

who was a very rationall chearfull serious person, had been something Mallencholy of late. But on New yeares day last in the morning walked in his Gowne and Slippers out of the house, was presently missed by some of his servants, who followed him by the track of his foot (for it was then a snow there) into the Ground to the brinke of the Pond, whereinto he had cast, and drowned himselfe.¹⁶⁸

Another suicide cited by Morrice related to ‘Mrs Aylofffe (daughter to Mr Aylofffe whose estate was begged for lunacy) a young Gentlewoman about 16 years old, and to have been marryed within 3 or 4 days, cut her own throat with knife in her chamber in German Street, there was no cause nor temptation evident.’¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ *Entring Book* 6 November 1678.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19 November 1679.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 16 January 1686.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 January 1685.

6.3 Obituary Notices

A subject closely related to mortality in the *Entring Book* is that of obituary notices which were published from time to time in seventeenth-century newspapers and illustrate the conditions under which Morrice and contemporary news-gatherers worked. Sutherland suggests that:

Deaths of important people were for the most part reported very briefly; anything approaching a full obituary was quite unusual. The reader is given, more or less accurately, the bare facts of a death, but further detail or comment are seldom to be found.¹⁷⁰

Based on evidence from the *Entring Book*, Sutherland's view is correct, but only up to a point, his opinion being only partially supported by seventeenth-century evidence which, it must be acknowledged, is replete with brief references to death. For example: 'The lord Ogle dyed this day sevenight,' and 'Mr Broxholme of Lyncolnshire is lately dead,' together with many more of similar ilk.¹⁷¹ The exceptions to the brief and factual obituaries which were so commonplace in the period are, however, illuminating and not as rare as Sutherland might suggest.

The modern-day reader may suspect that the exceptions to Sutherland's view might naturally include the death of the monarch as justifying an extended obituary, but even this was not always the case.

¹⁷⁰ Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper*, pp.81-90.

¹⁷¹ *Entring Book* 22 December 1677 and 13 November 1680 respectively.

Witness the treatment of the death of William III in March 1702, where the Whig *Flying Post* dedicated the whole of its front page to an account of the monarch's last illness and ultimate death, followed by a biographical tribute. This act was, however, unusual for the period and most of the press reported the king's death only briefly. Where an extended obituary was embarked upon in a newspaper of the period, Sutherland concedes that it was almost certainly written from personal knowledge of the deceased. Since Morrice enjoyed such an extensive and disparate network of information sources and readers, it is perhaps unsurprising that his news-gathering followed this pattern. The *Entring Book's* comprehensive description of the death of Charles II spans nearly a whole page for 2 February 1685. Morrice, however, was not on this occasion a first-hand witness of this event, the primary source being the trusted eyes and ears of Richard Collings, Clerk to the Privy Council as insurance on this point. Thus, almost as an aside, Morrice reassures his patrons:

All this [the description of the final hours of the King] I'd from an eye and ear witness who was more with him than any one person throughout his sickness and was constantly with him from Thursday noon...till he died, ie from my most honoured and true friend Mr Richard Collings.¹⁷²

This reassurance encapsulates, probably consciously on Morrice's part, the informational world he inhabited, describing as it does the forms of news-

¹⁷² *Entring Book* 10 February 1684

gathering being practised (oral and aural) together with, in this case, that well-positioned and famously indiscreet eyewitness of events, Richard Collings. Contrast Morrice's publication of a detailed obituary with the succinct description of Charles's death provided by Narcissus Luttrell, who simply records:

Tis said his majestie, the night before he was taken ill, was to visit the dutchesse of Portsmouth. The 6th, being Fryday, his majestic king Charles the 2nd died at Whitehall about three quarters after 11 at noon; took the news of which put the town in a great consternation, and the gates of Whitehall were shut up and the guards drawn out.¹⁷³

From these two extracts, the modern scholar can begin to appreciate Morrice's position as a political journalist or news-gatherer and his ability to get to the heart of an event, as compared with Luttrell's approach which focused more superficially on the process attendant, in this case, upon a king's death.

The longer the obituary, the more likely the author was to have been a friend or at least to have been be on friendly terms with the deceased. Charles II's deathbed scene is not an isolated case and in the *Entring Book* there are numerous examples of tributes and obituaries which have Morrice's fingerprints on them. Take the death of Mrs Baxter in June 1681, described by Morrice as:

¹⁷³ Brief Historical Relation 2-6 February 1685.

That most prudent pious and exemplary Christian who spent her selfe and all her interests in promoting the Gospell dyed Wednesday morning June 15 about one of the clock in the morning. She was buried Friday night 17 at Christ Church near her mother. She began to be disturbed in her mind Friday the 7th and so continued mostly till the day she dyed. Sometimes she had the use of her understanding especially a day or two before her death, in the midst of her illness she often inculcated those words I was not married.¹⁷⁴

Another extended obituary was that of the much-admired and contemporary Earl of St Albans, who:

Upon Wednesday morning the second instant about 5 or 6 o clock the Earle of St Albans died it is said of applopexie. Hee was about 77 years of age. He was a most frequent reader of the Scriptures, and a great promoter and liberall contributor to any comment thereupon, much disturbed its thought about present pollicies &c and very true to his friend and very civill and kind to those of different persuasions from himselfe, and a most compleat Gentleman and Courtier as England has bred.¹⁷⁵

Again, compare Morrice's obituary style with Luttrell's more cursory description of the same passing: 'The beginning of this month died the old Earle of St Albans.'¹⁷⁶ Morrice clearly admired the Earl and this is reflected in the tone and content of the obituary he crafted for his readership. Occasionally, the gossip surrounding death produced by the rumour mill was inaccurate, calling for a correction to what was being talked about, hence Morrice's *Entring Book* clarification of 30 November 1682 when he wrote: 'It is commonly said this evening that the Earle of St Albans dyed this day

¹⁷⁴ *Entring Book* 15 June 1681.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 January 1684.

¹⁷⁶ *Brief Historical Relation* 5 January 1684.

but it is not true.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, it could have been worse for the deceased and their circle, as exemplified by the treatment by Luttrell of Sir Richard Weston, who had narrowly escaped impeachment by Parliament. Where Morrice commented briefly of his death: ‘Mr Baron Weston dyed on Wednesday 23 erley in the morning of a Feavour in Chancery Lane’¹⁷⁸ any temptation on the part of Luttrell to allow the deceased to rest in peace was resisted in Weston’s case, with Luttrell reporting acidly:

22 of March died Mr Baron Weston, one of the barons of the court of the exchequer; he was a very testy peevish man, and inclined to an arbitrary temper; the last parliament having ordered an impeachment against him, but not lodged actually in the house of lords, for some illegal practices of his.¹⁷⁹

One bereavement noted, but two very different obituaries delivered.

A death which would undoubtedly have impacted Morrice personally and deeply was that of Lord Denzil Holles, one of Morrice’s most important patrons and undoubtedly a beneficiary of Morrice’s news-gathering activities. Morrice records on 1 April 1680 that: ‘On Tuesday the 17 of February about 2 a clock in the afternoone the Lord Holles died at his house in Covent Garden.’ On the 17 April, Morrice provided an update:

On Thursday night I returned from Dorchester where the Lord Holles was invaulted, and as great respects and honour paid to his memory by the Town and country as hath ever been known, and more coaches

¹⁷⁷ Entering Book 30 November 1682.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 March 1681.

¹⁷⁹ Brief Historical Relation 22 March 1681.

and horsemen attended his Corps out of the City then (as its said) hath ever been seen.¹⁸⁰

Such funeral pomp was not restricted to adults alone and Morrice provides a detailed description of a child's funeral: 'The corps of Sir Jonathan Raymond's daughter...carried through the City, through Cheapside thence into fleet street so down the Strand in great Pompe, a very considerable number of mourners in long black Cloakes (it may be 60) mounted on very good horses, after them came the Heralds at Armes in their proper Coates on horseback also just before the Herse (the horses that drew it having large White feathers) and after it followed about 20 coaches and six horses in mourning, seaven of them noblemens and Gentlemens and the rest hired Coaches and horses.'¹⁸¹

The emerging picture of Morrice's treatment of bereavement, then, is one of a news-gatherer free to write a more extensive obituary, either where one was required by circumstances (for example, the death of the monarch) or in order to help the readers of the *Entring Book* understand some of the connections and implications between the deceased and the living. Morrice is not afraid to supply detailed family lineages to enliven his information (his knowledge of political and other networks must have been remarkable), thus: 'My lord Yarmouth (Paston) is dead...The Lord of Yarmouth that is dead married the

¹⁸⁰ *Entring Book* 17 April 1680.

¹⁸¹ *Entring Book* 28 July 1688.

daughter of Sir Jasper Clayton a Cittizen hee has left a son that succeeds him in thalt honour who did marry a Lady from court six or eight years agoe.’¹⁸² Contrast this with Luttrell’s obituary for Yarmouth, namely: ‘His majestie, upon the death of the earl of Yarmouth, has been pleased to constitute Henry Earl of Arundell Lord Lieutenant of the county of Norfolk.’¹⁸³

Thus, obituary notices which Morrice supplied to his readers (with an attendant commentary) often served dual purposes. Firstly, there was the expected expression of piety for the Godly deceased but, secondly, there is a reminder for the reader of the *Entring Book* about the interrelationships (both blood and financial) pertaining to the deceased and which were so important for the period. Stone neatly summarises the issue, opining that: ‘Not only did some very young men inherit vast fortunes and power through the early death of their fathers; others were catapulted into high office by the patronage of an influential friend, who was often their father.’¹⁸⁴ Morrice sometimes neatly conflates the issues described above, for example:

It pleased God to take hence Mr Edward Buscowen upon Wednesday night about 10 a clock October 28, a healthy Vigerous man, upon very little sickness he was vary usefull man to those who knew him well, and my particular acquaintance...it was so sudain I heard not till the morning after that he was dead. These are great warnings to us, He has left one son and one daughter and I believe a great estate, there is never another heir Male of the family, but only his brother Hugh and one other brother.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² *Entring Book* 10 March 1683.

¹⁸³ *Brief Historical Relation* 10 March 1683.

¹⁸⁴ Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (Routledge, 1987), p.385.

¹⁸⁵ *Entring Book* 31 October 1685.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the financial settlement following death was of significance, especially for the nobility, since the quality of an inheritance could determine the position and influence of a family, for good or ill. Morrice cites the death of Henry German on 5 January 1684 and dedicates a full obituary to the circumstances of his death, noting in particular that: he ‘dyed possessed of above 10,000/yeare in Land Rents about St James’s &c which he charged with about 40,000/yeare. And about 4,000/a year in Land and Jewells and Personnell Estate its thought will almost pay his debts.’¹⁸⁶ Despite seventeenth-century society’s stress on maturity, favouring maturity of youth, the culture which Morrice inhabited was primarily one in which youth constituted a powerful force in society, witness the case (albeit an extreme one) whereby in 1677 a debate in the House of Commons was opened by the son of George Monck, the architect of the Restoration of Charles II, when he was fourteen years old.

Apart from Morrice’s predisposition to deal factually with death, he is not averse to using the *Entring Book* as a vehicle to convey related gossip, such as: ‘Ketch the old Hangman is dead.’¹⁸⁷ or ‘Collonell Bloud dyed on Thursday last.’¹⁸⁸ A more substantial (nine lines in the *Entring Book*) piece

¹⁸⁶ *Entring Book* 5 January 1684.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 December 1686.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 29 August 1680.

of ‘obituary gossip’ is represented by the case of the Lord Gerard who, Morrice declared:

dyed suddainly on the Thursday the ninth of this month about two or three a clock in the night of the Rose...Tavern in Covent Garden. Mr William Stroud one of the Guards was with him, and one that had been much acquainted with him, three of them had drunke that eveing six bottles of Rhenish and sugar, and they two alone came to that Taverne where he dyed and had some buttered Eggs upon toasts, and a pint of mulled Sherrey with them and soone after my Lorde has eaten he dyed.¹⁸⁹

The level of detail here is notable - perhaps Morrice’s description of Lord Gerard’s demise represented yet another subtle Presbyterian homily against the evils of drink aimed at readers of the *Book*, or perhaps it simply reflected that the noble Lord was a close neighbour of Morrice in Covent Garden.

6.4 Conclusions

As a practising Presbyterian, Morrice would not have believed in purgatory, nor the possibility that the prayers or ritual performed by the living could aid the dead. In Morrice’s mental world, funerary rights were kept to a minimum and funeral sermons were occasions for theological encouragement of the living, rather than personalised eulogies of the dead. Against this background, Morrice had to manage for his readers the tension which existed between, on the one hand, the basic requirement for him to report in the *Entring Book* the deaths of high profile nobility and gentry in the period (in

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1684.

particular those of a Presbyterian persuasion) but, on the other hand, also to provide detail in the *Entring Book* of those deaths which might be of financial interest to readers in general or the bereaved, circulated from the perspective of transmission of wealth (property, in particular) from one generation to the next. In this capacity, Morrice fulfilled an almost commercial role for his readers. As ever, the reality of the treatment of bereavement by Morrice and as described in the *Entring Book* is more nuanced and complex than might appear at first sight.

CHAPTER 7: THE ENTRING BOOK – THE DUEL

7.1 Introduction

One activity faithfully reported in both the *Entring Book* and, to a lesser extent, *A Brief Historical Relation*, is that of the duel in Britain. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Morrice had a penchant for news-gathering among the metropolitan elite and his commentaries on duels stand out as one of the consistent social history themes reflected in the *Entring Book*, often referencing the so-called ‘better sort’ who no doubt enjoyed both the gossip associated with duelling, as well as the opportunity represented by a duel to satisfy a gentleman’s ‘honour’. Nonetheless, contemporary discourse on the rights and wrongs of duelling in the second half of the seventeenth century (together with criticism emerging from Puritan clerics in the period) was lively and critics of the duel included Samuel Pepys, Thomas Hobbes and John Evelyn. Commenting on one duel in 1662, between the Earl of St Albans and the Earl of Carlisle, Pepys noted that: ‘The Court is much concerned in this fray, and I am glad of it; hoping that it will cause some good laws against it.’¹⁹⁰ Six years later Pepys would reiterate his view on duelling, following up his ongoing condemnation of the practice and remarking sarcastically on the notorious duel between George Villiers, Second Duke of

¹⁹⁰ V. G. Kiernan, *The Duel in European History-Honour and the Reign of Aristocracy* (Oxford University Press, 1988), p.100.

Buckingham and the Earl of Shrewsbury, that: ‘this will make the world think that the king has good Councillors about him, when the Duke of Buckingham, the greatest man about him, is a fellow of no more sobriety than to fight about a whore.’¹⁹¹

A duel originated in ‘giving the lie’ - perhaps the most common reason in the seventeenth century for participating in a duel - usually involving a claim of sexual or reputational misdemeanour. However, it is moot how ‘gentlemanly honour’ or a ‘lie’ could be served when the offending behaviour took the mundane form of purchasing oranges (associated with theatre-going in the period) or, as in another duel cited by Morrice in the *Entring Book*, when one of the duellists ‘trode upon the toes of another in the playhouse and did not cry him Mercy.’¹⁹²

7.2 Duelling in Seventeenth-Century England

Since the 1970s, there has been growing interest among historians on the subject of duelling. Donna Andrew, Robert B. Shoemaker, Lawrence Stone, Markku Peltonen and, more recently, John Jeremiah Cronin and Linda A. Pollock have all made thoughtful contributions to the subject, as have V. G. Kiernan, Robert Baldick and Elizabeth A. Foyster.¹⁹³ Among these

¹⁹¹ Latham, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, p.866.

¹⁹² *Entring Book* 2 March 1680.

¹⁹³ Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England, Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Longman, 1999). Donna T. Andrew, ‘The Code of Honour and its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850,’ *Social History*, Volume 5 No3 (1980), pp.409-434. Robert B. Shoemaker, ‘The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence

historians, a broad consensus now exists that the so-called ‘duel of honour’ in early modern England was actually an import from the Continent, in particular from Italy and France. Duelling only came to be practised in England from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries onwards when, Andrew attests, despite half-hearted royal proclamations against the practice of duelling by both James I (his Proclamation against Private Challenges and Combats, published in 1613) and Charles II (countenancing duelling during his exile in France), duelling continued to be practised throughout the seventeenth century in Britain and in larger numbers post-Restoration. Robert Baldick records one duel fought in Islington in 1609 between two courtiers (ironically, both favourites of James I), namely Sir George Wharton and Sir James Stewart.¹⁹⁴ No record remains as to the origin of their quarrel, merely that ‘reproachful words passed betwixt them.’ Bucking the academic trend of duelling in England not being as prevalent as once thought, Baldick argues:

Ballrooms, coffee houses and public walks were all scenes of fighting and bloodshed. Covent Garden and Lincoln’s Inn Fields were the favourite rendezvous in London for deciding points of honour and all hours of the night the clash of swords could be heard by peaceful citizens living in the

in London 1660-1800,’ *Historical Journal* Volume 45 No3 (2002), pp.525-545. Also Robert B. Shoemaker, ‘The Decline of Public Insult in London 1660-1800’ *Past and Present*, 169 (2000), pp.97-131. Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (Routledge, 1987) and Markku Peltonen, ‘Francis Bacon, the Earl of Northampton and the Jacobean Anti-Duelling Campaign,’ *Historical Journal*, Volume 44 (2001), pp.1-28. Also Ute Frevet, *Men of Honour. A Social and Cultural History of the Duel* (Polity Press, 1995). John Jeremiah Cronin, ‘Honour Duelling and Royal Power in Exile: A case study of the Banished Caroline Stuart Court c.1649-1660’, *Crime, History and Societies*, Volume 17 No2 (2013), pp.47-69.

¹⁹⁴ Robert Baldick, *The Duel - A History of Duelling* (Chapman & Hall, 1965), p.63.

neighbourhood or returning home. Many duels originated in a quarrel at some theatre, for the young bloods of the day were in the habit of going to a playhouse simply in order to insult some woman and get involved in a dispute which might further their reputation.¹⁹⁵

Ronald G. Asch, as recently as 2011, suggests that in early modern France some 350 noblemen were killed annually as a result of duels and even this is an underestimate, according to Asch, since records relating to the south of France are of questionable quality. Newsletters in England reported up to 35 duels annually between 1610 and 1620. The accuracy of statistics relating to duelling and the relative infrequency of duels in England, as compared with incidents in France, has resulted in an estimate of only 62 duels being fought in England over the period 1580-1620. However, the incidence of duelling appears to increase after the Restoration. Peltonen nevertheless adheres to the view that duels were relatively uncommon in England and Cronin reminds us that duels continued to be practised during Charles II's exile when his courtiers were prone to resort to violence, both to defend their honour and as a means of resolving disputes.

Lest duelling appear to be the prerogative solely of the older generation at the expense of the younger and focused among the nobility, rather than the 'lower orders', there is evidence that in the giddy atmosphere of post-Restoration London the duel was encompassed within the sphere of aristocratic violence. In the metropolis, young men from the nobility formed

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.69.

clubs, where members were called ‘Hectors’ and engaged in the ‘sport’ of ‘scowring’, where a group of gentlemen revellers and their hangers-on would forcibly clear a tavern of other patrons, then run into the street to break windows and assault bystanders and the Watch. Such excesses were more than the expression of youthful high spirits; through such violent behaviour, members of the social elite asserted their superiority, mocking law-abiding citizens of inferior status.¹⁹⁶

What motivated those who saw the duel as an appropriate mechanism to resolve disputes and reinforce honour? Andrew suggests that: ‘The desire for honour, the need for recognition and the acknowledgement of superiority were held to be central driving forces amongst, at least, the politically and socially important upper classes.’¹⁹⁷ In an earlier exploration of duelling, Lawrence Stone expressed a typically succinct position, namely that the function of the duel was simply ‘that of a safety-valve and regulator of aggression.’¹⁹⁸ This dissertation has already highlighted the modernising topography of London in the period, in terms of both the metropolis’s evolving physical sophistication (delivered through bricks and mortar) and what might be termed its social dimension, namely that from the late sixteenth

¹⁹⁶ Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transmission 1550-1700* (Hodder Arnold, 2003), p.77.

¹⁹⁷ Donna T. Andrew, ‘The Code of Honour and its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850’, *Social History*, Volume 5 No3 (1980), pp.409-434. Also John Jeremiah Cronin, ‘Honour, Duelling and Royal Power in Exile: a case-study of the banished Caroline Stuart Court, c.1649-1660’ *Crime, History and Societies*, Volume 17 No2 (2013).

¹⁹⁸ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1965), pp.242-250.

century the gradual establishment of a 'London Season', where nobility and gentlemen in and around the post-Restoration court began to model the characteristic of 'politeness' as a desirable virtue and one to be practised, as opposed to earlier standards of traditionally masculine behaviour centred around hunting, womanising, drinking and gambling, with particular emphasis on the last two of these practices. In this new and evolving culture, Shoemaker suggests the values originally enshrined in the duel were increasingly viewed as out of keeping with the times and as unfashionable as the seventeenth century moved into the eighteenth.¹⁹⁹ Pollock suggests that: 'Historians have been much less interested in elite men who rejected challenges than they have been in those who fought. Yet men of the same rank themselves disagreed on whether duelling was a necessary or even an honourable response to injury.'²⁰⁰

From a French perspective, F. Billacois defines the duel as: 'A fight between two or several individuals (but always with equal numbers on either side), equally armed, for the purpose of proving either the truth of a disputed question or the valour, courage and honour of each combatant.'²⁰¹ Accepting that this definition is grounded in French historiography and not British, it

¹⁹⁹ Robert B. Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence in London, 1660-1800' *Historical Journal*, Volume 45 No3 (2002), pp.525-545. Also Markku Peltonen, 'Francis Bacon, the Earl of Northampton and the Jacobean Anti-duelling Campaign,' *Historical Journal*, Volume 44 No1 (2001), pp.1-28.

²⁰⁰ Linda A. Pollock, 'Honor, Gender and Reconciliation in Elite Culture, 1570-1700', *Journal of British Studies*, Volume 46 (2007), pp.3-29.

²⁰¹ F. Billacois, *The Duel: its Decline and Fall in Early Modern France* (Yale University Press, 1990), p.5.

nevertheless resonates with both duelling philosophy and practice outside France. Sharon Howard describes how, based on her research in Wales, ‘duelling boasted more elaborate rituals than did the usual run of men’s brawls’ with alcohol, gambling and sometimes sexual insult involved.²⁰² Many of the Welsh cases of duelling uncovered by Howard relate to slanderous insults, with their attendant capacity to damage reputation and undermine social standing, such as questioning manliness, or allegations of cowardice or of malpractice. Some of Howard’s cases might appear bizarre to the twenty first-century reader, for example, pulling off a gentleman’s hat was deemed highly provocative and likely to enrage, judging by the number of cases in which this apparently trivial act led to serious violence, including duelling. However, a man’s hat represented a status symbol and doffing a hat was a sign of deference to a social superior; conversely, snatching a hat from a man’s head was a demeaning act which had to be challenged, often in the form of a duel. Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen²⁰³ suggest that men employed various terms of abuse towards each other in early modern England, ‘rogue’, ‘knave’ and ‘dog’ being favourites in the period. Morrice also reports a number of duels where the pejorative expression ‘rascal’ is used, such as the incident reported by him on 10 April 1684: ‘On Tuesday the

²⁰² Sharon Howard, *Law and Disorder in Early Modern Wales* (University of Wales Press, 1990). Also Sharon Howard, ‘Gentlemen behaving badly: Gentlemen and interpersonal violence in seventeenth century Britain’, Conference Paper: *Icons and Iconolasts: The Long Seventeenth Century, 1603-1714* (University of Aberdeen, July 2006).

²⁰³ Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen, eds, *English Masculinities 1660-1800* (Longman, 1999), p.141.

8 Mr Kirk in the Playhouse did aloud say the Erle of Dorset was a rascal many times over, the said Erle being in a Box in the Playhouse then. And afterwards Kirke sent Mr Macartey to the Erle to tell him Mr Kirke commanded him to tell his Lordshipp he said he was a Rascall.’²⁰⁴ The terms ‘rogue’ and ‘knave’ were also employed interchangeably as sexual insults, mostly to address a different kind of dishonesty: the dishonesty of not keeping one’s word. A man’s word was his bond and insults could extend to impact on business dealings.

7.3 Duelling and The *Entring Book*

What does the *Entring Book* tell the modern scholar about duelling in seventeenth-century England? This is not a straightforward task since the shape of the duel, whilst often prescribed as to its format, was neither fixed, either in terms of timescales applying to duelling, nor what comprised the term ‘duel’. In its essentials, the duel represented a ritualised form of violence, where insults were formalised into the ‘giving of the lie’, followed by letters of challenge, which often revealed the true motivation behind a duel, which then ensued. Underpinning this process, however, the notion of the duel assumes different guises in early modern England, which in turn prompt a series of questions: Was the duel the preserve of the nobility alone? To what extent, directly or indirectly, might the monarch be involved in the

²⁰⁴ *Entring Book* 10 April 1684.

practice of duelling? What was the demarcation (if any) between a quarrel/brawl, on the one hand, and the classic ‘duel’, on the other? Finally, what constituted the ‘lies’ which might form the basis of a duel?

In the work of present-day historians, the impression given, deliberately or otherwise, is that duelling was a relatively uncommon occurrence in the fourteen years covered by the *Entring Book*. Aggregated data in respect of duelling is not available by which to calculate accurately the incidence of duels in London, but Pollock suggests that the incidence of duelling might have increased in the decades after the Restoration, albeit from a relatively low base: ‘although a systematic statistical analysis of the number of duels has yet to be done, the evidence we have testifies to the infrequency of duels in England.’²⁰⁵ Morrice mentions and often describes in detail some 32 duels between the years 1677 and 1691, an average of two duels each year. Narcissus Luttrell mentions only five duels in the same period as the *Entring Book* and Pepys, in the entirety of his *Diary*, mentions only three duels, including one on 6 February 1661 when he records:

Mr Creed and Capt Ferrers tell me the story of my Lord Duke of Buckingham’s and my Lord’s falling out at Havre de Grace at Cards – they two, and my Lord St Albans, playing. My lord sent the next morning to the Duke to know whether he did remember what he said last night and whether he would owne them with his sword and a second; which he said he would, and so both sides agreed. But my lord St Albans and the Queene and Abbott Montague did Waylay

²⁰⁵ Pollock, ‘Honor, Gender and Reconciliation in Elite Culture’, pp.3-29.

them at their lodgings till the difference was made up, much to my Lord's honour, who hath got great reputation thereby.²⁰⁶

Morrice makes frequent reference to duelling and the rituals surrounding it, referring to guns, as well as swords and knives as weapons of choice, the role of seconds and, on a number of occasions, a flight to the Continent by some or all of the participating duellists (not unusual in the event of mortal wounding, by one or all of the duel participants). Morrice reports the indirect involvement of the king in certain duels, for example Viscount Purbeck was committed to the Tower in December 1677 for 'offering something like a Challenge in the [King's] presence' and, in another case, one Mr Herbert and one Mr Cutts were granted a return 'to this Kingdome...and they may assure themselves they shall have his majesties gracious Pardon.'²⁰⁷ Based on research in the *Entring Book*, Morrice records and comments on some 32 duels of various descriptions, 18 involving the participation of nobility, but 14 involving men of lower rank (for example, the duel of 30 April 1687 between the aptly named Narrative Smith (Bookseller and Publisher) and Mr Barker MP).²⁰⁸ Some duels referred to in the *Entring Book* (11 in number) involved what would appear to be mixed participation, noble and non-noble. Between 1677 and 1683, Morrice records 14 duels in the *Entring Book*, but 18 over the period 1684 to 1689. After the Restoration, all classes would have

²⁰⁶ Latham, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, pp. 117-118.

²⁰⁷ *Entring Book* 31 July 1686 and 16 December 1677.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 30 April 1687.

appeared to have been affected by the mania for duelling. Even doctors occasionally settled their professional differences at the point of the sword, for example, two physicians called Mead and Woodward fought a duel under the gate of Gresham College. Somewhat surprisingly, a number of years recorded in the *Entring Book* noted a single duel or no duels at all. There were obviously more incidents of duelling fought than were recorded by Morrice and his contemporaries alone; Luttrell records five which were not recorded by Morrice and a still smaller number of duels (two) were recorded by both commentators.

As with other perceived ‘vices’ of the period, contemporaries believed the incidence of duelling was credited by contemporaries to be increasing over the second half of the seventeenth century and prompted the comment by John Evelyn in his diary at the end of 1684, that: ‘So many horrid murders and duels were committed about this time as were never before heard of in England; which gave much cause of complaint and murmurings.’²⁰⁹

Thomas Hobbes made known his views on the subject of duelling, by referring to ‘the fear of dishonour, in one, or both the combatants: who engaged by rashness, are driven by the lists to avoid disgrace.’²¹⁰ Irrespective of whether there were more duels after the Restoration or not, and whether

²⁰⁹ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed Austin Dobson (London, 1906).

²¹⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, quoted by V. G. Kiernan in *The Duel in European History* (Oxford University Press, 1988), p.95.

Evelyn might or might not be factually correct in his observations, what did change was the profile of the duel and duellists, in particular the publicity attendant upon this activity which, although strictly illegal in seventeenth-century England, was tacitly tolerated by the king; duelling was thus a condoned practice. If a challenge and a duel were the means of ‘protecting the gentleman’s tarnished honour’ there were plenty among the population at large, at all levels of society, but particularly those inhabiting the metropolis and in close proximity to the Court, who took more than a passing interest in news circulating about duels. Thus: ‘Even a combat between two completely obscure gentlemen was thought to be worth reporting in both newsletters and private correspondence.’²¹¹ This posture suggests that, whilst duels were far from daily incidents, they attracted rapt attention and this might go some way towards explaining the coverage of duelling in the *Entring Book*, which no doubt reflected a genuine level of interest in duels among Morrice’s network of clients. On a few occasions, political overtones can clearly be identified in the circumstances of a duel, for example that recorded by Morrice on 13 June 1682, when: ‘On Saturday young Mr Tolmage [a Whig] and Mr Parker [a bailie and Tory] fought a duel and the latter was disarmed.’²¹²

As described earlier in this chapter, the reasons for fighting a duel were many and varied, if the *Entring Book* is an accurate barometer of duelling

²¹¹ Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.5.

²¹² *Entring Book* 13 June 1682.

practice, ranging from the classic elite examples of duelling described among the nobility, to duels which took place involving the gentry, for reasons which might appear trivial to the modern reader. Thus, the description of the grounds for a duel are varied in the *Entring Book*, but included: 'provoking words', a 'Challenge in the presence', 'some abusive words', 'base recollections' and 'a quarrel very Silley.' Historians of the duel, specifically those specialising in the second half of the seventeenth century in England, would appear to be reluctant to recognise the dichotomy between the reality of duelling over the period, as compared with the historical theory. Analysis of the *Entring Book* challenges some of the conclusions drawn on the subject by present-day historians and on the evidence obtained from the *Entring Book* the origins of duels were much more varied, mundane even, than might have been expected.

The traditional view of duelling is that such episodes were related to some form of 'insult' and the *Entring Book* supports this view. The form taken by an insult was many and varied, in one case relating to a dress worn in the presence of the king, namely:

This week Mr Orpe who hath some place neare the King's person being in the Presence at Windsor, where there was a considerable concourse, He told Mr Trelawnay (uncle to Sir John Trelawnay) who had bin at Tangier, who was very neare the King, told him that this was not a place for him, Mr Trelawnay asked him why; Mr Orpe answered his garb did not discover it, Mr Trelawnay answered whatever his garb shewed he was a Gentleman, and required satisfaction of him for that affront, so they went forth, and it

issued into a Duel and they both somewhat wounded, and then they were parted.²¹³

Another duel resulted from adverse comments touching on reputation, namely Lord Dartmouth sending a challenge to the Earl of Salisbury to answer ‘his base recollections he has made to the King for his ill Conduct of the Navy.’²¹⁴

In his matter-of-fact style, Morrice records in the *Entring Book* of 27 February 1680 a number of duels clustered around this date, namely:

There was a Duell betwixt Mr Oglethorp and Mr Poltney on the one side and Mr Henry Wharton (who wounded his opposite and was wounded) and Mr Warcop on the other, because one of them trod upon the toes of another in the play house and *did not cry him Mercy* (my italics).²¹⁵

On Saturday the 28th March, Morrice also records:

There was another Duell betwixt the Earle of Plimouth and Viscount Mordent on the one side and Sir George Huit and the Lord Cavendish on the other side about *some words that passed concerning some oranges they were buying* (my italics). On Lord’s Day there was another Duell betwixt Mr Mecarte, Mr Parker, Mr Brewer, and another about a *foolish trifle* (my italics).²¹⁶

In this incidence of duelling, Morrice perhaps displays his Presbyterian disdain for the practice, when he dismissively employs the description a ‘foolish trifle.’

²¹³ *Entring Book* 10 May 1684.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 December 1688.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27 February 1680.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28 February 1680.

In similar vein, the *Entring Book* appears to undermine any strict demarcation between a ‘duel’ and a ‘quarrel’, since the quarrel could, according to circumstances, migrate into becoming a duel. Against this background, Morrice’s record in the *Entring Book* of 17 November 1681 is interesting, where he describes a man called Thompson:

coming out of Richard’s Coffee House at Temple Bar, was slapt by young Mr Charleton, Mr Aylofffe came and rescued him, but Thompson saying he gave him (*provokein words*) (my italics) as he came out of the damned Republican Fanatick Coffee-House &c and for which words Aylofffe disciplined Thompson again.²¹⁷

Another incident - was it a form of duel or the settling of a quarrel? - was recorded by Morrice on 17 December 1687, when:

Upon Friday at sevensight Mr William Wharton (this Lady Wharton’s only child) went out of the house a little before 12 into St James Square and there Mr Robert Woolsley (Sir Charles eldest son) met him and they fought, Mr Woolsley had two slight wounds, but is reported to be well, and to be gone out of the way, Mr Wharton had a wound upon the outside of his buttock that went upwards towards his hipp bone.²¹⁸

Morrice’s intellectual world also describes cases of what might be termed the ‘quarrel transferred’, as exemplified by an incident on 6 November 1686 involving the Earle of Devonshire’s coachman, which repays reporting in full, namely:

The Earle of Devonshire’s Coach about Tuesday, he not in it, being in the street neare the Playhouse in Covent Garden, the Coachman lifting up his

²¹⁷ *Entring Book* 17 November 1681.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17 December 1687.

hand to whip his horses hit Mr Percy Kirk and Mr Vice-Admirall Herbert, the former if not the latter, the former or both beat the Coachman, and have hurt him ill, the Coachman seeing the Earle immediately acquaints him with what had happened, the Earle thereupon very privately sent Mr Kirk a Challenge, but his Majestie heard thereof and sent a Gentleman to the Earle to command him upon his Parol [word] to keepe within doors some tract of time, and not to do anything against any man in prosecution of this quarrel, the Earle answered he did give his Paroll so to doe, and tooke it for a great honour that his Majestie would interpose in this quarrel, and did rest assuredly confident his Majestie would take care he should have Satisfaction, otherwise he should be exposed to affronts by any Souldier. My Lord Chamberlain was to heare the matter, and to reconcile them together.²¹⁹

Thirty-two years later, in 1719, a newspaper account highlighted the emerging intolerance to fighting, describing a type of quarrel which frequently erupted in London's narrow streets, between two gentlemen whose coaches were unable to pass one another in a street near the Strand. When the gentlemen drew their swords, the paper reports: 'the mob very contrary to their modern practice, interposed and prevented mischief'; the gentlemen 'were soon seemingly friends and parted.'²²⁰

7.4 Conclusions

Apart from Morrice clearly not being entirely au fait with the facts of the Earl of Devonshire's quarrel, this nevertheless highlights how an apparently trivial incident of the period could escalate into a duel. In fact, examples of duelling cited by Morrice are interesting not just for the number of incidents recorded, but for their diversity. There are examples in the *Entring Book* of nearly all those characteristics of duelling which modern historians have commented upon, together with some European examples of duelling which add a

²¹⁹ *Entring Book* 6 November 1686.

²²⁰ Quoted Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen, eds, *English Masculinities 1660-1800* (Longman, 1999), p.142.

richness to the analysis. The tantalising examples cited earlier in the dissertation make this point and, even more salaciously, there is Morrice's news of 21 May 1687 where:

The Lady Mary Skitly, sister to the Earle of Clarendon, hath had the Pox lately and said such a Gentleman gave them to her, the Gentlemen heard thereof and demanded satisfaction, then she said such a Gentleman gave them to her.²²¹

Far from representing a single model of duelling, evidence from the *Entring Book* reinforces the view that although perhaps ritualised at the point of the duel actually taking place, alongside this there were means to achieve resolution between the parties to a duel, occasionally involving the king, without recourse to the ultimate sanction of a duel, with 'honour' upheld. Morrice makes no profound comment on the duels he gathers as news, neither positively nor negatively, although one might reasonably assume that, as a committed Presbyterian, Morrice's natural inclination would be one of being a critic of the practice of duelling, albeit a discreet one on this subject, as with the many others he reported on. No doubt Morrice would have sympathised with the societies being set up towards the end of the seventeenth century aimed at what was termed the 'reformation of manners', which promoted measures against fairs, gambling, masquerades, plays, taverns, whores and 'obscene ballads.' The practice of duelling would have fitted neatly into any such list of prohibitions. Where Morrice does make comment on the subject

²²¹ *Entring Book* 21 May 1687.

of duelling, it is to remark on ‘a foolish trifle’ underpinning one duel, or the ‘very sillay’ issue on which another duel rests.²²² Characteristically, touching on the theme of duelling, Morrice chooses discretion over valour on this subject, as on many others relating to the *Entring Book*.

²²² Entring Book 2 March 1679 and 7 August 1686 respectively

CHAPTER 8: ROGER MORRICE AND HIS *ENTRING BOOK* -
CONCLUSIONS

Mark Goldie suggests that Morrice bequeathed ‘a superabundance of information about his [Morrice’s] times and contemporaries’ in the shape of the *Entring Book*.²²³ In order to achieve this, Morrice was not afraid to gather and to share any subject in the interests of information-gathering, ranging from the stools afflicting Sir John Maynard and the pox allegedly caught from Lady Mary Skitly, to Morrice’s mainstream politico-religious commentaries on the Popish Plot, the Glorious Revolution and his ongoing concerns about the brutal treatment of the French Huguenots throughout the 14 years of his writing. All the contributors to the edited version of the *Entring Book* make reference, often only in passing, to the social aspects of the *Book*, for example Stephen Taylor who, in his short introduction to volume 4, suggests: ‘It is important to recognise the breadth and variety of Morrice’s concerns - crime, the law, City politics. Above all...the *Entring Book* is the product of a great collector of news stories both significant and trivial, some clearly connected to Morrice’s major preoccupation and some less so.’²²⁴ In volume 2 of the *Entring Book*, John Spurr makes a similar comment, referring to the milieu of the period ‘that fuelled the ‘talk of the town’, and the innumerable

²²³ *Entring Book* Volume 1 xiii.

²²⁴ *Entring Book* Volume 4 xxvii.

incidental occurrences from murders to births.’²²⁵ Taylor’s and Spurr’s position is shared with peers on the *Entring Book* project, Mark Goldie in particular adhering to his unshakeable view that the *Entring Book* is specifically ‘a political work and predominantly secular in tone.’²²⁶ Such sentiment clearly represents a bias on Goldie’s part and it can also be construed as setting the tone for his treatment of political and social issues in the volumes comprising the *Entring Book*, based on his role as General Editor of the project.

A significant part of this dissertation describes the culture of seventeenth-century Britain and the backcloth this provided for Morrice’s various activities and those of other intelligencers in London in particular and, by so doing, highlights subjects in the *Entring Book* as diverse as secrecy of the news, access to sources of information, sedition, coffee-houses, street violence and Presbyterian politics, to name but a few. The modern-day reader of the *Entring Book* will also observe that Morrice’s position in the life of the metropolis was marked by contradictions relative to the role he was asked to perform by his Presbyterian patrons. For example, the practical implications of being a news-gatherer in a culture practising censorship and pursuing sedition are in sharp relief in the circumstances in which Morrice finds himself. He must have been a visible pursuer after news, dressed for all to

²²⁵ *Entring Book* Volume 2 xxiv.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.101.

see in his black Puritan garb, yet there is no evidence to indicate that he was ever apprehended, questioned or prosecuted for his news-gathering activities (as many of his peers were) which could be categorised by the government as seditious in their nature, were it to so elect.

Elsewhere in the *Entring Book*, Goldie describes Morrice as proud of his access to state secrets and an inference might be drawn from this quote that Morrice was someone special, doing novel things in relation to accessing news or gossip of the day. Morrice may have deployed his news-gathering activities more effectively than the majority of his contemporaries (his network of contacts was, after all, prodigious) but there is evidence that gaining access to state secrets might not have been as fraught or as dangerous as first thought by historians, since many intelligencers or diarists of the period successfully engineered such access, which could culminate on occasion in access to the monarch himself. Where information had to be sourced by Morrice, therefore, access could often be facilitated, as well as sought-out; where this proved not to be the case, information could be gleaned from other sources, such as the notoriously 'leaky' Secretaries of State. Access to opinion-formers and sources of news was also framed by the significant topographical expansion of Whitehall and its environs around the middle of the seventeenth century, encouraging the nobility and gentry to spend more time in the metropolis. The same could be expected of Members of Parliament, clergy and lawyers who thronged Westminster Hall. As part

of the role expected of him, Morrice elected to live in fashionable Covent Garden, thereby enabling him to keep a finger on the pulse of his news-gathering activities.

Coffee-houses were increasingly common from the 1650s onwards, a phenomenon much remarked upon by the inhabitants of London in particular. Notwithstanding their growing popularity, Morrice is not known to have frequented a coffee-house which was most unusual for the period, given the amount of news and gossip available from such establishments. Such a posture would distinguish Morrice as unusual among his peer group, particularly in light of John Milton, the Puritan poet, using such facilities; Milton was hardly known for his high-spirits.

It is also appropriate to reflect on the role performed by Morrice and whether this represented continuity or discontinuity on the subject of news-gathering. It might be tempting for the historian to assume that Roger Morrice provided for his patrons a distinctive news service, but this is not necessarily the case since Morrice practised techniques of news capture which were not new and which indeed stretched back to the early part of the seventeenth century, in the form of Rous and Pory and many other such intelligencers. One of the features associated with news-gathering in the period was payment of an annual subscription from the patron or client, in exchange for (wherever possible) truthful reports. Morrice sought to be a purveyor of 'truth', whenever he was able to assure this, but there is no evidence that Morrice

charged for his services rendered, bearing in mind the Presbyterian nexus he actively supported and his own strong Presbyterian leanings. For Morrice, ‘news’ often arrived on his desk in pieces and it was his distinctive role to make sense of such news, drawing upon insight gleaned from fourteen years of collecting and analysing such ‘occurrences’, where his contribution was often distinctive.

Goldie comments that the *Entring Book* remains ‘underused as a source for literary historians’ and, in similar vein, that ‘as...this edition of the *Entring Book* goes to press, it is apparent that it is already significant for the burgeoning field that may be called media history.’²²⁷ The same observations could be made about the aspects of social history which feature heavily in this dissertation. In this context, the *Entring Book* and the social issues it captures might also accurately be termed as ‘under-used’.

In terms of whether the *Entring Book* adequately addresses social as well as political history, the absence of meaningful coverage of this subject by Goldie and his *Entring Book* contemporaries should not imply an absence of such content in Morrice’s work; on the contrary, there was plenty of social news for him to report on, both in terms of quantity and quality. The years of the English Civil War were, according to Martin Conboy: ‘the laboratory for the permutations of early journalism’²²⁸ and Joseph Frank suggests that

²²⁷ *Entring Book* Volume 1 p.315

²²⁸ Martin Conboy, *Journalism: A Critical History* (Sage Publications, 2009), p.28.

‘probably the most interesting bits of *Politicus* and the *Intelligencer* are the advertisements...a notice about a lost mute, another about a vanished child, a third concerning two abandoned infants, and a fourth requesting information on two runaway girls.’²²⁹ The 1650s witnessed the emergence of advertising to fill empty space in newsletters by Marchamont Nedham, among others, and the next thirty years witnessed the steady growth of social content. Examples of such social news and gossip can be found in early copies of the *London Gazette*, where political content was frequently squeezed to make way for more sociable news.

One question to be addressed is why Morrice reported on social matters in the *Entring Book*, when so much of its focus and that of his readers was politico-religious in nature, reflecting the times he inhabited. Apart from well-rehearsed political commentary, Morrice could err on the side of distinctly un-Presbyterian salacious gossip alongside serious social news-gathering, for example relating to duelling, playhouses, sexual mores and the treatment of disease and mortality in the post-Restoration period. One obvious reason for sharing social matters is that there was, at its most basic, demand among Morrice’s readership to be kept informed of the widest range of subjects through the medium of his manuscript newsletters, their contents representing a legacy established by other news-gatherers before the 1670s.

²²⁹ Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper 1620-1660* (Harvard University Press, 1961), p.256.

Such content was no doubt already valued by Morrice's clients and was increasingly in demand as part of generic news-gathering of the period. The social contents of the *Entring Book* represented not only nascent journalistic practice with roots dating back to the first half of the seventeenth century, but important social content which connected Morrice's patrons to information with which to live their everyday (sometimes dangerous) lives. The common denominator linking the various aspects of discourse in post-Restoration culture remained, of course, religion which underpinned all the various aspects of political and social history. Likewise, the reading of the Bills of Mortality and Obituary Notices could be construed as news items to allow the metropolitan elite to move safely, and with prior warning, from town house to country estate in order to avoid disease. It is clear that, for Morrice and his contemporary news-mongers, any and all situations represented a potential source of social news and gossip.

The contents of this dissertation, when positioned alongside those of Goldie's *Entring Book*, bring this work and its fastidious author to life across the widest range of political, religious and social issues, through which the inhabitants of the seventeenth century in Britain lived and died. To imply that the 2007 edition of the *Entring Book* is the finished article is tempting and understandable, but would, based on the analysis set out in this dissertation, be both misplaced and premature. Notwithstanding the accolades showered on Goldie's and his contemporaries' work and the somewhat

superficial references by him and colleagues to non-political issues in the text of the *Entring Book*, the absence of exploring Morrice and his *Entring Book* as a coherent work of social history represents an omission on the part of modern historians. The Biographical Dictionary which constitutes the whole of the edited version of volume 6 is a stunning work of reference, but it does not represent social history as such. Likewise, the relevant Appendices which comprise a large part of volume I of the *Entring Book*, and which include references to matters social, are not in a form to represent a narrative of the more important social aspects of the *Entring Book* as highlighted in this dissertation.

In many ways, Morrice can be defined as an example of very modern news-gathering practice, with his emphasis on seeking out accurate and truthful sourcing of news as a characteristic feature of his journalistic approach. It is somewhat ironic that the issues with which Morrice grappled 300 years ago - accuracy of sourcing, scepticism of headlines, verification of evidence, identifying 'false news' and establishing multiple reports for the same story - remain with the modern-day reader today.

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