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**Periodical Foreign News Printed
in London in the Early Seventeenth Century**

Jayne E. E. Boys
(PhD. University of Kent, 2009)



F218302

Abstract

This thesis explores printed periodical news coverage of the Thirty Years' War, its readership and impact. It sets the media in its context in Chapter 1 by considering the scope and constraints of methods of communicating contemporary events in the early seventeenth century and the way the start of the war was reported. Chapter 2 provides the European press news context and explores the material that became available in London, its scope, strengths and weaknesses as a source of information, and its growth as the war progressed.

Chapter 3 shows how English periodical news coverage began in the Netherlands, was taken up in London and its legitimacy established. This assesses the array of evidence and previous bibliographical dispute over the earliest corantos and newsbooks to provide an explanation of what happened, while Chapter 4 expands upon the theme of the pivotal role of publishers. This explores the London trade, the size of prints and distribution network to establish the scale, financial viability and reach of the trade.

Chapters 5 and 6 consider the impact of news coverage through explorations of the relationship of editors with their readers, particularly in years of heightened interest in the early 1620s and 30s, and of relationships with the authorities from 1622 until the mid 1640s when John Dillingham established *The Moderate Intelligencer*. These chapters show how increasing literacy, licensing, unfolding diplomatic relations, and Crown policy influenced the content of newsbooks and contributed to the development of public opinion.

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Abbreviations

A.P.C.	<i>Acts of the Privy Council</i>
Add. MS.	Additional Manuscripts, British Library
Annual	<i>Studies in Newspaper and Periodical History</i> , ed., M. Harris (1993 Annual, Westport Connecticut/London, 1994)
Arber	E. Arber, <i>A Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers' of London 1554-1640</i> ; 4 Vols, (London and Birmingham, 1875 – 94)
Arblaster	P. Arblaster, 'Current Affairs Publishing in the Habsburg Netherlands 1620-1660 in Comparative European Perspective' (D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1999)
Atherton	I. Atherton, 'The Itch Grown a Disease: Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century', in <i>News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain</i> , ed., J. Raymond (London and Portland, Or., 1999)
B.L.	British Library
C.andT.	<i>Court and Times of Charles I</i> , ed., T. Birch, 2 Vols, (1848)
Chamberlain	<i>The Letters of John Chamberlain</i> , ed., N. E. McClure, 2 Vols, (Philadelphia, 1939)
Clegg	C. S. Clegg, <i>Press Censorship in Jacobean England</i> (Cambridge, 2001)
C.S.P.D.	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
Cogswell	T. Cogswell, <i>The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War 1621-24</i> (Cambridge, 1989)
Cust	R. Cust, 'News and Politics in early Seventeenth Century England', <i>PandP</i> 112 (1986)
Dahl	F. Dahl, <i>A Bibliography of English Corantos and Periodical Newsbooks 1620-42</i> (1952)
DandB.	B. Dooley and S. Baron, eds., <i>The Politics of Information in early Modern Europe</i> , (London and NY., 2001)
Fox	A. Fox, 'Rumour, News and Popular Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England', <i>Historical Journal</i> , 40 (1997)
Frank	J. Frank, <i>The Beginnings of the English Newspaper</i> (Cambridge, Mass., 1966)
Frearson	M. C. Frearson, 'The English Corantos of the 1620s' (D. Phil. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1993)
Hanson	L. Hanson, 'English Newsbooks 1620-1641', <i>The Library</i> , 4 th Series, 18 (1938)
Harl. MS.	Harleian Manuscript, British Library
H.J.	<i>Historical Journal</i>
Jackson	<i>Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1602 -1640</i> , ed., W. A. Jackson (1957)
Jonson	Ben Jonson, 'The Staple of News', 1625 in <i>Ben Jonson: The Complete Plays</i> , 2 Vols (Everyman Library 1910/70)
J.B.S.	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
J.N.andP.H	<i>Journal of Newspapers and Periodical History</i>
Lambert	S. Lambert 'State Control of the Press in theory and Practice: the role of the Stationers' Company before 1640' in

- Censorship and the Control of Print in England and France 1600-1910, ed., R. Myers and M Harris (Winchester, 1992),
- Levy F. J. Levy, 'The Decorum of News', in J. Raymond, ed., *News, Newspapers, and Early Modern Britain* (1999)
- Love H. Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1993)
- M. B. *Mercurius Britannicus*
- N.&S. C. Nelson and M. Seccombe, *British Newspapers and Periodicals: A Short Title Catalogue* (N.Y., 1987)
- O.D.N.B. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
- Patterson W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997)
- PandP. *Past and Present*
- Plant M. Plant, *The English Book Trade; An Economic History of the Making and Sale of Books* (1965)
- Pory W. S. Powell, *John Pory 1572-1636: The Life and Letters of Man of Many Parts* (N. Carolina, 1977)
- Proclamations *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, eds., P.L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1973-83)
- Raymond J. Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper* (Oxford, 1996)
- Reeve L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge, 1989)
- Ries P. Ries, 'The Anatomy of a Seventeenth Century Newspaper', *Daphnis* 6, Heft 1-2 (1977)
- Rous *The Diary of John Rous*, ed., M. A. Everett Green (Camden Society, 1st Ser. 64, 1856)
- Schumacher W. H. Schumacher, 'Vox Populi: The Thirty Years' War in English Pamphlets and Newspapers' (D. Phil. Thesis, University of Princeton, 1975)
- Seibert F. Seibert, *Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776* (Urbana, 1952)
- Shaaber M. A. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England 1476 - 1622* (Philadelphia, 1929)
- Sharpe K. Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (Yale and London, 1992)
- S.P.Dom. State Papers Domestic
- S.T.C. *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland 1475-1640*, eds., A.W. Pollard, G.R. Redgrave, K. F. Pantzer, 3 vols (1991), Vol 4, Indexes (N.Y., 1998)
- TNA The National Archives
- Watt T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991)
- Wedgwood C. V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years' War* (1938/1968)
- Wing D. Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641-1700*, Rev. ed., 3 vols (N.Y., 1972-94)

Preface

I am grateful to Dr Gerhardt Benecke, my tutor in the 1970s whose enthusiasm and encouragement sparked my interest in the Thirty Years' War and evidence of a news trade in that period. I also want to thank Dr Kenneth Fincham for his support and advice over the years it has taken me to complete this thesis while also working full-time, and especially for his willingness to work with me on this basis. Without his help this would not have been possible. Thanks too, to the many librarians who have assisted me, particularly at the Bodleian, Cambridge University Library, and especially at the British Library where the calm efficiency of the service cannot fail to impress.

The notes and dates follow the usual conventions. New Style dating is given and the year is taken to begin on 1 January. Newsbook and coranto dates are given as they appear in the original publications and I discuss dating issues in Chapter 2. Spelling and punctuation in quotations is not modernised unless I am quoting from a secondary source, except that I have used modern conventions for 'j's', 'v's' and 's's'. The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. The use of false imprints is discussed in Chapter 3 and the corantos with disputed provenance are identified in Appendix 1. Titles that appear throughout this thesis are cited in full in the first instance in each consecutive chapter, except for those that appear in the table of abbreviations, and for the corantos and newsbooks: these are identified in the footnotes by their date and number in the relevant printed catalogues (*S.T.C.*, *N.&S* or *Wing*), in the following form; (date), pages, catalogue reference. References are provided in full in the bibliography.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION. THE MEDIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AND THE MARKET FOR NEWS 1618-1620

Introduction

This thesis is about the publication of news in London reporting the Thirty Years' War. Coverage began in 1619 with the appearance of pamphlets discussing the legalities of the disputed election in Bohemia. As events accelerated single sheet news corantos from the Netherlands appeared in London and were soon succeeded by more regular publications in a more familiar newsbook format printed in London. These corantos and newsbooks continued to appear through most of the intervening years into the 1640s but have received little attention from early Stuart historians. Now however, after decades of being consigned to the interest of bibliographers and historians of journalism who studied the genre in a way that divorced it from its broader political and cultural context and content, the subject is attracting more attention in relation to questions about political awareness, readers and the evolution of public opinion as England headed toward Civil War.

Interest has grown in the formation of public opinion with studies from Richard Cust, Thomas Cogswell, Peter Lake, Ann Hughes, Kevin Sharpe, and Mark Kishlansky, amongst others. The work of those exploring the 'middling sort' and the 'public sphere' has been helpful.¹ News publishers, as traders and entrepreneurs, who served their apprenticeships in the Stationers' Company, were also middling sorts operating within the social and cultural frameworks that have recently been explored. Jonathan Barry has described their attitudes, seeing success and failure in terms of the individual, with an emphasis on

¹ P. Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of Prejudice', eds. R. Cust and A. Hughes, in *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (1989); P. Lake and M. Questier, 'Puritans, Papists and the 'Public Sphere' in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context' in *The Journal of Modern History*, 72:3 (2000); P. Lake, 'Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s; Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match', *H.J.*, 25 (1982); Cogswell, 287-8, 325; T. Cogswell, 'The Politics of Propaganda: Charles I and the People in the 1620s', *J.B.S.*, 24 (1990); K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (Yale, 2000); D. Freist, *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637-45* (London/N. Y., 1997); M. Kishlansky, 'Turning Frogs into Princes', in S. D. Amussen and M. A. Kishlansky, eds., *Political Culture and Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1995); J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge Mass., 1989), originally published as *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1962); G. Leth, 'A Protestant Public Sphere: The Early European Newspaper Press', in *Annual*.

industry, thrift, self-discipline, and most importantly, credit worthiness. Christopher Brooks has described their distinctive urban culture and Barry Reay has helped place the readership and market for newsbooks in its cultural context, drawing out its political and economic relevance.² Pauline Croft, Thomas Cogswell, David Underdown and Harold Love have explored libels and manuscript news circulation, and Tessa Watt, Peter Lake and Alistair Bellamy have explored the cheapest and most popular publications of the period; and Adam Fox oral news.³

Revisionists challenged the traditional account of an escalating constitutional crisis in the pre-Civil War and post-revisionists argued for a more nuanced approach. This has led to a greater interest in exploring contemporary ephemeral publications such as pamphlets, news and ballads but has not yet liberated corantos and newsbooks from the journalistic heritage of Frank and Shaaber, or the bibliographical heritage of Dahl.⁴ The dull and abbreviated texts of foreign newsbooks, the need to read many successive issues (scattered in a number of library collections) to detect story lines, and the need for a reasonable grasp of the broader European context, seem to have deterred English historians from paying them attention. Their influence and the extent to which news of the Thirty Years' War permeated British society and influenced political thinking have remained understated, bedevilled additionally by a legacy of concepts about the efficacy of censorship, from Whig historians who suggested the media was too censored to be effective, and countered by

² C. Brooks, 'Apprenticeship and Social Mobility and the Middling Sort', and J. Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort', in J. Barry and C. Brooks, eds., *The Middling Sort of People, Culture, Society, and Politics in England 1550-1800* (Cambridge, 1991); P. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth Century London* (1985); B. Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (1998).

³ P. Croft, 'The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6, 1 (1991); P. Croft, 'Libels, Popular Literacy and Public Opinion in Early Modern England', *Historical Research*, 68 (1995); T. Cogswell, 'Underground Verse and the Transformation of Early Stuart Political Culture', in Amussen and Kishlansky, eds., *Political Culture*, 277-300; D. Underdown, *A Freeborn People* (1996), 19, 39, 50, 70-1; Love; *Pory; Chamberlain*; Watt; P. Lake, 'Deeds Against Nature', and A. Bellamy, 'Raylinge Rhymes and Vaunting Verse', in K. Sharpe and P. Lake, eds., *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (1994); Fox, 607-13, 616, 620; A. Fox, 'Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England', *PandP.*, 145 (1995).

⁴ Frank; Shaaber; M. A. Shaaber, 'The First English Newspaper', *Studies in Philology*, 29 (1932); Dahl; F. Dahl, 'Amsterdam - the Cradle of English Newspapers', *The Library*, 5th Series, 4 (1949); F. Dahl, *Amsterdam - the Earliest Newspaper Centre of Western Europe* (Hague, 1939); F. Dahl, *Dutch Corantos 1618-1650, A Bibliography and an Introductory Essay on Seventeenth Century Stop Press News* (Hague, 1946).

revisionists who simply dismissed their significance.⁵ This has led to view that newspapers were politically harmless, catering to elite groups and controlled by the authorities, and to a failure to consider the consequences and significance of periodicity.

There are, however, signs of change, with some recognition of the excitement that news reports generated. Sommerville included a brief overview of the corantos and newsbooks of the 1620s in his work on the significance of periodicity in the development of the early newspaper and Raymond has acknowledged foreign news publications as precursors to domestic newsbooks of the 1640s. Neither adds to our knowledge of corantos and foreign newsbooks but both signal a move in newspaper history from details of production towards joining with other historians in a consideration of readers, their motives and the way they were influenced by what they read.⁶ Meanwhile Michael Frearson, through his work on the early 1620s has explored the implications of periodicity and recognised the potential impact and influence of these publications. He identified their Protestant perspective and greatly expanded our understanding of how the news was spread beyond London. Most recently, two further articles have appeared taking somewhat tangential glimpses, again at the 1620s with Nicholas Brownlees looking at the occurrence of direct speech in newsbooks edited by Thomas Gainsford 1622-4 and Marcus Nevitt considering Ben Jonson's criticism of the unpredictability of their publication days. However, none of this amounts to a full account of this emerging media and its significance but, by concentrating on the 1620s, these works help to support arguments advanced particularly effectively by Cogswell and Cust that foreign policy was widely discussed outside Parliament in that decade.⁷

⁵ Seibert; Lambert; S. Lambert, 'Coranto Printing in England', *J.N.andP.H.*, 8, (1992).

⁶ C. J. Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (N. Y./Oxford, 1996), 22-8; J. Raymond, 'Irrational, Impractical and Unprofitable: Reading the News in Seventeenth Century Britain', in K. Sharpe and S. N. Zwicker, *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003); J. Raymond, 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century', and I. Atherton, 'The Itch Grown a Disease: Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century' in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed., J. Raymond (London/Portland, Or., 1999); F. J. Levy, 'How Information Spread among the Gentry, 1550-1640', *J.B.S.*, 21 (1982); Raymond, 7-9, 12-3, 90-4; J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in early Modern Britain* (Cambridge., 2003), 128-138.

⁷ M. C. Frearson, 'The Distribution and Readership of London Corantos in the 1620s', *Serials and their Readers 1620-1914* (Winchester/New Castle, 1993); M. Frearson, 'London Corantos in the 1620s' in

Only in recent years have historians of the early seventeenth century begun to explore events leading to the Civil War in their full British context. The next step towards seeing England as an integral, if outlying, part of Europe and a player and victim of the Thirty Years' War, has yet to be fully taken. Jonathan Scott has criticised the insularity of the English historical approach to this period in the face of a story about the sweeping progress of the Counter-Reformation. He pointed out that in the 1620s, 1670s and 1690s the English were absorbed in Continental affairs far more than they were interested in events in Scotland or Ireland. This, he argued, was because England's troubles 'were part of, and cannot be understood apart from, the historical experience of Europe'. In *England's Troubles* he described a single European conflict where the last act was not the Peace of Westphalia but the execution of Charles I. English fear of popery spanned the century, crossed social and political boundaries and was only explicable in a European context. Scott, like Hirst, Lake, Cogswell, Morrill, Reeve and Cust emphasised the importance of political and religious beliefs, noting that men killed, tortured and executed for these and that it was 'above all the effect of the European war upon public opinion from 1618 which applied intolerable pressure to an institutional superstructure incapable of making war'.⁸

The wider, European perspective advocated by Scott is more immediately evident in the history of the politics of information since the study of the dynamics of communication involves tracking a process of sharing information from city to city, and country to country. By the late sixteenth century information spread the length and breadth of the Continent and in the first half of the seventeenth century everywhere in Europe experienced an increase in the availability of printed news. This thesis follows upon the work of Jurgen Habermas who identified the circulation of news as a prerequisite for

Annual, 5-17; N. Brownlees, 'Spoken Discourse in Early English Newspapers' and M. Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson and the Serial Publication on News' in ed., J. Raymond, *News, Networks in Seventeenth Century Britain and Europe* (London/N. Y., 2006); Cogswell, 'The Politics of Propaganda'; Cogswell; T. Cogswell, 'The People's Love: the Duke of Buckingham and popularity', eds., T. Cogswell, R. Cust and P. Lake, *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain* (Cambridge, 2002); R. Cust, *The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626-28* (Oxford, 1989), 317.

⁸ J. Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth Century English Political Instability in a European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), 15, 21, 27-9, 51, 54; D. Hirst, *England in Conflict 1603-1660, Kingdom, Community, Conflict* (1999); Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, 28, 30, 310; J. Morrill, 'The Religious Context of the English Civil War' in J. Morrill, *Nature of the English Revolution* (1993), 68; Reeve, 37-40, 62-5, 70-1.

the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere, by tracing the origins of information networks linked to the development of the market economy and leading to growth in the public discussion of contemporary events.⁹ It recognises that London was very much a part of a wider diplomatic community, linked to other capital cities; part of a wider trading community, connected through the ports of the Low Countries, the Baltic and the Mediterranean; and part of a confessional community based upon the Protestant brotherhood of Churches and through the Catholic community, to Antwerp, Madrid and Rome. These communities saw the foreign policies of James and Charles as part of the European conflict and observed how the government's acts and omissions contributed to the political and military confusion that perpetuated conflict. News covered the progress of the Thirty Years' War as it spread to bring in many nations. The Truce between Spain and the United Provinces ended. France and Sweden played an increasing role in the second half of the war. Finally, the British Isles, after years of indecision and ineffectiveness, became fully a part of the conflict. Corantos, followed by newsbooks, provided almost weekly accounts of the progress of the conflict and became vehicles of this involvement, along with the newsletters of merchants, intelligencers and diplomats and the comings and goings of mercenaries, traders and embassies.

As in England, the European study of newspaper history has emphasised bibliography and practical aspects of production, travel, communication and datelines. There is little that spans the Channel and embraces the cultural and political context. Goran Leth noted that research into the first European newspapers on the mainland has been too bibliographical, though he and Paul Arblaster studied relationships between the printing and news industries in the Low Countries and London and the way these reflected religious affiliations, and Brendan Dooley and Sabrina Baron have brought together a collection of useful articles intended to begin an exploration of the European political information business using an interdisciplinary approach.¹⁰

Tensions grew in Europe as Catholic rulers went back on their agreements with Protestants and war ensued. Anxiety in Protestant

⁹ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 13-6.

¹⁰ G. Leth, 'A Protestant Public Sphere', in *Annual*, 67; P. Arblaster, *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of the Catholic Reformation* (Leaven, 2004); DandB.

communities created a significant market for news, while the unfolding, geographically dispersed and complex events of the Thirty Years' War provided the content. England was involved from the beginning through Elizabeth's marriage to Frederick of the Palatinate and his decision to accept the Bohemian Crown. James's attempts to negotiate were followed by his decision to call Parliament in 1621 to raise funds to support military action in defence of the Palatinate. The English middle classes, supportive of the Protestant cause in Europe and sympathetic to the plight of their Princess, watched anxiously as they prepared to consider how best to support the War and how to respond, but the Crown's pacific policy led to conflict with Parliament. Charles' subsequent militaristic response was short-lived and unsuccessful. Even after peace was made with Spain in 1630, Britain was influenced by the Thirty Years' War. Many served in Dutch and Swedish armies. By the 1630s Charles' use of Ship Money, alliances and co-operation with Spain, combined with his policies of toleration towards Catholics and efforts to unify and beautify Anglican liturgy, changed the tone of debate. Questions in the early 1620s were about how effective and committed James was to his title as 'Defender' of the Protestant faith and how much he was being strung along and duped by Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador. By the late 1630s there were grounds for questioning whether Britain was experiencing the rolling back of Protestantism as witnessed elsewhere in Europe. Domestic affairs continued to be influenced much more than is generally recognized by the continuing conflict and by Charles' response.¹¹

This thesis explores impact the Thirty Years' War had upon the people of England and tells the story of news reporting in its broader European context. Early chapters show how the trade evolved through Europe and how London played its part in the news communication networks of Europe. These chapters show how news was received by government, the printing trade and customers. As Sharpe argues, a full history of the politics of the English Renaissance state must be based on the study of reading in the context of political culture, addressing how texts were produced, disseminated and received, how they were written and read. He argues that much recent work on pamphlets, news and

¹¹ Reeve, 226-74.

ballads has too simply read complex texts as straightforward documents, ignoring the fact that politics was a matter of rhetoric, display and representation where authority was won or lost through careful performance. The failure to recognise this has left open the question of how a society that appeared to speak in harmony divided in violent conflict. He has shown how social change and reading in particular gave people the opportunity to construct their own interpretations and values and how Protestants and Catholics defined themselves through their distinctive modes of reading. For Protestants 'the journey to faith was a continuous process of interiorising the word' and this involved strenuous and purposeful reading and writing.¹² I do not attempt to deconstruct news texts for their symbolic and cultural meaning, nor to delve into the early seventeenth-century world view and philosophy of knowledge. For this there are the works of Sharpe, Sommerville and Shapiro, but I demonstrate the significance of the introduction of periodical foreign news reporting as a publishing initiative spawned in the Protestant trading and faith community of northern Europe.¹³ For its survival this trade needed to take account of other interests, including the Catholic news-reporting world of Antwerp, of the Crown, and of the trading interests of the Stationers' Company in London. I re-examine the production figures and conclude that, taking into account the implications of periodicity and fluctuations in demand, publication was on a far larger scale than imagined hitherto. The number of issues in circulation, particularly in the early years of the 1620s and 1630s, meant that people everywhere would have become aware of the Thirty Years' War and started to reflect upon England's role.

Periodicity also generated a need for the publishers to maintain sales and reach beyond the ready-made market of the upper echelons and the newsletter writing community by taking their information to a wider social mix of the population. London was growing and living standards rising. A growth in

¹² Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, ix, 5, 8, 15, 19; K. Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge, 2000), 13, 25; Sharpe and Zwicker, *Reading, Society*, 8-11.

¹³ J. P. Sommerville, *Royalists and Patriots, Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (London/N.Y., 1999); K. Sharpe, 'Ideas and Politics in Early Stuart England', *History Today*, 38 (1988); K. Sharpe, 'A Commonwealth of Meanings, Languages, Analogues, Ideas and Politics' in *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (London, 1989); B. J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England 1550-1720* (Ithaca/London, 2000).

spending power was creating a consumer society in which the 'middling sort' emulated the lifestyles of higher social classes. They had increasing access to written material because they had more disposable income and the cost of printed works was falling in real terms. Also they were more literate, especially in London where there was a large class of tradespeople. In Chapter 5, I explore the way editors provided new markets with an education in European politics, the Counter-Reformation and its military (though not its diplomatic) implications. This chapter also explores how the editors of the most productive years struggled to overcome a poor reputation of their trade and to substantiate their claim to be the purveyors of 'one truth' and the authority on events as they unfolded notwithstanding that news supply was uncertain, rumours abounded and events in Europe were repeatedly challenging established concepts of harmony and order.

With our view of the 1620s completely revised since the 1970s by many works of the historians noted above, there is a need to explore the way this new understanding fits within and changes our perspective the high politics of the 1620s and 1630s and whether it contributes towards an explanation of the fear of popish conspiracy and distrust of the monarchy by 1640.¹⁴ Chapter 6 is the longest chapter and poses questions about how well James I and Charles I apprehended the nature of the threat to their position that events on the Continent created. It follows the evolution of the relationship between the Crown and the publishers; both were influential in the production (or at times non-appearance) of the news. This relationship has been the hotly contested ground between Whig historians and revisionists, who from their opposing camps have equally failed to recognise pragmatism or to see the extent to which the Crown's attitude was shaped by the foreign policies it was pursuing, or how the relationship evolved through trial and error in the face of a completely new genre and social and political phenomenon. A recent upsurge in studies of both James and Charles has been helpful but none has explored the extent the Crown and the foreign news publishers worked together when their interests

¹⁴ Sharpe, *Remapping*, 322; especially relevant Cogswell; Reeve; C. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1983).

coincided.¹⁵ Even the most recent historians of the early Stuart news media, seemingly hypnotised by the 1632-8 news ban, have missed the extent to which Charles and his officials participated in the news trade and influenced foreign news publication both before 1632 and through the *Swedish Intelligencer* thereafter. This chapter builds upon the work of Cogswell who explored Buckingham and Laud's relations to the media and opens a discussion of the roles of William Watts, and Secretaries Georg Weckherlin and Robert Reade in the publications of 1630s. It concludes by proposing a revised view on how the foreign news trade influenced and was integrated into news publishing in the 1640s.¹⁶

Bibliographical

My interest in early seventeenth-century news reporting dates back to the mid-1970s under the tutorship of Gerhardt Benecke: archives in Germany were opening up and revealed that the approach that had been adopted in England, with its almost exclusive focus on a Dutch heritage, was too limiting. So, too, was the Whig approach to the history of journalism. This told a traditional story of the triumph of the press over censorship and seriously under-valued the interest of early news publications. I read English news reports alongside extracts from German publications of the same period and the letters of news correspondents in England and could see that news coverage was far more extensive and informative, and was taken far more seriously by contemporaries, notwithstanding their criticisms, than had ever been contemplated by twentieth century English historians who readily, and seemingly without any curiosity, accepted the Whig verdict of 'censored' and 'bland'. I knew that there was a more interesting story to be told.

Since then revisionist versions of an essentially cohesive pre-Civil War society with little interest in questioning the Whig version of press control have

¹⁵ J. Wormald, 'James VI and I: two kings or one?', *History*, 68 (1983); W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997); P. Croft, *King James* (Hants/N.Y., 2003); A. Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI and I* (2004); J. Bowle, *Charles the First* (1975); Reeve; Sharpe; C. Carlton, *Charles I; the Personal Monarch*, (London and N.Y., 1995).

¹⁶ Wormald, 'James VI?'; W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997); P. Croft, *King James* (Hants/N.Y., 2003); A. Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI and I* (2004); J. Bowle, *Charles the First* (1975); Reeve; Sharpe; C. Carlton, *Charles I; the Personal Monarch*, (London/N.Y., 1995).

given way to a post revisionist interest in public opinion and its formation. Tessa Watt and Margaret Spufford's explorations of cheap print and news dissemination exposed the variety of means by which news could penetrate different levels of society and regions, opening up the tantalising prospect that potentially the whole of England could have been reached with news of the Thirty Years' War. Annabel Patterson's view that there is a read-across between history, culture and literature offered liberation from the existing ways of reading historical texts. News publishers were not producing sophisticated literary work, nor endeavouring to retain Crown patronage in the way John Donne and Ben Jonson were, but they were aiming for continuity of production, so they so they walked a tight rope of sorts in seeking to maintain a working relationship. Moreover, their publications recounted a pertinent story at a time when the English populace was concerned about the commitment and affiliations of the Crown. I was also pleased to discover that a more critical attitude to the traditional story of rigid censorship was emerging particularly though Susan Clegg and Fritz Levy's explorations of nuances in the relationship of James to the press.¹⁷ Meanwhile, debate around the development of polarities in public opinion in the 1620s provided a new context for the story of foreign news reporting. Most recently, post-revisionist interest in public opinion has led to a further shift in interests so that, from having pursued a topic that was very marginal to the mainstream, I find myself working in a more popular arena.

All but the few post-1640 surviving issues are now listed in Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue* which largely supersedes Dahl's original bibliography. Together with Nelson and Seccombe and Wing this identifies a total of over 400 different corantos and newsbooks including reissues and new editions, and Thomas Archer's newsbooks. To these we can add versions of the longer news compilations of the 1630s, under a variety of titles including *Swedish Intelligencer*. I have studied well over 50 % (some in the form of microfiche from North American libraries) and complemented this with reading the correspondence of newsletter writers some of which includes material from

¹⁷ See especially, Watt; M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories, Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1981); A. Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* (1993); Clegg, especially Ch. 5; Levy, 13, 17, 31-4.

(and even transcripts of) additional corantos and newsbooks. I have also read and drawn upon many other printed works from the period, including printed sermons, broadside ballads, and pamphlets. In addition, Walter Schumacher's study in 1975 of the Thirty Years' War as reported in English publications provided a review of the story told by pamphlets, ballads and newsbooks.¹⁸ Little of the foreign news available to seventeenth-century readers was from primary sources or penned by eye-witnesses, rather it was compilations of second and third hand accounts of events. I have read these alongside secondary sources compiled largely independently of the contemporary media. Wedgwood in particular provided an account, as yet unsurpassed, of what was happening where and when that allowed me to place reporting and reactions in their context and to observe the extent to which timely and accurate information was reaching London.¹⁹

For the stationers' trade in London this new commodity came with a need to develop new skills of financial management, news editing, marketing and distribution, and negotiation with the authorities. In the absence of records from the stationers (due to the fire of London), I used later evidence from the London book trade, plus evidence relating to printing and publishing across Europe supported by the records of the Stationers' Company which show how the Company managed and regulated the trade.²⁰ State papers and related contemporary correspondence provide evidence about Crown control, along with the most recent studies noted above. I have added the largely unexamined correspondence, journal and writings of Weckherlin, licenser and secretary to successive Secretaries of States during 1620s and 1630s, which give a view of his, and obliquely, the Crown and Privy Councillors', involvement during that period.

Dahl remains the primary source of information on the Dutch news trade but a new generation of European media historians is beginning to expand our

¹⁸ Schumacher, Thesis.

¹⁹ There were between 700 and 1000 different issues between 1620 and 1642. Ch. 4, 133-37 on the survival of corantos and newsbooks; I have used Wedgwood in references throughout the notes but also drawn upon J.V. Polisensky, *The Thirty Years' War* (1970); S. H. Steinberg, *The 'Thirty Years' War' and the conflict for European Hegemony 1600-1660* (1971); G. Pagés, *The Thirty Years' War 1618-1648* (1970); R. G. Asch, *The Thirty Years' War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-1648* (1997).

²⁰ S. Parks, *John Dunton and the English Book Trade* (Garland, 1976); Ch. 4, 118-9.

understanding of the trade, including Paul Reis on news publication networking around the Baltic. Paul Arblaster has provided a European and Catholic perspective of the news trade in 1620s and 30s, the sourcing of material through news networks that conveyed reports, its printing and marketing. His thesis looks at the work of Abraham Verhoeven in Antwerp and his articles are beginning to address the gaps in our knowledge of the supply chains. This information can now be added to what we know about news networks on this side of the Channel.²¹

Michael Frearson has done most recently to raise the profile of English corantos and newsbooks and to argue that their influence upon public opinion was significant. He concentrated on the period from October 1622 to December 1624 and explored the commercial motivation of the publishers and the way their news reflected a Protestant perspective that was implicitly critical of James' foreign policy. He argued that the Crown was aware of their significance and that James controlled publication as effectively as he could.²² His thesis demonstrated the importance of the trade in the early 1620s, pointing out that newsbooks accounted for an eighth of all surviving titles for 1623 and over 60% of the titles produced by the news publishers between 1620 and 1624.²³ His calculations of print runs, exploration of the use of different printers, and his insights into news dissemination which demonstrated how effectively the network of carriers and vendors spread news beyond London, supported an argument that the significance and market penetration of these publications has been consistently under-estimated by historians. I have been able to build on this, to press the implications of periodical publication further, to explore how the publishers overcame unique, on-going copy supply, labour, distribution and financial issues. This has allowed me to suggest a clear relationship between peaks in public interest in both 1620s and 1630s and survival that is more easily explained through the evidence that publishers worked flexibly to allow for variations in demand, commissioning variable print runs which fitted fluctuating circumstances. With stronger evidence about the volume of printed news available I have explored the consequences of

²¹ DandB.; Ries; Arblaster, *Antwerp*.

²² Frearson, 'The Distribution'; Frearson, 'London Corantos', 1-25.

²³ Frearson, Thesis. 129.

periodicity for readers.

Frearson's focus on the early 1620s, with only a brief review of early 1625 and a reflection on the 1632 ban, allowed him to assess the significance of the foreign news publications in relation to James I's attempts to negotiate with Spain and the unpopularity of the Spanish match but did not allow him to follow the fluctuations in the fortunes of the publishers. I have followed the story through both sloughs and periods of heightened interest in the war; with France in 1627, when new hope in Charles I was subsequently dashed by the failure of the Rhé expedition; with the entry of Sweden into the conflict in 1630, where the successes of Gustavus Adolphus again led to longer term disappointment; and beyond, to an assessment of the way in which experience in regular news publication influenced news trade developments after 1641. By studying the content of the newsbooks from 1620 through to their demise I have been able to observe the Protestant bias of the foreign news as a whole and to see that neither reporting nor affiliation was generally as coherent as in the two years observed most closely by Frearson which were, in any case, untypical as Thomas Gainsford, the first English newsbook editor, edited much of the reporting. Because Frearson did not study the sources of material Gainsford was using, he missed inbuilt biases. I have looked at how the news reached London, what happened in London, the value being added by the London stationers and the extent to which Gainsford and his successor Watts were in tune with readers.

Finally, contemporary journals, correspondence and commonplace books, and recent works upon these have provided insights into public opinion. Exciting contemporary data from playwrights, especially Ben Jonson, as well as from Gainsford, has been for decades, if not exactly overlooked, then certainly until very recently, under-valued as a source of information on their experience of getting the news in London. I hope that this thesis will in some measure help to address this.

Early Seventeenth-Century News Media

We are aware today of the immense impact of the media on political culture. But where did this start? For English historians it is tempting to begin in 1641 when there was a blossoming of newsbooks following events of the Long Parliament. But the taste for news and engagement with a periodical news press

predates this by two decades and I suggest this played a significant role in the cultural changes that made Civil War possible. This section reviews the news media and its strengths and weaknesses in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

The word 'news' came into common use after 1500. By the early seventeenth century the term was no better established than a variety of synonyms, including 'tydings' and 'relations'. Standards of the day did not recognise news as something good in itself and the term was not as well defined as it is today, though it is related to the word 'novel' ('nouvelle' in French or 'novela' in Spanish) to denote an account of something new. Similarly there was no consistently used name for printed periodical news publications. The words 'corantos', 'relations' and 'advisos' were the most common. Ries and Arblaster in their recent studies of seventeenth-century European news publication have used the term 'newspaper' to cover the periodical, usually weekly, printed newsbooks and newssheets covering a miscellany of the latest news reports that appeared in many cities under a variety of contemporary terms, including 'avisos', 'corantos' and *zeitungen*'. In England, when the bibliographical groundwork was established in the 1930s and 1940s, a convention was adopted of using the term 'coranto' for single sheets printed in columns on both sides, after the Dutch publications they came from. Quarto, 16 or 24 page issues appeared from 1622 onwards and these were called 'newsbooks'.²⁴ These had a greater diversity of sources and influences, established the publication of periodical news, reported on a wide range of current events, provided continuity of numbering and dating, prompted the development of methods of rapid distribution to the country and initiated an exploration of editorial style. Arblaster's definition of a newspaper could be applied throughout but in this thesis for clarity, particularly in Chapter 3 which deals with the transition from corantos to newsbooks, I distinguish between the two in the traditional manner.

Before the advent of the newspaper, sermons were the most universal form of regular communication and the single, most influential, organ of public opinion. Godfrey Davies drew attention to the role of the pulpits in spreading

²⁴ Frearson, in his thesis, switched terminology and called all periodical issues of foreign news published from 1620 to 1641 'corantos' whether Dutch or not in origin, single sheet or the fuller newsbook format. Raymond followed suit, reserving the word 'newsbooks' for digests of domestic parliamentary news that began in 1641; Ch. 6, 288-92.

news of events in Bohemia and intensifying interest in politics. Sermons could potentially reach every level of society since attendance at Church had been mandatory from the Reformation. In practice this was seldom enforced. A high proportion of sermons were delivered in universities and London, while rural parishes particularly in the north and west of the country were badly served. However, attending a good sermon was a popular activity. Preachers at key venues such as St Paul's Cross or the Spital attracted crowds. The importance of the sermon for the dissemination of information, and particularly for politico-religious propaganda, was fully understood by the Crown that controlled it closely. They used more important pulpits and market place rostrums for lessons in good citizenship. Proclamations and official news reports were delivered from them. Appeals for the poor, for discharged soldiers and prisoners of war were launched from them. Many did public penance at them. James used the pulpit to expound his *Book of Sports* in 1618. Charles repeated the exercise in 1633 and used the pulpit to raise funds.²⁵

Sermons were not always understood, though puritans, aware of the problem, made an effort to communicate simply and to tailor their sermons to each audience so that even the most ignorant among the congregation could benefit.²⁶ Good sermons were given a second lease of life when printed. A preacher's views could be circulated as political tracts and pamphlets, printed crudely on inexpensive paper. The message then reached many more people. It was preserved and could be quoted by like-minded preachers at a later date. Many sermons appeared in print, demonstrating their popularity. Sermons were also 'profitable stealing', pirated either from the authorized published version or the preacher's notes, or even from the notes of a member of the audience, potentially misrepresenting the original.²⁷

²⁵ Just one sermon per parish per year would have meant at least 10,000 a year. (Parsons, vicars and curates were expected to deliver quarterly or monthly sermons in their parishes, plus sermons for religious festivals). G. Davies, 'English Political Sermons 1603-1640', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 3 (October 1939), 4, 7; R. Bayne 'Religion' in *Shakespeare's England*, 1 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1916), 48-78. Attendance could be very large and include many Londoners who did not regularly attend their own parish church and visitors to London. M. Maclure, *The St Paul's Cross Sermons 1534-1642*, 1 (Toronto and Oxford, 1958), 7-8; C. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (1958), 262; G. Davies, *The Early Stuarts 1603 - 1660* (Oxford, 1959) 76.

²⁶ C. V. Wedgwood, *Seventeenth Century English Literature* (1970), 23; Hill, *Puritanism*, 263, 239; K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1970), 193.

²⁷ W. Fraser Mitchel, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson; A Study of Literary Aspects* (1932), 15.

Sermons were however limited as a means of communicating contemporary events. Their purpose was to provide instruction and invoke godly behaviour. Preachers generally used news in their sermons to prove points, inspire an emotional response from the congregation, or inform prayers. Contemporary examples of ungodly behaviour were contrasted with godly behaviour. Some news, such as the punishment of traitors was given attention while other events were ignored. Events in Bohemia, the Palatinate and in relation to the Spanish match were widely used to expound on the threats to Protestantism. However, to keep a congregation up to date on a regular basis, preachers needed to receive news regularly. Many came to rely on the foreign newsbooks and their interest was from time to time reflected in their prayers for the accuracy and truth of news reports.²⁸

Fox has shown many other ways in which news was disseminated by word of mouth, along the roads and rivers, at fairs and markets, in inns and hostleries, taverns and ale houses. He has created a picture of a country brimming with interest in news, speaking of it at every opportunity and passing on truth and rumour alike. As he acknowledged, orally transmitted news is especially vulnerable to error and exaggeration. To many the Court was a remote and fantastic place, where it seems people were willing to believe all manner of things were possible. Nonetheless, 'People everywhere might be furnished with up to date information... and on this basis they were able to form quite knowledgeable opinions'. Printed and other written sources of news continually supplemented and stimulated the oral circulation of news and Fox has illustrated the process with evidence of neighbours copying out and borrowing letters and rural artisans reading news to others.²⁹

Notwithstanding the strength of evidence demonstrating the permeability of written and oral media, when we turn to printing, we have to consider literacy levels. Cressy's analysis of signatures suggested that by the 1640s male literacy

²⁸ Maclure, *St Paul's Cross*, 1, 102 noted a report that in 1620, 'in spite of express warnings from the King' that the clergy were not to meddle in matters of state a 'younge fellow' spoke at the Cross, 'very freely' against the Spanish alliance. John Everard preached against the Spanish match and was imprisoned. Many pulpits were used for anti-Spanish sermons. Thomas Scot wrote at least 25 pamphlets between 1620 and 1625, on the need to fight for the Palatinate. *Vox Populi, or Newes from Spayne*, which purports to have been written by Gondomar ran into four editions in 1620. R. Zaller, *The Parliament of 1624* (Berkeley, C.A., 1971), 26-28; M. A. Breslow, *A Mirror of England Puritan Views of Foreign Nations 1618 - 1640* (Cambridge/Harvard, 1970), 27-28.

²⁹ Fox, 616, 609, 612.

was as high as 70-80% in London and female literacy up to 20% in London with perhaps 30% and 10% respectively elsewhere. Debate around these figures has suggested that they must be viewed as minima since reading was taught before writing and writing was a poor indicator of the ability to read. Just how many more people could read remains a matter for speculation, but a hierarchy of literacy closely associated with trades, social and economic position has consistently emerged and confirms that, within London, all but the poorest men could read, including tradesmen, craftsmen and artisans. These became patrons of cheap print. Some could read print, and in particular Black Letter print, but not manuscript. Women were especially likely to be able to read though not write. Of course, this means that while we have evidence of reading from the most educated levels of society where they participated in the correspondence or recorded their reading in journals and commonplace books, there were large numbers of others who read or heard news from others but left little evidence.³⁰

The broadsheet ballad was second only to the sermon in popular appeal, permeating all levels of society and readily accessible to the unlettered. It was printed on one side of a folio sheet so that it could be set up and struck off by an inexperienced workman and produced more quickly and cheaply than a pamphlet. Broadsheets were used for ballads and proclamations and were ideal for posting in public places. To attract customer's eyes a wooden block, or later a copper plate engraving, provided illustration. Broadsheets were ideal for political or moral messages because of their broad appeal. Ballads could be sung to a specified folk tune, and were advertised by travelling minstrels who sang at markets and fairs, who also taught the words and the tune. The allegories in the illustrations usually depended for their effect on popular images that could be appreciated by everyone but some had references that could only be appreciated by those familiar with Latin. This shows that interest extended far beyond the barely literate. The moral was most important, often with a

³⁰ D. Cressy, *Literacy and Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980), Chs. 4, 6, and 7; D. Cressy, 'Literacy in Context: Meaning and Measurement in Early Modern England', in eds., J. Brewer and R. Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (1993), 312, 315-6; K. Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', in G. Baumann, ed., *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition* (Oxford, 1986), 97-131; Fox, 'Ballads, Libels', 60; M. Spufford, 'First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing of the Humblest Seventeenth-century Spiritual Autobiographers', *Social History*, 4 (1979), 407-35.

strong feeling for the apocalypse and predictions of judgment day.³¹

Many ballads and libelous verses did not get into print. Bellamy has argued verse libel often supported the existing order but because they could be read within a context where the Court and its courtiers were seen as politically, sexually and religiously corrupt and where corruption was linked to a sinister popish threat to religion and liberty, 'sexual and other apparently apolitical allegations contained in the verse libels could carry powerful political meanings'. He concluded that they reveal political discontent and that their wide distribution allowed them to help politicize the nation.³² Their sporadic production reflects the contemporary issues that caught the imagination of the public. Ten ballads on the accession of James I were recorded in the Stationers' Company Registers. The deaths of Henry and Anne of Denmark were covered, as was the marriage of Elizabeth and Frederick. Nine ballads were registered on the Gunpowder Plot and proved so successful that they were produced until the beginning of the eighteenth century. One that was repeated many times appears to have been designed by Samuel Ward, an Ipswich preacher, and printed in Amsterdam in 1621 as a part of the political response to James in the context of the 1621 Parliament. It reminded readers of the threat of Spain and the dangers of appeasement. On the one side is a picture of the Armada and the words 'I blow and scatter' in the sky. On the back is the Pope in council with Philip II of Spain and the words, 'I see and smile'.³³

Many broadsides were printed abroad in English. Others were translated in England. The execution of John Barneveldt in 1619 was treated as a warning to abandon popery. In 1624 a ballad about the Amboyna massacre appeared entitled, *News out of East India of the cruell and bloody usage of our English merchants and others ... by the Netherlandish Governour*. Many ballads

³¹ *The Shirburn Ballads 1585 – 1616*, ed., A. Clark (Oxford, 1907), for examples.

³² Bellamy, 'Raylinge Rhymes', 296, 309.

³³ The verse proclaims, 'In eighty eight. Spayne armed with potent might
Against our peacefull Land came on to fight
The windes and waves, and fire in on conspire
To help the English frustrate Spaynes desire....
To second that the Pope in counsell sits
For some rare strategem they straine their witte
November 5th by powder they decree
Great Brytanes state ruinate should bee'.

Stephens, F. G. *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, Vol. 1 (1978), in *English Cartoons and Satirical Prints, 1320-1832*, Vol. 1., British Museum, fos. 41, 42, 43.

appeared in 1623 celebrating the return of Charles from Madrid. In the Pepysian Collection there is a ballad from around 1624 entitled, *High and Illustrious King of Bohemia*, while *Gallants, to Bohemia*, reflected a popular opinion in a chorus proclaiming, 'Let us to the warres againe'.³⁴ In those about the Thirty Years' War both James and Charles were criticized for failure to declare war. Two versions of the *Revells of Christendom*, dated 1609 and 1626, show James playing cards with the Pope, Christian of Denmark and several monks. All are cheating and fighting.³⁵ *The Kingly Cocke* shows Charles I napping with his hand on a sheathed sword. Gondomar stands by, playing a tune on a pipe. Buckingham, Elizabeth, and her Palatine family are also there. Through the window the fleet can be seen at anchor and Charles is saying, 'I desire To hold the peace' while Louis counsels him to 'Look to your owne deare blood ...[lest they] never more shall repossess their land'.³⁶

These commented on rather than related events. They concentrated on topical themes which lent themselves to a patriotic interpretation and they appeared in large numbers with as many as 2000 in a print. Several editions could circulate when something captured the imagination of the public. They could be distributed throughout Britain by minstrels who purchased them by the bundle, and would get a very wide circulation to most levels of society.³⁷ But for a more regular and consistent coverage of events, and for more factual reporting, something more was required.

The well-established way of transmitting news and views was by correspondence. Writing newsletters was a flourishing activity. The news and gossip exchanged by John Chamberlain and Dudley Carlton is probably the best known example, and remains a well known historical resource. Some letters were simply from one friend or relative to another and included news from time to time. However, many regularly corresponded with friends in distant parts for the sake of the news they could obtain. In reply, they sent news they had from other sources, such as merchants and political figures. Some had formal

³⁴ *Pepysian Ballads*, 1, fo., 94, 104, 102; *Gallants*, G. Eld (1620? S.T.C.3207).

³⁵ Stephens, Vol. 1 (1978), fo. 81.

³⁶ *The Kingly Cocke* (Amsterdam? 1636 or earlier), Stephens, *Catalogue*, Vol. 1, fo. 133.

³⁷ T. Watt, 'Publisher, pedlar, pot-poet: The changing character of the broadside trade, 1550-1640', in eds., R. Myers and M. Harris, *Spreading the Word, the Distribution of Print 1550-1850* (Winchester/Delaware, 1998).

arrangements: with a continuing responsibility came a need to build contacts and check their reliability. The Reverend Joseph Mead, a fellow at Cambridge, sent regular letters to his friend, Sir Martin Stuteville at Dalham in Suffolk. These were made up of news he had collected from Dr Meddus, a scribe in London, and others and from printed sources. Others, such as Rous, kept up a regular correspondence with friends, neighbours and relatives but also hired agents to supply news from strategic places. Among the letters received by Stuteville and Rous are transcripts of avisos from Cologne and material published in the Netherlands. John Pory regularly supplied news reports. Other correspondents whose letters have survived include Pickering, Rossingham, Hamilton, Flower, Thomas Larkin, Peter Moreton, Richard and Brilliana Harvey and Yonge. In Cheshire, Davenport shared news with members of his local network. Viscount Scudamore employed no fewer than nine news correspondents in the 1620s and 30s. James Howell, in his published version of his letters, includes writing to the Right Honourable Earl R of his 'portion of obedience' which he owes and to Lord Viscount of Colchester, and of writing 'according to your commands' while at the same time he was writing to others, lower down the social hierarchy, specifying his own requirements for printed material.³⁸

Harold Love explored scribal publication in this period showing poets and musicians wrote primarily for scribal transmission. The separates business, that involved the reproduction and distribution of political documents, state papers, polemical tracts and reports of parliamentary proceedings, resulted in manuscript copies in such large quantities that many have survived. Similarly, some letters may have had several hundred copies in circulation. Sabrina Baron suggests this medium had a capacity to generate 2–500 copies of a letter and that writers could provide a weekly service for a cost of about £5 a year. It was a profitable business that continued to thrive long after the advent of printed news as did the established practice of correspondence between gentlemen. Neither was initially adversely affected by the introduction of corantos and

³⁸ Eales, J. *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990), 94; J. Howell, *Familiar Letters* (1645), 1, 268, letter 15 March 1626; 163, letter 12 August 1622. Howell's letters were published in the 1640s while he was in prison, and he claims that his papers were seized when he was imprisoned. He must have been reinventing them since some remain in the family archives of recipients but they appear to present a fair picture of how he conducted his trade.

newsbooks because it included material that was vulnerable to censorship and also material of interest to those in power or near to circles of power but for which there was not sufficient demand to justify printing. Love concluded that a large body of anti-Court material was given wide circulation during the early Stuart period for commercial reasons and noted that many accounts appeared twice, first as separates then in compilations. Love identified a third type of scribal publication, where a text continued to multiply until interest in it failed. The 'process of multiplication would be driven by cultural energies quite as powerful as those which sustained the printed text'. The motive could be ideological or to trade one manuscript for another. User publication was not random, nor unstructured. It rested on agreement between the copier and recipient and copies travelled through networks based on social groupings and common interests. Love developed the idea of 'the scribal community' and included groups from the Court, officials, the aristocracy, gentry, merchants, members of professions such as the law, military, Church and navy.³⁹

These communities were, as I will show, also important for the circulation of corantos and newsbooks in England and for the dissemination of news from England to the rest of Europe. Their members shared the characteristics of political interest, literacy and a determination to keep abreast of the news through the sharing of information and they used the two modes of news dissemination in a complementary manner.⁴⁰ Many letters of news ranging from the occasional and casual to letters written by witnesses of events in response to requests for an account of what they had seen circulated every year. As networks spread out and interconnected across Europe, recipients could give letters a wide local distribution among family and friends. These letters were grist for compilations that became the raw material of corantos, avisos, zeitungen and newsbooks. Some went directly into the hands of printers who, if they foresaw sufficient public interest (or had space to fill), would use

³⁹ Love, 4, 9-10, 12-3, 37, 45-6, 73, 83, 180-3; S. A. Baron, 'The Guises of Dissemination in early seventeenth-century England', in DandB, 51-2. N. Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge, 2005) explores news communications in Elizabeth's reign and similarly demonstrates the significance of this media. In Chapter 4 she shows how news to and from the Court was spread. Chapter 5 looks beyond court circles, 166-7.

⁴⁰ Ch. 5, 183-4, 191; Ch. 6, 248, 274, for John Pory's business at the bookstore of Nathaniel Butter. A mixed scribal and printed news office was also reflected by Ben Jonson in *The Staple of News*. Ch. 4, 123, Ch. 2, 39-47, for the European news networks.

them to update their publication or to trade with those in other cities.

Printed pamphlets of news, sermons and other polemic material could be hawked through the streets of London or taken out into the country by carriers for sale, or they too could find themselves enclosed with a letter and circulating through a news community or network. Pamphlets, newsbooks and tracts were all printed in the same manner as books, though generally hastily and shoddily. Like scribal publications, they were potentially of more interest to the better educated, as they were more difficult to read and to understand than broadsheets, particularly if they were in a roman typeface, as many were. They were also more expensive, at perhaps 2 or 3 pence a copy rather than 1 penny, and produced in smaller printing runs, often 3 to 500 copies rather than the 1 or 2000 copies, which were typical of a ballad.

However, like the broadsheets, they were produced as a commercial proposition and included their share of news of miraculous births, weird phenomenon, murder stories and hangings, intended for a popular market. As with the lighter papers of today, news of Court pageantry was also popular. Pamphlets, for example, reported the awarding of honours and royal entertainments, with detailed description of all the clothes worn and banners displayed, and lists of all the noblemen in attendance. Many were published at the instigation of interested parties. In addition the Crown and others such as the East India Company would publicise particular events with the motive for publication often stated in the text. Official publications would usually come from the presses of the King's printer in the form of proclamations and manifestos, texts of state papers and treaties with foreign powers. Royal speeches, delivered in Parliament, were released to the press and James went so far as to argue decisions in print, for example, by publishing an *Apology for the dissolution of Parliament*, in 1622.⁴¹

Texts of foreign treaties, tracts apparently printed as pleas for assistance by distressed allies, reports of embassies and state occasions on the Continent, official publications, treaties and proclamations also appeared. Although generally favouring the Protestant cause, most translations of material originally published in other countries can be regarded as having been published in

⁴¹ S.T.C.9241, 14377; Ch. 6, 220-2.

London primarily for its commercial benefits. In the absence of evidence to suggest there was politically motivated financial support, we must assume that availability and saleability were the chief considerations of publishers and that they found the trade both convenient and profitable since large numbers of proclamations, manifestos, edicts, narratives and polemical treatises translated from French and Dutch sources have survived. It seems that, providing the works did not reflect badly upon allies, Government showed little interest and publishers willingly undertook the relatively simple task of translating works already prepared for publication.

Natalie Mears has shown the extent of printed news of foreign events available in Elizabeth's reign, including items of news from Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Vienna, Hungary, Lithuania, Turkey and Spain.⁴² John Wolfe stands out as a printer and publisher who, towards the end of the sixteenth century, took the foreign news trade to a different level. Wolfe had travelled and worked abroad. He maintained contacts in Italy and France and had connections with Gabriel Harvey that gave him access to Dutch news. He was a prolific printer and two thirds of his publications were news translations. From 1594 he was appointed printer to the City of London. The English Crown's concerns about internal division in France after the assassination of Henry III and English intervention in the wars between the Netherlands, France and Spain provided an opportunity to work in co-operation with Burghley and Walsingham to print news of events, particularly in France. The majority of these publications consisted of reports of battles, letters and edicts gathered by Wolfe's French and English contacts but they included lengthier and more explanatory publications. Most of Wolfe's work was Protestant and gave English readers what they were most likely to want, including news of Henry IV being supported by English soldiers, the villainy of the Guises, the Spanish threat, flattery of the English and their Queen, but nothing of Leicester's unsuccessful Dutch expedition or the conversion of Henry IV. Yet in true entrepreneurial spirit, if the material was interesting enough, Catholic material was published too. The frequency and volume of his foreign news publications in the 1580s and 90s do not however qualify him to be counted as the publisher

⁴² Mears, *Queenship*, 149-152, 155-6.

of the first English newspapers. He did not achieve periodicity and his pamphlets and tracts lacked the principal distinguishing characteristic of corantos and newsbooks, variety of content.⁴³

Occasionally newsbooks appeared with a more varied content consisting of summaries, or extracts from letters from a variety of sources. In 1595, *Newes from Rome, Venice, and Vienna, touching the ... proceedings of the Turkes against ... Austria...Also the true Copie of a... Petition... of the afflicted in those parts*, appeared in London printed by John Danter and published by Thomas Gosson. This has a picture of a soldier on horseback at the front and subtitles though the text indicating the source of a variety of reports. It is interesting, not only because it so closely foreshadows the newsbooks that were to appear in the 1620s, but also because of its Catholic origin. Similarly, in 1597, *Newes from... Spaine, Antwerpe, Collin, Venice...* was printed by Valentine Sims, demonstrating that other publishers were like John Wolfe willing to publish whatever came to hand that would sell. *A Relation of all matters passed....since March last to the present 1614*, was published in London that year and translated from *Mercurius Gallobelgicus* from Cologne.⁴⁴ None, however, provided any sustained periodical reporting of news.

The treatment by the press of news of the marriage of Frederick V, Elector Palatine, to Princess Elizabeth and of the subsequent involvement of Frederick in Bohemia, testifies to the interest of readers and the readiness of London publishers to respond. The marriage was celebrated in London with at least 16 different pamphlets, many poems and printed sermons, including *Heauens Blessing, And Earth's Ioy*, which described the official celebrations and fireworks attending the marriage, *A Marriage Triumph, Of the Most Auspicious Marriage* which praised Fredrick as 'the Protestants protector'. This was the first royal marriage to be celebrated in nearly 60 years, so there was excitement and hope too that, as a Protestant match, it would result in a

⁴³ L. F. Parmelee, 'Printers, Patrons, Readers and Spies: Importation of French Propaganda in Late Elizabethan England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25 (1994), 855, 858-60, 869; C. C. Huffman, *Elizabethan Impression: John Wolfe and his Press* (N.Y., 1940), Ch. 3; D. B. Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing in England 1550-1640* (N.Y., Bibliographical Society of America, 1973), 6-7; Levy, 17-8, 20, 23-4, 27, 31.

⁴⁴ *Newes from Rome, Venice*, for T. Gosson (1595), S.T.C.21294; *Newes from divers countries*, V. Sims, (1597), S.T.C.18504.5; *A Relation of all matters*, Translated by R. Boothe for W. Welby (1614), S.T.C.20862; Ch 2, 66.

secure, Protestant succession. Political comment focused on James's intentions, interpreting the match as a sign of true anti-Spanish and anti-Roman Catholic sympathies. Other titles captured the emotional tone of the celebrations with titles such as *The Magnificent, princely and most royall entertainments* and *The Marriage of two great princes*, and Ralph Mabbe published a sermon by George Webbe, *The Bride Royall, or The Spirituall Marriage* which stressed the Protestant nature of the alliance. Two years later a translation of a sermon published at the celebration of Frederick's majority described him as 'most Christian', and the translator praised James for making such a good match for his daughter.⁴⁵

The Bohemian Revolt

This section shows coverage of the news of the Bohemian Revolt and the way London publishers handled Frederick's decision to accept the Crown.

The first printed material in English came from the Bohemian rebels who had renounced the election of Ferdinand and infamously defenestrated two of his councillors and a secretary. Their propaganda was first published to convince German opinion. It stressed legal justifications for the revolt, arguing that it was illegal for Ferdinand to control Bohemia while their King, Matthias, was alive; that Ferdinand violated the conditions of his election through attacking Protestant subjects in Bohemia; and that his election had been attained by force under illegal circumstances. This only began to reach London in 1619, after Matthias died and the Bohemian Estates formally renounced their earlier election of Ferdinand bringing Frederick into the picture. Much was first written in German and Latin then translated into English and printed by George Waters of Dordrecht, whose publications also include tracts written or translated by John Harrison, an English administrator who worked for Elizabeth. Other

⁴⁵ Schumacher, 13-17, *Heavens Ioy, or, heaven begun upon earth*, J. Harrison (1616), S.T.C.13019; *The Marriage of Prince Fredericke*, W. Barley (1613), S.T.C.11359; *The Magnificent, princely*, Butter (1613), S.T.C.11357; *The Marriage of two great princes*, Wright (1613), S.T.C.11358; J. Aretius, (pseud.) *Primula veri spanegerics, ... Palatinum*, (1613), S.T.C.736; A. Arelus, *In nuptus illustrissimus principis Frederici V* (1613), S.T.C. 960; G. M. Franchis, *De auspicatissimis nuptiis*, (1613), S.T.C.11308, and *A Marriage Triumph*, (1613), S.T.C.11309; T. Heywood, *A Marriage Triumph, Solemized* (1613), S.T.C.13355; A. Nixon, *Great Brittaines generall joyes* (1613), S.T.C.18587; H. Peacham, *The period of mourning... Together with nuptial hymnes* (1613), S.T.C.19513; A. Taylor, *Epithalamium upon the all-desired nuptials* (1613), S.T.C.23722; J. Taylor, *Heavens Blessing, And Earth's Ioy*, (1613), S.T.C.23763; G. Wither, *Epithalima: or nuptuall poems* (1612/13), S.T.C.25901.

material was published in English possibly in Middleburg, Amsterdam and the Hague in 1620.⁴⁶ There was little attempt to explain German institutions or clarify arguments for the benefit of an English readership. Booksellers in London must have believed there were enough sufficiently well-educated readers to buy these pamphlets who could appreciate the arguments as they stood. It was a cautious beginning for the London publishers, who could not, at first, have known how the Crown might respond. *The Golden Bull*, setting out the legal provisions relating to the succession of Princes Electors itself, was translated into English and published in London in 1619 by Nathaniel Newbury. This was a safe choice: there could hardly have been any political objection to the publication of a historic legal document to which both the Emperor and the Bohemian Estates could appeal for justification of their position.⁴⁷

News of the new election was registered for publication with the Stationers' Company in 1619 and Ralph Rounthwaite published *Newes From Bohemia. An Apologie*, which was a direct translation of an official statement in which the Bohemian Estates claimed they were defending themselves against subjection by the Church of Rome. Again, this was an official public document. By early 1620 Frederick had accepted the Crown and moved with Elizabeth to Prague. John Taylor's report of his visit to Bohemia was published in response to what he graphically described as continual requests for information about Bohemia and the fighting that had begun there, '[I] cannot passe the streets but I am continually stayed by one or the other, to know what newes, so that sometimes I am foure houres before I can go the length of two paire of butts'.⁴⁸

Early reports of military encounters were encouraging and the tone optimistic. Pamphlets and ballads called for recruits to go to Bohemia to join the Protestant forces. Others reflect the enthusiastic celebration of Frederick's decision and hopes of a strong Protestant alliance,

⁴⁶ Schumacher, 23-26, 38-9; Shaaber, *Some Forerunners*, 83-.5; *The Most Illustrious Prince*, G. Waters (Dort, 1619), S.T.C.11360; *The reasons which compelled the states of Bohemia*, G. Waters (Dort, 1619), S.T.C. 3212; *Declaration des causes* (London? 1619), S.T.C.11350.7; *Bohemiae regnum electivum. That is a plaine relation of the proceeding* (1620), S.T.C.3206; *Bohemica jura defensa. The Bohemian lawes or rights defended* (London? 1620), S.T.C.3205; *A briefe description of the reasons* (the 'Hayf' probably London, 1621?), S.T.C.11353.

⁴⁷ *The Golden Bull*, for N. Newbery (1619), S.T.C.13611.

⁴⁸ Arber, Vol. 3, 656; *Newes from Bohemia*, for R Rounthwaite (1619), S.T.C.3211; also *Newes from Bohemia, a true relation of the warres*, for R Rounthwaite (1619), S.T.C.3211.5; *The Last Newes from Bohemia*, (1620), no imprint and concerns the election of Frederick S.T.C.3208; J. Taylor, *Taylor his Travels*, Henry Grosson, (1620) quoted in Schumacher, 54.

The German States, and Netherlands,
Have mustered up their martiall bands;
The Denmarke king doth close combine,
His forces to the Palatine.

and openly called for English aid,
They looke for Ayde from Brittain, Horse and Foote,
With unbeleaved sommes of Golde to boote:...
When they heare Religion is the Cause,
They flocke amaine without stopping or pause.

John Taylor published a poem calling Englishmen to serve in Bohemia. Others listed all Frederick's supposed allies. Yet these attempts to inspire enthusiastic hordes to rush forward and enlist seem to have fallen on deaf ears. Sir Horace Vere's effort to raise 4000 men was cut back to 2000, and even then he found it difficult. He sent scouts out into the countryside and was met with what Chamberlain described as 'sharking and shearing, and such a deal of discontent'.⁴⁹

By the summer of 1620 a clearer situation was emerging and James's position, as would-be peacemaker and international statesman, was beginning to show signs of cracks, especially once rumours that Spinola was moving out of the Netherlands towards the Palatinate reached London. Frederick published two tracts giving his motives for accepting the Bohemian Crown that were printed in English in Germany. Others made more emotional appeals, accusing Ferdinand's Government of spoiling Protestant Churches, kidnapping, murder, and rape, while Ferdinand was criticized for being a Jesuit, having been educated at a Jesuit college, and having Jesuit advisers. Meanwhile, London publishers became bolder behind the shelter of false imprints. A tract called *A Plaine Demonstration of the Unlawful Succession*, with a 1620 Hague imprint, argued that Ferdinand had no lawful succession whatever since he was the product of an incestuous relationship. This was easily detected as a London publication: its only references were to English sources. It was traced to a publisher who was subsequently to become centrally involved in the regular publication of foreign news; Nathaniel Butter was arrested. The printer,

⁴⁹ *A most true relation*, (Dort? London? 1620), S.T.C.3210; *Gallants*, quoted in Schumacher, 80–81; J. Taylor *An English-man's Love to Bohemia*, (Dort, 1620) S.T.C.23751; *The Late Good Successe*, S.T.C.3209/11356; and *Letter written by a French Gent*, S.T.C.10812, quoted in Schumacher, 80–81, and E Thomson, *The Chamberlain Letters* (1965), 355.

William Stansby, whose press was closed down for this initiative, was also later to associate himself with more regular publications. Secretary Calvert commented that the emerging interest in forbidden books and transcriptions was because sales were good but his particular concern was the continued reprinting of *Vox Populi* and its criticism of the relationship with Spain. No decision to control the press was made until later that year.⁵⁰

In July Spinola set out for the Rhine and the Elector of Bavaria's army led by Tilly crossed the Austrian border. Sir Horace Vere set out via the Netherlands with English forces for the Rhine. Conway and Western were dispatched to assert the English diplomatic interest but it was only after Spinola attacked the Palatinate at the end of August that it became clear to James that a stronger political line was necessary. In October the first steps were taken towards calling Parliament to ask for funds and writs were issued in November, just days before the fateful Battle of White Mountain.⁵¹ With the most educated, literate and influential of the population about to assemble in London for Parliament and with subsidies to support a war in the Palatinate firmly on the agenda, the appetite for news was growing stronger. A few of the most interested publishers in London, through their contacts with the book trade in Amsterdam, Cologne, and Frankfurt in particular, already knew how to set about meeting this demand.

Conclusions

We are aware of the importance of news. In the last decade much has been written about the reciprocal nature of oral and written news transmission in the early seventeenth century, and the way information could be spread by reading out reports, the role of verse and the potential thereby for news to shape the attitudes of all levels of society. Raymond recently summarized current thinking,

As we continue to write the history of these media, we create a map

⁵⁰ *The Declaration and information of the King of Bohemia* (1620), S.T.C.11350; *A declaration of the causes* (Middleburg probably London?1620), S.T.C.11351; *Plaine Demonstration*, translated out of French and German originals and consisting of translations of documents including what looks like a coranto (1620), S.T.C.10814; *C.S.P.D. 1619-23*, 324; W. W. Greg, *A Companion to Arber* (Oxford, 1967), 61f, 66f, 209ff; L. Hanson, 'English Newsbooks, 1620-41', *The Library*, 4, 18 (1937-8), 364; Ch 3, 95-80.

⁵¹ Wedgwood, 114, 121-2.

where oral, manuscript and print transmission coexist, where commerce and politics need to be understood side by side, where social and intellectual networks are mutually explanatory... The contours of the news appears more clearly when seen within the contours of other histories.⁵²

To date, notwithstanding the evident importance of events in Europe and a growing understanding of role of English foreign policy in the process of the polarisation of attitudes particularly during the 1620s, relatively little has been done to place corantos and newsbooks on this map, still less to explore their role in the 1630s and 40s. This thesis aims to address these gaps in our knowledge.

⁵² Raymond, *News, Networks*, 14.

CHAPTER 2

EUROPEAN SOURCES

This chapter describes the way news was collected and exchanged across Europe, demonstrating the nature and constraints of the material available. It explores the scope of subject matter, how and why it was collected and transmitted in the form it reached England, who printed it, and the extent to which issues of bias and inaccuracy arose in this process.

The news trade was, and remains, an international phenomenon. From the beginning it was the product of European-wide community that networked across the Continent and beyond. England was part of this community both economically and politically. It played its part fully, transmitting and receiving news, directly and through a diaspora that included printers, writers and correspondents. Anyone who attempts to understand the development of the news trade in England while looking at English publications alone will miss its true significance. Writers of English history who have criticized or dismissed London corantos and newsbooks have generally done so with little reference to the material available to its publishers. Frearson and Schumacher studied the content of London publications but neither explored their European sources. This inevitably limited their understanding of issues such as accuracy and bias, making them inclined to share with Whig historians a tendency to emphasise censorship over some broader cultural, economic, and confessional issues as well as more practical production factors. Scott found that even among those currently reviewing early Stuart history in its British context ‘the “European layer” has been frequently ignored’. However, there are now over 50,000 known copies of pre-1700 German printed periodical news publications in addition to the known Dutch corantos, the work of the French presses in the 1630s and perhaps a further 2,000 periodical news issues from the Habsburg Netherlands, all of which are attracting new research. This growing body of knowledge allows us to see the role of London in context with an understanding of how news was gathered, how the industry worked as an interconnected whole.¹

¹ DandB., 7-8; S. Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980); K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (Yale/London, 2000), 37, 59-60, also H. Love on ‘scribal communities’ Ch 1, 25-8; J. Scott, *England’s Troubles: Seventeenth-Century*

From the fourteenth century onwards across Europe, merchants' factors, private intelligencers and diplomatic agents spent time writing reports on recent events. This activity grew in the sixteenth century alongside printing. Dissemination of news was supported by mutually reinforcing phenomena: the first two, business interests of trade and belief systems that stressed universalising principles, were already strongly established by the seventeenth century. Formal and informal information networks linked all courts and cities. The third factor was added by the commencement of hostilities in the Thirty Years' War. To trade successfully merchants needed to know where forces were being recruited, manoeuvred or in conflict. Plus there was a broader confessional interest in the progress of the war that stimulated demand for news from a wider readership and supported a step change in news dissemination.

International trade and diplomacy interests, and the financial interests that linked the two, depended for their success on the exchange of information. German historians approach the history of news printing in theoretical models of communication and media history. Among them Habermas has been particularly influential in developing a theory of the links between knowledge and power based on a model of a 'public sphere', consisting of the political realm, the world of letters, clubs and the press, and the culture of products. This was bourgeois (comprising merchants, traders, officials, school teachers, academics and scribes), pluralistic, and engaged in a process of rational consensus formation through public discourse (later called by Habermas 'communicative action'). This theory recognizes that early capitalism brought about a new social order based on trade fairs and long distance trade routes where the traffic in news developed alongside the traffic in commodities because merchants required ever more frequent and exact information about distant events. Merchants organized the first mail routes and great trade cities became centres for news. News became regular like the trade in commodities itself, with newsletters becoming weekly reports. The German 'Fuggerzeitungen' were typical. These sixteenth-century handwritten newsletters for use in the Court and within their firm used existing lines of postal communication and relied upon the great trading centres as the most productive sources of news. They covered events reported from Antwerp, Middleburg,

England's Political Instability in a European Context (Cambridge, 2000), 4, 15; Ries, 170-232; F. Dahl, 'Amsterdam – Earliest Newspaper Centre of Western Europe. New Contributions to the History of the First Dutch and French Corantos', *Hoet Boek* (N.R.) 25 (1838-9); F. Dahl, *Dutch Corantos 1618-1650, A Bibliography and an introductory essay on seventeenth-century stop press news* (The Hague, 1946); Arblaster, 4.

Hamburg, Frankfurt, Cologne, Venice, Rome, Paris and Constantinople. Initially these were not accessible to the public but in the sixteenth century printers in Augsburg and Strasburg began to make them public and added to the market in broadsheets that spread news of wars, floods, earthquakes and decrees. By the turn of the century there were semi-regular news sheets and pamphlets being published in many European cities covering Imperial Diets, wars, harvests, taxes, fleet news, the transport of gold and silver and reports on foreign trade. The reports had thus themselves become a commodity since selling letters increased their value and the profits.²

The Habermasian account points to ‘a broad strata of people participating as consumers of mercantile policy’. It underlines the commercial and functional nature of information exchanged across Europe – a factor that it is vital to any consideration of the quality or bias of printed news. The sources of information circulated were largely free of confessional or political bias since the primary objective of all participants was to exchange the most accurate information to allow trading, transport of goods and the circulation of letters of exchange. The commercial and utilitarian character of the newsletters networks on which published news is based is evident from any publication. Week in, week out, they monitor and report conditions of roads and travel, the prevalence of bandits (or, at sea, pirates and privateers), the impact of floods, famines, new taxes and diseases, as well as the whereabouts and movements of courts and ambassadors, all of which constitute vital information for those planning to transport commodities, open up new markets, or give financial backing to states or to new enterprises.

The seminal status of Habermas’s work is generally conceded and for many his thinking is a starting point for further research.³ The cultural neutrality of the Habermas model means that his explanation does not fully account for the transition of newsletter information into print for sale to a general reading public, or explain why the transition

² J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge Mass., 1989), 14-26, 30; C. Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1992), 6.

In Venice writers of newsletters were called ‘scittori d’avisi’,

Rome	‘gzettani’
Paris	‘nouvellistes’
London	‘writers of letters’ or ‘intelligencers’
Germany	‘Zeitunger’ or ‘Nouvellistes’

V. Von Klarwill, *The Fugger Newsletters 1568 – 1606*, (1926).

³ P. Johnson, *Habermas: Rescuing the Public Sphere* (London and N. Y., 2006), 15; Calhoun, *Habermas*, 41.

began primarily in German, Dutch and English speaking regions of Europe. For this it is necessary to consider the complexity of other factors at play. David Zaret pointed to the significance of religion as an issue in public debate and the role of Protestantism, with its emphasis on the application of conscience and opinion in self-reflection, noting that public opinion was centre stage in many of the key political events in seventeenth century England. He argued that printing shaped new modes of thought based on its appeals to public reason and that religion, science and printing all had roles in giving public opinion authority. He pushed back the era of appeals to public opinion from the late seventeenth and earlier eighteenth century to the reign of James I but conceded that public discourse did not reach the same level of rationality or universality as in the Habermasian liberal model.⁴ Others have looked still earlier with Natalie Mears, Peter Lake and Michael Questier exploring the extent to which the circumstances of Elizabeth I's reign created spaces for public discourse on topics central to the regime. They similarly concluded that despite evidence of news circulation and public discussion some of the features of the Habermas model are lacking in the earlier period.⁵

David Norbrook is among a group of English historians pointing to the significant expansion in public political discussion in England from the 1620s onwards. Like Zaret, Norbrook links this with strong religious motivations behind the emergence of the public sphere in England where 'the English monarchy could not be trusted to resist the process [of re-catholicisation] but was on the contrary likely to be complicit in it'. The belief systems of Europe stressed universalising principles and encouraged a community of interest that transcended national boundaries. Preachers and churchmen on both sides of the confessional divide travelled and shared ideas. The Synod of Dort addressed issues of

⁴ D. Zaret, 'Religion, Science and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-century England' in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed., C. Calhoun, (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1992), 214-6, 223-6.

⁵ N. Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge, 2005), Ch. 6 especially 215-6, explores news communications and public debate. She concluded that all classes of society were involved, men and women, but that the network of communications fell short of the Habermas model. While there was public discourse, it was haphazard and multi-centred. P. Lake and M. Questier, 'Puritans, Papists and the 'Public Sphere' in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context' in *The Journal of Modern History*, 72:3 (2000). 590-1, 625-7, identified religion as a key issue motivating public debate but they did not see participation or engagement with the media as an exclusively Protestant activity, showing how the Edmund Campion affair engaged all the media of the time, including the press, correspondence and the pulpit, and brought into the frame wider European interests in the re-catholicisation of England. But again, they recognised that this public debate fell short of the autonomous public sphere of Habermas. They identified a rudimentary public sphere that was a product of the regime's efforts to protect itself. What could be said, and to whom, remained critically dependent on shifting circumstances.

concern for Protestants across Europe and the Counter-Reformation made Protestants defensive and fearful.⁶

Christian Jouhaud has explored the literary field and the development of a public sphere in France in the 1630s under the watchful eye of Richelieu, seeking a more moderate model for its control of the press than the (by then) defeated devout party, while Thomas Schroder identifies the driver behind the growth of the news industry in seventeenth century Germany as a thirst for knowledge. The invention of new mechanisms for the diffusion of information provided the basis on which a new public sphere could then be constructed. This is what Habermas called the 'architecture' or a foundation course for the subsequent development of more self-reflective elements that characterised the fully formed liberal political public sphere. Schroeder and Lankhorst add that smaller German courts and Dutch municipalities supported the development of printed news as a supplement to existing systems of information that could also be influenced through patronage and the granting of privileges for a monopoly in a city. The threat to Protestantism that grew with the victory of the Emperor at White Mountain and subsequent Habsburg victories created an intense interest in European news beyond the merchant and ruling classes. Thus the war itself added a third internationalising factor and stimulus for news publication. As Scott explained, 'The crisis of 1618-48 threw not only the whole of religiously mixed, half-reformed central and western Europe into conflict, but Britain too, because Britain was part of religiously mixed, half reformed central and western Europe too', sharing neighbours' concerns for the survival of Protestantism.⁷

News of military activity was inherently interesting. Ambassadorial visits became more frequent and the discussion and anxiety around them became more intense. The number of ambassadors sent by even the English Crown during the 1620s and 30s was impressive and interest in the prospect of a marriage between Charles and the Spanish

⁶ D. Norbrook, 'The Early Modern Public Sphere', 5-7, in *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism and the Public Sphere*, ed., R. Burt (Minneapolis/London, 1994); S. Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, (Princeton, 1994). Raymond also disputes both the political neutrality and dating in the Habermas model, arguing instead that the 1640s was the real watershed and that much of the printing at that time was politically and religiously motivated. J. Raymond, 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century', 107-133, in J. Raymond, ed., *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London and Portland, Or, 1999), 117, 128.

⁷ C. Jouhaud, 'Power and Literature: The Terms of the Exchange 1624-42', 34-74 in *The Administration*, ed., Burt; T. Schroder, 'The Origins of the German Press', 123, 134-7, and O. Lankhorst, 'Newspapers in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century', 153-5, both in DandB.; J. Scott, *England's Troubles*, 28.

Infanta excited public interest across Europe. As conflict widened soldiers were recruited from across Europe, including Croats, Poles, Scandinavians, Russians, English, Scottish and Irish mercenaries and conscripts, increasing travel, experience and knowledge of Europe, and providing an additional focus of interest for families and friends at home. Merchants needed to know where forces were being recruited, about their location, quartering, provisioning, troop movements back and forth. Their reports additionally covered skirmishes, battles and other clashes between soldiers and the local population. This miscellany of information was recorded anonymously by merchants' factors and postal agents in a largely neutral, factual and functional manner and could be of a potentially wider interest. Periodical publication met demand for the most current news coverage possible. Once printed it targeted an increasing public. The main drawback was that reports were assembled from all directions, written by people from all confessional backgrounds in a level of detail that could be bewildering for the general reader anxious about the preservation of Protestantism across the Continent.

News Networks

This section examines the characteristics of the trade and diplomatic networks, demonstrating the reasons for their resilience and ability to stay relevant to contemporary readers. It also shows how publishers tapped into the news resources by making subscriptions.

Paul Arblaster described the 'interlocking news writing networks' as flexible, able to adapt to new institutions and events, and operating well beyond the control of any single government. He identified a news writing community functioning across Europe and extending beyond throughout the mercantile networks, for example, in the East and West Indies and Constantinople. Focusing particularly on Catholic writers, he illustrated the way this network played a key role in certain cities. Roman news writers provided papal court news, news from south Italy and the diplomacy of Catholic powers. This was supported by Jesuit correspondents in Vienna and Brussels. Verstegan, a Catholic refugee from England living and writing in Antwerp 1617-33, supplemented his news from the Jesuits with that from a consortium of English Catholic cloth merchants who had a clandestine trade in English Catholic books. He also had contacts with the Portuguese merchant community. These networks connected with others including, in Frankfurt, the

Protestant news service of Johann van den Birgden that was based at the Frankfurt post office until he was dismissed as Imperial Postmaster for his anti-Habsburg stance.⁸

News networks evolved and interacted organically. They fed off what was available and reacted to new stimulus. Networks ensured that readers were well provided with a fairly complete coverage of major events. Their flexibility meant they could easily extend to bring news from a new venue when events there became newsworthy. They supported one another, passing on whatever they received so that news of events rapidly reached all others and could be repeated in one place as easily as in another. A news publisher on the mainland of Europe could build up the quality and variety of a publication by subscribing to these networks. Thus Abraham Verhoeven, publisher of *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* in Antwerp, took newsletters from Cologne and Paris in 1620 then switched from Paris to Calais in 1622 and assembled regular reports from at least seven cities plus the Army of Flanders, while Johann Rudolf in Zurich was assembling news from eleven main centres. By contrast Jan Adriessen simply reprinted Broer Janz's Amsterdam coranto, only rarely adding material from another source. However, as Arblaster observes, a closer look at sources for any of the mainland publishers shows how broadly similar subscription strategies were – using Rome, Venice, Vienna, Prague, Cologne, Amsterdam and the Hague and adding Lyons, Leipzig, Breslau, Bremen and Brussels less often. The result was a 'degree of sameness'.⁹ In Chapters 3 and 5 I show how London publishers tapped into these networks by subscribing to publications in Amsterdam then broadening their reach to German and Antwerp sources. In this way they replicated the pattern of subscription adopted by others.

Though correspondents were normally found in higher social positions, this was not generally the correspondence of those with an 'inside track' on either diplomacy or military strategy. Full-time writers provided more reasonably priced though less exclusive news than those with the best contacts and news networks primarily had access to news that was already public in their locality, whether through letters or proclamations, conversations with those closer to events or personal eye witness accounts, but through

⁸ Arblaster, 54-6, 75-80, 82, 85. Originally called Richard Rowland, he had operated a secret press in Smithfield in 1581-2 and fled to Paris on discovery and resumed business as a printer in 1583 but was imprisoned there at the instigation of Sir Edward Stafford, the English ambassador. Adopting the new name, Verstegan subsequently settled in Antwerp and acted as an Anglo-Catholic agent, spy, intelligencer, author and translator. Rostenberg, L. *The Minority Press and the English Crown* (N.Y., 1971) 22-3, 32-33, 38, 139-40, 165, 182, 184.

⁹ Ibid, 6, 77-82, 84.

these media a large amount of generally reliable information was available. Although on the periphery of the European news market, London functioned as a news hub in much the same way as other European cities. James Howell was a glassware merchant who, within 5 years of travelling the Continent as a merchant, found the business of being a linguist and an intelligencer more profitable than glassware and specialized in news reporting. Earle's *Micro-Cosmographie* described the way St Paul's Walk in London acted as a point of news exchange, while Richard Brathwaite's description of a 'corranto-coiner' also shows that news for the foreign news trade was gathered in St Paul's (in the winter) and Moorfields (in the summer).¹⁰ Newsletter writers such as Chamberlain and Pory would visit St Paul's regularly to pick up news as well as relying on what they purchased and personal contacts. In addition, John Pory, working from Nathaniel Butter's premises, and Joseph Mead supplemented domestic news by making extensive use of the printed news from Europe in the services they supplied to customers outside London. John Dillingham, writing to Lord Montague in 1639, recognized the essential similarity between newsletter services in manuscript and printed newsbooks. The process of news dissemination was iterative and reciprocal. News radiated back from London to the Continent. Paul Arblaster found that between 1620 and 1629 Abraham Verhoeven was able to include 361 reports from England of which less than 40% reached him directly from England. The remainder circulated through news networks and reached his publication second or third hand: 22% arrived in Antwerp via France, 12% from the United Provinces and 11% came from Spain and Italy.¹¹

¹⁰ Howell's correspondence illustrates his method. In March 1622, he wrote to Mr William Martin in Brussels and promised to correspond with Mr Altham and buy letters. In return, he received German letters from William Martin that were 'so neatly couched and curiously knit together that [they] might serve for a pattern for the best intelligencer.' J. Howell, *Familiar Letters*, 3 Vols, 1, for James Dent (1645), 154; John Earle, *Micro-Cosmographie. Or, A Peece of the World Discovered: In Essayes and Characters* (1628), sigs. I11-K, quoted in Raymond, 'The Newspaper', 114-5; R. Brathwaite, *Whimzies: or a new cast of characters* (London, 1631), quoted in *The Times Tercentenary Handlist of English and Welsh Newspapers, Magazines and Reviews*, 9-10; R. Cust in 'News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *PandP*, 112 (1986), 70 quotes Francis Osborne, looking back on the early seventeenth century and describing the way 'gentry, lords, courtiers and men of all professions... meet in St Paul's by eleven...[to discuss] business... and news'.

¹¹ Pory, 56-58 and Ch. 3, 84; Mead was receiving both news from corantos and correspondence from friends and correspondents that he covered in his letters. For example, Harl. MS. 389. fo., 11, 9 February 1621, 'but the old gentleman... saw a letter from Cullen [and]... heard som others written from Prague and Vienna.'; Harl. MS. 389. fo., 17, 'From Venice Mr Pettie writes...'; Harl. MS. 389. fo., 67, 5 May 1621, 'Dr Meddus his ltr to Dr Chadderton the last week contained something not to be made common...'.. Dillingham is quoted in J. Raymond, 'The Great Assises Holden in Panassus: The reputation and Reality of Seventeenth-Century Newsbooks', in *Annual*, 5; J. Morrill, *Revolt in the Provinces, The people of England and the Tragedies of War 1630-48* (London and N.Y., revised 1999), 36; Arblaster, 79.

By no means all the news that circulated was printed. Some cities, such as Venice, provided an important centre for news exchange yet did not have locally printed news until 1640. Spain similarly was fully part of the news market but the newsletters they sent focused on domestic events and they had little printed news.¹² Printed news made visible the work of the news community as an international activity. It also revealed to a wider audience how much this community shared a similar perspective on what news was important. Networks can be identified by mapping news sources from any of the major centres. The cities that acted consistently as news hubs were Vienna, Prague, Cologne, Rome, Venice, Paris, Amsterdam and Hamburg. In addition, Madrid, Danzig, Calais, Breslau, Brussels, Antwerp, Milan, London and Augsburg are frequently cited. Less frequently we see Mainz, Genoa and Constantinople, plus others, including Lyons and Rouen. We can observe extensive networks in Germany, Austria and Bohemia reflecting interest in the war but also the engagement of major cities in Italy, Spain, the United Provinces, Habsburg Netherlands, Poland and England.

Postal System

The postal system was key to this trade. News exchange could be impeded by the irregularity of postal communications, vagaries of the routes taken, or weak links in the network. This section explores the service provided, methods used, times taken and disruptions suffered.

London publishers stated that corantos published in other countries were ‘publicly brought over by the posts’, while many German publications referred to the posts in their titles. For example, the Frankfurt news periodical was variously headed, *Univergreiffliche Postzeit(t)ingen* (meaning ‘the post paper that never goes out of print’), *Ordentliche Wochentliche Post-Zeitungen* or *Ordentliche Wochentliche Postzeitungen*. The Hamburg news of the late 1630s and early 1640s was simply entitled, *Post Zeitung*, and the Cologne *Raporten* from 1625-36 was called *Wochentliche Postzeitungen*.¹³

¹² Locally printed news began to appear in the Italian cities of Genoa, Florence, Milan, Bologna, Rome, Naples and Turin between 1639 and 1645. Spain and Portugal, like Italy, only began its own news printing in Barcelona and Lisbon in 1640s. Arblaster, 108; M. Infelise, ‘The war, the news and the curious: Military gazettes in Italy’, for later seventeenth-century printed news, and H. Ettinghausen, ‘Politics and the Press in Spain’ 202 for first periodical news in 1641, both in DandB.

¹³ *Weekly Newes from Germanie*, Butter and Bourne (3 December 1623), S.T.C. 18507.136; E. Bogel and E. Bluhm *Die Deutschen Zeitungen des 17 Jahrhunderts* (Bremen, 1971), Vol 1, 10, 23 and 41.

Established in 1489 under Johann von Taxis, the Imperial post of the Holy Roman Empire spread from Augsburg into other European countries and opened up to use by the general public in the sixteenth century. The office was hereditary and protected the routes and its couriers from seizure, even in times of war and even in an enemy's country. The routes across Europe are well known. The roads were in generally poor condition, except in Spain and Italy where they were paved. This meant that winter travel was particularly difficult, especially in Germany. Couriers provided a slower service (by foot, wagon or boat) and other travellers who were not committed to the official routes of the Imperial post opted for a sea route in preference where and when they could. Links around the Mediterranean and up the western coast of Europe were easier to negotiate than routes across the inland of central Europe.¹⁴

Brussels became a headquarters of the postal service. In the seventeenth century it was a centre for politics and culture and a significant source of news in its own right. The advertised schedule of journey times in 1505 gave from Brussels to Innsbruck as 5.5 days in summer, 6.5 days in winter and to Granada, 15 days. From 1518 the schedules remained broadly similar for well over a century. For Brussels to Paris in summer journeys were 36 hours in summer, 44 in winter; to Rome 10.5 days in summer, 12 days in winter; and Naples 14 days.¹⁵ These times were tightly scheduled. They involved a courier sticking to his route, using relay stations, riding post horses and sleeping and eating at posting inns. Any kind of difficulty, such as adverse weather, an outbreak of disease, or hostilities, could slow journeys down considerably.

The news trade frequently had to contend with delays. Travel by road, which at the best of times could be difficult and unpleasant because of the poor state of the roads, was extremely vulnerable to disruption during the Thirty Years' War. A newsbook of 18 July 1623 reported that, 'The Imperiall and ordinary post of Vienna having twice together about the middle of June failed to come that way, from whence we received our intelligence'.¹⁶ As a result there was little news of the Emperor. The issue of 11 December 1623 explained,

¹⁴ E. J. B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe* (The Hague, 1972); H. G. R. Reade, *Sidelights on the Thirty Years' War* (London, 1924), 89; C. H. Scheele, *A Short History of the Mail Service*, (Washington, 1870).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

¹⁶ (18 July 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.119.

Another Letter from Cullen is written to the marchant by way of advice not to travell such and such ways either to Strasbourgh or Franckford, by reason the passages are dangerous and that the campe being broken up before Lipstat, many of the souldiers are come to monsier Tilly and doe not only intercept the markets, but robbe all passengers.

When the post from Leipsig was late in the winter of 1640/1 the Nuremburg correspondent immediately assumed that General Bannier had arrived in the area with his troops.¹⁷

Allen argues that it is surprising that the post couriers were able to make the journeys they did in accordance with their schedules in view of such difficulties. Merchant and pilgrim routes went from town to town and could be varied in response to a warning but the post took the most direct routes and stuck to these, using the appointed relay stations, post horses and posting inns. At times posts became almost impossible to maintain. On 20 November 1620 it was reported from Nuremburg, 'That all the passages [from Prague] are so beset, & so dangerous to travaile that it is to be wondered at, & not enough to be vvritte of, what roveing, spoyling and killing is done dayly uppon all wayes'. In the winter of 1631/2 Prague was again cut off by road. A newsbook of 8 February report from Prague, dated 25 December begins, 'I would have written unto you, but that I know no letters could passe. Now understanding the posts are againe established, according to the former course, from hence to Dresden, I will againe returne to my wonted course and write unto you every week'. The report ends, 'I wish to know whether you receive my letters'.¹⁸

Antwerp was the closest finance and trade centre to Brussels. It traded between the Dutch, English and northern Germans on the one side and Spain, Italy and the Spanish Netherlands on the other. Antwerp's trading kept going through times of conflict by using false addresses and camouflage and offered finance even when boats from other cities were used. In the 1620s it supported a flourishing trade in furniture, paintings, books, tapestries, silks and lace. It handled English wool and German ticking, soaps, diamonds and wine. Antwerp provided international messenger services between central and Atlantic Europe, Catholic and Protestant lands, with daily services to Brussels and weekly services to Paris, Italy and Dunkirk, which in turn ran services by sea to London via Dover and to Lisbon, Seville and the ports of Spain. Its merchant carriers competed with the Imperial post under

¹⁷ (11 December 1623), 11, *S.T.C.*18507.135; (11 January 1641), 436. *S.T.C.*18507.343.

¹⁸ (2 December 1620) *S.T.C.*18507.1; (8 February 1632), 11, *S.T.C.*18507.240.

license from the city carrying packets to Paris, London and Calais, Dordrecht, Emden, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Delft, the Hague, Middleburg and Liege. Arblaster describes Antwerp as ‘at the heart of two different international mail services’, Paris, London, Germany and Holland on the one hand and Spain, Italy and Portugal on the other and all post from the north, Netherlands to Spain, England or France and almost all post from England to the Continent passed through it. Whenever the post from Antwerp failed, as correspondents like John Pory and Joseph Mead were well aware, England received no news.¹⁹

England was vulnerable to the disruption of the entire supply of news by the weather and the Dunkirkers who disrupted shipping in the Channel. From a newsbook from the end of November 1625, we learn that Londoners

haue beene so long without newes; but there is onely one supreme power, whom the Wind and Seas obey: as for man, he must purpose, but God determines, for howsoever it was our desire to satisfie the desire of men, whose nature is nouitatis auida, yet though the aduersitie of the winds wee were frustrate a long time for our intelligence, neither were the winds onely opposite to our appetites, but wee were hindered by another vnfortunate disaster, for a Pinke, of which one Blastoule of Flushing a duchman was owner, in the which, the Post from Holland was a passenger, and was unhappily surprised and taken by the Dunkerkes all the men in it being capiuated and carried to Oastend.

The editor added,

by the contrarietie and opposition of the winds, wee could not enioy the Newes of forraine parts, yet by the means of the land passengers we haue purchased the possession of them, for there was a Post which passed through Flaunders into France, and so from Calice sayled to this out soyle, by whom we haue this intelligence.

Readers too occasionally remarked upon disruptions. Mead wrote to Stuteville on 8 April 1626, ‘Of foreign news we hear nothing. The Dunkirkers stop all’.²⁰

Taking their lead from Folke Dahl, bibliographers and historians writing on early English news publication have focused on the fact that copy for the corantos and newsbooks published in London can often be matched with Amsterdam corantos.

However, by accepting this match they have overlooked the significance of the controlling

¹⁹ Arblaster, 18-26; P. Arblaster, ‘Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European System of Communications’, in ed., J. Raymond, *News Networks in seventeenth-century Britain and Europe* (London and N.Y., 2006) 21-2; *Pory*, Pory to Scudamore, 13 Oct 1632; Mead to Stuteville, 10 December 1625 notes the lack of news because the Antwerp post has been intercepted at Dover, Harl. MS 389, fo. 512.

²⁰ (November 1625), 1, 2-37, *S.T.C.* 18507.353; Harl. MS 390, fo. 40; also 15 April 1625, Harl. MS.389, fo. 42.

role of Antwerp in the postal and carrier services. Its influence was not limited to determining whether the mail arrived but was also relevant to the methods of control and censorship adopted in England. In the early 1620s the ready availability of the news publications of the official, licensed news publisher of the Spanish Netherlands, Abraham Verhoeven, provided the English Crown with an 'off the peg' alternative as a counter-balance to the Protestant news from Amsterdam. Chapter 5 shows how, under the direction of the Crown licenser, the London editor made use of published news from both sides of the confessional divide in the Low Countries. Chapter 6 explores the subsequent relationship between news publication control and the fluctuating ascendancy of pro-Hispanic foreign policy which lasted until 1632, when the Dutch Stadholder, Frederick Henry, invaded the Spanish Netherlands and seized the fortresses of Venloo, Roermond and Maastricht, breaking the only link between Brussels and the west of Germany and cutting the main roads from Antwerp and Brussels. Antwerp lost its dominance and its news and a royal ban in England eliminated weekly publication of news in London for six years.²¹

Meanwhile, in Germany, state intervention unintentionally helped shape more widespread developments in the news industry. The dismissal in 1627 of Johann von den Birghden, imperial postmaster in Frankfurt, for his political position marked the beginning of a series of changes. Birghden became head of the Swedish postal system, linking Augsburg, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, to Swedish centres in Leipsig and Hamburg, and establishing branches also at Speyer, Strasburg, Zurich and Venice.²² An expansion in the mid 1630s in postal routes available and the added news interest of the campaigning of Gustavus Adolphus resulted in news printing becoming more widespread in the 1630s and 1640s.

An inspection of the datelines of English corantos and newsbooks shows that news travelled across Europe to the Low Countries and England in a broadly north-westerly direction and that the source locations identified in them reflect exactly those found in publications in the Low Countries at that time. The oldest news came from the central and eastern Habsburg lands and news from Italy and Constantinople. German news came next

²¹ Posts were re-routed via Luxemburg and Alsace. Arblaster, 110; P. Arblaster, 'Policy and publishing in the Habsburg Netherlands, 1585-1690', 185, in DandB.; Ch. 6, 274.

²² Arblaster, 84.

and the freshest news was usually Dutch, though news from Northern France, the Spanish Netherlands and Westphalia, when it was available, was seldom more than a few days older and was often added on at the end. News from places north of the Netherlands, such as Denmark and Sweden appeared less frequently, and via a variety of routes but news of the activities of Danish and Swedish troops in Germany was eagerly reported. A list of the towns from which news was frequently received corresponds, predictably, with the major trading towns of Europe, including Frankfurt, Cologne, Strasburg, Metz, Vienna, Prague, Venice and Paris. All these towns produced their own regular printed newsbooks, avisos or corantos, or news letters at some time during the seventeenth century, and all appear on the schedules of the Thurn and Taxis Posts or lists of courier service stops for this period.²³

Most of the locations from which news was received, as listed in their publications, are similar. Each town received news from the others. Many of the German titles catalogued the places covered. For example, the Strasburg publication from 1622 to 1624 had the long title, *Relation Aller Furnemen und Gedenckwurdigen Historien/ so sich hin und wider in Hoch: und Nider Teutschland/ auch in Franckreich/ Italien/ Schott: und Engelland/ Hispanien/ Hungarn/ Oesterreich/ Mahren/ Boheimb/ Ober und Niderlaussnitz/ Schlesien/ Polen/ Siebenburgen/ Wallachey/ Moldaw/ Turckey etc...*. The Wolfenbuttel title of the same period listed *Deutsch: und Welscheland/ Spannen/ Neiderlandt/ Engellandt/ Frankreich/ Ungarn/ Osterreich/ Schweden/ Polen/ Schlesien/ item Rohm Venedig/ Wien/ Antorff/ Amsterdam/ Colln/ Franckfort/ Praag/ und Lintz, etc. So von Nurmberg...*. The *Besondere Jahrestitle* of the 1623 Zurich publication similarly listed *Nider Teutschland/ auch in Franckreich/ Italien/ Hispanien/ Engelland/ West: Indie/ in Hugarn/ Ostereych/ Boheimb/ Schlesien/ Polen/ Sidenburgen/ Wallachey/ Moldaw/ Turkey/ etc.* Through the 1620s and into the 1630s a series of newsbooks published in Nordlingen referred to news from, *Nider Teutschland/ Franckreich/ Italien/ Engelland/ Holland/ Hispanien/ Hungern/ Oesterreich/ Boheimb/ Polen/ Preussen/ Sibenburgen/ Turckey...*. As part of the Birghden expansion, Sweden was added to the list in 1631.²⁴

The Start of Printed Periodical News in English

This section explores the news printing and publication industry.

²³ Scheele, *A Short History*, 23–5.

²⁴ Bogel and Bluhm *Die Deutschen*, 1, 4, 53 and 65.

News printing began primarily as a German and Protestant phenomenon. The oldest remaining periodicals were the Strasburg *Relation*, from 1605, which was Protestant even though Strasburg became a recatholicized Imperial city and the Wolfenbuttel *Aviso* from 1609. Others followed, including *Wochentliche Zeitung*, printed in Hamburg from 1618 by Paule Lange and edited by Johann Meyer, a licensed carrier and professional news writer. This adopted a cautiously Protestant tone though his sources included Antwerp, while *Wochentliche Zeitung* in Frankfurt, from 1615, and *Avisen aus Berlin* in Brandenburg, from 1617, were published by the postmasters Johann van den Birghden and Christoph Frischmann respectively. On the whole, German newsbooks reported mostly German news with some news from Italy and France, while those from the Low Countries and Cologne also covered England and Spain. Some Danish news was also covered, reaching Amsterdam directly from its Baltic trade and Germany via Hamburg.²⁵

The earliest Dutch series began in Amsterdam sometime before June 1618, entitled, *Corante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c* and printed by George Veseler. By 28 August 1620 Caspar Van Hilten had taken over. Then, between 4 June 1622 and 13 March 1623, his son, Jan Van Hilten, succeeded him. Broer Jansz began a second and similar series of corantos, *Tydinghen*, some time before February 1619. Goran Leth observed the extent to which these early corantos supported Frederick and the Protestant cause in Bohemia with 'accounts of how the stand against the Catholic enemy was developing'.²⁶ Jan Jansen published news in Arnhem from 1621 for a more local market and Jan Adrienssen reprinted Broer Jansz's Amsterdam coranto for the Delft market from 1623. Broer Jansz exported copy to Cologne to be translated and published as *Wochentliche Niderlandische Postei-tungen*. Much to the consternation of the States General that was concerned to prevent problems with other states through the export of printed work abroad, by the early 1620s Amsterdam also published news in French and English. All of these were Calvinist and Orangist. Abraham Verhoeven's *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*, which began in Antwerp in 1620, was a notable exception, inspired by the pro-Spinola faction and aimed to encourage

²⁵ Schroder, 'The Origins', 123-5; Arblaster, 82-88.

²⁶ Dahl, 'Amsterdam – Earliest', examines corantos found in Sweden and published by Caspar and then Jan Van Hilten, printed by Veseler; 'Amsterdam - the Cradle of English Newspapers', *The Library*, 5th Series 4 (1949), 169; G. Leth, 'A Protestant Public Sphere: The Early European Newspaper Press', in *Annual*, 75-7, puts the start at June 1618 as a corollary to the *Apology* from Prague.

support for the Army of Flanders, and was published for the loyalist Spanish Habsburg market.²⁷

Despite the political pamphleteering campaigns of 1614-1617 which showed that France possessed a broadly accessible sphere of public, politically-orientated communications, France relied on Janz's corantos from 1618 and regular news publication only began in France in 1631 with a coranto called, *Nouvelles ordinaires des divers endroits*. This was published in Paris by Jean Martin, Louis Vondosme and Francois Pommeria and was based on the correspondence of a German, Louis Epstein, who obtained the news from Amsterdam, Danzig, Leipzig, and Frankfort among other places but it was quickly supplanted by Theophraste Renaudot's *Gazette* which was supported by Richlieu and given a monopoly. From 1634 Renaudot also published editions of his *Gazette* in Lyon, Rouen and Orleans.²⁸

The Dutch began exporting English translations of corantos in 1620. The earliest known issue stated it was, 'Imprinted at Amsterdam by George Veseler. And are to be sould by Petrus Keerius, dvelling in the Calverstreete in the uncertaine time'. Dated 2 December 1620, it appeared on the London market at a crucial time, just after writs for Parliament had been issued and news of a decisive defeat of Frederick at White Mountain was breaking. The coranto, a single, two-column sheet, just like the Dutch corantos of this period, begins *The New Tydings out of Italie are not yet com*, implying an expectation of news. This suggests it may not have been the first English coranto, though its abrupt beginning may simply mean it was translated but not edited. It contains news from Vienna, Prague, Cologne, and the Upper Palatinate. News from Cologne, dated 21 November, reports, 'Heere is tydings, that beveen the king of Bohemia & the Emperours folke hathe beene a great Battel about Prage, but because there is different vvriting speaking there uppon, so cannot for this time any certainty thereof be written.' Later reports, from Caden in Bohemia, dated 12 November, confirmed there had been a major battle and that Frederick had withdrawn, and from Cologne, 24 November, that in

²⁷ S. Groenveld, 'The Mecca of Authors? States Assemblies in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic' in A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse, eds., *Too Mighty to be Free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands* (Zutphen, 1987), 63-86; Arblaster, 85-87; Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 151-2; Ch. 3, 79-83, 88-90.

²⁸ J. Sawyer, *Printed Poison: Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics and the Public Sphere in Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley and Oxford, 1990), 7-10, 133-4; H. S. Solomon, *Public Welfare, Science and Propaganda in Seventeenth-Century France: The Innovations of Theophraste Renaudot* (Princeton, 1972), 105, 107, 112-9; J-P Vittu, 'Instruments of Political Information in France', 166-7, in DandB.

Nuremberg they were betting that the Emperor's forces had not entered Prague. There was nothing definite because 'all the passages are so beset & dangerous to travaile...Spoyling and killing is done dayly uppon all wayes'. The second surviving corantos is dated 23 December 1620 and had the same imprint. It included, from Vienna, 28 November, 'the victorious houlding of the field by Prague' (as confirmed by the Sunday posts) with the Emperor himself in the procession.²⁹

The third surviving issue of this series, dated 4 January 1621, provided a wide sweep of European news, foreshadowing events at Rochelle, discussing whether the Swiss cantons would ally with the French against Spain, and reporting Bethlem Gabor's negotiations for reinforcements. From Poland, there was news on skirmishes with the Turks and, from Frankfurt, on Spinola's activities on the Rhine. The news from Prague confirmed defeat, reporting the damage done by soldiers in the city, where there was now sickness and disease and people were fleeing. It expressed the hope that the Emperor would call the Parliament in Bohemia and reported that Mansfeld and Gabor were reassembling forces in Moravia and Silesia, while Frederick was now in Brandenburg.³⁰

These corantos were not targeted specifically at an English readership. They were simply reports as received in the Netherlands and sold in Amsterdam. Except for translation, no steps were taken to make them more comprehensible to English readers. They provided basic information without interpretation or analysis. The defeat at White Mountain was recorded, though the following coranto may have confused readers with its rumours and false hopes. Subsequent issues expressed optimism that there would be an alliance between Denmark, Sweden, the Princes of the Union and Bethlem Gabor in support of Thurn's army and reported that Brunswick and Luneburg were arming and that the King of Denmark was sending his army to the Palatinate.³¹ They may have created a more optimistic impression than was warranted but they were mirroring the hopes of Protestants across Europe.

The structure was typical of contemporary European news publications. The news content was varied and in short bulletins. There were no headlines indicating the content

²⁹ (2 December 1620), *S.T.C.* 18507.1; (23 December 1620), *S.T.C.* 18507.2.

³⁰ (4 January 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.3.

³¹ (21 January 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.4; (31 March 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.5.

of a report as we expect today. Instead, the common practice was to marshal news under a 'dateline' indicating the city and date of the report. At first sight these datelines would appear to give a useful resource for modern historians who, particularly with the benefit of computers, could analyse the data to determine which publications relied on which sources, how long it took to get the reports and print them. However, Paul Ries' dateline study of news reports reaching Copenhagen and Hamburg in the seventeenth century quickly revealed the difficulties. You cannot always tell whether a report is using Old or New Style dating nor readily work out the difference between dates of writing and printing. He concluded that you cannot therefore really determine the efficiency of the industry from analysis of dateline and publication dates but, since he felt that it would be negligent not to try, he did just that, only altering dates when he felt sure that they needed it. The result showed the number and percentage of reports being printed in Hamburg and Copenhagen from specific other cities and yielded a range of delays in getting the news into print from a minimum of 2 to 13 days from Amsterdam to Hamburg from the closest cities to 18 to 35 days from Milan, and 2 to 18 from Vienna to Copenhagen to and 26 to 53 from Lisbon.³²

Ries also identified a range of methods used by publishers in Hamburg in 1669 to assemble their issues. The most obvious was to rely on the regular supply of news from permanent correspondents across the breadth of the postal network, including a good supply of foreign news from Cologne. This allowed the publication to cover the whole of Europe evenly. Johann Meyer however concentrated on news from Germany, Silesia and Bohemia, often including local news picked up by post boys from places along through routes that did not regularly correspond, some of which were never heard of again. This publication did not look as far afield in the south but had its main connection with the centre of the German Empire, places in the vicinity and news from cities and ports in the west on both sides of the Channel. A third approach was found in *Nordischer Mercurius*, published by Georg Greflinger in 1669. This represented to Ries 'the newspaper industry at the peak of its development and in its true international context' and included news assembled locally but from a wide variety of places. This paper was translated in Hamburg from German into French, Italian, English, Spanish and Scandinavian. The fourth model

³² Ries, 184-5, 190, 200.

for Reis was a Copenhagen publication printed by Henrik Gode, which was not an original newspaper but an amalgamated Copenhagen edition of the Hamburg publications.³³

Arblaster's analysis of the reports published by Verhoeven in Antwerp advances Paul Ries' work, pointing out that news posted a week apart might be printed together while other reports might be ignored because they contained news that had already been reported. He concluded that Verhoeven relied on about 12 cities for *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*, but each of these were at the centre of their own networks making it important to distinguish between the place of origin of a report and the place where the events took place. A Venice dateline would usually contain little about Venice itself but would cover events in Milan, Rome and Constantinople while Rome datelines would cover events in Rome and often also Naples. He illustrates this with a letter from Venice published in Antwerp in 1624 relating news from Milan about the preparation of Spanish harbours and news from Livorno that English and Dutch mariners had brought news from Gibraltar about the Algerian corsairs. This, of course, was printed in Antwerp adding an additional layer of transmission and from there it might also appear in London or elsewhere still bearing the same dateline. He concluded that while datelines demonstrate something of the networks operating they are a poor substitute for a study of postal schedules combined with the content of reports.³⁴

Later evidence confirms Arblaster's view that datelines signify the city where the news went into print. The datelines for news published throughout London in the 1620s, show that in practice, it took the best part of a month for news to travel from central Europe (Vienna and Prague), being printed in at least one Dutch coranto or German aviso, en route. It took more or less than a month from Rome, depending on the season and the weather at sea presumably, whereas from Amsterdam, it took only a matter of days to get news out onto the streets in London. Looking more closely at English publications, however, we can find out more about the process. Appendixes 1 and 2 provide further information on the last known Continental edition of publications in English. Many early imports to England relied primarily on the collection of international news in Cologne often indicated the end with a ruling, then added news from Amsterdam or snippets of news obtained in Amsterdam from other places. For example, in the English issue of 9

³³ Ibid, 190-228.

³⁴ Arblaster, 67, 79-82.

August 1621, news from Brussels, Rochelle and Venice follows the ruling after the news compiled in Cologne and in the issue of 6 September news from France, Sweden, Denmark, Arnhem and Utrecht is added.³⁵

Evidence of news being printed in London and being last updated in Amsterdam is abundant. The issue of 13 October 1631 had an Amsterdam dateline of 25 September and under this a report that the Dutch had burnt 5 Spanish ships off Brazil, a report on the arrival of the fleet from Russia, and its cargo, and finally, an item beginning, 'We have lately received tydings of a sore and pitifull mischance happened in the City of Prague where divers, great and costly houses, were consumed by fire'. A newsbook dated 17 August 1627 ends with news from Groll, Wesel and finally Amsterdam. This Amsterdam dateline of 31 July covered news from Antwerp that the Spanish troops were on the move. A dateline of 10 August introduced the statement, 'We received the Newes at this instant, that the Prince of Orange hath taken the Towne. But we cannot learne as yet upon what conditions'. The last dateline, Amsterdam 17 August, gave a confirmation of this news, suggesting that this issue was being updated in Amsterdam, probably even as it rolled off the press, even though it then travelled back through Antwerp to London.³⁶ The 24 October 1627 issue had three pages of news under the dateline Amsterdam, 16 October, including a States General's proclamation on shipping, rumours of new trouble in France, conditions of a peace agreement with Tilly, the Prince of Orange's visit to the Hague and news of Dunkirkers. Most of the news items were of particular interest to the Dutch and the Dutch were probably the most likely to be the first to obtain this news, whether from the Hague, through their ports or, via the post, from France.³⁷

³⁵ See also Chapter 3, (9 August to 12 September 1621), v, *S.T.C.* 18507.13-15. (21 January and 31 March 1621), 5, *S.T.C.* 185074. Two surviving issues from 12 September are based on different texts. One has an item from 'Wesel', 1 September, after Cologne news but before the ruling. It is followed by news from Emmerich, France and Hamburg. In the other issue the ruling follows news from Cologne. The added item states, 'It hath bin a pleasant thing this week to see so many choise soldiers and so excellent horse men accompanied with their famous officers therwith so great qualitie of shipps laden with ordonnance...The Prince of Orange himself is in the house of Doen'. News from 'Wesel' follows this. Issues of 21 January and 31 March 1621 were similarly added to in the Netherlands. In the issue of 21 January news reports follow their usual route across Europe ending with a report from 'Heydelbergh 5 Januarij'. After this a ruled line is followed by, 'from Coppenhaghen is written...' and 'Letters from Paris...'. The issue of 31 March follows a similar pattern, ending before the line with news from Frankfurt dated 18 March, and Low Countries news.

³⁶ (13 October 1631), *S.T.C.* 18507.226; (17 August 1627), *S.T.C.* 18507.187.

³⁷ Chapter 5 shows how the process of news collection was explained to English readers. Arblaster, 79; (24 October 1627), *S.T.C.* 18507.192. Many news items under a Dutch dateline came from distant places. For example, the newsbook issue of 3 October 1632 has an Amsterdam dateline followed by news from letters from Spain

The process in any German city was just the same.³⁸ The relationship between Cologne and Amsterdam was, however, more complex than these illustrations suggest since news collection and distribution was an iterative process and Cologne acted as an international news centre from Germany, collecting news from both Amsterdam and London as well as supplying news to them. This factor complicates our understanding of the relationship between London, Cologne and Amsterdam and has implications for our understanding of how the news trade started in London. Reports were travelling in both directions and London publishers obtained printed copy direct from Cologne as well as Amsterdam. The majority of the main texts of the earliest English language corantos end with news from Cologne. If the Dutch were simply printing a translation of a German coranto, without adding to it, then the last dateline was German. Thus, for example, the last datelines in the issues of 2 December and 23 December 1620 were 'Ceulen' 24 November 'letters out of Newenburghe of the 20 of this present' and 'Ceulen' 12 December relaying Prague news, while the issues of 4 January and 20 June 1621 end with 'Keullen 26' with news of Spinola and Prague and 'Colen' 13 June respectively. In all these cases, it is not possible to tell whether a translator was working on a German or a Dutch original or, indeed, in the absence of further evidence from these cities where the news was translated into English.³⁹

Internal evidence of one coranto from 1621 suggests that the news came to London directly from a German publication. This has an imprint attributed to 'Broyer Johnson', a reference to the Amsterdam news publisher Broer Janz who published news in Amsterdam, Delft and Cologne. Its latest news (of the West Indian Company from Ostend) appears to have been added when it was travelling away from London rather than towards it immediately and to have reached London via 'Ausburgh the 19 July'. Another issue

concerning events in Sri Lanka while in 1624 news was arriving in London via Lisbon from Brazil (3 October 1632), 11, *S.T.C.* 18507.273.

³⁸ 3 October 1632 (*ibid*) also contained a dateline showing the same process at an earlier stage in the process. Under the heading, 'Francfurt' 16 September was news 'From Norimberg' about the King of Sweden's march, leaving behind 8000 men and the oxen, and 'Letters from Vienna' which confirm that the Archduke Leopold was dead. A newsbook dated 27 September 1622 has two datelines from Cologne. The first, dated 3 September, is followed by news from a private letter from Vienna and news from Marseilles. The second, dated 20 September, is followed immediately by the statement, 'It is written from Rome...', then 'From Constantinople...' and then from Sluce in Flanders. (27 September 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.80.

³⁹ (2 December 1620), *S.T.C.* 18507.1; (23 December 1620), *S.T.C.* 18507.2; (4 January 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.3; (20 June 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.9; Ch. 3, 81-90, and Appendix 1.

illustrates the way in which news travelled back and forth. It included, towards the end, under a Cologne 5 June dateline a report from Amsterdam,

Upon Thursday evening the 3. of June about evening, the King of Bohemia...and a great trayne came to Amstelredam and were honourably received... The next day, being Friday, the king with certaine Boates, was carried by water thorow the Towne, to visite the principall places.

After Spanish news (which could have been added in the Netherlands or in Cologne) there followed another account,

The King and Queene of Bohemia have arrived here the last weeke on Tuesday about 5 of the clocke... and stayed till the Saboath, and then they came to our Church, both hee and shee & her eldest sonne: Master Paget preached a most worthy sermon out of the second of Revelations, the 10 verse, Be faithfull unto the death and I will give thee the Crowne of life. Great gifts were presented unto the King.

Although, this last item does not give any provenance, we can safely say it was from Amsterdam since John Paget had been Presbyterian minister there since 1607 and become a friend of the Princess Elizabeth. As the message was of special interest to English readers it could have been added to the coranto by whoever sent it to England rather than part of the original publication but is more likely to be directly from what was a very poorly edited Dutch original.⁴⁰

Thus we see that the industry in the early seventeenth century functioned by means of bundling up and editing whatever was available at the time. This included adding to the news received from another city any fresh news reports received locally. This picture is consistent with Dahl's finding from his study of London news books from 1622 onwards that 60 to 70% of English newsbook contents originated in the Netherlands. The London news printing industry was therefore similar to Copenhagen's industry when it began later in the century; the first Copenhagen news publication was an edited compilation from three Hamburg publications. Ries speculated on how far further analytical studies of datelines similar to his own could progress towards ascertaining whether there were, in the seventeenth century, news agencies similar to DPA and Reuter today, supplying the news industry with information and leaving editors to sift and select for sale to separate reading

⁴⁰ (2 August 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.25; (13 June 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.8; Appendix 1. Mead was able to obtain a regular supply of what were probably manuscript transcripts of Cologne news from London from the winter of 1620/21 which he regarded as superior to the Dutch publications. Harl. MS. 389, fo. 11, 'neither received I any coranto, nor hear of any man that had news. Only a friend of mine one of the clergie in the Cittie whom I had... begun to imploy for the getting of the Cullen Coranto (as being though not so continuall yet better then those of the Hague) he having opportunitie of the neighbourhood...' 9 February 1621.

publics. Arblaster's conclusion was however closer to the truth in reflecting a diversity of sources, or networks, but also recognizing the way in which these came together to form a single news community. The result was that there was little clear difference between the bulk of the news being covered by Catholic and Protestant papers. Underneath headlines and editorials, the news was largely the same wherever it was published. This was equally true of the publications of Broer Janz, the staunch Calvinist, even though he had sources in Denmark that were not shared by others and for Abraham Verhoeven's *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*, notwithstanding his Habsburg Loyalist affiliations and access to material from the Army of Flanders. Van Hilten also had access to some independently collected reports through Abraham Casteleyn in Harleem, but Casteleyn in turn was relying on reports from the most important towns in Europe and consequently the same networks. This essential and on-going sameness of the majority of sources was a characteristic not only of the regular writers in established news centres but is also to be found in more occasional reports. Arblaster illustrates this with examples of the same reports of incidents appearing in publications in 1623.⁴¹

There were no dedicated reporters employed by publishers with a 'house' policy. Contributors to the news networks were associated through interconnecting and interdependent chains, some of which, like the Papal network, had distinctive political ideologies and religious affiliations. Others had purely financial and mercantile interests. Correspondents and postmasters could be Catholic if the city was Catholic, or maybe even unwilling converts if the city was in the process of re-catholicization. They were more likely to be Lutheran or Calvinist in the north and west. They earned their place in the networks by virtue of keeping their ears open and having the right contacts and, in turn, they kept these contacts by being reliable sources of information. This was, as Schroder has labelled it, 'predominantly fact-orientated event coverage' and, while there was no clear separation between information and judgement and contradictions and mistakes in numerical data were quite frequent, the informative function dominated and 'no events were made up'. Commentary was often non-partisan, for example, criticizing behaviour that endangered peace or a reproduction of comments from those closest to the events.⁴²

⁴¹ F. Dahl, 'Amsterdam - the Cradle of English Newspapers', *Library*, 5 Ser, 4 (1949), 171 – 3; Dahl, *Dutch Corantos*, 18, 22-26; Ries, 229; Arblaster, 6, 57, 84-5, 102-6.

⁴² Schroder, 'The Origins', 126-7, 141.

All relied primarily on the copy they received and shared an essentially similar view of what was of interest. This 'sameness' is an important factor that underlies the story of the early news trade and must temper all consideration of the quality, accuracy and political or religious bias of the news reported.

News Content

To understand the nature and quality of the news arriving in England it is necessary to probe beyond datelines and comparative material from other cities and examine the material itself. This section looks first at issues published in England for evidence of the European printed news that appeared in English, secondly at where it came from, as well as at evidence of new news reports from official or personal sources added prior to publication in London. Subsequent chapters are concerned with what happened to the news once in London, the activities of the publishers, the practical implications of production, editing, and the effect of licensing and censorship.

Once London publishers took over from the Dutch (Chapter 3) they made no mystery of their sources, stating that they printed, 'what is extracted out of true and credible Originals; that is to say, either Letters of justifiable information, or Corantos published in other Countries in the same manner, as we here accustome; ... or privately sent to such friends and Gentlemen as do correspond with understanding men in forraigne parts'.⁴³ To establish a baseline of the material that the London news trade was working with, we need examples of English language issues where there was no London editing.

An issue was produced hastily in London on 11 September 1624 without editing shortly after the untimely death of the editor, Gainsford. This clearly demonstrates three separate sources of Protestant material. It included a report from Cologne about the movement of Tilly's troops, and the statement,

It is held for certaine and true, that the aforesaid union betwixt most mighty Kings, Princes, Potentates, Commonwealths, and Nobles, is now firmly made: and that there is such a unity, that many Lords wonder thereat, & they are resolved & meane to unsit the house of Austria, Burgundy, & the King of Spaine.

On the siege of Breda by Spinola, it said,

But they shall be answered as at Bergen, for the valianest and best Souldiers and Officers lye therein. As also above a 1000 Voluntaries, as well French as English,

⁴³ (13 December 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.136.

most persons of qualitie, who with the Souldiers will bravely bestur themselves... In the meantime the Spaniards make great outrage, and have shamefully abused some women and maids of the towne... stripping them naked, have so driven them to the Towne, some they tooke with them, that we know not what are become of them. A new title, 'A Continuation of the weekly Newes word for word out of the Coranto printed by Broer Janson Currantier to the Prince of Orange, and for the Leaguer 1624' provided a fresh start and is followed by 'The Coppie of a letter written from the Hague, to his friend in London concerning the present affaires of the Low Countries'. It commenced, 'Sir I have only two maine things to write unto you at present'. These concerned West Indian ships and the siege of Breda. On the latter he wrote,

The Governour or Chiefe Commander of the towne, is Sir Charles Morgan, a valiant Gentleman, and one that approved himselfe in the late siege of Bergen up Zom, in the towne are many brave English, Scots, and French Commanders, as resolute and expert Souldiers.⁴⁴

By contrast the newsbook published on 29 August 1623, had the words, *Ital Gazet. Nu prio* next to the number and states the source was Antwerp and explained,

Whereas hitherto I have published ... letters both written and printed in the Dutch Tongue... I have now lighted upon other Letters, and other Authors, some in Latine, some in Spanish, and most in Italian from whence I have extracted the whole occurences of last Moneth.⁴⁵

A single, loose sheet, that has survived from a newsbook published at a time in 1625 when the publishers made clear they were only translating in London and not editing, again drew on Antwerp material,

Good and true tydings out of the Indies Containing the dammage and defeate which the Hollanders have received by sea. As likewise the taking of Ormus. First printed the 7. of March 1625, at Antwerpe by Abraham Verhoeven, dwelling on the wall of the Lombard, at the signe of the guilded Hand. Translated and printed at London according to the same copy.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ (11 September 1624), 5, 6, 7, 9, 18, 19, *S.T.C.*18507.151. Ch. 6, 244-6, for the end of the syndicate, September 1624. This issue poses some unanswered questions. The spellings, 'Joris Veseler' and 'Broer Janson' and the use in the sub-title of the descriptor 'Currantier to the Prince of Orange' are reminiscent of corantos published in 1621. This seems to link this issue more with the work of Archer than with the members of the syndicate whose names appear on the imprint. (Ch. 3, 92-4). However, Archer had begun a rival series of his own which he presented as the true continuation of the syndicate's series. A comparison of the datelines for this newsbook with those in Archer's rival publication (9/10 September), *S.T.C.*18507.246/347, shows the issue of 11 September to be consistently 5 days 'fresher' than Archer's, confirming that the publishers who remained in the syndicate responded to competition with speed. At short notice they probably could not use the services of George Eld or the Eliot Court press, their normal printers at that time, but called instead on Edward Allde, a printer who was frequently used in 1621. He was probably responsible for the reappearance in this issue of the typographical details and spellings he had used in the summer of 1621. Chapter 4, 130.

⁴⁵ (29 August 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.124; see also Ch. 5, 171, 206-7, and Ch. 6, 225-6.

⁴⁶ (29 March 1625), verso, *S.T.C.*18507.164, quoted Ch. 6, 249.

The Third Newes Continued, 8 December 1626 is another issue consisting of 3 distinct and unedited parts reproducing separate material as it was received in London. All the parts illustrate that the English publishers were making use of whatever they could obtain, irrespective of its origins. The first part contained 'A Relation of Newes which Imperialists and Spanish have printed and written in Germany from the 7 of October, till the 7 of November: Concerning the present warres in those parts'. The second part, contained 'Certayne Avisoes, taken out of severall Letters written to private Friends from out of Germany and other places: Received since the first of December last past &c'. The final part was 'A Letter of advise from Southampton concerning a Prize of Spanish soldiers, taken by Jonathan of London, set out to Sea with others, by the Right Hon: the Earle of Warwick'.⁴⁷ In practice, material from Dutch and German Protestant sources predominated, and where Catholic material was used a disclaimer was often made.

During the tenth series of newsbooks that began in December 1638, the appearance and mode of publication completely changed. By this time printed news was appearing in more European cities. The Antwerp monopoly on the posts to England had ended and the publishers were able to secure a regular news supply from German cities and Van Hilten's Amsterdam coranto. It became the practice to publish three, and sometimes four (if there was additional miscellaneous material available), separate numbers on the same (or almost the same) day. Each number consisted of four, slightly larger pages and the title page was replaced by a short caption - title in most cases only stating which continental publication was translated. From the beginning of 1639 until 23 April 1640, when Butter announced his intention to revert to the old method of publication, we have an almost complete record of all the news sources being used in London. For example, on 1 January 1639 four were published. Number 6 was *From Norimberg. Ordinary avises from severall places*; number 7 was the *Ordinary weekly currantoes from Frankford*; number 8, the *Ordinary weekly currantoes from Holland*; and number 9 contained *The articles and other circumstances and particulars of the taking of Brisack by the Duke of Weymar*. All subsequent titles show that the publishers were in receipt of a regular supply of corantos and avisos from Holland, Frankfurt and Nuremburg. After 23 April 1640, this supply appears to have continued until the autumn and the weekly newsbooks consisted of news

⁴⁷ (8 December 1626), 1, 8, 13, *S.T.C.*18507.184; See also Ch. 6, 255, 259-62.

from these three, and any other reports received during the previous week.⁴⁸ These arrangements demonstrate the continued efforts to obtain news from whatever sources were available. London publishers used Amsterdam material extensively but they did not simply rely on the Dutch and their sources expanded over time.

The process of assembling news publications was one of adding new material to what printed news was received. Better publishers abbreviated news that was plentiful or repetitious, and removed stale news. Editors in some cities exercised more control than in others. Eye-witness accounts could be arresting, interesting and partial but they could also be edited to leave almost nothing by the time they reached London.

Full texts of official papers were often valuable copy in their own right and published separately. Also if a monarch wanted a full text published they would use their own printers. But official papers were used in news periodicals whenever an opportunity arose, often reaching them second hand. Single sheet corantos were most likely to include a summary because little space was available. Newsbooks, such as the issue of 8 April 1641 quoted official text verbatim. 'A Letter from the King of Spaine to the King of Portugall', and the States' General proclamation on shipping, published in the issue of 24 October 1627, is mentioned above. The 14 March 1631 issue included the French King's letter to the Court Parlement of Normandy about the 'restraint of the Queene Mother, and other of the Nobility of France'. This included a picture, an imprint and the text in both English and French.⁴⁹

Proclamations and official publications of treaties, surrenders, and edicts had a formal style. They were not written for the benefit of English readers. Nevertheless, they were translated and reproduced in English newsbooks when they were available, even when they made reference to events, formalities and places which would seem unlikely to interest the English market. However, readers were accustomed to reading official publications from the King's printer, so the genre would not have been completely unfamiliar. The range that appeared in London newsbooks over the 20 years of their

⁴⁸ (1 January 1639), *S.T.C.* 18507.278, 279, 280, 281. Ch 4, 140, and Ch. 6, 289-90, for September 1641 when subscriptions ran out.

⁴⁹ 55 above for issue of 24 October 1627; (8 April 1641), *N.&S.*, 64.409; (14 March 1631), 7, 11, *S.T.C.* 18507.209; see also Ch. 6, 229-30, for the Oldenbarnevelt treason. Although the London news syndicate had a monopoly for most published material from corantos and avises from the Continent, the publication copyright for European official publications was less certain. Ch. 3, 114-5, the copyright of the *Peace of France* was accepted by the Court of the Stationers' as the property of Nathaniel Newbery, February 1623, and not part of the syndicate's monopoly.

publication was considerable. Texts could be provided with commentary. The issue of 5 May 1629 *Newes of Certaine commands Lately given by the French King* is an example, based on avisos from Germany.⁵⁰ It included no Dutch news, suggesting that the content came directly from Germany. It had transcripts of several official documents. The first were the Articles of Peace offered by the King of Denmark to the Emperor at Lubeck, following his defeat by Wallenstein at Wolgast in September 1628; the official response from the Emperor; and Denmark's answer to that, saying that there was no hope of peace on terms like that, and that the Emperor obviously had no real intention of peace. The Emperor's response was included and ended, 'This is the last answer giuen by the Imperialists, which came into my hands with a Letter of the 1. of Aprill,' saying that the Danes are getting impatient with these negotiations and are going home. Most of the Imperial Army was heading to Prussia to help the Poles against the Swedes. Later in the same issue the proposed articles of the Lubeck peace are provided in full. The same issue included a 'Copie of an horrible and fearefull Oath, which by the Emperour is forced upon the Protestants in Bohemia and the Palatinate, either to take it or forsake their Country'. This oath, part of the process of restoring Roman Catholicism in the wake of the Edict of Restitution, is an official document which, when published by Protestants, became ready-made anti-Catholic propaganda. A number of extracts of letters included in the issue came from Protestant sympathizers, even in strongly held Catholic cities. News from 'Preslaw 16 March' about the Polish defeat by the Swedes first mentioned the 'Romanists' attempting conversions, in this case, in Silesia. Then it tells us that the Imperialists had attempted to billet 12 companies of foot in the territory of the Duke of Brieg. He had refused and complained to Vienna, 'Wherof it is thought the Emperour with his Jesuiticall Councell will make as much account as of all other complaints the Protestants bring before him'. From Vienna, on 19 March, comes news of the proclamation demanding that all merchants, tradesmen and strangers must, by Easter, profess to the Catholic faith and obtain absolution from previous heresy. 'Kausburen 6 Aprille' reported, 'The Imperiall Commissioners heere are now more imperious then ever, having lately commanded all our inhabitants to goe to Masse, and for the neglecting of one Sunday a man is to pay one Florin or Guilder, and the second time two, and so forth, But who absolutely refuse to

⁵⁰ (5 May 1629), 8-10, 11-14, *S.T.C.*18507.200.

come to conversion...' can stay until August to sell their goods and be gone. Those who refused also had soldiers quartered on them. From Vienna on 21 March, we learn of a 'new Inquisition', 'So that it appeares, that those poore Protestants whethersoever they flye are still persecuted'. Of course, we do not know where along the chain of correspondents, or by whom, this conclusion was drawn but we can see that English readers had access to a window that opened, albeit spasmodically and inconsistently, deep into the diplomatic, confessional and military developments of the war and Counter-Reformation.

Courtly and diplomatic news, including the progress of embassies, updates on synods and trials, disputed successions and protracted marriage negotiations provided a substantial proportion of the news. Since the policies of rulers and the diplomatic correspondence were not available there were frequent references in reports to audiences, visits and letters arriving or being sent without information about the content though sometimes with guesses at the political intentions. There was always something happening in public court life to be relayed and life-style news from courts was helpful to merchants, bankers and civic delegations. Reports of events such as births, weddings, deaths, coronations and elections were also covered but, as with proclamations, they were reported more effectively and fully in single-issue pamphlets. Judicial proceedings and pronouncements were of little interest unless they dealt with matters of state, the protection of trade routes, taxes, grievances or religious persecutions or restitutions, though again, public events and executions were reported.

Private letters are emphasized in many newsbooks and were regarded, especially when the writer could be vouched for, as a superior source of information. Again, these could be added at any point along the chain of communication. Some letters arrived as a result of an agreement with a publisher. Others arrived in the packs of merchants and private travellers journeying along the main trade routes. They were used whenever they were available and added to the news. For example, in a newsbook of 12 March 1624, there were a series of news items from the usual locations (Rome, Venice, Vienna, Prague and Cologne) and then under the dateline for Amsterdam, 3 March, was the statement, 'I have a letter from Amsterdam, which was enclosed in another Merchants Letter, and was thus written to a friend in Tems -Street'. Under the next dateline, Brussels 5 March, was the statement 'I have three severall letters from Brussells. A soldiers, a townesmans, or burger of Brussells and marchants factor, of London... I will truely set you downe their own

words'; and under a dateline for Paris, 9 March, is the statement, 'I have one letter more that comes from Paris...it is written to a friend in London'.⁵¹ Thomas Archer, in a bid to demonstrate that his newsbook, *A True and Very Memorable relation*, was superior to his rivals, stated that it, 'is extracted not out of common Currantoes, but of divers Letters comming from worthie hands'. While Butter and Bourne's newsbook of 20 October 1624 contained 'A letter written from a commander of the Prince of Oranges leager, dated 7 of October 1624 Relating and confirming the truth of the late danger of Prince of Orange', and also carried 'A particular concerning the newes of France, related to us the 11 of October' demonstrating that the publishers were so keen to diversify their sources that they even took down and published an oral account from a traveller arriving in London.⁵²

News from soldiers' letters could be added at any point in the network, including in London. Whenever there was military action soldiers would write home and to friends, or sell their stories. From the beginning men from England, Ireland and Scotland were serving and seeing action in Europe. In 1622 James I allowed a regiment of 2000 volunteers under Sir Horace Vere to put out from Gravesend for the Low Countries. Thus, in 1622, the newsbooks were able to report in great detail on the activities of Mansfeld and the Battle of Fleurus. In 1627 direct English engagement in events on the Isle of Rhé proved a good source of news reports.⁵³ In August 1627 they were able to publish *Newes of the Siedge of the Towne of Grol by the States Generall of the United Provinces*, dated 27 July, a report on the same subject from Antwerp of 2 August, a private letter written from Groll on the 27 July, a report from Zutphen of 22 July about the arrival of the Prince of Orange at Groll, another from Zutphen of 23 July, reports of Groll from Deventer 23 July, a report 'From the Leaguer of the States, which lyeth before the Towne of Groll' and finally, from Amsterdam 10 August news that the Prince of Orange hath taken the Towne'. The coverage of Wallenstein's unsuccessful siege of Stralsund in 1628 is even more impressive and extends to at least two issues.⁵⁴

By the early 1630s the publishers knew how to make use of all the opportunities that came their way. Sales were high and money could be found to tap additional sources.

⁵¹ (12 March 1624), 15, 20, *S.T.C.* 18507.144; see also Ch. 6, 268 for oral evidence.

⁵² (late June 1628), *S.T.C.* 18507.355, quoted in Dahl, 277; (20 October 1624), 21, 8, *S.T.C.* 18507.155.

⁵³ (9 September 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.76; (25 September 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.79; (30 October 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.85; Ch. 6, 255-63.

⁵⁴ (17 August 1627), 7 – 14, *S.T.C.* 18507.187; (7 August 1628), *S.T.C.* 18507.357; (15 August 1628), *S.T.C.* 18507.358.

The Swedish Intelligencer, which was a compilation of news akin to the German news digest *Mercurius Gallobelgicus*, aimed to provide an overview of events, rather than the latest news, hot off the press. This meant there was more time for editing and adding material in London, including oral reports from those who had returned from the Continent. For example, in the first part, published in 1632, there was an explanation of how the story of the attack on Gartz was assembled, ‘In this particular passages (especially) hath our intelligence beene amended, by the directions of a brave Commander of our owne Nation; ... From whose mouth we have now also bettered our instructions concerning the sieges’. In the second part of *The Swedish Intelligencer*, the editor added, ‘my care was, to learne out, and to get acquainted with such understanding Gentlemen, as had been personally present in the Actions’.⁵⁵

Under the leadership of Hamilton, Monro and Hepburn, many men from England and Scotland were serving in Germany by this time. Reports of military action were readily available and also appeared in weekly newsbooks. On 16 October 1632 there was a diary-like account of the siege and fall of Maastricht, ‘Written by a Gentleman of Qualitie; and an Actor in most of the proceedings’, followed by a list of the English Scots, French, Walloons and Dutch killed during the siege as well as reports of spectacular success for the Swedes from the Swedish Camp and the Allied Saxon Army and accounts with interesting first-hand experiences. Often accounts from the camps appear to be genuine because of the detail they contain. For example, a report concerning the crossing of the River Lech by the King's army, described the weather and geography of the area very carefully, but it provided a very patchy account of the ensuing encounter with Tilly. This reflected the limited perspective we might expect of someone involved in the action rather than at the front to observe and report. Meanwhile, in the same issue were letters from civilians in the cities affected by the military advance. One from Augsburg reported that the Swedes have begun to arrive and that the leaders of the city are leaving. Two more companies of Bavarian soldiers have been sent to strengthen the city, ‘but we can easily perceive that they have no courage to fight’. From Augsburg a week later, but in the same issue, we are

⁵⁵ *Mercurius Gallobelgicus*, published semi annually in Latin in Cologne, first appeared in 1594 and was later published in Frankfurt. (9 January 1632), 73, S.T.C.23521; (1632), 1, S.T.C.23522); see also Ch. 5, 185-90, 212-3; Ch. 6, 264, 276.

told that Tilly and the Swedes are within 4 miles of each other and that Altringer has been to the city to order fortifications, 'But I cannot see how this citie shall long hold out'.⁵⁶

Once weekly publication resumed in the late 1630s, the publishers continued to seek out and use what they could find in addition to publishing the regular issues from Frankfurt, Nuremberg and the Netherlands. In May 1639 they published *A True and Particular Relation of the Battell fought neare Kemnitz*. News of local interest, such as the skirmishes off Dunkirk, the arrival of any merchant fleet, at the ports, and the activities of the Prince of Orange from the Hague were usually added by the Dutch. In June 1639, the taking of 13 'Zealand Pinks and Boyers' sailing from Gravesend to Vlissingen and carrying 200 passengers by Dunkirkers was reported. On 27 March 1640 they published *A True Narration of the late sea fight betwixt 15 men of vvarre of Dunkerke and one ...of Sealand*.⁵⁷ Military news continued to be of great interest throughout the war. In addition to news of battles, raids, skirmishes, blockages and sieges, there were recruitments and levies, supplies, billeting and contributions for troops. Information about ill discipline among forces, outrages, sackings and the punishment of ill discipline were all reported, and throughout the period the constant and confusing reports of movements of troops were recorded in detail and were of vital concern to merchants, traders and travellers.

From April 1640, the publication of a single issue covering all the latest avisos and corantos arriving in London was resumed but with little attempt to edit or rationalize the material. With so many sources available by this stage, we can more easily see how rapidly news travelled in every direction when troops were on the move. The Swedish Marshal, Johan Bannier's march south towards Erfurd, east of Frankfurt, was reported by

⁵⁶ (16 October 1632), *S.T.C.* 18507.276; see also (26 June 1632), 8, *S.T.C.* 18507.254; and (23 June 1632), 8, 10, *S.T.C.* 18507.256, 'A Coppy of a Letter written from the Army of his Maiestie of Sweden, at Northeym' was included in the 28 April 1632 issue and combines some of the best features of letters 'from the front'. It locates the Swedish Army, 2 leagues from Tilly and recounts an incident where the King of Sweden went incognito over to Tilly's base and, unrecognized, addressed an Imperial soldier. The King began by asking, 'Good morrow Monsieur, where is olde Tilly' and was answered, 'Good morrow to you, Tilly is at Rain in his quarter. Comradee where is the King' To which Gustavus Adolphus replied, 'Hee is now in his Quarter, what else doe you else desire to know of him?' The Sentinell then asked, 'Doth the King give quarter?' He was answered, 'Yes, I assure you; come but over to us. You shall have good quarter.' The soldier's letter continues with matters of interest to him, commenting about the booty they have taken, 'but we cannot sell them, for they will yeeld us but little money or none at all, a good faire Horse may be bought for foure Rixdollers, a Cow for... Mony is that which is here lookt after'. (28 April 1632), 5-6, 10, *S.T.C.* 18507.248; The encounter of Tilly with the King of Sweden is not quite the same version as that related by Wedgwood but no doubt many versions were circulating by the time the story had spread around the camp and found its way into a number of letters. (Wedgwood, 315).

⁵⁷ (between 22 and 27 May 1639), *S.T.C.* 18507.308; (21 June 1639), 348, *S.T.C.* 18507.313; (27 March 1640), *S.T.C.* 18507.328.

civilians in Prague and Erfurd, Maastricht and Hamburg, while reports of letters from Bannier to governors in the United Provinces about provisions and progress led to speculation about his plans. In June reports from Italy to Germany recorded plundering and arson in Piedmont at the hands of French troops and the Spanish troops gathering to retaliate. In the same issue we learn the Imperial Army was advancing and taking Dresden and neighbouring castles and expecting to be joined by the Duke of Bavaria, while a report from Erfurd stated that the Swedes had defeated both the Croat and Imperial troops. Many writers had only rumours and no confirmation yet the reports were sufficiently consistent to inform merchants of the locations of trouble spots and inform English readers of the extent of the warfare and distress in many regions. The following year, the issue of 11 January 1641, again because it is badly edited, gives a clear impression of the anxiety of people in areas affected by military activity. Letters were sent from city to city crossing with one another and displaying the confusion of reporting when several armies are manoeuvring and advancing. In February, news of Swedish advance towards Regensburg where the Imperial Diet was in session was reported with surprise from Nuremberg. The wealthy took what they could and fled. Some arrived in Nuremberg as Piccolomini's forces departed from the city, newly equipped with 'money, shirts, cloathes, stockings and boots... having done great mischief amongst the inhabitants'. Meanwhile, reports from Cologne told of the arrival in Vienna of people fleeing from Hungary as Turks invaded. Confusing manoeuvres continued into the spring with Bannier falling back to the Weser but, despite the disorganization and repetition of the newsbook, we get an impressive account of the locations of armies, the levying and organization across Europe in preparation for summer campaigns and of prices being paid for provisions.⁵⁸

Meanwhile readers learned when and where troops were being transported and of the arrival of cargoes. The arrival of a silver fleet was important news and the dangers of pirates whether off the northern shores or in the Mediterranean was a continuing theme through the period. From Rome in the summer of 1639 it was reported that the French had taken a Spanish ship with cloth worth 20,000 crowns and the Neapolitans had taken two Turkish ships while the Florentines captured an Algerian ship with 32 pieces of ordnance

⁵⁸(23 April 1640), 7-12, *S.T.C.* 18507.337; (6 June 1640), 113-4, 118-9, 120-3, *S.T.C.* 18507.338; (11 January 1641), *S.T.C.* 18507.343; (11 February 1641), 3, 5, *S.T.C.* 18507.345; (8 April 1641), 134-8 239, *N.&S.* 64.409; Wedgwood, 436-446.

and liberated 300 Christian slaves. News from Milan in January 1641 reported from an English ship arriving in Genoa of fighting between the Catalonians and the Castilians then amplified in news from France via Amsterdam. News of far distant lands reached newsprint when fleets returned.⁵⁹

As with modern newspapers, most reports were anonymous. When a correspondent is named it is a testimony to the source. Doctor Wells, Horace de Vere's physician, is identified as having sent a letter in June 1622.⁶⁰ Also in June 1622, Bourne and Archer published, *The True Copies of Two Especiall Letters verbatim sent from the Palatinate by Sir F. N.* Sir F.N. is described as 'a commander of the Prince of Oranges leager'. He was evidently a hero in London, and probably the Hague too, because he enjoyed considerable notoriety due to his eccentricities. He is mentioned again in the 21 April 1625 issue where we are told, 'Sir Francis Nethersole is come from the Hague, and arrived here on Wednesday last, who brings certainty of the Prince of Orange's death and said that Mansfeld is scarce in the field'. John Bartlet explained in his *Coppies of letters*, on 21 June 1622, that, 'these Letters are Printed without the priuitie of those that sent them, but I suppose that they will not take it offenciue, that all such as are well-wishers to the cause of the Palatinate, should bee made acquainted with the common occurrences which fall out there...you haue them printed in the same wordes and phrase in which I receiued them'.⁶¹ Many of the letters used were probably written without any intention of publication and anonymity also protected the identity of the recipient of the letter who handed it to a publisher.

By no means all letters were so abbreviated as to lose their character. Even letters from the east could reach London without having been summarized radically, and still retain interesting and seemingly authentic detail. One from Galatia concerned Turkish discipline problems because women were 'very rare and deare in these parts'. So the Turks had brought in women from the Black Sea area to sell to the citizens and soldiers, 'who marry the same and sometimes proves very profitable'. It continues, 'Those who doe lesse sympathize with the miseries and afflictions of other men, than I doe, would take

⁵⁹ (21 June 1639), 338, *S.T.C.*18507.312; (11 January 1641), 420, *S.T.C.*18507.343; (11 February 1641), 14, *S.T.C.*18507.345.

⁶⁰ *A True and Ample Relation*, John Bartlet (13 June 1622) 1-2; (28 October 1628), *S.T.C.*18507.198, names another writer, as Sampson of London, Dahl, 211.

⁶¹ (21 June 1622), *S.T.C.*18507.55; (21 April, 1625), *S.T.C.*18507.167; *Coppies of letters sent*, John Bartlet (21 June 1622), 1.

great pleasure to behold these Creatures, the next Moneth of October, for that is a time when they return from hunting, for in the last captivity you might have seen those poore and silly women and Wenches led captively in triumphe, in 24 Barques, accompanied with 28 Gallies of Ottomon'. The following year readers learned from Constantinople about 'Testerdar' being taken captive and executed and his body being displayed on a tree near where the Janissary Aga was hanged. We are told that the punishment pleased the people, but nothing more about the attempt on the throne.⁶²

A frustrating feature throughout the period was that publishers could not secure a continuous supply of letters from one particular source (or subjected to one consistent editorial process), yet the letter writers assumed that their recipient had received earlier letters and knew the context. This gave the publications a peculiar and distinctive characteristic of discontinuity despite their frequency. This must have been a serious obstacle to comprehension and is still worse for historians who have to follow through issues in different archives and allow for the fact that many issues, particularly in periods of low sales with small print runs, have not survived. Nonetheless, survival rates are adequate to show that stories that began part way through were common. Letters were taken singly from a series of correspondence or from one issue in a series of corantos or avisoes from another town. Typical of these is a story from Rome which began the issue of 6 June 1632, 'When the Cardinall of Strigonia understood hee should not be admitted to have audience of the Pope as Imperiall Ambassador, he did desire, that he might be heard by what title soever'.⁶³ Sometimes letters have the appearance of starting in the middle because at some point they have been edited clumsily. For example, 'A True Relation of a late very famous Sea-fight, made betwixt the Spaniard and the Hollander in Brazil... Truely translated out of the Low Dutch Originall Copie', begins with the sentence, 'After that the Spanish Fleet the tenth of January 1639 had shewed itselfe heere before the Reeyf'. This account appears to have come from a diary or logbook. Despite appearances to the contrary, no part of it was published in the earlier issue.⁶⁴

In the late 1630s and early 40s the short format of newsbooks meant that though there was still a mixture of reported speech and more personal statements, there was less

⁶² (13 October 1631), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.226; (6 June 1632), 5, *S.T.C.*18507.254.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁴ (12 June 1640), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.339.

detail. Reports are so summarized that it is difficult to determine where a report was put together, or whether a 'we' or 'I' referred to a writer or to an editor on the Continent. For example, part of a letter is included in *The Norimberg Corranto of this Week* published on 21 June 1639, under a Linz dateline for 7/17 May, begins, 'Within this hour I am to go by Post from Prague, but with small courage because the danger is too great'. At times, it is less clear whether it originated in the town named in the dateline or later in its journey. For example, the same issue begins with a 'Prague the 2: 12 of May' heading, and the statement, 'What I have certified you, is not onely confirmed, but we have likewise received further intelligence'. By contrast we can see the passage under the dateline 'Norimberg 7: 17 of May' was compiled locally prior to publication in Nuremberg and that considerable effort was put into summarizing the information. The editor felt free to draw conclusions, adding,

The Hatzfeld troops, which are arrived hereabouts, and lye at Furt, are to break up again to morrow, or the next day after, with whom certain Bavarian troops are to joyn, and go together into Bohemia, they have very bad weather to march, and are likely to come too late: at this instant we receive the Letters from Prague, it seemeth the poor people dare not write what they know, yet tho they certifie, that the Swedes their owne pleasure straggle all the Country over, and play the master in the field, the Imperialists except for Harzenfeldsh succour, which consist of brave horsemen but the foot are not 1500 strong, and in all both begin to pillage in the cities of Prague.⁶⁵

This comment is not presented in a distinct editorial, but as part of a report. This practice of mixing personal views and reported speech makes it difficult to distinguish editorial comment from the views of correspondents except in the cases where a letter is considered so important that, despite the desire for brevity, it is given its own heading and separate treatment.

In addition to the difficulties in obtaining a steady supply of data, a passive system of news collection, where the publisher is not usually employing a journalist, inevitably meant he could have no real reassurance about the quality of the material received. Where reports are commissioned, the publisher has selected the writer. Publishers, like postmasters, could rely on the status of the writer if they knew it, as some kind of assurance as to the veracity of a report. Mostly, however, London publishers could have had no idea of the source of a letter. Any assurance as to the reliability of the reports came

⁶⁵ (21 June 1639), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.312.

from the fact that the whole functioning of news networks was mutually reinforcing. Ultimately, no one would be interested in repeating or exchanging news with an unreliable source.

Major events triggered many reports. Reports of battles and sieges often continued to appear for weeks after events. Details of the numbers involved, of deaths and injuries and even of the outcome could vary, be modified and amended. Rumours could spread rapidly then like computer viruses today. This phenomenon, probably more than any other, tended to undermine the credibility of the news trade, particularly since the conflicting, confirming and qualifying reports also revealed the affiliations of their writers by the way the behaviour of military leaders was alternately praised or criticized so that a single newsbook could contain several reports of the same event, often conflicting with one another. Archer's newsbook of 7 August 1628 gave different accounts, even on the same page, that Stralsund has fallen and that this news was false. Writers appeared to have done their best to establish the facts. A letter from Gustraw, written on 11 July reported,

That I have not written any newes within that space of eight dayes, hath beene by reason that the tidings which came did varie, and differ much from one another: But now wee have learned by a man of qualitie, who is lately, come from Stralesont how that ours of the 26 of June, gave a fierce assault to the said Citie, and continued it till the 28 of the same, but lost about 5000 and they of Stralesont, about 800...the King of Denmark has now sent in troops, the Swedes have sent troops to Pomerania to make a diversion, to cross the Imperialists in their designs...The Imperialists have lately offered to make an agreement.

Similarly in an issue of 17 October 1627, a correspondent added, 'For this last weeke we have here no certaine newes to relate, all reports being so uncertaine: But for the rumors that here I shall relate, hoping they will prove true'. These rumours concern the number of soldiers in Wallenstein's Army and the possibility that he may have been killed.⁶⁶

However, the range and number of reports available provided the media with its own protection. It meant that 'the truth' would eventually emerge and this was ultimately beyond the control of the government, editor or publisher. Though publishers had some scope to influence the content of the printed news through the selection and presentation of material. Abraham Verhoeven, working in Antwerp in the 1620s, with the protection of a monopoly, was able to take time preparing his *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* without fear of competition from rival publications rendering his news stale. He demonstrated what could

⁶⁶ (7 August 1628), 7, *S.T.C.*18507.357; (17 October 1628), *S.T.C.*18507.191.

be done to transform what was essentially a ‘rag bag’ of reports into a more consistent account. Verhoeven was, in Arblaster’s words, an ‘outspokenly loyalist publisher’ who ‘hero worshipped Bucquoy and Spinola’, and his publication was intended to appeal to the loyalist readership that subscribed to support the Habsburg Netherlands troops in Bohemia and the Palatinate and to win over those in Brussels who had voted against taxes to support the war effort.⁶⁷ Verhoeven invented the idea of a title to summarize the events covered in the issue, introduced illustrations and adopted an 8 page booklet format. He introduced editorials that showed his loyalty and emphasized good news of Catholic military successes and used the headlines and woodcuts to emphasize any news that enhanced the reputation of the monarchy. His reports stressed the good organization of the Army of Flanders and its successes. The military affairs of enemies could not be disregarded entirely but news of Spanish defeats and disasters appeared more slowly, delayed in the hope that better news might arrive, and were under-reported. Similarly Dutch fleet successes were not as prominent as news of Spanish fleet arrivals. If all else failed Verhoeven handled both doubt about his sources and reluctance to accept the veracity of reports by adopting what Arblaster has termed ‘a rhetoric of truth telling’, with the frequent use of expressions such as ‘whether it is true time will tell’, or ‘it is rumoured’. These allowed the publisher to avoid taking responsibility for the content of reports and to disassociate himself in particular from those reports least likely to be palatable to readers. Despite this, Arblaster found that ‘a careful reading of the inside pages shows that a range of stories were carried which put the Habsburg and Catholic forces in a bad light’. So that, overall, even the *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*, despite the efforts of its publisher and its surface appearance of Catholicism, was carrying essentially the same mix of content, supplied in the same way through essentially the same subscription networks, that could be found in all the printed news at this time.⁶⁸

In Amsterdam, by contrast, news was produced in a competitive and less state controlled market so news had to be printed as quickly as possible. Publishers aimed to

⁶⁷ Arblaster, 39, 48, 41-2. Verhoeven’s publication process also had a delay of 2 days to allow each issue to be checked by a cathedral canon, 87.

⁶⁸ Arblaster, 66-69, 103, 105, 57, 66. Verhoeven, for example, reported the investiture of the Duke of Bavaria but omitted the absence of the Spanish Ambassador. All news publications noted the death of the prince-bishop of Bamberg and Wurzburg but only Verhoeven provided a 2-page obituary. Verhoeven covered the progress of the Spanish Match closely but did not report rejoicing in England when the Prince returned. Instead, he invited readers to rejoice because Charles was safely home and the Infanta would follow in the spring.

condense the latest news, complete a page, and get it onto the streets before the events reported were covered by others and became common knowledge. As a result of these very different pressures, news could appear in print in Amsterdam as much as 2 weeks earlier than it appeared in Antwerp. This gave time little time for editorial niceties such as headlines and editorials or for the luxury of withholding unpalatable news in the hope that subsequent reports would be more acceptable to their Calvinist readers. Faster, cheaper production did not result in a different range of news but did mean that there was no time to wait for news to be confirmed by further reports. As a result, more mistakes were made. For example, Broer Janz printed news of a wedding between Prince Charles and the Infanta in Madrid before he returned to London unwed. Similarly, in Germany, there was often less checking than in Antwerp.⁶⁹

Conclusion

From 1620 onwards London was in regular receipt of rich and varied reports covering diplomatic, military and mercantile news from across Europe and sometimes also news from as far away as Turkey, Russia and the East and West Indies. The material was primarily from newsletters covering events that were publicly known in the cities they came from and had been published at least once before it reached England. German and Dutch publications provided the bulk of what was republished in English. In addition publishers had access to primary sources of information, mainly letters but sometimes also official publications of proclamations and treaties. None of these were 'impartial' if what is meant is that the professionalism of newsletter writers, postmasters and publishers resulted in a purely factual coverage of military and diplomatic events, uncoloured by religious or other affiliations. However, the purpose of most of the correspondence was to exchange information rather than to persuade. Writers of all affiliations participated in the exchange and they did so in a sufficiently business-like way to make them all equal as the passive recipients of reports and correspondence in exchange for the best information that they could find and offer in return. They were not like modern investigative journalists

⁶⁹ Dahl, *Dutch Corantos*, 18, quotes Abraham Cateleyn, a Haarlem printer, which demonstrates that Van Hilten was nonetheless on the look out for fresh and more reliable sources. 'The falseness of the corantos... has forced me to write for special news from the most important towns in Europe... The late Mr Jan Van Hilten asked me, when he saw this news at my house, to put them or something from them at his service every week, a thing which I did now and again and which made his corantos better than those of the others'; Arblaster, 86-7.

and they had no modern technology to assist them in checking out the facts. Yet these writers were regularly relied upon in the same way that they relied upon others, so if they failed to provide valid and frequent reports they would not have been used or been able to maintain their position within their networks.

Though from time to time governments intervened, for example, the States General in the United Provinces attempted to stop the Amsterdam press from causing embarrassment to other governments and Johann von den Birghden was dismissed as postmaster in Frankfurt, the international, informal and flexible nature of the news networks placed them effectively beyond the reach and control of governments. The analogy today is the internet with its pages, chat rooms and blogs operating largely outside the control of government and in response to the interests and engagement of participants. However, this does not mean that the public sphere was ‘non-instrumental’ in the pure sense used by Habermas to mean that it could not be deployed to some degree to serve the interests of a particular group or achieve a particular political or confessional effect. Abraham Verhoeven’s Antwerp publication aimed to encourage support for the Army of Flanders, and Theophraste Renaudot’s *Gazette* in Paris provided a mouthpiece for Richlieu. The Protestant publishers of Germany, the United Provinces and England were responding to the threat of the Counter-Reformation by printing reports and thereby making a commercial venture out of a market created by the fears of their readers. There were however limitations on the extent to which news could be manipulated and these limitations resulted in the publication of very similar news in all the cities participating in news exchange. News publishers were in the hands of their suppliers and at the mercy of the weather. They were not in a position to withhold indefinitely news of events that were unpalatable to them since it would undoubtedly reach readers via other routes. They could not check the material they received though the repetition of the same news from different places provided some assurance of accuracy. They could also consider whether the reports seemed credible. As the London editor in 1624 put this, ‘for the truth I referre you to the Discourse, not that any of these be untrue, concerning the substance; but that they vary in some circumstances and names and places’.⁷⁰ Thus the editor in any city had limited autonomy to decide to repeat good news by using as many reports of the same event as

⁷⁰ (12 March 1624), 9, *S.T.C.*18507.144.

arrived in the city or possibly to hold back certain news for a while until the truth of it was inescapable. Only the most innovative, such as Verhoeven, would write a covering introduction tailored to a particular readership. Mostly they made the most of whatever they received.

Although reports were neither as timely nor as reliable as we have come to expect, they were sufficiently well regarded by their many recipients across Europe to keep the trade flourishing and steadily growing to take in progressively more cities throughout the Thirty Years' War. All participated in exchanging, trading or reading the news because they were part of the conflict, whether directly or by proxy when their sons enlisted or their leaders paid contributions from funds levied locally, through diplomatic negotiations, trade and mercantile interests, or shared religious and dynastic concerns. Reports reflect the absorption of attention in a shared European experience. At this point it is not necessary to enter into a revisionist debate as to how great a consensus there was within English society on political ideology, religion or foreign policy, only to note that these sources of information were available. They were diverse, and production and dissemination in England allowed readers to develop and polish their critical faculties, form their own views or apply their beliefs and prejudices to interpret according to their own world-view.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH CORANTOS AND REGULAR NEWSBOOKS 1621-1622: A PUBLISHING INITIATIVE

The bibliographical details of the beginnings of English journalism were researched in the 1930s but the key role of the publishers, as the principal risk takers and innovators in this initiative, has never been fully investigated. This chapter looks at their work in the context of the impact of wider political events. It shows how London publishers facilitated news reporting by importing and translating work from Dutch and German sources; took political and commercial risks, and challenged all the existing mechanisms for controlling and directing their trade.

The term 'stationer' is used throughout this period to encompass printers, publishers and booksellers and much of the study of the trade has highlighted the work of printers, the development of their craft, and the evolution of Stationers' Company which, again focused on the control of printing.¹ However, specialization in the book trade meant that many stationers either kept shops and issued works in their own names or concentrated on either publishing or selling. The gradual separation of functions can be seen in the imprints. The imprint, 'Printed by Augustine Mathews, for Thomas Jones, and are to be sold at his shop in S. Dunstan's Church-yard in Fleetstreet 1633' indicates that the bookshop was run by the publisher. As the importance of the publisher grew the printers' names were reduced to initials or disappeared completely from the imprint.² Successful newspaper production called for little skill or capacity from printers but its challenges required publishing skills ranging from international networking, to commissioning translations, handling the

¹ Early printing houses were also publishers and booksellers, seeing books through all stages to marketing. N.F. Blake argues in *Caxton: England's First Publisher* (1976) that even Caxton was primarily a publisher with only as much interest in printing as he thought necessary. Those most interested in publishing often also arranged for others to do the printing. Clearer separation began with the Charter of Incorporation (1557) of the Stationers' Company which vested the monopoly for printing in the Company while introducing no publishing and selling restrictions. Printing became the main focus for controls operated by the Company. In 1586, the Star Chamber limited the number of master printers so that other members of the Company had to remain journeymen or become publishers or booksellers. An order of the Court of Stationers in 1615, limited 19 printers to 2 presses each and the remainder to one. Arber, Vol. 1, 28-32, 4 May 1556; Arber, Vol. 2, 807-812; Arber, Vol. 3, 699; (S. H. Steinberg, *500 Years of Printing* (1974), 182; F. Dahl, *Amsterdam - the Earliest Newspaper Centre of Western Europe*, (The Hague, 1939), 184; W. G. Hellinga in *Copy and Print in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, 1962) describe the Dutch printers).

² By 1614, the ascendancy of publishers led journeymen to complain that 'the Stationer hath all the profit both by Printing and Bookselling'. Plant, 66. George Wither commented 'the Bookeseller hath not onely made the Printer, the Binder and the Clasp-maker a Slave to him: but hath brought Authors, yea the whole Commonwealth, ...[to] labour for his profit, at his owne price'. Quoted in F. A. Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling*, 1 (1974), 94.

authorities and organizing subscriptions, sales and distribution. Contemporary commentators were aware of the central role of the publishers in the emergence of the periodical press. The publishers introduced the word when referring to themselves in print. Yet Leona Rostenberg's account of the lives of Butter and Bourne, two of the names most associated with this trade, stands alone.³ This chapter demonstrates the crucial role of publishers in taking entrepreneurial risks, initiating the domestic production of corantos and shaping their evolution into newsbooks for the English market.

One of the first challenges was handling the authorities. Interpretations of the role of censorship in this tense period at the start of the Thirty Years' War range widely from the Whig lenses of Christopher Hill and Frederick Seibert who saw early modern press censorship as a tool of royal repression, to the revisionist approach of Sheila Lambert who argues that documents customarily viewed as evidence of the government's control of the press represent concessions to the Stationers' Company. Post-revisionist accounts range from Thomas Cogswell's *The Blessed Revolution*, suggesting that censorship was effective, to Cyndia Clegg's *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* which emphasizes the multiplicity of players and demonstrates that the political print world of Jacobean England was 'enormously complicated'. Censorship operated mainly in times of crisis, suppressing works infrequently and only temporarily and often in response to the concerns of political allies. She shows that the influence of foreign ambassadors and Court members could, and did, influence James I. This validates the frequent speculations of contemporary commentators who pointed at the role of Spanish ambassadors. She depicts censorship as a complex cultural negotiation 'made to serve multiple cultural ends' and suggests that, in this period, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, on whom the Crown would normally rely, was inactive in tackling foreign news while the press itself was amassing authority and power of its own.⁴

The chapter tells a story that fits well with Clegg's analysis. It follows the evolution of foreign news reporting in England in its first two years when London

³ Numb. 9. *The Continuation*, Bourne (16 July 1630), 14, S.T.C.18507.205, 'The Publisher to the Reader'; Dahl. 168; L. Rostenberg, 'Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, First Masters of the Staple' *The Library*, 5th Series, 12 (1957); L. Rostenberg, 'The Debut of English Journalism: Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, First Masters of the Staple' in *Literary, Political, Scientific, Religious and Legal Publishing, Printing and Bookselling in England 1551-1700*, I (N.Y., 1965) 75-93; Mandelbrote, G. 'From the warehouse to the counting-house: booksellers and bookshops in late seventeenth-century London', in eds., R. Myers and M. Harris, *Genius for Letters* (Winchester and New Castle, D. E., 1995), 77, says 'publisher' meant to 'make public' and was associated with distribution.

⁴ C. Hill, 'Censorship and English Literature', in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, 1, (Brighton, 1985); Seibert; Lambert, 1-32; Cogswell; Clegg, 14, 15, 18, 19.

publishers took advantage of the availability of periodical news and the sharpened interest in news. Questions about the authenticity of imprints confuse the story of transition from Dutch to London publication in 1621. Until now although Hanson provided an excellent analysis of the typographical and trade evidence no account has adequately explained it.⁵ Scrutiny of the events leading to the licensing arrangements that emerged in May 1622 and October 1622 allows a closer examination of relations between the publishers, the Stationers' Company and the Crown to reveal a process of negotiation in which the publishers played a key role. Compromise and innovation resulted in establishing parameters in which this new trade could operate and evolve and gave the publishers public and official recognition. The chapter includes the reaction of James I to rising public interest in foreign affairs, leaving the broader study of the Crown's involvement to Chapter 6.

Coranto Publication

Appendix 1 identifies all the earliest surviving corantos and describes their typographical and bibliographical characteristics. This section assesses the evidence to provide a new and more coherent account of the way London publishers took over periodical news production in London from the Dutch.

The first surviving corantos in English, beginning 2 December 1620 with the first news of the White Mountain defeat, provided the seller's name and address as Peter de Keere in Calverstreet, Amsterdam. This suggests they were printed for sale to the English speaking population of the Netherlands initially. De Keere was well placed to seize the marketing opportunity that opened up in the wake of Imperial troops advancing on Prague. He was an illustrator of newsprints and a map engraver whose Calvinist family had fled to London from Ghent when he was 11 years old. He had worked for John Nordon and maintained close associations with London stationers and in the early 1620s he provided engravings for George Humble who traded at the sign of the White Horse in Pope's Head Alley. With these contacts it would have been relatively simple to start sending copies to London, probably to Thomas Archer whose bookshop was also in that alley.⁶ Initially, de

⁵ Hanson.

⁶ Appendix 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.1-7; George Humble published John Speed's atlas of Great Britain in 1627, with engravings by Pietre Van de Keere, and the proofs were in Humble's hands by 1623. De Keere was related by

Keere's name and address would have given authenticity to the product because he was known in London. It appeared on corantos printed up to 9 April 1621. (Once the series was established, of course, this would not have been so important.)⁷

This series was to continue through the spring and summer of 1621. These earliest corantos covered news that provided a backdrop to parliamentary discussion. After MPs had been summoned, James issued a proclamation against 'Lavish and Licentious speech of matters of State' on 24 December 1620 which referred to the growth of 'Intercourse with foreign nations' and cautioned everyone 'from the highest to the lowest, to take heede, how they intermeddle by Penne, or Speech, with causes of State, and secrets of Empire, either at home, or abroad', threatening punishment for offenders.⁸ This must have been announced before copies of the second coranto reached the streets of London and there is no evidence to suggest that the Crown was singling out corantos. The proclamation signalled a view that writing about and discussing foreign matters and matters of state violated the law. James was aiming to avoid war. Unwilling to support his son-in-law's succession to the Crown of Bohemia, which he had advised against, yet concerned to protect the Palatinate from Spinola, James was faced with a dilemma which he meant to address in Parliament. His proclamation was directed against all forms of public discussion of foreign affairs and was supported by an order to the Bishop of London to summon the clergy 'to charge them from the King not to meddle in sermons with the Spanish match or any other matters of state'.⁹

Historians have since disputed the interpretation of this proclamation. It appears to have been more about speech than print. The 'audacious tongues' seem to have been those of the Earl of Southampton, the Earl of Oxford, Edwin Sandys and other Members of Parliament who were imprisoned in 1621. The proclamation was loosely worded and

marriage to another coranto publisher, Jan Jansson. R. A. Skelton, 'Pieter Van Den Keere', *The Library*, 5th Series, 5, (1950); G. Leth, 'A Protestant Public Sphere: The Early European Newspaper Press', in *Annual*, 71-2.

⁷ F. Dahl, 'Amsterdam - the Cradle of English Newspapers', *The Library*, 5th Series, 4 (1949), 169, explains the disappearance of de Keere's name from imprints by saying that the English version of corantos omits reports concerning events in England. So they were intended for English readers in England, and it was pointless to direct readers to a bookshop in Amsterdam. However, the earliest example of omissions he found was 31 March, so this does not rule out local sales, nor explain why de Keere's name appeared initially. However, de Keere's name was probably very familiar to coranto customers who attended the Dutch Church in Austin Friars nearby Pope's Head Alley. This evidence is suggestive of a gradual transition of main sales from the Netherlands to London.

⁸ Quoted in full in *Proclamations*, 1, 208 and 218. Also R. R. Steele, *Tudor and Stuart Proclamations* (Oxford, 1910), 1296.

⁹ Clegg, 84, 185-6. Bacon wrote to Buckingham on 16 November 1620, concerned about the level of talk about foreign affairs, 98-99 below.

followed close on the heels of the appearance of *Vox Populi* by Thomas Scott, a puritan cleric, which exposed Spanish influences on English policies at home and abroad through a fictional dialogue between Spanish ministers and Count Gondomar. So it would have been easy enough, even at the time, to be less than completely clear about whether James intended to put a stop to all print relating to foreign affairs and to choose instead to interpret it narrowly as a reaction to Scott's publications. Subsequent events were however to demonstrate his intentions more clearly.¹⁰

Anna Simoni's *Catalogue of Books from the Low Countries 1601-1621* shows 367 news pamphlets from the Low Countries now in the British Library. Puritan refugees in the United Provinces were smuggling works to England and harbouring Thomas Scott who had left England because of the outstanding success of *Vox Populi*. So too were Catholic sympathizers in Antwerp where Richard Verstigan, another English refugee, became one of the earliest identifiable European news journalists making foreign news more readily available in England.¹¹ No action appears to have been taken against any booksellers in London for handling corantos at this stage though their appearance in London may have helped to draw attention to an ever increasing flow of works from abroad. The government turned its attention to the ports: on 21 December 1621, Lord Zouch, Warden of the Cinque Ports, and Mayor of Dover confiscated 108 "dangerous books" being imported from France.¹² However, import control was always a weakness in the system of censorship and like the proclamation of December 1620 this appears to have had little effect on Low Countries' trade.

By this stage James had identified Dutch imports as a problem. He appealed to the Dutch Government and on 16 January 1621 the States General issued a proclamation stating that there had been secret and public printing of

¹⁰ Ibid, 263, fn. 103; Chamberlain to Carleton 22 Dec. 1622, *Chamberlain*, 2, 331; Ch 6, 220-223.

¹¹ (1999). 335 of them were published by Abraham Verhoeven in Antwerp between 1617 and 1633; L. B. Wright, 'Propaganda Against James I's "Appeasement of Spain"' *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 6 (February 1943) 2; P. Arblaster, *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstigan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (Leuven, 2004); Ch. 2, 41.

¹² Frearson, 241; 20 January 1622 John Reading also sent a Bordeaux pamphlet to Lord Zouch that was scandalous to the King. These were Catholic books and James I was criticized in Parliament in 1621 for allowing the increase in French and Spanish ambassadorial personnel, their attendance at Catholic masses and their importation of Catholic books. L. Rostenberg, *The Minority Press and the English Crown* (N.Y., 1971), 144. She provides an account of the collectors, searchers and other officers at ports, 78-80, 119-20; 'Although the early Puritan printers were to issue manifestoes and dogma anonymously in England or from a haven on the Continent they never experienced the... aversion displayed against their Catholic colleagues', 166.

Certain booklets, pamphlets and writings' in the 'Latin, French, English, Scottish and various other languages, both on ecclesiastical and political matters, touching persons and governments of Kings, Princes, friends and allies' of Holland. The Dutch were therefore forbidden 'to send the same to other countries and realms and particularly not to send some twelve scandalous writings and pamphlets concerning other Kings and potentates, friends and allies, touching their political or ecclesiastical governments, and especially none against the King of Great Britain and his principal ministers, spiritual and temporal.

We do not know which publications had caused particular offence.¹³ The emphasis is on pamphlets and tracts, rather than corantos. Again, there was no noticeable impact on the publication of corantos in English. It seems that neither de Keere nor Veseler had any concerns about political impropriety or trouble from the authorities. Even when de Keere's name and address disappeared from the imprint in the spring, issues still continued to identify Veseler as the printer, making production easy to trace.

Having started and found the authorities either less interested in their small digests of news than in the more political fare of the polemicists or unable to do anything effective to stop them, de Keere and Veseler might have continued to export copies to England as Broer Jansz did to France. However, this approach had limitations. Shipping costs would have been high for such a low value item as these rapidly and crudely printed single sheets. Also the larger the shipments became the greater the chances of them being intercepted on the docks. Importing would only have worked long term with a stable, moderate demand from a clientele who could afford to pay for a special service. It would probably have worked best through a high unit price and a subscription list like those used for manuscript news. But with the assembly of Parliament and MPs arriving daily in London in January 1621 with support for Frederick and Elizabeth on their minds, demand for the latest news was running high. Publishers in London would not have remained content for long with a selling and distribution role, still less with the prospect of missing sales if shipments proved too small. Publication in London would have been cheaper and Londoners were better placed to exploit marketing opportunities.

Mead's correspondence provides evidence that supply did not keep up with demand. His surviving correspondence, like the surviving evidence of printed corantos in English, begins with news of the White Mountain defeat which he got from a letter from 'an English gentleman there'. Mead relied primarily on transcripts of corantos through the

¹³ *Groot Placet Boeck*, I (1658) 409, 441. Quoted in the *Tercentenary Handlist of English and Welsh Newspapers, Magazines, and Revues* (The Times, 1920), 9.

spring of 1621 but commented on the scarcity of supply on 9 February and again in April when he referred to ‘a later Courrante ... I have seen it but could not be the owner of any of them’. Even after he began to pass on printed corantos in April over 50% of his foreign news continued to be transmitted in transcripts.¹⁴

However, to switch production to London the publishers needed a deal with their suppliers in Amsterdam to secure a regular supply of copy. They also needed to be sure that periodical publication would be acceptable to the Stationers’ Company and the Crown if printing was to take place weekly in the City, under the noses of the wardens of the Company, Crown officials and Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The prospects of doing so cannot have looked very promising in the spring of 1621 and the evidence suggests that the first approach was simply to avoid dealing with these issues altogether through illicit publication. At first sight it would appear that the main competition to de Keere and Veseler came from a second series from Amsterdam. Appendix 1 identifies the fifteen surviving issues of English corantos with Amsterdam or other Dutch imprints, dated from 9 April to 10 August, of questionable authenticity. A letter from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 10 August 1621, tells us that presses in London printed ‘every weeke, at least, corantos with all manner of, newes and as strange stuffe as any we have from Amsterdam’, and an excellent typographical analysis by Hanson tells us the trade was very quickly picked up in London, probably by Thomas Archer using false imprints with at least some of the issues coming from the press of Edward Allde.¹⁵

Despite considerable bibliographical research, the evidence of the earliest London publication of corantos remains confused and confusing. It is complicated by the uneven pattern of the survival of issues, and Dahl’s reaction to Hanson’s analysis. Dahl’s decision to catalogue all the issues in accordance with their imprint, despite the questions about authenticity, has also discouraged further detailed investigation. What is clear, however, is that the initiative rested entirely with enthusiastic publishers. We need to understand the role of the publishers more fully to get a closer understanding of how they operated. They deliberately obscured the origins of early issues and their reasons can be found in their methods of trading and anxiety about the official reaction they feared they might receive.

¹⁴ Harl. MS. 389. fo. 1, 11, 61.

¹⁵ Appendix 1 for S.T.C. 18507. 8, 9, 13, 15, 18-28; *Chamberlain*, Vol. 2, 396; Hanson, 356-364; Dahl, 42.

All the evidence suggests that Thomas Archer was the first to take the plunge into coranto publication in London and that the authorities caught up with him quite quickly. Joseph Mead, writing from Cambridge on 22 September 1621, told Sir Martin Stuteville that ‘my Corrantoer, Archer was layd by the heales for making or adding to Corrantoes’. Frearson argues that this quotation from Mead alone is insufficient to prove that Archer was the first London coranto publisher. However, he overlooks the wealth of additional information about Archer’s activities as a supplier of corantos to Mead from his papers. There are eight transcripts of corantos in this correspondence, plus two references to other printed corantos during 1621 that Mead copied from and for which there is no other record and a wealth of other foreign news. In addition, the papers include nine of the earliest surviving corantos; eight of them among those identified as having false imprints. Appendix 2 identifies the corantos, transcripts of corantos and other foreign news corantos in Mead’s correspondence for 1621.¹⁶ This evidence suggests that the process of transition production from Amsterdam to London began in stages; first with a scribal effort to supplement the supply of printed corantos (which continued after Archer began to publish in London). The second was illicit printing; and when Mead said he was getting corantos from Archer he was, which is why the ones he received were mostly those with false imprints.

Archer’s involvement is best understood in the context of the way he traded. He was apprenticed to Cuthbert Burby of the Cornhill near the Exchange. Being apprenticed to a bookseller meant that he had little opportunity to learn to print. He became a freeman in January 1603 and began publication that year with Henry Timberlake’s *True and strange discourse ... of two English pilgrimes*. In his early years he occupied a series of premises, a little shop by the Royal Exchange, the Long Shop under St Mildred’s Church in 1604, and Popes Head Palace near the Royal Exchange in 1607. Then he moved to Pope’s Head Alley, by the Sign of the Horse-Shoe, where he dealt in plays, jest-books and popular literature. He was brought before the Court of the Stationers’ Company and fined in August 1619 for ‘Bynding Fran. Williams(on) at a scriveno(rs) and for keeping him Contrary to order’. In 1617 both he and Nathaniel Newbery, another publisher who was

¹⁶ Harl. MS., 389 fo. 122; Frearson, 90-1; By contrast, Levy, 34, assumes Thomas Archer was the first. Since Mead says specifically on occasions that he is relying on printed copies it seems reasonable to conclude that the other transcripts of corantos were received by Mead in manuscript form. Harl. MS. 389 fo. 11, says he was drawing on at least two sources, one of which was Dutch and more ‘continual’.

later to join the news syndicate, went into the news trade. News became his major interest. We do not know how much of this was scribal.¹⁷

Archer appears to have begun with too little capital to enable him to buy stocks in the Stationer's Company or a patent from the Crown for established works with a good sales record. Only a wealthier publisher could consider the publication of more significant volumes by better-known authors. A modest publisher like Archer had to build up capital slowly through successful sponsorship. He would have been obliged to concentrate upon the cheaper works where the outlay would be low and the profit reasonable if the works sold.¹⁸ Printing an existing document was much easier and cheaper than employing a writer, hence the popularity of official documents. Some impecunious publishers saved themselves further from expense and effort by simply helping themselves to a writer's work, amending the title and the author's name to obscure the origin.¹⁹

Works would have reached Archer much as they reach publishers today. They were taken to the publisher by the author or a go-between. But in the seventeenth century most publishers needed to seek work actively, especially to specialize in news from abroad. Venturing into the European market meant entering into a world of letter writing, employing clerks to look after consignments for dispatch and check incoming bales of what were usually unbound sheets.²⁰ Moreover, Archer needed subscriptions to secure a steady supply of copy. He may well have approached de Keere or Veseler to change the arrangements. We have no evidence that he did other than the fact that de Keere dropped his name from the English imports on 9 April; the day the first surviving London issue appeared.²¹ This suggests that de Keere knew what was happening. The fact that

¹⁷ Jackson, *Fine Book*, 112; Shaaber, 289; Rostenburg, 'Nathaniel Butter', 28.

¹⁸ John Dunton's career shows how a publisher and bookseller worked with cheap publications. Although active in the latter part of the seventeenth century his business reflected essential features of the trade that remained similar. Once he had some stock, he started trading with other booksellers to get a variety of pamphlets for sale and thereby assembled stock with the minimum financial outlay, 'The very first copy I would venture to print was written by the Reverend Mr Doolittle, and intituled, *The Sufferings of Christ*. This book fully answered my end; for, exchanging it through the whole Trade, it furnished my Shop with all sorts of Books saleable at that Time.' Printed for S. Malthus, (1705); S. Parks, *John Dunton and the English Book Trade* (Garland, 1976).

¹⁹ To obtain free copy Dunton invited readers to submit contributions to the Athenian Society. Sometimes he would also write himself. He did not expect to pay much for material. Authors had little bargaining power. When asked by a writer for more money, Dunton was indignant, saying that they wanted to become 'half-booksellers' and that he would not make any profit. He would also publish work without the author's consent. Wither complained that the bookseller will make no scruple to alter the author's name in a second edition and change the title. G. Wither, *Schollers Purgatory, Discovered in the Stationers Commonwealth* (1625) quoted in Arber, 4, 14–19.

²⁰ Ch 4, 148–9, on relations between London and provincial booksellers. The letter from a seventeenth-century publisher in Lyons shows the responsibilities that might be entrusted to an agent.

²¹ Appendix 1, (9 April 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.6 and *S.T.C.* 18507.18 and 79–80 above.

Veseler's issues continued to reach London further suggests that Veseler may also have known but decided to continue to export independently. Archer did not reach an agreement with either of them and instead published what came to hand so that the issues with false imprints came from a variety of originals.

Archer was venturing into a market where he had reason to expect that, despite the very considerable interest in European affairs at the time, he might not attract a great deal of unwelcome official attention. The information based accounts of events of distant and unfamiliar places of corantos, sometimes with conflicting reports of a single event generated by the confusion of warfare, were not aimed for popular consumption by the ignorant. Only a discerning reader was likely to have been able to get very much intelligible information from them. Dutch imports had tested the market giving him the expectation of a good trade, particularly among discreet newsletter correspondents. The Dutch also inadvertently gave him the opportunity to shelter behind the names of respected Amsterdam tradesmen who were openly associating themselves with English corantos. It may at first have seemed a relatively simple matter to take advantage of their imprints.

Mead's letter of 22 September 1621 shows he believed the coranto trade was officially sanctioned. This assumption has no basis in the records of the Stationers Company. It is not clear why Mead thought the trade was legitimate if the only corantos to have appeared in London at this stage had a Dutch imprint, authentic or false. To Mead the term 'Corrantoer' may have meant seller or transcriber of corantos. Honest translation, rather than the question of whether they could be lawfully imported and sold, seems to be the key issue for Mead.²² The frequency of a regular news service may have helped to convince Mead that the business was legitimate or it would not continue. By the same token, however, it could only have been a matter of time before the Stationers' Company would trace their source to Archer and seek to collect fees for entering each issue in their register. Archer was fined in July 1621 for publishing unlicensed books. However, frustrating as it may have been for the Stationers' Company to see his illicit business booming, they had little authority over ephemeral single sheet products.²³

²² S. Morison, *The Origins of the Newspaper* (1954), 20, 24, suggests that Archer was probably punished for doing literally as Mead said, 'adding to his corantos' by making use of the blank space at the end of the coranto to add, in manuscript, items of local or otherwise unprintable news, but there is no evidence to support this.

²³ Jackson, *Fine Book*, 466, 9 July 1621 states, 'It is ordered that Tho Archer for causing to be printed certain books unlicensed and unentered shall pay for a fine ... xls'; S. Lambert, 'Coranto Printing in England', *J.N.andP.H.*, 8 (1992), 9; Frearson, 242, links the fine with Archer's subsequent imprisonment on 13 August and therefore with the

In August they were able to take firmer action: Archer was imprisoned just as Mead reported, though not for an offence directly related to corantos, but for the publication of a foreign news pamphlet with a false imprint from the press of Edward Allde, 'Printed at the Hayf by Arnold Meuris Bookseller at the Signe of the Bible'.²⁴ Archer and Allde had evidently been collaborating on a number of publications. The Court Book entry for Edward Allde's release from prison, dated 8 October 1621, shows he was questioned about printing several unlicensed works, not just the one specified in the entry for 13 August. 'Whereas Mr Alldee, hath latlie Imprinted diverse bookes without lycense or entrance, and being called into question for the same, hath used verie unfitting wordes and scandalous speeches.... It is therefore this daie ordered that he shall not ... attend anie more as a liveries man untill he shall submitt himselfe to this table.' Archer appears to have remained in prison throughout the winter. His name did not reappear again in the Stationers' books until the following May when he was reminded of his outstanding debt to the Company for the fine for unlicensed publications.²⁵

Action by the Stationers' Company against Archer and Allde must also be seen in the context of the growing crisis in Europe and a confused domestic response. James' failure to show sufficient public sympathy for the fate of Elizabeth and the Protestant cause put him onto a collision course with public opinion, and Parliament was proving more difficult to direct than anticipated. As a result, an enterprise that may have seemed low risk in the winter of 1620/1 grew more hazardous. James I reissued his proclamation against 'Lavish and Licentious speech on matters of State' in July 1621, at the height of a summer full of news and rumour. Clegg describes 1621 as the 'high-water mark in government efforts to contain criticism of James's foreign policy'. Parliament adjourned at the beginning of June with a promise of subsidies if peace could not be restored by treaty but Parliament had voted no more cash. Moreover Digby's mission to Vienna to negotiate

printing of *A brief description of the reasons that make the declaration of Ban made against the King of Bohemia... of noe value or worth*. They both therefore conclude that neither offence was directly tied to coranto publishing.

²⁴ Jackson, Court Book, 137, 'It is ordered that Mr Alldee and Thomas Archer shal be comitted to prison, upon Mr Secretaries Calverts Comands for printing a book called, A briefe declaracon of Ban made against the King of Bohemia as being the Electo(r) Palatine Dated 22 Janurij last of noe value or worth, and therefore not to be respected. It is alsoe ordered, that the barres of his presses shal be taken downe'. Rostenberg, *Minority Press*, 59-60, records Edward Allde's earlier activities antagonising the authorities by printing Catholic publications, and an illicit edition of *Basilicon Doron* and using a fictitious imprint.

²⁵ Ibid, 137, 146; 'This Daie Thomas Archer promised to paie 40s that heretofore he was fined to paie, for printing bookes contrarie to order.'

for the restitution of the Palatinate was being met coldly. So there was no resolution in sight.²⁶

Corantos were, by this time, reflecting increasingly unrealistic hopes of a Protestant alliance for the recovery of the Palatinate, which according to them, was to include Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, Lower Saxony, and the United Provinces, despite the Treaty of Mentz in April, in which the Evangelical Union had agreed to withdraw their troops from the Palatinate and had effectively disbanded. The corantos were even more out of step with the diplomatic situation when they criticized Spain to an English readership. A coranto with an 'Altmere' imprint of 29 July 1621 included the text of a letter from Mansfeld to Bethlem Gabor referring to 'the tyrannie of the Pope and crueltie of the Spanish yoke' as the real reasons for the Bohemian War, while an issue of 9 August, with a 'Joris Veseler' imprint, included a report from Frankfurt of Spanish garrisons that were not allowing farmers to work their land without paying large levies. Crops were being spoiled and people running away. These reports were probably true and their appearance in London may not have been, in itself, any more of a trigger for a Crown reaction than the first appearance of corantos in 1620 was for the December proclamation. Also the reports were counterbalanced over the summer by the honest reporting of the damage and sacking done, for example, by Mansfeld's forces.²⁷ But criticism of Spain was a particularly sensitive issue with James I. All his hopes of settlement rested on negotiations which were to be accomplished with the assistance of the support of Spain: the Palatinate rested on a general cease-fire and subsequent six-week extensions negotiated by James through Madrid.²⁸

Yet the coranto trade did not stop. Joseph Mead's letter of 22 September 1621, reporting Archer's arrest adds that 'now there is another that hath got license to print ...[corantos] and sell them, honestly translated out of the Dutch'.²⁹ The very first surviving corantos with London imprints began with an issue of 24 September 1621, 'London Printed for N.B. September 24th 1621 Out of the Hie Dutch Coppy printed at Frankford'. Seven corantos from this series have survived. The last is dated 22 October

²⁶ Clegg, 194; R. Zaller, *The Parliament of 1621* (California, 1971), 137, 143.

²⁷ Appendix 1, (29 July 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.26; (9 August 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.13; (9 July 1621), verso, *S.T.C.*18507.23,.

²⁸ Zaller, *The Parliament*, 142; Ch. 6, 222-7.

²⁹ Harl. MS., 389 fo. 122; Schumacher, 64, suggests that 'N B's' Sept/Oct 1621 'monopoly' was overtaken by events because it did not apply to newsbooks. 'As it had taken over a year for the government to decide to license corantos, so it took about a year of competition to produce an official newsbook monopoly.'

1621. They all refer to 'N B' as the publisher. There is some uncertainty about the identity of 'N B', who could have been either Nathaniel Butter or Nicholas Bourne, both of whom were involved with foreign news for many years but it probably was Butter. John Nichols in *Literary Anecdotes*, also lists a 'Courant, or Weekly Newes from Foreign Parts' in Black Letter, 'out of the High Dutch, printed for Nath. Butter' dated October 1621, which may have been a slightly different version of the issue of 9 October.³⁰ These corantos appear to follow on directly from the last surviving issue of the Veseler series, dated 18 September 1621 but we do not know if Butter came to an agreement with Veseler, possibly as part of a rationalization once Van Hilten took over management in Amsterdam. It may only be the chance survival of copies that suggests succession rather than simultaneous production. Butter's publication claims to be translation of a German original, and not Dutch, though since Dutch and Cologne sources were interlinked this does not, in itself, tell us very much.

However, this venture was even more short-lived than Archer's. As Parliament resumed its debate on intervention in the Palatinate, soon after the date of the last surviving 'N B' coranto, Butter was called before the Court of the Company of Stationers. Like Archer, the offence was not, at least ostensibly, to do with corantos. It is recorded in the Court Book and the Fine Book for 12 November 1621 that, 'Nath. Butter shall pay for printing certayne lets from the Pope to the ffrench King w(th)out entrance ... xls Compounded for'. The work was *A Letter to the French King Louis xiii*. Butter cannot have been in prison for long. His name appears in the Fine Book again, in March 1622, 'Rec of Mr Butter for printing a book called Davids straight w(out) Entrance...vjs viid'. The work this time was *David's Straight; a sermon*, printed by G. Eld for Butter that year. Then, on May 11, 1622, again like Archer, he reappeared before the Stationers' Court, this time seeking to settle matters.³¹

A postscript to this episode in the history of the news trade comes from a letter from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 16 February 1622. It refers to the news press having been running in London for two years at that point.

The uncertainty likewise and the variety of reports is such that we know not what to believe of that done under our nose; and what gives out today for certain is to-

³⁰ (24 September 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.29; (22 October 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.35; (9 October 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.33; Dahl, 51, 53–54, quotes Nichols, 4 (1812), 38.

³¹ Jackson, Court Book, 139 and Fine Book, 467; Jackson, Court Book, 145, 'This daie Mr Butter did promise to paie his debt to the English stoke, on Twesdaie next, or to alloe Xp Centum till it be paid.'

morrow contradicted. For, since two years that forge, or mint, was set up at Amsterdam we have never left off coining, so apish are we in imitation of what is worst.

This letter confirms Chamberlain's earlier assertion that the corantos are being published in London but brings the first appearance of corantos in London forward, suggesting that, by February 1622, they had been printed in London for up to 2 years (that is from February 1620) rather than for 5 months from the commencement of the 'N B' series in September 1621. Of course, Chamberlain's reference need not be interpreted as referring exclusively to corantos. As we have seen, from 1619 onwards, the European and London presses had been busily turning out proclamations, justifications and news pamphlets in English related to the Bohemian Revolt. However, the characteristics he describes, apish imitation and news being given out one day, then corrected another, leaves little doubt that he had corantos in mind.³²

Corantos may have begun to appear in London before December 1620 but if so, the numbers were probably low to begin with and there was no reason to preserve them until reports of the defeat of Frederick at White Mountain began to appear and Parliament was called, bringing Bohemia and the Palatinate to the top of the political agenda. As an exile from Ghent, de Keere no doubt had religious motivations for wishing to draw associates in England more closely into approaching conflict with Spain but he was also a businessman seizing a marketing opportunity. Thomas Archer appears to have been the first to develop the trade in London through sales, through the scribal market for news and then through print. His caution and decision to shelter behind false imprints seems to have been reasonably astute since he found himself in prison within a matter of months, albeit in connection with another work bearing a false imprint connected with the Bohemian news but by the autumn of 1621, with the appearance of the N. B.' series, we see the first sign of an attempt to adopt a more established approach backed by a supply arrangement. Though this too was stopped.

Reception of the Corantos

This section shows how corantos found a ready-made market in England, examines the background to Butter's involvement in the trade and considers how effective censorship was in London at this time.

³² Ch. 2, 56, news between Amsterdam and Cologne; *Chamberlain*, 2, 423. Ch 1, 31-4, on 1618-19 publications.

On 29 November 1620, the Dorchester merchant William Whiteway recorded in his diary that ‘newes came to the towne that the King of Bohemia was overthrown by Count Bucquoy and fled with the queen into Silesia’. The diary of Sir Simonds D’Ewes from the winter of 1620/1, to 1622 is full of the ‘most sad and doleful news’.³³ Royal proclamations, the correspondence of Mead and the comments of John Chamberlain all point to the level of public interest in these events and to the desire for news. But how effective were corantos in responding to this demand?

As we have seen, corantos were dull, terse and difficult to interpret without some prior knowledge of who was who and what was where. Records of readers come from the diaries and correspondence of social elites. These writers did not, as Schumacher has noted, give corantos (or their successors, the newsbooks) much of a recommendation. It

is not surprising that contemporaries with more direct sources of information from the Continent found the news stale. Yet complaints about the slowness and inaccuracy of the printed news may have been fed by a snobbish feeling that private sources of information had to be superior.

It probably was, if you were privileged enough to be able to get it from well connected and reliable personal sources. As Schumacher also observed, ‘The news was usually fresh enough to be saleable without falsified dates’. Only a real expert in the news business used to direct reports, like the Rev. Joseph Mead, could complain on 2 June 1627 that the only available news ‘is from the corranto & that so ancient as it concerns nothing done since May began’. Yet, despite complaints, as Schumacher also notes, Mead continued to get corantos regularly and forward or describe them or send transcripts. So, without doubt, corantos had a role, filling in gaps in news left by the coverage of known correspondents and, given the focus of criticism whenever there was delay, we can take it that they were valued for reasonable speed.³⁴

Despite evidence that social elites, people of influence in their counties and in Parliament, continued to both read as well as criticize printed foreign news, twentieth-century historians continued to decry the significance of the arrival of corantos in England. As Michael Frearson has pointed out, ‘paradoxically’ Seibert and Lambert agree on their lack of significance. Their reason is either that they were heavily censored, or conversely

³³ Frearson acknowledged this, 273, but his analysis of the intended audience relates to the edited texts of newsbooks. *The Autobiography and correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes During the Reigns of James I and Charles I*, ed., J. O. Halliwell (London, 1845). See also Ch. 5, 190-7, for other known readers.

³⁴ Schumacher, 62–3; Dahl, 152; Ch. 2, n. 40, shows Mead discriminated between different coranto sources and regarded Cologne as more reliable than the Dutch.

not censored enough.³⁵ Most others have continued to accept that censorship was effective, including Schumacher and Davies. Zagorin and Cust accept that domestic news was banned throughout the period and Zagorin saw the corantos and newsbooks as 'dry', acknowledging simultaneously considerable public interest, which made it impossible for the government to stifle them, but claiming none the less that the real political focus was on events in Parliament. More recently Keith Thomas's article, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England' disappointingly ignores them. Cogswell has described them as 'heavily censored and bland'. Cogswell sees scribal texts as necessitated by the desire to avoid censorship, which he argues operated fairly effectively in terms of the controls over the printing presses through the Stationers' Company but had little effect on the world of circulating manuscripts. Not unreasonably, he suggests that tracking down anonymous poets was much more difficult than tracing a printing press.³⁶

However, just because contemporary historians find corantos dry, we cannot assume they were not read or that they had little impact. A historian of the future might equally draw the same conclusion about today's BBC news continuously running website updates. Yet many office workers have the facility switched on all day every day so that major disasters, like rail crashes, are now known almost immediately. It is also a mistake to assume that censorship had a role in making them dull. The initial impact of Crown and Stationers' Company initiatives was only to stem their appearance in London temporarily. This did not affect the content. In all the cases where it has been possible to match English corantos with their continental counterpart the text has been practically identical. The primary reason for the corantos appearing as they did up to October 1621 had everything to do with the way the news media was evolving throughout Europe (a point systematically missed by Anglo-centric historians) and nothing to do with the effects of censorship in London. We need to re-evaluate the evidence.

Joseph Mead was part of the network of news correspondents in England and exactly the kind of customer for whom early corantos were most suited. He had the time, patience and interest to follow issues regularly and carefully, comparing reports and dates,

³⁵ Frearson, 232.

³⁶ P. Zagorin, *The Court and Country* (1969), 107; R. Cust, 'News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *P. and P.*, 112 (1986), 62; K. Thomas in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed., G. Baumann (Oxford, 1986), 97-122; A personal view given to Frearson in May 1992 and reported in Frearson, 3; T. Cogswell, 'Underground Verse and the Transformation of Early Stuart Political Culture' in *Political Culture and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, eds., S. D. Amussen and M. A. Kishlansky (Manchester, 1995), 278.

and drawing his own conclusions. As we have seen, his regular correspondence with Sir Martin Stuteville shows he was a good customer. The correspondence contains nine of the known surviving corantos and evidence of a great deal more coranto activity in England than we might ever have guessed from the sparse survival rate of printed issues. In addition, even by early February 1621 it reveals an expectation of regular news. By June a hitch in supply was remarkable. On 23 June he wrote, 'The last Saturday failed almost wholly of foreign news; the winds I suppose have been these three weeks opposite.' Then, on 30 June, 'Corrantoes, I know not what is become of them'.³⁷ By early summer 1621, there were as many as four corantos a month in circulation. By May 1621 he was able to compare sources. He annotated the contents of a London letter dated 18 May 1621 with comments such as, 'The Corranto says that it was...', 'The Corranto says that Baron...', and 'The Corranto (from Vienna) says that...'. At the end he added, 'More out of the Corranto Amsterdam May 24 styl nov.1621'. Mead distinguished carefully the origins of the corantos he quoted from. He identified those from Amsterdam separately from those from Cologne. For example, 'Cullen Feb 12 and 19 1620/21 sn', 'Cullen 4 Mar.' and 'Cullen Aprill 29 Amsterdam May 1 styl novo'. Lower down the page from this, and in a different ink, is added, 'It is written from Cullen Apr 20 that 1500 horse and 6000 foot were sent downe the Rhine under the command of Henry van den Berg'. Thus he recognized, more clearly than we can now, two distinct series in circulation at the time.³⁸

When Butter began coranto publication in September 1621, he too distinguished carefully between Dutch and German sources. We have four surviving issues from the High Dutch dated 24 September, 2, 9 and 22 October, the first of which specifies its source as Frankfurt. Issues of 3 September and 6 October are identified in the imprint as Dutch; 11 October says it is from the Low Dutch. Butter was making a serious attempt to present the public with clearly authenticated translations and appears to have had networks in place. However there is nothing in the State Papers or the records of the Stationers' Company to throw light upon the remainder of Mead's statement, that 'another hath got license to print them'. We do not know whether such a license was granted, only that these issues were not registered with the Stationers' Company. There were no Company rules to deal with this new type of publication. Butter may not have thought registration was

³⁷ Cust, 63, 70-1; Harl. MS. 389, fo. 11, quoted more fully Ch. 2, n. 37. Harl. MS. 389. fo. 100.

³⁸ Harl. MS. 389, fo.74, 75, 16, 32 and 63; Appendix 2; Ch. 2, 56-7.

unnecessary or, like Mead, he may have believed he had been given a privilege that exempted him from Company registration. As they were only single sheets, he may have thought they were too ephemeral to warrant registration.³⁹ Historians can be forgiven for finding it difficult to know what was considered permissible given that contemporaries, such as Butter, could not assess the situation correctly. Whatever discussions he had with either the Stationers' Company or Court officials, before deciding to put his initials to the September 1621 series, he must have thought he was safe enough, and he turned out to have been mistaken.

Nathaniel Butter was, by this time, already an experienced publisher of news. He is the best known of the publishers who were involved in this early news trade and by the time he died, in 1664, he had a total of 60 years experience as a stationer. Butter was born into the trade. His father, Thomas, was a bookseller with premises at St. Austin's Gate, St. Paul's Churchyard, who appears to have confined his business largely to distribution and had few publications. At his death his wife continued the business. She married another stationer, John Newbery, but continued to conduct her own business. Nathaniel Butter served his apprenticeship under her and his stepfather. He was made a freeman on 20 February 1604. As with Archer, there was little opportunity to become a printer. Although he may well have inherited a little working capital from his mother, there appears to have been no question of financial enterprise on a large scale.

Butter set up a shop at the Pied Bull near St. Austin's Gate and began to take an interest in publishing. His first registered publication appeared on 4 December 1604 and was entitled, *The Life and Death of Cavaliero Dick Boyer*. His interest spread to other types of work at the popular end of the market - sermons, tracts, and then news pamphlets including in June 1605 an account of two recent murders and, in August, the trial of one of the murderers. Also that year, he published a foreign newsbook entitled *Sir Thomas Smithes Voiage and Entertainment in Rushia. With the tragicall ends of two Emperors, and one Empresse* . . . In 1607 he published a report on the 1605 expedition to Guiana and a report from Norwich assizes. In 1608 he published *Newes from Loughffoyle in Ireland*, in 1609, *The Originall Ground of the present Warres of Sweden*, and 1611 *Newes from Spain*. He also took an interest in some better quality works, including in 1611 Chapman's

³⁹ Schumacher, 59, claims that Butter got a Royal Patent but presents no evidence for this.

translation of the *Iliad*, and in 1609 Dekker's *Belman of London*. In 1607, with John Busby, he published Shakespeare's *King Lear*.⁴⁰

As early as 1611 he had established trade contacts abroad. George Waters, at Dordrecht, printed an edition of the school primer for him and he began to sell his publications in Europe at the Frankfurt Book Fair, where for many years numerous religious tracts and news pamphlets of his were recorded in the English catalogues. By 1614 he was well established and able to lend £36 15/- to Ralphe Mabbe a bookseller in London, who was later to become a competitor in foreign newsbooks. In 1616, he invested £50 in the stock of the Stationers' Company. Leona Rostenberg estimated that by 1622 he had trained 4 apprentices and published some 200 books of which 41% may be regarded as news tracts, including sensational news of murderers, travel stories, accounts of the Irish rebellions, and foreign news. She claims that he was able to 'scent the literary trends of the day and anticipate the changing tastes of the morrow'.⁴¹ But he had also had brushes with the authorities. In 1611, he had lost his share in the English Stock when it was concluded that the primers printed in Dordrecht were pirated, and he had been imprisoned for his part in the publication of *A Plain Demonstration of the unlawful succession*. Fines and imprisonments presented Butter with serious financial problems. His petition to Sir George Calvert for release from prison for the publication of *A Plaine Demonstration* asked for his freedom because his wife was pregnant. They had 3 small children and no income other than his book business.⁴² Yet Butter continued to take risks and, like Archer, he was not able to stay out of difficulties in 1621.

⁴⁰ *O.D.N.B.*

⁴¹ Rostenberg, 'The Debut', 77-78; Rostenberg, 'Nathaniel Butter', 24.

⁴² TNA, S. P. Dom., 14 (James), 4 fo. 130,

'To the honorable Sr George (Calvert)...

The humble Peticon of Nathaniell Butter.

Humbly shewing that whereas your poore Suppliant hath byn Comytted by my lords grace of Canterbury the space of 28 daies being since brought before your honour and examyned about the printing of a booke Concernynge the Emperour wherein he hath answered truly and freely and for which he doth humbly acknowledge his fault, being Comytted to a Messenger he knoweth nott howe to obtayne his libertie haveing a poore wief greatt with Childe and three small Children, and is like to be undone, without your honours Consideration. Wherefore he humbly desiereth your honours Comiseraction in grauntinge his libertie uppon good and sufficient bayle to be allwaies reddey for the Confirmation of his Confession wherein of he hath nott dealt truly and plainly with your honour he will never looke for any favor And he according to his bounden dutie shall daily pray for your honours helthe and happyness longe to Conynue.'

This is in the papers for 1623 but the publication was in 1620 and Stansby was fined 7 August 1620 for his role in the same publication, so Hanson dated this in 1620. (Ch 1, n. 50) Butter was free and fined on 3 April 1620 for keeping an unbound apprentice. So it is likely to have been after this, but before 8 April 1621 when Butter was once again making entries of publications.

Seibert, the historian of journalism from the 1930s and 1950s, established a view that censorship was a significant and effective force in the early Stuart period and this view was accepted for decades. He argued that

Within a short space of time all the devices of the Crown for the control of printing were employed in regulating the first newspapers - royal proclamations, prosecution by the Councils, the licensing system, the machinery of the Stationers Company and finally the power of the Crown to grant privileges of monopoly. This is only now beginning to be questioned. In 1989 Kevin Sharpe suggested, quite the reverse, that censorship was largely ineffective because there were no adequate institutions or mechanisms available. In 1995 Pauline Croft observed that despite the virulence of attacks on Cecil earlier in James I's reign, which indicated widespread disdain of the Jacobean regime, no action was taken. She concluded that only in times of acute tension threatening political stability that the government would consider punitive steps, while Fritz Levy argued that James was more generous than his predecessors in allowing news to get about and that the traffic in news had increased steadily from 1603 to 1620, stimulating a market that seemed potentially lucrative.⁴³

Sheila Lambert has done most in recent years to counter 'the idea that an all-pervasive censorship, which successfully prevented all expression of unorthodox opinions, was intended by the autocratic and repressive governments of James I and Charles I'. She suggests that the notion of strict state control was a useful concept, capable of excusing a multitude of early printing 'sins', including poor copy, while allowing historians to avoid looking for evidence of dissent. 'It is only natural that historians of the newspaper press, believing that 'the battles for a free Press are a part of the march of democracy', should seek to emphasize the extent to which the journalistic profession has triumphed over great odds'. Lambert questioned the importance of the proclamation of December 1620 pointing out that it said nothing about printing and was so obscurely worded that it is difficult to see it having any effect. She concluded that, 'the purpose of this and the other similar proclamations (8 April, 21 July 1621 and 8 March 1623/4) was only to assure the Spanish Ambassador that the State was doing its best... to give him proper protection', and that there was no general tightening of censorship. She interpreted these proclamations in the light of the Stationers' Company's concerns expressed in 1622 over overseas piracy of

⁴³ Siebert, 151; K. Sharpe, 'A Commonwealth of Meanings, Languages, Analogues, Ideas and Politics' in *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (London, 1989), 9; P Croft, 'Libels, Popular Literacy and Public Opinion in Early Modern England', *Historical Research*, 68, (1995), 276; Levy, 13, 27-8.

books for which there were domestic patents and concludes that they only show ‘the normal course of politics in time of tension over foreign policy’. The error, as she sees it, arose because historians, such as Godfrey Davies, faced with the outburst of political pamphleteering in the early 1620s used this series of proclamations as ‘evidence of an attempt to stem the tide and suppress all criticism’, thus bringing forward in time the intensification of censorship always associated with the accession of Charles and the rise of William Laud’.⁴⁴

However, as we have seen, these proclamations did not appear in isolation. Other sanctions, import control, fines and imprisonment, were employed during this period to control the availability of current European material. Moreover, despite the fact that corantos were not singled out by the authorities in any of the surviving records, some contemporary observers saw a connection between coranto publication and the use of these controls and publishers and printers, when concealing their activities with false imprints, demonstrated an expectation of trouble. Also, we know that in December 1620, a week before the Proclamation, John King, Bishop of London, told his clergy not to ‘meddle in their sermons with the Spanish Match nor any other matters of state’. So we know the proclamation appeared in the context of a concerted effort to stem discussion of foreign affairs in London. Relevant too, if ineffective in achieving its goal, was James I’s appeal to the States General and their proclamation on 16 January 1621.⁴⁵ It took time, and several unsuccessful attempts, but the corantos were ultimately stopped towards the end of 1621. It is clear therefore that Lambert is wrong to think that foreign news reporting was not an issue for government. Lambert overstates her case and, as Michael Frearson has pointed out, she has also criticized historians for thinking early Stuart correspondents feared interception and censure: there is evidence enough in their correspondence on foreign affairs alone to demonstrate the reality of that fear.⁴⁶

Does this mean that Lambert’s challenge is unhelpful and we must revert to the idea that censorship was a significant and effective force in the early Stuart period? I do not think so. Siebert created the impression that the King, faced with a new type of threat to absolute monarchy, set out systematically to use every means available to him to suppress corantos, then brought them within his direct control. I can agree with Seibert

⁴⁴ Lambert, 1, 2, 20, 23.

⁴⁵ Chamberlain to Carleton, 22 December 1622, 2, McClure, *Letters*, 331; *Groot Placet Boeck*, 409-and 441.

⁴⁶ Frearson, 238-9 quotes from Mead 20 June, 7 July, and 1 August 1621, and March 1622.

that government tried to use most of the powers available stem the flow of foreign publications but I find his analysis too simplistic. It fails to acknowledge the independent and very different interests at play and the role of the Stationers' Company. (We have Lambert to thank for a clear recognition of their distinct and separate interest.) Moreover, neither Seibert nor Lambert has recognized the role of the publishers who were emerging as a third party in negotiations; a party which ultimately secured a good settlement from both the Crown and the Stationers' Company. As I shall show, due control, once established, was far less draconian than Seibert suggested. In fact, the very effort and time it took to stop the corantos (18 months to 2 years) and the fact that the outcome was ultimately one of adjustment and accommodation on all sides, suggests that James's concept of censorship fell considerably short of the attempt to suppress all expression of opposition to the Crown as depicted by Seibert. It also shows that whatever the weaknesses of the machinery of government, we cannot simply write off the experience of 1620-22 as a demonstration of ineffective government. James had at his disposal a variety of means of exercising control that worked, but not in the simplistic and absolutist manner that Whig historians suggested.

Francis Bacon drafted the December proclamation as part of the preparations for Parliament in November 1620. Foreign affairs were being debated at every level. In the press, pulpit and tavern, 1588 was being relived and the Bohemian events were being debated. Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi*, a report purporting to have been written by Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, about English activities, ran to four editions in 1620, and so angered the Spanish Ambassador that he complained to the King. On 16 November, in this heightened political atmosphere, Bacon was prompted to write to Buckingham 'the prognostics are not so good as I expected, occasioned by the late occurrences abroad, and the general licentious speaking of state matters, of which I wrote in my last'. At the end of November news of the White Mountain disaster arrived from Brussels, and London became so angry that Gondomar's life was threatened. The proclamation consequently appeared at a time when the whole country was at fever pitch with anxiety over events in Bohemia and the Palatinate.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ F. Bacon, *Works*, ed. J. Spedding (1874), 14,150-1; Proclamations (Dec 1620 and July 1621) are quoted in full in *Proclamations*, 208 and 218.

This was a new situation for James. After a considerable period of allowing an increasing amount of foreign news, the decision to call Parliament had made the question of what was being reported more sensitive. He regarded decisions of foreign policy as a matter for his own deliberation. The fact that his decision was prompted primarily by the need to raise money for foreign policy made the already unclear distinctions between domestic and foreign affairs, acceptable comment and unacceptable criticism, open to question. When Parliament assembled it was in a radical mood and immediately questioned the King's motives in making the proclamation. Calvert explained that the proclamation was 'intended against such as make ordinary table talk of state matters in taverns and alehouses, and not against parliament men'.⁴⁸

Yet, despite the proclamations in London and the Hague that winter, news continued to appear in London. This could explain the reissue of the English proclamation in July 1621 but, from the State Papers, it appears fairly clear that this reissue followed upon the investigation of a book called *Withers Mottos*. As such it may be interpreted as part of the general effort to contain controversial printing during the parliamentary recess while Digby was negotiating in Vienna.⁴⁹ The subsequent arrests of Archer and Butter in 1621, both officially for reasons unconnected with their involvement in the coranto trade does not mean that there was no connection with coranto publication as Sheila Lambert assumes, it only tends to suggest that the authorities preferred to take action on familiar grounds.

Lambert's contribution to the debate about censorship in 1620 and 1621 is to draw attention to very different interests of the Stationers' Company and the Crown. She suggests that the Company was only interested in trade control for the benefit of its membership and that it did little to support government censorship. Frearson and Clegg have since recognized that licensing in itself was not a means of state control or censorship but primarily a matter for trade regulation and revenues. In fact, the Company was cautious about its role where books or pamphlets dealt with matters of state.⁵⁰ Pirating was an issue, as was any kind of printing abroad that deprived members of employment. But in 1621, the Company, the Crown and the High Commission worked towards the same ends.

⁴⁸ Zaller, *The Parliament*, 38.

⁴⁹ *Withers Mottos* (1621); TNA., S.P.Dom, 14, 122, 10 July 1621 and 12 July 1622, 12-19; John Digby was sent to Vienna in the summer of 1621 to negotiate peace with Ferdinand II on the basis of the abandonment by Frederick of his claims in Bohemia and the abandonment by Ferdinand of any attempt to punish Frederick.

⁵⁰ Clegg, 178, 180, 246.

For example, the prosecution of Nicholas Oakes for his part in *Withers Mottos*, was brought before the Archbishop of Canterbury on 10 July by the Stationers' Company and the hearing of evidence ran through to 12 July. A fine was then registered in the Stationers' Company Fine Book on 23 August 1621.⁵¹

Both the Company and the Crown would have had cause for concern about corantos. As imported ephemera, corantos were difficult to pick up through searches at the ports and, as they were a new type of publication, there were no existing Company rules to deal with them. As single sheets, it was not necessary to license them or to enter them in the registers unless the owners wished to obtain personal copyrights. Given their short shelf life, there was no advantage to be gained by the publisher for going to the expense of entering them in the register. Without a specific ban against them, or a clear infringement by the publishers of the rules, the Company's right to jurisdiction in this field was unclear. This was no doubt a matter of concern to the officials of the Company by the summer of 1621, it was apparent that corantos were being regularly printed and published in London, under false imprints. It made considerable sense for them to obstruct publication by the simple expedient of attacking the publishers and their associates on other grounds.

The Company's first response was, it seems, to decide to require licensing and a fee - hence Archer's fine on 9 July 1621. But their authority was by no means fully established. Butter went ahead in September and October with his series of corantos without entering them and without making any attempt to hide his identity. However, as both Archer and Butter learned, the Company and the Crown could co-operate and act pragmatically in the face of a new challenge to which the existing rules did not appear to apply. They both found themselves in prison and thus the way was made clear to develop a new approach for the handling of a new product.

English Newsbooks

This section shows the emergence of the newsbook format in preference to the single sheet coranto and explores this change in the context of the licensing system, the registration of publications by the Stationers' Company, and the role and identity of 'Mr Cottington', the appointed licensor.

Publication of corantos appears to have been stopped by November 1621. There are no surviving corantos from October but the story did not stop there. Butter's

⁵¹ TNA, S.P.Dom., 14, fo. 122, art.18, 12 July 1621; Jackson, Fine Book, 46.

imprisonment merely set the stage for a further negotiation and development. Schumacher identified the first true newsbook, as a book, like a pamphlet, but making use of a variety of reports from corantos to provide news items from many different places. This was entitled *The Certaine and True Newes, from all Parts of Germany and Poland*, and was printed in 1621 for Bartholomew Downes, a printer with some publishing interests and shares in the Latin Stock of the Company, and William Lee, his apprentice.⁵² Entries for two newsbooks with licences from 'Master Cottington' appear in the register of the Company for 23 October and 6 November 1621. The first of these, *Newes from Poland. Wherein is truly enlarged the ... interception of the Turks threatening Europe*, is more like a traditional, one subject pamphlet. It tells of Sir Thomas Glover's embassy in Constantinople, the audience of the English Ambassador, Sir Arthur Ashton, in May 1621, the succession of Achmate at the age of 15 years and his unjust reign. It explains Turkish culture and why Osman had to have his brothers killed when he took over. It argued that the Turks must fight abroad to keep peace at home, thus posing an on-going threat to Europe, and continued with a history of Poland from 1609 explaining how war was declared upon Poland by Osman in 1618, and how the Poles looked for assistance, including asking for help from King James.⁵³

The licensing of these newsbooks suggests that negotiations had been going on behind the scenes to find a way to accommodate these publications within the existing machinery of press control. By this stage pressure for publication and difficulties in preventing it must have been clear to all concerned. From July to October 1621 alone, 22 extant corantos were published. This amounts to a publication a week. There was lots of material available. Import control had failed to stem the flow. There was a keen public interest and a good deal to report on the military campaigns, with the conquest of Bohemia and the invasion of the Palatinate. The decision to bring news publication into the more familiar newsbook format, marks a decision to allow publication in London. Approved publication had many potential advantages. The work would be made available for London printers and journeymen. The more familiar newsbook format also meant the publications would be easier for the trade to handle as books that could be licensed through the regular machinery of the Stationers' Company. Entry in the registers of the Company

⁵² B. Downes and W. Lee (after 29 October 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.35C; Schumacher, 297, nt. 27.

⁵³ Arber Vol. 4, 22, 23; 'Published by Authority at London. Imprinted by F. K. for B. D. and William Lee and are to be sold at his shop in Fleet Street' (after 4 October 1621).



would ensure that it had some control plus a sixpenny registration fee for every issue. At the same time arrangements could be made to give the Crown a more effective role in monitoring and controlling the content.

The licensing system for these arrangements were those originally established in 1586 by a Star Chamber Decree that required all books to be licensed by an ecclesiastical or a state official as well as being entered in the registers of the Stationers' Company before going to press. The decree also empowered Wardens of the Company to search for unlicensed publications and to punish members of the Company who failed to meet these requirements. It depended on the interests of senior members of the Company and, as Lambert has successfully argued, these tended to be commercial and financial, rather than political: there is little doubt that the Wardens saw the system as a means of gathering revenue. But there were, none the less two other, distinctively different, issues for the system to address. These were the interests of members of the Company in establishing a copyright for what they published and the interests of the State in controlling seditious publications.

Ecclesiastical licensors were always available in the London area. It seems that London publishers actively sought ecclesiastical licensors when copyright was a concern. However, given the ephemeral nature of the regular news reports from Europe, this was not a primary concern for their publishers in these early days and it is not surprising to see that no one was seeking ecclesiastical licenses.⁵⁴ The High Commission was usually an important vehicle for controlling the press. Yet it seemed less interested in doing this under Archbishop Abbot. It seems Abbot's sympathies lay in areas of foreign affairs that the King wished to silence. So its role in 1621 was much less effective than it might have been, as Clegg demonstrated in her account of the Whateley case. The reason being, as Kenneth Fincham pointed out, that Abbot, who headed the High Commission, was strongly aligned with the English Protestants who advocated war in Bohemia. In the spring of 1621 he had openly criticized James's foreign policy and was confined to Lambeth Palace.⁵⁵ So, instead of licensing by the Stationers' Company under the supervision of the High Commission, James turned to a state official to monitor news reporting.

⁵⁴ Frearson, 250 shows that 4 of the newsbook publishers – Bourne, Butter, Archer and Sheffard sought the services of 13 different ecclesiastical licensors between 1600 and 1620 and that they did this to protect copyrights on specific works.

⁵⁵ Clegg, 189-196; K. Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor* (Oxford, 1990), 50-1, 226; K. Fincham, 'Prelacy and Politics: Archbishop Abbot's Defence of Protestant Orthodoxy' *Historical Research* 61 (1988), 36-69, 52.

State officials were appointed only at times of heightened political tension. In accordance with the new arrangements established from October 1621 until March 1624 'Master Cottington' was appointed to the task of licensing these regularly published newsbooks. In this period he licensed 72 individual issues and little else. It is clear therefore that this was a special arrangement.⁵⁶ Pamphleteers were arguing for military intervention on the Continent. These periodicals provided a mass of detail of military campaigns and fortunes of the Protestant cause in Bohemia and the Palatinate while James I was attempting to negotiate, particularly with Spain. Given the sensitivity of James's relationship with the Spanish ambassador, it would seem reasonable that he would have decided that newsbooks could be licensed by someone who knew about European politics and was sympathetic to Spanish interests at Court. Seibert assumed that Francis Cottington, clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary of State to Prince Charles, was the 'Mr Cottington' appointed to license the newsbooks even though Sir George Calvert remained Secretary of State with overall responsibility for the licensing of political works until 1625 and that Cottington was chosen for his specialized knowledge.⁵⁷ Cottington had spent many years as an English agent in Spain and had mediated for James over Bohemia. His close links with Spain and his leaning towards Roman Catholicism would have satisfied any opposition which may have come from the influential Spanish faction who, by this time, had 18 months' experience of Abraham Verhoeven's successfully state controlled pro-Spanish news publication in Antwerp.⁵⁸

These arrangements indicate a pragmatic approach, caution and an eye to diplomatic relations with the Spanish. However the identity of Mr Cottington as the licenser has never been proved. Greg suggested the licenser was George Cottington, licenser in 1623 of Thomas Heywood's *Ovid's Art of Love*, but otherwise completely unknown, a choice which, if true, would suggest that these publications were considered far less important. More recently, Frearson reviewed the evidence and presented a good case for regarding Francis Cottington as the licenser. He considered the unknown George

⁵⁶ Schumacher, 64, argues that there was no special licensing arrangement for these publications. Clearly, this is incorrect.

⁵⁷ Cottington is referred to throughout in the register of the Stationer's Company as 'Mr. Cottington', without first name or initials. Siebert, *Freedom*, 153; Clegg, 181 assumes that from May 1621 Francis Cottington became the government licenser of newsbooks and other political texts and identifies him as the licenser of 93 titles between then and January 1624. Ch. 6, 222-7, for Cottington's licensing.

⁵⁸ Cottington supported the Spanish party and became so closely associated with the Spanish marriage plans that, on their failure, he was temporarily deprived of his office. He was converted to the Catholic faith in 1623 but renounced it on return to England, adopting it again later in life. Ch. 2, 72-3, for *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*.

an unlikely candidate since a classical translation bears no relation to the corantos and since George appears to have been neither an ecclesiastical licenser nor a state official. Also he could see no reason why, given James I's sensitivity and the practice of appointing state officials, James would have chosen someone who was unknown. He regarded Francis's long service as an English agent in Spain and his commitment to the Spanish faction as excellent credentials for this particular job. In addition, he pointed to an intriguing reference to Francis Cottington in the State Papers dated 3 February 1623, which seems to refer to books being authorized for printing.⁵⁹

There is just one flaw in Frearson's argument and that is that from October 1621, at the time of the appointment of the licenser, to October 1622 Sir Francis Cottington was not in England but in Spain. While he may have been appointed with every expectation of an early return, the fact remains that 42 newsbooks were licensed before he returned. This leaves us with the option speculating that in Francis Cottington's absence someone in his service was reviewing the newsbooks and granting their licences on his behalf. Maybe this was George, a relative? There is no evidence. The only thing that we can be sure about is that entries in the register at this time mark official acceptance that a periodical coverage of the continental war need not be such a problem, providing there was adequate control and each issue was scrutinized by someone with an appropriate understanding of the subject matter and of the Government line. At least this approach seemed preferable to continuing unsuccessful attempts to prevent imports.

Unfortunately, initially at least, this did not work either. The crucial role of the publisher in securing a regular supply of copy had not been sufficiently understood, and it was soon apparent that Downes and Lee did not have the right connections abroad. So, soon, other publishers ventured into the market. The appearance that winter of a report of peace between the Turks and Poland in *Newes from Turkie and Poland.... Translated out of a Latine copie, written by a gentleman of quality*, and *Newes from the Palatinate*, with Hague imprints though they came from the press of Edward Allde early in 1622 must have

⁵⁹ W. W. Greg, *Licensers for the Press* (Oxford, 1962), has no other evidence for this argument and does not identify George Cottington further. M. C. Freason, 'London Corantos in the 1620s', in *Annual*, 11-3; Frearson, 251- 255, and Appendix III, and TNA, S.P.Dom., 14.214 fo.106, a document in Edward Conway's letter book which says, 'Sir Francis Cottington. Sendinge him two Bookes signed for the Prince.' At this time Cottington was the licenser, and he and the Prince were in England.

been particularly worrying since they demonstrated that having an agreement with Downes and Lee would not stem the tide of unlicensed works with false imprints.⁶⁰

Two newsbooks appeared in the spring of 1622 that criticized news publishing in London. *Good Newes for the King of Bohemia?* claims to have been written, 'Because I see, that the generall Currantos coming weekly over, have rather stifled their owne credits then given satisfaction... yet men throng as fast to heare Newes'. *More Nevves from the Palatinate and more comfort to every true Christian* claimed to be published for 'every true English heart', and had no imprint. It included criticism of the English Parliament for failing to vote adequate war subsidies. The writer hoped that 100,000 soldiers would fill the fields in the summer though this might 'seeme ridiculous to Polliticians, who presently demand after the money to pay them' adding, 'I make no question of a recovery in the Palatinate', even though Protestant armies 'which pretend defense of the King of Bohemia's cause are either most of them Papist, or of no Religion and yet forrage, and spoyle... though the Papists maintaine their absurd opinions, yet shall they be made instruments of Gods glory'.⁶¹ Neither of these was a simple translation of digests of news, nor 'one off' reports or letters from a correspondent acquainted with the publishers. The second was the work of someone from England, reading and reflecting upon the news from Westminster as well as abroad who also understood the pressures upon London publishers. Its appearance was a challenge to the authorities. Its combination of optimism while acknowledging uncomfortable facts (about the mercenary Protestant armies that took men irrespective of their faith and were obliged to live off the land through plunder) was not a particularly uncommon feature of war reports, but the fact that this newsbook was openly addressed to an English readership who supported the Protestant cause in Europe was a step beyond the largely neutral and factual summary reports of corantos.

A further compromise was needed if any control was to be maintained and this would need to take into account the interests of publishers who had reliable business contacts in the Low Countries and Germany and would therefore be better placed to

⁶⁰ For example, *Newes from France, A True Relation of the Great losses which happened by the Lamentable accident of fire in the city of Paris* was 'Printed for R.R. at the Golden Lyon in Paules Churchyard' (November 1621); (1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.36; (March 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.37; Appendix 1 and 81 above identify Edward Allde as the printer in 1621 of corantos with false imprints.

⁶¹ B. Alsop (17 April 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.40, contains few dates or facts, only a story of the Duke of Brunswick getting 100,000 dollars from the Jesuits which the writer claims has not reached the general news reports; (late March, 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.38, title page, 5 and 16. This also criticized the Dutch for partial news reporting, adding, 'There are other things of which I could write, but I am sure you dare not publish: For such is the nature of rumor, that a little truth begetteth many absurdities.'

maintain supply and enter into agreements with the Stationers' Company and the Crown that could be sustained. Doing business with Butter and Archer may have seemed like a climb down to the Crown and was perhaps even more unpalatable to the Stationers' Company given the extent to which these two had been prepared to flout controls. Other options were considered: Among the State Papers for this period there is a statement in Thomas Wilson's hand explaining that the *Mercurius Gallobelgicus* was sold in Germany and that such avisos were also sold in France, Italy and Spain. It claimed that many towns all over Europe reprove England because it did not receive weekly news and went on to present a strong and enlightened case for the publication of periodical news in England, explaining that, 'In all these places ... and Provinces the ploughman and artisan can talk of these matters and make ... benefit'. Wilson then showed how publication would provide a useful instrument for the political and religious instruction of the vulgar and asked that he and Mr. Pory be given a patent to be 'overseers of all bookes of humanly which shalle be printed' and leave to 'print the Gazetts or weekly occurrents which we shall gett from other parts'.⁶²

John Pory, a well-connected graduate of Cambridge University (BA 1592 and MA 95) and Oxford (MA 1610), who had represented Bridgewater in Somerset as a Member of Parliament for 6 years and travelled in Europe as well as North America, was fluent in French and Italian with some Spanish. He had news contacts including Dudley Carleton, John Chamberlain, Thomas Locke, Lord Brook, Sir Robert Cotton and Henry Wotton and was already skilled in the collection and dissemination of news. On return from Virginia in 1624 he settled in London and corresponded as an intelligencer corresponding regularly with Joseph Mead and later, in the early 1630s, with Sir Thomas Puckering, and John Viscount Scudamore. He was in many ways an ideal candidate and the application is aimed to portray news publication in a positive light as a tool for education. We can only speculate on how this argument was received at Court. The application was unsuccessful but Pory needed a partnership with a publisher if he was going to get into this trade. The petition may have helped to persuade the King that a controlled publication was not necessarily harmful but we have no evidence. The petition fits well with Levy's arguments which portray this period as one of expanding political awareness due to James I's

⁶² *C.S.P.D.* 1619 – 23, 330, No 113, for his petition for a patent to publish news of Europe and TNA, S.P.Dom., 14, fo. 124, (undated and unsigned). Levy, fn. 59, suggests it may have been earlier – 1619 or 1620.

relatively permissive approach. While Richard Cust's study of the news records of country gentlemen in the early 1620s revealed the extent to which these writings were dominated by those opposed to royal policy with 'very little evidence for the "Court" side of the story', the fact that licensing arrangements had already been set up by this stage shows that James was willing to go along with controlled publication, at least as the lesser of two evils, since no effective way had been found to suppress them. But this is insufficient to suggest that he saw the need to use this vehicle to put across his own point of view. He and the Stationers' Company needed a publisher on whom they could rely and this publisher needed to be a member of the Company with contacts with European networks.⁶³

Butter and Archer returned to the scene on 11 May 1622, making amends before the Court of the Stationers' Company and the stage was set for a deal.⁶⁴ But it was Archer, in partnership with Nicholas Bourne, who took the next step, and began to register newsbooks and publish foreign news regularly and openly with the full co-operation of the Company. Working with the more familiar newsbook format which more readily complied with the arrangements for the registration of publication, they were also using the new arrangements for licensing by the Crown which had first appeared in the autumn when Downes and Lee published their first digest of news from many places in a newsbook format.

Official Recognition

This section begins with the partnership of Thomas Archer and Nicholas Bourne who started publishing periodical foreign newsbooks from May 1622. It traces competition from other publishers until the formation of a syndicate in October 1622 that began the first official series and took responsibility for all periodic foreign news reporting.

The first entry to Thomas Archer and Nicholas Bourne in the register of the Company is dated 18 May 1622 and states, 'Entred for their Copie under the handes of Master Cottington and master knight warden, A Currant of generall newes Dated 14th of

⁶³ Pory, 6, 9, 25, 33-6, 42-49, 51-9. Granting a monopoly to Pory, who was not a member of the Stationers' Company, would have been unnecessarily contentious especially since the failure of the Cokayne project in 1616 gave new monopolies a bad reputation. They were the cause of Bacon's downfall in the 1621 Parliament. Levy, 28, 34; Cust, 'News and Politics', 81. By the early 1630s Pory was working with Butter and Bourne, Ch 5, 184, Ch 6, 274.

⁶⁴ Jackson, Court Book, 146. Allde's return is also recorded in the Register of the Company, Arber, Vol. 4, 29.

may last vjd'.⁶⁵ From this point, the periodic publication of the continental war news was officially recognized in the hands of publishers who could maintain a regular output of similar digests. Their work took place within the existing systems of regulation and control of the press while drawing upon the joint experiences of Archer, and Bourne, long time associate of Archer but a very different character, a well respected and law abiding senior member of the Stationers' Company. It was an inspired compromise.

Bourne was the third of the publishers to join the periodic news-trade and to stay seriously involved for many years. He was the son of Henry Bourne, a cordwainer. He was Archer's junior and had succeeded him as an apprentice at Cuthbert Burby's shop in the Cornhill near the south entrance of the Royal Exchange. Cuthbert Burby died in 1607, during the apprenticeship, and Bourne inherited the business. He ventured into publication cautiously in association with other publishers and, though he had nothing like the number of publications behind him that Butter could boast, he was successful. He acquired several titles through the assignment of widows of late colleagues including Elizabeth Burby, Elizabeth Oliffe of Long Lane, and Katherine Rockitt of the Poultry. He worked alone or in partnership with Dawson, Newbery and Bellamy. Between 1608 and 1622 he trained 3 apprentices and published 78 books and pamphlets. Of these, Leona Rostenberg estimates that 50% reflect an interest in news.⁶⁶ Many of his other publications consisted of theological argument and sermons.

His partnership with Archer was productive. They published *A Garland of triumph for the honour of the Duke of Brunswick and Lauenburg*, which was entered 16 May 1622 and their first weekly news appeared on 14 May 1622. It contained little of cheer - a report on the death and burial of Prince Ernst of Holstein, uprisings in Naples because of hunger, starvation in Prague, fighting in France against the Huguenots and the breaking of sluices in Flanders.⁶⁷ This did not, however, in any way deter them even though, as the summer progressed, the fortunes of Frederick continued to falter. Over the following 20 weeks Bourne and Archer published 21 further extant newsbooks and entered 5 further newsbooks in the registers of which no copies have survived.

⁶⁵ Arber, Vol. 4, 30.

⁶⁶ Rostenberg, 'The Debut', 83; They include *Articles of a treatie of truce, made in Antwerp the 9 of April, 1609*, *A True relation of the travailes..of William Davies ... under the Duke of Florence 1614*, and a speech made by Dudley Carleton as English Ambassador in the United Provinces in 1618.

⁶⁷ Dahl, 60, (14 May 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.45.

In 1622 Frederick gathered new troops and entered the Palatinate. He had three allies, Mansfeld, Christian of Brunswick, and the Margrave of Baden-Durlach but, as the summer campaign progressed through numerous inglorious encounters with Tilly and Archduke Leopold and Baden-Durlach, lost heart and withdrew, and his efforts came to nothing. First reports came quickly in June of Tilly's encounter with the Duke of Brunswick at Höchst and were published by Bourne and Archer in *The True copies of two especial letters*. When the full truth of the extent of Brunswick's losses was emerging in their next issue, they responded with reassurances, 'Now courteous Reader, having heard the truth of the matter, moderate your grieffe... let vs trust in God, hoping for better successe, firmly beleeeving the hee will never forsake his Church or Champions'.⁶⁸ When the main action shifted to the Low Countries during the siege of Bergen and there was little to report of the Palatinate, they published an issue of European miscellany in addition to an issue (published the same day) about the Bergen siege, telling their readers, 'you must not looke for fighting euery day, nor taking of Townes; but as they happen, you shall know'.⁶⁹

Unfortunately for Bourne and Archer, they were not granted a monopoly. As the summer progressed and campaign news became abundant, other publishers entered the market. Everyone appears to have assumed that the usual convention, that a publication became the patented property of whoever registered it, continued to apply on an issue by issue basis. The ramifications of periodicity had not yet been thought through. The fact was that there was little benefit in protecting the copyright of a single issue that would be replaced by fresher news or news from different perspective within days, but there was a commercial value in the right to produce a continuing series. Butter resumed news publication in June, working at first in partnership with William Sheffard, then mostly alone, while Sheffard, a bookseller with a few publications to his name and premises at the Lombard Street entrance to Pope's Head Alley, published two issues with Nathaniel Newbery and four others with Bartholomew Downes. 'Mr Cottington' and the Wardens accepted this upsurge in publication, licensing and registering publications by Bourne and Archer, while granting licences and entering 8 newsbooks to Butter on his own and one with Downes from the end of May to the end of October 1622. Sheffard, Newberry and

⁶⁸ (21 June 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.55; quoted Dahl, 68, see also n. 72 below and Ch. 5, 160; (3 July 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.59.

⁶⁹ (26 July 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.66, for fuller quotation Ch. 5, 165.

Downes, separately and in a variety of combinations, also licensed and registered 8 newsbooks in the same period, while John Bartlet entered one.⁷⁰

There was no fixed style or approach. Butter included in his publication of 4 July further reports of the murder of Osman and the coronation of his uncle. He integrated Turkish news with the rest of the reports for that issue. On 15 July, Bourne and Archer published a newsbook on the Turks, including an account of Mustapha's survival in prison before the coup, which it claims was brought about by God's providence to help 'the preservation of Christendom in these troublesome times'. This issue was more like the old news pamphlets, dealing with a single issue. The writer even took the opportunity to be critical of corantos,

Where are your dreaming Gazettes, and Coranto's now, that talkt of such formidable preparation, and so many hundred thousand in an Army? ... I can but wonder at the shamelesse reports of strange men, and weake Certificates by Corantes from Foreign parts, especially to have them Printed, to talke of so many Thousands slaine, the Prince kill'd, Sigismond defeated, and the whole Army put to flight.⁷¹

The criticism had some validity. Despite early optimism that there would be a recovery of Bohemia, this had become less and less likely. And since the Rhenish Palatinate had negotiated with Spinola in 1621, Strasburg, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, Ansbach and Wurtemberg had all left the Evangelical Union. Yet, even in 1622, corantos persisted in their optimism about the prospects of an alliance. However, the fact that this criticism appeared in a publication from Bourne and Archer, who were the leading publishers of newsbooks at this point, indicates that the distinction between their roles as publishers of periodic news and as the purveyors of older-style news pamphlets was not clear. The publishers, working hurriedly to get whatever copy they received out on the streets as soon as they could, were not being vigilant or selective about what they used.

John Bartlet, one of the new comers to the trade, published letters from the Palatinate. In a single letter issue, more typical of the older style news pamphlets, Wells, the physician to Sir Horace Vere offered an unashamedly pro-Protestant account, intended to clarify to English readers what was happening in the Palatinate or, more accurately, to

⁷⁰ Arber, Vol. 4, 30-45; Of the 43+ surviving issues published from May to September, 16 issues were published by Butter and/or Sheffard, Newbury, Downes, Bartlet, the rest by Bourne and Archer.

⁷¹ (4 July 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.60; (15 July 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.62; Dahl, 70, argues that the criticism included in this issue is of foreign corantos, not of English ones, but, of course, all the coranto material came from abroad so the distinction is spurious.

put what might be termed 'a brave face' on it. Doctor Wells claimed that he did not write the letter with a desire for publication or to 'countermand such Pamphlets, as are rather framed out of coniecturall braynes then honest intelligence, but meere to satisfie my friends' but if the account is given to the press, then 'extractions, and culling out...the principall poynts, ...will be better'. He reported that since the King of Bohemia joined Mansfeld there had been many successful skirmishes. An admirer of Frederick, he assured his readers that the King fought bravely and that 'there is a pleasure to behold Him, and a delight to converse with Him'. He claimed that the encounter between Archduke Leopold and Baden-Durlach at Wimfen in May resulted in equal losses on both sides, that the King took much of Leopold's baggage, powder and good furniture, and 'That the Marquis of Durlach had, for though he lost more ordnance, yet not halfe so many men: besides, that losse is doubled by so many troupes as are gone over to our side, and God be praised are most willing to serue his Maiestie'. Yet the fact, unreported here, was that Baden was defeated and fled. Wells went on to describe the way Tilly had so far prevented the forces of Frederick and the Duke of Brunswick from joining up, and the retreat of Frederick to Manheim at the end of May, as resulting in equal losses on both sides and a lucky escape for Frederick.⁷²

Bartlet's publications were not typical. Rather, they are the most extreme examples from that summer of Protestant bias in the reporting. As Schumacher noted, newsbooks 'did not turn defeats into great victories, but they consistently passed on reports which exaggerated minor victories and discounted real setbacks'. Thus we find what Schumacher describes as 'an essentially accurate description of Mansfeld's victory at Mingolsheim on 17 April' reported in the newsbook of May 27 and Mansfeld's victory at Fleurus on 19 August also fairly reported in the issue of 14 September. More damaging, in Schumacher's view, to the news reports, was the fact that the earliest reports of a battle usually came from Dutch or German Protestant writers who had only heard the Protestant side of the story. So even though the English newsbooks cautiously labelled such reports

⁷² *A True and ample relation of all such occvrrances... in the Palatinate since first of Iune Stilo Antique. Truely Related in a Letter, received from Doctor VVelles the tenth of Iune 1622, 'Printed by I. D, for John Bartlet, and are to be sold at his Shop, at the gilt Cup in Cheap-side, in the Gold-smiths Row.'* (14 June 1622), 6. John Bartlet subsequently published *Coppies of letters sent from personages of accompt* (21 June 1622), which so underplayed the subsequent Battle of Hochst that it claimed Brunswick had only lost baggage.

as unconfirmed, readers were nonetheless very often disappointed as the fuller truth emerged.⁷³

Despite the difficulties of rumour and disappointment that typified the summer months of campaigning, however, Butter expressed an intention of establishing a series of his own in a notice printed in his issue of 23 August 1622.

If any Gentleman or other accustomed to buy the Weekly Relations of Newes, be desirous to continue the same, let them know that the Writer... hath published two former Newes, the one dated the second, the other the thirteenth of August, all of which doe carrie a like title,... and have dependance one vpon another: which manner of writing and printing, he doth purpose to continue weekly by Gods assistance from the best and most certaine Intelligence.⁷⁴

The text shows a real effort to set his work apart by offering a coherent and readable issue for an English market, with the coat of arms of the King of Bohemia on the verso of the title page.

However, his plans changed quickly. In September, three publishers came together to form a syndicate. Then, in October, the first series of dated and numbered newsbooks began. The publishers' version of what precipitated this change is reported on 14 September in an issue for Butter, Downes and Sheffard.

There was printed the 9. of this month a Relation or booke of newes, wherein were foisted in (without the Licensers knowledge) certaine fabulous passages namely that Count Mansfield shoud have in h[is Campe 5,]000, women or whores, and some ot[her newes not] only false but also scandalous, to certaine amongst our Neighbours and friends, which may perchance giue occasion some to thinke the weekly Curr[ants are pa]ssed without any care or regard what is print[ed and] published (as formerly when things were done without order) but I will assure you the contrarie, and whatsoeuer is licensed is thoroughly examined and printed according to the high or low Dutch printed copies, or out of Letters of the best credit from beyond the Seas, and that whosoeuer hath or shall obtrude, or put anything more then hath beene iudiciously examined and approued, is liable to be seuerly punished: therefore expect no such bold attempt from any of vs thereafter. Farewell.⁷⁵

A problem that had begun to emerge over the summer was that the publishers needed to take greater responsibility for the content of their newsbooks. As we have seen, on 15 July, in their publication of a report about Turkish events, Bourne and Archer had included critical comments which were probably unnoticed at the time of going to press. Mistakes were easily made since they were publishing more than one newsbook a week

⁷³ Schumacher, 85, 62.

⁷⁴ (23 August 1622). 19, *S.T.C.* 18507.72. See also Chapter 5, 163, 166-7.

⁷⁵ (14 September 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.77.

and aiming to get their issues onto the streets before their competitors, and probably did not allow time to check the contents carefully. This time however, the error was more serious: the criticisms related to Protestant forces in the Palatinate and to news about unidentified 'Neighbours and friends', in other words, to reports added at the end of the newsbook, including a report from Zealand about the French ambassador's return from Madrid which claimed that the Spanish would not 'yield Terms', so Bourne and Archer were being accused of adding to the newsbook after 'Mr Cottington' had approved the text.⁷⁶

There is no evidence that the offensive material was added later and, despite the reference to being punished severely, no record has been found of punishment on this occasion. However, Butter and Sheffard issued two further newsbooks before either Archer or Bourne's names reappear in the imprints. If they were imprisoned, it could only have been for about two weeks. In any event, when they resumed publication, they too were working in cooperation with Butter. Butter and Archer published the issue of 27 September 1622 and Butter and Bourne the issue of 4 October.⁷⁷

The words 'expect no such bold attempt from any of us thereafter' may come from their competitors, not from Bourne and Archer themselves, so they can be read less as an implicit admission of guilt and rather more like an attempt to point a finger but they appear to amount to a public statement of a shared commitment to responsibility on the part of all five who were immediately involved, that is Butter, Sheffard and Downes who put their names to the issue of 14 September, and Bourne and Archer who did not. Early signs that an agreement had been reached are that from the 14 September none of the issues separately specifies the addresses of the shops where copies may be obtained, suggesting that all issues were available at all their premises. Confirmation that the publishers were sharing responsibility comes from the fact that, from then on, the names of Nicholas Bourne, Nathaniel Butter, Thomas Archer, William Sheffard and Bartholomew Downes appeared in imprints in a variety of combinations, and these combinations did not always tally with the names given in the register for the same issue, suggesting that every one of them was responsible for every number, irrespective of the names given. This was further demonstrated in a ruling of the Stationers' Court in the following February. Nathaniel

⁷⁶ (9 September 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.76; Arber, Vol. 4, 42.

⁷⁷ (27 September, 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.80; (4 October 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.81.

Newbery, who had not joined the syndicate, published *The 4 of November, The Peace of France*. This edict then appeared in the syndicate's newsbook of the following day.

Newbery responded by defending his copyright against the syndicate, taking the case to the Stationers' Court and winning. The fine and order to pay compensation were directed at Butter whose name was neither on this imprint nor in the register, indicating that all of them were potentially liable to pay compensation.⁷⁸

On October 15 the syndicate began their first series of numbered and dated newsbooks. Fifty numbers were published in the following fifty weeks, bearing an assortment of names from the syndicate operating at that time. They also cooperated to produce some newsbooks which they did not regard as part of the series.⁷⁹ Thus, between them, this syndicate began to provide a significant news service of officially registered newsbooks. Bartholomew Downes dropped out that winter. His name does not appear after 28 January 1623. He may have been deterred by preparations for the Court case with Newbery that was heard on 3 February. Nathaniel Newbery, on the other hand, joined the syndicate in their second series.

So what had prompted this remarkable co-operative effort? Sir Francis Cottington returned to England from Madrid in October 1622. Frearson speculated that it was news of his imminent return to England that precipitated first a drop in output in September and then the formation of a syndicate in October.⁸⁰ I would go further and suggest that the evidence of a sudden sharpening of focus on effective licensing, taking place in the wake of Sir Francis Cottington's return, completes the case for the argument that he was the appointed licenser. He almost certainly sent some officials ahead as he set out for England. They, enquiring into the work that had been done in his name in his absence, found the situation unacceptable and started to put it in order.

With so many rival publications, the task of checking each issue had become too onerous. Unacceptable content had crept in, and prompt, stern action was needed. To

⁷⁸ *The 4 of November. The Peace of France of the Edict with the Articles of Peace*, Newbery, (4 November 1622); (5 November 1622), *S.T.C.* 18507.87; Jackson, *Fine Book*, 469, on 3 February 1623 Butter was fined for printing the Edict and ordered to pay compensation to Newbery, even though only Bourne and Archer had registered it and Downes and Archer's names were on the issue. Hanson 'English Newsbooks', 368 - 369 refers to Court Book C as stating that all 5 members of the syndicate should compensate Newbery.

⁷⁹ For example, *A True Relation of that which Lately Hapned to the Great Spanish Fleet*, Butter, Bourne, Sheffard (1623).

⁸⁰ Frearson, 256-7. Frearson doesn't appear to have been familiar with the content of the issue of 14 September. He also puts a date on the appointment of Thomas Gainsford at 15 October 1622, which is, in my view, too late since Gainsford's hand is detectable earlier, for example, in the issue of 4 October.

avoid competition, piracy and false imprints in the future it was vital that all the publishers interested worked together. Within a month a solution to the problem of proliferation and competition was found in the form an agreement to cooperate in the production of a numbered series. This was monopoly, and the Newbury case had effectively defined its parameters to include all digests of foreign news but exclude free-standing official documents. However, it was not an official Crown monopoly in the conventional sense, with an attendant, overt implication of close co-operation with the Crown. Numbering provided a guarantee of order and completeness to the new phenomenon of a periodical publication and allowed the agreement to apply to the series as a whole. The agreement appears to have provided for one publication a week (50 issues in the course of one year). The number may reflect standard provisions of a news network supply contract. This frequency was probably about as much as the licenser could be expected to handle without making mistakes and missing unacceptable text. It also gave an average that assumed reasonable intervals in the supply of news. As we have seen supply was variable seasonally and in response to noteworthy events and weather in the Channel, but the posts out of London were nonetheless fairly regular. So the publisher would have wished to aim as far as possible for one issue a week to maintain sales and distribution via the domestic post and carrier system.⁸¹

The significance of these new arrangements is that they were publisher-focused and based on an agreement between a licenser operating on behalf of the Crown and the publishers. The Stationers' Company protected its interests by the agreement to register copies and pay entry fees. These arrangements were tailor-made to the needs of periodical publication. They had a number of benefits that then assisted the further evolution of the foreign newsbook trade in London. Cooperation in the syndicate allowed publishers to pool and plan their resources. This was an important element, since effective, periodical publication demanded a speedy turn-around of copy, and this in turn, required labour resources and arrangements with printers capable of providing prompt service.

Conclusions

While the publication of corantos in English began in Amsterdam, publication in London, albeit under false imprints, followed swiftly and was initiated by Thomas Archer, closely

⁸¹ See also 107 above on Pory's application for a foreign news monopoly.

followed more openly by Nathaniel Butter. The evidence suggests that a great many more issues were available in earliest days than is generally recognized and that, even so, it was the intensity of interest in the affairs of Frederick and Elizabeth, coupled with the decision to call Parliament, rather than the arrival of corantos in London as such, that first led to official concern and attempts to moderate discussion and speculation.

This analysis shows that censorship was not the all powerful, effective machine described by Whig historians. Nor, indeed, do we have any reason to believe, based on the evidence presented here about James I's reaction to the upsurge in interest in foreign news, that James would have tried to stamp out all news reporting had he had effective machinery at his disposal. The mechanisms that existed could be used to make life difficult for those who functioned on the margins of what was politically acceptable in the way that Archer and Butter did, even though the single sheet corantos were a new development and outside the scope of existing controls. James's concern to orchestrate events leading to the opening of Parliament and to appease Spanish interests led him to explore these mechanisms but he was also willing to accept a pragmatic way forward: the public could have news, so long as it was monitored with sensitivity.

Revisionist and post-revisionist arguments about the importance of the trade are supported by this agreement. Publication in London brought work to London but the publishers had to work within the system and guarantee registration fees to the Stationers' Company. The publishers were key players in the arrangement but no arrangements could be introduced and made to work without the Company of Stationers' full assent. All the interested publishers had to be part of an agreement. Putting Archer and Butter into prison did not work so long as others were eager to publish. Similarly, making arrangements with one or two publishers, even when these included a leading and respected figure within the trade like Bourne, could not work if others were left out. However, the publishers had every incentive to reach agreement with both the government and the Stationers' Company. Periodical publication was evidently lucrative in 1621 and 1622 but impossible to sustain effectively on an illicit basis.

The outcome could be depicted as a compromise with the publishers emerging as strong parties in the negotiations. However, the term 'negotiation' implies a certain degree of self-awareness and directionality or purpose that seems to have been absent from most stages in a process of moving towards agreement that was more one of trial and error until

October 1622 when the need to get all the publishers together with collective responsibility was recognized. This process of trial, error and evolution, away from the single sheet coranto format of the Dutch to a quarto format similar to the familiar format of news pamphlets, opened further opportunities for innovation and change. Once this format was adopted there was no longer a need to adhere strictly to the distinctive 'news in brief' coranto format. A new identity for these publications emerged immediately.

CHAPTER 4

COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the publishers' role, motivation, and the scale of publications. It looks at the business reasons for working in a syndicate, and later a partnership, and considers how these related to capital investment, output and distribution considerations. Until now the assessment of the likely output of the newsbooks has been based on an assumption that print runs were the same from week to week and that only the frequency of publication varied. This chapter questions this assumption and explores the implications of a variable output both in terms of quantities and frequency. It suggests that both need to be taken into account and that historians and bibliographers have largely missed or underestimated the significance of periodicity in their assessments of the impact of newsbooks.

The publisher's role was complex. Previous chapters show how obtaining copies of texts ready to translate and edit meant entering into negotiations with suppliers of copy from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Antwerp and Cologne. The first section of this chapter looks at the publisher's entrepreneurial role once copy reached London, including capital investment, securing the supply of paper, selecting the printer and supervising production. The second section looks at the practicalities of production, including the time printing would take and the capacity of printing houses. To get money back, publishers also needed to arrange distribution, which meant developing a network of contacts among the other London booksellers and among the carriers who would take copies out into the countryside and to the provincial cities and their booksellers. The third section looks at retail prices and wages to assess how affordable newsbooks were. The chapter ends with a look at distribution methods and the potential for sales outside the London market.

The Publisher's Role in Production

This section examines the way publishers organized their finances, offices and staffing to oversee production and distribution. It also considers what these arrangements reveal about the motives of the publishers and the way in which responsibility was shared between them.

The publishers' work involved a great deal of business correspondence with contacts in Europe and England, as well as careful accounting. It is unfortunate that,

because of the Fire of London, all business records were destroyed. Often this means that the closest evidence available is from the accounts and records of publishers in other cities, such as Paris where their survival rate is higher. One of the consequences of this is that few English historians have ventured into this area. Philip Gaskell, Colin Clair, Sigfrid Steinberg, Marjorie Plant and Jonathan Harthan have generally concerned themselves with studying the printer's business from a technical production perspective. More recently Margaret Spufford, Tessa Watt, Michael Frearson and Giles Mandelbrote have taken an interest in the mechanisms of distribution and their effect. Of these, only Frearson has looked more specifically at the commercial business of production and distribution of the foreign news.¹

As we have seen, Archer was probably the first coranto publisher in London. He had Amsterdam connections and was implicated in the production of corantos with false imprints. In 1622 he was the first to see the advantage of getting access to additional financial resources as well as credibility within the trade, so he went into business with Bourne, who was well placed to supply both. Butter began later and, until September 1622, continued to work alone while Archer and Bourne were working in partnership and dominating the market. Butter had his own connections on the mainland of Europe through his participation in the Frankfurt Book Fare and his dealings with George Waters in Dordrecht. Later in 1622 Butter also started to work partnership with William Sheffard and began to imitate Bourne and Archer's format. At the end of September he, Bartholomew Downes, and William Sheffard began to work with Bourne and Archer. The numbered series began soon after when the syndicate was formed.

The five men appear to have had little in common. Butter was trading at the sign of the Pied Bull, St Austin's Gate, at the south-east corner of St Paul's Church Yard and was already established in news publication. Archer traded in Pope's Head Palace, and at the

¹ P. Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1972); C. Clair, *A History of European Printing* (1970); S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (Middx. and Baltimore M. Y., 1955); Plant; J. Harthan, *The Illustrated Book* (1981); M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular fiction and its readership in seventeenth-century England* (1981); Watt; and T. Watt 'Publisher, pedlar, pot-poet: The changing character of the broadside trade, 1550-1640', in eds., R. Myers and M. Harris, *Spreading the Word* (Winchester and New Castle, D. E., 1990); 61-81; M. C. Frearson, 'The Distribution and Readership of London Corantos in the 1620s' in eds., R. Myers and M. Harris, *Serials and their Readers* (Winchester and New Castle, D.E., 1993), 1-25; Frearson; G. Mandelbrote, 'From the warehouse to the counting-house: booksellers and bookshops in late seventeenth-century London', in eds., R. Myers and M. Harris, *Genius for Letters* (Winchester and New Castle, D. E., 1995), 49-84; A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago, 1998) is more concerned with the relationship between publication processes and the accuracy and truth of the contents.

sign of the Horse Shoe at the Royal Exchange end of Pope's Head Alley, and had rather less publishing experience. Nicholas Bourne, though younger than Archer, was better established in the trade. Like Archer, he had been apprenticed to Cuthbert Burby and he traded at the south entrance to the Royal Exchange, so he was a close working neighbour to Archer. Bartholomew Downes by contrast, was a bookseller and binder. He appears to have had no news supply contacts and did not work as a publisher except for this venture into newsbooks. His house was well to the west, near Fleet Bridge. All four were of much the same generation but William Sheffard was younger. He had traded from the shop of his former master, Nathaniel Newbery, at the Star under St Peter's Church in Cornhill and in Pope's Head Alley but by 1622 he had his own shop at the south Lombard Street end of Pope's Head Alley. He was also trading with Nathaniel Newbery on the Continent and subscribed to the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1622. So again there was something of a location link with Archer and, like Butter, his publications revealed a Protestant and a European trading interest. But after he left the syndicate in 1624 he concentrated on religious books, rather than news and ephemera. The evidence therefore suggests that though these men would have known one another, they were neither previously established business partners, nor did they share many similar interests. The two main areas therefore where they were likely to have the greatest mutual interest in news publication were in sharing the financial burden and sharing distribution contacts. In both ways the unique features of this trade made particular demands that were best met through the co-operation of a group of publishers.

There can be little doubt that the publication of foreign news was a speculative venture. Considerable known demand for news bolstered the courage of the publishers to overcome objection and go on to establish the trade firmly. But the initial costs of the enterprise must have been significant. Sharing the responsibility for costs of obtaining the news, licensing and any liabilities would have made a good deal of sense. Chapter 3 showed how Butter's finances suffered from his fines and imprisonments in 1620 and 1622. He did not recover easily and his financial difficulties were to continue. In 1623 he was dismissed from his membership of the Stationers' Stock Company for having overdrawn his account.²

² L. Rostenberg, *Literary, Political, Scientific, Religious and Legal Publishing, Printing and Bookselling in England 1551 – 1700* (N.Y., 1965), 77.

Capital was required to bring out any publication, including the initial costs of obtaining the copy and preparing it for publication, even when that copy was available locally. We know nothing about what was being paid to the suppliers of corantos, the agents who brought them over, or the translators. We do know however that, as with other books and pamphlets, the costs of paper and wages had to be met up front before sales brought any return. Partnership in publication is as old as printing precisely because of the ways book production makes great demands on capital resources before any return is possible. Books tend to sell slowly, so the turnover is likely to be slow and uncertain. It was obviously sensible to share both the outlay and the risk, and there were many examples of groups of publishers working together for this reason. Larger works such as Shakespeare's first folio which was printed in 1623 'at the charge' of four booksellers William Taggard, Edward Blount, John Smithweake and William Apsley, required a very large capital outlay and this could be met by several publishers collaborating and distributing the Stocks between their shops. The 1632, three-folio edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was a publication having 16 subscribers and three printers.³ These are, of course, examples of major publications but, from the sixteenth century, publishers had regularly operated in rather smaller syndicates than this. They handled their own warehousing and generally also each member had a retail shop from which the process of distribution could begin.

Newsbooks had little in common with major publications of large volumes on good paper. They were usually only 24 pages in length (and later 16 pages) and, in keeping with their ephemeral nature, they were on the cheapest possible paper. Each issue needed to be sold before the next was available, usually within a week. So the print run would be short enough to reflect the sales and distribution possible in this relatively short time. Another significant factor is that turnover was rapid by comparison with most of the work available to publishers at that time. This would have created its own unique pressures, because the means of distribution were not adapted to the demands of regular news dissemination. The key elements for successful publication of newsbooks therefore had little to do with having large capital sums tied up for a long time. Enough capital was needed to secure good deals on the Continent to ensure a reliable supply of material and enough organization and

³ Such partnerships developed into the 'Congers' of eighteenth-century English publishing. H. S. Bennett, *English Book and Readers 1603 to 1640* (Cambridge, 1965), 224-5.

funding was needed to back a rapid turn around in London of the largest print runs that could be distributed within a week.

Michael Frearson provides an analysis of the financial dealings of each of the publishers in the syndicate with the Stationers' Company. He shows that Butter and Bourne had the money in 1616 to be able to pay for livery shares in the English Stock but by 1620 Bourne was borrowing money (and again in 1624). Butter too borrowed money before May 1622 but he could not afford to pay back his debts so he forfeited his yeomanry share. Archer too mortgaged his half share in yeomanry stock in September 1619 and was still in debt for unpaid fines in May 1622. He concludes that Butter, Archer and Bourne went into debt early in the venture, presumably to fund it. Yet the frequency of publication shows they were successful. This leads him to conclude that financial considerations were probably of primary importance for all of them. He also notes that Downes, Sheffard, Archer and Butter took on more apprentices at this time. He comments that despite Archer and Butter's financial difficulties when they began coranto publishing they '(strangely) took on more labour'. To him this suggested that they hoped for good sales. Whereas, Bourne, the only one who ultimately came out of the venture successfully, took on more apprentices only in the 1630s. He concludes that while the other four were providing the necessary extra labour for the venture, Bourne stuck to providing capital, taking out two more loans to support the syndicate.⁴

This act of binding additional apprentices is more significant than it might at first appear. In total Downes, Sheffard, Archer and Butter took on between six and eight additional young men specifically to help cope with the news trade. Apprentices were not paid. So they might be seen as a useful source of very cheap labour, but they had to be accommodated, fed, clothed, trained and cared for in the event of sickness. Moreover, they were bound for seven years, so there was a major commitment and risk involved if the interest in foreign news or the supply waned. The work of the apprentices was most likely to have been involved with the printed copies, moving them from the printers to their warehouse and book shops, counting out batches of copies and packing them for dispatch to carriers and travelling salesmen and women heading for the provinces, and to other bookshops around London. Unless the distances were short, the newsbooks would have travelled in sheets, unbound and packed up in chests or barrels. This work was intensive

⁴ Frearson, 120-123, 125-6.

and necessitated keeping careful records. The number of additional boys taken on reflects the intention to provide a fast turn around of copies, to catch carriers on regular post days, and to ensure that as far as possible every copy printed was out and available to customers in the shortest possible time. The profitability of this venture was crucially dependent on the efficiency with which this turn around of copy could be achieved.

Ben Jonson, a contemporary dramatist who wrote about foreign news publication at its height in the early 1620s, described 'a staple of news' in his play of that name. This was an office where news came in and was recorded and then sorted, sealed and issued. The context in which Jonson sets the office is all to do with conspicuous consumption and fashion and the office itself is based entirely on the motive of making money. (By the end of the play, it prophetically collapses on the failure of funds.) This news office appears to be for scribal publication and suggests rivalry with the printed news but this rivalry appears to have been overstated for dramatic purposes. There was a close relationship between Butter and John Pory, a professional newsletter writer, who remained closely connected with the periodical trade. The chief clerk at the office is Nathaniel, a clear reference to Butter, whose first task is to sell a groatsworth of news to a 'butter-woman'. There are four 'emissaries' who are

sent abroad
To fetch the commodity
From all the regions where the best news are made.

These include 'Hans Buz, a Dutchman; he is emissary Exchange', a reference news from the Royal Exchange and Pope's Head Alley. The first news discussed in the office in the play is the latest news of Spinola.⁵

Jonson portrays this busy office as a coveted place to be. Thomas, the barber, is keen to get a job there as a clerk and the price is given as £50. It is paid for by his fashionable young patron who, in return, asks to be kept up to date with all the very latest news; an event that suggests that even the work at the office had captured the imagination of patrons of quite substantial means. The figure of £50 may have been Jonson's idea of what it cost to become a partner in the syndicate: the sum was chosen to emphasize the fashionability of the office. But the sum may not have been at all unrealistic given that

⁵ Jonson, Act I i. 352, i, 353 and 361, Act I ii, 358–9, Ch 5, 197–200, 207–8; D. F. McKenzie in *The Staple of News and the Late Plays; A Celebration of Ben Jonson*, eds., W. Blissett et al., (Toronto, 1973), shows Jonson as a very sharp observer, commenting that he was 'singularly percipient in seeing an organized news network run for profit as the quite new phenomena', 118.

John Pory, had estimated that for a patent to print ‘a Gazette of weekly occurants’, ‘would be worth unto me £200 per ann[um]’ and was receiving £20 a year from Lord Scudamore in 1631-2 for a comprehensive news service including newsletters and printed foreign news. This suggests that, in the short term at least, five members of the syndicate, with the new apprentices who would each also have brought with them a small capital sum towards the finances of this new enterprise, may have drawn together initial capital of perhaps around £300 or more.⁶

Jonson, writing this play in 1623-5, evidently expected his audience to recognize the references to Butter in the leading role, surrounded by a bevy of busy apprentices at the very centre of the activity. He possibly also expected audiences to identify Tom as Thomas Archer, anxious to have work in the office. The assistants at the Court of the Company of Stationers clearly would have agreed that Butter was in the lead by this stage given the way they held Butter responsible in February 1623 for breach of copyright for *The Peace of France*.⁷ Frearson also notes the prominent role of Butter. His name was dominant in the Registers of the Stationers’ Company for the first series, (ten issues were entered by Butter alone; eighth by him with Bourne; five by him with Sheffard; and three by him with Downes), and on 45 of the title pages, compared with 26 for Bourne, 18 for Sheffard, 17 for Archer (whose name never appeared in syndicate Register entries). The fact that Butter bound the most apprentices between 1618 and 1624 and again in 1639 to 1641 suggests that he was, as Jonson depicted him, at the heart of the activity. In addition, Frearson shows that while publications for all five men increased overall in the early 1620s Butter was the most prolific. He was also the only one whose non-newsbook production fell while the non-newsbook production of the others increased. Frearson concludes that Butter was dedicating more of his publishing capacity to corantos than the others, making him the most committed syndicate member, whereas Archer and Downes became minor partners.⁸

Frearson rejects Sheila Lambert’s claim that periodical news was never more than a small part of these publishers’ businesses. He points out that in 1623, they accounted for an eighth of all surviving titles for that year. He looks at the number of other publications

⁶ Jonson, Act I, ii, 357, Act I, i, 352; Pory, 52-5; Ch. 3, 106; H. Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts* (Mass., 1998), 10.

⁷ *The 4 of November. The Peace of France of the Edict with the Articles of Peace*, Newbury, (4 November 1622); Jackson (1957), 469: see also Ch. 3, 113-4.

⁸ Frearson, 100, 127-135, 101.

by these publishers, 109 from 1620 to 1624, compared with 176 coranto issues produced between them and demonstrates ‘the overwhelming importance of coranto publishing in these publishers’ printing interests’. Frearson goes further and shows the close relationship between the contents of newsbooks and their other ventures in the early 1620s. He does this by analysing the subject matter showing that it complemented material they were publishing in the periodical series. 53 titles were religious, covering news related themes, and 31 were news, 12 of which were also foreign news. In fact, for Archer, Bourne and Sheffard the number of ‘non-coranto’ titles they published was also increasing at this time. He sees a general increase in production and also an increase in the number and range of partnerships being formed to help finance and distribute individual issues of publications outside the numbered and dated series. Some of these partnerships were with other members of the syndicate. Some were with other publishers to produce religious titles. Only Bourne retained an interest in a more diverse publications list, including trade, education, logic and history. Archer published five unregistered news publications, while Sheffard and Butter produced religious works ‘which provided an interpretive context in which the corantos were produced and read’. Frearson’s conclusion from this is that ‘coranto and non-coranto’ publication were related, especially for Butter and Sheffard, and that commercial and political interests were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, ‘Butter was committing more of his considerable publishing capacity’ to the enterprise.⁹

Production Time and Costs

This section concerns the work of the publishers to produce copy for sale. It looks at their costs, in particular at the financial implications of registering copies with the Stationers’ Company and the costs and arrangements associated with printing. It also seeks to estimate the time a printer might take to produce each issue and the length of print runs, a crucial factor in determining profitability and in enabling us to assess the impact of these publications.

The full costs for a publisher of foreign news are not known. We have no information on the charges for contracts with news networks, shipping or translation. An editorial of 3 July 1624 contrasted these quality of publications with others on the basis that their competitors ‘have not taken the paines, had the meanes, or been willing to beare

⁹ S. Lambert ‘Coranto Printing in England’, *J. N.andP.H.*, 8 (1992), 13; Frearson, 80, 83, 129, 127-148, Table 2.2 on 133.

the charges which we undergoe to get good newes and intelligences' and there is a clue about the arrangements with suppliers in the issue of 4 October 1627 where the editorial refers to 'our great charge, being ... a yearely charge'.¹⁰ Despite the fact that the syndicate ended by 1627 and that newsbooks were being produced by then by Butter and Bourne in partnership, the yearly cycle of numbered issues in a series, each running for about 50 issues, continued. This suggests that the arrangements made with news network suppliers from the time when the syndicate was established had been secured with annual contracts. This would help to explain the confidence with which the new arrangements were introduced in October 1622, the decision to run each series with 50 issues and underline the need for a fairly substantial starting capital.

The freshest news, generally from the Low Countries, would already be two to three days old when it reached London. From the evidence available comparing datelines for continental copies and those for subsequent publication in London we can generally identify a lapse of five to six days between publication in the Netherlands and those in London. This gives a two to three day window for production in London.¹¹

From the commencement of the first numbered and dated series of newsbooks in October 1622, the first task of the publishers was to register each with the Stationers' Company. Most were entered in the register for six pence, but not all were registered. Even during the first series the syndicate only entered 27 issues out of 50. Retrospective entries to the register began on 23 February 1624. By the third series, only three entries were made in the register, two of these were for single issues and the third was a block entry made 19 July 1625 for three newsbooks published in May. Clearly, by this stage there was no attempt to protect copyright by this means. More likely, the publishers were simply making the minimum number of entries they felt they must if they were to avoid objections from the Company. In the fourth series Butter made a block entry on 4 July 1626 for 10 shillings for all 20 issues of that series up to 27 July, but he did not go back and make further entries for the rest of the series until 19 June 1627 when the block fee of 15s paid then covered five issues from this series in addition to 25 from the next series.¹²

¹⁰(3 July 1624), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.149; (4 October 1627), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.189.

¹¹ Ch. 2, 48-9, 53-6, for datelines and their value as evidence.

¹² Arber, Vol. 4, entry 23 February 1624 for issues up to the fourteenth issue and a payment of 6s 6d, ie., 13 copies, 74. (The fourteenth issue in the series was published on 24 February 1624.) Frearson, 103, calculates this was an entry for 10 issues, if that were true, at six pence an issue that would be 5s so it would appear that the charge was higher because it was paid in arrears.

With the fifth series there is a change in pattern. From August to October 1627 ten individual entries are related to control and inspection by a new licenser, Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, but the block entries have no reference to licensing and seem to be related solely to satisfying the Stationers' Company's demand for payments of fees. The second of these entries was 2 May 1628, which fell during a break in production between number 47 which appeared in January and number 49 in June. It also seems to cover many issues which were already entered as having been licensed. This demonstrates quite clearly, as Frearson observes, 'the dual function of the Stationers' Company registers' to record both licensing for the purpose of censorship control and ownership for the purpose of copyright and Company fees. So too, does the next entry in the registers, which is during the sixth series and is dated 20 June 1629. This covers issues up to 20 March, including some that had already been entered as licensed by Weckherlin.¹³

By this stage retrospective block entries had become the norm and it does not seem that Butter and Bourne, working in partnership, were attempting to avoid payment. During the seventh series there were three entries in the register 24 June 1630, 15 July 1631 and 6 October 1631 and in the eight series these block included the three issues that were also entered as licensed. Perhaps the oddest of the entries occurred after the ninth series had not only begun but also ended as a result of a royal ban. In December 1633 Butter and Bourne paid seven shillings to enter a retrospective block of 14 newsbooks, taking them up to September 1633 although none had been printed since the ban in October 1632. They may have made this payment because they hoped to start again.¹⁴

With issues translated, registered and, if necessary also licensed, the next task was to find a printer. By the seventeenth century it was increasingly common for a printer to be employed by a publisher and when this happened the printer had only to cover his costs, overheads and profit. In England, it became customary during the seventeenth century for

19 June 1625, entry stated, 'Received of Master Butter for 3 Currantes under Doctor Worrallles hand to number 24 and under master lownes his hand ... ijs vjd', 106; 4 July 1626, entry, Arber, Vol. 4, 124; 19 June 1627, entry to Butter and Bourne, 'Received of them for all Corrantes of Newes untill the first day of August 1627 ... xvs', Arber, Vol. 4, 146.

¹³ Frearson, 108-9; Ch. 6, 255-86, for the work of Weckherlin. Arber, Vol. 4, 146-162.

¹⁴ Arber, Vol. 4, 202, 222, 228, 9 January 1632, 234, 13 January 1632, 235, 26 June and 2 July 1632, 246, 16 July 1632, 247, 27 July 1632, 248, 6 December 1633, 283; Ch. 6, 275.

the printer to charge for labour costs plus 50%. It was then up to the publisher to meet such costs as paper and editorial fees, and to settle the retail margin.¹⁵

A printer would generally operate with one or two compositors and two pressmen plus apprentices whom he did not pay.¹⁶ Gaskell has estimated, allowing for the fact that not all presses on a premises would usually be working, that the total numbers of printers per working press was probably in the region of three or four (taking master, compositors, pressmen and apprentices together). This placed a considerable pressure on the printer to strive to get the biggest possible output from their journeymen by keeping them as busy as possible, keeping the presses running as far as possible by taking on pamphlets and ballads between significant printing assignments and expecting everyone to work long days, pulling in their wives and children to assist as necessary. In Geneva and Paris working days of 12 to 15 hours were normal in the early seventeenth century. Compositors might complete between one and three forms a day according to the types used and the kind of work involved. A printer's output ranged from 2,650 sheets per day in Paris to 3,375 in Frankfurt and 3,350 a day in Lyons at the end of the sixteenth century and 4,000 a day in the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century. This gives an incredibly high output of something close to 200 sheets an hour for a hand press. Yet it seems that the general rates

¹⁵ Gaskell, *A New Introduction*, 178; The capital outlay for the press and premises were themselves relatively inexpensive. The purchasing of type, which also had to be renewed fairly frequently was more of a burden. But, even though together, these meant considerable resources were required to get established, once established, the plant required could be used almost indefinitely. In sixteenth-century Paris capital costs could range from 60 livres for one press with worn type to 700 livres for five presses with 10 founts and many engravings. Michael Brunet who died in 1648 in Paris left two presses valued at 150 livres and 15 founts, ornaments, copper letters and tools estimated at 746 livres. But because of the high cost of paper and labour, a single edition book would cost more than the initial outlay to set up a print shop. (L. Febvre and H-J. Martin, *The Coming of the Book* (1976), 110-111, 113.) Clair, *History*, 176, tells us a print shop with two presses and 1,500kg., of type cost £350 in mid eighteenth-century prices. More than half as much again was needed to cover wages and other overheads before a printer would see any return on his capital. M. Plant, *The English Book Trade*, 172, 179, reports a press valued in 1625 at £4. The supply of type presented the greatest challenge as the materials were more expensive and imported from France, and it required renewal and replacement at a cost of around 3d a pound. She estimates the capital value of a small print shop as between £150 and £165 in the mid 1620s. Labour costs were thus more conspicuous and immediate, and these formed the basis of the calculation when quoting for a job.

¹⁶ Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, 112. The minimum equipment required by a printer was a workroom, a press, its accessories, a quantity of type sufficient for at least one sheet and a supply of ink. Secondary needs were ornaments and devices for title pages. Woodcuts and engravings were rarely used in pamphlets and, as pamphlets were, at best sold stitched together without any covering, binding materials were not employed. Premises would not have been expensive. With one press the printer could manage with one workroom. Joseph Moxon in *Mechanic Exercises in Printing*, H. Davis and H. G. Carter, eds., (1962), 17, gave the necessary floor space as seven feet square for each press and five and a half feet by four and a half feet for each frame of type cases. The strength of the floor was important, and good light. Plant, *Book Trade*, 165-9, argues that rents were so low in St Paul's and around Fleet St that they are unlikely to have affected the cost of individual books. Others note that printers did not allow for rents or capital costs in estimates.

of pay across the Continent were only slightly higher than those for a less skilled or educated labourer, around 8d a day.¹⁷

The economics of printing tended to keep edition quantities down so that the investment could be recovered. They also discouraged printers from enlarging their plant to an extent that would increase dependency on a flow of large orders. Even in cities where, unlike London, the number of presses was uncontrolled we see a preference for smaller printing houses. In Geneva in 1563 there were 20 printing houses and 85% had one or two presses, the rest had four presses each. In Paris in 1644, 81% had one, two, or three presses: the largest had seven presses.¹⁸

In England, from 1586, presses had been subject to control: the High Commission had power to appoint master printers and the number of presses was limited. In 1615 the number of printers was fixed at 22 and the only authorized printing allowed outside London was in Oxford and Cambridge. Although Lambert argues that the interventions of the archbishops had not been in 'a direction of ensuring that there was a small and well-ordered body of printers', the Stationers' Company appears to have been largely effective in exercising control. The majority of printers had only one or two presses.¹⁹

Most printers would have welcomed the opportunity to print corantos and newsbooks because they were short and could be fitted in between other tasks to help keep the presses busy. Dahl identifies the work of seventeen different London printers among editions in the 1620s. Some were being employed far more frequently than others. The main printers prior to the formation of the syndicate were John Dawson, ('I.D.') who, between 1613 and 1634, operated from the Three Cranes in the Vintry, and Edward Allde who may still have been operating from his premises in Old Fish Street at this time, followed by Bernard Alsop, from Distaff Lane near Old Fish Street, and the puritan printer,

¹⁷ Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, 131-2; Jackson, xxi; Plant, 156, quotes 18d for a weekly wage for a journeyman in 1581, plus food, drink, laundry and lodgings; Moxon, *Mechanic*, 327 said they were paid for 'all Church Holydays that fall not on a Sunday, whether they work or no'. By then they might earn 2s 6d or more for a working day. But they paid for any wasted paper and were fined for delays that caused other workers to be standing idle. Raymond, 234 gives 250 impressions an hour as a figure which 'is high but by no means implausible'.

¹⁸ There were exceptions, such as Koberger in Nuremberg who owned 24 presses in 1500 and Plantin who had 16 presses in 1574. Gaskell, *A New Introduction*, 175-6.

¹⁹ Seibert, 70; Lambert, 14; Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, 192 and 131; E. Arber, Vol. 1, 242, Vol. 3, 699-700, Vol. 4, 529-36.

William Jones, who between 1601 and 1626 had premises in Ship Alley, Redcross Street, Cripplegate.²⁰

Frearson argued that ‘developments among coranto printers following the formation of the coranto publishing syndicate in 1622 were no less momentous’ than those among the publishers. Prior to October 1622 ‘the lesser coranto publishers sent their news to be printed by individual printers. Downes’ corantos, for example, were printed by Nicholas Kingston, while the Sheffard-Newbery partnership employed John Dawson to print their corantos. In contrast, the more prominent quarto coranto publishers employed a wider range of printers’. He went on to argue that Butter, Bourne and Archer rarely used the same printer from one issue to the next. From October 1622 John Dawson and Edward Allde continued to have a significant role. Each printed eight of the extant 47 issues of the first series and the Eliot Court Press printed 17 issues. George Eld was responsible for 12 issues. Frearson suggested that this is because the syndicate favoured printers with the greatest capacity, for while most printers in London at that time worked alone, Dawson and Allde were both allowed two presses each, George Eld had two presses in partnership with Miles Flesher, and Eliot Court Press was a partnership of three printers with five presses between them.²¹

Frearson oversimplifies the pattern of printers’ usage prior to the formation of the syndicate: Bourne and Archer favoured Dawson and Allde as printers but also used Alsop and Jones, while Butter made equal use of Eld, Alsop and Jones. However, the shift to printers with a greater capacity, which he identified, is both evident and significant. The Eliot Court Press had possibly only been used once for foreign news printing before the syndicate was formed in October 1622, being brought in by Butter and Archer on 27 September 1622. Similarly George Eld had only printed two issues before for Butter on 23 August 1622 and for Butter and Sheffard on 25 September 1622. Yet these quickly became the dominant printers of the series, with Dawson and Allde falling into second place. It seems that when Archer and Butter came together for their first joint issue they then selected the Eliot Court Press, which was new to this business. Their choice may have been to signal a new, co-operative venture but it also probably reflected the fact that

²⁰ F. Dahl, 14; H. R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (1907), 5; R. B. McKerrow, *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland and of foreign printers of English Books 1557-1640* (1910), 160-1.

²¹ Frearson, 101, 95-96.

business was prospering and that they decided on a larger print run for the first issue that would benefit from dissemination throughout both their distribution networks. The other factor here that was not considered by Frearson is that George Eld and the Eliot Court Press were located on the very west of the City in Fleet Lane and the Little Old Bailey, locations which were less convenient for Bourne, Sheffard and Archer than they were for Downes and, to some extent, Butter. The printed copies would have needed to be moved from the printers' premises to the publishers' warehouse or office for counting, packing and dispatching. The larger the edition the more it would have made sense to seek to minimize this journey through crowded streets and alleys in the City. What we appear to be seeing here is a geographical shift that reflected the increasing importance of Butter, at the centre of the dispatch and dissemination activities.

Later developments support this theory. When Archer left the syndicate and was working independently, he still used the printers Eliot Court Press but reverted also to Bernard Alsop and William Jones for his news publications while Edward Allde, who at some time after 1612 had also moved west, continued to work for Butter and Bourne, producing 17 of the extant numbers. George Eld produced four issues and Augustine Mathewes, also in the west in Bride's Lane off Fleet Street, one issue. By the end of the second series, the syndicate with a consortium of printers had been succeeded by a leading partnership (Butter and Bourne) and one printer (Edward Allde). This trio continued to work together throughout the third series. After the imprint 'Mercurius Britannicus' was adopted they stopped naming any printer but this imprint was dropped in the sixth series and towards the end of the seventh John Dawson became identified the main printer. He appears to have had a contract for the whole of the eighth series, so that by the time of the ban in 1632, he had 50% more extant issues to his credit than even Edward Allde.²²

By not committing themselves to long-term contracts with printers and negotiating on an issue by issue basis, the publishers gained maximum flexibility both on timing and on quantities. They turned first to larger printers because a printer with several presses could probably be relied upon to respond quickly as soon as copy was available. They would have been less likely to have to interrupt other work to get started. Moreover, the strategic use by the syndicate of printers with greatest press capacity allowed for an

²² The exception was 3 August 1632 when two issues appeared the same day. The first mentioned 'I.D.' in the imprint and the second 'B.A. and T.F.' Presumably John Dawson lacked the capacity to produce two issues on one day.

increase in production and, with presses running simultaneously, it also allowed for a more rapid turn around of copy once the presses were in action. Frearson argued that the syndicate printed longer runs than was normal for that time and pointed out that a few numbers - ones calculated to generate the greatest demand - were even printed by more than one printer. He cited issues published in February 1623 when the syndicate produced three newsbooks using three or four printers for each issue dealing with the Oldenbarnevelt conspiracy in the Netherlands. He speculated that the reason for such heightened interest was the departure of Charles and Buckingham for Spain. Though there was no news of them in these issues, he noted 'the increased number of printers commissioned at this time does indicate that the numbered corantos were well established by the middle of the first series, and that the English public looked to them to satisfy their curiosity regarding foreign affairs'.²³

Time was also a factor. English publishers had little concern about competition at home once the syndicate was established, so they were under less pressure than their Amsterdam counterparts to get news out onto the streets in the shortest possible time. Time could however be significant when the news was so important that it would be spread by manuscript, word of mouth and rumour or where official state publications such as proclamations and peace treaties were concerned. The syndicate had, only days before news broke of the conspiracy in the Hague, lost the case in the Court of the Stationers' Company to Nathaniel Newbery about copyright to news of the *Peace of France*. The decision by the Stationers to uphold Newbery's copyright entitlement against them gave them, by the same token, confidence that no one would be allowed to compete with them by producing rival versions of the authentic Dutch texts concerning the conspiracy. The syndicate decided to get the conspiracy news on to the streets with all possible speed. They were so confident of high sales that they commissioned particularly high print runs. The evidence Frearson noted of the intense effort put in by the publishers to secure a large print in a hurry comes primarily from the type-setting of three issues in February 1623. The issue of 11 February 1623 concerned the discovery of a plot to assassinate the Prince of Orange. Only five days after the event, by means of duplicate setting, they were able to produce a 38 page (five sheet) issue which included 'a proclamation published by the

²³ Frearson, 102; news of a plot to assassinate the Prince of Orange also broke on 6 February 1623. It was this that the publishers aimed to cover quickly. Charles and Buckingham left Essex for Spain on 18 February.

States, for the apprehending of the conspirators of the late intended horrible treason against the whole State of the united Provinces and against the King and Queen of Bohemia, and their children; with severall letters concerning the plot annexed to this present weekes relation &c'.²⁴

Establishing the likely size of print runs for newsbooks is important to our understanding of both the economics of the trade and their likely readership. We know the smallest possible print run for which a printer would set up type was about 200 copies and that in the earliest days, for books, editions of 2-300 were quite normal but by the sixteenth century 1,000-1,500 was more usual. The economics and financial arrangements operating worked in favour of printing at least 500 copies and no more than 2000 of a sizable book but favoured larger prints of small, cheap books. However, from 1586 until 1637 edition quantities were limited by decree to 1,250-1,500 for ordinary books and 3,000 for books in small type and small books like catechisms, though we know from the complaints of journeymen that masters often ignored this decree and we have no reason to assume it would have been applied to the publication of newsbooks. It is much more likely that the constraint on print size for foreign newsbooks was related to an estimate of how many copies could be sold in London or distributed among the provincial carriers in a week.²⁵

Dahl initially made the modest estimate that only the minimum print possible was made for each issue, that is that perhaps 200 copies of each were printed. Following advice however, he revised his print run estimate upwards to 400 which is the sort of number usually estimated for illicit pamphlets. He assumed that there were between 1000 and 1200 different issues of corantos and newsbooks this made the total production 400,000, giving an overall survival rate of about 0.13%.²⁶ Frearson eliminated uncertainty about the number of issues published by excluding from his calculations the single sheet

²⁴ Ch. 3, 113-4, for the Newbury case; (11 February 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.97; Dahl, 96-7 found that Sheet A of this issue was off the presses of Eld and the Eliot Court Press, sheets C and E were printed by Alde and sheets B and D by another printer. The next 2 issues, (19 and 28 February 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.98 and 99 were printed in a similar fashion. Van Hilten in Amsterdam also reduced printing times from 1632 by introducing duplicate setting. Dahl estimated in *Dutch Corantos 1618-1650* (Hague, 1947), 19-20, that Van Hilten reduced his printing times for each issue by about four hours enabling him to have corantos on sale earlier than his competitor Broer Jansz. The long title quoted contained a rather exaggerated version of the facts. The plot was aimed only at Maurice and was planned by a younger son of Oldenbarnevelt in revenge for the execution of his father.

²⁵ Watt, 11; Gaskell, *A New Introduction*, 160-2; Raymond suggests 250 was the incremental unit for print runs, 233. Composition of one sheet cost about the same in wages as the printing of 1500 copies. Printing more copies led to a pro-rata rise in costs for the press-men's wages but left compositors without work. Controls therefore protected the work of the compositors. Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, 219.

²⁶ F. Dahl, 'Short-title Catalogue of English Corantos and Newsbooks 1620-1642', *The Library*, 4th Series, 18 (1938), 45-46; Dahl, 22.

corantos, the unnumbered newsbooks and Archer's separate series between 1624 and 1628 because of uncertainty as to how many issues there were of each type. He based his calculations instead on the numbered and dated series. This gave him a figure of 641 for the number of issues published from 1622 to 1641. He then considerably increased the output estimate. He argued reasonably that intensity of publication is shown by the frequency of editions, the rapid evolution of form, the large number of publications involved, and the number of publishers involved in the early 1620s. All of these together indicated rapid growth in English interest in European affairs. So he estimated editions averaging 1000 copies each overall with more at times of heightened interest and fewer at times when interest waned. This approach supports the argument that the significance and potential penetration of these publications has been consistently under-estimated by historians.²⁷

Frearson did not produce any direct evidence to substantiate his estimate but built upon evidence of the use of more presses at times of heightened demand and argued that the publishers would have responded to fluctuating demand. He provided an analysis of what this kind of output would mean in terms of the number of copies printed, comparing the numbers of issues, the number of surviving copies per series, and the percentage of extant examples per series. However, despite his argument that print runs would have varied, in his calculations he applied the estimate of 1000 copies per issue across the board, even for the period in the late 1630s and early 1640s when three very short issues were being published simultaneously. This approach gave a total production figure of 641,000 copies from October 1622 to January 1641 and produced two very strong and distinctive survival peaks. The first was, as we would expect, in the first and second series. If 1000 copies of each issue were printed then there was also a varying survival rate.²⁸

Some variation in the survival pattern from issue to issue is credible. During times of heightened interest, the content was of greater interest and therefore it was possibly thought more worthwhile to keep copies in much the same way as commemorative issues of memorable news are kept today. In addition, people who did not habitually purchase an issue would have bought a copy at these times and may have been more likely to hold on to their copy for this very reason. However, it seems unlikely that survival patterns would

²⁷ Frearson, 116-8.

²⁸ Ibid, Table 2.1 provides Frearson's calculations and gives the percentage of issues with an extant copy ranging from 12-100%. He does not show his copy survival rates.

have fluctuated quite so much as Frearson's figures suggest. Moreover, given the sensitivity of the trade to fluctuating interests and given that publication costs were so closely related to the quantities printed, the publishers would have had a strong incentive to tailor each print run as closely and tightly as possible to estimated demand. Of course, they would not always have got it right and there is some evidence to suggest that from time to time they may have underestimated demand and ended up ordering a reprint or asking the printer to run off some additional copies.²⁹

A more credible picture is created by assuming a more even survival rate nearer to one in a thousand and by making an assumption of print runs of over 1000 for the peak periods.³⁰ There is a good case for assuming such a low survival rate. Newsbooks were a weekly product printed on the cheapest of paper. They were soon rendered redundant by the arrival of a more recent issue. It is clear, even from reading contemporary correspondence such as Joseph Mead's letters to Sir Martin Stuteville that there were many corantos and newsbooks and only a small sample of issues has survived. Contemporary comment explains why the survival rate is so low. Richard Brathwaite's *Whimzies: or, a New Cast of Characters* refers to 'A Corranto – coiner' and to the fact that his products do not last, 'A weeke is the longest in the Citie, and after their arrivall, a little longer in the Countrey. Which past, they melt like Butter, or match a pipe and so Burne. But indeede, most commonly it is the height of their ambition, to aspire to the imployment of stopping mustard pots, or wrapping up pepper, powder, staves-aker, &c. which done, they expire'.³¹ All pamphlets and newsbooks plus many broadsheets were no doubt treated similarly. Coupe, in his study of German illustrated broadsheets from the seventeenth century, drew similar conclusions about their low survival rate and suggested that it was reasonable to assume that the ratio of sheets that have survived approximates broadly to the ratio of sheets actually produced. This seems realistic and I have followed the same assumption.³²

²⁹ 30 October 1622 has two identical versions, except for the names of the publishers in the imprints. It is possible that Butter and Downes paid for the first printing and that when demand outstripped supply Butter, Bourne and Archer funded a second printing from the same type-setting, *S.T.C.* 18507.85 and 86. (The order could have been the other way around, as suggested by the ordering designated by Dahl, 88-89, but it makes more sense to assume that the financial burden was spread more widely for unscheduled additional printing.) In 1632, again at a time of high demand, there are instances where the text was amended in the course of printing. *Numb.* 38. (3 August 1632), *S.T.C.* 18507.262, has two different settings and appeared on the same day as *Numb.* 37 (3 August 1632), *S.T.C.* 18507.261; (1 September 1632), *S.T.C.* 18507.266 and 7 are variants of the same issue. In these cases, an opportunity for making corrections arose after the first print run was complete, before additional copies were run off.

³⁰ Appendix 3, Table 1.

³¹ Quoted in Dahl 'Short-title Catalogue', 45.

³² W. A. Coupe, *The German Illustrated Broadsheet in the 17th Century* (Baden – Baden, 1966-7), 83.

To arrive at the likely range of size for print runs, we need to assume that the survival rate for the two most successful series, the first and the eighth, was probably higher than for other series and that the survival rate in the least successful series is probably lower, partly because the news was so lacking interest that very few people were motivated to keep their copies but also because the publishers may have been left with copies on their hands which they destroyed. This still gives a likelihood of some print runs of over the legal limit of 1250. But we know that in 1621 demand for printed corantos outstripped supply as the publishers struggled to get to grips with the production process. By 1622 several publishers and several printers were involved so it is reasonable to assume they went for maximum print runs especially since, by early 1623, they needed reprints. In any case, the purpose of controlling the number of books printed was to create work for compositors for subsequent editions. There was no prospect of reprinting these publications after a new issue was available, so it is most unlikely that the legal limit was imposed.

The merit of this approach is that it yields a range of print runs that realistically fit fluctuating circumstances. The range accommodates Dahl's earlier estimates (200 and 400) for years of dwindling interest, while allowing for higher runs which are more in line with Frearson's estimate of 1000 at times of heightened interest in the second and seventh series as well as in the first and eighth series. This is in line with estimates for German newspapers at this time, and for France in 1630s, and has the additional merit of giving more average print runs not far off 500. In other words, at times when the business was neither booming, nor failing (for example, in the third, seventh and twelfth series), print runs were normal for pamphlets in the early 1600s. Similarly, this approach gives an overall average of around 600 copies per issue, which again, is closer to what might reasonably be expected for a news pamphlet at that time.³³

The factor that makes periodical newsbooks so significant is not so much that many print runs were exceptionally large but that frequency of publication meant overall output was remarkable. Joad Raymond argues that periodical news provoked 'satirical heat' because, by promising a continuous supply and meeting readers' needs, it was more

³³ T. Schroder, 'The Origins of the German Press' 133, and J-P. Vittu, 'Instruments of political information in France', 167, both in DandB.; Raymond, 233; J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 80.

threatening.³⁴ This evidence suggests that the volume and accessibility of periodical news meant its presence was experienced more keenly and continuously in English publishing than ever before. Moreover, the number of issues in a year was particularly high in the early 1620s and again in the early 1630s. Once the frequency of publication is built into the calculations, a credible profile of production emerges, reflecting the significant fluctuations in trade, and the down turn which almost put the publishers out of business in the forth to sixth series in the late 1620s. This also demonstrates the very large numbers of copies in circulation in the busier periods, of possibly over 6000 copies a month in 1622-3 and again in 1631-2.³⁵ This outcome brings forward by two decades the date at which ‘pamphlet culture was impossible to ignore’ as suggested by Michael Mendle. It is consistent with the fact that five publishers were involved at the height of the trade and with the extent to which these publications are mentioned in contemporary correspondence and journals as well as with the level of contemporary interest depicted in Ben Jonson’s work. It is their periodicity, their single distinguishing characteristic, that pushed production numbers up to unprecedented levels and meant that in the first decade of the numbered series well over a quarter of a million newsbooks went in to circulation.³⁶

In addition to the length of each print run, the length of each issue would influence the cost of production by determining the amount of labour involved in printing, the time it would take before copies were on sale, and the amount of paper.³⁷ In the early days publishers experimented with the length of issues varying them from eight pages (or one sheet) to 32 pages (or four sheets), the most common length being 24 pages (or three sheets). Usually the verso of the title page, the first leaf and the last page would be blank, giving 19 sides of news. After October 1622 when numbered and dated series began, they would leave only the verso of the title page blank, filling the remaining 22 sides with copy. This system was maintained as far as possible for the next three series. After this, the length of the newsbooks was reduced to 16 sides including 14 of news and remained this length until 1632.

³⁴ Ibid, 129. He also explains the criticism of the periodical news particularly by dramatists as a recognition that ‘energies and alignments within the culture of print, and within the social mechanisms for communication, had shifted’ from the theatre to the news periodical, 138.

³⁵ Appendix 3, Table 2.

³⁶ M. Mendle, ‘News and the Pamphlet Culture’, in DandB., 57; B. Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (N.Y., and Essex, 1998), 48, argues for a figure of five million in 1620s and 1630s based on M. Spufford, ‘The Pedlar, the historian and the folklorist: seventeenth-century communication’, *Folklore*, 105 (1994), communicating the findings of Frearson. This is however, a clear overestimate.

³⁷ See footnote 42 below for costs of paper and printing costs calculated by the sheet.

In 1638 publication was resumed, but costs had risen. The book trade had experienced a period of inflation. In addition, under the terms of the new warrant, a new fixed price tax was introduced for foreign newsbooks involving the payment of 10s a year towards the repair of St Paul's. During the tenth series the appearance and mode of publication were completely transformed. More sources were available and Butter and Bourne took the risk of making subscriptions to more news networks. To recoup the costs, instead of combining reports into one weekly issue, they published short separate four sided London issues. Thus three or four issues would appear on the same (or almost the same) day. The pages were slightly larger (about 180 x 115 cms compared with 155 x 90 cms) and the title page was replaced by a short caption, in most cases only stating the town of the publication from which each was translated. Pages were numbered continuously, a device that presented all the issues as one continuous series to encourage the sale of all issues. Butter and Bourne may have hoped to avoid editorial costs and increase sales but the income was too low. Sales did not support the high number of issues appearing under these new arrangements. Plus, the quality of these short, single-source issues was poor. To get a full picture of events it was necessary to buy several, thereby paying a significant premium and tolerating constant repetition. Butter, who by 23 April 1640 was the sole publisher, announced, 'Gentlemen, we have againe reduced the methode of printing the forreigne weekly Avisoes, into two sheets, and do promise, for the content of the buyer, to sell them at a cheaper Rate, if a competent number shall be vented weekly, to recompence the charge, we shall continue them; if not, we shall be forced to put a period to the Presse'.³⁸

As for the time it would take to print the copies, it is more difficult to arrive at a secure figure than might be expected, given the relative inflexibility of the production process. Raymond, working with the domestic newsbooks of the early 1640s, arrived at an estimate of perhaps 14 hours or less to compose the text.³⁹ As with the foreign newsbooks, the quality of composition was poor and errors were common so the time was probably similar. Printing could be done overnight. This means that even a 2000 copy edition might be turned around by a printer within 24 hours. However, although the foreign news

³⁸ Dahl, 223; (23 April 1640), verso, *S.T.C.* 18507.337. By 1641, and particularly in 1642, quality was particularly low. Butter was probably unable to afford to employ someone to oversee the press and check proofs. Ch. 2, 61-62, for sources 1938-41.

³⁹ Raymond, 235.

was current and time sensitive, as noted above, the syndicate was not generally under the quite same time pressures that the publishers of competing newsbooks in experienced other European cities, nor were they under the same time pressures as publishers of competing with domestic newsbooks in London in the early 1640s. Translation probably took place in London and, as Chapter 5 shows, the publishers also took time, once the copy had arrived in London, to edit and amalgamate texts from different corantos before presenting a text to the printer. Printed copies were therefore more likely to be on the streets in two days, rather than one day, after reaching London. A 1000 print run in the early 1620s with three sheet issues would take one long day's work. By the mid 1620s with only two sheets to print and print runs down to 500 copies or less a turn around of copy in one to two days would have been easily accomplished.

Arriving at a total production cost is even more difficult, despite all that is known about the trade and the fact that the parameters of charging by the printers are fairly well known and consistent across the major cities of Europe. It seems possible to calculate one way on the basis of one set of figures and another on another. Yet, it is fairly clear that, given that the time it took to compose and print, and the labour involved were all quite standardized in practice, then the costs passed on to the publisher were likely to have been fairly predictable at the time. Publishers would, no doubt, have aimed to get the best quotation that they could but they would not have had a great deal of scope to negotiate prices since the industry appears to have been working with a very narrow margin of profitability anyway due to the constant struggle to find enough business to keep their presses occupied.⁴⁰ For news publication, however, the publishers were looking for a printer who was interested in the work, with a press standing idle and the capacity to respond and start work immediately. Also, in the production of foreign newsbooks, a high number of cost elements were fixed irrespective of how many copies were printed. These included purchase of copies, shipping to London, translation, licensing and registration fees. Only the cost of printing and the paper costs would fluctuate with demand and reflect the numbers of copies in a print run.

In 1642, the printer Robert White charged Frances Coles and Thomas Bates 18s for printing 1,500 sheets of Roger Pike's *A True Relation of the Proceedings of the Scots and English Forces in the Northern Ireland*. Raymond adapted this figure that seemed to him

⁴⁰ Bennett, *English Books*, 271.

‘improbably low’ to demonstrate that with a newsbook print run at a plausible minimum of 250 copies, the print cost would probably be no more than 9s. He concluded that this figure begins to look quite realistic if we then consider that the publisher had to supply the paper and that this could easily be the largest single cost incurred. Paper costs usually equalled or amounted to more than the cost of printing. Raymond calculated that if newsbooks were then sold for a penny, the cost of 9s would provide a profit of 11s 10d to be shared between the supplier, publisher, editor (if any) and sellers.⁴¹

I am by no means confident that Raymond is right to consider the 1642 figure ‘improbably low’. Other calculations yield different results, some considerably lower than this. For example 8d to 10d a day for a compositor, plus four people on a press for two working days would be a maximum of 7s 6d, and if the printer added 50%, we get a maximum of 11s 3d for 3000+ sheets (plus the cost of paper which would at least double the cost). While evidence from Marjorie Plant suggests that in the mid 1620s eight sheets for 1d would cover the printer’s costs. Again this could be at least doubled to cover the cost of the paper.⁴² This may be a more relevant calculation for the bigger print runs that the syndicate was producing in the early 1620s, especially as these predated the rise in prices in the 1630s. It demonstrates that news production at ½d per copy for a two-sheet issue could be very profitable if print runs were high. However, Raymond’s calculation of a minimum print run is also instructive because it demonstrates how tight the margin became on a low print run, particularly by the early 1640s, with short runs of 1d, for short publications. This would have been a very small margin indeed, allowing for the fact that there were additional initial outlays required to obtain the copies from the Continent, register and translate them. It is not at all surprising that Bourne dropped out and that Butter ended his days in poverty. It is also quite possible that some of the issues in the

⁴¹ Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, 110-113; Raymond, 233-4.

⁴² Gaskell, *A New Introduction*, 178, Harry Carter in ‘Early Accounts of the University Press Oxford’ in *Studies in the Book Trade in Honour of Graham Pollard*, (Oxford, 1975), 18, 122 gives costs for 1672 figures for cheaper works, as 3000 copies of 3 sheets (i.e., 24 sides, similar to the first numbered series of newsbooks in length and format) £9 19s. The most expensive part was the paper at £4 6s 8d. Presswork was charged at £1 7s 0d an hour and composing at 5s a sheet. 30s was paid in October 1672 for one almanac of 2 sheets in length. On this basis, newsbooks cost between £5 for 24 pages and 30s for 16 pages. However, prices had risen considerably in the intervening period and while these may give some clues to 1640s prices, it is unhelpful for the early 1620s. Plant quotes Adam Islip paying 6s for 500 sheets of an impression of 1500 in 1607 (excluding paper) and John Norton and Augustine Matthews getting *Lucans Pharsalia* at a rate of 1,500 sheets for 15s in 1627, 221. Paper was mostly imported to reduce costs. News was printed on the lowest quality paper but even so, the cost could have been as high as ¾d or 1d per copy, making it the single most costly item of the production process and a key consideration when planning issues. Plant, 198, 188; Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, 112, 114; Gaskell, *A New Introduction*, 177. Editors aimed to make the best use of each page Ch. 5, 210-11.

fourth and sixth series with low print runs may have been produced at a loss. By contrast, however, since the initial costs were fixed, as soon as print runs rose above 250 copies, the profits would begin to increase, making issues with 1000 copies or more quite lucrative.

For Butter, in particular, the experience of more profitable times provided sufficient incentive to continue through a number of leaner times. His mistake was to stay in difficult times for too long. Instead of diversifying in 1639, Butter mortgaged his copyrights to secure loans totalling £600. Thus, the tenacity and optimism that had seen him through earlier rough times proved his undoing in the end because he did not know when to give up. Bourne was the shrewder financial operator.⁴³ Does this mean that Butter had a religious rather than a commercial motivation? I doubt it. If the Protestant cause had been his overriding motive, then in the early 1640s he would have switched his attention to London news. Instead he maintained his interest in continental news. Though his interest in the Protestant cause is undeniable, his chief motivation was in trading. His mistake was his failure to diversify.

Prices and Wages

In *The Invention of the Newspaper*, Raymond sums up the significance of print runs for historians. 'The sizes of editions of newsbooks partly determined the size of their readership, and affect our perceptions of their importance...The larger the print run the higher circulation a text was likely to have, leading to greater opportunities to influence'.⁴⁴ As a result historians ask the question about print runs but have no conclusive answers. The second related question aimed to shed light on the readership and the importance of a publication is about retail prices. Fortunately, the evidence available on prices for newsbooks is far more conclusive than that about print runs. This section examines prices in the context of contemporary wages and prices for other household purchases.

Just as the charge for printing was based upon costs, so too was the retail price of publications and, as in so many aspects of early modern English life, the government stood ready to intervene and to enforce the sale of books at reasonable prices if there were signs of profiteering. In 1533, it was ordered that if, in the opinion of 12 honest and discreet

⁴³ *O.D.N.B.*, May 1639 he assigned his copyrights to Miles Fletcher to raise money for the next year's news network subscriptions. The timing of Bourne's withdrawal suggests he was the more politically or religiously scrupulous of the two. He was certainly careful about his reputation and position in the trade. Ch 6, 283, 289

⁴⁴ Raymond, 233.

persons, any printer or bookseller should charge 'too high and unreasonable prices' the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer and two chief Justices, or any two of them, should have power to fix maximum prices and fine the offender. In practice there was little need to intervene. Prices were calculated on a sheet basis, allowing a margin for booksellers and hawkers. From 1560 to 1635 the calculation for most publications was in the region of one half penny per sheet for those composed in pica types, with higher prices for publications including illustrations. Prices also varied slightly according to the type of work and the subject matter; a small pamphlet tended to be sold at a higher rate proportionate to size.⁴⁵

Barry Reay describes a hierarchy of accessibility of printed works, based largely on length with the penny ballad at the bottom, two and three penny almanacs and chapbooks in the middle. At the higher end, chivalric romances and histories sold for one or two shillings. Then at the top we find Sydney's *Archadia* at 9s bound and Holinshed's *Chronicles* which was bought by the Earl of Essex for £1. 6s. Aldis, looking at 1641 prices and also at the higher end of the market, gives the price of an unbound copy of the *Cambridge Bible* with Psalms as 7s and the *London Bible* with Concordance also as 7s, while Grammars were under 1s.⁴⁶ The printed broadside was the cheapest and most accessible form of print. By 1641, the normal price was a penny. Historians have assumed a standard penny price throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. Tessa Watt suggests they may however have been lower before 1635, probably somewhere between a half penny and a penny with room for haggling and concessions.⁴⁷

Pamphlets generally sold at a penny a sheet. Two pence was the expected price of a short pamphlet of two sheets (16 pages). But after prices rose in 1635 it is likely that lengthier pamphlets no longer sold at two pence. Because book prices remained stable between 1560 and 1635 they became more affordable because other commodities doubled in price and wages rose by half to two thirds. Tessa Watt concludes that, given the wages in the early seventeenth century 'a two penny pamphlet every fortnight or so looks like a possibility for even a fairly ordinary household, although it might mean sacrificing two quarts of beer at the alehouse. A lesser yeoman with £40-50 income a year would hardly

⁴⁵ Plant, 238-9; F. Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail Book – prices 1550-1640', *The Library*, 5th Series, 5 (1950), 83-112.

⁴⁶ H. G. Aldis, 'The English Books Trade 1557-1625', in eds., A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1907), 4; Reay, *Popular Cultures*, 56.

⁴⁷ Watt, 11, quotes Henry Peacham, *The worth of a penny* (1641); Plant, 239, gives a ballad sheet at least ½d a copy. Francis Johnson, 'Notes', 90, records that paper prices rose by about 25% in the 1630s and the Stationers' Company relaxed controls. Prices rose by about 40% throughout the trade.

have to think twice about buying pamphlets of ballads, and probably presented a more regular market.⁴⁸

Fortunately we have contemporary evidence for the price of foreign newsbooks. The 8 June 1627 copy in the Burney collection has ‘Liber Nathan: Bowman...ijd’ written in hand on the front. Ben Jonson gives ‘Two-pence a sheet’ as the price to secure copy by order in advance in *The Staple of News*. However, newsbooks in 1625, when the play was written, were 24 pages long and by 1627 they were 16 pages. So Jonson’s price of 2d for a sheet would seem to be a generic and familiar one for one issue, irrespective of length. The price rose in the 1630s in line with other publishing prices. *The continuation of our Swedish Intelligence, since the 23, 1 September 1632*, has on title page, ‘Ffrancis [rest of the name cut away] 1632.pr[e]t[iu]m 3d’, for a 16 page issue.⁴⁹ Further rises in cost may have meant that a charge of 4d would be necessary to cover a similar publication by the late 1630s. When, in the tenth series, Butter and Bourne changed the format and began to produce 3 or 4 one-sheet issues simultaneously, each covering the news from a different European city’s publication for that week, these one-sheet issues could be sold for one penny. This would make them more affordable for poorer customers. Unfortunately, the experiment was doomed to failure because, while it may have attracted addition sales from lower down the market, it could only do so at the risk of failing to maintain sales of all three or four corantos to wealthier and more consistent customers. This consideration put an end to the experiment. The 16-side newsbook was reintroduced in the twelfth series 1640 with the promise to sell them ‘at a cheaper Rate’. Butter needed to keep the price as low as he could to reach down market and secure as many sales as possible but he also needed to give value for money to customers who could afford more.⁵⁰

These prices put newsbooks within the grasp of most people. Schumacher comments that they represented ‘a reasonably small sum to men with a parliamentary franchise or to most literate Englishmen’. It can easily be imagined that the weekly news was a regular source of topics for conversation, even in tavern groups including workingmen. We know that, even at twice the price of these issues, a topical pamphlet

⁴⁸ Watt, 261–262; P. Lake and M. Questier, *Anitchrist’s Lewd Hat* (Yale, 2002), 3, notes that murder pamphlets were written for profit and published in cheap quarto, 24 page format with black letter type. Longer ones ran to 48 or 56 pages: they all sold for a few pence. M. Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century*, (1952/1977), 23, argues that prices rose six-fold between 1500 and 1640 whereas wages rose much less.

⁴⁹ Dahl, 153, 214; Jonson, Act I, ii, 357.

⁵⁰ Quoted more fully 97 (London, 23 April 1640), verso, *S.T.C.*18507.337.

could sell well. Sir Simonds D'Ewes in a letter of 2 February 1627 refers to a scurrilous book or pamphlet selling at 6d. It was a clearly a good commercial proposition because he tells us it was on sale at every shop.⁵¹

Wages within the printing trade itself were fairly normal for London at the time, ranging from 8d to 10d a day. Wages varied from 7d to 1s a day for agricultural workers. Masons were highly paid at 2s 6d a day. An artisan in London could earn 7s a week and would pay between 1d and 1s to see a play and 4d for a quart of ale, 8d for a quart of sack. A penny would pay for a 6.5lb loaf. Bridenbaugh gives a peasant family's weekly average income as 3s 2d to pay for rent, clothing, food and drink and notes that a woman could only earn a shilling a week, even doing men's work.⁵² However, while the price of a single issue was about the same price as other forms of cheap print, such as ballads, chapbooks and almanacs, and therefore brought them within the reach of the most humble potential customer, this only meant they could afford to buy a copy occasionally. At 2d a copy, it cost more than 8s to buy a series of fifty numbers, plus the cost of carriage that could double or triple the price for anyone beyond the vicinity of the City. Frearson has pointed out that, although these publications would have been encountered at all levels of society, the market of purchasers was 'probably much less amorphous'. These readers, who supported the expanding news industry of the early 1620s, were those who could afford to purchase weekly copies regularly. He concluded that they were not therefore a form of popular literature aimed at the widest possible market of readers. The 'real cost of following foreign affairs in the corantos should be calculated in terms of the consistent purchase of weekly copies'. To get the most out of them regular purchase was important because comprehension of the often complex and confusing news reports depended on regular reading, putting them 'out of the reach and beyond the interest of many poorer readers'.⁵³

⁵¹ Schumacher, 68; J. O. Halliwell, ed., *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes During the Reigns of James I and Charles I* (1845), Vol. 2, 193.

⁵² Ashley, *England*, 197; C. Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen* (Oxford, 1968), 51, 79, 148, 211.

⁵³ Chapters 2 and 3 for content and the need for regular reading; Frearson, 'The Distribution', 17, 22; M. Frearson, 'London Corantos in the 1620s', in *Annual*, 4. Schroder, 'The Origins', 133-5 suggests that in Germany subscription lists were strong, including the high nobility and smaller German courts. By 1611 the Wolfenbutterl *Aviso* had subscribers at the local court, among jurists and aristocrats and was circulated in the countryside by messengers to subscribing aristocrats, pastors, estate managers, mayors and governors. Communal subscriptions lowered the costs for individuals in private reading circles with some aristocrats and patricians sharing issues and copies going to monasteries, convents, charitable institutions and municipal councils. He estimates German readership as 24,000 to 60,000 people before the Thirty Years' War, rising to 200,000 and 250,000 after the war with a larger public being reached through oral news circulation.

This also helps to explain the pattern of sales revealed by the analysis of print runs. High sales were achievable when noteworthy events occurred, such as the discovery of the plot against the Prince of Orange in February 1623, when interest in continental events was already high because of Prince Charles's trip to Madrid. At these times the newsbooks could have sold like any topical one-off pamphlet and sometimes even the content, like other pamphlets at the time, was almost completely dedicated to that single issue rather than a diverse range of items from many locations. The challenge was to maintain a consistent level of interest. In this case, it seems that printing returned to normal by the first issue in March, even though the story of the plot was still running, with accounts of the apprehension and torture of suspects. Bad harvests between 1623 and 1625 and summer plagues in the mid 1620s would also have reduced the amount of disposable income among poorer buyers who would have had less to spend on inessentials like the foreign news. It proved difficult to retain the same high level of regular purchase through summers of campaigns with unexceptional and inconclusive skirmishes taking place in regions that readers knew little about. It was more difficult still to maintain interest through winters where the armies were disbanded or dug into uneventful sieges.

Any serial publisher today will testify that long-term financial success is critically dependent upon the number of committed subscribers. Newsbooks needed a readership prosperous enough to commit around 8d to 10d a month in the 1620s and 1s to 1s 3d in the 1630s. Continuity maintained interest and the publishers, like any good director of a modern TV soap opera, ensured that the title pages stressed the fact that they were reporting on continuing stories of main actors and critical campaigns covered in earlier issues. This stress on continuity was so great that, by 1624, the title itself had become almost standardized to read, *The continuation of our weekly newes...* (or later, *our forraine/weekly avisoes*).

Sales and Distribution

The final factor in achieving a realistic assessment of the potential impact of foreign newsbooks in early seventeenth-century England is the extent to which they were disseminated beyond London. This section reviews the range of evidence that has become available more recently about distribution networks and their implications for the news trade. It examines the evidence for widespread distribution throughout not only London

and the Home Counties but into distant corners of England, Scotland and Wales and considers how this may have been achieved.

Having obtained printed copies the publishers needed to distribute these throughout the news correspondent community and do so as quickly as they could. Between them the syndicate had bookshops in the south at St Paul's, further to east at the Exchange and in Pope's Head Alley, and in the West near the Fleet. They could trade their newsbooks with other publications and get them into more bookshops and ensure there was a wide availability on the streets of London. As we have seen in Chapter 1, literacy in London was high by the 1620s with 70-80% in London and female literacy up to 20% in London with perhaps 30% and 10% respectively elsewhere.⁵⁴ Print prices were at an all time low compared with wages and other potential purchases, and demand was being fuelled by concerns about the future of Protestantism in Europe, the ambitions of Spain, and the safety of Elizabeth and Frederick. At no time before had conditions for sales of foreign news been so favourable.

Until recently historians have been largely content to let their account of news production end at the London market, although it was recognized that most of the known readers lived considerable distances from London. These include William Whiteway in Dorchester, Joseph Mead and his correspondent Sir Martin Stuteville, in Cambridge and Dalham, Suffolk respectively, John Rous in Suffolk and Walter Yonge in Devon, all of whom appeared to have had personal arrangements in place to ensure a steady supply of information from the capital.⁵⁵ However, in the last decade, efforts to explore the distribution of printed material have increased in tandem with a growing interest in popular culture. Jonathan Barry's assessment is cautious, suggesting that there may have been many barriers to reading, 'whatever the theoretical reading capacity of the public', and that publishers may have concentrated on the luxury end of the market and on letting buyers come to London. But he acknowledges that publishers always aimed to broaden markets. Others have developed interests in cheap print and the oral dissemination of news as the vehicle through which the less literate could be reached. Tessa Watt has argued that, while before 1640 it is likely that a large proportion of the buyers of cheap print were drawn from the middling ranks of yeomen, husbandmen and traders, and would have included gentry

⁵⁴ Ch. 1, 22-3.

⁵⁵ Ch. 1, 25-7; Ch 3, 91-2.

readers, cheap print can be seen as an instrument of social cohesion, bringing more people into the reading public. Adam Fox acknowledges the difficulties in assessing who precisely read cheap print and why. Writing of ballads, he acknowledges ‘we have the texts but not the contexts’. However, he has demonstrated that even the illiterate benefited from the spread of print and that ‘what probably began in manuscript form passed into oral circulation and eventually into print. From print it passed back again into manuscript and lived on in the mouths of minstrels and their audiences’. He describes layers of loose and interconnecting networks of communication, many of them far removed from the defined and agreed news supply arrangements that we learn about from reading, for example, Joseph Mead’s or John Pory’s correspondence, and he argues that in the seventeenth century no one was immune from the influences of the written word.⁵⁶

Fox and Watt, together with Margaret Spufford and her students, have also swelled the evidence available to demonstrate the wide geographical distribution of news trade networks in the seventeenth century. There is now impressive documentary support for the widespread impact of chapmen, hawkers and pedlars who travelled the country selling smaller books and other items and communicating the news, door to door and through inns, markets and fairs. They show how the flow of printed material and information out from London to the provinces grew through the Tudor period until, by 1654, a contemporary was commenting on London as ‘the sea of news from which smaller rivulets often flow to us in the country’. Frearson demonstrated that ‘the corantos undoubtedly informed a much larger body of public opinion than illicit pamphlets and manuscript newsletters, yet they have been largely ignored by political historians’. They ‘were intended for a large market of readers, and they were encountered at all levels of society’. A chapter of his thesis was dedicated to an exploration of the idea that ‘London news was much more influential beyond the capital than historians have previously supposed, especially in the “corridors of communication” which linked the capital with the localities’.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ J. Barry, ‘Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective’, in *Popular Culture in England c1500-1850*, ed., T. Harris (1995), 79-80; Watt, 5; A. Fox, ‘Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England’, *PandP*, (1995), 48; A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2000), 3, 8; Atherton, 44.

⁵⁷ M. Spufford, ‘The Pedlar, the historian’, in ed., M. Spufford, *The World of Rural Dissenters 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995), 47-55, 236-40, 275-87; M. Spufford, *Small Books*, Ch 5; Reay, *Popular Cultures*, 48-50; *The Faithful Scout*, 188 (July 14-21, 1654), 1492, quoted in J. Friedman, *The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford’s Flies* (N.Y., 1993) 6; Frearson, 5, 14; Frearson, ‘The Distribution’, 2.

Records from booksellers kept after the Fire of London give evidence of trade networks and private customers essential for successful distribution. The inventory of Luke Meredith in the late seventeenth century includes a list of money owed by 'country chapmen', who were sellers who acted as middlemen in the distribution process. He supplied to booksellers in Oxford, Cambridge, Shrewsbury, Lichfield, Market Harborough, Coventry, Ludlow, Bristol and Exeter. Levy concludes that most provincial booksellers seem to have kept a running account with London suppliers and his study of a court case between Throp of Chester and Dod of London reveals frequent communication probably using a delivery service from London at least twice a week. Looking at this networking from the perspective of booksellers in Oxford, Paul Morgan shows how they maintained their supplies from London through contact with a number of different booksellers and how they, in turn, provided books to the west country and Wales. These studies indicate that dealings and communications between booksellers were probably very little different in England to those on the Continent where booksellers would correspond and trade from city to city, employing an agent to act for them or taking to the road themselves to improve business links.⁵⁸

Frearson established a link between Butter and a bookseller in Bristol and listed 29 cities, from Newcastle and York in the north to Exeter and Wells in the west and Canterbury and Ipswich in the east, with booksellers at this time. He also noted that no corantos could be found recorded in the inventories of provincial booksellers at this time, but that 'small books' were rarely itemized, so this did not really tell us much. However, he only saw the regular trading contacts of booksellers as a supplementary service and speculated that newsbooks, being ephemeral, needed faster methods of distribution than these connections allowed. Instead, he argued that the packhorse and carrier service probably provided the fastest and most reliable means of distribution available at the time.⁵⁹ He is supported by Tessa Watt who identified a range of places where chapmen sold wares between King's Lynn and Westmorland as early as the 1570s, demonstrating

⁵⁸ Mandebrote, 'From the warehouse', 73; F. J. Levy 'How Information Spread among the Gentry 1550-1640', *J.B.S.*, 21 (1982), 20; P. Morgan, 'Letters relating to the Oxford book trade founding bindings in Oxford college libraries c1611-1647', in *Studies in the Book Trade*, 18 (Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1975), 77-84, showed a seller writing to London requesting a reprint, another travelling to Bath and Bristol on business and another dealing in paper and apprentices between Oxford and London. A letter from Lyons, 1671, quoted in Febvre and Martin, *The Coming*, ft 205, illustrates the networking of a French trader who sent his son as his agent to trade in Frankfurt and Antwerp, Cologne, Basel, and the Netherlands.

⁵⁹ Frearson, 'The Distribution', 7; Frearson, 15-17.

the existence of a network for distribution of goods on a credit system 'ready to be exploited by enterprising publishers', while in the 1590s in the midlands, the south west and home counties pedlars were carrying ballads as a sideline with other wares. She added these traders to the London based pedlars who, in her view, 'alone covered much of the country in their wanderings' and to the routes covered by the carriers, to conclude that 'we should think of a national market for cheap print, not merely the metropolitan area'.⁶⁰

Packhorse and carrier services carried high value, low volume goods. These could include unbound books and might include foreign newsbooks. They were cheaper than the official post after this was introduced in 1635, and faster and more reliable than river and coastal services. Carriers also spread verbal news and rumour. Frearson, building on evidence of known provincial readers who used the carrier services argued that, '

Far from being cut off from London news.... provincial readers were regularly supplied with the latest printed news from the capital. The postal service operated by common carriers appears to have been important in the distribution of the London corantos, and other forms of London news, among the provincial readers. London carriers, the packhorse drivers and wagoners who operated weekly services between the capital and numerous provincial destinations, provided a fast, frequent, regular, reliable and inexpensive service for the distribution of London corantos in the early seventeenth century.⁶¹

Frearson noted that all we read from contemporaries about the conditions of roads is their complaints, and argued that this has created a more negative picture of travelling conditions than historians generally believe now. Moreover, because most overland travel was still by packhorse, they needed tracks rather than roads and had less difficulty with winter conditions than wagons. He concluded that the roads were good enough to permit the running of a complex network of scheduled public carrying services and that roads provided the basis for most trades at that time. This is demonstrated by the existence of road books, census data and carrier service directories for the period. 'By the early seventeenth century, London was well established as the focus of the network, and connected to most parts of the country by a web of highways and cross-country roads'. As a result 'Most parts of England were in regular contact with the capital'. Watt confirmed that the carriers provided a service that ensured that even in the northern villages ballads were available and stuck up on walls.⁶²

⁶⁰ Watt, 27-29.

⁶¹ Frearson, 24.

⁶² Ibid, 27-29; Frearson, *The Distribution*, 10, 13; Watt, *Publisher, pedlar*, 63.

Frearson used Richard Grafton's road book that was reprinted 15 times between 1517 and 1611 and Frank Adams' *Wryting Tables* that was reprinted 17 times between 1577 and 1628 to compile lists of destinations that demonstrated that most of the cities and towns of England and a number of those in Wales could be reached regularly. He argued that the frequent reprinting of these tables showed a growing awareness of the national highway network. 'The corantos of the 1620s probably... travelled with the carriers along the London highways to provincial readers, and thus followed well-established routes between the capital and the country'. He also provided a detailed study of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire which showed how the 5 main highways that ran through the area had a concentration of inns and alehouses from which all the local roads and byways could be penetrated. 'The integration of the national corridors of communication with more local patterns of trade and transport thus ensured that ... London news which flowed with the traffic out of the capital filtered through to the localities'.⁶³

Provincial inns and alehouses provided stopping places along the routes. These were the main centres of news for country people. People came to collect letters, parcels and news. They met others, conducted business and exchanged information and gossip. It was common to leave letters at inns and hostelries for collection and when the official postal service was introduced innkeepers were often named as postmasters. There were up to about 4000 of these inns and alehouses in the provinces in the seventeenth century and Adam Fox suggested that everyone in the provinces must have had access to such an establishment. At the London end of each route inns were grouped. In *The carriers cosmographie* (1637) John Taylor listed inns, hostelries and other lodgings in and near London where carriers could be found on specific days of the week, bound for over 200 towns across Britain, 'and able to deliver goods and letters to the remotest regions of Scotland, Wales and Cornwall', with regular services to all the main towns in the north and many other towns in between. Examples included the Bell Inn outside Ludgate where carriers arrived every Friday and left again on Sunday or Monday for York. From there, further services were available to Berwick and into Scotland, while from Lancaster they could travel on to Kendall and Cockermouth, from Worcester goods could travel on to Carmarthen, from Exeter to Plymouth, and from Chester to Caernavon. Southwark served Kent, Sussex and Surrey while Fleet Street and the Strand served roads to the south west

⁶³ Frearson, 33-41, 46-52, 59-70

and Bishopsgate, those to the north and East. The Oxford road terminated at Holborn. Watt, convinced by the evidence of such extensive services, concluded that 'we should think of a national market for cheap print'.⁶⁴

Costs, of course, for provincial readers would have been higher than in London. The charge from London to Ipswich and Oxford was 1 penny at this time and, to Coventry, 2 pennies. This additional cost on a weekly basis would have been enough to ensure that only the wealthier reader could afford to subscribe on a regular basis and it is these customers whose news correspondence historians know most about. But the cost factor does not rule the possibility that many carriers and pedlars are likely to have taken newsbooks by the bundle, as they would have other cheap print, and then aimed to get the best price they could for copies in the provinces. Their readers would probably not have had every copy and not been able to follow the news as effectively as subscribers. Nor would any of the provincial readers have received their news in such a timely manner as the immediate London market. Estimates of the distances covered by carriers in a day vary from 10 to 20 miles. News reached Colchester and Cambridge in 2 days and it took 3 to 4 days to reach Bristol, Southampton, Salisbury, Oxford and the Midlands, 6 days to reach Manchester and Liverpool and a week to reach Devon, Wales, Lancashire and York. Provincial readers would usually have received one issue before the next edition was on sale in the streets of London and there was no competing media or mode of transport that could have reached them sooner.⁶⁵

The scale of weekly services can sometimes be found from the records of the towns served. Frearson found from the Devonshire Record Office that Tiverton employed 22 carriers to London between 1617 and 1636 and that up to 5 were working at any one time. He also found that many cargoes arrived from towns that John Taylor did not list. Taylor did however show that most services were bi-weekly, with most carriers arriving on Tuesdays and Fridays and leaving the next day.⁶⁶

Many writers of newsletters included printed foreign news in their shipments and, John Pory even used Butter's address as his own. So there is no doubt that the newsbook publishers were well connected to provincial carrier services. A notice published 19

⁶⁴ Fox, *Oral and Literate*, 374; Watt, 71-2.

⁶⁵ Frearson, 21, 71-76; Raymond, acknowledges that on the whole the south east of England was probably best informed but gives evidence of newsbooks in 1640s reaching every corner of England and being available in Wales and Scotland, 238-241.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 57-8.

March 1624 demonstrates that the rural and provincial readership was an important part of the publishers' marketing strategy and that they aimed to make the best use that they could of the bi-weekly services:

Gentle Reader...both the Reader and the Printer of these pamphlets, agree in their expectation of weekly Newes, so that if the Printer have not wherewithall to afford satisfaction, yet will the Reader come and aske every day for new Newes; not out of curiosity or wantonness but pretending a necessity, either to please themselves or satisfie their customers. Therefore is the Printer, both with charge and painstaking very carefull to have his friends abroad supply his wants at home with pertinent Letters, and acquaint him with the Printed copies beyond the Seas, that hee may acquaint you with such true intelligence as his fortune lights upon, so that according to the affairs published else-where, sometimes you may have two Corantoes in one Weeke which seeing it is for your sake, and especially that you may make the Country far off partake of our London Newes, be so far generous to acknowledge his kindnesse, and doe not dishearten him in his endeavors.⁶⁷

Uncertainty over supplies of news was frustrating for publishers, intelligencers, carriers, pedlars and readers alike. Newsbooks did not have a fixed day of the week for publication because they did not have sufficient certainty with the supply of news. It could easily be held up by adverse winds in the Channel. However, Frearson took a sample of 70 issues published between October 1622 and December 1624 and found that 57 of them were published between Tuesday and Friday with the remaining 13 appearing on either Monday or Saturday.⁶⁸

As we have seen, the publishers took on apprentices in the early days whose main task would have been to assist with batching, packing, recording and dispatching printed copy as soon as it came off the presses. The additional hands would have assisted a speedy turn around of copies. This would have been especially important to catch the carriers. Butter was centrally located in at the St Austin's Gate end of Watling St, near St Paul's, convenient for the carriers for Oxford, the Midlands and north west who used inns in and around Smithfield and Holborn, while the others who were by the Exchange, in the east of the City, had easy access to Bishopsgate for the north and east and Southwark Bridge and London Bridge for the south and south east. Downes, being the odd one out as a stationer with no other publishing interests, may well have been brought into the syndicate because

⁶⁷ Levy 'How Information Spread', 23; *Pory*, 51-3; Butter (19 March 1624), 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.145.

⁶⁸ Chapter 2, 47; Frearson, 76; Marcus Nevitt argues in 'Ben Jonson and the Serial Publication of News' that corantos were 'utterly irregular publications' and that Ben Jonson's *Staple of News* commented on periodicity and delays. In J. Raymond, ed., *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe* (London and N.Y., 2006), 56, 58-62.

of the westerly location of his shop, near the Fleet. This location would have supported the rapid distribution of copies to the south west as well as improving access to the carriers around Smithfield and Holborn.

There is a very likely parallel to be found in the operations of the ballad partners who first registered 127 ballads in 1624. In fact, the foreign news syndicate may well have provided the inspiration and blue print for the ballad partnership. Like the syndicate, it was set up to focus on the dissemination of cheap, small and easily carried printed works. Also, like the syndicate it comprised of booksellers, not printers, and its main function appears to have been distribution.⁶⁹

Spotting a new trend, Jonson's depiction of the staple of news, or new news office, in his play seems to have had a distribution function. Many of the hawkers, most of whom were women, as shown by Jonson's 'Butter-woman', would have provided a service through the streets of London, supplementing retail sales through London bookshops. They seem to have been the main means for distributing ephemeral material rapidly and anonymously. In addition 'Mercury Women' sold them wholesale. Both hawkers and carriers would then take them out, beyond London.⁷⁰

Conclusions

The publication of corantos and newsbooks in London was costly. Subscriptions for the supply and shipping of news, registration with the Stationers' Company, printing and paper had to be invested in and paid for before copies were available for sale. In addition, the publishers took on apprentices for the batching and dispatch process to speed dissemination throughout London and the provinces. There is no evidence of a wealthy politically or religiously motivated sponsor and, although some of the publishers were more clearly committed to the Protestant cause than the others, there can be little doubt that they were first and foremost businessmen who approached the enterprise in a business-like fashion. Their decisions about whether to invest in apprentices or in capital to pay for printing and when to pull out also seem to have been based on business considerations.

⁶⁹ John Wright had a shop in Giltspur St, just outside Newgate, well placed for carriers going west or north west from the city. By 1624 Francis Coules, Francis Grove and John Trundle, other ballad publishers were located in the same area while routes to the south were covered by Henry Gosson on London Bridge. The ballad partnership set up a communal warehouse from which sold their ballads to hawkers at a standard rate of a third of a penny a copy. Watt 'Publisher, pedlar, pot-poet', 66.

⁷⁰ Jonson, Act I, ii; Mandebrote, 'From the warehouse', 53.

Sheffard, Downes and Newbery got out early and went on to other more successful ventures. In the end Butter and Archer faced financial ruin because they could not sustain the level of trade needed to cover costs. Only Bourne managed to stay in the business through to 1640 yet still leave early enough to remain a successful publisher.

An understanding of the business methods the publishers adopted allows us to form a more accurate idea of the extent of the trade and the degree of penetration into the market for print. By negotiating printing contracts on a single issue basis it was possible to vary the print run as well as the frequency of publication according to the potential interest of the copy and the readership. The number of issues, their frequency and the size of print runs in buoyant periods suggest that the newsbooks were by far the most dominant publications on the market in the early 1620s and early 1630s. Periodicity had the effect of pushing production numbers up to unprecedented levels and newsbook output became greater than any other news or topical publication that had been experienced in England at that time. Moreover distribution was organized to ensure that everywhere in mainland Britain had access to copies on a regular basis. The potential demonstrated by this success appears to have inspired the ballad partnership that also aimed to penetrate the entire market with cheap and easily transported print. Foreign news would have penetrated every corner and every level of society, given what we now understand about the interrelationships between oral and written cultures and the role of inns and alehouses as centres of communication. However, it is unlikely that many below the yeomanry class could afford to subscribe on a regular basis. A working man, living in or near London, could almost certainly have afforded a copy from time to time, but not weekly. This meant that it was a struggle for survival for the publishers in times when interest waned. Nonetheless newsbooks performed a significant role in the education and politicisation of the public. Readers and even illiterate visitors to the inns and alehouses on the highways were regularly caught up in the political and religious affairs of Europe and the fortunes of war. As the next chapter shows, interpretation and understanding were a problem, but the publishers thought of that too, and they addressed it through editorial work intended to make the newsbooks more accessible to the less educated among their readers.

CHAPTER 5

EDITING, THOMAS GAINSFORD 1622-4 AND WILLIAM WATTS 1631-2

This chapter examines the editing of newsbooks in England as a commercial product intended to secure sales by satisfying customer demand and relates this to contemporary evidence about the nature and extent of that demand. It shows how the editorial effort put into the production of newsbooks by editors employed in profitable times aimed to attract a market of newly literate middling sorts, and helped to educate and inform them about the crisis for the Protestant cause in Europe.

We have seen that the publishers experienced periods of intense demand at times of heightened interest in events on the Continent, but they could only be sure of a stable level of sales of up to 500 copies per issue to gentry, clergy and other well-informed and habitual news readers who could be relied upon to continue to buy or subscribe irrespective of what was happening. Unfortunately this level of subscribers was not sufficient to keep the business profitable and while the price of a single issue was affordable for a wide range of the literate public, purchasing on a weekly basis was too costly for many. The publishers needed to expand their base income by reaching out beyond the most affluent and educated to increase the frequency of sales to poorer readers. Yet as Jonathan Barry notes, there were many obstacles to reading, including lack of leisure, privacy, cost, the effectiveness of candlelight and purchase price.¹ Most of these were beyond the control of the publishers, but this did not deter them from tackling what they could. This chapter demonstrates how they increased the appeal of issues and made them more comprehensible and accessible to a growing market of new readers. They realized they needed to edit and transform the dry and often dull publications they imported into something with a closer resemblance to a popular news publication more familiar to English customers if they were to attract a wider spectrum of readers and increase frequency of purchase by those who were already willing to buy from time to time.

¹ J. Barry, 'Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective' in *Popular Culture in England c1500-1850*, ed., T. Harris (1995), 79-80.

The fact that these newsbooks were edited in London in periods of highest sales has long been recognized. Dahl, by comparing English newsbooks with their Dutch single sheet equivalent, came to regard the English editorial effort with respect and argue that the English newsbooks showed many signs of editorial initiative and imagination. Schumacher acknowledged that regularity and uniformity of style was accomplished in 1631-2, while Handover comparing these series with their English predecessors and detecting similarities, regarded the editors' efforts less favourably. However, he was not giving due recognition to the complexity of the task. Similarly, Nevitt, a more recent critic examined Gainsford's work entirely from Ben Jonson's perspective as a competitor,. Newsbooks were compilations of Dutch, Antwerp and German news publications plus many other letters and pamphlets. Regular publication was maintained in a way that had never been achieved before, and the material was adapted from many styles of presentation to suit the domestic market.²

One editor for 1622-4 has been identified as Thomas Gainsford or 'the Captain' as he was popularly known. Schumacher and Frearson recognized Gainsford's distinctive militaristic and Protestant leanings and his ambition for England to play a fuller and more effective part in the defence of the Palatinate. They acknowledged that Gainsford was in touch with his readers and explored the extent to which his views mirrored or amplified his contemporaries. Schumacher studied the content of newsbooks for accuracy and timeliness of reporting and he acknowledged the commercial motivation of the publishers. Frearson looked for evidence of Protestant bias and of the control of the licenser, Cottington, over the content. He remarked upon the intimacy of the relationship between publishers, editor and readers but only saw this as a feature discernible in the issues published when Cottington was absent from London and Gainsford felt free to pursue his own style. Schumacher observed that while Watts, editor 1631-2, blamed the Catholics for the war and eagerly reported the victories of Gustavus Adolphus, he was not prepared to challenge royal foreign policy.³ I argue in this chapter that both Schumacher and Frearson have tended to distract from the truly innovative nature of the work to create a product that was unique and very

² F. Dahl, 'Amsterdam - the Cradle of English Newspapers', *The Library*, 5th Series, 4 (1949), 173; Schumacher, 221; P. M. Handover, *Printing in London 1476 to Modern Times* (1960), 110-113. M. Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson and the Serial Publication of News', in J. Raymond, ed., *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe* (London/N.Y., 2006), 51-62.

³ Frearson, Ch 3; Schumacher 199-235.

different from its continental sources. Publishers and editors had a role in avoiding conflict with the Crown but both also aimed to extend readership by making their newsbooks attractive, saleable and comprehensible to a readership, many of whom were first generation literate and unfamiliar with European politics and geography, or military matters. In this way they aimed to overcome as many barriers to sales as they could.

That most Londoners had an interest in the foreign news but lacked knowledge is illustrated in John Taylor's account of his reception in London on return from Bohemia in 1620 when he encountered widespread ignorance about Europe.

John Easie...will needs torture some newes out of me from Spinola, whom I never was neere by 500 miles: for hee is in the Palatinate country, and I was in Bohemia... an Alderman of Gotham, catches me...demanding if Bohemia bee a great towne, and whether there be any meate in it, and whether the last fleet of ships be arrived there. Thomas Cogswell has argued that 'in the decades before Edgehill, a rapidly expanding percentage of the population underwent a crude adult education which left them keen observers of national events and ultimately eager participants'.⁴ This chapter shows that the education offered in the early years was subtle, because it made no direct criticisms of government, yet was more overtly instructive than that to be found in the libel verses that were the subject of Cogswell's study. By studying the extent to which the needs of readers were accommodated we can better assess their reach as well as the role they played in raising awareness and influencing the development of public opinion.

This chapter also shows that editors knew their readers and engaged in dialogue with them. Barry comments on social historians studying printed texts for what 'publishers and authors were saying or assuming about their readers' and Adam Fox has written of us having access to the 'texts but not the contexts', while Bob Scribner has questioned whether it is possible for historians to 'read across' from what remains of printed material from the past to assess its reception among readers and thereby gain insights into what might be termed 'popular culture'. He acknowledges many attempts fail because they only really tell us about the producers, rather than the consumers of that literature, and they tend to ignore the relationships involved and the dynamic process of change. Here, however, in the dialogue between editors and readers, we get a privileged insight into the relationship and its evolution. By drawing upon the work of literary historians, including Annabel Patterson,

⁴ John Taylor, *Taylor his Travels* (1620), quoted by Schumacher, 54; T. Cogswell, 'The Politics of Propaganda: Charles I and the People in the 1620's' in *J.B.S.*, 24 (1990), 278, 294.

who has studied the relationship between history, culture and literature, we can pursue this analysis and ‘read between the lines’ of a historic text, decoding its editorial conventions and asides to gain insights into the perspective of the readers. We can establish a picture of the extent to which foreign news was reaching and influencing a wider public than has traditionally been thought. Most recently Nevitt and Brownlees have acknowledged the significance of the work of Gainsford in endeavouring to address readers directly but no one before has examined what this editorial relationship with readers tells us about the readers or how this adds to our understanding of the market for news, nor recognized that, even in 1622-4, editors other than Gainsford were at work and pursued the relationships through into the 1630s.⁵

Establishing a Distinctive Identity and Title Page Uniformity

This section demonstrates how the publishers pressed the idea of giving their product a ‘selling face’, a clear identity and uniform format. It shows which elements of modern news presentation they adopted and the way experimentation formed part of a developing approach to marketing.

Though publishers were at the centre of the process, initiating and financing news collection, translating and printing, their autonomy was severely restricted. They could choose the continental news networks to which they subscribed, but they had little control over the supply of reports. They could also have virtually no control over the quality or content of reports, nor assurance about accuracy since they employed no journalists. Developments in the early 1630s gave them unprecedented opportunities to seek out news but most of the time it was necessary to accept whatever material came to hand. Unlike the publishers of Parliamentary news in the 1640s, they had little control over the flow of material and consequently were unable to adhere to a regular day of the week for publication. Moreover, because of the close-knit structure of the domestic printing industry under the control of the Company of Stationers, they had to work within the constraints of the printing

⁵ Barry, ‘Literacy and Literature’, 79; A. Fox, ‘Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England’, *PandP.*, 145 (1995), 48; B. Scribner ‘Is a History of popular culture possible?’ in *History of European Ideas*, 10 (1989), 180, 176, 186; A. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Wisconsin/London, 1984); A. Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* (1993); Nevitt, ‘Ben Jonson’; N. Brownlees, ‘Spoken discourse in Early English Newspapers’, in Raymond, ed., *News Networks*, 69-74. Mead’s letter to Stuteville, 15 November 1623 describes efforts to replace the first ‘Corrantoer’, Harl MS. 389 fo. 381.

facilities available at the quoted costs. They therefore planned each issue to ensure that it was the most economic size for production. More innovatively, they also attempted to compensate for any shortcomings in the material supplied by concentrating their efforts in the final stages of publication.

The dry, brief bulletin reports they received in the early 1620s were difficult to follow and a far cry from the eye-catching headline news and colour photographs in newspapers today. Arblaster has recently described them as 'a bewildering ragbag of unexplained events, names, hints and speculations... the pieces need[ed] to construct a coherent mosaic of events'.⁶ Ingenuity and editorial effort was required to produce attractive issues that were readable and credible despite the handicaps of an irregular supply of material of varying quality and interest. Yet by the summer of 1622 the publishers were already taking steps to do just that through the selection and presentation of news and its adaptation for their potential market. Once the syndicate was established in September 1622 all the interested publishers in London were working together. They no longer had to try to get their issues onto the streets before their competitors with similar batches of news. Instead, like Abraham Verhoeven in Antwerp, who similarly had the protection of a monopoly, they could allow time for editing. The Channel crossing further assisted them by isolating their readership from the range of news sources available on the mainland. A delay of perhaps a day for translating and editing was worth the investment if the effort increased sales. By contrast, in Amsterdam, where speed continued to be essential, publishers did not introduce any of the editorial innovations described in this chapter. Instead, they concentrated on getting access to the best sources they could and speeded up printing through duplicate setting - a step that was considered unnecessary in London except for the one period of particularly heightened interest in the news in February 1623 when Prince Charles went to Madrid.⁷

Even before the syndicate was formed, publishers changed the format from single sheet corantos used by the Dutch and Germans and initially copied by the English, to quarto newsbooks with a front page devoted to the title and description of contents. Then, by skilful

⁶ P. Arblaster, 'Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European system of communications', in Raymond, ed., *News Networks*, 31.

⁷ F. Dahl, *Dutch Corantos 1618-1650, A Bibliography and an introductory essay on 17th century stop press news* (The Hague, 1946), 22-3; Ch. 4, 132.

manipulation of layout and careful organization of texts, they were able to develop a style which was attractive and intelligible to readers and economical to produce. The pamphlet format was in general use in England for news of all kinds. It had been used throughout the previous century for news pamphlets, including John Wolfe's news publications from 1589 to 1591. There would have been advantages in adopting it for the European news as soon as the process of printing and sale were centred in London. Printers were familiar with the layout and were probably more willing to negotiate for issues of newsbooks. However, the production of foreign news in a format familiar to the readers was almost certainly the decisive factor. The change was so successful that the Dutch form was never used again by any publishers of European news in English in this period. Even during the 1632-8 ban on London production of newsbooks, when anonymously published news began to be published again with Amsterdam imprints, the newsbook format was used.⁸

An anonymously published issue which appeared towards the end of March 1622 shows that the publishers were already aware of the benefits of adapting and addressing themselves directly to their readership. The title associates it closely with English readers, *More newes from the Palatinate; and more comfort to every true Christian ... published for the satisfaction of every true English heart*. This is explained in the text,

I vnderstand by many messengers that your Corantos in England are so translated, and obsequious to the Dutch Coppies, that they neuer mention any exployt of the English, nor vouchsafe to attribute the glory of any enterprise; vnto them, as forgetting Captaine Boroughs, at the siege of Frankendale, and diuers valiant Gentilmen in other places say, they scarce mention Generall Vere himselfe.

An earlier March 1622 issue had also been aimed directly at English readers, with the ingenious title, *Newes from the Palatinate. A true and comfortable relation of the wonderfull proceedings of Count Mansfield... Wherein... he hath set out Gods glory, and enlarged his owne renowme, by being honest to the King of Bohemia, and a constant maintainer of the Gospell of Christ. Likewise relating the true and admirable manner of raising the seige of Frankendale by Sir Horatio Vere,.... Faithfully translated and extracted out of a Dutch letter sent from Franckendale, by a great commander, who hath beene an eye-witnesse of the same*. This includes references to all three heroes of the English public at that time and

⁸ Chapter 3, 100-7, shows how regular news publication evolved in 1622 to fit the conventions and practices of the London Stationers' trade. Dahl, 280-283.

promises favourable reports of each of them. The stamp of national identification was continued into the early 1630s in support of the British force mustered to support Gustavus Adolphus, with *The brave victory obtained by the L. Marquisse, Hambleton, neare Crossen... wherein most of the Imperialists were slaine... to the great honour of our nation.*⁹

Once newsbooks were legitimate, the device of using a false, or anonymous, imprint was abandoned and publishers were identified, entered their issues in the Stationers' Register and began dating the title page. The transition to an English format was completed and the publishers proceeded to develop an original identity and appropriate 'selling face' for their publications. They consolidated their image, at times employing editors who made their own distinctive marks, sometimes working to modify and adapt presentation to make the best use of available information.

The first place for attention was the title page. Modern editors always try to give their papers a striking visual impact and in this respect London editors were well ahead of their Dutch counterparts. Instead of a heading or a few lines on the first page, except during the period January 1639 to April 1640, they followed the practice in the popular pamphlets of developing title pages designed to tickle the curiosity of the prospective reader browsing through the bookstall. This approach was also employed by some of the more distinctive German news publications, such as *Relation Aller Furnemen und gedenckwurd igen Historien* (Strasburg 1609-1667), *Wolihentuche Zeitung* (Danzig 1619) and *Raporten* (Kohn 1621-1699), and also Abraham Verhoeven's *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*. Just as today, the main feature of a front page is the headlines, so too, these titles page emphasised the content. They drew attention to sensational or good news and to news of particular places or people. Thus, the issue of 17 April 1622 began with the promising title, *Good newes for the King of Bohemia? Or, a certaine relation of the last and great overthrow, given by the Duke of Brunswicke to the Bishop of Cullen, and Duke of Bavariaes forces; wherein was rumored that Brunswicke was slaine. With the proceedings of Count Mansfield since his last*

⁹ Ch. 3, 105; (late March, 1622), 10-11, *S.T.C.* 18507.38, quoted in Dahl, 57. The issue has no familiar ornaments and devices to make it easy to identify the printer. The publication of newsbooks with the reports of corantos had not yet been officially sanctioned. Avoiding identification was especially important since the publisher was associating so closely with English readers. The second claims to be a Hague publication, but evidently was not. (March 1622), 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.37. Both seem to have been printed by Edward Allde. (13 October 1631), title page, *S.T.C.* 18507.226.

comming into the Palatinate, and since the Emperours anbassadour came into England, with other accidents.¹⁰

More succinctly, if less accurately, the Battle of Höchst was reported as, *More newes from the Palatinate the 3. of June. Relating most fully the utter defeate of the Emperours forces under Leopold: with the passage of the Duke of Brunswicke to joyne with the King of Bohemia. Together with the true and present estate of Count Mansfield, the Marquis of Baden; the Generall Vere, Don Cordova, de Tilly, and their severall armies: with the preparations of Bethlem Gabor for Bavaria.* The first page demonstrates that by the summer of 1622 publishers were taking advantage of the fact that English soldiers had gone to the Palatinate and were receiving reports directly from the front, beginning, ‘Sir, to requite your newe out of England with som of ours out of the Palatinate, which is as much as I know desired by you there, as yours is here; and now especially since the King of Bohemiaes arrivall amongst us’. Of course, it was not always possible to obtain the most appropriate contents for an English readership. News from the Palatinate could sometimes dry up even while Mansfeld was campaigning there. When material was in short supply, there was a strong temptation to use any material, including reports which could only have been of interest to a more local readership in another country. Use was also made of the wonderful or miraculous, for example, with *The strangling and death of the great Turke, and his two sonnes. With the strange preservation and deliverance of his uncle Mustapha from perishing in prison ... A wonderful story... to manifest the glory and providence of God.*¹¹

There was an attempt to achieve some uniformity on the title page to enable readers to recognize each issue as part of a particular series. Butter, who in the summer of 1622 was establishing a series in competition with Bourne and Archer, appears to have been the first to recognise this need. He used a motif of a flaming heart and announced his intention to produce an identifiable series,

If any Gentleman or other accustomed to buy the Weekely Relations of Newes, be desirous to continue the same, let them know that the Writer... hath published two former newes, one dated the second, the other the thirteenth of August, all which doe

¹⁰ (17 April 1622), S.T.C.18507.40.

¹¹ (3 June 1622), 1, S.T.C.18507.49; (15 July, 1622), S.T.C.18507.62.

carrie a like title, with the Armies of the King of Bohemia on the other side of the title page.¹²

Consistency in dating began to emerge that summer. At first the date could appear anywhere on the title page, at the top, in the imprint, or somewhere in the description of contents. From June onwards, the appearance of title pages began to settle down and titles began in a similar fashion with the words, *A continuation ...*, or *Our last newes... Weekly Newes* or *More newes ...*. In the first series of newsbooks produced by the syndicate from October 1622 this standardization was taken a step further and on the top right hand corner of each title page there appeared an issue number and in the top left, a date. But this dating and numbering may have been a requirement for licensing, rather than a device for customer recognition. The publishers did not make the next step of realising that a consistently used name could be helpful. This is perhaps surprising since Butter, when he registered copies with the Stationers' Company, simply entered 'A currant of news'. We also know from contemporary references that customers spoke of the latest currant, curranto, aviso or weekly relation. The publishers may have felt no need for a consistent title, as there were no competitors. When the issue of competition resurfaced in late 1624 the publishers sought to demonstrate that theirs was the *authentic* series, identifying themselves with the London production of foreign news, confident of their monopoly and not seeing themselves as marketing a particular brand, or series. As a consequence, as late as October 1627, we see them fumbling for a way to refer to their publications, calling them 'passages of forreine Intelligence' and the rival publication as 'another unknowne Mercurie'. They advise readers to 'compare him with the continuation of our weekly Newes'. This formula was awkward, yet *The continuation* became the most usual opening of the title, especially from the late 1620s. Moreover, they never quite decided what, exactly, it was that they were continuing and referred variously to 'weekly intelligence', 'weekly newes', 'forraine newes', 'forraine avisoes' and 'weekly avisoes'.¹³

¹² (23 August 1622), 19, *S.T.C.*18507.72. Quoted in Dahl, 78 – 9. The front page of the issue of 2 August is reproduced, 75. See also 166-7 below and Ch. 3, 112.

¹³ (4 October 1627), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.189. The competitor here was probably Ralph Mabb who entered a coranto in the Stationers' Company records for 28 September 1627; Ch. 4, 138, on title page continuous referencing from 1639.

Editorial Notices and Editing Newsbooks

This section explores the work of editors, primarily through one of the most distinctive feature of the English newsbooks, the notices addressed 'To the Reader' that were added in London. Their purpose was to assist those following the news from week to week by explaining editorial policies whenever these were criticized or changed. Occasionally they also expressed views or offered an interpretation of events. The device was used frequently and so they provide a wealth of evidence on many aspects of the trade and are used here to show how they formed part of an effort to bring the publication to readers in ways that made it interesting and comprehensible.

Editorials were not an entirely new feature. In 1591 when John Wolfe approached the idea of serial publication he announced in an introduction:

To the Reader Least that the better sort shoulde be mis-ledde by the malicious, who hearing of some smal garboyl betweene the French and the English, enlarge it so on Tenterhookes, that they proclaimed it a ruin of both armies. I thought it good to publish this Journall of Advertisements, which I receaved out of Brittain as well to make it knowen how well our slender and weake Forces daylie confront the enemie as also with what good agreement (by the great wisdome of the Commaunders) the two Nacions joyne in a common quarrell against a common enemie. If I may finde this to be acceptable to the Reader, I shall be willing to acquaint him with the rest, as it shall come unto my handes. Farewell.

Raymond's study of 1640s domestic news says the preface functioned as a means of courting readers that reflected their growing influence and diversity while Brownlees examined the language in foreign newsbook editorials published between the autumn of 1622 and summer 1624 and concluded that they were used to seek consensus around a shared Protestant belief in the need to resist the Catholic armies. The language aimed to establish a close, even intimate relationship with readers, to assure them of the editor's commitment to provide a satisfactory product and to encourage readers, in return, to recognise and appreciate the high standard of workmanship. It seems therefore that both Wolfe and the news syndicate associated the provision of an on-going printed news service with the already familiar manuscript newsletter service with its close relationship of deference and assistance. Like Verhoeven in Antwerp, they were reaching out, placing their newsbooks beyond the confines

of a subscription list and into the public sphere, while simultaneously seeking to bind all readers into a relationship of trust and mutual understanding.¹⁴

The first known examples of editorial notices in the newsbooks are in Bourne and Archer's issues of 3 and 26 July 1622. The first consoles readers for news of the Duke of Brunswick's defeat at Höchst, 'Now courteous Reader, having heard the truth of the matter, moderate your grieffe, and doe not discourage a young brave Warrior, by lamenting for some small losse by him sustained'. It assumes that readers are enthusiastic supporters of Brunswick and have a strong Protestant sympathy.

'seeing also that commonly the issues of Battailes and Warlike Actions are variable and inconstant, and many times it happeneth, that those that the one day have the worst, the next day have the better hand. Wherefore let vs trust in God, hoping for better successe, firmly beleeving that hee will never forsake his Church or Champions'.

The second consoled readers for the absence of news from the Palatinate.

'But whereas you expect, and that with great longing, the Businesse of the Palatinate: in this time of cessation, you must not looke for fighting euery day, nor taking of Townes; but as they happen, you shall know. In the meane while, take this in good part: For as I conceiue, it will afford you much pleasure.'¹⁵

The style and views expressed in these issues could have been those of Bourne or Archer. Nothing tells us here that they employed an editor. Indeed, we have no direct evidence from any newsbooks as to the identity of editors. However, the style and sentiments are unmistakably those of many subsequent issues and may have been Thomas Gainsford, a writer and editor who never signed his name to any material in newsbooks, but who was widely acknowledged to be an editor by readers and contemporary commentators. Thomas Gainsford had a long established connection with Pope's Head Alley, having inherited part shares in 11 properties in Lombard Street, as well as other properties. Despite having sold these in March 1590, he worked from Pope's Head Alley during his career as news editor. The first contemporary mention we have of his news work is in a poem written by Ben Jonson in 1623,

¹⁴ P. M. Handover, *Printing in London from 1476 to Modern Times* (1960), 108; J. J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 95; Brownlees, 'Spoken discourse', 71-3; Atherton, 48, 50; for Verhoeven's editorial work see Ch. 2, 72-3.

¹⁵ (3 July 1622), verso, *S.T.C.* 18507.59, quoted in Dahl, 68; (26 July 1622), verso, *S.T.C.* 18507.66; quoted in Dahl, 73. See also Ch. 3, 109.

Captaine Pamphlet's horse and foot that sally
Upon the Exchange, out of Pope's Head Alley,
The weekly Corrents with Paul's Seal and all¹⁶

This suggests that Gainsford's place of employment was Archer's shop in Pope's Head Alley. It seems therefore that, once again, Thomas Archer's name can be associated with a new development in the trade. Archer not only became the first publisher, but also employer of the first known editor.

However once again, Butter was not to be out-done. Within a month, his competing series began and his issue of 23 August 1622 included reference in the notice to readers to 'the Writer or Transcriber' and a promise to continue the 'manner of writing and printing... weekly by Gods assistance from the best and most certaine Intelligence'. The style of this announcement is more formal than the July editorial notices and is concerned with matters of interest to the publisher, rather than the news content. Probably written by Butter himself, it demonstrates an understanding of what was needed to distinguish his issues from those of rivals, announcing the introduction of the logo and the appointment of a 'Writer or Transcriber'. (The term editor had not yet come into use but the role proposed here was that of an editor, not a translator.) Butter invited readers to choose between rivals on the strength of their style and presentation while claiming that his series had the best and most reliable reports. He also showed an understanding of the significance of periodicity and the need for continuity in the stories. As Butter explained, this 'Writer or Transcriber' had taken command of the content of the newsbook to make it more intelligible for readers. Of course, Butter may have found another editor to do this work but given the novelty and unique range the skills displayed, this is unlikely. The editing style in the August issues of Nathaniel Butter bears hallmarks of the approach Gainsford had already begun to develop in July for Bourne and Archer; an approach that was also subsequently to work for the syndicate. It seems therefore that Butter poached Gainsford. We do not know if he offered more money but Mead tells us the editor had a year's contract: once again we can see Butter acting as a financial risk taker, believing strongly in the potential of this new trade. When the

¹⁶ M. Eccles, "Thomas Gainsford, 'Captain Pamphlet'", *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 45 (1982), 259-260; B. Jonson 'Execration upon Vulcan', 1623 or 24, *Ben Jonson: The Man and His Work*, eds., C. H. Herford and P. Simpson (Oxford, 1925/1954), 2, 174, quoted in Schumacher, 69 fn. 39.

publishers joined forces to form the syndicate this contract continued into the following summer and expired with issue 42 of the syndicate's first series.¹⁷

Editorial work is evident in most issues during the period up to the summer of 1624 which, Chamberlain tells us, is when Gainsford became ill with the 'spotted fever' and died.¹⁸ Gainsford did not, however, work on every issue: some were not edited and there was also at least one period when, after the expiration of Butter's one year contract, other editors were tried. It is also possible that this led to a permanent change of editor in 1623. Mead believed the editor of issue 3 on November 11 was the second newcomer to the role since August and this issue also introduced some previously untried editorial innovation that was successfully embedded in subsequent issues. However, it seems unlikely that a completely new editor could have achieved editorial control over the material and become so confident and competent so quickly. Evidence of underlying continuities in editorial style suggest Gainsford was reinstated. Moreover a comment on the new method in the issue of 11 December 1623 appears to refer back to events in the interregnum, 'I cannot use a better Methode, then I have ventured upon in the division... I will follow that tract'. This suggests that Gainsford and the syndicate were divided but came back together again and that the break enabled him to further refine his approach.¹⁹ We must also consider the notoriety Gainsford achieved. Contemporary comment on Gainsford only began in 1623, but it takes time to acquire a reputation and writers had little status then. Yet Gainsford was so well recognized among Londoners that, despite his lack of identification in the newsbooks, there were many contemporary references to him. He made a strong impression on Ben Jonson and others were still writing about him after he died. In *Mercurius Anti-Britannicus* he is referred to as

the Captain who heretofore wrote weekly intelligence from Popes-Head Alley; who usually took Townes in Cyder, and after his second draught in Metheglin still... in lesse then two Houres operation ordinarily over-runne all chiefe parts of Germany. I never knew any professed sword man but this make Gazets his Trade of living.

¹⁷ (23 August 1622), 19, *S.T.C.*18507.72. See also 163 above and Ch. 3, 112; Harl MS. 389 fo. 381.

¹⁸ *Chamberlain*, II, 579, Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 4 September describes the progress of the 'spotted fever' due to the hot, dry summer, and lists among the victims 'Captain Gainsford our newsmonger or maker of gazetts'.

¹⁹ Ch 4, 132-33 for a period of unedited newsbooks in early 1623; (11 December 1623), 2, *S.T.C.*18507.135; 182 below.

Later, in *The Staple of News*, Gainsford's death is referred to, when the Register of the news reprimands a 'Butter-woman', 'Do, good woman, have patience; It is not now, as it was when the captain lived', adding that Mercurius Britannicus 'was want to get In hungry captains, obscur statesmen - ... Now all that charge is saved'. Also in 1625, Abraham Holland, a poet who was educated at Trinity College Cambridge, wrote a poem making a scathing attack on the printed news *A continu'd just inquisition of Paper - Persecutors*, its reference to the weekly newsbooks and to Captain Gainsford are clear in the lines, 'wals Butter'd with Weekly Newes which had by then become an accepted and popular feature of London life. Called compos'd in Pauls By some decaied Captaine'.²⁰ The following year Fletcher's play, *The Fair Maid of the Inn* repeated several of these ideas including the pun on Butter's name and the suggestion that Gainsford wrote the news and that it was a waste of good paper. Like Jonson's *The Staple of News*, it introduced the idea of 'a new office for writing pragmaticall currantos'. The character Forobosco, a conjurer, offers to call up the ghost of some lying Stationer, 'a Spirit shall looke as if butter would not melt in his mouth, a new Mercurius Gallobelgicus'. Coxcombe remarks, 'I would set up a press here in Italy To write all the Corantos for Christendome, O There was a captaine was rare at it.' and Forobosco replies, 'that Captaine writ a full hand gallop, and wasted indeed more harmlesse paper than ever did laxative Physick Yet will I make you out-scribble him'.²¹ The debacle and his reinstatement may well have established his identity and unique standing in the trade.

Neither Simon Adams nor Frearson explored the 1623 breaks in editing. Both assumed Gainsford was the editor throughout the first years and focused on Gainsford as a Protestant propagandist, noting similarities between his views and those of Thomas Scott. Adams explored his association with the writing of *Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost or Vox Spiritus*, a pamphlet opposing the Spanish marriage and urging the King to support his son-in-law. The discovery of the manuscript during a search by Secretary Calvert for scurrilous pamphlets and Gainsford's arrest were reported to Buckingham in a letter dated 28 November 1620. Adams analyzed the content *Vox Spiritus* which was intended to appear as a sequel to Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* and concluded that Scott continued his political

²⁰ *Mercurius Anti-Britanicus*, 3, (22 August 1645), 24, quoted in Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 137; Herford and Simpson, *Ben Jonson: The man*, 2, 175; Jonson, Act I, ii, 357, 358; Pollard and Redgrave cat ref 6340. It was appended to John Davies, *A Scourge for Paper - Persecutors*, partially quoted in Dahl, 22-3.

²¹ Beaumont and Fletcher in A. R. Waller, ed., *Cambridge English Classics*, 10, Act IV, ii (Cambridge, 1911).

propaganda work from the United Provinces after fleeing from England whereas Gainsford used the periodical news as part a Protestant campaign to engage England in the cause on the Continent.²²

Frearson took as his text for the understanding of the work of Gainsford an editorial in the issue of 13 December 1623 where he congratulated himself on ‘the orderly setting downe of the businesse (that)... got the start of opinion’. He believed that by telling the news coherently he was influencing readers and creating a climate of opinion. Frearson noted that Gainsford was working in Pope’s Head Alley, which in the 1640s came to be known for its anti-royalist propaganda and he examined the opinion that emerged from the issues published between 1622 and 1624. Frearson was responding to the array of contemporary historians who claim there was a consensus of views in this period, including Adams, Clive Holmes, Derek Hirst, Ann Hughes, William Hunt, David Underdown and Thomas Cogswell. He argued that, ‘The corantos undoubtedly informed a much larger body of public opinion than illicit pamphlets and manuscript newsletter’. He supported Schumacher’s conclusion that corantos, pamphlets and sermons contain the ‘most abundant surviving evidence of public opinion’ and suggested that the reports from abroad encouraged fears about religious security at home and popish influence of government. ‘Foreign news printed in the corantos was a thinly disguised vehicle for sustained critical comment on the English government [which reflected] aspects of public opinion critical of government’.²³

A chapter of Frearson’s thesis concerns puritan opposition to James I’s foreign policy in the years 1622-4 and its support in newsbooks. He argued that newsbooks provided a strong diet of English Protestant nationalism and quoted from the preface of 6 March 1624, ‘There are few English eares, but would be glad to have Paletines restitution’. He described Gainsford as ‘a Puritan pamphleteer’ who collaborated with Thomas Scott. He cited Peter Lake’s view that Thomas Scott’s anti-popery and hatred of Spain operated within an

²² S. L. Adams, “Captain Thomas Gainsford, the ‘Vox Spiritus’ and the ‘Vox Populi’”, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 44 (1976), 141-4; Calvert’s letter printed by S. R. Gardiner, *The Fortescue Papers*, Camden Society, new ser, 1 (1871), 143-4, describes the author as ‘a poore Captaine about London one Gainsford, whom I have committed to prison’. *Vox Spiritus* purports to record a conference between Gondomar and a Jesuit, in Ely House, Holborn on 21 November 1620. *Vox Populi* was probably written earlier, possibly in August 1620, and contains nothing on Frederick and Bohemia, whereas *Vox Spiritus* seems to have been written soon after the opening of Parliament in November and proposes a programme for Parliament including assistance for the King of Bohemia and investigating the Spanish Marriage. Frearson, 213-7.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1, 197, 3, 5, 7, 8; (13 December 1623), 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.136.

ideological consensus, arguing that Gainsford contributed to this consensus. Frearson agreed with Adams' suggestion that the corantos may be regarded as part of the campaign to engage England in the defence of the Protestant cause in Europe, supporting this line by reference to three of Gainsford's earlier works that dealt directly with foreign policy and advocated unity between England and other Protestant states.²⁴

Frearson concluded that in 1622-4 they amplified contemporary puritan propaganda which criticized the peaceful aims of James I's foreign policy and advocated a militaristic policy based on war with Spain in support of the European Protestant cause by simplifying affairs in Europe into a holy war with telling omissions. For example, there is no exploration of Spanish relations in Europe such as Spain's differences with the Emperor, nor of the Emperor's dependence upon Saxony and Bavaria, of the differences between the Pope and the Habsburgs or between the Jesuits and the Capuchins. His detailed analysis also showed how reports of recatholicization of previously Protestant territories, the zeal of the Jesuits in many areas, the Pope's support for military action in Europe, and Spanish support for the Emperor helped to build a picture of Roman Catholic aggression. There was also a consistently optimistic view of the Protestant position intended to strengthen English support for the European Protestant cause. The criticism of James in newsbooks was not however explicit. Instead, it involved championing Frederick's Bohemian claims and always calling him 'the King of Bohemia' despite James's known opposition to him taking the throne, identifying Spain as an aggressor, and criticizing the German Emperor even at times when English diplomats were attempting negotiation. It showed these negotiations failing while the military efforts of the United Provinces were more successful. Newsbooks also showed divine providence deployed to hinder the enemies of the Protestant cause and when the Protestants lost, the English soldiers involved in the fighting were honoured. They did not hint that the Protestant Union had collapsed and they consistently diminished Protestant defeats. Frearson's analysis makes a strong case for an almost exclusively Protestant perspective in the news reported throughout the period. He agreed with Schumacher that they depicted a story of godly Protestants against the Papal antichrist. 'The message to English readers was clear: pacific diplomacy was an ineffective and inappropriate response

²⁴ Frearson, 151, 156, 158, 212, 217-221; (6 March 1624), 1, S.T.C.18507.143; 141 below.

to the threat of a Catholic universal monarchy posed by the Hapsburg conquest and recatholicization of Protestant Europe'.²⁵

To determine how much of this bias can be attributed to London editing we need to examine the sources and their use. Chapter 2 shows that most of the sources from the United Provinces and Germany in the early 1620s were Protestant. However, the provenance and content of news was more complex than is immediately apparent and the only control the publishers and editors had was over what to include and what to omit. There was little real prospect of much that was received being wasted. Reports coming directly from Catholic cities were used when available. A notice 'from the Printer' 27 August 1623 acknowledged that local news, even from Catholic sources, could have merits, and that Italian Gazettes may be trusted to be accurate 'in their own businesse', but this must be regarded as special pleading since the year contract for editorial services had just ended and the syndicate was using what was at hand while trying to fill the vacancy. *Extraordinary Newes* from the spring of 1624 was full of scraps of news, many of which probably came from a local news sheet published in Vienna, including the Christening of a Jewish 14 year old, a description of the celebration of Lent on the streets of Vienna, rates of exchange in the city, and daily counsels of the Emperor, as well as a detailed account of relations with Moravia. It included detail about Tilly's movements and arrived in London via Ostend. However, if you read many issues you quickly discover that much of the news (if not all) coming from within the Habsburg territories has come originally from residents there, probably Catholic. This was true even though the news generally reached London via Dutch or Protestant German publications.²⁶

Moreover, not all reports painted an attractive picture of Protestant activities. Some have embedded references that point to Protestant partisan authors, for example, the 30 October 1622 issue refers to 'our campe before Manheim' but the issue of 28 January 1623 included a report of Mansfeld's army pillaging. This apparent slip in editorial control coincided with a short period early in 1623 when it appears that there was no editor and readers commented. In the issue of 31 January, news from Antwerp was included again but with a note responding to criticism by acknowledging that 'some write partially' and

²⁵ Frearson, 165-175, 191-4, 196.

²⁶ (27 August 1623), 21, *S.T.C.*18507.123; (7 April 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.146; Ch. 2, 42, 58-9, describes what Arblaster called the 'sameness' of content of printed news, whoever was publishing.

advising readers that they must judge for themselves. Again, in August and November 1623 we see news from Antwerp included with a caution that the post from Antwerp brought ‘many unjustifiable things’ but that issues would include what is ‘warranted’, while in February 1624 news from Antwerp was described as ‘so much smoake’.²⁷

Frearson did not attempt to separate what was contributed in London from source material. It is difficult task, involving close scrutiny of the text of reports (rather than the editorials that were evidently added in London) to identify the authentic ‘voice’ of a London editor and be reasonably sure of whom that editor was.²⁸ Though there are some ‘hallmarks’ that allow us to give a positive identification in some issues, such as when the London editor addressed his readership directly as ‘the Reader’ and disassociated himself from current speculation, for example on 28 October 1623, ‘whether the Protestants in Germany may conceive any hopes of their re-establishing (as many believe in Holland) by the cumming downe of Bethlem Gabor, it is not our intention to speak of it at this present: But we will rather wish that it were already done’. In the issue of 11 November 1623 the editor explained that he had rewritten the reports received in this issue ‘to avoide breakings off, and fractions of matter’. In issues like these it is easy to spot other examples throughout the text that appear to have been inserted in London and probably were. He asked why good men are ‘sometimes afflicted’ and later comments, ‘I had not thought to have published any Newes out of Italy at all, because there is nothing there befitting my Advertisement, or pertinent to our inquirie, the place and the businesse being equally remote from us’.²⁹ It is, however,

²⁷ (30 October 1622), 15, *S.T.C.*18507.86; (28 January 1623), 14, *S.T.C.*18507.93; (30 and 31 January 1623), verso of title page, *S.T.C.*18507.94 and 95; (29 August 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.124; (20 November 1623) 21, *S.T.C.*18507.133; (24 February 1624), 17, *S.T.C.*18507.141.

²⁸ Sometimes Gainsford appears to be writing in the main text of the newsbooks. In the issue of 16 November 1622, the ‘voice’ could be that of a correspondent from de Vere’s camp at Manheim explaining the surrender, ‘But first you may please to heare the extremities our countrymen were driven unto before the resolute Generall would give it up’. The terms of surrender are given and the conclusion drawn ‘upon these condition, (then which his friends could scarcely have desired more honourable, and none here lookt for any so good) was the castle surrendered’. This could have come from anywhere, as could ‘The ordinary and Imperiall post of Vienna having twice together about the middle of June failed to come that way, from whence we received our intelligence’, which appeared in an issue in the middle of July 1623 (16 November 1622), 16 and 20, *S.T.C.*18507.89; (18 July 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.119. The issue of 24 February 1624 has a comment aimed at English readers but the words ‘you in England were’ indicate that they were not written in London. (24 February 1624), 21, *S.T.C.*18507.141. By contrast in 28 October 1623, the new London editor’s voice comes through with flowery language, ‘Fortune is never constant.’ ‘But seeing that some will thinke it strange that they have begun now so late in the yeare to set upon the Emperour, we will give the Reader (touching this point) as good satisfaction as wee can’. (28 October 1623), 1–4, *S.T.C.*18507.131; (16 June 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.115, has a mixture of voices and it is difficult to tell what was added where except where familiar editorial phrases signal changes of subject/location and remind readers of the news in the last London issue.

²⁹ (28 October 1623), 3–4, *S.T.C.*18507.131; (11 November 1623), 12, 21, *S.T.C.*18507.132.

fairly clear that in the uncertain editorial period from August to October 1623, the substitute editor had less of a grip on his material and that comments appeared that were unlikely to have come from London but escaped editorial attention. Thus, for example, in the issue of 24 September 1623 a passage about Mansfeld's character and willingness to accept French money that was likely to have raised some eyebrows in London, and on 2 October 1623 we learn, 'thus are the Emperors Designes likely to go forward apace, and prosperously, the successe we must leave to time'.³⁰

When considering the entire run of newsbooks, through into the 1640s where there is an opinion provided within a report in a newsbook, it is most likely from the original, as received in London; and the absence of anything showing it was added in London suggests it is safest to assume that it was not. Even where England or the English are referred to it can be because news from England has been recorded in Amsterdam, Antwerp or Cologne then allowed to stand when the text arrived back in London. Taking the whole period, rather than limiting study primarily to the years when we know issues were edited, it is possible to see there is a Protestant bias but this is not as coherent as in 1622-4. And while it is not always possible to be sure when Gainsford or another London editor was adding and when not, it is safe to conclude that editors in London generally amplified the pro-Frederick dimension in particular. By emphasizing even minor victories and making as little as possible of defeats, newsbooks cultivated false hopes and inevitably left Protestants feeling cheated as the news of failures steadily accumulated.

However, there is nothing to suggest that Gainsford or anyone else was omitting anything from the reports received or that any explanatory material was available, covering the stresses and conflicts within different Catholic factions that Frearson suggests he would have expected to see in a more balanced account. Publishers did not have access to diplomatic correspondence, only to signed and published Treaties. Similarly, proclamations could be used only when they came to hand. Gainsford appears to have been completely unaware of how close some of James's diplomatic initiatives in Spain, France, Austria and Belgium came to securing Frederick's hereditary lands since the results of these efforts did not conclude with public announcements. The Brussels Conference in the summer of 1622

³⁰ (24 September 1623), 17, *S.T.C.*18507.128; (2 October 1623), 9, *S.T.C.*18507.129; Ch 6. 224-8, on the effect of licensing.

was overtaken by events. Similarly the agreement reached in Madrid to cease military action in the Palatinate was not publicly known. The fact that during these discussions Tilly and Cordoba acted independently of Isabella was not something that could have been known from printed material arriving in London. Meanwhile, reports of military action were continuing to cover the siege of Heidleberg and its fall, followed by Mannheim and Frankenthal in December 1622, then in the autumn of 1623 the distribution by Ferdinand of Frederick's lands.

Schumacher also commented on omissions. He noted that Gainsford did not explore motives. In particular, Schumacher is curious as to why Gainsford did not venture opinions on the role of Saxony during a period when the Duke's position was critical and topical. This question reflects a misunderstanding of his role and of the constraints that came with the conditions that the syndicate accepted. Editors worked with material that was already written. The evidence suggests that neither London editors nor correspondents in this long chain of letter writers were much inclined to probe motives. They reported on visible, actions and consequences of actions and sometimes they speculated on intentions.³¹ As news got nearer to London it came increasingly from predominantly Protestant writers with whom Gainsford shared sympathies. He had, to use his own words, to 'trust other men's relations' and he tried to persuade readers to do the same.

In Chapter 6 I explore the impact of censorship but here it is sufficient to note that we can see editors adding explanations when they had something useful to contribute. Gainsford drew on his experience and knowledge of military service on the mainland and acknowledging speculation when he did not know something or when there was no official pronouncement. The task of trying to discern the truth when faced with a range of reports of military actions and diplomatic movements, some of them conflicting, added enough uncertainty. To form a true assessment of Gainsford's unique contribution to the newsbooks it is necessary to look more closely at the quotation Frearson chose to introduce Gainsford's work but to take Gainsford more literally than Frearson did: Gainsford aimed to achieve exactly what he claimed, 'the orderly setting downe of the businesse' and this was, in itself, a

³¹ Schumacher, 71-2; (7 May 1623), 8, *S.T.C.*18507.109, shows the way Gainsford handled the Duke of Saxony's negotiations with the Emperor. He says that Saxony has brought out his troops, that the Emperor has offered religious toleration but that Saxony is looking for a settlement over the electorate but then says, wait and see what the news brings. There is no attempt to explain. Ch. 2, 42, 64.

valuable service. It helped to create a marketable commodity and was of more value to English society in getting ‘the start of opinion’ than anyone, including Frearson, has appreciated until now because so many newly literate readers were facing a steep learning curve and were unfamiliar with military or political reporting or with the European-wide dimensions of religious conflict.³²

Mark Eccles investigated how Gainsford became ‘an expert in collecting and editing foreign news’. He found that Gainsford was an impoverished career soldier who made a living writing histories and foreign news despite being born into moderate wealth. In his youth, from 1588 to 1599, he lived beyond his means and ran into debt, selling off properties to keep debtors at bay. When his inheritance was gone he joined the army and went to Ireland where he served as a captain from 1601-3. In 1606-7 he was travelling in Italy, Switzerland and Turkey, then in Cyprus and Israel in 1607-8. He served under Prince Maurice of Nassau in the war of Cleves in 1610 and 1614. He began his writing career during this period and his first printed publications appeared in 1610. *The Secretaries Studie* (1610 and 1615) demonstrates a professional interest in the craft of writing and skills required to provide news reports from abroad addressed to those back home in England and it includes sample letters of news that appear to have been written by him from Italy, Crete, Cyprus, Malta and Israel. In addition, many newsbooks about the Cleves war were entered in the Stationers’ Register, including *News out of Cleve-land* (1610), *The Protestants and Jesuits up in arms in Gulick-land* (1611) and *Newes from Gulick and Cleve* (1615). An early example of his editorial work can be found in *The Rich Cabinet* (1615). He also had an interest in history and story telling. His years of travel led him to the view, expressed in *The Glory*, that England was the best place to be.³³

His life story demonstrates that while he had a Protestant background and education that found expression in *Vox Spiritus*, Gainsford needed the income from writing and editing.

³² Frearson, 1.

³³ From a Surrey family, he was educated in Cambridge and the Inner Temple. He inherited property shares in Lombard St. and a large house with associated gardens and houses in Scrope Place near Ely Place, Holborn. He wrote *The Vision and Discourse of Henry Seventh Concerning the Unity of Great Britain* (1610), *The Historie of Trebizoid*, (1610), *The True and Wonderfull History of Perkin Warbeck* (published by Nathaniel Butter, 1618), *The True Exemplary and Remarkable History of the Earl of Tirone* (1619) and his successful work, *The Glory of England, or a True Description of many excellent Prerogatives and remarkable Blessings whereby she triumpheth over all the Nations of the World* (1618, 1619, 1620) mentions his earlier active service in Ireland under Mountjoy. Eccles, ‘Thomas Gainsford’, 259-263.

By the time the Thirty Years' War began, he had honed his skills and had extensive and experience both of military matters and of the relevant geographical and diplomatic factors that were influencing events on the Continent. His background was especially relevant because he had been to many of the places from which reports came and had even served as an officer in action in Europe. This gave him a particular advantage when trying to make sense of the many and sometimes conflicting reports that came his way. Once he was established as the syndicate's editor, he began experimenting with different approaches to make a clear and orderly account from the material he received and he was untiring in his efforts to communicate effectively with readers.

Beginning with the issue of 26 July 1622, we see attempts to render order and coherence to the presentation of reports. This is explained as follows:

This Weeke you shall heare of no fighting, nor further trouble, than you know already: yet the dayly Letters afford matter sufficient both of pleasure and varietie, all which are translated for thy contentment, ... I have contracted them, as you see, and culled them out to give you notice of the affaires of Europe and what is likely to be the issue of these troubles.

He did a good job to make sense of the array of material reaching London by this stage. He made analogies and put events into a historical context for readers:

This attempt of Spinola's on Bergen makes me remember that famous siege in 1590. or, thereabouts, when the Prince of Palma came before it with 30000 and continued the battery almost halfe a year.

He referred to events that followed the Armada and introduced the latest news of the siege with an explanation of Bergen's geographical and strategic significance:

The Towne of Bergen is of as great importance to the States in Brabant, as Sluice in Flaunders: For as this watcheth Ostend, Newport, Dunkirke, and other maritime Townes, yea openeth a doore to Ipres, Gaunt and all the land Countrey, that keepeth the Rivers, and is the key of the continent letting you in to the fields of Antwerpe, Thurnont, Auschtroten, and all the great Townes of Brabant.

And he acknowledged news of particular relevance to English readers:

I will not speake a word of neither Armies, nor their skirmishes... but of the bravery of the beseiged and the glory of the English, whose fame flourished over the world.' He dealt with the loss of 600 men, 'most of the Irish and English newly come out of their Countries...(and) a valiant Colonell Scotchman (who) lost his life by showing these were outweighed by Spanish losses.'³⁴

³⁴ (26 July 1622), verso, 2, 11, 12, S.T.C.18507.66, quoted in Dahl, 72–3.

Many presentational changes were tried during Gainsford's time, and he often took the trouble to explain not only the news but also how he was handling it. In the issue of 4 October 1622 a logical arrangement was imposed on the material and his method was explained. Under the first heading 'Naples' he stated,

I begin with Naples, because as neere as I can I will come orderly forward with the Provinces as they lye, and in regard the several Letters beare not one date, I have thought good to muster the newes, which belongs to the same place, as it were into one Armie, and so you shall receive the occurrences all together.

Under Rome, he explained,

The Letters haue likewise severall dates, but after the overlooking afford us thus much' and under Venice, 'Because commonly our Post letters of Italy come from Venice, or at least those of Venice make mention of the affaires of the petty provinces, especially Milaine I have thought it convenient to put in the items of Italian affaires into this section.

Under Vienna, he continued,

You see what Method I have used to draw the account of Europes Businesse by items, which I am perswaded is not unpleasing, and therefore I will continue the same... There are so many Letters from the severall parts of the Low Countries and so much contradiction, as men on either side favour the cause, that I know not how to satisfy the Reader: yet considering there is but one truth, and to be honest in a plaine enarration of the same, is allowable, therefore as neere as I can, I will relate, what is most probable and worthy of your acceptation.

He included in this issue,

A true Relation of the Cruell Execution done in Ommelberg a Towne in the Bishopricke of Mentz upon the persons of two ministers, ... by the instigation of the Jesuites' and some comforting news from Frankfort that the 'rumour after the taking of Heidelburgh of putting all to the sword, is not true: For the 300 English and Scots, that were in the Towne had safe conduct to passe to Franckfort, where my Lord Belfast was, and so by his directions either to goe into England, or disperse themselves.³⁵

This illustrates difficulties in getting to the truth amid rumour and incomplete accounts to which I return below. On September 19 the garrison had marched out safely with honours of war, and this is reflected in this report but, for the town's people left behind, it was a different story. Tilly's men were allowed the customary plunder and no doubt many were put to the sword.³⁶ We are told in this report that the solders were instructed not to go to Mannheim or Frankenthal to support De Vere's forces there. This was probably part of

³⁵ (4 October 1622), 1, 3, 5, 8, 16, 17, 35, 12, *S.T.C.*18507.81.

³⁶ Wedgwood, 157.

the agreement that allowed their safe withdrawal. The impression the newsbook gives is that Gainsford enjoyed this work, and was agreeably challenged by the process of attempting to make sense of the many overlapping and conflicting reports to tell a coherent story as honestly as he could, quite possibly because this was more than a job to him. He had been to these places. He probably knew many soldiers in active service there and he wanted to unlock the reports, discover the facts and reshape them into a story that made sense. He did not claim to know or to be able to understand everything and he openly accepted that there was a limitation on the confidence with which he could report some news.

The reference to what ‘is allowable’ seems to refer to the clash with Cottington over the issue of 9 September 1622. The criticism that had been levelled at the publishers was that the report contained ‘certaine fabulous passages... not only false but also scandalous to certaine amongst our Neighbours and friends’. Here, we learn, more specifically, that Cottington would allow an honest plain narration. (The implication being that the report about why negotiations between France and Spain had been terminated, that was added at the end of the issues of 9 September, was merely speculation.) The task was therefore to produce a factual account without elaboration that entered into sensitive areas of international diplomacy. In practice Gainsford never succeeded in keeping his comments and opinions to himself, but his temperament was inclined to be philosophical and nationalistic rather than confrontational and the lesson of the September clash with authority was learned.³⁷ Thus, for example, explaining the shortage of fresh news over the winter months in the issue of 6 February 1623, he commented,

you haue a long time expected some relation of newes and discources concerning the affaires of Europe; alas you must consider what you doe, when you come into a well furnished Garden, you see the frost and snow hath nipped the flowers, and there is scarce any appearance either of sweet herbes or flourishing plants... so hath winter delt with the affaires of Europe, the Souldiers have beene glad of refreshing, and the Princes taken care to make them strong with ease and quietnesse, but now the Spring comming forward... you shall see... a face both of terrour and pleasure’.

In the same vein, after a summer that provided more terror pleasure, he reflected that,

Fortune is never constant but in her inconstancie, and this is the reason ... that the wise and prudent of this world have wished rather a moderate then a great fortune, ... this world is a stage on which one and the same play is continually acted: ... But to come to our purpose, it is knowne almost to the universall world, what great successes the house of Austria hath had within these few yeares’.

³⁷ Ch. 3, 112-3.

He then gave news of the Turkish attack to the east and treated speculation on whether this could help the Protestant cause in Germany with caution.³⁸

We can follow the process of discovering how best to produce an honest narration through October 1622 since all issues for that month have survived. We can see that there was not a clear organization in every issue, but that a number of editorial questions were worked through as they arose. The issue of 22 October begins reflectively,

Smart usually makes not such an impression in us, as Feare, nor doth the Thunderbolt it selfe so generally amaze the world, as the Thunderclap: And the feare of Warre, oftentimes workes more in us, then the blowes; for while we expect an evill to come (which is the very materiall cause of feare) wee are not able in that puzzel so suddenly to remember or fore-think how manhood can suffer.

Later, in reference to whether a Diet will be called, he commented, ‘as eye-witnesses are more fully to be beleevd, then those that report upon hear-say’, and reported that what was known was that the Emperor and his son had gone to Schamburg. The plan was to move Matthias’s body to this new location, so Gainsford commented, ‘I wish he would as well consider those poore soules, both in his owne and the Protestant Armies, whose carkases have no other Tombe, then the bowles of wilde beasts’. Then he warned readers not to be too hopeful about news from Frankfort of a rift between the Duke of Saxony, from whom the Protestants had hoped to get support, and the Emperor, ‘peradventure these Relations may bee streyned too high, or these two Princes may be friends againe and we may never heare of it, which will make people suspect these reports for lies’. From the beginning he cautioned readers in this way to be wary of the reports they might most want to believe.³⁹

He had to exercise judgment about what to include when many of the reports said much the same thing, and what to do with reports that were blatantly Imperialist. Under the report from the Val Telline, in the 30 October issue, he admitted,

Much of this we confesse you have heard before though not in so continued a discourse, but this we repeat, not only to show you how true intelligence we have of

³⁸ (6 February 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.96; (28 October 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.131.

³⁹ This issue reported the withdrawal of Vere from Mannheim, ‘the noble Generall Veere, having at first but 8 companies of English and 4000 Dutch, in the Towne: was not able to man those vast out workes: and therefore after some Salleys made bravely out upon the Enemie, in one of which tis said he killed 700 Enemies, without any losse at all of his owne. And in another, as Letters from Franckfort, Sept 29. say, he killed 100 and almost destroyed one of their Batteries: and wisely considering that he had not men enough to doe so often; hee suffered the Enemy to approach the Walls, himselfe setting fire to an old castle (which was not a piece to be kept) ...But if he wants not victuals and munition in the Towne, his countrey men need not doubt, but through the grace of God and his owne valour, he will not too readily part with so small a piece, but upon honourable termes’. (22 October 1622), 1, 4 (2 but misnumbered), 8, 14, *S.T.C.*18507.84.

Forraigne occurrences, but also that you may see how the businesse of the times (as it were) conspired, both to leave them to themselves and to give their enemies leasure and means to subdue them. And this is the reason that this manly and stout Nation hath beene compelled to accept such poore conditions in the Diet of Lindaw.

This issue also dealt with Mannheim: it includes the texts of letters from both sides, without any London comment. One was from ‘an Irish Captaine’, saying ‘the English made a resolute sally out of the Towne... I am sure he will report it in England, that his Nation had the best of it’. At this stage, Vere’s troops were hopeful of success and of recovering the whole Palatinate. By 7 November Gainsford had decided enough had been said on the subject and optimistically assured readers that he would not repeat reports, ‘we will not abuse you by selling you one thing twice’.⁴⁰

Gainsford wrote as if oblivious of the King’s very different agenda and ambitions for a resolution in Europe, focusing entirely on the activities of war as they unfolded. He demonstrated skills at recognizing what explanations his English readers might need and providing them. Schumacher remarked on his ‘attempts to educate English readers, especially in military matters’, and that their ‘common ignorance... required the editor to explain esoteric matters like the system of titles in the Empire and the political significance of events’. Gainsford told readers, ‘we had a purpose to have left nothing which is hard to be understood unexplained’. Nearly six years before the Edict of Restitution he explained that one of Tilly’s objectives would be to restore to Church lands which were currently held by temporal Princes and their younger brothers. At this level, little seems to have escaped Gainsford’s attention, even among the smaller details, such as the need to explain a word if he felt readers would need this.⁴¹

Gainsford’s greatest accomplishment was to produce issues that provided a well-ordered and coherent account of what was happening. His issue of 21 November 1622 is a

⁴⁰ (30 October 1622), 4, 15, *S.T.C.*18507.85; (7 November 1622), ‘Out of the Palatinate’, *S.T.C.*18507.88.

⁴¹ Schumacher, 70; (2 May 1623), 3, *S.T.C.*18507.108: An Amsterdam ‘spinster house’ is explained as ‘a place of punishment like Blew coats in Bridewell’ (11 November 1623), 17, *S.T.C.*18507.132; Gainsford’s issue of 30 October 1622 included an explanation of the method of dating, referring to the letters of 23 October ‘(which is our 13th)’; (30 October 1622), 13, 19, *S.T.C.*18507.86. Other examples of explanations of the implications of differences in dating include, ‘You may see by the date of this proclamation, October 19 that it could not here be knowne Octobe the 12 although their 19 be three daies before our 12’, (5 November 1622), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.87. In another issue Gainsford stated, ‘Yesterday the letters from Venice May 16 here arrived a Post from the French King’, (16 June 1623), 3, *S.T.C.*18507.115; in another there are two examples of dating clarification, (29 July 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.121. Usually the original dating was allowed to stand, thereby giving impression that the news was consistently ‘fresher’ than it really was though, of course, this would not hold good for really ‘fresh’ news from the Low Countries. (Later the publishers said they used new style dating in line with European publications, M. B. ((23 May 1626), 11, *S.T.C.*18507.179).

good example of an early, coherent text. In it he ends the Palatine news with a common sense verdict on Frankendale, unadorned by comment or by any questioning of the inescapable fact that England had manifestly failed to provide the necessary support, 'neither doe we looke for any other newes but that it is given over by this time, or shortly will be when provisions be more spent; if they many have honourable conditions and faire quarter granted them, unlesse the seige by authoritie be removed'.⁴²

With news of this quality and almost weekly regularity, newsbooks were ensuring that, for the first time, a literate Londoner could be well informed about a wide range of political and military events on the Continent. In the short time, from the arrival of the first corantos in English in 1620, newsbooks had become more regular, more educative and a vehicle for making news accessible to a wider readership. There were problems with assessing the accuracy of the reports but Gainsford did his best to give readers enough information to form a view for themselves on what might be believed. Thus, for example the issue of 12 May 1623 included a report that Brunswick had a successful encounter with Cordova but with a note,

The newes is possible: but fearing that it may be but made Newes to put a Tricke upon us, that when the Truth comes, we may not know how to believe it, we will not make a Tempest of an uncertaine businesse to no end. Desiring our Readers in the meane time, to expect either the Confirmation or the Confutation of it.⁴³

Readers valued information about sources. A more radical modification of the format in November 1623 eliminated references to the letters themselves and explained, 'I

⁴² (21 November 1622), 16, *S.T.C.*18507.90. There were many examples. The issue of 7 May 1623 retained the established order and this order was maintained consistently through June and July. It explained that Silesia was surrounded by Imperial forces, 'For they write from Vienna (which should have been tolde you in the last booke)'. Then it explained that because Bethlem Gabor's forces were mostly horse they could not march until the grass has started to grow and hay and oats were available. (7 May 1623), 4, 7, *S.T.C.*18507.109. The next issue moved from the journeys of the Emperor and Empress to Prague to Bethlem Gabor's negotiations with the Turks. A meeting between the Duke of Saxony and Darmstadt follows, with news that the Duke of Bavaria has agreed to a tax of one rix dollar per man to support the wars and to maintain 3000 foot and 500 horse: one in every 5 men is to be conscripted in the towns and one in every 10 in the countryside. 'Thus farre the Letters, which if punctually true, is a very large proportion both of men and money. And what need there will be of them, time will hereafter show.' After a report on relations between Russia and Poland was the comment, 'wheresoeuer the Duke of Bavaria is Master, they goe strongly on with their manner of Reformation (as they call it) causing many to forsake their former Religion, and to turne Papists'. Tilly's march towards Hessen is marked by an evacuation of the countryside ahead of him, 'many to save themselves and all their best goods that they could either carry or drive, by flying up higher into the countrey'. (12 May 1623), 4, 7–8, 9, *S.T.C.*18507.110. The following issue explained etiquette of events around the Emperor, throwing in an explanation of the behaviour of local magistrates, '(for you must understand that Prague is three Cities in one)'. (17 May 1623), 2, *S.T.C.*18507.111.

⁴³ (12 May 1623), 10, 12, 18, *S.T.C.*18507.110.

will promise you in a manner the whole businesse of Europe the last moneth of October: now you must consider that what extractions wee have, are out of Letters, peradventure of a whole moneths antiquity, so that though we expose to your view the 7 or 8 of November, yet are the actions of former date, and so to avoide breakings off, and fractions of matter, I will not precisely name either the Letters, or the time of their mission: Let it suffice that you know we were not eye-witnesses of the businesse but we must trust other mens relations'. There are no datelines, but topic headings such as 'The State of Spinola's Army' and 'The Affairs of Holland'. The public response was evidently sharp. In the next issue the editor replied bitterly,

you must be finding faults, though you know no cause. If we afford you plaine stuffe, you complaine of the phrase, and peradventure cry out, it is Nonsense; if wee adde some exornation, then you are curious to examine the method and coherence, and are forward in saying the sentences are not well adapted.

Instead of datelines he noted the origin of letters in the margin in some places, and in others in the headings, but kept to the new structure.⁴⁴

Some bitterness continued into a December editorial,

Fame hath plaid a womans part, and rumour hath exposed unto you, as many (l)ies as tongues, so that if you looke truly upon her, shee hath a deformed visage, but yet will show you rather a ridiculous face, then an affrighting countenance: For you know that many have laughed to scorn some of these reports: ... notwithstanding there are judicious men, and temperate spirits to be satisfied, and therefore according to my weekly custome... I will go forward.

In this issue he listed the ten topics on which news was continuing and confirmed his resolve to follow the new approach, dealing with each of these in turn.⁴⁵ It was business as usual and clearly what readers preferred. They had difficulty enough trusting the reports when their dates and places of origin were mentioned. It was too much to ask, that they 'must trust other mens relations'. They did not. Nevitt suggests that changes of approach are indicative of inconsistency and interprets this dialogue with readers as evidence of a lack of understanding. On the contrary however, on 13 December, we can see Gainsford, far from deterred and learning from experience,

⁴⁴ (11 November 1623), 1, 6, 21, *S.T.C.*18507.132; (20 November 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.133. The text is organized under a few key subheadings such as 'From the Hage, with Letters from Amsterdam'. More of this notice is quoted below, 201.

⁴⁵ (11 December 1623), 1-2, *S.T.C.*18507.135. The ten are 1) the Turkish advance, 2) Bethlem Gabor's efforts to repel them, 3) the Emperor's resistance, 4) Bavaria's efforts to retain the Palatinate, 5) Tilly's advances, 6) Brunswick and Mansfeld, 7) United Provinces, 8) Spinola, 9) Protestants in France, 10) Tunisian Pirates.

Gentle reader ... Now because the last Methode I used was acceptable unto you, and the orderly setting downe of the business got the start of opinion and prevented rash censure concerning devices, and partiall invention, I will still keepe myselfe within the same limitation, and so desiring your pardon, if I doe not precisely name the date of the letters or the parties to whom they were missive: I will proceede to give you the same satisfaction which you yourselves confesse, you received by the former.⁴⁶

This exchange appears to have cleared the air and determined the ultimate organization of the texts. From this time until the ban in 1632 newsbooks adopted this basic pattern. The quality of editing varied, and at times, especially after Gainsford died, there was no editing at all. But a well-edited book would have items abridged and personal comments which had appeared in the original letters, such as the addresses 'Worthy Sir' or 'loving friend', would be removed. News would be presented with the oldest first, the latest last. News relating to one topic was broadly grouped together under one heading stating the place and indicating the date of the news. Arrangements remained flexible however and the publishers would, from time to time, divide an issue to draw attention to a significant item, where appropriate quoting the official text or an original letter in full. For example, the issue of 7 April 1625 made a fresh start towards the end with a heading, 'A Short Relation & Of the guifts which the Kingdome of Spaine have lately offered to his Maiestie towards the maintenance of the war: Printed at Antwerp the 29 day of March 1625'.⁴⁷

Good organization aided continuity from issue to issue on major stories such as the Diet of Regensburg or the campaign of Gustaphus Adolphus, but it was not always possible. These extracts illustrate not only the fact that the art of editing news was being learned quickly but also that it was a two-way process. The dynamics of a direct link with the reading public through the bookshops of the publishers, from which many customers obtained copies is illustrated through the editorials. They show that the publishers received 'over the counter', regular and spontaneous feedback on their material. Editors responded, leaving evidence of a continuous and sometimes heated dialogue.

After Gainsford's death there was little editorial work until interest revived with the entry of Gustavus Adolphus into the war. There were some notices to readers but these were

⁴⁶ Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson', 53, 57-8, seems to have been unaware of contractual arrangements or switches in editor, see also 201-3 below (13 December 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.136.

⁴⁷ Schumacher, 70-73, studied the campaigning season of 1623 and drew similar conclusions. He noted Gainsford's restraint in handling the vacillations of Lower Saxony and the motivations of the Emperor. He simply passed on, without comment, rumours that France was giving money to Mansfeld, (7 April 1625), 21, *S.T.C.*18507.165.

headed 'The Translator to the Reader' and the author is unidentified. Sabrina Baron has suggested that this may have been John Pory. If so, he successfully maintained a low profile and kept his editing efforts to the minimum consistent with orderly transcription. After a period where poor sales and the consequent low survival of issues provides insufficient evidence to see what readers could have made of the tangle of negotiations and informal alliances and groupings behind the Diet of Regensburg, we are able to follow the progress of Gustavus Adolphus and the story of the destruction of Magdeburg. Once again, there was a switch of perspective, from an editorial notice in July 1630 anticipating an upturn in trade and reflecting the publishers' concern with the need for 'better encouragement [having] lost by our publication, both our labour and a great deale of money' to concerns more typical of an editor, with the quality of reports and efforts to engage readers in the establishment of a shared view point. Again, this shared view is distinctly Protestant, as in the issue of 2 September: 'In our last... wee printed severall passages of the late good successe and Victories of the King of Sweden... God grant him the multiplication of the lie victories and good successe until all his Enemies be vanquished, and a generall Peace settled in all the parts of Germany'. A new, confident voice of English Protestantism emerged from confusion; with a notable difference in the early 1630s, there was now an interest in the establishment of peace.⁴⁸

Anthony Wood tells us that the editor during Gustavus Adolphus's successful campaign was William Watts who published forty newsbooks or more. He was a linguist and a graduate of Cambridge who became chaplain and fellow of his college, Gonville and Caius, in 1616 and had acted as chaplain to Morton when he delivered £300,000 to the Protestant princes of Germany in 1620. He was not a Puritan, but a pluralist, vicar of Barwick in Norfolk and rector of St Alban, Wood St, London, from 1624. His other publications included a translation of *St Augustines Confessions* (1631) and a translation from French of *The Catholic Monitor*. He wrote *Mortification Apostolicall* (1637), which Wood noted gave great offence to Puritans, a *Treatise of the Passions* and a *Treatise of the Surplice*, plus several sermons, and he edited Matthew Paris's *Accesserunt duorum offarum* (1638) and *Historia Apostolica* (1640). In January 1632 Watts also started serial

⁴⁸ S. A. Baron, 'The Guises of Dissemination in early seventeenth-century England', in DandB., 45-6; Ch. 6, 244-50, 193-4; (28 June 1625), 1-2, *S.T.C.*18507.173; (23 May 1626), verso, *S.T.C.*18507.179; (16 July 1630), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.205; (2 September 1631), verso, *S.T.C.*18507.221.

publications that appeared every few months called, *The Swedish Intelligencer*, *The Swedish Discipline*, *The History of the Present Warres of Germany*, and *Diatelesma*. *The Swedish Intelligencer* is perhaps the best known of his works and has been described as the first English news magazine. Issues gave a very organized account of events, supplementing newsbook information with subsequent reports and focusing on the activities of each army in turn.⁴⁹

Schumacher saw Watts as a writer who saw the King of Sweden as ‘a gift from Heaven, [that] his achievements [were] beyond all proportion to his resource ... [was] proof of divine assistance’. Watts news editing was part of an ‘intense but transitory revival of interest in the war’ and he ended his participation when the King died.⁵⁰ Butter and Bourne, building on their experience from the earlier period of prosperity in Gainsford’s time, knew how to make the most of this opportunity to maximize sales. In Watts, they employed a capable editor with a strong Protestant leaning, aimed to engage the sympathies of their readership and they built contacts to secure a good supply of fresh reports back to London. Working a decade later than Gainsford, Watts had the benefit of a wider range of sources than ever before. The network of European news centres had expanded yielding a wider range of printed news. Hamilton’s volunteers had joined the Swedes in northern Germany and there were English embassies in Vienna and the King of Sweden’s camp. The reports Watts received from serving officers plus information from his own contacts at Court gave him access to copy with a distinct sense of a shared interest in Protestant success with references to ‘Our soldiers of Wesell’ and ‘My Lord Craven’. A letter from Frankfurt included a prayer to ‘The same God that stood on our side, and fought for us ... give us all truely thankfull harts’, from Bohemia came news that ‘Almost all Townes do openly reioyce and declare for [the Swedes]’ and from the Palatinate came news of people waiting for the king ‘with a fervent and longing desire’. The inclusion of many eye-witness accounts made Watts’ issues particularly lively since he was willing to include in full reports like this one from an ardent admirer of Frederick. Watts’ Court connections also provided him with the

⁴⁹ *O.D.N.B.*; A. A. Wood, ed. P. Bliss, *Fasti Oxonienses*, (1815), 1, col. 383-4; (1632-3), *S.T.C.*23521-5; (1633-5), *S.T.C.*23525.3- 9), 11783-4, 11790, 13528; and (1639?), *S.T.C.*4292-93; Ch. 6, 270-1.

⁵⁰ Schumacher, 195, 221 and 233. Schumacher also notes that the other writer on the successes of Gustavus Adolphus published was John Russell, a Laudian. Ch. 2, 66.

Breitenfeld victory 'As it was related to our King by a Gentleman of quality, who was then present in the Battell'.⁵¹

Though Catholics remained the real villains of most reported atrocities and Watts blamed them for the war and its continuation, most evidence for Watts' pro-Swedish views is to be found especially in the titles during this period and in his commentaries in *The Swedish Intelligencer* and its sequels. These were published less frequently than periodical newsbooks and so gave Watts longer to refine and interpret the text, and express his own opinions. The schedule for turning round newsbook copy and getting it into print was far too tight at this time to permit extensive editing and rewriting. In the ten months of the eight series which began December 1631, 50 issues were published, three times there were two issues in the same day and three times there were three issues within 7 days.⁵²

Newsbook content continued to be mixed. Rather than waste copy for which there was an eager market, Watts used all sources available to him, including Catholic reports and Antwerp copy. To manage the flow, he introduced a method of splitting material from a full postbag into two parts, generally according its place of origin or the event which it concerned, indicating on title pages where two parts came from the same shipment of news and publishing them on the same day or as soon as he was able.⁵³ So, despite access to an unprecedented flow of news, he included the usual mix of sources and affiliations from the Dutch and German corantos and avisoes. For example, he labelled but included 'The Contents of a letter written by a Papist ... and sent to London', and the title of the issue of 14 March 1631 penned in London refers to *the good successe of the King of Sweden in ... Mecklenburgh* but inside a Catholic report alludes to secret discussions between the French, Swedes and the Protestant states 'We expect with great longing, what the Protestants will resolve at Leipsick... but we rather feare than hope for any generous designes'. Watts

⁵¹ Schumacher, 209, 216, 227-30; (25 June 1631), 12, *S.T.C.*18507.218; (24 January 1632), 2, *S.T.C.*18507.238; (13 October 1631), 5, *S.T.C.*18507.226; (29 November 1631), 1-8, 11, *S.T.C.*18507.233; (24 April 1632), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.247; Ch. 6, 268-70. Dahl, 166, noted that during this period page after page was filled with personal reports and eye-witness accounts with the sympathies of the writers included.

⁵² Dahl, 187.

⁵³ Sometimes Watts would carry some of the news over from one issue to the next. The issues of 24 January 1632, *S.T.C.*18507.238, and 14 April 1632, *S.T.C.*18507.246, included reports that he had not managed to fit into either of the two preceding issues. But he used 6 March 1632, *S.T.C.*18507.242, issue for German reports and letters and kept Dutch news for 15 March, *S.T.C.*18507.243. On 4 May there was enough material to print two parts on the same day. On 30 August he explained, 'Wee onely in this aviso, print the businesse of Maestricht, you shall expect in the two next following avisos, the businesse of the French King, and the King of Sweden, wherof we have received very much, and which you shall have as fast, as the presses can dispatch them'. (30 August 1632), title page, *S.T.C.*18507.265.

maintained the victorious Protestant king theme through titles such as *The late happy and victorious successe of the King of Sweden against the forces of the Emperour*. 2. *The taking of the citty Francford ... with the slaughter of neere 6000 of the Imperialists*. On 25 June Watts' title referred to *The malicious inhumane cruelty offered to the dead bodies of those which were martyred at the taking of Magdeburgh, and Tillies causing a Te Deum to be sung for his bloody massacring of innocent Protestants*. But despite this billing and the fact that sack of Magdeburg was the most outrageous of the disasters and atrocities of the war and a sure signal for the need for unity among Protestants, the newsbook contents are varied and make less of the opportunity for attributing blame than might have been expected. Protestants in Leipzig reported that due to the 'late miserable and hideous disaster [Magdeburg] is reduced to an heape of stones, being quite and utterly ruined' but from Magdeburg itself we learn that nearly all the bodies have now been removed and that 'Yesterday there was sung for Joy of the taking of this Citie, Te Deum Laudanum'. Reports came from escapees and others in Germany reflect the contributors' views rather than those of the editor.⁵⁴

Just as Gainsford made no direct criticism of James, Watts made none of Charles and while readers may have compared their King unfavourably with Gustavus Adolphus, the bold and successful champion of Protestantism, they were not encouraged to do so by Watts. Schumacher commented that Watts, like Gainsford before him, did not report on diplomacy. After Gustavus Adolphus took control of Stralsund, Watts explained its strategic importance in *The Swedish Intelligencer* but provided little discussion of Sweden's military interests. Similarly, the Treaty of Barwald was covered as was other evidence of French support for Sweden but with little comment on French diplomacy. The handling of Saxony's position continued to be problematic even after Protestant Convention at Leipzig. As in the early 1620s, it remained unexplained, though in *The Swedish Intelligencer*, Watts noted Saxony's

⁵⁴ (3 October 1632), 12, *S.T.C.*18507.273; (14 March 1631), title page *S.T.C.*18507.209; (9 May 1631), title page, *S.T.C.*18507.213; (25 June 1631), title page, 4, 3, 5, 10, 13, *S.T.C.*18507.218; (24 January 1632), *S.T.C.*18507.238, included Catholic news from Brussels, referring to 'the turbulent Hollander' and 'Our Spanish Generalls', and informing readers that citizens of Mainz are paying 80,000 Rixdollars to the Swedes to avoid pillage; (30 January 1632), 1-3, 7, 9, 10, 13, *S.T.C.*18507.239, both sides writing; (6 June 1632), 1, 2, *S.T.C.*18507.254, included a reference to the Pope's 'admirable eloquence', followed by a report of 'generall joy and applause' at the news that the King of Sweden has attacked Bavaria; (1 September 1632), 8-9, 11-12, *S.T.C.*18507.266, from the army of Bernard of Weymar reveal a callous and matter of fact attitude to pillage and destruction by the Swedish army while a Catholic report from Cologne commented that those who invited Pappenheim's army have brought in ruin and harm; Wedgwood, 285-91.

record of inconstancy. Similarly there was little news of splits on the Catholic side and no discussion of either French or Spanish dealings with the Papacy. As in Gainsford's time, for the most part these omissions can readily be ascribed to the nature of the printed sources available. However, given Watts' unprecedented access to original material from British participants in both military and diplomatic spheres, the lack of comment on England's role is more conspicuous.⁵⁵

Watts benefited from the earlier editorial experiments and was able to organize his material coherently, grouping reports on the same topic, giving a good sense of order and clearly stating origins. Apart from stating on the title page what areas and dates and topics would be found within, Watts provided very little explanation of the structure or his methods in newsbooks. This debate had already been had. Again it is necessary to turn to *The Swedish Intelligencer* for any insight on his thinking. Watts had more time to prepare copy for the press and he wished to explain his product since it was longer, innovatory, and more thoughtful, 'Our methode is this: to handle every story by it selfe, and then bring all together at the day of Battell'. It allowed him to take, for example, all the October and November 1631 reports of Swedish victory Breitenfeld and turn them into the best contemporary account now available. It was in *The Swedish Intelligencer* that the investment that Butter and Bourne had made in contacts through the British forces serving under Gustavus Adolphus paid off with accounts so well written that they were widely read and understood.⁵⁶ The first was so well received that it ran to four editions and many sequels. In *The Swedish Intelligencer: The third part*, Watts was even moved to respond to praise, 'in thankfulness to your courtesies, ... I have done all with as much diligence as a scholler'.⁵⁷

Like Gainsford, Watts did his best to provide accurate news and to discern the truth, assessing the validity of reports and being open about uncertainties. On a title page in August 1632 he expresses a willingness to believe news that Pappenheim has been defeated

⁵⁵ Schumacher, 201, 210-1, 224-5. The motivations of the Protestant rulers who didn't automatically side with Gustavus Adolphus was beyond the scope of the newsbooks. Wedgwood, 280-285, 291-5. Watts aimed to show a Protestant consensus, for example, in *The preparation of the Duke of Saxony and all the Protestant princes, and their unanimous joyning with the King of Sweden, for the recovery and preservation of theyr liberties, against... unjust persecution*, (25 June 1631), title page, S.T.C.18507.218.

⁵⁶ (1632), 3, S.T.C.23522. In addition to written reports, when Sir John Caswell arrived in London with letters from Gustavus Adolphus, Watts was able to question him and report on his journey and the encounter with Tilly at Breitenfeld. (13 October 1631), 3-5, 9, S.T.C.18507.226; (9 November 1631), S.T.C.18507.228; Dahl 183-4.

⁵⁷ (1633), 1, S.T.C.23525.

at Maestricht, 'it is very probable (and letters from Lille and other places doe import no lesse out of very apparent circumstances)... and advices from Callice yesterday doe confirm the same'. He provided improved accounts when more information became available but he also expected a high level of sophistication from his readers to compare texts and even to hold on to back issues for that purpose: in August 1632 he invited readers to compare the new text with a declaration and letters in an issue printed nearly two months earlier.⁵⁸

Watts placed higher expectations on readers, provided far less interpretation than Gainsford and no explanatory background information. However, he was working a decade later and readers probably needed less help. They had had time to become accustomed to the genre, to gain familiarity not only with its conventions and limitations but also with the place names of main theatres of action, the principal military leaders and chief civilian protagonists.

Dialogue with Readers

This section explores the dialogue between editors and readers. It considers the contribution to our understanding of other contemporary evidence and shows how editorials reflect the intimate relationship between the publishers, editor and readers. We can observe not only one side of that relationship but also see the way in which the publisher and editor responded by trying to make the product more acceptable and appealing. The result was a creative exchange. A format and style for the newsbooks was negotiated to strike a balance between providing a coherent and accessible story from each of the main theatres of action and providing evidence of the provenance of the reports. This section shows that the editorials provide more than a one-sided account. The editor was not just assuming something about readers, and the task of 'reading across' from what remains of the printed material is far from the hazardous activity Bob Scribner describes since we can observe one side of the dialogue issue by issue over a period of two years and how the approach was modified in the process.⁵⁹

We know quite a lot about the readers of newsbooks from a range of contemporary sources including diaries, correspondence, sermons, plays and poetry, so we are not in the

⁵⁸ (23 August 1632), title page, *S.T.C.*18507.264; Dahl, 210; (3 August 1632), title page, *S.T.C.*18507.262; Dahl, 207; Schumacher, 199-233.

⁵⁹ Scribner 'Is a History?', 180, 176, 186.

position of knowing the ‘texts but not the contexts’ as described by Adam Fox.⁶⁰ Mead’s correspondence refers to the dismissal of one editor in October 1623 because he ‘was not liked’ and his verdict on the subsequent editor (that, ‘in time he will do well’) proved true. John Chamberlain’s correspondence with Dudley Carleton has also been drawn upon extensively in this thesis. William Whiteway, in Dorchester, took an early interest. To these names we can add Walter Yonge. A Puritan, educated at Oxford and the Middle Temple, he became Sheriff of Devon in 1628 and MP for Honiton in 1640. His diary for the years 1604 - 1628 shows that he relied on the correspondence of friends and acquaintances in London to help him keep abreast of the news. He was in receipt of news from corantos throughout most of 1620 which he recorded in his diaries. He continued to receive this news through 1621 and 1622, probably as often as once a month, but then in January 1623 he wrote ‘We give the Palatinate as wholly lost.’ After this, his interest in European news appears to have dwindled. His recording of European events became sporadic.⁶¹

Other readers, at this time, include James Howell and John Rous. Corantos and newsbooks from Howell’s correspondence became part of the Duke of Rutland’s collection and include an issue of 24 August 1626 annotated in a contemporary hand with such comments as ‘good yf true’, indicating the Protestant and Palatine sympathies of the reader. His faith in Mansfeld is shown in the comment ‘tis sooner sai(d) then done’ which appears alongside news of plans for the Emperor’s army to go to Silesia to oppose Mansfeld. John Rous was a clergyman, educated at Cambridge (MA, 1607). His diary shows that he was following the European news intently from his home in Stanton Downham in Norfolk and it includes many references to newsbooks. An entry for 1627 tells us, ‘Newes came in October of count Mansfeld, that he had given diverse overthrowes to the emperor’s part, and slaine the duke of Friedland in the field’. This was false he adds but ‘Newes is newes. Many corantos confirmed an overthrowe given to the duke of Friedland’. An entry for October 29 1628 tells us, ‘I had a coranto at Norwich, wherein was a liste of the names of fifty-two shippes, Rochelers and English, that joyned with our navy at Plimmouth, wher I was tould, that a former coranto had a liste of the navy from Portsmouth’. His diary shows his interests

⁶⁰ Fox, ‘Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England’, 48.

⁶¹ Harl. MS 389, fo. 381; The issue of 28 October 1623 that was so disliked is ‘wordy’, describing ‘fortune’ as ‘never constant but in her inconstancy’ and probably more damagingly, to ‘great successes’ of ‘the house of Austria’, (28 October 1623), 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.131; Ch. 6, 226; W. Yonge, *The Diary of Walter Yonge*, ed., G. Roberts, Camden Society, 1st Ser. 41 (1848), 67; Ch. 3, 91.

to be firstly local news of the assizes and Parliament, then news of relations between England and France and Spain, then German news, lastly shipping and mercantile news. It seems he could rarely get his own copy of a newbook, but he could pick up information about the contents of the latest issues, or see a copy in Cambridge or in Norwich when he visited.⁶²

In London Sir Simonds D'Ewes was a reader. He was Sheriff for Suffolk in 1639 and MP for Sudbury in 1640. Elisabeth Bourcier notes that, 'He was obviously an enthusiastic reader of the corantos, newsbooks, broadsheets, pamphlets, proclamations and ballads which he mentions in various entries and which furnished him with materials for his notes...one must not forget that D'Ewes was an Englishman but also a Puritan'. His diary records his feelings about the news of the flight of Frederick and Elizabeth from Bohemia, as 'Most sad and doleful ...to all true Protestant hearts in England' and he recounts difficulties he encountered in getting 'certain truth though I resided then in London, and daily inquired.... (and) partook of the best intelligence the towne afforded'. Later, when printed news from Europe was in more plentiful supply, he carefully reported it in his journal, analyzing, summarizing and assessing what he learned. He blamed the loss of the Palatinate on the dissolution of the 1621 Parliament before sufficient funds had been voted, 'Thus, by the failing of seasonable assistance, were the Prince Elector's whole dominions vested by his bloody enemies'.⁶³

D'Ewes' correspondence also allows us to add another name to the circle of news readers. It includes letters from Robert Gell, a Fellow at Christ's College Cambridge, to Sir Martin Stuteville, and these in turn, include references to newsbooks and indicate that some copies were being enclosed with his letters. To these we can add John Pory's circle of correspondents including Sir Thomas Puckering, Lord Brook and Sir Robert Cotton. Dr Meddus also wrote to Mead and Mead to one of his students, Geoffrey Finch in Cambridge, while Francis Harris in London corresponded with his aunt, Lady Joan Barrington in Essex, sending her copies of the latest foreign news.⁶⁴ Jacqueline Eale's study of the puritan correspondence of Sir Robert Harley's third wife, Lady Brilliana Harley, shows how 'the

⁶² (4 August 1626), *S.T.C.*18507.181; Dahl, 149; Rous, 7, 31.

⁶³ E. Bourcier, *The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes 1622-24* (Paris, 1974), 43; *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes during the reigns of James I and Charles I*, ed., J. O. Halliwell (1845), Vol.1, 153-4, 222.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2, 200, letters, 25 July 1628, 205-6; 212 – 213, letters, 8 and 9 August 1628; *O.D.N.B.*; Pory; Frearson, 205-6 quotes from the 'Barrington Family Letters'.

cause of right religion and their sympathy for the reformed Churches of western Europe also gave their religious beliefs an internationalist dimension'. Harley corresponded with Sir Horace Vere while he was leading the volunteer forces in the Palatinate while Lady Vere received regular correspondence from her husband and also corresponded with wide circle of puritan ministers including William Ames in the Netherlands. Harley spoke in favour of war with Spain in the 1628 Parliament as a way to protect English Protestantism while Lady Brilliana's letters show her sympathy for the Scots and an apocalyptic interpretation of international events. The circulation and availability of news items was crucial to their analysis of events.⁶⁵

Together, these customers comprise a well-educated, thoughtful and discerning readership with Protestant leanings and affection for the Princess Elizabeth and the Palatine cause. They were representatives of the people to whom James was obliged to turn in Parliament for subsidies to support his foreign policy. They were also people with similar educational backgrounds to Gainsford and Watts; a factor which demonstrates the business sense of the publishers who employed editors whose background and sentiment were likely to resonate with regular customers. However, these discerning readers were, as we have seen, the wealthier clients who could afford subscriptions. They were probably not the people to whom Gainsford was primarily addressing himself in the editorials of 20 November 1623 and 19 March 1624 quoted above. It seems reasonable to speculate that, despite Gainsford's colourful image, he would have adopted a rather different tone to those with whom he was educated and from whose company he was somewhat distanced by his poverty and lowly status as a writer of news. It is more likely that what we see in these editorials is Gainsford reacting irritably to those who came round to Archer's shop in Pope's Head Alley or drank with him in the local tavern and aimed to impress upon him their views. These customers would have been a mixture of those buying to send into the country or buying for themselves. Frearson took the view that newsbooks probably filtered down to all levels of society but, well aware of the high cost involved in the regular purchase of copies,

⁶⁵ Durston, C. and Eales, J., eds., *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560-1700* (London, 1996), 5; Eales, J. *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990), 11-13, 42, 71, 78-80, 88-9, 92, 94. When newsbook publication resumed in 1638/9 Lady Brilliana immediately looked forward to receiving weekly news in her correspondence with her son in Oxford. Eales, J. *Women in Early Modern England 1500-1700* (London, 1998), 42, records Lady Brilliana's keen interest in exchanging political news from 1623 to her death in 1643.

he referred to customers among the middling ranks who could afford them as 'the prosperous vulgar who were becoming increasingly fluent with reading'.⁶⁶ These would have included newly literate customers - people that the publishers would have been most keen to attract to expand their customer base. These people did not express their views in writing and leave us a first hand record of their growing interest in contemporary affairs.

In London, in particular, as Tim Harris has shown, by the 1680s most males were somewhere among the 'middling sort'. Literacy in London was widespread and so was access to political knowledge. Even by 1620 there was a large class of trades' people who were literate though few have left behind personal journals and correspondence. This group provided an important addition to the market for newsbooks. These readers were, in a sense, learners. Reading, by itself, would have been insufficient to allow them to gain much from following the news. As Malcolm Smuts notes, they also needed to learn to apply analytic observational skills to the gathering of information, to develop a sense of how politics worked, and a skill in distinguishing misleading appearances from meaningful information. This process of learning was encouraged. As early as 1621, Thomas Gataker recommended reading foreign news publications to develop compassion for the Protestant brethren in Europe and inspire support for their cause. By 1624 Lushington was encouraging his Oxford congregation to weigh news carefully and learn to distinguish between the opinions of writers of different religious affiliations. Seaver has argued that a puritan culture of study and reflection 'joined artisan and husbandman, minister and gentleman' in the study of public, political developments, seeing their own personal spiritual struggle in a wider perspective as part of their search for understanding the unfolding of God's purpose in the world. News publishers were targeting these readers rather than the least literate. This is demonstrated by the fact that, even though Black Letter remained the most accessible text for the least literate, they switched to Roman at an early stage as well as switching from single sheet to pamphlet format. So, from the beginning, they were expecting readers to be moderately sophisticated. This is consistent with Jonathan Barry's argument that all the

⁶⁶ Frearson, 279.

efforts of publishers to bring brief, unbound items into the market place and to sell them to a range of shops were most likely to benefit the 'middling sorts'.⁶⁷

Keith Thomas looked at the value of increasing literacy. He noted that the authorities believed that literacy could be a route to obedience and a consensus that it should be encouraged because it did more to support the social order than to subvert it. Yet the effect of widening the horizons and awareness of people was to increase restlessness and dissatisfaction. However, as he acknowledged, it is also probably largely true that, since written literacy was the literacy of the educated classes, 'it was almost impossible to acquire it without absorbing also the values and social attitudes of polite metropolitan culture'. Unfortunately Thomas ignores the impact of foreign newsbooks, arguing that most news was oral and that the newspaper was not launched until the following century. So he misses the culture and values reflected in these in the 1620s and 30s and the fact that their circulation allowed copies to reach a great many thinking and politically conscious people. His conclusion that the 'spread of literacy... did not noticeably alter the direction in which society was moving anyway' needs to be questioned taking into account the fact that these newsbooks cannot in any way be depicted as helping to consolidate the authority of the educated over their inferiors.⁶⁸ Though the newsbooks helped to consolidate a view readily associated with educated Protestants, more than anything, they broadened the political perspective of readers, helping them to see events in Westminster in a European context and trained readers to become discerning in their use of written evidence.

Frearson acknowledged that most of the known records of news readership do not belong to the sorts of people for whom corantos appear to have been intended. 'Most of these records were kept by social elites, particularly the gentry, the substantial merchants, and the clergy'. He recognized that in the editorial notices we could observe Gainsford confidently and directly addressing his audience in a way that suggests an open dialogue. He

⁶⁷ T. Harris, 'The Problem of Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London', in *History of European Ideas*, 10 (1989); M. Smuts, *Culture and Power in England 1585- 1685* (1999); T. Gataker's sermon, *A Sparke Towards the Kindling of Sorrow for Sion*, is quoted in J. Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 145 as is T. Lushington's sermon, *The Resurrection Rescued from the Soldiers Calumnies*, 146-7; P. S. Seaver, *Wallington's World, A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, California, 1985), viii, 8, 10; K. Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England' in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed., G Baumann, 1986, 101; J. Barry, 'Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective' in *Popular Culture in England, c 1500-1850*, ed., T. Harris (1995), 80-82.

⁶⁸ Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy', 119-121.

also commented that the editorial prefaces reveal much about the readership but he did not explore this. Despite his understanding that the audience for foreign news went far wider than the ranks of the early Stuart journal and diary keepers, Frearson still turned to correspondence and journals for a view of the opinions of readers. In particular, he used the records of Joseph Mead, an academic, and William Whiteway, a prosperous merchant from Dorchester, for a sample of views on foreign affairs and concluded from their records that 'Corantos were eagerly read by English Protestants who wished to know when to praise and when to pray, for mercies and punishments shown by God to their brethren abroad. In this way, the coranto news reflected the state of religion in England, where sinfulness and piety were seen directly to affect the course of the war on the Continent'. He showed how similar the views of Mead and Whiteway were despite the considerable differences in their temperaments, occupations and methods of interpreting what they read. He also found they held consistent Protestant, anti-Spanish views before they started to read corantos, so he concluded the reports found a ready and receptive audience but they did not form readers' views they 'entertained a body of public opinion which existed before coranto production began'.⁶⁹

Is it possible to form a view about the attitudes and interests of the wider readership of newsbooks? Among the commentaries on social history, Bob Scribner's article, 'Is a History of Culture Possible?' asserts that all social cultural history is gleaned from second-hand witnesses, so we infer culture from documents. We do not know if people really bought into the ideas that were written about. He dislikes the division of culture into two camps, popular and elite, but approves of the study of crises in culture because in his view, the study of the process of culture in change can be revealing. It demonstrates that the powerful can influence the rest. I accept that print culture cannot be seen simply as an indicator or reflector of popular culture. Since it is also part of the process of cultural modification, I would argue that it is in the dynamics of that interactive process at its best that we can gain insights. Because of the dialogue in the editorial comment in foreign newsbooks, they can give information about both readers and writers. This interpretation is not so vulnerable to criticism because this commentary, and often quite heated dispute with readers, provides ample evidence of what both thought, albeit reflected through the words of

⁶⁹ Frearson, 273, 292-3, 284.

the editor or publisher. In the small world of newsprint in the City of London in the early seventeenth century, readers, editors and publishers knew one another and aired their views quite freely. John Sommerville has commented that the modern industry would envy such intimacy with its readers. Jonathan Barry described the dialogue of writers and publishers with their readers as showing more about the trade's attitudes to the readers than anything about the readers themselves. Barry conceded however, that it does show a process whereby writers and publishers may have aimed to educate their readers but were actually engaged in 'a process of negotiation rather than domination'. David Underdown acknowledged the significance of the fact that news was being published for profit by the 1620s. He realized that this meant that the publishers needed to be responsive to audiences and to their assumptions and prejudices. To him this meant that the publications themselves could show people's attitudes at the time. I agree: a study of successive series of newsbooks illustrates this argument very well. The publishers were well aware of their dependence on sales to their customers. They could not afford to be high-handed or to ignore customers' opinions and maintain sales. Both sides understood where the power lay in this negotiation. Accordingly, newsbooks often give an impression of a rather beleaguered editor or publisher being criticized, striving yet unable to live up to the demands and expectations of readers.⁷⁰

Since business was good in the earlier 1620s, the publishers were motivated to tackle the many obstacles they encountered in the process of establishing their trade. They were tapping into a market that was hungry for news. Pauline Croft's paper on the reputation of Robert Cecil showed that by 1612 the attacks on Cecil demonstrated that there was already an audience 'avid for news and quick to pick up topical references at the theatre and in printed satire'. This news originated in London but was quickly carried to the provinces in both manuscript and print. 'More specifically, the libels revealed the divide between government, aware of a pressing need for re-foundation of crown finance, and a public which saw only individual corruption and extortion. ... Distrust on matters of religion and foreign policy also deepened the divide'. Fox has shown the diversity of means by which news was disseminated - by word of mouth, road, river, fairs and markets, inns and hostelries, taverns and ale houses - reports on evidence he has found in Court records, where people were being

⁷⁰ B. Scribner, 'Is a History?'; C. J. Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England; Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (N.Y./Oxford), 1997), 30; J. Barry, 'Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture', 88; D. Underdown, *A Freeborn People* (Oxford, 1996) 88.

tried for sedition or treason or speaking ‘evell’ of those with a position of authority in society. He has created a convincing picture of a country brimming with interest in news, speaking of it at every opportunity and passing on truth and rumour, and provided evidence of neighbours copying out and borrowing letters, or many rural artisans reading the news. Aware that orally transmitted news is especially vulnerable to error and exaggeration, he described a world where the Court was a remote and fantastic place, where it seemed people were willing to believe all manner of things were possible. Nonetheless, he argued, ‘People everywhere might be furnished with up to date information... and on this basis they were able to form quite knowledgeable opinions on important issues’.⁷¹

Ben Jonson’s work also tells us a story about an expanding readership and new class of literate customers in his depiction of this new range of customers for the printed news. Jonson wrote and commented upon contemporary life in London and he did not confine his commentary to writing about those members of the public who were sufficiently educated and literate to leave their own accounts in diaries and correspondence. He tells us that newsbooks made inroads into a market that was not confined to the graduates and the legal profession; readers came from a wider social background; news can be seen as a social asset to take to a dinner party or to the tavern and to exchange on the streets. He drew a picture of a growing and curious class of critical readers within a politicised artisan culture. He depicted greedy news seekers with few powers of discrimination, introducing them in *The Staple of News* as ‘Gossip Mirth, Gossip Tatle, Gossip Expectation and Gossip Censure, four Gentlewomen, lady-like attired’ who describe themselves as ‘persons of quality... and women of fashion’. Those aspiring to rise socially clearly needed to be aware of the news.⁷²

As shown in Chapter 4, Jonson’s story revolved around the establishment of a fictitious new office and it depicted news-mongering as having become big business, ‘a place of huge commerce it will be!’ It was not the size of the readership that mattered to Jonson so much as the extent to which news sales penetrated into different social groups. News was fashionable. It followed visitors back to the counties and penetrated down the social scale. A country woman comes in asking for, ‘A groatsworth of any news, I care not what, To carry

⁷¹ By 1623 newsbooks accounted for an eighth of all surviving titles for that year. See Ch. 4, 125-5, 133-7; P. Croft, ‘The reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century’, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series 1 (1991), 69; A. Fox, ‘Rumour, News and Popular Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England’, *H.J.*, 40, (1997), 607-8, 612-3, 616.

⁷² Jonson, Prologue, 347.

down this Saturday to our vicar.’ As a retailer of news she is called a ‘butter-woman’, making one of many obvious plays on Nathaniel Butter’s name. Customers are ‘of all ranks, and all religions - Through all the shires of the kingdom’. The aim of the office is to see that readers,

‘No more shall be abused, nor country parsons
Of the inquisition, nor busy justices
Trouble the peace, and both torment themselves,
And their poor ignorant neighbours, with enquiries....’

But his observation that everyone has access to news is immediately linked to a concern about both the credibility of the news and the credulity of readers. When the head of the new office is asked,

Why...if the honest common people
Will be abused, why should they not have their pleasure,
In the believing lies are made for them;
As you in the office, making them yourselves?

The reply is that they oppose printing,

for when news is printed,
It leaves, sir, to be news...
The very printing of ‘em makes them news:
That have not the heart to believe any thing,
But what they see in print.⁷³

Jonson, despite his own origins as the stepson of a bricklayer, worked for the Crown, providing masques and plays. It is legitimate to question whether he was opposed to the printing of news and whether he was reflecting a view held more widely in the highest circles. McKenzie’s *The Staple of News and the Late Plays* showed Jonson as a sharp observer of the social and political importance of the emergence of news reporting in the 1620s but argued that his lack of sympathy or understanding of the process of education and awareness-raising meant that he isolated himself. He noted that Jonson understood what the editor and publishers of newsbooks only came to understand through practical experience, that reporting requires analysis, but his reaction to their efforts was arrogant. He vilified

⁷³ Levy, 15, 32-4; Jonson, Act I, i, 352; Act I, ii, 357; Act I, ii, 358-9. Lushington shared some of these concerns in cautioning his Oxford congregation to use discrimination, see 193 above.

Nathaniel Butter and looked down on his readership, just as he blamed his audiences for their failure to understand his plays, condemning them all as fools.⁷⁴

McKenzie approached Jonson's play as a literary work. He possibly saw the political and social allegory in it more clearly than he could realize the accuracy of the eye-witness observation behind it. Thus, when Jonson wrote about a staple built on money and greed that collapsed through failure of funds, McKenzie saw literary links between sex and money. What is more interesting to historians is that Jonson recognized the commercial venture. He saw that this was an economic development with potentially enormous social and political consequences. He recognized that the popular press was a reflection of an egalitarian movement, and immensely educative in forming a new language for talking about politics. McKenzie acknowledged, 'The Staple of News is at once a supremely perceptive... comment on the times... also a courageous reaffirmation, deeply conservative but powerfully sanctioned, of the poet's public role as spokesman for his age, a role which the development of the press, with its unsifted reports and vulgarity of language, threatened to usurp'. He pointed out that Jonson took a long time to write this play and produced a deeply considered comment on where he saw the nation going but he had little faith in human nature. He diagnosed the ills of society in terms of a populace 'seduced by its own curiosity' in the thrall of an unholy alliance of business interests and professional ambitions. As McKenzie observed, the play 'shows no understanding at all of what a painful struggle it is for the ill-educated to learn a new language of conscience and independent political judgment'. It made no allowance for the fact that the press could be a teacher, and it failed to recognise any potential for good from the emerging media.⁷⁵

Jonson identified, as early as 1625 in a play he began two years earlier, a problem that has survived into the twenty first century. While people are aware that information they receive by word of mouth or in a manuscript may be fallible, there is a tendency to accept printed information at face value and to allow the act of printing to give the written word greater authority. The criticism Jonson made of the public was their lack of discrimination in their thirst for news. He described them as,

⁷⁴ D.F. McKenzie, in *The Staple of News and the Late Plays; A Celebration of Ben Jonson*, eds., W. Blissett et al. (Toronto, 1973). Chapter 6 shows that, his employer, James, was less aloof and engaged with readers, employing its own publications and refutations, making decisions to ban in some cases and allow in others.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 107, 95, 116, 111, 118.

both the curious and the negligent,
The scrupulous and careless, wild and stay'd,
The idle and laborious....
..the vulgar: baits, sir, for the people;
And they will bite like fishes.⁷⁶

The news trade was booming. The gullible throughout society were hungry for news and stationers were only just managing to satisfy demand. That Jonson was at such pains to parody the newsmen and their product at length not only confirms the significance of the impact of this news by the mid 1620s but shows that he was aware then of what historians have been remarkably slow to recognize: he was witnessing change of enormous potential significance. To him this was such an important development that he continued his parodies in 1629 in *The New Inn* where the character, Jug is described as 'the tapster, a thoroughfare of news' and, typically, he has a reputation for incredible stories.⁷⁷ Yet Jonson's negative view of the powers of discrimination of new readers blinded him to their potential for education, change and growth. As we have seen, from Gainsford's reactions in editorials, these new customers had ideas about what made for a good and readable newsbook and they weren't afraid to express them. In fact, the impression given by editorial notices is that the relationship between the publishers and the readers was far closer than it is today, and they do not appear to have been in awe of the printed word. Rather, more often than not, the publishers felt themselves to be too close for their own comfort to their demanding readers.

Publishers and editors were often criticized not only for the presentation but also the content of the news and its sources. The autumn of 1623, for example, was a bad time for the publishers and the Protestant cause. After the shattering defeat of Christian of Brunswick at Stadtlohn in August, Frederick had signed an armistice with the Emperor. This left Mansfeld reduced to a life of survival for his army through the winter months by means of plunder in East Freisland while the news publishers in London found themselves at a different front line: they had to face their disappointed readers. The issue of 20 November

⁷⁶ Jonson, Act III, i, 386.

⁷⁷ Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 129, suggests that Jonson was among playwrights and poets who found periodical news threatening because it promised a continuous supply of news, thereby 'meeting readers' demonstrable needs'. However, given the scale of news production in the early 1620s and its wide readership, it is clear that Jonson was also responding to what he saw as a major social development. B. Jonson in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Plays*, 2 (Everyman Library 1910/70), 429.

1623 shows readers not only complaining about the editing but equally vociferous about the news content,

Gentle Reader, how comes it ...that nothing can please you?...if the newes bee forcible against the Emperour, you breakeforth, it is impossible, and all is invention: if it tend to the dejection of the Country, you seeme to commiserate and wonder at the misfortune: if we talke of novelty indeed you make doubt of the verity: if wee onely tell you what we know, you throw away the booke, and breake out, there is nothing in it, or else it is repetition of the former weekes newes: In a word, what euer we endeauor is wrested by the scrue of passion; and whether good or bad, is fashioned to strange formes by the violence of humor, and overswaying of opinion. ... yet ...we will not be affrighted from ...acquainting you with the occurents of the time'.

They were still complaining two weeks later,

many have laughed to scorne some of these reports: and because they heare not present sacking of Townes, possession of Countries, crowning of new Kings, slaughtering of whole Armies, and taking of great men prisoners, they peremptory conclude, there is no such matter:

but there were also 'judicious men, and temperate spirits to be satisfied'.⁷⁸

Nevitt appears to have read the 20 November editorial out of context, misinterpreting progressive editorial innovation as evidence of an unpredictable style and suggesting that 'publishers had little idea of what their readers wanted'. Yet it is clear they were receiving considerable feedback. The question was not whether they knew what readers wanted but whether they could hope to satisfy customer demands. Newsbooks could not be all things to all people. These were appearing in the days before it was accepted that all news must somehow be slanted, if only by the process of selection, let alone any more overt expressions of opinion.⁷⁹ A January 1624 notice acknowledges a range of different views and demonstrates how keenly the news was being followed:

For some are yet so transported with conceit, or opinion of the Emperours prevailings against all the protestant Countries in Germany, that they will not allow more then a rumour, and some suming reports of such an Enemies proceedings, as the prince of Transilvania, and flatly deny the successe of such attempts, as have beene formerly divulged. Others, who seeme to understand the businesse, and are apprehensive of the danger, not onely threatening all Germainie, but already beginning like a fire in a new reaped field to consume, whatsoeuer is combustibile before it, doe not deny his

⁷⁸ (20 November 1623), 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.133; also 182 above; (11 December 1623) 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.135.

⁷⁹ Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson', 58; Jonson, Act I, wrote mockingly of, 'Barbers newes,...Taylors Newes', etc; Atherton, argues that, 'it was the fitness of the news for the audience as a whole and vice versa' that was important. B. J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England 1550-1720* (Ithaca/London, 2000) shows how news reporting bolstered concern for verifiability and took the reader into the realm of empirical verification; Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 147-8.

descent into Hungary...Others suppose, that there hath beene a kinde of forbearing by composition, as if Caesar receiving money out of Italy, had made that an instrument of pacification; so that 200,000 Florins was worth accepting, and the Transilvanians were willing to desist...In this manner at this houre is the businesse variated euen in England it selfe betweene the Emperour and Bethlem Gabor, and although men doe read both letters and credit, and peruse the very printed Dutch Corantoes, yet doe they either disesteeme then, as untruths, or deny them as partiall... I will not be disheartened.⁸⁰

Gainsford knew his readers well, their range of opinions as well as their strengths and weaknesses in understanding.

Soon after, a notice acknowledged that there were two factions among the readership, and that they could not please everyone.

Gentle Readers: for there are two sorts of you I know: the one wishing well to the Emperor and his proceedings: the other, murmuring and repining that the Palatine's cause and Bohemia's business thrives no better: Now how can you both be satisfied with any reports or newes that concerne either party: therefore to auoid partiality and take an eauen course concerning the reports abroad, and passions at home, I will directly proceed in my accustomed manner of searching and opening the Letters that came from beyond the seas, and so acquaint you with their secrets.

Gainsford added that, if they were not satisfied, they should blame the letters, not him or the printer. He soon retracted from this position, acknowledging a dominant interest in the restoration of the Palatinate. It referred to recent news reflecting successes of the Imperial forces and explained, 'This is the cause with some, other circumstances of weather, and the time of the yeare, that so little pleasing newes hath bin exposed unto you: I call it pleasing for there are fewe English eares, but would be glad to heare of the Palatines restitution'.⁸¹

Gainsford understood the limits of his readers' understanding but he also had a sense of how far he might push opinion forward. For example, in the issue of 20 April 1624 we find,

who knows not, but that the Emperour and King of Spaine are rich, mighty, and powerfull Princes, but so to kepe us in awe with formidable preparation, as if there were not as equall force, armes, or wealth, either to resist if occasion shall serve, or propulse them, if there be such necessitie; is as ridiculous one way, as to be secure of our selves with politicke prevention, endangers another.⁸²

However, Gainsford's portrayal of himself as simultaneously a blameless middleman and commentator upon the news, with a sympathy for readers' views, was overridden by the

⁸⁰ (7 January 1624), 1 – 2, *S.T.C.*18507.137.

⁸¹ (24 February 1624), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.141; (6 March 1624), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.143.

⁸² (20 April 1624), 1-2, *S.T.C.* 18507.147; quoted in Frearson, 262-3

publishers' determination to keep the presses going, despite any sadness they may have felt about events in Bohemia and the Palatinate or, by this stage, in the Netherlands. As winter was drawing to a close in early 1624 they had little news to report, good or bad. He commented,

Gentle Reader: I make no question, you heare how loudly Rumor threatens the Low Countries, as if the King of Spaine had found out a new Myne, as he hath raised new armies. For now they say, that 15000. Italians, Spaniards, and Swisse, are come into Brabant and Flanders: So that with the possession of the Neuter Provinces, & the supplying their owne Garrisons neerer hand, there is nothing to be expected, but overrunning all Holland immediately. And yet for all this, there is no newes to acquaint you with since the last Incurions of Vanderbergen into Guelderland: and so to say the truth, as you stand affected to so good neighbors, and the cause of Religion, I confesse your hearts are euen sadded againe at the first view, when you thinke you shall reade of nothing, but the happie proceedings of the Emperour; and that the States, with the Prince Palatine, are now threatened to their utter ruine... Notwithstanding... you shall be supplied with one Newes or other.⁸³

In the early 1630s the London theatre reflected the upsurge in interest in the Palatinate. *The Staple of News* was staged again in 1631 and Massinger's *The Maid of Honour* was unmistakably about the Palatine family. Although William Watts did not attain the personal notice, or notoriety of Gainsford, commentators quickly registered renewed news interest. Richard Brathwaite commented upon the evolving trade of journalism in *Whimsies: or A New Cast of Characters* which included a description of a 'Corranto-Coiner'. We are told there are journalists who actively seek foreign news and write down whatever is heard. The publisher's motive is 'to get him currant money and delude the vulgar'. Because of the great appetite of the public for news, he is thriving. 'His mint goes weekly and he coins money by it'. Jonson, too, noted the development of the trade in *The Magnetic Lady* in 1632. He returned to the familiar pun on Nathaniel Butter's name, 'News, news, good news, better than butter'd news' and though he didn't mention an editor (or licenser) by name, he made an accusation that the news was politically biased with a character called Bias, an intelligencer, described as, 'a vi-politic or sub-secretary'. We learn that, 'all the lords Have him in their esteem for his relation'. Meanwhile, Christopher Foster prayed in 1632 that God

⁸³ (12 March 1624), 1-2, *S.T.C.* 18507.144.

would 'inspire the curranto-makers with the spirit of truth, that people might know when to utter praise for the King of Sweden's victories, and when to pray for him in his distress'.⁸⁴

There is less evidence about how well Watts knew his readers. Breslow argued that, to the English, Gustavus Adolphus 'was an embodiment of near perfection ... the Puritan ... response to the king was not so much a response to the man as to a Protestant ideal that was acting in the world ...[he] was the military saviour of the afflicted Church'. Schumacher suggests that what began as euphoric support for a seemingly invincible hero and champion of Protestantism faded quickly after Gustavus Adolphus' death and that people were losing interest in the war. He adds that English readers were becoming more cynical due to Charles's failure to act decisively in support of the French alliance with Sweden, that severely challenged the idea of a religious war, and ever mounting news reports of undisciplined troops and atrocities. However, Watts' work was so well received during Gustavus Adolphus's time that it opened up a market for longer compilations in *The Swedish Intelligencer*. The publishers advertised these to customers in the summer of 1631 and in them, Watts, confident in his understanding of the relationship, followed the precedent of manuscript news writers and solicited for news in return, indicating the sympathies of readers and the type of material he was consequently seeking:

God blesse the King of Swedens Maiestie: and thoroughly enable him to be the glorious Assertor of the Germane Libertie. If the Reader desire the continuance of our Relations, our Intelligencer shall be much the better furnished to give Content, if they please to send us their owne Intelligence.

⁸⁴ A. B. Worden, 'Literature and Political Censorship in Early Modern England', in *Too Mighty to be Free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, eds., A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse (Zutphen, 1987), 53-57; R. Brathwaite, *Whimzies: or a new cast of characters*, (1631), quoted in *The Times Tercentenary Handlist of English and Welsh Newspapers, Magazines and Reviews*, 9-10. Brathwaite regards journalists as poorly educated, 'for hee never yet understood much Latine...For his librarie (his owne continuations excepted) it consists of very few or no bookes'. The reason for his work is demand from the public, who 'you shall know by their Monday's morning question, a little before Exchange time; 'Stationer, have you any newes?'" and who promptly send off what they buy to their friends in the country. He repeats earlier criticisms, 'his owne genius is his intelligences...He retaines some military words of Art which he shoots at randome; no matter where they hit.... He ever leaves some passage doubtfull, ... closing his sentence abruptly with, *hereafter you shall heare more*.' 'Hee has an alphabetically table of all the chief commanders, generals, leaders, provincial townes, rivers, ports, creeks and other fitting material to furnish his imaginery building. Whisperings, mutterings and brave suppositions are sufficient grounds for the authority of his relations.' 'You shall many times find his Gazettas, pasquils and corrantos miserable distractions; here a city taken by force long before it bee beseiged; there a countrey laid waste before ever the enemy entered.' He, himself, is depicted as more gullible than ill-intentioned. 'He will scrue himself to the acquaintance of some knowing intelligencers...who do familiarly gull him.' B. Jonson, 'The Magnetic Lady' in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Plays*, 2 (Everyman, 1970), Act III, iv, 545; Act III, i, 533; Dahl, 23.

The first part sold so well it ran to four editions. By the second part he expressed his purpose as addressing ‘well-affected English, as desired in their dayes, to see some ease and consolation to the miserably afflicted Churches of Germany’. His aim of ‘Truth and Plainenesse’ led him to become not only editor but an investigative journalist, ‘my care was, to learne out, and get acquainted with such understanding Gentlemen as had been personally present in the Actions’ and his references to continental sources suggest he knows his readers to be familiar with them. Responding to comment from those who were less enthusiastic about the news of Protestant success, he turned the table, inviting them to supply evidence, ‘had the Imperialists well beaten the Swedish now and then; I would not have omitted it, if any claim [otherwise] ... they should have done well to have sent me in their Intelligences’.⁸⁵

Chapters 2 and 3 show the publishers often laid great emphasis on the sources of their information, the efforts they made to diversify the supply, and the difficulties and obstacles which beset attempts to improve upon them. They could not however side-step criticisms about the presentation of the news. Gainsford listened to comments and the public response to his efforts played a significant role in determining the way news was explained and interpreted, even though the public proved difficult to please. Watts appears to have had a more confident relationship with readers. This may have been partly a matter of personality but the teething troubles had already been dealt with by Gainsford, access to news sources had improved and the news itself was more palatable to Protestant sympathisers.

Accuracy and Accusation

It seems that a Protestant allegiance was expected and possibly even demanded by most readers. The second part of *The Swedish Intelligencer* shows that some readers were unhappy with a strongly Protestant account. However, the assumption was that, for most, truth and Protestantism were inextricably bound. However credibility remained an issue. Marcus Nevitt, recognizing that contemporaries such as Holland, Lushington and Shirley shared a view that newsbooks contained fabrications and lies, argued, ‘If the publishers and editor were “not fully sure of” what they were printing, one can understand why so many

⁸⁵ M. A. Breslow, *A Mirror of England, English Puritan Views of Foreign Nations, 1618-1640* (Harvard, 1970), 125-131; Schumacher, 223, may underestimate this interest as the adulation of Gustavus Adolphus was resumed in print in 1641. Dahl, 202-5; (1632), 3, *S.T.C.*23522; (1632), preface, *S.T.C.*23524. In this he boasts of the superiority of his product over *Gallobelgicus* which he only used sparingly in the few instances where it had information he had not seen before and points out where *Gallobelgicus* is less accurate than his own sources. (1,62)

readers were quick to lampoon their work'. Barbara Shapiro, however, set this criticism in a broader context, demonstrating how claims about facts and truth helped to create an audience that desired facts and confirming evidence; where 'Truth was the goal, but it was not always easy or quick to obtain and sometimes required correction or revision'. She showed that the language adopted in foreign newsbooks to reassure readers and help them develop discernment continued in use through the seventeenth century and into the next. She concluded that news reporting bolstered concerns for verifiability and 'took the public into the realm of empirical verification'. Mousley used the works of Pory as a news writer and the news diaries of Walter Yonge and John Rous to demonstrate how in a time of change and uncertainty knowledge through information, observation and confirmation from reliable sources affected their sense of themselves and their relationships with the state. There is therefore a growing recognition among historians that readers were, despite Jonson's misgiving, both discerning and anxious to read newsbooks to get to the truth.⁸⁶ Accuracy was the topic on which editors and readers had most to say. This section examines criticism and the editors' role in getting to the truth and helping readers develop their own skills to assess reports.

Gainsford might protest, 'I acquaint you with nothing but what is extracted out of true and credible originals' but not all were equally credible. Catholic sources were suspect and where Gainsford had misgivings he gave a caution. Thus in January 1623 he wrote, 'we set downe some things as we receive them from the High Dutch Copies, and some from the Low Dutch, printed at Antwerpe which peradventure may speak partially, which I desire you to take notice of and judge accordingly.' Another notice referred to a more unusual accusation that maybe the news was somewhat slanted towards the Protestant cause in Europe:

Whereas hitherto I have published for the Readers satisfaction divers letter both written and printed in the Dutch Tongue, and so by way of connexion proposed the affayres of Europe, especially Germany: and that therefore I finde some, that would, as it were pull me backe by the sleeve, for running to fast away with the newes, as if the Dutch-men were partiall on their owne side. I have now lighted upon other Letters, and other Authors some in Latine, some in Spanish, and most in Italian, from whence I have extracted the whole occurences of the last Moneth... let the Letters answer for themselves, onely by way of caution let me intreat you neither to expect

⁸⁶ Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson', 54-6; Shapiro, *A Culture*, 89, 91-3, 104; A. Mousley, 'Self, State, and Seventeenth-century News', *The Seventeenth Century*, 6 (1991), 149-168.

an order ffrom Prioritie of date, nor any such exactness, as men are tyed to a continued story: For in plaine tearms for any thing I see, they that writ these Letters had them by snatches.⁸⁷

Editors did not share Jonson's view that readers were undiscerning gluttons for news. They knew that readers would be better equipped to assess the news for themselves if they knew its source. Seasoned correspondents like Mead could routinely assess the variety of reports and spot discrepancies, but the continued topicality of European news combined with editorial work which had helped to make the newsbooks more accessible and intelligible, had simultaneously opened the trade to a wider readership and run into a problem of distrust. Unlike the correspondents and intelligencers, new readers were rather less familiar with, and less tolerant of, the inevitable shortcomings of the medium. As we have seen, a primary target for Jonson's sarcasm was the readership. The Prologue of *The Staple of News* depicts readers with unrealistic expectations and a limited understanding, 'only we would entreat of Madam Expectation -...That your ladyship would expect no more than you understand'. He reprimands a reader, saying she expects 'too much, lady; and teach others to do the like'.⁸⁸

Jonson's masque, performed for James on the Twelfth Night 1621, and entitled *Newes from the New World Discover'd in the Moon*, is concerned with intelligencers who 'do write my thousand letters a week ordinary, sometime twelve hundred... [to] ... friends of correspondence in the country' and the printers of pamphlets on incredible events, such as the appearance of a 9 foot long serpent in Sussex, 'for the common people... [who have] pleasure in beleeving of lies [that] are made for them'. He put this down to the fact that the motivation of a news printer was entirely commercial. As the Printer says, 'Indeed I am all for sale, gentlemen, you say true. I am a printer, and a printer of news and I do hearken after 'em wherever they be, at any rates, I'll give anything for a good copy now, be't true or false'. This statement summarizes the attitude contemporaries and reflects the basis of most concern and criticism of the new media that was to follow. We have already seen the way, in *The Staple of News*, Jonson depicted the commercial nature of this trade by showing the news

⁸⁷ (13 December 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.136; (31 January 1623), verso, *S.T.C.*18507. 96; (29 August 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.124.

⁸⁸ For example, transcribing from 'another Corranto' on 15 October 1625, Mead writes, 'from Frankfurt & Aken Sept 26. new style that the king of Denmark had over Tilly a very greate over throw slaying 100000 of his men. You see we are not the greatest multipliers, for we had but 9000 when it was highest.' Harl. MS 389, fo. 496; Jonson, Prologue, 348.

sold as a 'staple', a commodity sold by the bale, or by lots of six pence, nine pence or a shilling. Jonson associates the work of the clerks in the office (called Nathaniel and Thomas with obvious reference to Butter and Archer) with gossip and condemns it as inaccurate. Jonson reasoned that reports were obtained from 'hungry captains, obscure statesmen' and the like, who 'dish out news, Were't true or false', and that the news was often stale, 'worth nothing, mere pot butter', or worse, old news that is being reissued when 'the stationer cheats upon time, By buttering o'er again'. He linked both these complaints to Gainsford, referring to 'a stewed poet (with) two heads, as a drum has; one for the making, the other repeating! (who has) put himself to silence in (a) dead sack'.⁸⁹

The idea that greed could override concern for truthful reporting grew as trade prospered. Thomas Middleton's political allegory about English/Spanish relations, *A Game at Chess* includes a scene where the Black Knight representing Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, receives newsletters from England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. He comments, as he is handed the German letter, 'Thinke they've sealed this with Butter', showing that Middleton also assumed that Nathaniel Butter's name was already widely known and closely associated in the minds of his London audience not only with the publication of European news but also with dubious content.⁹⁰ Abraham Holland's criticism of Gainsford's work in *A Continu'd just inquisition of Paper – Persecutors* was heated, referring bluntly to, 'shamefull lies', and conveyed indignation and a suspicion that much of the weekly news is fabricated, yet widely regarded. This idea was also reflected by Shirley in *Love Tricks or The Schoole of Complement* which first appeared in 1624 and suggests that there was money to be made in this trade of lies and claims that soldiers fabricate war news while sitting at home in a tavern.

They... will write you a battell in any part of Europe at an houres warning, and yet never set foot out of a Taverne, describe you Towns, Fortifications, Leaders, the strength a th enemies, what Confederates, every dayes march, not a Souldier shall

⁸⁹ B. Jonson, "Newes from the New World Discover'd in the Moon", in *The Works of Benjamin Jonson*, Vol. 2, (1640, presented at Court 1620) 39-41; Jonson, Act I ii, 357; Act I ii, 358-9; Act II i, 381 and Prologue, 348 – 9.

⁹⁰ This was performed at the Globe in Blackfriars in August 1624 and ran for nine days before being closed down by order of the Privy Council and a warrant was issued for Middleton's arrest. T. Middleton, 'A Game at Chess', Act I, i, in *The Revels Plays*, ed., T. H. Howard Hill (Manchester, 1993), 88; E. C. Morris, 'Allegory in Middleton's "A Game at Chess"', *Englische Studien*, 38 (1907), argued that this scene is part of an allegorical sub plot about the seizure of the Palatinate. T. Cogswell, 'Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 47 (1984) examined the factions at Court involved in its production, see Ch 6, 243.

loose a haire, or have a bullet fly between his Armes but hee shall have a Page to wait on him in quarto, no thing destroyes ‘em but want of a good memory, for if they escape contradiction they may be chronicled.

By comparison, Lushington’s comment is no more than an observation on what was happening week by week,

This week the Spanish Match goes forward, and Bethem Gabor’s troops are broken; and the next week Bethem Gabor’s troops go forward, the Spanish match is broken... they cross and counter each others News... False news follows true at the Heels, and oftentimes outstrips it.⁹¹

Suspicion of dishonesty was linked to knowing the trade was commercial. The main line of defence in editorial notices was repeated reassurances that everything came from recognized sources, corantos and avisos published on the Continent and letters from reputable writers. Gainsford explained his approach to rumours.

I thinke it not unfit to resolve a question which was lately made unto mee, viz. wherefore I would publish any tydings which were only rumoured without any certainty: I will answer, that I doe it to shew both my love and diligence to the impartiall Reader. And that I rather write true tidings only to be rumoured, when I am not full sure of them, then to write false tidings to bee true, which will afterwards prove otherwise.

This was probably true, if only because the real truth could not be kept from the readers indefinitely: if they were misled, he was answerable. If he felt sure, he told readers. For example, in the issue of 2 May 1623, there is a report of agreement between Mansfield, the

⁹¹ J. Davies and A. Holland, *A Scourge for Paper – Persecutors... With a Continu’d Just Inquisition*, (1625), part 2, 10,

‘hungry braines compile prodigious Books,
Of Bethlem Gabors preparations, and
How terms betwixt him and th’ Emperor stand:
Of Denmarke, Swede, Poland, and of this and that,
Their Wars, Jars, Stirs and I wote not what:
The Duke of Brunsicke, Mansfield, and Prince Maurice,
Their expeditions, and what else but true is:
Yea of the Belgique State, yet scarcely know,
Whether Brabant be in Christendome or no:
To see such Butter everie weeke besmearre
Each publike post, and Churchdore, ...’

J. Shirley *The Schoole of Complement* (1631), Act I, i, ‘I have known a gentleman that has spent the best part of a thousand pound while he was prentice to the trade in Holland, and out of three sheets of paper, which was his whole stock, (a pen and ink - horn he borrowed) set up shop, and spent a hundred pounds a year upon his whore, and found sheets for them both to lie in too.’ Shirley had some knowledge of the trade: newsbooks were usually 3 sheets of paper made into a quarto book, and included reports written after interviewing a returning soldier. *British Pamphleteers from the 16th Century to the French Revolution*, ed., G. Orwell, I (1948), 53 quoting Lushington’s sermon, *The Resurrection Rescued from the Soldiers Calumnies*, from its 1741 printed version. Also quoted in J. Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 147, see also 193 above.

King of France, Savoy and Venice for the relief of the Val Telline with the assurance that 'wee have received them, from very good intelligence'. There are clear details about the numbers of men, horses and the sums of money involved from each party. Sadly, for Gainsford, if not also for Mansfeld and residents in the Low Countries where he was quartering his troops, the scheme came to nothing. Disappointments like these helped to feed the mistrust of enthusiastic Protestant readers who were hoping for better turn of events. But Gainsford persisted in his efforts to supply accurate figures where he could and where he could not he explained the difficulty. Thus in the issue of 12 May 1624 he explained,

I know that the one Letter makes mention of more or lesse slaine then the other, but they doe not marvell at this, seeing that commonly after all conflicts the number of the dead are increased or diminished as men are drawn by their affections, or otherwise guesse, for it happens many times, that the just number cannot be knowne at first, before it be found out how many escaped by flight.

He frequently warned people to be cautious about accepting the truth of a report simply because the news seemed good and recommended instead they wait until reports were confirmed. Readers learned and checking the facts became a commonplace activity with many reading the news, seeking the truth as part of their search for a greater Truth of Divine will.⁹²

There are also examples of times when, far from inventing news, they simply told the readers that there was nothing new to say. Responding in June 1623 to a rumour in London of conspiracy against Mansfeld, Gainsford says, 'of this we confesse that we have seen nothing'. The issue of 20 November 1623, (quoted above) with its bitter protest at the complaints of readers, includes a comment anticipating complaints about repetition.

The last weeke we spake not a word of Italy, Spaine, or France, now because we will be sure to avoyde tautology, and anticipate their quicknes, that use to say, why, there is nothing but what is written before, you shall have occurrences of those Countries, and so I begin with Italy.

On 12 March 1624, there is also the statement about the Low Countries that, 'there is no newes to acquaint you'.⁹³ Part of the editor's role was to ensure that issues filled the right number of sheets of paper. As paper was expensive a lengthy issue would mean charging a higher price to cover costs. Equally empty pages at the end were wasteful. So the practice

⁹² (3 July 1624), 1 – 2, *S.T.C.* 18507.149; (2 May 1623), 17 *S.T.C.* 18507.108; (12 May 1624), 4, *S.T.C.* 18507.148; (12 May 1623), 8, 12, *S.T.C.* 18507.110; See also n. 41 above. Levy, 33; Atherton, 45-7.

⁹³ (10 June 1623), 14, *S.T.C.* 18507.114; (20 November 1623), 2, *S.T.C.* 18507.133. The editorial notice is quoted 201 above; (12 March 1624), 1, 3, 9, 15, *S.T.C.* 18507.144. The editorial notice is quoted 203 above.

of using what was available, even if doubtful or repetitious, continued. Sometimes there was so much good material available that the editor was able to say, 'the Letters and Dutch Corantos are come so thick into our hands this weeke, that we can spare you no wast paper if we would', and in July 1624 Gainsford claimed, 'Reader I cannot let the have the Letters of the Truce for want of roome, untill next weeke'.⁹⁴

The last page or two of newsbooks was often reserved to add news which arrived at the last moment (a sort of 'stop press') or it could be filled with odds and ends of news. 'Other such broken stuffe we have, which we think not fit to trouble you with the reading for that we believe you have not so much leasure to trouble yourselves with the remembring, and this that we doe, we doe rather to fill up a blanke page, than to stuffe out a Booke.' But what were they to do when there was little to report and customers were asking for news? They tried to make the best of what they had. The issue of 30 October 1622 repeats reports from the Val Telline and Gainsford suggested that this would help readers to get a better understanding of why the terms being negotiated at the Diet of Lindaw were so poor. The issue of 12 March 1624 was so padded with devices to spin it out, including a good deal of what seems like fairly unnecessary explanation and several similar reports on the same topic that it led to reader complaints. These were duly countered following week with a complaint about readers for asking 'euery day for new Newes'.⁹⁵

Continually commenting on not only the news but its sources, on 16 April 1625 Mead reported that he saw a newsbook with 'a Catalogue of I know not how many men to be raised in Spaine in the severall provinces thereof above 100 thousand but I suppose it is but a bragg or at most but a story of what... each province could afford if need were'. Then on 28 May, 'I send you a Corrant but the most part of the news is elder then the 2 last told us of. Thus the naves plague us'. Gainsford similarly wrote 'so much over again', to quote Jonson.⁹⁶ But this does not mean he invented the news. I have found no evidence to suggest

⁹⁴ (15 January 1624), verso, *S.T.C.*18507.139; (3 July 1624), end, *S.T.C.*18507.149.

⁹⁵ (17 April 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.105; (30 October 1622), 4, *S.T.C.*18507.85; (12 March 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.144, for example, 'The Letters from Venice, have commonly the particulars of the affaires of Genoa. For although they are neere three thousand miles assunder by Sea by reason they must in a manner saile round about Italy, yet are the Postes by land commonly over in foure or five dayes, and the Marchants acquaint one another with all occurences, and keepe good correspondencie with one another, writing in this manner'. (19 March 1624), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.145, quoted Ch 4, 152; Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson', 59, suggested 'Butter and his team were unable to gauge consumer taste' for the timing of issues yet acknowledged that the expectation of weekly news was recognized in this editorial and exerted a 'considerable market force'.

⁹⁶ Harl. MS 389. fo. 424, 448; Jonson, Act III, i, 385.

this and ample evidence of caution and wariness. Schumacher investigated accuracy by making a comparison of events with reports and concluded that, on the whole, 'the news was rarely completely false. Simply to present a long list of fundamentally accurate reports of major battles and troop movements would be tedious...And naturally contemporaries did not often bother to comment that the news was reliable, so that it was easier to find satire of its 'shameful lies'. He set out to demonstrate, 'that the news was usually worth reading and provided Englishmen with a fairly accurate picture of events' by illustrating the few and minor nature of the errors that were made. This finding is broadly supported by Frearson: the inaccuracy that Schumacher identified can often be associated with the Protestant leaning which was also observed by Frearson. Schumacher noted that in 1623 the newsbooks created the impression that Brunswick was conducting a very successful campaign when in fact his successful minor skirmishes were completely cancelled out by his defeat at Stadtlohn. But, as he points out, this disaster at Stadtlohn was subsequently correctly reported. He also found earlier errors, such as the destination of Argyle's troops in 1622 and a report that Tilly and Pappenheim had been killed in May 1622, which were corrected in the following weeks. Another error was news that Spinola was shortly to leave his command in March 1623, but this too was subsequently corrected. He concluded that, 'considering the frailties of seventeenth-century communications, letter-writers did a good job of getting the news to readers quickly and accurately'. Moreover, readers 'were made to feel they knew and understood what was happening in Germany'.⁹⁷

Recycling old news was not a problem for Watts. There was ample material and readers had learned that reports of major events arrived in London over several weeks and that later reports could supply confirmation and further detail. But accuracy and truth remained a major source of potential difficulty. Debate with readers flared up in August 1631. An editorial on 2 September that may have been penned by Butter, given its intemperate language and use of 'we' and 'our', suggesting the publishers, referred back to the disputed reports of the king of Sweden's victories over Tilly and responded with the defence that these were printed 'as wee received them from forreine parts ... without addition or subtraction'. The publishers felt they

⁹⁷ Schumacher, 76–78; Frearson, 202–6.

deserved a more favourable construction from the most malevolently affected, yet from some it could receive no better approbation than that all was lyes, and that the King of Sweden was kild, or taken Prisoner, and his Army utterly defeated, as at this houre some shame not impudently to maintaine both here, and beyond the sea at Antwerp, Bruxels, and else-where. Wherefore wee doe now publish ... a confirmation of the Truth thereof with some circumstances not in our former, and against which, let the most barking curre open his mouth.⁹⁸

Watts considered accuracy so important that it was the one subject he debated with readers. He was tripped up early in his news-editing career by an early report from Frankfort that Tilly had been killed at Breitenfeld and was naive enough at that stage to defend the report, perhaps because of its somewhat convincing level of detail.

Indifferent Reader, we promist you (in the front of our last Aviso) the Death and Internment of Monsieur Tilly, which we now performe: notwithstanding the last Antwerpian Post hath rumoured the contrary, against which you may balance each other, and accordingly believe: onely wee will propose one question unto all gaine-sayers, let them demonstrate where Tilly is and that great formidable Army which he hath raised and we will all be of the Catholike faith.⁹⁹

Although Watts had more material at his disposal, methods of information gathering had not changed and correspondents continued to be unsure of the facts. Thus a Protestant in Prague wrote, 'we can seldome understand the certainty of things here, where all is related as the Imperialists will have it. But we perceive so much by their lookes and behaviours, that their last newes are not so good', while from Wimpfen another correspondent admitted, 'I can tell you no certain newes out of Bohemia, for some say and write one thing, some another'. However, with the benefit of more time to gather and assess information Watts could provide a greater quality assurance in *The Swedish Intelligencer*. He was able to claim he

trusted no written Relations, unlesse received from a knowne hand, or confirmed by personall eye, or eare-witnesse. No, I have not singly relyed, so much as upon that diligent ambassador of the Dutch Currantoes, the Gallobelgicus... [further] where I differ from [the French publication] I report me to those who have read both, and have been personally present in actions ... nor doe I professe myselfe to be other [than]... the disposer of other mens materials, at my best value. I am Author of nothing, here, but of the mistakings... If I have made my Readers wait ... I only staid, till false rumours might be contradicted, true reports, brought home to me by men present; and the passions of people a little over.

⁹⁸ (2 September 1631), verso of title page, S.T.C.18507.221.

⁹⁹ (20 October 1631), verso, S.T.C.18507.227, Dahl, 182.

He knew this to be a counsel of perfection appropriate only for a publication that could take weeks to appear. Even so, by the summer of 1632 he was sufficiently confident that he made issues of reliability a selling feature and included on the title page, *The true state of the armies ... somewhat contradicting our last ... but plainly & truly nullifying that groundlesse report spread abroad, concerning a great defeat (and what not) of the King of Sweden and his armies.*¹⁰⁰

Printed news may not have gained the respectability of manuscript news services. Nonetheless Watts became proud of what he accomplished and defended newsbooks vigorously, 'which if a man of judgement reades, he shall for the most part finde (especially those of latter times) very true, and very punctuall. Whosoever will be cunning in the Places and Persons of Germany, and would understand these warres, let him not despise Currantoes'. Nearly a decade later, after crown licensors lost control of the trade (and Butter lost his monopoly on foreign news) Butter compared his work with domestic newbooks and claimed the higher ground with the title, *A little true forraine newes: better than a great deale of domestick spurious false newes.*¹⁰¹

Nevitt suggests that accusations about the untrustworthiness of newsbooks were partly because editors were 'disarmingly frank about the limits of their own reliability'. While true, this misses the cultural significance of active reading in seventeenth-century England. As Atherton has pointed out, the news was 'read with an eye to discovering the truth'. Readers, diarists and those who made news collections were actively seeking to separate truth from falsehood. Editors understood that evaluation and discussion were part of the process and assisted their readers by openly acknowledging the issue and providing pointers.¹⁰²

Newsbooks published 1622-4 made the news sufficiently intelligible for people to be able to see the shortcomings and problems of the new media clearly. They created an impression of inaccuracy because reports arrived and were corrected by subsequent posts. Learning how to interpret the printed word and assess its credibility is a skill and these were difficult circumstances in which to learn as readers sought week by week to find out about the fate of the Palatinate and of Princess Elizabeth. Gainsford did a good job explaining the

¹⁰⁰ (12 January 1632), 7, *S.T.C.*18507.237; (1633), 4-5, *S.T.C.*23525; (13 August 1632), title page, *S.T.C.*18507.263.

¹⁰¹ (1632), 4-5, *S.T.C.*23523; (Mid January 1642), Wing, L2553, quoted in Dahl, 262.

¹⁰² Nevitt, 'Ben Jonson', 55; Atherton, 45-8.

factors that affected reliability but he also made the news go as far as it could in times when there was not much available. Watts had an easier time. He had more material at his disposal and a more sophisticated readership that had developed an understanding in the 1620s or grown up with printed news.

Conclusions

The editor played a vital role in the production of newsbooks. He rationalized material arriving at irregular intervals from a variety of sources, then converted it into newsbooks with a front page of a suitable style for English readers and a convenient length for printing. This was a period of experimentation and learning what was possible and acceptable to readers. Newsbooks were not works of literature but they were presentable and readable.

Gainsford was editor at a time of energy and innovation that corresponded with a period when news readership expanded and reached a wide group in society. Gainsford's role in making the news readable and educating his readers about European politics, military matters and geography supported the process. He continually explained how to interpret what they were reading and how to assess accuracy. He responded to readers' comments and demands, giving us evidence about their thoughts and feelings on the news and its presentation. He reveals to us today a picture of a largely Protestant readership with keen enquiring minds, not willing to be fobbed off with inconclusive or incomprehensible reports. This picture of readers takes us beyond the middle class and highly literate readers historians are familiar with into a broad band of middling sorts as depicted by Jonson and other contemporary writers who were able to follow the news for the first time. However, they differed from Jonson's depiction of them in one key respect: they were not undiscerning and if, when they began to read, they were ignorant this did not last. They were being educated and they were receiving a diet of news which showed the failing military fortunes of the Protestant forces, blow by blow, without the benefit of reports on any potentially counter-balancing diplomatic developments. This change in the reach of printed news was to have a profound political impact. It began a process of politicising a broader range of people and giving them a degree of confidence in their understanding of major war events. In time, the next step, to involvement in domestic politics through the publication of domestic news, was almost bound to follow.

Daniel Woolf, who sees the role of history in news going back to the corantos, explains this in terms of the development of a 'detemporalized zone' (between the past as reported and the future) that offered space for the discussion of current events. Relating this concept to Habermas's emergent public sphere, he notes that it was in this period that news stopped simply being 'marvels' that were passively absorbed. Issues emerged as matters of on-going concern, to be discussed and engaged with but, while there was a discernable collective response of readers, there was not yet a sense in which this elicited possible resolutions. Indeed, the evidence of the dialogue between readers and editors in London confirms Schroder's observations in relation to German news publications at the time. There was no real separation between information and judgement. The London editors started to make connections between different events but there was no real analysis and no attempt to seek solutions. Criticism was of behaviour that threatened peace or security and publishers did not intend to change the world.¹⁰³

Gainsford had his sights set on meeting the needs of these readers. At a more detailed and technical level he was not a particularly good editor. A close inspection of runs of newsbooks reveals repetitions and overlapping items which could have been consolidated. Failure to 'edit out' personal addresses and comments is sufficiently frequent to indicate that such lines were left because they gave a flavour of authenticity to the works and this was a more important objective than literary skill or even tidiness. Even when Gainsford was at the height of his editing career there were times when the newsbooks contained much that was either repetitious, or of little interest, or was included with the caveat that it was rumour and might prove untrue. The effect was to weaken trust in the newsbooks, even though the majority of reports were broadly accurate and errors were soon corrected.

Watts was less intimate with readers and lacked Gainsford's 'common touch' but he was a better editor, building on Gainsford's experience, he was surer of what was required. Working at speed, he applied a light touch, grouping and labelling sources. He used an upbeat title page to introduce the content that generally revealed a confident view that his readers were Protestant, supported the Swedish campaign and British participation in it, but hoped for an early peace based on the restoration of the Palatinate. He explained himself far

¹⁰³ D. Woolf, 'News, History and the Construction of the Present in Early Modern England', 108, 137; T. Schroder, 'The Origins of the German Press', 139, 147, both in DandB.

less than Gainsford and, after early teething troubles, appears to have had every confidence in the ability of readers to digest the news and discern the truth. For information about reception of the newsbooks by readers in the early 1630s, we have fewer interactions and diary commentaries so we have to rely more heavily on evidence of a high level of sales during Gustavus Adolphus's campaign. *The Swedish Intelligencer* demonstrates that readers had an appetite for both the news as it appeared and for the larger digests every few months that revisited events. It also provides insights into Watts' thinking and his perception of his readers.

CHAPTER 6

THE CROWN AND NEWSBOOKS 1622-48

This chapter explores how the Crown managed relationships with the publishers of foreign newsbooks once it had established regulatory control through the licensing system. Part 1 pursues this relationship and its consequences through James' attempts at peace making, through the period leading up to and including the anti-Habsburg Alliance. Part 2 covers Charles' reign, including the period of personal rule and peace and Part 3 takes the story to its conclusion, including what happened once the publishers lost the control and protection of the Crown.

By the autumn of 1622, the publishers were working in a syndicate to produce a single series, with issues registered by the Stationers' Company and licensed by the Crown's licenser, Sir Francis Cottington. Chapter 3 showed how this oversight was understood both by readers, in terms of honest translation, and by the publishers who were to print only what 'is thoroughly examin[ed] and pri]nted according to the high or low Dutch [printed c]opies, or out of Letters of the best credit fro[m beyond]d the Seas'.¹ The arrangements agreed in 1622 were not without effect: sales were high in the early years making this a valued monopoly the publishers were determined to retain. The syndicate observed the registration conditions of the Stationers' Company after a fashion (Chapter 4), and they and the editors respected the censorship constraints placed upon them by ensuring that reports were accurate. (Chapter 5)

This chapter explores the views of James and Charles from the autumn of 1622, considering the extent to which licensers influenced the content of newsbooks. It looks at whether James and Charles sought to make use of the arrangements to present accounts to serve their interests and evaluates the political impact, demonstrating that although the partnership was put under stresses through changes in Crown policy and successive failures of foreign policy, there was a continuous supply of detailed news that allowed English readers to draw their own conclusions about European events and about Britain's role in them. The Long

¹ Ch. 3, 112; Dahl, 82-3; (14 September 1622), 21, *S.T.C.* 18507.77; Ch. 4, 126-7; Ch. 5, 176-9; (4 October 1622), 17, *S.T.C.* 18507.81.

Parliament set up its own Committee of Printing and, from 1642, increasingly supported the Company of Stationers' licensing system. I do not explore Parliament's role but show how domestic and foreign news became integrated with domestic news in the mid-1640s in time to cover the Peace of Westphalia.

Part 1

James I's Policy and the Impact of Cottington

This section examines James's handling of newsbook publication from October 1622 when the first series began under the scrutiny of Cottington.

In managing the foreign news press, James demonstrated, as with so many other things, an apparent inconsistency of the sort which has encouraged historians to repeat the remark attributed to Henry IV of France that he was 'the wisest fool in Christendom'. Chapter 3 shows that between 1620 and 1622 James made a steadily more concerted effort to stem public debate and speculation. This culminated in the proclamation of July 1621 that Susan Clegg dubbed the 'high water mark' of policy to contain public discussion. Yet this control was less draconian than historians like Seibert and Hill have suggested. As Fritz Levy notes, James was in practice more generous than his predecessors in allowing news. His approach was neither simplistic nor absolute but was pragmatic and balanced. He allowed the trade to continue but appointed Cottington, who understood his foreign policy and diplomatic relations with Spain, to license foreign news.²

The popular image of James, as a king who was learned and scholarly yet whose political judgments were poor, is undergoing revision. Scottish historians have pointed to his success in Scotland and there has been a re-examination of his record in the management of ecclesiastical affairs and of foreign policy. He has been shown by Fincham and Lake to have successfully reformed a number of abuses in the Church and enforced conformity while maintaining a degree of flexibility and scope for compromise. He steered a middle course, distinguishing between moderates and radicals among papists and Puritans. Their verdict now is that he did well to maintain harmony for as long as he did in the face of considerable challenges. Patterson, meanwhile, depicts James as 'shrewd,

² Ch. 3, 115-7; Sharpe, 152, on Cottington's judgment as a diplomat; Levy, 13, 17, 31-4.

determined, flexible, and a resourceful political leader who had a coherent plan for religious pacification', was wholeheartedly committed to Church unity and who achieved a great deal with little physical force. He shows how he maintained balance in the Church through strategic appointments, prepared his bishops carefully for the Synod of Dort, forged alliances across Europe, and became a respected European peacemaker, served by a remarkably able corps of diplomats.³ In this section I consider whether Cottington's appointment was consistent with this interpretation and a shrewd move supportive of James's wider objectives of securing a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Bohemia and the Palatinate. I also consider how far this appointment worked domestically, given a growing readership anxious about events in Europe and the relationship with Spain. Was the appointment an example of resourceful and moderate political leadership or little more than an ineffective compromise?

James' attitude towards news publication corresponded with his attitude towards the publication of state information generally. He displayed sensitivity to criticism of himself, his family and other governments and was quick to suppress individual publications that offended, responding sympathetically to complaints of foreign ambassadors; and he was particularly protective of the sensitivities of Gondomar.⁴ In 1614 George Wither spent four months in prison for writing *Abuses Stript and Whipt* for offending Henry Howard, the Earl of Northampton, a supporter of a Spanish Marriage who feared an attack on the Spanish faction at Court as a result of Wither's poem. In 1624 James commanded the alteration of verses written for a masque which criticized the Spanish while the proclamations of 1620-1 were attempts to stem the upsurge of interest in foreign news but also responses to verbal attacks on Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador.⁵

Repeated proclamations against 'licentious speech' and the control James exerted over the pulpit in 1622-3 seem to indicate an authoritarian approach associated with his belief in the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. Yet, as

³ J. Wormald, 'James VI and I: two kings or one?', *History*, 68 (1983); K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I', *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985), 169-207; K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I' in K. Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church 1603-1642* (1993); Patterson, ix, 3, 20, 264, 271, 198, 295-6; Sharpe, xvi.

⁴ Clegg, 178, concern for the reputation of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots. 92-6, and the Duke of Savoy, 180-1; G. Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta* (Yale, 2003), 13-15, 30-31, 35-36, 45-48.

⁵ Clegg, 114, 163, 177; S. Lambert, 'Coranto Printing in England', *J.N.andP.H.*, 8, (1992), 7.

Tanner remarked, 'James himself did not press his own premises to their logical conclusion'.⁶ Despite the House of Commons' consternation that he was trying to interfere with their right of free speech in the Parliament of 1621, he presented his view of the international situation in his opening speech, where he expressed his great regret that the peace he had maintained for 18 years was now threatened and the Palatinate in danger of falling. In November 1621 when the collapse of the Palatinate seemed imminent, James invited Digby to explain what had happened on his summer embassy to Vienna and to recount what he had learnt. So, while he objected to the publication of matters of state for the 'vulgar multitude', he was willing to expose his statesmanship. He and his officials sponsored publications justifying and presenting his policies and in 1618 he published a panegyric to peace, celebrating his achievements as a peacemaker.⁷ But James remained protective of his authority and careful about news in circulation immediately prior to sessions of Parliament. In December 1620 he attempted to control the information in circulation and available to MPs on arrival in London from the counties. He preferred a personal presentation of the facts in each of the Houses of Parliament to an earlier appeal in print, and he combined this silence with the appropriate measures to frustrate attempts by the opposition to publish anti-Spanish propaganda. It was a cautious and coherent approach necessitated by the fact that, with the collapse of his pacific foreign policy, the question of what to do next was difficult to answer.

Simon Adams, in his study of the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624, argued that the Crown's proposals 'were either militarily, politically, or financially absurd', but there were no easy options. In January 1621 James appointed a council of war to

⁶ J. R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1966), 20.

⁷ Patterson, 305-6, 309; R. E. Ruigh, *The Parliament of 1624* (Harvard, 1971), also concludes from the proceedings of James' 1624 Parliament that James did not object to discussion of foreign policy in a 'parliament summoned for that purpose', 157. A brief selection of the titles which appeared from the presses of the King's printer during his reign includes: *Articles of peace, entercourse and Commerce, Concluded in the names of ... James ... king of great Britaine ... And Philip the third, King of Spaine*, Robert Barker (1605); *The kings majesties Speach To ... this present Parliament at Whitehall, ... the xxj of March 1609*, Robert Barker (1609); *His majesties Speach in the Starre-Chamber, the xx Of June Anno 1616*, Robert Barker (1616); *His maiesties Speach in the Upper House of Parliament the 26 of March 1621*, Bonham Norton and John Bill (1621); *His Maiesties declaration touching his proceedings in the late Assemblie ... of Parliament*, Bonham Norton and John Bill (1621); Patterson, *King James*, 296 quotes from James I, *The Peace-Maker: or, Great Brittaines Blessing, Fram'd for the Continuance of That Mightie Happiness*, Thomas Purfoot (1619) [first published 1618].

compute the size and expense of an army strong enough to defend the Palatinate. The figures, provided in February, seemed to rule out this option and continued to make him cautious in 1624. The indirect approach of a diversionary, naval war against Spain was to attract considerable attention in both Parliaments but was a gamble that would rely on the success of Protestant allies in Germany. The alternative, diplomatic route, lacked popular appeal and was difficult to justify given Spain's support for their Habsburg cousins and occupation of the Palatinate.⁸ It seems James never fully comprehended the unpopularity of negotiations with Spain. His adherence to this option meant that, almost to the end of his reign, there was a continuing problem with handling the press. His proclamations in the early 1620s and increasing controls over the press reflect his failure to convince Parliament that a naval war against Spain was not the way to save the Palatinate. When the House of Commons set down views on foreign policy in 1621 which were substantially different from his own, his reaction was firm and uncompromising. His reply, 'We wish you to remember that we are an old and experienced King, needing no such Lessons, being in our conscience the freest of any King alive', did not stop discussion.⁹

Frearson argued that the decision to license foreign newsbooks was taken in the knowledge that suppression would not work since if publication were successfully banned in London the Dutch could resume their export trade to the English market.¹⁰ However, at this stage James may well have been more optimistic of both his ability to sway opinion in his favour and to control the press through a remunerative monopoly and an astute licenser. As Patterson has shown, his pacific foreign policy had proved successful for many years. It had made him a

⁸ S. L. Adams, 'Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624', in K. Sharpe, ed., *Faction and Parliament in Early Stuart History* (Oxford, 1978), 139, 149-150, 160, 162. Buckingham explained James' method of promoting his opinions for this Parliament in a letter, 19 October 1620, to Francis Bacon explaining the King's rejection of his first draft of the proclamation for summoning Parliament, 'he findeth a great deal more containing matter of state and the reason of calling Parliament whereof neither the people are capable, nor is it fit for his Majesty to open now unto them, but to reserve, to the time of their assembling'. The emphasis is on timing, complexity and the mode of communication. J. Spedding, R.L. Ellis and D. D. Heath, eds. *The Works of Francis Bacon* (1874), Vol. 14, 128.

⁹ D. Hirst, *England in Conflict 1603-1660, Kingdom, Community, Conflict* (1999) 103-4, 106; R. Zaller, *The Parliament of 1621: A Study in Constitutional Conflict* (Berkeley, CA., 1971), 165.

¹⁰ Frearson, 232, 240, 245; Frearson even suggested that Gainsford's task was to 'deceive' the authorities by claiming text was copied out verbatim from the Dutch and remind them that if the syndicate did not publish this news the Dutch would, 200. M. C. Frearson, 'London Corantos in the 1620s', in *Annual*, 7-8; Clegg, 85, 168-9, 176.

widely admired figure in the Protestant community and brought him closer to securing peace in Europe, even after White Mountain, than most observers have recognized.¹¹ Such success may have led him to hope that if people were acquainted with the facts of the military theatre of war in central and northern Europe they would better understand his point of view. Reports of the war, if based on information which would in any event come out sooner or later, could potentially help reduce speculation and lead to more realistic discussion. Anything reported would need to be carefully managed to ensure that it stayed clear of Spanish sensitivities, given their central role in his plans for negotiating peace. The risk must have seemed manageable. He saw the Spanish position as divided over events in Bohemia and did not expect them to seek suppression of accurate news reports so long as the reports were about what was happening in Bohemia and the Palatinate and were not critical of the Spanish government, its minister and policies. Cottington's job was to manage this risk.¹²

The effectiveness of this approach depended on what Cottington accomplished. To Clegg, the appointment of Cottington marked an important shift in press control and 'represents the government's first major effort to "license" printing'. She refuted Lambert's argument that it was simply due to the fact that clerical licensers were unable to cope with demand and saw Cottington's service as a government effort to control news as a gesture to conciliate Gondomar. Clegg argued that licensed news published between 1621 and 1625 was 'markedly different' from what was published without license or entry in the register of the Company of Stationers and contrasted them with *A briefe description of the Ban made against the King of Bohemia*, which led to the imprisonment of Edward Aldee and Thomas Archer and which frequently returned to the role of Spain against Frederick. To her, Cottington's appointment resulted in a change of tone in reporting: newsbooks thereafter contained nothing critical of Spain or attacking the Catholic Church and she suggested that Cottington's surveillance clarified for

¹¹ S. Lambert, 'Richard Montagu, Arminianism and Censorship', *PandP*, 124, (1989), 36-53; Patterr, 363, 124, 295-6.

¹² Ibid, 298-9.

printers what was dangerous and what could be published.¹³ Nonetheless, licensing by Cottington got off to a weak start from October 1621 to September 1622. A more careful approach was apparent only once the syndicate was formed and Gainsford given responsibilities to help them to avoid including troublesome material.¹⁴ Gainsford openly acknowledged the need to satisfy the authorities. He wrote about only including in the newsbooks what 'is allowable' and 'such things as are fitting for you to know and for me to relate' and which he 'dare justify in London'.¹⁵ He frequently took care to make clear when he was copying verbatim from Dutch originals. He also showed how he was aiming to arrive at the truth.¹⁶

Frearson compared the content of the newsbooks published when Cottington was present in England with the content when he was away on diplomatic missions to Madrid. He concluded that open criticism of the government's foreign policy stopped abruptly whenever Sir Francis was in the country and that most open criticism only appeared when he was abroad. Frearson also associated changes in the format of issues with Cottington's movements. Thus, for example, in October 1623 when Cottington returned to England, the newsbooks returned to a dateline format from a more continuous story approach. This, Frearson argued, was because the publishers were cautious at these times but happy to attack the Habsburgs as soon as Cottington left. Then, when Cottington lost favour, and the mood was turning against Spain, Frearson noted the appearance of 'long and excited editorial prefaces and asides in the corantos' from 28 October 1623. 'The coranto editor evidently felt free to pursue his audience without fear of

¹³ Clegg, 181-3. Clegg cited Richard Sibbes delaying a publication because of concern about passages on Spanish cruelty, and acknowledged that publishers continued to take risks by publishing copy unprotected by entry to cater to their readers' taste for the latest news.

¹⁴ Chapter 3 shows, in Cottington's absence in the first year, licensing continued energetically in his name. 44 issues were signed off by 'Mr Cottington' and the Wardens, but the publishers were unorganised and unacceptable content slipped through these controls. Ch. 3, 103-6, 113-5; (14 September 1622), 21, *S.T.C.*18507.77. Frearson provided a useful analysis of licensing in his Appendix 3.

¹⁵ Ch. 5, 177-8; (4 October 1622), 17, *S.T.C.*18507.81; (11 December 1623), 14, *S.T.C.*18507.135. Frearson argued 198-201, 257 that Gainsford's main responsibility was to satisfy Cottington as the censor, on the basis that facts were 'allowable'. However, editorial innovation began in the summer and the editor simply picked up responsibility for making sure that issues would be acceptable from 14 September onwards. Evidence in Chapter 5 above suggests that making copies saleable remained at least as important as satisfying the authorities. Frearson attributed to Cottington greater responsibility for changes in the format and presentation of the news than is warranted, overlooking the extent to which editorial experimentation preceded his arrival and editors changed during this period.

¹⁶ Frearson, 200, provided a list of examples where Gainsford claimed to be copying verbatim from Dutch originals; (20 April 1624), 8, *S.T.C.*18507.147.

censure, thereby revealing a close relationship between public opinion and the contents of the corantos'. However, there were many other factors influencing newsbooks content and it would be a mistake to overemphasize the appearance of a pattern between Cottington's presence in the country and the news reported. As Chapter 2 showed, news reports and sources were broadly similar wherever the publishers obtained their material because cities largely shared the same news distribution networks irrespective of their affiliations and, in any case, reports of Habsburg advances from Catholics (as many of them, in fact, were) could be every bit as alarming to an English reader as a report of the same events penned originally by a Protestant. Moreover, the pattern revealed by looking at editorial content is by no means as dramatic as Frearson has suggested.¹⁷

On 15 October 1622, just after Cottington had arrived in England, the publishers produced a newsbook based on Spanish material. Possibly this issue arrived with Cottington and his entourage. But by the following issue the material was once again from Protestant sources and the issue of 22 October included praise for the Protestant armies and that of 30 October expressed hopes of a Protestant success. Those of 16 and 21 November were also Protestant in their sympathies. But then, in January 1623, while Cottington was still in the country, all the issues included material that was clearly from Catholic sources and in the issue of 31 January Gainsford expressed caution over the use of those sources, possibly in response to criticism from readers. Part of Cottington's role may therefore have been to support a balance of reporting, encouraging the use of news from Antwerp. He also encouraged a moderate editorial tone. We see a similar pattern in May 1623, after Cottington returned to England: first there was an issue from Catholic sources where Gainsford expressed a qualification about whether reports could be trusted. The issues of 17 and 26 May contain news sympathetic to Spain, but by the end of the month Gainsford again criticized the Emperor and included a report of Spanish soldiers pillaging.¹⁸

¹⁷ Frearson, 'London Corantos', 12-4; Frearson, 254, 257-8, 261, 259, 262-3. Frearson used the word 'coranto' when referring to the periodical foreign news for both the early single sheet corantos and the later newbooks. Ch. 2, 59-74, for sources/bias of newsbooks and Ch. 5, 171-3.

¹⁸ (22 October 1622), *S.T.C.*18507.84; (30 October 1622), *S.T.C.*18507.85; (16 November 1622), *S.T.C.*18507.89; (21 November 1622), *S.T.C.*18507.90; (31 January 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.95; (12 May 1623), 12, *S.T.C.*18507.110; (17 May 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.111; (26 May 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.112.

A similar pattern can be detected to some degree again in October 1623, with the issue of 2 October describing territory newly occupied by Tilly as 'very commodious for the Emperours purpose' and 28 October editorial stating, 'it is knowne almost to the universall world, what great successes the house of Austria hath had within these fews yeares'. It is also evident in the issue of 11 October, after a few pages of editing, the effort was abandoned and the rest of the issue consists entirely of translated, unedited dateline material. However, the syndicate was at this time searching for a decent editor. By November they returned to Gainsford, and to a better edited style that was less reliant on datelines.¹⁹

Cottington's role was not to oppose or edit out main Protestant sources, nor to suppress the expression of hopes for securing Frederick's hereditary lands. James and his citizens shared a considerable degree of common ground in their aspirations for a fair settlement to the troubles in central Europe. Cottington had acquainted the King of Spain from the outset that James was concerned that those who had taken arms against the King of Bohemia had done so to prevent a massacre because of their religion and Buckingham wrote to Gondomar that James was committed to do all in his power to resolve the Bohemian problem peaceably. James reacted swiftly with embassies to Germany and the Emperor intended to support Frederick through a peaceful settlement that secured the Palatinate.²⁰ When the Palatinate was close to collapse in October 1621, James called Parliament for supplies to defend the Palatinate. Digby explained to Parliament the hopes for peace but Parliament wanted war with Spain, a Protestant marriage, and stronger action against Catholics at home. The differences were about how to protect the Palatinate and Spain's role rather than the goal. James and Cottington knew that Spain might not be completely committed to supporting Ferdinand given the costs

¹⁹ (2 October 1623), 12, *S.T.C.*18507.129; (28 October 1623), 1, *S.T.C.*18507.131; (11 October 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.130; Ch 5, 167-8, 181-3.

²⁰ From as early as June 1619, the Habsburg forces were no longer on the defensive. Mansfeld had been badly beaten by Bucquoy, so for James, the process of negotiation was intense, complex and sensitive. Digby's visit to Brussels in early March 1621 secured an agreement with Archduke Albert to recommend a truce in the Palatinate to the Spanish government in anticipation of the ending of the Twelve Year Truce between Spain and the United Provinces but Philip III died late in March and Albert in July. So, while Villiers attempted to persuade Frederick to accept James's strategy, Chaworth approached Archduchess Isabella. Patterson, 298-9, 302.

that could entail.²¹ However, Parliament could not know this. Its members never saw Spain as a genuine potential ally and at no point was James in a position to spell out the Spanish position since to do so would risk embarrassing Spain, thereby undermining the very agreement he aimed to secure.

Unable to fully expose his position, James instead did what he could to control information about the conflict being published. Employing Cottington with an insider's knowledge of the diplomatic situation was to ensure that nothing offensive to potential allies or inappropriate would be said about his diplomatic efforts while these remained in the balance. Throughout 1622, the public and Parliament remained ignorant of the progress James made diplomatically since this progress was negated by Tilly and Cordoba acting independently. Readers learned instead of the fall of the Palatinate.²² A considerable gap was opening up between what was happening visibly, in the public eye through newsbooks reports and what was happening diplomatically. James, through continuing to pursue this strategy and further enforcing silence on diplomatic developments, was protecting Spain from embarrassment but he was doing so at the cost of his own image.

Factual and reasonably accurate reporting of military activities, of levies, taxation, dearth and starvation were less sensitive than anything about the intent of leaders. James may also have hoped that the newsbooks, by focusing attention primarily on land-based military action, on the disposition of Imperial forces and on activities in Vienna, might help MPs to reach a shared view of where the action, and the need for an English military response, really lay. If so, then it would be reasonable to conclude that Cottington's licensing was a success both when he was around in person and when he was abroad. However, this conclusion would overlook the fact that beneath the arguments about tactics there were deeper world-view and ideological issues at stake. Johann Sommerville has been criticized for his construction of an ideological map that places opponents into separate camps, overlooking the complexities of views and allegiances. Nevertheless, there were

²¹ Ibid, 302, 309-19, 299, 301-2, Cottington reported to Lake, 26 September 1618, that though Spain was supporting Ferdinand with 500,000 ducats, there were concerns about the cost and he heard from the Council of State in Spain, 22 January 1622, that Philip III was pleased that James was willing to work for peace in Bohemia and would support his efforts through his ambassador in Vienna.

²² The Brussels Conference began with both Frederick and Isabella agreeing to a stand-off. However Tilly and Cordoba continued on the offensive. Once Heidelberg fell in September 1622 the Emperor began to look for different ways of settling matters, by calling a Diet. Patterson, 312, 318.

distinct ways of approaching foreign policy. Giving priority to the maintenance of stable monarchical government meant supporting and seeking to work with Spain and France, even though they were Catholic, since they represented social order and monarchical legitimacy. This approach remained the most influential at Court into 1624. There were also moderates at Court and in Parliament who supported Elizabeth and Frederick and who hoped to see Protestantism flourish in Europe, including the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Benjamin Rudyerd and the Bedfords, but other Protestant groups were more radical and interpreted events through an apocalyptic conception of history. To them, the acceptance of the Bohemian Crown by Frederick was a step towards the final struggle between the godly and the Antichrist. Recent historians have demonstrated how James steered and maintained a middle course by allowing ambiguity and avoiding open debate about potentially fundamental differences but Kevin Sharpe points to the tensions both within and between texts, ideals, theory and practice, and shows that people did not always act according to their words. Everyone could believe in ideals like universal harmony and 'one true interpretation of God's word' and be basically conservative, yet believe that those who did not share their interpretation were either separatist or Jesuit.²³

Newsbooks contributed to ever-increasing discussion of foreign policy outside the formal institutions of government. Whether their content was moderated or not they provided a continual source of information, and by focusing on the more dramatic events and presenting conflict rather than consensus, they helped reinforce the more radical apocalyptic views of the struggle with the papal Antichrist. Seaver's account of the Puritan Wallingford shows how reading the news, reflecting on its meaning and prayer played an integral part of his spiritual life. He used the news to look for the working out of God's will in public events and interpreted what he read in a way that reinforced his beliefs. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes commented in *Conflict in Early Stuart England* that the implications of the popular focus on foreign events in the 1620s may not have been fully understood by the revisionists. James seems to have grasped that the widening of

²³ J. P. Sommerville, *Royalists and Patriots, Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (London/N.Y., 1999); K. Sharpe, 'Ideas and Politics in Early Stuart England', *History Today*, 38 (1988), 45-51.

public discussion and debate posed a real problem for him and that it led to the growing challenge to the royal prerogative, making it increasingly difficult for him to maintain control of decision-making on foreign policy. However it is less likely he could have appreciated the deeper and more long-term impacts of periodical news reporting, read alongside the tracts of writers such as Thomas Scott, or interpreted with the help of Puritan preachers, to support the development of a radical Protestant world view.²⁴

The Spanish Match

Letting facts stand for themselves was the favoured approach but had its drawbacks. Even at the tactical level, the facts did not always produce an account that supported James. Newsbooks, through the lucrative co-operation of the syndicate and the Crown, could have been used as a vehicle for James to promote his point of view to the public but instead they exemplified his failure to do so. At no time was this more evident than during the 1623 crisis of the Spanish match. This section details news reporting that must go down in the annals of lost opportunities for both the Crown and publishers.

In February/March 1623 news of two major events was breaking: the one best known to English historians is the news of Charles and Buckingham's trip to Madrid to secure the hand in marriage of the Infanta. The other was news of the Arminian conspiracy against the Prince of Orange which, though posing less of an immediate threat to English Puritans, nonetheless appeared to demonstrate that nowhere was entirely safe, not even in the heartland of Calvinism, the United Provinces. Yet, just when it would seem the syndicate might be in greatest need of an editor, Gainsford was not employed. Many of the reports, letters and other documents, particularly about the Dutch conspiracy, were published without any editing while newsbooks maintained complete silence on the Madrid expedition, long after the destination and purpose of the journey were publicly known, up to the return of Charles and Buckingham.

²⁴ Readership, Ch. 3, 91-100; Ch. 4, 145-153; Ch. 5, 189-205; Durston, C. and Eales, J., eds., *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560-1700* (London, 1996), 5-6; R. Cust and A. Hughes, eds., *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-42* (1989), 29; P. Lake, 'Constitutional consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s; Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match', *H.J.*, xxv (1982), 805-25.

No doubt, news of the conspiracy presented a dilemma for the publishers and for those deputizing for Cottington while he travelled to Madrid with the Prince. In the absence of information on James' position (which must have been torn between abhorrence for any hint of treason and conspiracy, and regrets about the loss of any base for the development of a middle ground in the United Provinces), the syndicate seized the commercial opportunity that the conspiracy news presented. They adopted an old and familiar approach, dispensing with editorial services and printing unedited translations of the official documents. This was the speediest and most commercially viable approach, allowing them to publish issues quickly, in large numbers: it was also the most prudent. Cottington's representative evidently concurred. Issues appeared with no editorial comment whatever, neither condemning the treason nor questioning the veracity of reports. Lengthy passages even repeated some of the text in Dutch.²⁵

Why did Hague news sell well just when news was also breaking of Charles' expedition? The reports can only have amplified the sense of threat and danger to readers who saw events as interconnected and studied the news for 'signs' of the Divine Plan unfolding while the Crown became ever more deeply embroiled in relations with Spain. The view represented by contemporaries Thomas Scott, James Howell, John Reynolds and others and reflected in John Bowle's *Charles the First*, that Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador 'had been

²⁵ Ch. 4, 132-3. James helped to resolve dispute between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants through his delegation to the Synod of Dort in 1618. He is unlikely to have sympathized with Arminians accused of conspiracy. Patterson, 263-4, 271-2, 281; K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy', 201. (6 February 1623), 102, *S.T.C.* 18507.96, scraped together news from Constantinople, Italy, France, 17 begins a translation of a Dutch coranto, followed by extracts going over earlier ground, 31 starts translations of documents on the treason and an account of the capture of the plotters. The reward for capture is repeated in Dutch. (11 February 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.97. The following issue admits that the previous issue was confused, but repeats the story in Dutch. It explained 'The last weeke we receiued and published certaine priuate Letters concerning the late intended horrible treasin ... At what time ..., little or nothing was knowne ..., but since diuers persons haue beene apprehended, and some of them examined, and tortured; vpon whose examination the States haue permitted something to be published to the world ... assuring you, that so soone as more particulars shall come to my hand, ... you shall receiue it impartially.' (19 February 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.98. Regular reports began only on page 20. The next issue had a muddle of reports with 'A Proclamation of the States of Holland', in English repeated in large italics in Dutch. (28 February 1623), 30- end, *S.T.C.* 18507.99.

On 7 March two issues appeared: *Numb. 21. A Proclamation*, contains statements and letters about the conspiracy (7 March 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.100: and *Numb. 22, The Sentence and Execution*, which 'described the abominable, wicked, and barbarous Conspiciacie, (as was neuer heard of the like)' (7 March 1623), title page *S.T.C.* 18507.101. They were not simply filling up paper: two February issues ran to over forty pages. Possibly they aimed to demonstrate authenticity. Issues then returned to normal with a final piece about one conspirator. (31 March 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.103.

neutralizing the English' with negotiations for a Spanish match for Prince Charles while the Spanish fleet was being reinforced, was suddenly being tested. Whether we concur with Cogswell's view that Charles was right to go because he shortened negotiations and saw for himself that the Spanish were not serious, there can be little question that the step was decisive. Charles and Buckingham broke the deadlock in negotiations, failed to conclude an agreement in Madrid, and set in motion a chain of events that was to carry through into the 1624 Parliament and bring England to war. James understood the risks involved and the extent to which he had lost the initiative. Quite possibly he felt himself at a loss to present these developments publicly in any way that would have been any better received than silence. Whatever his reasons, the undeniable fact is that he did not try.²⁶

Cust described this as a period when the circulation of news became an integral part of the political process, something that those who were making the news had to make allowances for, 'which they appreciated could substantially affect public attitudes'. Yet discussions in the diplomatic process remained protected. It was impossible to see how this distinction could be maintained once the whereabouts of Charles and Buckingham were known. Cogswell's study of the sea change in English foreign policy that was precipitated by the trip to Madrid starts from the premiss that if historians look only at individual courtiers or at Parliamentary affairs they are 'likely to miss the full significance of the domestic turmoil over the Spanish match'. He shows how the clamour against the match had swelled from 1622.²⁷ Schumacher similarly noted that immediately after Charles departed for Spain there was an outbreak of anxious sermons. Thomas Gataker's tract, called *A Memento for Christians*, expressed the need for concern about the children of a king being in a strange land. The government responded by ordering the clergy to pray for Charles' safe return 'and no more'. Cust observed that items circulating as far as Chester about the Spanish match included Archbishop Abbot's supposed council speech opposing it, a letter purporting to be from the King of

²⁶ J. Bowle, *Charles the First* (1975), 64, 66-70; Cogswell, 58-60; Redworth, *The Prince*, 3-5, 32-34, 73-4, 136-8, challenged the view that the Palatinate was uppermost in the minds of Charles and James through an analysis of Spanish accounts of the negotiations, noting how little discussion there was of the Palatinate compared with debate over religious tolerance in Britain. However, Spain was driving negotiations and reflecting its own concerns. Even in 1624, James continued to meet Spanish ambassadors and raise the German question. Ruigh, *The Parliament*, 384-8.

²⁷ Cust, 73; Cogswell, 51, 27, 32, 34, 36-48.

Spain - informing Gondomar that the match was simply a ploy to keep James out of the war - and a copy of Thomas Alured's letter to Buckingham urging him to oppose the match. There was no evidence of the Court's side of the story. This is consistent with Schumacher's note that only two sermons were published supporting the match.²⁸

Meanwhile, the syndicate made no attempt to circumvent their understanding with Cottington and there is no evidence to suggest they attempted to renegotiate their agreement. Instead, we see a muted handling of the aftermath of the decision at Regensburg to depose Frederick. Newsbooks reported where the Emperor was granting freedom of worship to Protestants and where he was not. We can read of the poverty and famine in both Bohemia and Austria, the low value of the land in Bohemia, with the explanation that 'thus five severall Religions being in prosecution one of another: ...[and] Christendome still suffering which Religion soever prevailes'. We also learn of the Duke of Bavaria's policy of reform, 'wheresoever the Duke of Bavaria is Master they goe strongly with their manner of Reformation (as they call it) causing many to forsake their former Religion, and to turne Papists', and of the violence of his men. Tilly's manoeuvres were reported. We learn of Mansfeld's agreement with the French, of Turks moving into Poland, Silesia and Moravia, and of Christian's campaign defeat at Stadtlohn. The issue of 29 August consists of Italian news. The issue of 11 October included news of devaluation of prices and lots of misery recorded in news coming from Rome and Vienna. The 28 October issue had a discursive editorial explaining the implication of the manoeuvres of the Turks and Bethlem Gabor with the wish that he would help the Protestant cause.²⁹

There is scope for speculation here: did Gainsford resign that summer through frustration with the restrictions of the licensing agreement? Or were there personal reasons or arguments about pay in negotiations for the next contract? I have found no evidence. The syndicate was however missing a valuable commercial opportunity, unable to report on the progress of the visit or act as a

²⁸ Cust, 72-3, 80-1; Schumacher, 119, 146-7.

²⁹ (7 May 1623), 1, 4, 8, 14, *S.T.C.*18507.109; (27 August 1623), 1-3, 8-9, *S.T.C.*18507.123; (12 May 1623), 9, *S.T.C.*18507.110; (16 June 1623), 13, *S.T.C.*18507.115; (17 May 1623), 14, *S.T.C.*18507.111; Schumacher, 77; (29 July 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.121; (21 August 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.122; (29 August 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.124; (28 October 1623), 14, *S.T.C.*18507.131.

vehicle for the publication of any Crown-inspired account of the issues at stake. Yet, this restrained approach did not keep the newsbook printers out of the courts. Edward Allde was called to account by the Stationers' Court of Assistants and, on 13 June 1623, he apologized too for 'printing certain Currantes and other bookes, without lycense or Entrance'. Either James or the Stationers' Company was being particularly sensitive as negotiations in Spain reached their climax.³⁰

Frearson claimed that from July to October 1623 the coranto attacks on the Habsburg rulers were 'vitriolic'. I do not agree. It is true that the 16 June issue included news about rape and violence by Bavarian troops and the 10 July newsbook expressed the thought that there was no hope left for Bavarian Protestants, but Bavaria was never regarded as a potential ally by the English Crown, and any link with Spain was too many steps removed to have been a significant diplomatic consideration. Moreover, from August through October, it is possible to see an increasing trend for misery of every kind to be reported, including devaluation, plague, and escalating prices affecting anyone unfortunate enough to be in the way of the Turks, Bethlem Gabor or famine. It was as late as March/April 1624 before direct references to Spain were less guarded and then there was even mention of Spain's fear of war with England. I would not therefore use the word 'vitriolic'.³¹

The syndicate were finally free to join the clamour to celebrate the forthcoming return of the party with an announcement in their issue of 24 September 1623 under the heading *A Relation of the Journey of the High and Mighty Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, from ... Spaine ... for England about the 12 of Septem 1623*. 'Mr S D, an English gent in Charles traine' who was sent ahead with letters for James, supplied the account. It wished Charles God speed and ends,' as once again to enjoy the sweetnesse of his presence. Amen.' Butter also published with Henry Seile a pamphlet that reported 'the unspeakable joy of both nations: testified no lesse by Triumphal Expressions of the Spanish

³⁰ Jackson, 'Court Book C', 159, signed 13 June and entered 5 July; Frearson, App 3 and 256. Only later, in January 1624, when Bristol came home to face charges from Buckingham did the special commission learn how close James had come in both 1618 and 1623 to succeeding in securing a peaceful settlement. Patterson, 328-9, 336.

³¹ Frearson, 259; (16 June 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.115; (10 July 1623), *S.T.C.* 18507.118. For reports of misery and suffering (11 October 1623), 12-13, *S.T.C.* 18507.130; (28 October 1623), 14, *S.T.C.* 18507.131; (19 March 1624), 19, *S.T.C.* 18507.145.

Ambassadors (here now residing) as by the lowd Acclamations of our owne People'. Public celebrations demonstrated what Hirst has described as 'the clearest and most widespread expression of public opinion before the Restoration' and were so great that they became an embarrassment.³² On 25 September, James, responding to the immense popular interest in the negotiations and especially to the wave of anti-Spanish feeling unleashed, expressed his dissatisfaction with the efficiency of the various means at his disposal to control discussion and dissemination of news with *A Proclamation against the Disorderly printing, uttering and dispersing of books, pamphlets etc.* Its target was the vigorous polemic pamphlet trade flourishing both in imports and domestic publications. The September proclamation had no discernible effect on the syndicate. They continued to report the news as the Emperor began to distribute Frederick's lands, devaluation and poverty devastated much of central Europe and Bethlen Gabor and the Turks manoeuvred.³³

What is more noticeable in Gainsford's style over the winter of 1623/4, as England gradually adjusted to the abandonment of a Spanish marriage alliance and the influence of the pro-Spanish lobby dwindled, is a growth in confidence, not in the potential outcome of the conflict, nor in the justice of the Protestant cause, but more personally, in the value of his work as editor and in his own skills. In this period he was straightforward in his condemnation of reports he did not believe and direct in his responses to readers.³⁴ He well understood the constraints that continued to apply. In December he included in a report from France about their internal Protestant conflicts,

Now what will be the issue of this, time will declare: for great Kings wil deliberate upon businesse of such importance, and the subject must not expect present dispatches in matters of such consequences; lest Princes diminish their greatnesse.

³² (24 September 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.128; Schumacher, 121-2; Hirst, *Conflict*, 109.

³³ *Proclamations*, I, 583-5; Clegg, 186-7 noted the many risks taken in 1623 to publish and distribute this unauthorized material. Lambert, 20, suggested this proclamation was for trade purposes only. This is most unlikely in view of the heightened interest in the news and the fact that Calvert was collecting evidence about unauthorized publications at the time. For James, the pursuit of a Spanish match was not over: he raised the stakes in what Patterson describes as 'a bold and calculated attempt by James to hold onto the diplomatic initiative and keep his peace policy on track'. Correspondence continued with the papacy into November and negotiations ended only in December. Patterson, 332-4.

³⁴ (20 November 1623), 21, *S.T.C.*18507.133; (13 December 1623), *S.T.C.*18507.136; (19 March 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.145.

But with increased confidence came a measure of carelessness. By February, even references to Spanish diplomats seemed safe along with intimations of a change of line from the French government. A report from Paris from someone in the embassy of Lord Kensington reassured its recipient that the French were not likely to be raising arms against the Protestants and was quoted fully in the newsbook:

There is great alteration of officers at this Court, & the Spanish Ambassador seemeth much discontented, and we know not wherefore: the Jesuits for all that they are very busie, & dare still to threaten the Protestants, but I am perswaded, you shall heare more shortly: For although the Queen mother standeth altogether for the Romane Religion, yet are all things better carried, since her reconciliation and coming to Court, then they were before. God turne all to the best: For I thinke the world went never so ill in Europe as it is now.³⁵

Gainsford cannot have realised that negotiations for a French marriage had begun unofficially. He had blundered into highly sensitive matters. Gainsford was quickly reminded that James was still taking a close interest and that, contrary to any impression the syndicate may have gained from the seeming shift in foreign policy following the Prince's return from Madrid, Cottington's role had not ended. On 5 March we find the last reference to Cottington acting as a licenser and in the issue of 6 March 1624. Gainsford noted that he could not tell them that the Palatinate has been restored so 'you and I both must be contented with such other newes, as wee finde, and dare justify in London'.³⁶ This suggests that he was pulled up quite sharply. The licensing rules still applied and diplomatic matters remained firmly outside his remit.

Frearson wrote of Gainsford 'deceiving' the authorities during this period. For evidence, he listed the issues copied 'verbatim' from Dutch. He claims Gainsford was aiming to remind the government that if the syndicate did not publish then the Dutch would.³⁷ But James and Cottington were sufficiently astute not to be deceived by such shallow devices. James was consistent in allowing news

³⁵ (11 December 1623), 22, *S.T.C.* 18507.135; (24 February 1624), 21 – (misnumbered) 14, *S.T.C.* 18507.141.

³⁶ Kensington's negotiations were not officially underway until the following June. Patterson, 353; Arber, Vol. 4, shows Cottington's name for the last time in an entry to Butter dated 5 March 1624. (6 March 1624), verso, *S.T.C.* 18507.143. Cottington continued as the Prince's secretary until James' death the following spring, upon which he surrendered the post, and was asked to leave the Court. M. Havran, *Caroline Courtier: the Life of Lord Cottington* (1973), 81-2.

³⁷ 11 and 13 December 1623, and 7 and 15 January 1624, Frearson, 200.

of the war and its consequences while controlling reports of diplomatic efforts to ensure that the news neither caused offence nor embarrassment during sensitive discussions. After Gainsford's death in August 1624 newsbooks were no longer edited. They were in fact, as frequently claimed, straight 'out of the originals'. They were less coherently assembled yet the overall range of news remained broadly similar, further demonstrating that James's concern had been primarily to protect the diplomatic process.

I conclude that Cottington was an able administrator who established clear ground rules in 1622 that were understood by the syndicate, editor and Cottington's assistants who operated during the periods of his absence abroad. Those rules covered a requirement for publishers to co-operate to produce just one licensed series of approximately weekly issues. Editing was to make texts as coherent and accurate as possible by drawing on a wide range of reliable sources including Catholic ones and by avoiding speculation. Sensitive matters to be avoided included reports and letters from England that appeared in publications in Germany, the United Provinces or elsewhere, news of embassies and overt criticism of other governments, especially of Spain. Had James' diplomatic efforts been successful the verdict today on his media policy may well have been positive. But as it failed, the only lasting effect of Cottington's vigilance was to ensure that no one knew how close it came to realization, nor how realistic it may have been.

It had taken time to develop a news policy and then a process of trial and error and negotiation to implement it effectively. Newsbooks published under the supervision of Cottington recounted what was happening week by week on the Continent, on the basis of reports not only from Dutch and German corantos and avisos but also from reports published in Antwerp. They contained nothing potentially damaging to diplomatic relations with Spain. From James's point of view they may even have performed a useful service, after the failure of the 1621 Parliament to vote sufficient subsidies for effective action on behalf of Frederick in the Palatinate by helping to focus English readers upon the real military problems surrounding recovery of the Palatinate.

Clegg summarized the dichotomy that James's approach leaves us with:

Historians, who frequently turn to the troubled years, are no more successful than the Venetian ambassadors were in constructing a dialogue

for both the government's power and the apparent influence of the powerless populace. Censorship represents the inevitable sticking point. Between December 1619 and 1624 James repeatedly sought to silence opposition...Even so, opposition continued unabated.³⁸

Frearson argued that newsbooks were part of the armoury of opposition, that they were sympathetic to the Protestants, depicting them as respectable people who wanted to practise their faith in peace while reporting on the activities of the Catholics that included closing Protestant Churches, banishing preachers, taxing and billeting and confiscating property. He suggested that Gainsford made no distinction between the Austrian and Spanish branches of the Habsburgs, seeing Spain as the more aggressive partner and he concluded that the newsbooks 'were a form of propaganda similar to the Puritan pamphlets of Thomas Scott and others, which urged the English public to support the Protestant cause in Europe and opposed the pacific foreign policy of King James'. They 'provided abundant "evidence" in support of the more explicit attacks on the English government found in the Puritan pamphlets'. They were 'a thinly veiled vehicle for an oblique yet unmistakable and sustained critique of English foreign policy'.³⁹ However, newsbook content was more complex than Frearson allowed. It is most unlikely that either James or Cottington were deceived by Gainsford or lacking in ability to detect 'subtle' or 'veiled' messages. The real issue was the political and cultural impact of the fact that readers were able to follow events, develop and hone skills of critical analysis and apply their own interpretation to the events as they unfolded.

James was a Calvinist, and for all his efforts to establish Christian unity in Europe and a peaceful settlement to the crisis precipitated by Frederick's decision to accept the Bohemian Crown, he consistently held out for Protestant security and the restoration of the Palatinate. He also appears to have realized the true reality of the crisis. Restoring the Palatinate meant dealing with the Emperor and Bavaria and from the time the Protestants were defeated and on retreat there were only two ways forward: the first was through building alliances that were sufficiently strong to wield influence in central Europe; the second was through military action, on land, in Germany, on a sufficiently grand scale as to draw the Emperor to the negotiating table. Naval action against Spain, as favoured by many, was a less

³⁸ Clegg, 176.

³⁹ Frearson, 173, 222, 225.

direct option. It had the merits of a lower cost and of allowing England to intervene in an arena where it already had strength and expertise, but James believed intervention was potentially unnecessary so long as he had credible reasons for believing the Spanish were open to negotiation and had something to gain from a treaty with England. Regular reporting of the war as it evolved in Germany, especially since it was edited by a soldier familiar with the realities of European warfare, had potential to direct the attention of readers to the reality of what was happening ‘on the ground’. Yet it did not have the effect of converting readers to James’ perspective. As Cust and Cogswell have pointed out, James was not sufficiently proactive to win the public debate.⁴⁰ Readers learned nothing of the intricacies of international negotiation. The story of international alliances and the subtle shading of different political and religious affiliations that unfolded particularly of those, like Saxony and France, whose allegiance was less committed, remained complex however much Gainsford aimed to simplify it into a story of an uneven contest in which the defenders of Protestantism struggled valiantly against the superior Hapsburg forces.⁴¹ Under-reporting Protestant failures and heralding even minor successes would, if anything, have tended to allow readers to believe that potential Protestant allies were bigger and stronger than they were. This encouraged false hopes and made James’ lack of military or naval action all the more difficult to comprehend or accept.

Derek Hirst has argued that ‘the wars were interpreted by many as a vast conflict of religions, of the true against the false’. The war injected an ideological element into an already vulnerable body politic. Debates in the Parliament of 1621, especially in the second session, were informed by fresh news of the suffering of the Palatinate and of Elizabeth and Frederick and revealed divisions about financing, foreign policy, the proposed military approach and the underlying religious convictions. These helped to explain how the nation could divide more deeply in 1642.⁴² James’s failure was his apparent inability to realise that if people are kept informed about current events and government policies they apply their

⁴⁰ R. Cust, 60-90; Cogswell, 27-8, 30-4, 301, 311; T. Cogswell, ‘The Politics of Propaganda: Charles I and the People in the 1620s’ *J.B.S.*, 24 (1990), 192.

⁴¹ Frearson, 342, 196.

⁴² Hirst, *Conflict*, 103, 106.

own interpretation to the information and can reach different conclusions. This failure was all the more unaccountable given the strength of opposition, in print and in manuscript that was simultaneously circulating at the time. He would not tolerate opposition where the royal prerogative was at stake. He lacked the personal charm to persuade and his policy of appeasement towards Spain failed to bring any visible or sufficiently convincing results. He opened debate on sensitive subjects and, when the arguments did not go the way he anticipated, he attempted to close it again. He could exercise some control over the pulpits and, by means of the licensing system, over what might be published, but his repeated efforts to ban controversial publication demonstrate the inadequacy of the system to control illicit and imported works.

England goes to War

The return of Charles and Buckingham had little immediate effect on the publication of newsbooks. Cottington's influence diminished yet he continued to be responsible for licensing until March 1624. This section considers how the change in foreign policy ushered in by the 1624 Parliament affected newsbook publication.

The new Parliament met in February. While bad weather was delaying opening, the Lord Keeper recommended a proclamation to prohibit the publication and sale of any book not approved by authorized persons. Charles and Buckingham also made preparations, using their patronage, mobilizing allies in both Houses. James undertook to have his Secretary disclose correspondence and Charles and Buckingham relate what had happened, then listen to Parliament's advice. Buckingham reported to Parliament on 24 February, setting the stage for change in the government's foreign policy and war with Spain by presenting detailed reports of Spanish duplicity, and securing the support of important voices in the House of Commons.⁴³ Newsbooks had been reporting blow by blow the steady decline of the fortunes of the Protestants. At last, there was an opportunity for action. Three subsidies and three fifteenths were voted for a Spanish war, and Charles and Buckingham, against the advice of James, encouraged the impeachment of the Lord

⁴³ Ruigh, *The Parliament*, 154-5, 162-6, 35-36, 60-89, 187, 191-2, 216, 392; Cogswell, 63-68.

Treasurer Middlesex, who continued to oppose the war on cost grounds, for mismanagement of the Wardrobe. It was a worrying Parliament for James who saw the dangers in inviting Parliament to have so decisive a voice in royal concerns of marriage and foreign policy, allowing discussion of religion with a complaint against Richard Montague's tract *A New Gag for an Old Goose* that was thought to be strongly Arminian, and putting pressure on Councillors. But whatever James' misgivings, it marked a significant step with the Crown and Parliament in agreement on the decision to go to war. James prorogued Parliament at the end of May with a speech that praised 'the obedience and good respect of the Commons' and celebrated 'the happy conclusion of this session' apparently intending to recall them in the autumn, though he did not do so.⁴⁴

Conrad Russell argued that 'James and the House of Commons shared one illusion: both thought that by their dealings with Spain they could affect the policy of the Emperor in the Palatinate and Bohemia'. If so, it was understandable. Spinola's Spanish-Walloon army together with Tilly's Catholic League troops had taken the Palatinate. Newsbook readers were well aware that a Spaniard, Don Guilielmo, occupied the Palatinate on the left bank of the Rhine. Since 1621, with the ending of the Twelve Year Truce Spain had again been at war with the United Provinces. Action by 1624 was focused around the fortress of Breda and at sea, with Spanish efforts to damage the Dutch shipping trade in the Baltic and with the Iberian Peninsula. It is also a perspective shared by some historians: Brightwell and Adams argued that the spread of the war to Germany was due to Spanish involvement. There were however, a multiplicity of issues that separated Crown and Commons, around whether this was a battle against the Antichrist, or a political and dynastic issue, how the discussion and decision-making process should be conducted; what funds were needed, what preparations should be made, and how funds should be spent. As Kevin Sharpe summarized: 'In the euphoria of 1624, such differences were not aired and may not have been comprehended'. He saw

⁴⁴ Ruigh, *The Parliament*, 217-227, 230, 249-55, 303-344; D. L. Smith, *The Stuart Parliaments 1603-1689* (1999), 111-112; Bowle, *Charles*, 80-1.

these as rooted in fundamentally discordant attitudes to strategy, war and the conduct of foreign affairs.⁴⁵

The most immediate and visible question in 1624 was about how England might best intervene. England had been injecting money and forces into Germany since the 1621 benevolence. Even for MPs who were perhaps naïve about the true costs of seventeenth-century warfare or the inadequacy of the financial mechanisms available to the Crown, it was easy to see that a great deal of money could be needed. Adams argued that 'Parliament would not support an expedition to the Palatinate; James would not undertake any other form of military action'. Cogswell accepts that 'the prospect of a major expeditionary force operating deep inside the Empire, and the cost of such a venture, filled the Commons with horror'. However, he argues that the Commons was willing to use loans to encourage princes within the Empire to start to work together again, pointing out that they were only invited to increase the defence budget. They voted a bigger subsidy than ever before and they expected to meet again, though he concedes that 'generous though the 1624 Parliament was the fact remains that it was not generous enough to underwrite the full expense of warfare'. James remained firm throughout the 1624 Parliament in refusing to declare war on Spain and insisting that recovery of the Palatinate was the only justifiable reason for hostilities. He was also consistent in then dedicating funds to Mansfeld's expedition with a specific instruction not to use them in the Netherlands against Spain. Ruigh concluded that 'the mutual distrust' between King and Commons was such that it was only the fear of a breach that prevented dissolution, plus the intervention of Charles and Buckingham that gratified Parliament and placated James. But, as Hirst has more recently argued, their interventions, concealing the extent of the divergence of views between Crown and Commons, created a misunderstanding that was to undermine subsequent Parliaments.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ C. Russell, *The Crisis of Parliaments; English History 1509-1660* (Oxford, 1971), 292; *Numb.* 29. *The Continuation*, Butter and Sheffard (2 May 1623, S.T.C.18507.108), 19-20; P. Brightwell, 'Spanish Origins of the Thirty Years' War', *European Studies Review*, 9 (1979); P. Brightwell, 'Spain and Bohemia: The Decision to Intervene, 1619', *European Studies Review*, 12 (1982), 117-141; P. Brightwell, 'Spain, Bohemia and Europe, 1619-21', *European Studies Review*, 12 (1982), 371-399; Sharpe, 7; Adams, 'Foreign Policy', 149.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 171; Cogswell, 225, 266-8, 310-12, 318, 242-3; Ruigh, *The Parliament*, 385-7, 391, 393-394; Hirst, *Conflict*, 110-111.

Signals about how money was to be spent were mixed. Cogswell points to the fact that Mansfeld was in London when the subsidies were debated and that his popularity was celebrated in ballads and newbooks alike. He suggests that James agreed to support Mansfeld because his army could unite the Protestant forces and potentially do something for his daughter at the least possible cost, but that James only agreed to payment subject to Mansfeld also getting French support. Further, Cogswell notes the mass of anti-Catholic material in print in the summer of 1624. It was, he suggests, 'a banner year for booksellers' and he sees the very fact that government was not very concerned about the printing and distribution of almost all of these as an acknowledgement that it was moving into line with popular expectations. He concludes that the consensus in celebrating the end of Spanish treaties 'combined to convey to their readers a profound feeling of providential deliverance'.⁴⁷ The tracts were rather less consistent about strategy. A few, such as Leighton's *Speculum Belli* and Scott's *Vox Regis*, assumed that Parliament was called to provide for direct participation in the war. The frontispiece of *Vox Regis* even shows the Commons offering their hearts and purses for the war. D'Ewes expressed hope for direct action in Germany and believed that many shared his view. Others, including *Tom Tell-Troath* and *Vox Militis*, complained of too much peace, while John Reynolds praised Buckingham's work to restore the navy in *Vox Coeli* and *Votivae Angliciae*.⁴⁸ Many enthusiasts harked back to the Elizabethan era, nurturing memories of a naval war against Spain that was perceived as successful and cheap, even potentially profitable. Sir Francis Seymour stated that 'he had heard wars spoken on, and an army, but would be glad to hear where. The Palatinate, the place intended by his Majesty. This were never thought of, nor fit for the consideration of this House, in regard of the infinite charge'. Some pamphleteers argued that a profit could be made from a naval war but also supported an attack on Spain in the United Provinces. Meanwhile, newsbooks reported whatever came their way that was likely to be of interest and included naval and some mercantile shipping news. They were increasingly reporting news

⁴⁷ Cogswell, 224-5, 243, 281-299; Schumacher, 161; Cogswell, 'The Politics', 214.

⁴⁸ Schumacher, 149, 140-1, 134-5, 148; M. A. Breslow, *English Puritan Views of Foreign Nations 1618-1640* (Harvard, 1970), quotes D'Ewes, 29; Clegg, 174-5, 185.

of bandits and pirates, which would have tended to support the idea that a stronger naval presence was needed.⁴⁹

By this time James was allowing greater freedom to the press but, as his treatment of John Reynolds showed, when he took a step too far in criticising James for failure to protect his daughter and son-in-law and was imprisoned in July 1624, he was still defining limits. On 15 August 1624 a proclamation appeared against 'seditious, popish and puritanical bookes and pamphlets' which stated that 'No person or persons whatsoever (should) presume to print any Booke or Pamphlet, touching, or concerning matters of Religion, Church government or State ... (unless it has first been) ... perused, corrected, and allowed'. It added that no person was to import a book until it had been allowed. This proclamation coincided with the nine-day run of Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chesse*, in August, which was anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish and offended the Spanish ambassador, Coloma, who complained to James. A letter from Conway to the Privy Council dated 12 August asked them to investigate but it is indicative of James' change of heart by this stage that action was taken slowly. Middleton was not severely punished and, despite the fact that the process of producing copies had already begun, no follow-up action seems to have been taken against the printers who proceeded without licence or entry.⁵⁰

As in September 1623, this proclamation appears to have had no direct effect on newsbook publication. From March until the following September, with war the determined course, the government neglected its supervision. Cottington was out of favour as discussions with Spain deteriorated and he withdrew from Court in April 1625. Issues appeared without licence or entry but this did not help the syndicate since the important news, both about the meeting of the Catholic League at Augsburg and the meeting between France and the United Provinces at Compiègne in June were slow to reach them. England joined their alliance on 15

⁴⁹ Schumacher, 155-6, 158-160. For example, (20 November 1623), 6, *S.T.C.* 18507.133, tells of pirates following 3 English ships into harbour at 'Lignorne'; (11 December 1623), 15-17, *S.T.C.* 18507.135, covers pirate activity in the Mediterranean, shipping reports on the East and West Indian Companies and the use of Spanish bullion to support Spinola.

⁵⁰ *Proclamations*, 1, 599-600; Clegg, 187-9. T. Cogswell, 'Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 47 (1984) 273-288, argued that this play demonstrated to cunning and valour of Charles and Buckingham who, by going to Madrid, had exposed Spanish designs for a 'universal monarchy'. The play was consequently evidence of a new leniency or 'blessed revolution'.

June, yet three weeks later, in the last issue edited by Gainsford, he was still struggling to distinguish truth from rumour. As a result it seems unlikely that the stronger position of the Protestant side in 1624 was fully appreciated by readers.⁵¹ Newsbooks processed the minutiae of the war while sometimes failing to recognize bigger political pictures.

After Gainsford's death, the publishers did not appoint another editor. Gainsford's experience and skills had made him uniquely suitable, and they knew that finding a replacement would not be easy. There were also financial considerations: as the fortunes of Frederick declined and attention turned to war with Spain, sales of news of military action on the mainland though still buoyant were dropping. The publishers may well have concluded that they could save costs by not employing another editor. Also with the withdrawal of Cottington from the scene and no discernable pressure from government there was no longer pressure to collaborate. The outcome was that the syndicate split and Archer found a new partner, Benjamin Fisher, who had a shop in Paternoster Row, and called his newsbook *A Continuation of the Former Newes*. It was a poorly translated and assembled effort which Archer clearly intended to sell as the next in the syndicate series since he numbered it 32. He also aimed to protect the copyright and turned to Thomas Worrall, the bishop of London's chaplain and rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, who had responsibility primarily for the licensing of religious works. He was not known as a statesman with an understanding of foreign politics but as a fairly lax licenser who readily gave his authority. Worrall and Warden Lownes entered Archer's newsbook on 7 September.⁵²

Archer was quickly challenged. The next day, possibly due to pressure from the remainder of the syndicate, he produced a covering sheet for his newsbook with a different title *Extraordinary Newes. Three Great Invasions already attempted* and on that page the number was confusingly given as 23. In a race to

⁵¹ Ruigh, *The Parliament*, 288; (3 July 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.149; Schumacher, 168-9.

⁵² (9 September 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.346. The syndicate started to fall apart in July. Gainsford referred to the newsbooks as 'our next Relations (for so I stile the newes which I write) to distinguish them from other which (as it seemeth) have not...[like us paid good money to get good quality news reports]'. (3 July 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.149. Worrall authorized over 100 works during the last three years of James's reign and continued to work as an ecclesiastical licenser under Charles. Andrew Marvel wrote of 'Doctor Worral, the Bishop of London's Chaplain, Scholar good enough, but a free fellow-like man, and of no very tender Conscience' was apt to approve 'hand over head' to any copy submitted to him. W. W. Greg, *Licensers for the Press* (Oxford, 1962), 289-290; Clegg, 66.

establish their legitimacy, on 10 September Bourne and Butter also went to Worrall and Lownes and entered their next newsbook which duly appeared on 11 September as *The Continuation of the weekly Newes* and bore the names of Butter, Bourne, Newbery and Sheffard. Frearson has suggested that Archer tried to steal the market of readers for the publishing syndicate's corantos. But given that Archer was the initiator and founder of this trade, he probably saw this differently and, true to pattern, was once more the first to realize the significance of the changes that were taking place at a political level and to explore new options. Sadly for Archer, he was under-resourced.⁵³ Benjamin Fisher abandoned the enterprise after his first brush with the competition. Archer continued to register under the authority of Dr Worrall until December and to publish news from time to time until 1628, but his issues lacked the content and range of material that was available from the news networks. He doubtless also lost access to much of the domestic distribution network. Archer lost hope of market recognition and ceded the title to Bourne and Butter. He avoided further conflict by employing a wide range of titles. His 21 October 1624 issue was called *A relation of the chieftest and last proceedings* and in November he published at least two more issues. From 1625 to 1628 Archer did not number or date his infrequent publications. His fortunes never recovered and he ended his days in poverty, reliant on the charity of the Stationers' Company.⁵⁴

The syndicate dissolved after Archer's challenge leaving Butter and Bourne to continue in partnership. To maintain their market and ensure their issues were seen as the main series the title page of almost every issue indicated the date of the previous one. From 11 September 1624 the opening words of the title of the series were standardized to *The continuation of the (or our) weekly (or weekely) newes*. Further standardization occurred when the imprint, 'Printed for Mercurius Britannicus' was adopted by Butter and Bourne in December 1624. Together these

⁵³ (9 September 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.347; Arber, Vol. 4, 84, entry for 10 September 1624; (11 September 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.151; Frearson, 265. For an example of the poor quality of Archer's work see (11 October 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.348. Archer used large print with only 11 pages of scraps he had assembled from a variety of sources.

⁵⁴ (21 October 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.349; (10 November 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.351; (24 November 1624), *S.T.C.*18507.352; Jackson, 'Court Book C', 221, 20 December 1630, 'It is ordered yt Tho: Archer shall have 10s p qvter out of ye poores money'; Ch. 4, 122-4, 153-4.

changes produced a uniform front page despite variations in the longer form of the title and they confirmed their status as the official foreign news publishers.⁵⁵

Butter and Bourne clearly placed more faith in marketing techniques and the loyalty of their established clientele than they did in any copyright established through licensing. After obtaining two authorizations from Worrall in September they must have decided that, with their readership secure and Cottington no longer breathing down their necks, they could relax and they made no entries with the Company of Stationers in October. However, this was not acceptable to the Company. On 6 November Butter was fined 6s. 9d. 'for printing a Currant without entrance', as part of what looks like a sweep by the Stationers' Company to address infringements by a number of news publishers, including Nicholas Oakes who was also fined for publishing news about Breda without licence and Thomas Archer who was given a warning. The purpose appears to have been to re-establish order and organization.⁵⁶ It set in place a new system, no longer overseen directly by the state but conforming to regular trade practices. It may also have suited James's purposes reflecting the change in foreign policy. (Mansfeld was, by this stage, recruiting new forces to take to Germany.) But there is no evidence of Crown involvement. Butter and Bourne continued to turn to Worrall for licences and paid for their entries in the Company register but they were only doing this to satisfy the trade requirement for an entry fee. They were no longer seeking authority in order to stay on the right side of the Crown and Worrall was less effective in inspecting newsbooks than his predecessor.

The syndicate's first newsbook without Archer was completely unedited. It contained both the Jansz and Veseler corantos from Amsterdam and reflected, unmediated, the optimism of its Protestant correspondents. The formation of the anti-Habsburg Alliance is reported but without according it the weight that might be expected had there been any appreciation of its potential significance;

It is held for certaine and true, that the aforesaid union betwixt most mighty Kings, Princes, Potentates, Commonwealthes and Nobles, is now firmly

⁵⁵ Dahl, 114, suggested that showing the date of the previous issue was an original idea unknown in any other series. It made it clear this was one continuous series. We occasionally see a small variation, such as *Numb. 42. The third newes continued for this moneth*, M.B. (8 December 1626), *S.T.C.* 18507.184; Dahl, 133.

⁵⁶ Jackson, 'Fine Book', 472; 'Court Book', 171.

made: and that there is such a unity, that many Lords wonder thereat, & they are resolved & meane to unsit the house of Austria, Burgundy, & the King of Spaine'. The 'valiantest and best Souldiers and Officers lye (in Bergen). As also above 1000 voluntaries, as well French and English, most persons of qualitie...in the meanetime the Spainiards make great outrage, and have shamefully abused some women and maids of the towne... stripping them naked.

Butter and Bourne soon showed no anxiety about reporting whatever arrived in their mailbag. Their issue of 20 October included a report from France, 'that our English, as well the Ambassadors as others are used with more then an ordinary respect of courtesie in all that Kingdome' and this was not picked up either by them as an opportunity for speculation, or by the Crown, as an occasion for censure.⁵⁷

The issue of 4 December 1624 stands out for its rich combination of European and English news, showing how fully England had become engaged in European affairs and demonstrating how far the boundary had changed on what could be reported. It contained the French response to the royal marriage reported from Paris,

there hath beene much triumphing and solemnity used in the Court, the City of Paris & generally through the Kingdome of France, for the honour of the concluded marriage betweene the high and mighty Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and Christian of Bourbon, daughter unto Henry the fourth of famous memory.

The publishers included reports of the congratulations of many ambassadors but noted that the Spanish ambassador was less than happy. This story is complemented in February 1625 by a report from Madrid, 'Two dayes agoe made the French Ambassadors our King acquainted with the match that is concluded betwixt France and England, and the people here in generall shewed thereupon signes of Joye'. These reports even include reports that originated in England that had been routinely edited out of issues from 1621 onwards. Thus we learn from the issue of 4 December from a report written from England,

The like solemnities were used upon Sunday Last in London, and other neighbouring places'. The news is welcome by all, 'except Jesuited English, who have not so much hope to accomplish their ambitious projects, allwayes hurtful to the good, and tranquility of this kingdome; by this marriage.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ (11 September 1624), 5, 7, *S.T.C.* 18507.151; for more on this issue Ch. 2, 59-60; (20 October 1624), 7, *S.T.C.* 18507.155.

⁵⁸ (4 December 1624), 4-5, *S.T.C.* 18507.158; (8 February 1625), 4, *S.T.C.* 18507.162.

Through the autumn and winter of 1624/5 the siege of Breda was well reported in the sort of detail and with a level of coherence that English readers would have appreciated even though there was no London editor. But even in military matters, Worrall was allowing news originating in England to be reprinted in London. For example, a report appeared from a coranto from Hamburg which recorded the assembling of German and English troops, including an account from England that

twelve thousand English who are appointed to meete at Dover... to march under the command of the most illustrious Ernestus Earle of Mansfeld, a man whose commaund and worth is such that it is beyond the panegiries and stile of my commendation. These Troupes are to be payd one third part out of England, another third part out of Fraunce, and the last third from the Protestant ...Cities of the German Empire. What their Design is, God he knows...the issue whereof we hope will prove fortunate, to us, our friends & our Country.

The report ends with 'A list of those souldiers who are Prest out of every Shire in England for this next expedition of Count Mansfield'. The writer solemnly warns readers about the value of secrecy in laying military plans. This report is sufficiently precise in detail and accuracy, and even in the line it draws in relation to the intended purpose and destination of the troops, to suggest that it could have come from an official source.⁵⁹

Butter and Bourne may have been able to dispense with an editor of note, but they still needed a translator, someone to control the length of the issues and sometimes, too, to include an editorial notice. Who did these tasks after August 1624 is unknown, though John Pory may have taken on the translation on his return from Virginia. A seemingly modest note at the end of a story suggested that this new translator had less editorial control and that no one was attempting to assess the merit or significance of reports.

I hope that none that have any sence or judgement will blame me if either hee, I, or another shall receive or publish hereafter anything contrary to this newes. For I translate only the Newes verbatim out of the Tongues or Languages in which they are written, and having no skill in Prognostication, leave therefore the judgement to the Reader, & that especially when there are tidings which contradict one another.

⁵⁹ (15 November 1624), 8-9, *S.T.C.* 18507.156; (1 February 1625), 16-17, *S.T.C.* 18507.161; (4 December 1624), 18-19, 21, *S.T.C.* 18507.158. This may have been provided at the instigation of Buckingham, given his involvement in the engagement of Mansfeld, and an early signal of his willingness to court the public and gamble on military success.

Other notices appear to bluntly reveal the feelings of the publishers towards Verheoeven's Antwerp news.

May it please you to understand, that whereas we have hitherto printed (for the most part) The *Occurrences* ... from the Protestant side, which some have excepted against: wherefore to give them content, we propose to publish (as they now come into our hands) such Relations as are printed at Antwerp, Vtopia, or other such ... to build their miraculous faith upon: and feede them with Milke from their owne dame, and this we doe not for profit, but to free ourselves from partiallity.

In fact, their real reason for using this material at all at this time was a shortage of other reports.⁶⁰

Direct translation of letters from different corantos could result in multiple repetitions. Again an answer claims to come from the translator but seems to have come from the publishers given its opening position, its impatient tone, and stark contrast with a note later in the text quoted first in the paragraph above:

I intend to answer an objection which hath beene made by one or two, that I have made lately some repetitions: To this I answer, that I know not of any, but very well of confirmations of matters of consequence, which contained likewise divers other notable circumstances which were not printed in our former newes: It is very well knowne that ordinarily those which write newes beyond the seas, give notice of it, when any things of moment are confirmed, and that especially when they had written before that they were rumoured. For my part I would willingly please everyone, but seeing that this is impossible, and not Jupiter himselfe could give content to everyone whatsoever weather he sent, whether it were drie or wet, I will still doe my best endeuours, and please every one as farre as I can. And I hope that all men of discretion would have bourne with me, if I had latey extended our newes as farre as I could, seeing that we received none from the United Provinces in the space of 5 or 6 weekes (by reason of contrary winde, which was not seen in the space of 30 years).⁶¹

Sensitivity about the Spanish government and its ambassadors was no longer relevant and Cottington's skills no longer required so the lines of engagement between the industry and the Crown were redrawn. Satisfied that the Crown was no longer interested, the publishers brought in Worrall, simply to

⁶⁰ See Ch 5, 183-4; (28 June 1625), 5, *S.T.C.* 18507.173; Dahl, 137. Dahl described the 'rankness of the wording' of a notice published 29 March 1625 as typical of the notices published at this time, verso, *S.T.C.* 18507.164. The claim, that all that was being done was exact translation, was reiterated in May, 'The Translator to the Reader. Seeing that I have lately received many particular advices of the last two conflicts which have been made betwixt Count Mansfield and the Imperialists, I will exactly translate then, and leave the judgement of them to your discretion'. (23 May 1626), 11, *S.T.C.* 18507.179.

⁶¹ (28 June 1625), 1-2, *S.T.C.* 18507.173, 1-2.

establish copyright. The Court of the Stationers' Company supported the arrangement because it secured their continued role and income. Far fewer issues were entered in the Company's register and Butter and Bourne established a bulk reckoning system with the Company.⁶²

By December 1624 we see signs that perhaps Charles and Buckingham recognized some potential benefits in the reporting of England's new role in continental affairs. They were allowing people who were sufficiently well connected to know what was happening in diplomatic and military circles to release their accounts. It was their misfortune that constraints placed on the funds expended in 1624 exacerbated the problems of mismanagement inherent in a war, where alliances came and went, and generals often acted independently of the rulers from whom they received their commissions preventing the effective deployment of the forces they supported. Consequently news reported in the early years of Charles' reign was uniformly bad and it would have been very difficult for readers to comprehend from the reports they received quite why the allies were failing to meet up and execute anything resembling an effective campaign. Butter and Bourne became the purveyors of news that was singularly unlikely to inspire confidence in the ability of Charles and Buckingham to manage a war effort.

Part 2

Charles I's Policy

This section explores Charles' handling of the press from 1625-6, during the period when the Crown needed news of military or naval success in order to win credibility at home and financial support.

Charles came to the throne committed to a French marriage and faced with funding war in a period of economic depression using ineffective financial machinery. Of the money voted in 1625, £360,000 had gone to Denmark and £100,000 to troops in the Low Countries. £240,000 had gone to recruiting and equipping an army of 12,000 pressed men who had been transported under the command of Mansfeld from Dover to Vlissingen in January 1625. They had embarked ill-equipped and under instructions from James that depended on support

⁶² Ch. 4, 126-7.

from France which did not materialise and precluded potential effective action in support of the Dutch at Breda. Yet Charles began his reign in a spirit of confidence and optimism. He ordered what was left of Mansfeld's troops (barely 3000 in active service after the losses from disease and desertion) to Breda to support the Dutch and turned his attention to raising funds. His experience during the Parliament of 1624 suggested that he could handle it and align foreign policy with public opinion. He also initiated a more open style of public relations, backed by his use of the pulpit and the printing press over the Spanish match and French alliance.⁶³

Charles expected parliamentary support for his plan to attack Spain directly and for a naval campaign but his confidence seems to have blinded him to the need to construct an effective court party in the House of Commons. He equally neglected to take the sorts of precautions familiar under James to ensure that the printing industry supported his policies or at least published nothing to undermine them. He seems to have been content to let the news speak for itself, allowing interested and sympathetic insiders to contribute to the news, not actively taking steps to tell the royal story. A *laissez faire* approach to the press might have worked but for the fact that events in the Low Countries and Germany went from bad to worse. Readers in England followed the courage and suffering of the Dutch in Breda and were left to wonder why the English troops did not arrive. As newsbooks reported outward events only, they were silent about strategy, including the fact that French aid was promised but not forthcoming, and that James had wanted Mansfeld's troops to go to Germany not the Netherlands. Charles and Buckingham appear to have been oblivious of this public reading of events, expecting continuity between the Parliaments of 1624 and 1625, notwithstanding the fact that fresh elections were needed and that the new MPs would be well informed about events on the Continent. Worse, neither of them appears to have contemplated the possibility that they might be considered accountable for the failures reported.⁶⁴

⁶³ Breslaw *A Mirror*, 30 – 31; C. R. Kyle, 'Prince Charles in the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624', *H. J.*, 41 (1998), 603-624; P. Gregg, *King Charles I* (1981/2000), 124-5; Cogswell, 'The Politics', 191-197.

⁶⁴ (14 April 1625), 10-11, *S.T.C.* 18507.166; (24 May 1625), final report from English officer in Dort, *S.T.C.* 18507.171. T. Cogswell, 'The People's Love: the Duke of Buckingham and popularity', in eds., T.

Charles called Parliament for June seeking help to make good his commitments in Europe and declare war on Spain. However, he did not directly address the fact that there was a discrepancy between the line taken, particularly by Buckingham in the Parliament of 1624, and the implementation of foreign policy under the direction of James in his last months, even though the effects were being reported for all to see. This choice combined with timing that could hardly have been less auspicious. Breda was lost and the Dutch marched out on 5 June 1625. This news was broken to the assembling MPs in a gathering storm of reported rumours. The English loan ships sailed for France on 9 June but to present a show of force to quell the Huguenots, not to oppose Spain. Meanwhile Wallenstein moved to support Tilly, and the Protestant alliance began to crack. Readers were angry. In the issue of 28 June the Translator attempted to smooth things over, not only explaining why the newsbooks included and repeated rumours but also that 'a contrary winde' had prevented them from receiving anything from the Low Countries, except Antwerp reports. But the reports that followed from the Dutch only confirmed what they had already heard. The publishers buried Breda news at the back of the issue but this did not make it any more palatable.⁶⁵

As if this were not enough to challenge the mood of MPs, there was an outbreak of the plague so severe that Members assembled in fear for their lives and Parliament had to be adjourned to Oxford in August. Suspicion about the terms of the French marriage agreement and Charles' decision to protect Montague, following his publication of a further Arminian tract, *Appello Caesarem*, which was dedicated to Charles, were added to complaints about Buckingham's management of the fleet and of increasing piracy. Newsbooks added fuel to the flames by leading with reports of rumours of the recovery of 'Todos los Santos' (Bahia in the West Indies) by the Spanish in March/April and the loss of two Dutch ships coming from Brazil.⁶⁶ The result was a break down in discussions in the House of Commons and early dissolution with only 2 subsidies voted.

Cogswell, R. Cust and P. Lake, *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain* (Cambridge, 2002), 221.

⁶⁵ Wedgwood, 201-3; (28 June 1625), 2, 19-22, *S.T.C.*18507.173.

⁶⁶ Russell, *The Crisis*, 300-2; Hirst, *Conflict*, 113-4; (28 June 1625), 1-5, *S.T.C.*18507.173.

So Charles began his reign levying a forced loan, pressing men and billeting them throughout the summer in order to assemble the 1625 fleet. Hirst described the wedge these actions placed between the new King and his people. 'Such burdens were not readily understood, for fear of the plague made men all over the country shun company and stop trading, and left inhabitants of clothing areas (already suffering an economic depression) facing starvation'. The English and Dutch fleet's attack on Cadiz in October/November 1625 resulted in another defeat. Cadiz was better defended than in Elizabethan times and the English forces were ill equipped and had not seen action for more than 20 years. In Germany things were no better. Only Denmark went to war in the summer of 1625. Money from England ran out and no more payments were forthcoming except for Mansfeld's troops and they received less than a third of what was expected. Supplies for the war were missed, inadequate or too late.⁶⁷

By the beginning of 1626 however, a fresh anti-Habsburg Alliance had been agreed at the Hague Convention that brought together Dutch, English and Danish interests and had the support of France and Bethlem Gabor. This was based on a Danish plan to eject Imperial and League troops from the Lower Saxon Circle and relieve pressure on the United Provinces. So Charles tried again to secure support at home, calling a new Parliament in February 1626, this time attempting to keep out some of the more difficult members by pricking them as sheriffs. Nothing was done, however, to influence news in circulation or to explain the significance of the new alliance.

While Parliament was sitting printed news was in short supply with the number of issues falling despite the existence of a market of readers with MPs in town. The publishers blamed the damage being done by Dunkirkers to Dutch and English shipping, so even lack of news could be attributed to Buckingham's failure as admiral to command the fleet. What news did get through reflected badly on the English war effort. Butter and Bourne put the best face on it that they could within their limited resources. For example, the front page of the issue of 18 January lists one item after another, promising news of Protestant victories but the content was

⁶⁷ Hirst, *Conflict*, 116; Bowle, *Charles*, 94-6; Wedgwood, 203; R. G. Asch, *The Thirty Years' War; The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-48* (New York, 1997), 80-5, 88; Sharpe, 8.

primarily of Catholic origin and began with a Spanish report celebrating the safe arrival of the Spanish fleet in November having evaded the English. When news of Mansfeld's defeat by Wallenstein at Dessau Bridge on the Elbe in April reached England Joseph Mead wrote to Stuteville,

Mansfield is overthrown by Count Wallenstein, nor can gather his men together again for want of money, which he hath in vain expected from us. Wallenstein is thirty thousand strong, and proceeds. All will be lost, and they say by our fault.⁶⁸

In Parliament blame was placed on Buckingham. He was accused of mismanagement and impeached. To protect him, Charles dissolved Parliament in June without gaining any further supply.

With no new money from England, bad news continued unabated. Christian of Brunswick died in June 1626 dejected. While in August, Christian of Denmark lost half his army at Lutter and Tilly occupied the greater part of Lower Saxony. After defeat Mansfeld headed to Brandenburg and then Silesia to join Bethlem Gabor. The subsequent manoeuvres of Mansfeld and Bethlem Gabor through Moravia and Silesia were difficult to follow or place in context, though they were met with some short-lived, initial success. The English reading public lost both heart and interest. By the end of 1625 the plague had reduced the London population by 20%, doing considerable damage to the economy. Sales of newsbooks petered out after January 1626 and were to remain low until 1630 when Gustavus Adolphus revived the fortunes of the Protestant cause.⁶⁹

Thus, despite the optimism with which Charles embarked upon an adversarial foreign policy in 1625, he was soon frustrated. The support he expected was not forthcoming. He did not secure an adequate vote of funds. Failure bred further failures, both on land and at sea. Yet Charles did nothing to attempt to influence public opinion, either by means of censorship or by spelling out the opportunities that were offered by the formation of an anti-Habsburg Alliance. Cogswell has suggested that a division in opinion developed that owed much to the way government presented its position. He considered Charles' problems to have been entirely of his own making since he knew how to explain his case, yet chose

⁶⁸ (18 January 1626), 11, 1, *S.T.C.* 18507.177; Harl. MS. 390 fo.8, May 1626; *CandT*, I, 100, Harl. MS. 390 fo.40, 8 April 1626, Mead wrote, 'Of foreign news we hear nothing; the Dunkirkers stop all'.

⁶⁹ Wedgwood, 209-12; Bowle, *Charles*, 98-100; Russell, *The Crisis*, 302-3; Hirst, *Conflict*, 116-8; Ch. 4, 134-7.

not to. Conrad Russell identified in Charles 'tunnel vision' which made it very difficult for him to understand anyone's else's perspective and Cust has since explained this in terms of a deep-seated mistrust of popularity which resonated with contemporary thinking and which he traced back to Charles' classical education and the influence of James' guidance on how to become a good ruler in *Basilicon Doron*.⁷⁰ An education that depicted the people as irrational and unstable, may have deterred Charles from considering their views, while his ideas about kingship and its dignity may have obscured the distinction between actively courting popularity (in the way that Buckingham had quite unashamedly done in 1624) and simply arguing his case. His reluctance to explain himself or to take any other kind of protective action through, for example, licensing control, is conspicuous from the evidence of newsbooks in the first years of his reign. It led, by the summer of 1626, to an early breakdown in relationships. Parliament was unwilling to back failure and readers only wanted to buy newsbooks that held some hope of success for the Protestant cause.

Isle of Rhé 1627 and Weckherlin

After the failures of 1625 and 1626 Charles' approach to the press started to change. At first this took the form of only a minimal exercise of censorship in June 1626 when he issued a proclamation against the printing and distribution of the House of Commons' *Remonstrance*. But by December 1626 Warwick was at sea and providing news and some privateering success against the Spanish.⁷¹ Charles and Buckingham were soon to develop a much more proactive approach to public relations in a bid to improve Buckingham's image and regain the popularity he had lost. This section explores the implications for the periodic news trade.

Cogswell described Buckingham's fall from popularity after the Parliament of 1624 and his use of the Rhé expedition in 1627 to win back popular acclaim. Charles decided to intervene against the French because he felt his honour was at stake after the English loan ships had been used to weaken the Huguenots in 1626. This gave Buckingham an opportunity to pose as a Protestant champion but what

⁷⁰ Cogswell, 'The Politics', 191, 200; C. S. R. Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), 207; R. Cust, 'Charles I and Popularity', in eds., Cogswell, Cust and Lake, *Politics*, 235-256.

⁷¹ *Proclamations*, II, 93-95; (8 December 1626), 13-14, *S.T.C.* 18507.184.

might have proved a boon for Butter and Bourne did not turn out that way since they were not the chosen publishers. Charles had never given them favourable treatment. Possibly he was influenced by the criticisms of Butter in particular by Ben Jonson in his recent plays. If the news campaign was to be successful it could not afford to be associated with a publisher whose credibility had been the butt of jokes.⁷²

A publicity campaign was planned alongside the expedition and was two pronged, with publications going to Thomas Walkley while restraints were placed on the circulation of other news, particularly on the activities of Butter. Early in 1627 Secretary Conway wrote to the Stationers' Company complaining of

unfitting liberties which some of your Companie do take in printing weekly for their owne privat gaine, divers false and fabulous papers under the titles of Avisoes and Courantors which... do abuse the people and oftentimes raise disadvantageous and scandalous reports upon the proceedings and successes of his Majesties friends and Allies, His Majesty hath commanded me to take like course as hath been formerly used for preventing these abuses, And according to his gracious pleasure... I have appointed my servant George Rudolf Weckherlin to have perusal and allowance of all such papers of that kind.⁷³

By this arrangement Worrall continued to license other works but handed responsibility for newsbooks to Georg Weckherlin who was a German, educated in jurisprudence, with personal ties to the publishing business through his brother-in-law, Robert Raworth. He had worked on behalf of Elizabeth and Frederick in England in the early 1620s and was employed from 1625, drafting, deciphering, and translating official correspondence. Like Cottington before him, he seems to have been a practical choice because of his relevant knowledge and appropriate skills but, unlike Cottington, he was a Lutheran. This does not appear to have been seen as an obstacle to his employment. After Conway's advancement he served

⁷² T. Cogswell, 'The People's Love', 211-234. Butter celebrated return of Charles and Buckingham and to London from their trip to Madrid, *The joyfull returne, of the most illustrious prince, Charles*, Butter (1623 October 13) and got the Paris report of the marriage to Henrietta Maria, *A relation of the glorious triumphs*, Butter (15 May 1625). A rival publisher got the reports of the entertainments of Charles in Madrid, *A continuation of a former relation concerning the entertainment given to the prince*, W. Barret, (1623), and *A true discourse of all royal passages, tryumphs and ceremonies, at the marriage of Charles*, W. Barret (1625).

⁷³ Add. MS. 72439, fo 1. This draft in Weckherlin's hand is dated 25 February 1627. Jackson, 'Court Book', 193. Butter, though not Bourne, was cautioned in particular because of his association with news publication, possibly Bourne was a sleeping partner at this stage.

Dorchester, who was a Protestant and strong advocate of the Palatine cause as well as a continuing channel of news between England and northern Europe.

Weckherlin was not a courtier but a poet, translator and international correspondent at the heart of Charles' intelligence service who worked for successive secretaries as a paid official. He never gained a high profile or visibility that associated him publicly with a particular faction at Court. He survived Dorchester's death in 1632, his friend, Thomas Roe's loss of position, and the eclipse of the Protestant faction in Charles' Council at that time, to become a close assistant of Charles. He worked on Charles' correspondence, handling petitions, meeting visitors from overseas and overseeing translators as well as keeping Charles abreast news from abroad. He continued in office until 1640, and even wrote letters after Sir Henry Vane's dismissal in 1641. Weckherlin's network of news correspondents was extensive. He was well connected with the news networks, particularly of Protestant Europe. He exchanged news with agencies abroad and sometimes also with gazetteers through contact with post-masters, including Johann von den Birghen. He also wrote regularly to agents, including in Paris, Henry de Vie, René Angier and his secretary, Lehlin, to Johann Joachim von Rusdorf, the Palatine diplomat, Balthasar Gerbier in Brussels and Blanc in Turin. Charles may well have valued his knowledge and experience with his sister's household in Germany. His appointment, like Cottington's before him, suggests an intention to make use of his expertise and sympathetic understanding, while his survival in a position of trust reflects Charles continued concern for the Palatine.⁷⁴

There were further signs of government scrutiny and caution, particularly over foreign news. In May the Bishop of London was busy seizing books and seeking the support of the Privy Council against a contention from some stationers that they should be compensated for their losses. On 2 June Mead wrote that

The Lords of the Counsell have of late used to seaze upon the Merchants packes & break them open both from & to their Factors whereupon they have given a generall Caveat to their Factors to write nothing of intelligence

⁷⁴ O.D.N.B.; L. W. Forster, *Georg Rudolf Weckherlin zur Kenntnis seines Lebens in England* (Basel, 1944); L. W. Forster, 'Sources for G. R. Weckherlin's Life in England: the Correspondence', in *The modern Language Review*, 2 (1946), 353-6; A. B. Thompson, 'Licensing the Press: The Career of G. R. Weckherlin during the Personal Rule of Charles I', *H.J.*, 41 (1998), 658-661; Reeve, 107-117, 181, 235-7, 284; Sharpe, 157, 201-5; Atherton, 42. Among Weckherlin's papers in the Trumbull collection are pages from a diary of his working life showing the extent of his responsibilities: B.L., Add.MS.72433.

by this meanes there is no more newes of forraigne affaires upon the Exchange then is upon our Layes: whatsoever is, is from the Corraunto & that so ancient as it concernes nothing done since May began & so not worth relating.

This scarcity of news is apparent in newsbooks where space is filled by reciting rumours at length then stating, 'This newes I hold not to be true'. In the same issue they also included an account of a fire in Vienna about which the editor comments, 'This is the same fire of which was made mention in our former Newes'.⁷⁵ Butter, however, seems to have been strangely slow to respond to this change of climate since nothing more about foreign news is recorded by the Stationers' Company for nearly three months. Then, on 19 June, Charles gave the Rhé instructions to Buckingham. On the same day Butter and Bourne put their business in order at the Company of Stationers', paying the hefty sum of 15s to register newsbooks from the previous June through to 1 August. This was a significant investment. They must have been hopeful that some new business would come their way. Butter also registered a further Warwick story. This was licensed by Weckherlin and provides the first record of his involvement in the licensing of foreign news.⁷⁶

Buckingham led 7,000 English troops ashore at the Île of Rhé, a few miles from Rochelle and issued *A Manifestation* and a request for the realm's prayers. These showed Buckingham as a heroic knight, listed the ships and commanders, and advertised a map of the Citadel where the French were besieged. But, as Cogswell has noted, none of this explained why, in the middle of a war with Spain, the country was also engaged in war with France. Secretary Coke drafted an account of the diplomatic background to the French war but it was not published. Cogswell explained, the government 'was averse to a public explanation of the expedition's motives, [while] quite willing to approve rousing accounts of the expedition's progress'. In August, Thomas Walkley published *A Iournall*, 'by Authoritie' with news of 'all the Proceedings of the Duke of Buckingham his Grace, in the Isle of Ree'. This ran to a second edition and was followed on 30 August by, *A Continued Iournall of All the Proceedings of the Duke of*

⁷⁵ *A.P.C. April 1628- April 1629* (1958), 396, 398, 289; HarI. MS. 390. fo. 261; (8 June 1627), 12, 5 - 6, S.T.C.18507.185.

⁷⁶ Arber, Vol. 4, block entry 19 June 1627, also shows Weckherlin first licensing 'A Currant Contayning the Earl of Warwicks voyage and a list of the Ffrench Comanders with a letter of the taking [of] Saint Martins', 146.

Buckingham... until this 17. Of August. It imitated the newsbooks, both in its title and by addressing the 'Gentle Reader'. It contained an up-beat account of the English troops and of the Duke leading them courageously, including a foiled attempted assassination, and it assured readers that the English forces were well supplied. By contrast, Butter found himself not only out of favour but in more serious difficulties: on 2 August 1627 a warrant was signed by Coke for his arrest. No reason was given. The warrant simply stated, 'A warrant to the keeper of the Gatehouse to receave into his custodie and keepe prisoner the person of Nathaniell Butter. Signed by Mr Secretarie Coke'. We do not know how long he was imprisoned but an entry in the register to Butter and Bourne as soon after the imprisonment as 7 August suggest he was released soon after he had given an account of himself on 4 August. It was as a warning.⁷⁷

The reason for the arrest is apparent from his 1 August newsbook. Butter had not waited for official sanction to report on the expedition and subsequent siege of the French garrison. He had invited members of the expedition to supply material. This issue accordingly included both regular reports from Germany plus lengthy accounts of the attack on Rhé. Most of it was in a positive vein with ample praise for Buckingham but there were a few details that the government would probably have preferred to exclude, for example, the fact that the people of La Rochelle had not welcomed the Duke and a report of soldiers running away and being called back by the Duke.⁷⁸ Perhaps because Buckingham was shown to be acquitting himself well, Butter's punishment was not harsh. He was permitted to continue to publish both continental and Rhé news provided Weckherlin licensed the issues. So, through the remainder of the summer and into the autumn, Butter and Bourne jointly received licenses for nine regular newsbooks from Weckherlin.

⁷⁷ Cogswell, 'The People's', 226-8; T. Cogswell, "'Published by Authoritie': Newsbooks and the Duke of Buckingham's Expedition to the Ile de Rhé", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 67 (2004), 5-6; *A.P.C., 1627* (1938), 470. Butter explained in his petition to Coke that the tract with scandalous content was acquired as to meet a customer's request, 4 Aug 1627, B.L., Add. MS. 64,892, fo. 59; Arber, Vol. 4, entry 7 August 1627, 148.

⁷⁸ The 'noble Duke, having beene at first in shore, and taking his barge againe, found them in such a desperate manner of running away: who at the instant did behave himselfe with such aclaritie towards the revolvers, himself standing in the head of the barge, his sword drawne intreating some and taxing others with fearfulness and cowardise to returne to their Countrymen, that stood to it valiantly on the shore'. The account ends with a list of English dead and injured, admitting that there were many more who drowned and are not named. (1 August 1627), 9, 11-12, *S.T.C.* 18507.186.

The surviving issues were published in Butter's name as were four others that were not entered in the register as licensed.⁷⁹

Butter reported, on 17 August, a story of the defeat of three vital French relief ships and a story of an attempt by the Governor of the fort to assassinate Buckingham. Each subsequent issue included a bulletin from the Rhé expedition. Yet, this did not end the difficulties. Thomas Walkley published four further issues of the *Continued Iournall*, all claiming that the campaign was going well and that the Duke was excelling himself as commander while Butter was put under continuing pressure. On 12 September Butter made a double mistake of publishing an issue without first taking the precaution of showing it to Weckherlin and including in it a report from Paris from early August of the siege noting that the English were expecting reinforcements. Conway wrote again to the Stationers' Company reminding them, 'I have formerly signified unto you his Maiesties dislike of the Libertie taken in printinge of weekly courantos and pamphletts of newes without anie rule or warrant'. He complained that some of the Companies members had published 'manie things... that are false and oftentimes scandalous... nothing of that kind should bee printed without ...the view approbation of my servant Weckherlin'. On 14 September, Mead again commented on the publishers' problems. 'Currantes will be scare hereafter; for there hath a check bin given the Printers'.⁸⁰ Butter was allowed to continue but he must have felt besieged on every side. He was required to get licences, yet the partnership no longer had a monopoly as they did under Cottington's supervision. The imprint, 'Mercurius Britannicus', was dropped after 1 August, possibly in recognition of the fact that Butter and Bourne no longer held any claim to being either the sole or official publishers of periodical news from abroad. Now that profits were once again being made they were vulnerable to further competition and another publisher, Ralph Mabb started a new series and registered his first issue on 28 September. Butter had evidently felt it unwise to challenge Walkley given his connections but he felt no such constraint

⁷⁹ Appendix 3 Table 3; Walkley's publications, by contrast, were not licensed by Weckherlin until mid-September 1627. Cogswell, 'By Authoritie', 10, 'So anodyne was the reportage in this period, so carefully had Weckherlin inspected it, that several issues of the *Mercurius* displayed three words that Butter and Bourne's corantos had never before carried: "Published by Authoritie"'.
⁸⁰ (17 August 1627), 5 and 6, *S.T.C.* 18507.187; (12 September 1627), *S.T.C.* 18507.188; Cogswell, 'The People's Love', 229-320; Thompson, 'Licensing the Press', 653-4; B.L., Add. MS. 72439 fo.2; Harl. MS. 390. fo. 292; Conway to the Wardens 5 Sept 1627, B.L., Add. MS, Misc 18, fo. 82.

about Mabb and reacted promptly, complaining that ‘there is another unknowne Mercurie sprung up within these few dayes’ who is merely an opportunist, ‘that by chance met a Pinke from Holland, twixt that and Gravesend, that wil tel strange newes’.⁸¹

By October the good news story of the Rhé expedition was crumbling, attempts to re-supply the forces had failed and awareness of the carnage and loss of English troops was growing. Walkley’s reports continued to be up beat but readers had become sceptical. Butter meanwhile, deprived of official reports from the English forces, continued to rely on his usual contacts. This in the end gave him some credibility. Thus, when he reported on 17 October that the Citadel was taken he was able to add, ‘which newes was written by good hands from the Hage’.⁸²

While Reeve dismisses the war with France as ‘Buckingham’s private war with Richelieu’ pursued at the expense of the war with Spain that Parliament wanted, Anthony Thompson interpreted this episode of news manipulation as a failure, ‘even with the best intentions, early journalism could not explain away failure... Charles and his counsellors came to see news, no matter how closely it was supervised, as a dispensable commodity’. However, Thompson overestimated the amount of licensing Weckherlin carried out and his account left him unable to explain why Weckherlin allowed *A declaration* by the Duke of Rohan even though it criticized the English for their slowness of response to the plight of the Huguenots. Cogswell, by contrast, argued that Charles made an error in allowing the Rohan publication while stifling the more helpful explanation drafted for publication by Coke, but he still depicted this episode as ‘a very real accomplishment’. It involved ‘throttling the *Mercurius* then mounting its own coverage ... never before had the government ever accorded any military or naval operation such lavish coverage’. He noted that in the following spring Commons voted 5 subsidies, to be collected in one year, the largest grant in parliamentary history to that date and that the accord reached in Parliament at that point was publicized through the official publication of the parliamentary proceedings.⁸³

⁸¹ Arber, Vol. 4, entry for Ralph Mabb, 28 September 1627, 150; (4 October 1627), 1, S.T.C.18507.189.

⁸² Harl. MS. 390 fo. 299; Cogswell, ‘The People’s Love’, 230; (17 October 1627), 11, S.T.C.18507.191.

⁸³ Reeve, 15; Thompson, ‘Licensing the Press’, 665; Thompson appears to have missed the fact that Weckherlin was given the role of licenser in February and began in June, not 7 August 1627. He argued

This episode may, however, say more about Buckingham and his desire for popularity than about the development of Charles' thinking about his commitment to Parliament for a war with Spain, public relations or news reporting. Despite the fact that there was seldom any discernible difference between Charles and Buckingham in policy emphasis when they were together, Charles could allow Buckingham to do as he wished without necessarily completely agreeing with him. This was demonstrated when Cottington was sent away from Court by Buckingham in April 1625, but provided with a pension by Charles. If Charles had an interest in the reporting of the Rhé campaign or in the muzzling of Butter he did not sustain it. He made no press preparations for Parliament in February or March 1628 of the sort James made when he called Parliament. Weckherlin continued as licenser but the only news publication he licensed that year was the Duke of Rohan's. In May Butter was allowed to make a bulk entry in the register for 24 newsbooks without any mention of Weckherlin or of a requirement for their inspection. The attention of both government and readers turned away from foreign news to domestic issues with the Petition of Right and Charles' temporising response. George Wither castigated his countrymen for their failure to support the wars, 'War threatens us... Yet we do nothing... Armes, victuals, men and money we have in store; Yet we falsely cry that we are poore'.⁸⁴ Charles began to rethink foreign policy, initiating moves for peace with Spain. Buckingham's assassination in August did not immediately curtail Charles' hopes of redeeming honour at Rochelle but after unsuccessfully sending ships to the Huguenot rescue in the spring and autumn, their capitulation in October left him little to fight for.

In Germany, the Protestants and the Roman Catholic League considered how to respond to the increasingly dynastic moves of Ferdinand, while Wallenstein

that Weckherlin saw and licensed a great many more newsbooks than appeared in the registers of the Stationers' Company though he admitted he had no evidence (654, ft 3, 665, ft 44). However, it would have been entirely in the publishers' interests to show every licence they were given and in-keeping with their practice at other times both before and after this. See 262 below. Henri, Duc de Rohan, *A Declaration of the duke of Rohan*, Butter (1628), 6-7; licensed by Weckherlin on 28 March 1628, Arber, Vol. 4, 161; Cogswell, 'The People's Love', 231-3; Cogswell, 'Politics of Propaganda', 188, 207.

⁸⁴ On 30 July Bourne's pamphlets about Amboyna were confiscated but Bourne quickly extricated himself and remained in good standing in the Stationers' Company. He claimed he published entirely at the behest of the East India Company and even gained compensation. *A.P.C., April 1628–April 1629* (1958), 61 No. 205; Arber, 4, 162, entry 2 May 1628; G. Whither, *Britain's Remembrancer* (1628), 239, quoted in Sharpe, 60.

went from strength to strength. He was given the duchies of Mecklenburgh by Ferdinand and was only frustrated in his ambitions to establish dominion over the Baltic by failure to take Stralsund. The summer of 1629 marked a low ebb in Protestant fortunes. Newsbook sales fell to an all time low, leaving us with little evidence on which to base an assessment of the coverage of the Danish defeat at Wolgast or the Dutch successes off Cuba or at home in Flemish waters, at Wesel and Hertogenbosch.⁸⁵

The Newsbook Ban in Context

This section examines the period from January 1629 to the Ban on news publication in October 1632 and explores its significance in the context of Charles' period of personal rule.

Charles' period of personal rule was marked by a number of steps designed to improve influence in print and control of the press. Anthony Milton has shown how manipulation of printing controls was one of many ways religious factions worked to show they held centre stage and how in the 1630s Laudians were 'aggressive and effective combatants', using licensers to allow the publication of works with Arminian sympathies and to have a decisive influence over what appeared in print as mainstream orthodoxy. Laud tightened the regulation and licensing of religious material as soon as he became archbishop. The punishments of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton have been seen as emblematic of the censorship of puritan works. Licensing was extended to almanacs in 1634 following an unwelcome prediction about the Church in the preceding year. The Star Chamber Decree in 1637 gave additional powers to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, tightened trade control of the presses and apprentices and extended licensing to law books, ephemeral material that was usually left to the discretion of the Stationers' Company, and the reprinting of previously licensed material. It also prohibited importing books in English. This period was further marked by a ban, in 1632, on

⁸⁵ For example, the uninspiring extended title, *A large relation of all that which lately hapned about the besieging of St. Hertogenbosh, and especially the taking of the Petter sconce. The substance of the Emperours proclamation concerning the restitution of the ecclesiasticall goods. Divers passages concerning the affaires of Italy. The confirmation of the arrivall of the silver-fleete in Spaine. Besides divers other matters of moment, concerning severall parts of Christendome* lacked any popular appeal (4 June 1629), S.T.C.18507.201.

the publication of newsbooks that was to last until 1638. Yet Sharpe has denied that there was anything resembling effective censorship in this period. He argued that there was nothing new in the Star Chamber decree which merely 'subsumed and systematized rather than invented' and the control of imports was 'nothing more than a pious hope'. He concluded, 'England in the 1630s was not a country in which men were free to publish or read what they saw fit. Nor, however, was it a realm in which all criticism and dissent were stifled'.⁸⁶

By contrast, Seibert bolstered his argument that the news was heavily censored by linking incidents where, in 1629, Butter was brought before the Ecclesiastical Commission for publishing puritan tracts and, in 1630, Bourne for possession of 30 copies of a banned pamphlet with the decision in 1632 to ban the regular publication of newsbooks. Steinberg came closer to an explanation of the ban, suggesting that the 'undisguised enthusiasm of the editors for the success of the anti-Habsburg powers was their undoing'. However, a simple analysis can not explain the confusion caused by the ban at the time nor why, while weekly news was banned, Butter and Bourne were permitted to continue to publish a less frequent serial 'history' of the war under a variety of titles including, *The Swedish Intelligencer* and *The Swedish Discipline*. Thompson has looked more closely at the period and uses the career of Weckherlin to show the 'government worked hard to silence public discussion' but he over-estimated the amount of licensing undertaken by Weckherlin and failed to recognize the potential relevance of Weckherlin's Lutheranism and support for Elizabeth of Bohemia.⁸⁷ This section provides a much needed study that takes into account the way Charles' attitude towards the possibility of calling Parliament hardened and his foreign policy vacillated before settling on a pro-Spanish 'neutrality' through which he hoped to develop support for the Palatine cause. A Hispanic orientation was so much at odds with popular sentiment that it would not comfortably co-exist with the practical or political pressures created by news publication, but the confused nature of the

⁸⁶ A. Milton, 'Licensing, Censorship and Religious Orthodoxy in Early Stuart England', *H.J.*, 41, 3 (1998), 623-651; K. Sharpe, 'A commonwealth of meanings: Languages, analogues, ideas and politics', in his *Politics and ideas in early Stuart England* (1989), 9; Sharpe, 644-654; Arber, Vol. 4, 528-36; *C.S.P.D.*, 1631-33, 426.

⁸⁷ Seibert, 155; *C.S.P.D.* 1628-29, 525, 539; *C.S.P.D.*, 1629-31, 202; S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (1955/1974), 248; Thompson, 'Licensing the Press', 666.

switch in foreign policy and the fact that it was not publicly acknowledged or explained left the publishers and others ignorant of the reason for the sudden loss of their livelihood while providing the opportunity for Weckherlin to accommodate the *Intelligencer*.

In January 1629 Charles recalled Parliament. He was still committed to supporting Denmark and seeking to avert or at least delay Christian from pursuing peace negotiations with the Emperor following defeat in September 1628 outside Wolfsgast. He also still hoped to confirm the legality of the collection of Tonnage and Poundage. He appears to have approached the new session with optimism, instigating new commissions to investigate abuse at Court, restoring old enemies of Buckingham and enforcing the recusancy laws. His preparations did not extend to any attempt to influence public opinion, and debate quickly deteriorated into arguments about religion and taxation. On 5 February Viscount Dorchester, who had succeeded Conway as Secretary of State, wrote to the Stationers' Company reminding members of the need to submit to Weckherlin any proposed publications 'of newes relations histories or other things... that have reference to matters and affairs of State'. The letter noted that publishers had been negligent but was mild in tone and made no reference to Parliament. It was unlikely to have made much impression. The session of Parliament ended in disarray on 2 March. Charles followed dissolution with two proclamations, the first explaining his motives and, on 27 March, a second, 'For suppressing of false Rumours touching Parliament', drafted by Dorchester in discussion with Charles it left open the possibility of a future Parliament in the right circumstances.⁸⁸

Historians continue to debate the relationship between Parliament and foreign policy in the 1620s. Reeve argues that the level of supply overall in the 1620s was impressive given Charles' military failures and that had Charles had some military or naval success, more money would have been forthcoming, but he aligns his arguments with those of Simon Adams, suggesting that only a privateering sea war with Spain could have satisfied the Commons. Conrad Russell, leading the revisionist analysis, argued that MPs represented the concerns

⁸⁸ Sharpe, 52-3, 56-7; Hirst, *Conflict*, 127; B.L., Add. MS, 72439, fo. 4; *Proclamations*, 2, 226-8; Reeve, 75-96, 106, 109-111.

of their localities which included concerns about increasing financial burdens. In his view, they had no national remit and remained ignorant throughout the 1620s about the real costs of running a country, much less of war, but Cust has shown that MPs were becoming more representative of public opinion, were concerned about the prospect of money being misspent and about the bad news from La Rochelle, while Christopher Thompson has demonstrated that MPs' concerns were linked to matters of high policy. Both Cogswell and Thompson have recognized the generosity of the subsidies and the significance of foreign policy in this political awakening, while Pauline Croft has shown how the greater frequency of Parliaments allowed greater informal contact in London, facilitated shopping for goods including publications, and strengthened the role of networking in the formation of public opinion.⁸⁹ There can be little doubt that newsbook readers, MPs included, were better informed than ever before about political and military events in Europe and also about trading concerns and tensions further afield. They now had evidence on which to base different arguments about how a war should be conducted. In so far as there was a gap in knowledge, it was due to the fact that both James and Charles withheld information about diplomacy and about costs and expenditure, and they did the latter at least partly because budgeting was poor.

Charles and Buckingham gambled on turning failure into success, no doubt believing fewer questions would be asked and more support would be forthcoming but matters went from bad to worse through a mixture of failed negotiations poor naval and military strategies, inefficient procurements and bad luck. Events on the Continent in the spring of 1629 caused further distress for Charles, both at the personal level, with the accidental drowning in January of Henry, the Prince Palatine and heir to the lost lands, and at the political level, in March, with the Edict of Restitution. Charles could see he was in no position to play a direct and influential role within Germany. He reached agreement with France but was concerned about how his withdrawal from direct action might be seen in England and took steps to influence the way in which the news was presented.

⁸⁹ Reeve, 232; R. Cust, 'Politics and the Electorate in the 1620s' and C. Thompson, 'Court Politics and parliamentary Conflict in 1625' in Cust and Hughes, eds., *Conflict*, P. Croft, 'Capital Life, Members of Parliament outside the House', in *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, eds., T. Cogswell, R. Cust and P. Lake (Cambridge, 2002), 65-83.

Dorchester's February letter to the Stationers' Company, reminding them that 'no newes nor other writings concerning matters of State' should be published 'without the view, approbation and license of my secretarie Weckherlin', was followed on 2 May 1629, after the terms of the Treaty of Susa were agreed but before they were signed, by Weckherlin licensing two newsbook issues. One had already been published on 24 April but the other, dated 5 May promised, *Certaine commands lately given by the French King concerning the interteinment of the English, and which doth conduce to a firme peace betweene the two nations. Articles of peace propounded by the King of Denmarke ... unto the deputies of Walenstin and Tilley*. Yet it contained nothing about relations between France and England; it consisted of a lengthy transcript of the articles of peace offered alternately by the King of Denmark and the Emperor at Lubeck, together with a scatter of news on the implementation of the Edict of Restitution. Material on the English/French negotiations had been withdrawn. Bourne had 'jumped the gun' and was presenting these two, independently negotiated treaties in a way that would have associated them far too closely for comfort. However, details of treaties could not be suppressed for long. On 27 May Weckherlin licensed Bourne's publication of the peace with France. The incident was enough to attract a brief spurt of official attention to Bourne. In May, Bourne also found it necessary to license a siege map. He could not hide behind his colleague Butter, since Butter was simultaneously facing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for his involvement in the unlicensed publication of puritan tracts.⁹⁰

Butter was suffering, along with Michael Spark and two printers, from association with Henry Burton and William Prynne in the publication of four puritan tracts. Religious censorship was to grow in the 1630s, and is symbolized today by the punishments in 1637 of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton. It is possible to suggest that the two incidents were linked. The increasing vigilance of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners reflected the growing influence of Laud, which in turn can be related to the growing influence of Weston, Cottington and the pro-Spanish lobby. However, news regulation and the control of religious publications were managed separately. No trend towards increased news control is discernible

⁹⁰ Arber, Vol. 4, 176-7; (5 May 1629), S.T.C.18507.200.

at this stage. It remained under the Protestant oversight of Dorchester and Weckherlin while Charles continued to support the Palatine cause in a new embassy to northern Europe and in his negotiations with Spain.⁹¹ Butter's experience of the courts showed in his defence to the Commission. He challenged the licenser and persuaded the Commission that the 'judgment of two bishops... was more to be regarded than the opinion of the Licenser'. He was back on the scene shortly after, catching up with payments for another bulk registration of newsbooks. Meanwhile, Christian of Denmark, having looked in vain for the promised support from England, made peace with the Emperor on 12 May 1629. This news did not reach the newsbooks until after 4 June.⁹²

Butter appears to have left what was, by this stage, a struggling business due to low sales, in the hands of Bourne until after the news broke that the Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus, had entered the war and sales started to pick up. Newsbooks sales were so low that Bourne reduced the output to about one issue a month. Then, from the summer 1630, with the arrival in Germany of Gustavus Adolphus, sales began to increase until, by October 1632, they were back to levels at the start of the 1620s. This change in fortunes justified Bourne's decision to invest in maintaining the business and its supply and distribution contacts through lean times. It also demonstrated the continuing support of the reading public for the Protestant cause and for the Palatine family. Meanwhile Charles supported Gustavus Adolphus as best he could without calling Parliament by letting Hamilton raise a troop of 6,000 volunteers and giving £25,000 towards expenses. The men sailed in August 1631 for Stralsund while Charles sent Sir Robert Anstruther to Vienna and Sir Henry Vane to negotiate with Gustavus Adolphus and welcomed home and knighted the messenger, John Caswell, who was sent by Gustavus Adolphus to announce his victory at Breitenfield and whose report subsequently appeared in the printed news.⁹³

Butter and Bourne were confident that there was now no need for a subtle or implicit Protestant voice. This period was a high point in the development of

⁹¹ Reeve, 113, 237, 242-249; Sharpe, 66-8.

⁹² *C.S.P.D.*, 1628-9, 525, 539; Arber, Vol. 4, 20 June 1629, 182; (4 June 1629), 6, *S.T.C.* 18507.201, recorded speculation that if Christian were to agree terms, France would have to deal with the Emperor and that that, in turn, would bring peace to the Protestants in France.

⁹³ *CandT*, II, 139, 140. See also Ch. 5, 185-6.

Thirty Years' War news reporting in England for its content and quality. It is also the only time when there was a creative co-operation between the trade and those in authority based on a belief that newsbooks could serve the policy objectives of the Protestant pro-Palatine family faction in Whitehall. It is somewhat analogous to the alliance of interests that served in Antwerp to produce *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*. Just as, in 1620, in the Habsburg Netherlands when large numbers of 'Netherlandish gentlemen' fought in the Spanish and Imperial armies in Bohemia and the Palatinate so, in 1631 and 1632, there were soldiers from Britain serving in large numbers in north Germany and the Netherlands, under Colonel Robert Monro, Sir John Hepburn, Sir James Ramsey, Sir Patrick Ruthven, Sir Alexander Leslie, the Marquis of Hamilton and others. Though numbers are difficult to establish, there may have been over 20,000 British mercenaries in Gustavus Adolphus's army by December 1631, including many Scots.⁹⁴ This meant there were many opportunities to obtain news and much demand for it at home. There was also sense both in Antwerp in 1620 and in London in 1631 that there was a need for proactive news reporting to harness public opinion in support of military commitment. Fortunately for Butter and Bourne, Dorchester was Secretary of State and among those in Court who had been waiting for the political tide to turn in favour of proactive engagement to restore the Palatinate and Weckherlin, his assistant with the extensive news networking and intelligence connections, was the licenser.

Weckherlin's sympathy for the publication of the war news was demonstrated in 1637 in *The Lamentations of Germany*, with letters from Germany and his recollections of the suffering of the Palatinate at the fall of Heidelberg. It seems as if from the beginning Weckherlin was content to trust the publishers. His secretarial responsibilities were extensive and the task of reading newsbooks carefully every week would have been time-consuming. So despite the fact that his knowledge had the potential to be a valuable check on accuracy and sensitivity and though he had the assistance of his son, he seems to have always been too busy to

⁹⁴ Arblaster, 41, 44-51; J. W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, 1 (1899), 168-188; I. Roy, 'The Army and its Critics in Seventeenth-Century England' in *War and Society, A Yearbook of Military History*, ed., I. Roy and B. Bond, ii (N.Y., 1977), 141-150; Th. A. Fischer, *The Scots in Germany: Being a contribution towards the history of Scots abroad* (Edinburgh, 1902), 76-118.

do justice to his role as licenser. He could not afford to employ others to work on his behalf, yet Butter and Bourne needed issues to be inspected quickly. As we have seen, even in 1627 in the height of interest in controlling the news of the Rhé expedition, Weckherlin caught up with the news only after there was a problem and even then, he did not inspect every issue. Papers in the Trumbull collection reveal repeated complaints between 1627 and 1632 that the publishers were not presenting their newsbooks for scrutiny by Weckherlin. This suggests that Weckherlin let the publishers police themselves at their own risk; approaching Weckherlin only if they had material they were not sure about. This would help to explain why so few issues were licensed. Whatever the informal arrangements, however, the publishers found them workable. Butter was later to describe Weckherlin as 'more understanding in these forraine affaires, and ...more candid'. And by the summer of 1631, despite the upturn in business, they had had no foreign publications officially inspected since Weckherlin approved their Bermuda news in April 1630 while, in February 1630, despite the potential risk of a read-across to English negotiation with Spain, he had approved *Three severall treatises*, that argued against the Dutch making at truce with Spain.⁹⁵

A trustworthy editor was needed if mistakes and political gaffes were to be avoided and news was to be presented well enough to appeal to a broad spectrum of Protestants and help to encourage Charles to commit to a stronger alliance with Sweden. Watts was appointed. He may have known Weckherlin from his time in the Palatinate in 1620 and he appears to have been the ideal candidate. Protestant but not a Puritan, he was connected to Laud, then bishop of London and his connections to the Court were growing. In 1633 he was made prebendary of Wells, then in 1639 he became a chaplain to the king, subsequently serving both the Earl of Arundel and Prince Rupert.⁹⁶ He had useful contacts for securing news and produced well-edited issues with almost all criticisms of the British forces and their

⁹⁵ P. Vincent, *The Lamentations of Germany*, (1638). For official complaints that Butter and Bourne were not presenting issues of their newsbooks for inspection, see 5 September 1627, B.L. Add. MS., 72439, fo. 2; 5 February 1628/9, fo.4; 30 January 1631/2, fo. 6, also n. 79 above. Arber, Vol. 4, 195, 198, 222, 376; *Three severall treatises*, Butter and Bourne (1630); (11 January 1641), S.T.C.18507.343, quoted in Dahl 251.

⁹⁶ Ch. 5, 184-9, 204-5, 213-5; *O.D.N.B.*; A. Wood, ed. P. Bliss, *Fasti Oxonienses* (1815), 1, col. 383; *C.S.P.D., 1640-1641*, 36, 45, for Watts' actions against puritans; Cogswell, 'By Authoritie', 11, 14, for the sources of Walkley's Rhé publications.

lack of supplies carefully omitted and no inappropriate hint of discussions that were going on behind the scenes between Gustavus Adolphus and Charles. There is moreover a case for suggesting that Watt's editorship, with its almost unprecedented access to privileged news, signifies a Court attempt to influence news coverage in a way that would support the Crown. Watts was possibly even a forerunner to Berkenhead. Schumacher noted that the only other significant English writer extolling Gustavus Adolphus's virtues was the Laudian poet, John Russell. The Swedish King represented an acceptable, monarchical face of Protestantism in Europe, likely to find favour with Laud who, though he lacked much interest or insight into foreign policy, was interested in the idea of a united Protestant Church in Germany. Watts was also able to reflect to readers the increasingly devastating effects of war, pillage and destruction. For Charles and Laud, aiming to maintain a nation at peace, accounts of the deterioration of conditions in Germany drew attention to the advantages of peace at home. For Weckherlin, the same reports served to mirror his grief at his country's distress and ensure that its plight was not forgotten.⁹⁷

Success quickly led to the introduction of the lengthier *Swedish Intelligencer* and from the beginning Butter and Bourne received licences from Weckherlin for these too. Watts was soon able to boast,

To the Favourable and judicious Reader, This is a Booke thorowly allowed, when Seene and Allowed: when the Readers have approved it, as well as the Licencer. With this favourableness (as I thankfully must acknowledge) have my former Bookes beene entertained.

From the number of editions and revises published, these were an outstanding commercial success. For Watts and Weckherlin there was the benefit that it was also possible to provide more careful oversight of their contents than during the rush of weekly publication.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Schumacher noted there was no explicit comparison of the Kings of Sweden and England, no discussion when the 6,000 strong English and Scottish force was disbanded after 15 months because it was too small, only a few disparaging remarks about the English volunteers, little criticism of Charles' inaction. He concluded 'barbed comments in news sources may have been excised by William Watts', 202-3, 205, 207, 212, 214, 215; Sharpe, 284-5; L.W. Forster, 'Kleine Schriften zur Deutschen Literature im 17. Jahrhundert', in *Daphnis: Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literature*, 6 (1977), 163-231; Forster, *Georg Rudolf*, 58-60.

⁹⁸ Arber, Vol. 4, 234, 244; *The Swedish Intelligencer, The second part*, Butter and Bourne (1632), preface.

1631 was the year when it was most acceptable to be visibly pro-Palatine. Massinger's *The Maid of Honour* was licensed even though it was unmistakably about the Palatine family and began with a scene that recreated events in 1620/21 when James did not rush to the aid of Frederick. However, *Believe as You List* was rejected by the Master of Revels because it dealt critically with Spain's relations with Portugal, then passed once re-written with a Syrian setting. If, as Blair Worden suggests, writers found intervention 'bewilderingly unpredictable', it was probably because Charles' allegiances were changing.⁹⁹

It had taken time to negotiate peace with Spain because Charles continued to hold out for support for the restitution of the Palatinate. Encouraged by Spanish defeats in the Low Countries he simultaneously pressed the Dutch through Carlisle and Sir Henry Vane for troops for the Palatinate but finally settled for vague promises of help from Spain. The Treaty of Madrid was signed in November 1630 and did no more than restore the balance of 1604 but Charles continued to pursue his objectives of retrieving honour and reclaiming the Palatinate. In addition to negotiating with Sweden, he began to restore the fleet, recognising the need for a strong navy to protect Britain's growing mercantile interests against piracy and to counter the growing Dutch fishing fleet presence of British shores. He was also thinking that Spain might benefit from English naval protection in the Channel and might perhaps even pay for it, though diplomatic intervention in Vienna, thus sparing him from direct engagement in the war in Germany. Undecided, through 1631 and 1632, he explored different options, including one of siding with the Dutch to stir up rebellion in the Spanish Netherlands and another, with Spain, to launch a joint attack on the Dutch. The real turning point came in the winter of 1631/2 when Swedish forces advanced on Heidelberg and Charles had to decide whether to form an alliance with Sweden as the price for a commitment to the restoration of Frederick. Despite the obvious popular appeal of an alliance, he hesitated, then decided not to call Parliament for funding. Dorchester died in February 1632, leaving Weston to continue the negotiations. Thereafter the emphasis shifted decisively towards Spain. Vane was recalled from negotiations

⁹⁹ A. B. Worden, 'Literature and Political Censorship in Early Modern England', in *Too Mighty to be Free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, eds., A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse (Zutphen, 1987), 53-57.

with Sweden in the summer of 1632 and Windebank, rather than Roe, was appointed to the vacant Secretaryship of State.¹⁰⁰

Already, by early 1632, Charles was annoyed by ‘the pernicious publishing ... daily practiced, of divers pamphlets’ and he wrote to the Stationers’ Company reminding them of the need for licences and of Weckherlin’s role. What was good for the publishers was now not so acceptable to the King. Yet neither Weckherlin nor the publishers seem to have responded immediately. Weckherlin was by this stage working for Sir John Coke, an aging diplomat with a strict Protestant and anti-Spanish views, who trusted him to carry out most of his duties unsupervised, but who seems to have had less personal authority at Court, as Windebank who succeeded Carleton, took responsibility for relations with Spain, Italy and Flanders. In June and July, Butter, realising he had mistakenly spoken too freely to a customer in his shop who turned out to be Thomas, the agent to the Archduchess Isabella, resumed taking newsbooks to Weckherlin for licensing. But by then issues were appearing frequently, often more than one a week and there was no possibility that Weckherlin could give them the attention necessary to scrutinize effectively. After licensing five more issues, it seems he did not try to keep up: no further newsbooks were entered in the register after July and the monopoly was unwittingly left exposed to a tumble of events that led to its abolition.¹⁰¹

On 4 September 1632, Butter and Bourne provided an account of the death of Sir Edward Harwood at the siege of Maastricht. Then, in the issue of 3 October Butter made a second mistake, including a diplomatically sensitive report that Olivares and Legnares had been imprisoned in Spain and had been storing up personal treasure. This was spotted quickly while the press was still running, and the passage removed. However it was shortly followed by an issue devoted to the Dutch taking Maastricht. This was one unfortunate news report too many for Isabella’s agent and its timing could not have been worse for Butter and Bourne. Cottington had negotiated for the coining in London of Spanish silver to pay the army in Flanders and shipments had just begun to arrive bringing with them a

¹⁰⁰ Sharpe, 57-9; Cust, ‘Charles I and Popularity’, 246-7; Reeve, 207, 256-9, 277-288; C. Carlton, *Charles I; the Personal Monarch*, (London and N.Y.. 1995), 172.

¹⁰¹ Carlton, 160; Sharpe, 155-6; Letter 9 June 1632, in *Pory*, Micro. 272; B.L., Add. MS. 72439, fo. 8; Arber, Vol. 4, entries for 26 June and 2 July 1632, 246, 248.

percentage for Charles for their safe passage. Charles was inevitably sympathetic to Thomas's complaints but the ready opportunity to mollify Spain by giving London news a pro-Spanish gloss through the use of Verhoeven's Antwerp news had just been lost because victory at Maastricht allowed Frederick Henry to sever the news link between Antwerp, Brussels and West Germany. The resulting ban on news publication in London by order of the Star Chamber on 17 October was to last for six years.¹⁰²

Pory wrote to Lord Brooke, 25 October, repeating the order fully, listing those involved in the decision and adding,

They say the occasion of this order was the importunity of the Spanish and archduchess's agents, who were vexed at the soul to see so many losses and crosses, so many dishonours and disasters, betide the House of Austria... but this smothering of the corantos is but a pallation, not a cure, of their wounds. They will burst out again one of these days.¹⁰³

Despite warning signs the ban came as a surprise to Butter who thought that whatever the problem, it could be fixed. He told Pory that

a gentleman of his acquaintance having dined this day sennight in the company of Mr Taylor, the arch duchesse's agent, and asked him the reason of calling in the Currantos, he answered the newes was so ill, as the lords would not have it known... Besides he is getting to be translated divers Antwerp Currantos, to show their lordships how they lie upon us and our friends, and we in the meantime must be muzzled and our mouths stopped. But yesternight I met him at Whitehall, after he had been in Mr Secretary

¹⁰² (4 September 1632), 3, *S.T.C.* 18507.268; (3 October 1632), *S.T.C.* 18507.273; Dahl, 219; (16 October 1632), 12, *S.T.C.* 18507.276; Reeve, *Charles I*, 256; G. M. D. Howat, *Stuart and Cromwellian Foreign Policy* (1974), 44; Sharpe, 91; Ch. 2, 48, 66-7, Maastricht siege and fall; Ch. 2, 46-8, for the influence of Antwerp and the re-routing of posts following Maastricht. Star Chamber: Order from the Council, 17 October 1632, referred to 'the great abuse in the printing of gazettes, and pamphlets of news from Foreign parts, and upon signification of his Majesty's express pleasure and command to the Board for the present suppressing of the same, it was ordered that all printing of the same be suppressed and inhibited; and that as well Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Borne, booksellers, under whose names the said gazettes have been usually published, as all booksellers, presume not from henceforth to print, publish, or sell any of the said pamphlets'. *C.S.P.D.*, 1631-33, 426; Arber, Vol. 4, 528-36.

¹⁰³ *CandT*, II, 185-6; the coining of Spanish money in England is mentioned in the same letter. Pory's letter to John Scudamore, 20 October, confirms that 'printing newes is wholly suppressed'. His letter, 27 October, to Scudamore referred to the newsbook issue that 'did a little touché the copyholde of that great favourite of Spaine the Conde d'Olivares in saying he was committed to prison and had great sumes of money found in his house whereas there was no such matter'. Pory, *Micro.* 309 and 311; Baron supported her argument that Pory translated for Butter and Bourne, with the comment that Pory's reaction to the ban was that 'of a man who had just lost a significant portion of his livelihood'. S. A. Baron, 'The Guises of Dissemination in early seventeenth-century England', in *DandB.*, 46; Ch. 5, 183-4. Pory was undoubtedly very much involved and probably had more at stake than translation into English to the newsbooks. He was well placed to also supply news to the continental news networks to which the partnership subscribed. Ch. 2, 41-44.

Coke's chamber: and he told me he hoped ere long his Currantos would be revived.¹⁰⁴

His relationship with Weckherlin had, by this stage, endured the dramas of news production for 5 years and there can be little doubt that it was Weckherlin that Butter met in Coke's office, or that he received reassurance and encouragement, but matters were not settled as quickly as Butter hoped. It is also unlikely that the level of sales attained during Gustavus Adolphus's campaign would have been maintained: within weeks both the King of Sweden and Frederick were dead. The war ceased to be about 'The Protestant Cause' and became a dynastic war without clear confessional alignments while, at home, Weckherlin found himself having to cope with increasingly complicated relationships, surrounded by Laud and Weston, Cottington with his Spanish sympathies and Windebank.

Nevertheless, Butter and Bourne persisted. In February 1633 Butter held on to a report about Lutzen and Gustavus Adolphus's death, thinking he would get permission to print, only to find he was refused and warned not to circulate it even in manuscript.¹⁰⁵ In September 1633, Butter and Bourne petitioned pleading their livelihood and saying

'a great part of the King's subjects content by the Gazettes and weekly news, they therefore pray, that on promise of being careful in time to come, that nothing dishonourable to princes in amity with his Majesty should pass the press, they may, like the subjects of all other states, be permitted the publishing of the said news again'.

The petition is endorsed with a statement that these are published in all other countries and, 'at Brussels and Antwerpe are corrected and licensed by the Jesuits'. There is a further note to the Secretary saying that if they are permitted again they are willing to 'settle it in some fitting course'. On 2 October a further signal of official favour came in the form of their election to the governing body of the Stationers' Company. Weeks later they thought their petition had been granted and paid 7 shillings in arrears for registering the newsbooks at the Stationers' Company. But still they were disappointed.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *CandT*, II, 188, letter to Sir Thomas Lucy, 1 November 1632.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 225-6, letter from Gresley to Puckering; Raymond, 90-1, ponders whether copyists were restricted because of Butter's possession of the text or because an embargo likewise was placed on them by implication and concludes that it appears to be the latter.

¹⁰⁶ Wedgwood, 327, 332; *C.S.P.D.*, 1633-1634, 222; *O.D.N.B.*; Arber, Vol. 4, 283, entry 6 December 1633.

It is not impossible that part of the delay was because the new arrangements suited Weckherlin quite well. Newsbook publication had become so frequent that it must have created considerable pressure trying to keep pace with the editing and review required. The story of the German war was still being told in *The Swedish Intelligencer* and subsequent periodicals but now it became a 'history' based on research into all the evidence after events were concluded. There was time to tell the story coherently and to edit and license with the sort of care that was more appropriate given the greater vulnerability of Weckherlin's position and Charles' closer relations with Spain. But Watts recognised the change in foreign policy and the King's increasing preference for peace, to allow him to continue without recourse to Parliament. He ended *The Swedish Intelligencer*, *The Fourth Part*, with a prayer claiming peace at home 'to be more glorious then Victory' then withdrew as editor.¹⁰⁷

Others continued to believe that renewed weekly publication was a possibility. A petition from Walter Wardner and George More was recommended by Henry Gibb but was unsuccessful. Trade in anonymous newsbooks with Dutch imprints resumed. Three surviving issues of a series translated largely from the corantos of Van Hilten date from the beginning of 1633. English translations of *Mercure François* came into the country and, as the 1630s progressed, autobiographical accounts of service in the Low Countries and Germany became available. Weckherlin himself sent out weekly abstracts and one off accounts of recently concluded events were also permitted from time to time such as an account of the death of the Duke of Friedland.¹⁰⁸

After 1633 Charles continued to support Sweden but with far less money than was needed. He also negotiated unsuccessfully at Prague on Charles Louis's behalf but the support he gave to Spain was not sufficiently critical to their interests

¹⁰⁷ (1633), 175. *S.T.C.*23525.1.

¹⁰⁸ *C.S.P.D.*, 1634-1635, 418. The following year there was also a proposal to set up an office to check that nothing was added to books after they were licensed. *C.S.P.D.*, 1635-1636, 75; (Amsterdam, 1633), *S.T.C.*18507.359; (Amsterdam, about February 1633), *S.T.C.*18507.360; (Amsterdam, February 1633), *S.T.C.*18507.361; Dahl, 280-283; C. M. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (N Carolina, 1983) 24; K. Sharpe, 'The King's Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England', in K. Sharpe and P. Lake, eds, *Culture and Politics in early Stuart England*, (1994), 133-4, Charles' silence up to 1641; Atherton, 42, 52; G. Mortimer, *Eye-Witness Accounts of the Thirty Years' War, 1618-48* (Hants/N.Y., 2002), on Sydnam Poyntz, 24, Robert Monro, 23, 34, 151-63, Thomas Raymond and Sir James Turner, 28; Arber, Vol. 4, 278, 281, 289, 301.

to give him the backing he needed. The Peace of Prague in 1635 confirmed how little England or the Palatinate counted by this stage in the affairs of Europe. Charles Louis, Frederick's heir, visited England that December and was joined by his brother, Prince Rupert, in the summer of 1636 but Charles made no commitment to any alliance with France and the United Provinces and no change in permitted news coverage.

Most historians would probably agree with Howat that at the heart of Charles' foreign policy was 'the perennial issue of the Palatinate: the wolf in the web of all his endeavours' and that, when the cause of Protestantism and the cause of the Palatinate coincided, he and his people were in agreement. Sharpe and Howat have argued that Charles did well to achieve neutrality and security in this period, but Sharpe consistently underplays the public relations cost. People distrusted Charles because the peace was Spanish and Catholic and because of the connections they saw with Laud's policies and Arminianism. English public opinion remained staunchly anti-Spanish. The boom in newsbook sales and the enthusiasm with which publishers responded to even the smallest of Charles' pro-Protestant steps in the early 1630s are indicative of an open door that Charles could have walked through to be in sympathy with his people. Yet, he chose to work with Spain, though Spain symbolized values, including wealth, the papacy, ritual and spiritual tastes that were rejected by the more Calvinistic and militant Protestants in England. Moreover, because both Charles and Laud denied papal authority they do not appear to have recognized that others did not make the same distinctions. It seems Charles' expectation of loyalty from his citizens was so strong that he did not allow for their feelings or consider that these might have any basis or consequences. He failed to act decisively or effectively in the interests of his sister, yet he entertained Catholic guests such as Con, joked about his religion, and appears to have been oblivious of the impression he created.¹⁰⁹

Sabrina Baron has suggested the Crown was increasingly concerned about controlling the content of printed material from 1620s and probed the question of why Charles did not attempt to control the circulation of manuscript news given its

¹⁰⁹ Howat, *Stuart and Cromwellian*, 40-1, 44, 46; Reeve, *Charles I*, 183-187.

capacity to shape public opinion.¹¹⁰ But Charles' handling of foreign news publication shows that despite Buckingham's experiment to woo the press, a number of warnings given to the Stationers' Company, licensing and the 1632 Ban, in practice he paid little real attention to the news press. He intervened sporadically, defending the forced loan, shaping the impact of the Petition of Right, and insisting on news licensing. Control over religious tracts increased but he left news in the hands of Weckherlin who shared his concern for the Palatinate but was happy to allow a Protestant foreign news press to thrive under nominal supervision in politically sensitive times. Even when newsbooks were banned, no one interpreted this as part of an intentional strategy. Its cause was perceived as a means of avoiding embarrassment in dealings with Spain. Petitions received in Whitehall were commended and Weckherlin continued to license other news, now dubbed 'history', including the *Swedish Intelligencer*. These were sufficiently infrequent to allow more effective editing. The Ban reduced day-to-day political pressure on foreign policy but did nothing to redirect the impact of news on the formation of public opinion. Readers were able to maintain their interest in foreign affairs through the *Swedish Intelligencer*, imported foreign news and the autobiographical accounts of British mercenaries and volunteers serving in the Low Countries and Germany. In 1638 Charles was willing to renew the newsbook monopoly. Thus, when Parliament reassembled, despite a decade of peace, foreign policy remained a bone of contention and Charles' opponents criticised him in the Grand Remonstrance for both the breach with France and the peace with Spain.

Part 3

War in Britain

This section covers the final stages of reporting the Thirty Years' War. This is a period that has never been studied in its own right, falling into years where attention is drawn to the Scottish Wars and Parliament. Within the history of the press, attention has been focused on the emergence of printed domestic news. Yet there was a continuing market in foreign news and the efforts of Butter, Bourne and others to persuade the King to review his decision persisted. Butter later described

¹¹⁰ Baron, 'Guises of Dissemination', 42-5.

the years of the Ban as leaving 'every man to the pleasing of his own fantasy, by a more uncertaine restrained way of private letters, or verball news which cannot but suffer much alteration, according to the affection of the Relater'. Then, in October 1637, Breda fell to Frederick Henry leading an army with many English and Scottish volunteers fighting in Dutch regiments alongside the Palatine Princes. Charles was once again under pressure to declare war, this time to support the French and Dutch against Spain. It was time to re-enter the market with foreign news; a biography of Henry IV of France and the terms of the surrender of Breda duly appeared. Other publications were more sensational and emphasized the horrors of war, including *The Lamentations*.¹¹¹

Butter and Bourne received permission to resume publication on 20 December 1638, just days after the anticipated surrender of Breisach on the Rhine to Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, which put all of Alsace in the hands of troops in the pay of France and closed the gateway for Spain into southern Germany. The summer saw at least four publications about Germany and in October rumours reached London that Prince Rupert, whose army had been supported with the help of English money, was missing in action following the defeat by the Imperial forces at Vlotho on the Weser. Still, with success in Alsace and the revival of Swedish fortunes in the east, the tide was turning more steadily against the Habsburgs. Licensed news reporting was likely to be preferable to rumour. The Star Chamber Decree of 1637 had reduced the number of printing presses. It also attempted to address some of the loopholes in licensing, extending licensing requirements to all ephemeral publications. It specified that histories 'or any other Booke of State affaires, shall be licenced by the principall Secretaries of State' and required all imported books to arrive via the port of London to be inspected by Ecclesiastical Commissioners. We have no evidence to suggest that renewed permission to publish foreign news was a sign that Charles was confident that controlled periodical publication was possible or a recognition that the import of news was impossible to stop. The many difficulties in the practical application of censorship and the pressures of 1637, which contributed to the issue of the Star Chamber

¹¹¹ (23 April 1640), verso, *S.T.C.* 18507.337; Sharpe, 683-90, 695; Hibbard, *Charles I*, 88; Wedgwood, 421; C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's Peace 1637-41* (1955), 176-7; Arber, Vol. 4, 345, 347, 349, 355, 369, 370, 376.

Decree, including book-sellers illicitly circulating news of the Covenant from Scotland, the Dutch unloading forbidden literature on the Essex coast and Lilburne's arrest for importing Bastwick's books from Holland, may be interpreted to suggest that Charles was, like his father before him in the early 1620s, seeking alternate means to control the foreign news press. However, while these factors may have been considerations, permission came at a time when Charles was contemplating an offensive treaty with France against Austria and his concerns about the sensitivities of Spain were weakening.¹¹²

Unfortunately, the exploration of a potential alliance against the Emperor was even more elusive than the one with Sweden in 1631. Charles muddied diplomatic waters by entertaining the Queen's mother, Marie de Medici, known to be in the pay of Spain and raised arms and money for war in Scotland, even in the Spanish Netherlands. The need to avoid war abroad plus some suspicion that the French could be supporting rebels in Scotland led him to revive discussions with Spain as the only alternative for the restoration of the Palatinate. Wedgwood has noted that European diplomats and the King's subjects suspected that Charles was 'taking up a definite position at last ... [but] on the wrong side'. Officers were appointed for the Scottish offensive, including men who in 1631/2 had filled newsbooks with reports of action in Germany. Essex, who had fought for the Dutch was respected by the Puritans and appointed to lead Charles' army, while Hamilton would command the fleet. But Leslie, Montrose and Lorne joined the Covenanters and there were enough soldiers with military experience from Germany all over Scotland to ensure that their troops were trained.¹¹³

Financial considerations appear to have clinched the deal for Butter and Bourne. Charles' project to improve St Paul's was to be supported, 'for the term of 21 years, they paying yearly towards the repair of St Paul's the sum of 10£'. But this agreement was far from 'business as usual'. Though they registered their first issue with the Stationers' Company, it soon became apparent that neither the Stationers' Company nor Weckherlin were to play any part in the new process.

¹¹² Wedgwood, 418-29; *C.S.P.D., 1638-1639*, 315, 365-6; Arber, Vol. 4, 528-36; Seibert, *Freedom*, 142; Raymond, *Invention*, 13, 95; Arber, Vol. 4, 393, 395, 396, 400.

¹¹³ Wedgwood, *The King's Peace*, 225-8, 236; Sharpe, 826-9; B. Donagan, 'Halcyon Days and the Literature of the War: England's Military Education before 1642', *PandP.*, 147 (1995), 68-70.

Instead, the monopoly was to be protected the Star Chamber Decree and Spanish interests watched over by Robert Reade, Windebank's cousin, who permitted each issue individually. The words 'With privilege' or 'permission' in each imprint signified their new status, and issues often also identified the licenser as Robert Reade. Instead of permission to produce 50 issues over a period of approximately one year, this new system took them to 100 issues in about 8 months. Any potential complexity in the licensing process was eliminated by removing all editorial discretion: after a first issue that caught up on news going back as far as the previous summer, they printed only short newsbooks which were direct translations adhering closely to their continental originals. They also helped boost Charles' case for Ship Money by including whatever naval news was available, highlighting the activities of the Dunkirkers, hostilities in the Mediterranean and off Brazil.¹¹⁴

1639 was to turn out to be a bad year to resume publication. The market for sales was unpromising, with Charles' efforts to raise money and troops, then events in the north occupying people's minds as Charles set out for York in March. Even so, foreign news sales were strong enough to justify the publication of a further edition of the *Swedish Intelligencer* series, called *Diatelesma ...the principall passages of Christendome from Nov 1636. till Aprill 1638* and a pamphlet on the Turks. However, the new periodical arrangements quickly showed flaws. Even though regular customers had maintained their interest, higher costs were not matched by a sufficiently increased income. The Treaty of Berwick and the King's return to London in August did little to restore confidence as, in a further twist of foreign policy, Charles took up once more with Spain. The Elector Palatine, hopeful that the Berwick agreement signalled a fresh commitment from Charles to the Protestant alliance, arrived with a plan to take leadership of the Saxe-Weimar troops at Breisach, but he found Spanish officers in London requesting safe passage for their troops landed on the south coast en route for Flanders. Charles agreed to their transportation in English ships and agreed too to the hire of English merchant ships to defend the coasts of Biscay from the Dutch and French. The third Spanish

¹¹⁴ *C.S.P.D.*, 1638-1639, 182; Arber, Vol. 4, 422; Dahl, 223, 237; Sharpe, 653-5; Dahl, 223-260; (20 December 1638), 11, *S.T.C.* 18507. 277; (21 June 1639), 338, *S.T.C.* 18507.312; (21 June 1639), 347, *S.T.C.* 18507.313; Ch. 2, 67-9, for 1638-40 newsbooks' content.

request was for an escort for its fleet with troops, money and supplies for the Spanish Netherlands, and Charles instructed Pennington to protect them. In September this fleet put into Dover for safety from the Dutch, putting Charles in the position of negotiating with both sides. The Elector Palatine left in early October, sailing past the Dutch, English and Spanish fleets off the English Downs, all waiting on the outcome of negotiations in London. What followed exemplified the confused state of the Crown's foreign policy and the uncomfortable position that Butter and Bourne were now in with their news monopoly. Charles may have aimed to secure a benefit for the Palatinate but he accomplished nothing because on 11 October Tromp, admiral of the Dutch fleet, ran out of patience and attacked and defeated the Spanish ships while the English fleet stood by and the local populace looked on.¹¹⁵

Rumours would have reached London with speed and led to confusion and concern. Sharpe recorded the extent to which in England in 1638/9 there was foreboding about the war coming to England, but it must have seemed to many as if the war had arrived with Spain ready to invade with royal support. Charles' vacillation was, at best, completely inexplicable. There was no way of turning this into a story that could bolster the Crown's reputation. Butter and Bourne were chosen to defuse the gossip by setting out the facts. Reade licensed *An Extraordinary Curranto wherein is related the Late Sea Fight betixt the Spaniards and the Hollanders*. This described the encounter between 66 Spanish ships and about 100 Dutch vessels, with Pennington heading the English fleet in the middle, asking both to leave British waters then retiring. It said the Dutch blew up a Spanish ship which had on board,

100 of our Englishmen, which the admiral had hired for money at half a Crown a day. The Spanish seamen performed their service and fought bravely, as long as there was any hope; yet at last, most part of the Fleet was destroy'd.

It reported an attempt by the Dutch to follow and pillage the fleeing Spaniards on the English shore but said Pennington 'gave fierce fire upon the said two Hollanders'. It ended with corrections on points of detail and a comment that there was bravery on both sides. There was no mention of the joyful English crowds on

¹¹⁵ Arber, Vol. 4, 424, 441; Ch. 4, 138; Sharpe, 831-3; Wedgwood, 429-30; Wedgwood, *The King's Peace*, 271-4.

the shore celebrating Spanish defeat. The Kentish plunder of the fleeing Spanish was airbrushed into hints that possibly not all coastal residents were as hospitable as they might have been and a story about a minister's horse catching a stray bullet.¹¹⁶

Charles maintained the convention of allowing external events to be described while failing to explain policy. But it would be a mistake to see many parallels with the reporting of the Rhé expedition. There was no plan and at no point was there any hope of positive publicity for either the Crown or any advisers, simply a need to stop rumour and allay anxiety. Sharpe argued that it was after 1638 that popish fears began to escalate. 'It may be argued that a regime that collapsed under a foreign threat, a propaganda campaign and a military failure was already moribund'. He suggested that if Charles had signed a treaty with the French and gone on the offensive in Europe his kingdom may have been saved because the fear of popery would have been addressed. For the publishing partnership the summer of 1639, when Spanish troops were given safe passage across the south of England to avoid German Protestant defences on the Rhine, and that autumn when the fleet fired on the Dutch pursuing the Spanish onto the English coast, brought their news enterprise to its end. They faced a bitter reality: England could not pursue a policy for the restoration of the Palatinate and take action against the Scots. Charles' need for Spanish gold meant that the transportation of Spanish troops and negotiations continued even as the Short Parliament met. Bourne dropped out of the partnership after the *Extraordinary* issue. And after June 1639 only two other European newsbook issues survived for the year, a sure sign of the struggle that Butter had to keep going alone. The brief hope of a renewed Protestant alliance had been snuffed out and, with it, what remained of public interest.¹¹⁷

Butter hung on. In April 1640, shortly after he might reasonably have hoped for a boost in sales once MPs arrived in London for the opening of Parliament, he announced his return to a single, weekly publication which he hoped would be more affordable and marketable but sales did not pick up. Parliament was

¹¹⁶ Sharpe, 843-6; (18 October 1639), 166-7, *S.T.C.*18507. 315.

¹¹⁷ Sharpe, 953; Wedgwood, *The King's Peace*, 302-3; Hibbard, *Charles I*, 124-8; Bourne's name appears only on one further issue (24 March 1640, *S.T.C.*18507.326). Ch 4, 141, for Butter's finances.

dismissed before it had hardly begun and England turned in upon itself with civil unrest and riots in London and many other places. A mood of instability and crisis left little interest in reading and reflecting on events abroad. Charles once again travelled north to address the Scots. Only 15 issues appeared in the following 6 months, despite the opening of the Long Parliament in November. Meanwhile the name of Philip Minutelius had replaced that of Robert Reade as licenser.

Weckherlin, who had been working for Vane since Coke's dismissal at the end of 1639, in an arrangement that gave him correspondence with Germany, the Baltic, France, Holland and Turkey while Windebank handled Spain, Italy, Flanders and Ireland, did not resume licensing and relations with this new licenser soon broke down once the return to single issues reintroduced the need for editorial discretion.¹¹⁸

In January 1641 Butter announced,

Courteous Reader. ... the Licenser (out of partial affection) would not oftentimes let passe apparent truth, and other things (oftentimes) so crosse and alter which made us almost weary of Printing, but he being vanished (and that Office fallen upon another, more understanding in these forraigne affaires, and as you will finde more candid.) We are again (by the favour of his Majestie and the State) resolved to goe on in Printing.

The licenser was once again Weckherlin, Windebank and his nephew Reade having fled to France. Weckherlin's name appears on newsbooks as 'Imprimatur' from January to July 1641 and reappears in the Stationers' Company register as licenser for a number of separate pamphlets of foreign news published in this period.

Thereafter steps were taken to reintroduce arrangements whereby Butter took responsibility for the content of issues without reference to him. Fleetinglly, it even seemed possible that the partnership could be restored under Stationers' Company registrations, rather than the royal monopoly that had proved so difficult. Butter and Bourne had continued to collaborate on other foreign news publications and an entry to Butter and Bourne, for 22 July 1641, naming Weckherlin and Bourne in his role as warden as licensers, covered the next periodical issue.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ (23 April 1640), *S.T.C.* 18507.337; quoted Ch 4, 138; Dahl, 242-250; *C.S.P.D.*, 1639-40, 434, 7 February 1640.

¹¹⁹ (11 January 1641), *S.T.C.* 18507.343, quoted in Dahl, 251; Dahl, 223-260; H. R. Plomer, ed., *Transcript of the Stationers' Company Registers 1640-1708*, 1 (1913), 11, 14, 15, 29.

As previously more favourable treatment for the foreign news accompanied a shift in Crown policy. In December 1640 there was talk of plans for the Prince of Orange's only son to marry one of the English princesses and when it was announced to the House of Lords Charles depicted it as a change in foreign policy intended to support the Queen of Bohemia. This popular marriage took place in May and was followed by more cordial relations with the Elector Palatine. The mission of Thomas Roe to the Diet of Ratisbon resulted in the release of Rupert and Charles' publication of a manifesto arguing that he and his father before him worked for 20 years for peace in Germany and the restoration of the Palatinate. Charles finally explained his foreign policy and its history of concessions and disappointed negotiations but his plea to raise an army in Scotland for the Palatinate was mistrusted and refused.¹²⁰ His actions came too late to quell fears and mistrust at home, convince diplomats in Ratisbon, or to revive Butter's news trade.

The highest point in the story of Crown control had come at a time when, to quote Sharpe, its foreign committee was most 'paralysed by uncertainty'. As the privilege for covering the Rhé expedition went to Walkley in 1627, Butter and Bourne had never before 1639 been called upon to act as mouth-piece for the Crown. Nor had they previously been so closely monitored and regulated. Neither Cottington's parameters in the early 1620s, nor the later understanding with Weckherlin had reduced the periodical foreign news to anything resembling a government news vehicle like those in Antwerp and in Paris. Raymond has questioned why Charles did not follow the French example and concluded that his experiences of public exchanges with the 1628 Parliament made him cynical about the use of propaganda. Baron concluded that Charles failed to control manuscript news because he 'completely miscalculated', believing the upper orders of society impervious to the politically polarizing effects of news, that the regime exhibited insularity and insensitivity, and Charles was 'out of step with popular political opinion in his realm'. Cust's explanation of Charles reluctance to court popularity or to explain his reasons for doing anything is undoubtedly sufficient to account for the distance he maintained from the press. But what shaped the 'on – off' nature of

¹²⁰ Wedgwood, *The King's Peace*, 360-1; Carlton, *Charles I*, 221; Gregg, *King Charles*, 325, 332-3. *Newes from Scotland. His Majesties Manifest touching the Palatine Cause*, (Edinburgh/London, 6 September 1641).

the controls exercised, and made it impossible for Court officials to work with the partnership to develop a consistent foreign policy voice had a deeper root: it was the absence of a sufficiently coherent and consistent foreign policy to inform or provide editorial direction. Charles appears to have believed he could do as he pleased to achieve his goals. He acted as if oblivious of the depth of feeling against accommodating Spanish demands and did so in full view on English soil and in the English Channel. He was unlikely therefore to have reflected much about the press and its power to inform and influence opinion.¹²¹

Integrating Foreign and Domestic News

In this section I show how the periodical news trade adapted to a changing market from 1640; how publishers quickly adopted periodical methods and editorial practices to printing domestic news; and how, once this news base was established it was able to fully integrate news networking with other European cities, absorbing the costs without dependence on a monopoly.

Seibert saw a failure in 1640 due to the dilatory and erratic behaviour of the licensers and lack of public interest, not recognizing that the publishers over-committed themselves with supply subscriptions that drained Butter's assets. He then had to compete not only with demand for domestic news but also with an increasingly free market for foreign news from competitors without the same liabilities. Seibert also ended his account of the foreign news at 1640, so he missed the curtailment of Butter's activities as an intelligencer, in January 1643.

Raymond, perpetuating earlier misunderstandings by Frank about the way in which news networks functioned, saw the upsurge in printed newsbooks and the shift in focus to domestic news in 1641 as having a different root to that of foreign newsbooks. Sommerville has similarly suggested that the 'first two decades of periodical news was a false dawn'. However, Frank was writing before the European archives of early newsprint had been explored. He was not aware of the way European news networking (including with London) functioned as an organic whole, through correspondents, user-publication and the editing down of more

¹²¹ Sharpe, 838; Raymond, 95-100; Baron, 'Guises', 52; Cust, 'Charles I and Popularity', 235-56; 254-5 above.

distant, older news to give space to fresh material. He saw the short news digests compiled by post-masters and correspondents as something essentially different in origin to the manuscript separates, newsletters and journals that first found their way into print in London in the early 1640s. Raymond is now beginning to recognise a wider European news history, for example, by including work from Arblaster on the Habsburg Netherlands and Fillippo De Vivo on Italy in *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe*.¹²² By stepping back from an insular perspective and seeing domestic news in the context of the broad spectrum of European news networking, developments in London can be seen as different primarily only in scale to the transitions experienced in other European cities, especially in the 1630s and 1640s. Brendan Dooley, taking this broader perspective, has observed that the first papers in most places were entirely concerned with foreign news but that as they began providing more and more information they began to turn to local affairs. It is the 'unparalleled vitality of the English media landscape' with over 350 titles of news publications from 1641 to 1659 that distinguishes it.¹²³

Until 1640 a combination of the work of the King's printer and the scribal system had been adequate for the transmission of domestic political news. Scribes could turn round domestic news more quickly than printers when 200 or so copies were sufficient to meet demand and they continued to do so through 1630s. continental news had made the leap into print in 1620 through de Keere's corantos when events in Bohemia and the Palatinate became news. Demand soon outstripped scribal and printing capacity and speed, though desirable, was less critical when the news had already been travelling for many days to reach London. English domestic news was edited out of corantos and the first newsbooks because by the time it crossed the Channel twice it was stale and had already been covered by domestic correspondents in greater detail. Our understanding has developed in recent years from the simplistic notion that the printing of domestic news was

¹²² Seibert, 159-61, 165-191; J. Raymond, *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe*, (London and N.Y., 2006), 12, 14, 19-31, 35-6; Frank, Ch. 1-2; C. J. Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England; Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (N.Y. and Oxford), 33.

¹²³ B. Dooley, in DandB., 'Postscript', 296, 'Introduction', 11.

illegal to questions by Cogswell, Baron and Croft who in different ways ask – why did the Crown pay so little attention to scribal news?

Twenty years after foreign periodicals were first printed in London, Parliament seemed to offer the only prospect for addressing the concerns readers had prayed about, including ‘a worthy general to succeed the King of Sweden’, and the suppression of popery and Arminianism. So domestic demand boomed and became urgent. Instead of the output of scribes crossing the Channel before going into print it was picked up by publishers and printers in London. Separate texts (copies of speeches, declarations and parliamentary documents) of the sort that had been available in manuscript in large numbers in 1629 were printed for the first time after the start of the Long Parliament in November 1640 particularly following the Grand Remonstrance which led to many petitions being printed. Further spates of separates marked other great events in 1641 and 1642 in just the same way as major events in other countries, such as the Imperial Ban against Frederick, had generated ‘pamphlet wars’. Despite Parliament seeking to restrict note taking during proceedings and preserve secrecy, as Love has noted, many speeches were actively circulated by their authors as a form of political activism. Others wished to ensure accuracy and maintain control over the text.¹²⁴

Soon after the start of the Long Parliament commercially produced weekly manuscripts of proceedings were also available with generic titles including the words ‘Diurnall Occurrences’. These covered a week’s events and complemented the copies of speeches available in cheap print. In November 1641, the first weekly domestic newsbook began to appear on Mondays. Raymond has elucidated events around the upsurge in domestic news publication, the imprisonment of Laud and abolition of the Court of Star Chamber. He has also described the way editors of domestic newsbooks ‘rapidly engineered a repertoire for representing and organising news events’ and how they transformed them from a ‘non-controversial narration of parliamentary proceedings into a bitter and aggressive instrument of literary and political faction’. He is at his weakest however when arguing that there

¹²⁴ Sir Robert Harley’s prayer from 1635 is quoted in D. Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, (1996), 45; Love, 16-7; M. Mendle, ‘News and the Pamphlet Culture of mid-seventeenth-century England’, in DandB, 59-61; W. Notestein and F. Relf, eds., *Commons Debates for 1629* (Minneapolis, M.N., 1929), Introduction; Raymond, 13, 101-2.

were 'few direct continuities' between foreign and domestic newsbooks and that 'continuity ... has been overstated'.¹²⁵ It was, of course, easy to produce domestic newsbooks on a fixed day of the week since the supply of material was not dependent on a Channel crossing. Issues were distributed using all the methods established by Butter and Bourne, including street vendors and posts. From the beginning the newsbook format adopted, with eight pages, a title page and blank verso. Largely anonymous editors digested material for publication, while Humphrey Blunden in his effort to produce a distinctive periodical also copied the issue number and consecutive pagination methods used by Butter and Bourne in from 1622 and 1639 respectively. Like Butter and Bourne in 1639 the domestic newsbook publishers also abandoned the full title page and, after a while, they also followed the system of datelines to indicate the origins of letters.

Meanwhile, by 1641 Butter had finally re-established licensing arrangements on a workable basis only when he had run out of capital, and was competing for custom with many publications covering Parliamentary developments so that his issues for the thirteenth series were produced cheaply and edited inconsistently. But readers learned of the final phases of Baner's campaign and his death, successful replacement by Torstensson and victory at Wolfenbuttle, as well as the troubles of Spain in Portugal and Catalonia. Had Bourne been convinced that the sizeable investment required to secure news network supplies for the coming year could be protected adequately through Stationers' Company licensing and that sales would be high, the partnership might have resumed, but his experiences suggested otherwise. He did not take the risk and Butter could not afford subscription renewals that summer. Butter did what he could to become part of the new wave of public interest in domestic news. He briefly collaborated with Samuel Pecke who was among the first of the new generation to rise to prominence and develop a distinctive professional style, but Butter's real interest remained with the news on which he had built his reputation. So he continued as best he could

¹²⁵ Raymond, 13, 85, 102-6, for discontinuities, 8-9, 21-3, 81, 145, on datelines, J. Raymond, *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England 1641-1660* (Gloucestershire, 1993), 63-4 with many examples among the illustrations. J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 152, claims that since November 1641 Britain has almost never been without a newspaper. Sommerville, *The News Revolution*, 45, dates the start from 1638, when the partnership resumed publication.

with a fourteenth series but was already in the Fleet in January 1643 when he was arrested under the charge of being an 'Intelligencer' and taken to Windsor.¹²⁶

In January 1642, Butter had shown he understood the 'faire opportunity being now offered to recover the Palatinate' as a result of Swedish successes but also the unlikelihood of English support, adding, 'if friends were both ready and willing'. In March he tried to sell his foreign news by referring to domestic upheaval on the front page, *Nevves from Forraigne Parts... very fittin for this State to take notice in this time of division and Distraction. Especially the great councill of the kingdome, the Parliament*. But it was only scraps. He was no longer able to protect his foreign news monopoly and was arguing with other booksellers who he claimed 'doe (out of envie or ignorance) ... obscure and vilify the said Avisoes'. In late May, after a disagreement, possibly sparked by the publication of *News from Holland* by Edward Blackmore, he was no longer able to sell through other bookstores and advised London customers to establish terms directly with him at his shop in St. Austin's Gate. Bourne, by contrast, devoted his energies and used his position in the Stationers' Company to police his more lucrative copyrighted publications and publish popular religious works with Daniel Fealty. When he ventured again into foreign news in 1644 he targeted the Huguenot exile market with *Le Mercure Anglois*.¹²⁷

The partnership's heritage was, however, not forgotten. The idea that the news press could be used as a vehicle for the Crown was once again revived with the aid of Sir John Berkenhead in a series from Oxford under the title *Mercurius Aulicus*. Cogswell has noted that 'some of the staff involved in the [Walkley] experiment figured in Charles's later efforts' and that 'Buckingham doubtless would be delighted to learn that the journalistic laurels that scholars have long

¹²⁶ Raymond, 20-4; Sommerville, *The News Revolution*, 35, 39-40; *A cruell and bloody battaile*, Butter, (end Jan 1642, Wing C7416), title page; L. Rostenberg, 'Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, First Masters of the Staple' *The Library*, 5th Series, 12 (1957), 33; arrest 26 Jan 1643, *Journals of the House of Commons, 13 April 1640-14 March 1642*, Vol. 2 (1742-), 943; arrest for trial by martial law, 10 Nov 1643, *15 March 1642-24 Dec 1644*, Vol. 3, 943.

¹²⁷ (5 March 1642), title page, Wing N597A; (4 June 1642), 114, quoted by Dahl, 265, but reported as lost from the Rutland collection; *News from Holland*, E. Blackmore (20 May 1642), Wing, N967. Other rival publications that year included, *Nevves from Dunkirke*, H. G., John Johnson (1642), Wing, H33; *Newes from France*, S. W. John Matthewes (1642), Wing, S200; Raymond, 146, refers to *Speciall and Late Passages from the Most Eminent Places in Christendome*, Thomas Underhill, (October 1641) and to fragments of foreign and shipping news appeared in newsbooks though 1642-3; Bourne, *O.D.N.B.*

accorded Richelieu and Renaudot more properly belong to the brows of Mr Walkley and the duke'. Thomas Audley and Marchamont Needham replied for Parliament with a series named *Mercurius Britannicus* in ironic recognition of the discomfort at that time of Butter and Bourne, then publishing under that nom de plume. (They maintained the misspelling throughout.) In 1645, a further publication, *Mercurius Anti-Britanicus*, completed the honours more scathingly, referring to the work of Captain Gainsford.¹²⁸

With Butter's monopoly set aside, from 1644, *Mercurius Civicus* occasionally included small foreign reports as did *Perfect Diurnall*, *Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer*, *The Kingdomes Faithfull and Impartiall Scout*, and *Certaine Informations*. There was nothing systematic at this point but enough for *The Great Assises* in 1645 to note John Dillingham's inclination to mix foreign and domestic news in *The Parliament Scout* and a similar interest in *Mercurius Civicus*. Without reciprocal arrangements, publishers had limited means for getting foreign news until, in 1646, *The Pheonix of Europe*, *The Exchange Intelligencer*, and *The Moderate Intelligencer* ventured into foreign news publication more seriously. Of these, only *The Moderate Intelligencer* was successful. Dillingham had the necessary experience as a news correspondent. He had lived in Paris where he provided news for Lord Montague from 1639 to 1643. He was able to establish relations with correspondents and news networks. Sales of *The Moderate Intelligencer* were sufficient to fund and allow enough space in each issue to cover foreign events adequately. His assistant, John Cotgrave, similarly had some foreign news experience, having been associated with Bourne's *Le Mercurie Anglois*. It thus fell to *The Moderate Intelligencer* and its off-shoot, *The Moderate*, to conclude the account of the Thirty Years' War in 1648.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Raymond 26, 87; Cogswell, 'By Authoritie', 3, 24; 179-184 above; Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 137, quotation in Ch. 5, 168.

¹²⁹ Raymond, *Making*, 256-266, includes transcripts of reports from overseas included in newsbooks from 1643 to 1649. J. Raymond, 'The Great Assises Holden in Parnassus: The Reputation and Reality of Seventeenth Century Newsbooks', in *Annual*, 8-9, 12. Raymond, 144-152, describes the use of foreign news in newsbooks during this period and includes the following, quoted from *The Exchange Intelligencer*, 1, (1 May 1645, Wing 145.1 fo. E284(12)), 1-2, 'Years ago we lived 'in so blessed a Time, that wee were onely curious, and desirous to heare forraign Newes, and to know the fate of other Kingdomes and Nations. And now..wee talke of nothing else but what is done in *England*: and perhaps once a fortnight. Wee hearken after Newes out of *Scotland*. ...our owne Domestique affaires are of greater concernment, then foreign businesses; but yet we may looke farther than home... [to be reassured that they are too busy to be a threat or (as in the past) to rejoice or commiserate with our friends for their

Terms between the Dutch and Spain had been settled in January 1648 favourably for the Dutch and Amsterdam at the expense of Flanders and Antwerp. The signing of the Peace of Westphalia was reported in *The Moderate Intelligencer* in November 1648, which described how it was marked by 108 shot salute and the appearance of a stork flying about the lodgings of the Imperial Lords. 'The next day was so cleer a Sun-shine without any clouds, that it seemed, Heaven it self was well pleased with this general Peace: in the Churches thanks was given to God.' A report from Munster noted that Council house was hung with ensigns and trumpets and kettle drums played but concluded that

amongst other harsh conditions of this Peace to the Calvinists, The Prince Elector Palatine, and his Brothers are to renounce for themselves, & their heires their right to the Upper Palatinate... There are also some lands (Fees) of the Lower Palatinate, bestowed by the Emperour and the Duke of Bavaria upon foure Noblemen, their Counsellors, who have beene always the greatest enemies to the House Palatine... Let all take notice of the different disposition and affection ... in England now, and 30 yeeres, when Prayers, Fasts, Men and Money was offered in abundance.

The reported loss of England's central cause, the Palatinate (with financial terms misreported and subsequently corrected) was not fresh news. The fate of the Palatinate had been settled in the winter of 1646 when Charles Louis, weakened by the collapse of Charles' power in England, had resigned himself to loss, though to the end he was supported by Sweden and Spain against Bavaria and France; a fact that, in different circumstances, might have helped shed light on Charles' ever mistrusted negotiations with Spain.¹³⁰

Conclusions

The Thirty Years' War gave the news industry the impetus to move into print in many cities across Western Europe. Since news travelled via political and business networks in all directions through the post, it was inherently difficult to control and its publication presented government with new challenges. To influence public

successes or failures]. Besides, it is requisite for Marchants, and for those that travell... to know... what forces are upon the Seas, and where Armies quarter... These reasons have moved me to undertake this Weekly labour... You shall know our owne affairs first, and in the next have Informations almost from all parts of the world. The best of the *French and Dutch Coranto's*... besides many things out of Marchants and gentlemens letters'. *O.D.N.B.* and Ch 2, 43.

¹³⁰ Wedgwood, 454-9, 498, 501, 488-9, 491, 524; *The Moderate Intelligencer*, 191 (9-16 November 1648), quoted in Raymond, *Making*, 263-5.

opinion a variety of tools and mechanisms were available ranging from sponsored publication, bribery and favouritism, through co-operation to licensing, threats and imprisonment. The favoured approach of the English Crown was licensing, moderated by favouritism and threats. The outcome was a process of negotiation, adapted and adjusted as the circumstances and foreign policy changed.

James I managed the press as part of a wider strategy of governance aimed to maintain balance. He presented his opinions on some matters, censored extremists and controlled the output of the press at the time of Parliaments. Until 1624 he avoided war but could not escape from the heightened ideological positions within English politics. In many ways Charles followed in his father's footsteps. He used the same methods for controlling the press but he did not use them as effectively or systematically. Moreover, if James had failed to anticipate or appreciate the potential political and cultural impacts of regular news readership, Charles largely chose to ignore them.

James' pacific foreign policy served him for many years but he failed to live up to his title as the defender of the faith; he failed to satisfy English Protestants who did not believe England should stay out of the conflict and failed to keep England at peace. James' approach, if disappointing to many, was coherent whereas Charles explored many options and made mistakes. Frequently playing one interest off against another, he never seemed to reap any benefits. Loan ships were used against Protestants. He engaged in war with France and Spain simultaneously. His actions delayed the engagement of France as a potential ally against Spain and turned English involvement in the European war into a religious matter – something both he and James at other times avoided in their search for allies to assist in the restitution of the Palatinate. When Charles rediscovered the attractions of alliance with Spain as a tactical and potentially economical approach to the recovery of the Palatinate he also found, like his father in 1623, he did not have sufficient leverage. Even with an improved fleet there was not enough inducement or threat to tip the balance of Spanish allegiances. While he was playing the French and Dutch against Spain, or being strung along by one or another, Charles was, like James before him, unable to engage in effective public relations at home. Then, when the opportunity came in 1631 to adopt a more

popular foreign policy for a relatively low cost, the news industry, working in co-operation with its friends at Court, were ready and able to respond, but Charles hesitated then changed direction.

In subsequent years, as long as government activity was diplomatic and there was a reluctance to explain motives, the press could only report action in the field. However, diplomatic efforts in the 1630s were not just played out in the capitals of Europe. Charles used his newly refurbished fleet as a bargaining tool, sailing up and down the Channel, sheltering the Spanish fleet from the Dutch. Charles was careless of public opinion, seemingly oblivious of the impact this would have or the implications when Parliament assembled. His expectation of loyalty and his tendency to see opposition as no more than small groups of malcontents prevented him from recognizing the importance of cultivating public opinion.

Kevin Sharpe has constructed a picture of Charles as a diligent, ordered and able administrator and questioned whether during the period of his personal rule there was any serious disaffection. Reeve argues that Charles did not perceive the depth of his people's fears and Cust that Charles 'misjudgements' were often a consequence of his interpretation of the motives of his opponents, while Carlton has suggested that he saw his opponents as insane or idiots and that he was a fundamentally lazy monarch who left much of the domestic administration to his secretaries.¹³¹ However, Charles maintained interest in foreign policy but his attention to the press was at best spasmodic. Much of the time he took almost no interest at all. He set up machinery for the management of the press, but he left the licensing of foreign news largely in the hands of Weckherlin, who was not only already a busy official but also willing to accept a staunchly Protestant viewpoint in the material he licensed.

The cultivation of public opinion takes place over a sustained period. It involves telling a consistent story and attention to detail. There is no sign that Charles grasped this, or that he had any inclination to learn. By contrast, the news publishers learned quickly that the unique financial and logistical implications of

¹³¹ Sharpe, 209, 608-10, 682-701; Reeve, 29; Cust, 'Charles I and Popularity', 250; Carlton, *Charles I*, 103, 106, xvii-xviii.

importing periodical news commercially involved risking their capital in a significant long-term commitment. Despite many difficulties, including political vacillation and state interference, they demonstrated resilience, stamina and consistency over an extended period. They kept the issues of the war alive, informed their readers and intensified the ideological divide within England that was seen to underlie the conflict abroad.

Interest in the Thirty Years' War was not extinguished by domestic events. Through the 1620s and 1630s scribal and printed news complemented and supported one another. Foreign news had to compete for attention in the 1640s, but there are many surviving foreign news publications throughout the period of the War. Nor did censorship and government control extinguish the trade, but it made it very difficult at times and created a dependency for the partnership which proved costly both financially and politically. Between 1642 and 1646 the batons passed from Butter and Bourne to Dillingham who, with Cotgrave, was able to operate domestic and foreign news networking in the new context where the two were printed together.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

While the earliest years of the history of English corantos and foreign newsbooks (1620-24) have attracted the attention of bibliographers and historians who have seen it as the start of the periodical press in England and as evidence of an essentially puritan reaction to the loss of the Palatinate, the later years of these publications have scarcely been studied. Indeed, a casual observer could be forgiven for believing that reporting of the Thirty Years' War ended with a Ban in 1632. Yet all of the Thirty Years' War was reported in England. This study explores the whole period, showing the way this was achieved. It provides a unique insight into both early seventeenth-century processes for mediating and controlling publication and also into public opinion as it evolved. It also fully reflects its European news context. This approach has allowed me to break free from some of the misconceptions about communication networks, censorship and the uniqueness of the English experience that are reflected in narrower studies.

Periodicity, established by Thomas Archer, Nicholas Bourne and Nathaniel Butter in 1622 after false starts the year before and maintained in one guise or another until the end of 1642, created a commitment to continuity which in turn generated a need to steer a careful course between the Crown (and later Parliament), licensers and the Stationers' Company in order to stay in business. Publishers were seeking to influence public opinion but throughout the period commercial considerations meant they had to listen to their customers and try to meet their demands. They had to build news supply relationships and a distribution infrastructure, and they had to find ways to operate that would maintain working relationships and allow them to stay in business week after week, weathering the storms of sensitive times, changes of approach to control, and political uncertainty as foreign policies changed course and as the readership evolved. The distribution network they built facilitated the development of printed periodical reporting of the Long Parliament. Their trade innovations stimulated and informed its development from 1640/1, and their foreign news legacy was inherited by John Dillingham in 1646 after his apprenticeship as a news correspondent in Paris.

Much has been made in recent years of the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to make sense of cultural history, the history of the press and the formation of public opinion. It follows that different aspects of this thesis will be of interest to historians with a variety of economic, social, cultural, literary and political interests. The earlier part of the thesis shows how the foundations of this trade were laid. The idea of periodical news reporting was not, in itself, revolutionary since the news networks that supplied the presses had been operating across Europe, including London, and developing for over a century. But the step into print brought with it a new role for the publisher and a far greater level of responsibility and entrepreneurial risk taking than ever before. It even led to the introduction of the term 'publisher'. Michael Frearson has already studied the financial basis on which the trade operated and the way dissemination networks penetrated deeply into towns and the countryside. I show how, as soldiers headed to the Île of Rhé in 1627, then as trade grew in 1630/1, publishers made early steps in the creation of a new craft of active investigative journalism by the officers, soldiers and other overseas correspondents who were invited to send back their reports and families and friends were solicited for copy. I also rework the printing figures and show very large numbers of copies in circulation in busier periods, of possibly over 6000 copies a month in 1622/3 and again in 1631/2, demonstrating that what made periodical newsbooks so significant was partly the size of print runs but more the frequency of publication. This gave an overall output that was remarkable. The volume and accessibility of periodical news meant its presence was experienced more keenly and continuously than ever before. And this experience was explored in contemporary literature and correspondence.

In parallel with my work on this thesis, bibliographical and historical study of the news media on the Continent has progressed rapidly. This shows how a great deal of public news was shared, 'regardless of confessional and dynastic allegiances'. Arblaster has shown how much English news was circulated across Europe. Dooley and Baron have assembled articles about the trade across Europe that demonstrate the flow of news was sufficient to allow readers 'to construct a coherent mosaic of events' where printed news permitted

the comparison of accounts in a way never possible before.¹ This thesis demonstrates the extent to which news flowed across the Channel into London. It explores the development of the public sphere, taking into account the fact that, in the last 15 years, historians have established its inception began well before the end of the seventeenth century and recognizing that by the 1620s there was a thriving and popular interest in the news. More news was available, and available more quickly than ever before. I show news publishers reached out to an extended readership, including the newly literate of the middling classes who needed to be cultivated and trained to be able to assess and understand the reports and so participate in the news culture that gripped society from the outset of the Thirty Years' War. For this, editors were needed. Chapter 5 explores editing in terms of the cultivation of readers, their relationship with them and the introduction of editorial innovations.

By the end of the 1630s the trade had learned from foreign news publication, about speed of production, dissemination via carriers, subscriptions, dating, numbering, and the role of editorial introductions. A generation of readers had grown up with a strong taste for periodical news. A culture of active and conscientious reading had developed, which for Puritans was a way of searching for signs of God's work in the world. Readers had a capacity for following political and military events and for discerning the 'truth' from rumours and opinions. The stage was set for the step change in the domestic news media from the circulation of several hundred copies of domestic separates and newsletters to printing and then for the process of integrating domestic and foreign news reporting that followed.

Readers learned lessons from living on the periphery of a war zone where the matters at stake spoke to them deeply. But what were those lessons - the virtues and merits of peace - or the need to fight?

Sharpe acknowledged that events in Europe challenged concepts and fostered tensions in England. Frearson suggested that sustained military reportage 'encouraged news readers to view political and religious conflicts in terms of military resolutions'. 'The vocabulary of violence, the legitimisation

¹ P. Arblaster, 'Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European system of communications', in J. Raymond, ed., *News Networks in Seventeenth Century Britain and Europe* (London and N.Y., 2006), 19; DandB., 31, 279, 275, 277, 286-7.

of violence and the advocacy of military solutions for political and religious struggles' shaped newsbook contents and 'prepared the public for years when apocalyptic allegory became an English reality'. We find similar concerns today with violence depicted in detail on television and in the cinema though, of course, individuals respond differently. Joad Raymond identified the excitement generated by the news. Weckherlin read the news with fading hope for his homeland and ultimately switched allegiances. Scudamore read widely for an overall understanding and a bigger picture of events while Wallington read avidly for an insight into Divine Providence at work in the world and, by 1643, wished for revolution and had learned to see politics in terms of a European religious struggle.²

We do not at this stage see the full Habermasian model of public discourse falling into place behind this unprecedented access to information. The greatest importance was attached to the identification of truth rather than the pursuit of reason, consensus and common ground and that truth was related to ideas of the necessity for supporting a Protestant alliance in Europe. Yet for all but two brief periods, the first early in Charles' reign and the second in the early 1630s when there was some prospect of an effective Protestant alliance with Sweden, the Crown favoured messages about the benefits of peace and prosperity. These were unlikely to appeal greatly to a news industry built on news of war, selling to a Protestant readership suckled on stories of the Spanish Armada and keen to see action in support of the new Queen Elizabeth, Elizabeth of Bohemia, but neither James nor Charles developed an effective communications strategy that either worked with the new media or operated, as earlier historians and bibliographers believed, through suppression and censorship. Since it is only as recently as the late twentieth century that historians have begun to reflect in any depth upon the development of public opinion in the early seventeenth century it would be anachronistic in the extreme to blame either monarch for their failure to fully grasp the power and potential of the media as a vehicle for the cultivation of public opinion or to

² J. Raymond, 'Irrational, Impractical and Unprofitable: Reading the News in Seventeenth Century Britain', in K. Sharpe and S. N. Zwicker, *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003), 198, 201; K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (Yale, 2000), 56, 115; Frearson, 345, 344; P. S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth Century London* (Stanford, 1985), 156-7, 192.

manage it effectively to promulgate their own views. This thesis reviews arguments about the power of the Crown and methods of press control available to them. It shows that James' approach was far from simplistic: he was aware of the power of words and sought to influence public opinion. Charles, by contrast, may have been personally blind to the need for 'a good press' but he had servants, including Buckingham, Weckherlin and William Watts, who were interested in working with the press.

The real failure, recognized and felt keenly at the time, was the failure of foreign policy; a failure to defend Protestantism and to avert the advancing tide of counter-Reformation. The news provided a week by week window on the working out of this failure. Readers learned of military defeats, failed alliances, and the application of measures to re-convert Protestants and penalize those who refused to co-operate. Ironically, in so far as news was controlled and censored to avoid political embarrassment through the reporting of embassies and negotiations on politically sensitive matters, there was a perverse effect that made most readers largely unaware of sustained diplomatic efforts to restore the Palatinate. Readers were also increasingly mystified and alarmed by Charles' tactics to avoid the costs of war and reap benefits from dealings with Spain. Reports of the progress of re-catholicization amplified the fears of Protestants for their own security especially when, in 1630s, Charles began to enforce a religious conformity that seemed popish. Thus seeds of distrust were sown by the late 1630s which grew strong by the time of the Short and Long Parliaments. The telling verdict of Wallington, willing finally to support war against Charles and ultimately even his execution, was built on the fact that he read the news avidly and from this knew Charles had turned on the Huguenots and failed Elizabeth. To him, this made Charles' execution seem like a working out of Divine Providence.³

There is already ample evidence from contemporary diaries and correspondence of the development of political consciousness. The work of uncovering county and family archive material is progressing and as further archives are explored, they will no doubt yield further evidence of news exchange and its impact. A generation of historians, including Levy, Cust and

³ Ibid, 81, 143-4, 158, 160-1, 167-9.

Kishlansky, are exploring the effect of political opinion on elections. Historians can no longer afford to ignore the media, yet knowledge of what people knew and read tends to remain a preserve of social and cultural history rather than influencing the way the political history is written. Sharpe complained in 2000 that revisionists ignore the wider formation of public opinion. Still only a minority of historians, including for example, Cogswell in *The Blessed Revolution*, Cust in *The Forced Loan*, and Sharpe himself in *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, provide political histories that weave public opinion into their fabric.⁴

Others such as Clegg show James was more pragmatic and experimental than generally recognised. James' profile as an international statesman is improving, seeing himself as part of a European brotherhood of monarchs, giving himself the title 'defender of the faith', and acting as a negotiator and peace broker in Europe. I argue that he was well aware of the delicacy of the balance he strove for, and of Britain's financial weakness and consequent vulnerability should diplomacy fail. He also had an awareness of the emerging role of the media. He was however out of his depth in 1620/1, when the new international threat was accompanied by a massive upsurge in public interest and printed news at a time when his sympathies and policies were at odds with public opinion.

From late 1621, pragmatism, negotiation and accommodation resulted in compromises with the publishers, some of which I show have been more widely misunderstood than others, especially in the 1630s where the role of the *Swedish Intelligencer* and the significance of the position of Secretary Weckherlin have been missed. But Charles' successive failures in foreign policy faced him with monsters in the form of the press and public opinion which government proved unable to address. Cust and Russell have put forward psychological/philosophical explanations of Charles' failure to attend to public opinion. This thesis shows Charles was largely inattentive and negligent of the press from 1627 to 1630 when Gustavus Adolphus' successes forced it to his attention. The Protestant, pro-Palatine, faction at Court retained a voice throughout the 1630s, reflecting his continuing sympathy and concern for the

⁴ K. Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge, 2000), 15.

Palatinate and his sister's plight, but Charles persistently chopped and changed tack, gambling on finding a way to restore the Palatinate while often also striving to save (or even make) money from his relationship with Spain. Had the outcome of his efforts been successful there could have been a very different story for the press and for historians to tell, but he failed and there was never any damage limitation strategy.

News of the Thirty Years' War can be seen as a contributory element to the causes of the Civil War, and the Civil War as the last rebellion in a series that included the one that began the Thirty Years' War. Many in England tried to work within the establishment but became more and more convinced that this was not possible. In *England's Troubles*, Scott challenged the Anglo centric focus of historians of the early seventeenth century. I accept it is understandable that English historians would resist an approach that depicts the Civil War as what Arblaster has described as 'a sideshow in the final crises of the Thirty Years' War' but I would suggest that there is none the less scope for considerable further work on the 1630s, exploring in greater depth the development of public opinion through archive records of news readers, being open to the significance of wider European events in the formation of opinions, and not being thrown off course by the 1632 news ban, since *The Swedish Intelligencer* continued as did the activities of news correspondents, while the Dutch resumed news imports. Many came back from the Continent in the early 1630s who subsequently played roles on both sides in the Scottish Wars. The news they brought back was picked up at the time by Watts for *The Swedish Intelligencer* but we know little about how their experiences influenced them. They, too, would merit further study.⁵

This thesis explores for the first time the role of Weckherlin in periodical news licensing. There is, however, more correspondence available in the Trumbull Papers, covering a wider perspective and his role as an administrator and friend of Thomas Roe, linking England particularly with the states of Northern Europe, while observing domestic development from within Government, both before 1627 and after 1641 that deserves greater attention. Weckherlin served the Long Parliament from 1642 and in February 1644 was

⁵J. Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth Century English Political Instability in a European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), 15,21; Arblaster, 'Posts', 30.

employed by its committee of both kingdoms and became secretary of foreign affairs, finally assisting John Milton on foreign affairs 1652-3, while his son, Ralph, became a royalist so his work could potentially provide a unique and useful perspective.⁶

The post-script to this story is the development of a printed news media with the skills of periodicity, regular supply, dissemination, the balancing of reporting and opinion forming were all mastered more effectively for both domestic and foreign news. This started to come together in the troubled times of 1643 but for a variety of reasons (not least, I suspect because of inconvenient differences in cataloguing and access to material before and after 1641) this has not been looked at by historians in an integrated way. I would hope that this thesis encourages others to bridge this divide in the future.

⁶*O.D.N.B.*

Typographical and Imprint Analysis of Earliest English Corantos

S.T.C. 18507	Date	Imprint	Type-face	Bibliographical Comments	Last News	Conclusions
1	2 Dec 1620	Amsterdam, G. Veseler, by P. Keerius	Small Roman with subtitles in italics	No heading. Dahl: Veseler's (G.V.) series began in Amsterdam in 1618 with Title in Roman, text in Dutch Black Letter. Caspar Van Hilten took over in Aug 1620	Cologne	Genuine
2	23 Dec 1620	Amsterdam, G. Veseler, by P. Keerius	Black letter with subtitles in Roman	Corrant out of Hanson: same font as Dutch <i>Courante uyt</i> <i>Italien</i> printed by G.V. 25 Nov 1619 and 12 Feb 1621	Cologne	Genuine Two copies survive
3	4 Jan 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler, by P. Keerius	Black letter	<i>Corrant out of</i>	Cologne	Genuine
4	21 Jan 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler, by P. Keerius	Black letter	<i>Corrant out of</i>	Copenhagen and Paris letters after Heidelberg	Genuine
5	31 Mar 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler, by P. Keerius	Black letter	<i>Corant out of</i> Dahl: Broer Janz (B.J.) issue of 27 March with 34 lines of news from England missing	United Provinces (U.P.)	Genuine
6	9 Ap 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler, by P. Keerius	Black letter	<i>Corant out of</i> Dahl: translation from B.J. corantos <i>S.T.C.</i> mistakenly identifies this as in Harl.MS. (See 18)	Palatinate Poland, Denmark, Sweden	Genuine
7	25 May 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter with datelines in Roman	Courant Newes out of Italy Mead Harl. MS. 389/79	U.P.	Probably only genuine Veseler issue in Harl. M.S.
8	13 June 1621	Amsterdam, Joris. Veselde	Roman font, datelines Italic	<i>Corante, or newes from</i> <i>S.T.C.</i> says probably printed in England	Amsterdam news via Cologne?	London

					See Ch 2, 12	
9	20 June 1621	Amsterdam, Joris. Veselde	Roman font Identical to the B. J. ones, eg, 24 but with different imprint	<i>Corante, or newes from</i> Dahl: translation from Van Hilten corantos Mead Harl. MS. 389/107 S. T. C. has this as Harl. MS. 389/106	Cologne	London
10	5 July 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter	<i>Courant out of</i>	Cologne	Genuine
11	9 July 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter	<i>Courant out of</i> Dahl: translation from B.J. coranto	France and Flanders	Genuine
12	15 July 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter	<i>Courant out of</i>	Hague	Genuine
13	9 Aug 1621	Amsterdam, Joris. Veseler,	Roman font	Newes from	Cologne followed by ruling then Brussels, Rochel, Venice	London
14	6 Sept 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter	<i>The Courant out of</i>	Cologne followed by ruling then France, Sweden, Denmark, Arnhem and Utrecht	Genuine
15	12 Sept 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter	The Courant out of Dahl: translation from B.J. coranto. (Two different texts, translations of the two different corantos published in Amsterdam that day)	U.P.	London?
16	12	Amsterdam,	Black letter	<i>The Courant out of</i>	Cologne with	Genuine

	Sept 1621	G. Veseler,		This version is a translation of G.V.'s Van Hilten original.	France and Poland added after ruling	
17	18 Sept 1621	Amsterdam, G. Veseler,	Black letter	<i>The Courant out of</i> Dahl: translation from B.J. coranto	Amsterdam includes news from France and Italy	Genuine
18	9 Ap 1621	Amsterdam No printer No name	Roman Font, Italic datelines	Corante, or, newes from Dahl: printed by B. J. Hanson: Same as G.V. content plus 2 paras. No reason for Jansz to use G.V.'s copy, too reputable to do this Mead Harl. MS. 389/56 S.T.C. does not identify this as in Harl. MS. instead it shows G.V.'s issue of same date (6) as in this collection	Amsterdam News of the U.P. declaring war on Spain and the Archduke	London
19	22 April 1621	Amsterdam	Roman Font very like 18	<i>Covrante, Or, Newes from</i> S.T.C.: probably printed in England, possibly for T. Archer Dahl: printed by B.J. Mead Harl. MS. 389/68 Amsterdam news includes 'His Maiestie of Bohemia with our Lady the Queene are...come to the Hage...[entertained by] our Lord Ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton'	Hague	London
20	6 June 1621	Amstelredam, B.Janson	Roman with Italic datelines Identical to 21 and 23	<i>Corante, or, newes from</i> S.T.C.: probably printed in England, possibly for Archer Hanson: Roman 144 heading is not like the heading B.J. used. B.J. also used gothic for his corantos, and spelled his name Jansz, even in French edits Dahl: translation of B.J. corantos	Cologne and France	London

				Mead Harl. MS. 389/87 <i>S. T. C.</i> has this as Harl. MS. 389/82		
21	25 June 1621	Amstelredam, B. Jonson	Roman with Italic datelines Identical to 22 But not the same as 18	<i>Corante, or, Nevves from</i> <i>S.T.C.</i> : probably printed in England, possibly for Archer Mead Harl. MS. 389/82 <i>S. T. C.</i> has this as Harl. MS. 389/83 (Harl. MS. 389/81, and therefore in the same bundle of news sent by Mead as this corantos, is a Roman type transcript of Letters Patent to the West India Co. Also claiming Dutch origins and also likely to be from a London press) Hanson: dating in text suggests it took 3 wks from Hage to Amsterdam; more likely to be trans from a Frankfurt coranto	Cologne including news from Brussels	London
22	3 July 1621	Amstelredam B. Jonson	Roman Very like 21 but type face a little wider	<i>Corante, or, Nevves from</i> <i>S.T.C.</i> : probably printed in England, possibly for Archer Mead Harl. MS. 389/83 <i>S. T. C.</i> mistakenly has this as Harl. MS. 389/84	Denmark, Brabant, France	London
23	9 July 1621	Amstelredam B. Jonson	Roman Identical to 21	<i>Corante, or, newes from</i> <i>S.T.C.</i> : probably printed in England, possibly for Archer Mead Harl. MS. 389/84 <i>S. T. C.</i> mistakenly has this as Harl. MS. 389/87	Hague, Bon, Zealand	London
24	20 July 1621	Amstelredam B. Jonson	Roman	Corante, or, newes from <i>S.T.C.</i> probably printed in England, possibly for T. Archer Dahl: translation of B. J. corantos Mead Harl. MS. 389/104	Miscellany from Turkey, Poland, France and Sweden probably	London Two copies survive

					gathered in U.P.	
25	2 Aug 1621	B. Jonson	Roman	<i>Corante, or, newes from S.T.C. probably printed in England, possibly for Archer</i>	Augsburg? Covering Ostend news	London
26	29 July 1621	Altmore M.H.	Black letter, same font as 27	<i>Newes from S.T.C. probably printed in London, Hanson: No known stationer. Black Letter font available in England, not like Dutch font probably printed by Nicholas Oakes</i>	Cologne	London
27	6 Aug 1621	From Altmore M.H.	Black letter, same font as 26	<i>Corrant or Newes from S.T.C. probably printed in London, Hanson: No known stationer. Black Letter font available in England, probably printed by Nicholas Oakes</i>		London
28	10 Aug 1621	The Hage, A. Clarke	Roman Similar in title and look to 21- 25	<i>Corante, or, newes from S.T.C. probably London Hanson: No known stationer. Black Letter font available in England, same press as 'N.B.' London issues of 2 and 11 Oct 1621, probably printed by J. Dawson. Content makes it unlikely to have been printed in Hague</i>	Cologne	London
36	1622	The Hage		<i>Newes from Turkie and Poland S.T.C. London, E. Allde?</i>		London
37	1622	The Hage		<i>Newes from the Palatinate S.T.C. London, E. Allde?</i>		London
38	1622			<i>More Newes from the Palatinate</i>		London?
49 and 50	3 June 1622	W. Jones for Butter and Sheffard		<i>More Newes from the Palatinate</i> 2 issues – sold well Hanson: probably meant to be a sequel to 37 (with false imprint)		London
				<i>The Continuation of More Newes from the Palatinate</i> No copy remaining		London

151	11 Sept 1624	Same misspellings, Joris Veseler, Broer Janson The title 'Currantier to the Prince of Orange' with 'formerly' omitted from the text in the Dutch original.	.	<i>Sept 11. Numb. 32 The Continuation S.T.C.</i> E. Allde?		London
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Notes:

See Chapter 3, especially pages 77, 81, 83, 86 and 102 above for a discussion of the origins of the earliest corantos in English.

Hanson's main contention was that many of the 1621 corantos were in London print and therefore had false imprints; L. Hanson, 'English Newsbooks 1620-1641', *The Library*, 4th Series, 18 (1938). *S.T.C.* reflects this. Unfortunately, the *S.T.C.* has errors – mixing corantos from Harl MS. with other corantos from different collections and miss numbering folio references.

F. Dahl, 'Amsterdam- The Cradle of English Newspapers', *The Library*, 5th Series, 4 (1945) disputed Hanson's findings but he was really disputing Hanson's suggestion that some of the originals came from Germany rather than from Amsterdam. Seeking to prove the corantos were all Dutch, he demonstrated that many were translations of Broer Jansz issues (see table above). Dahl may have been unaware of how linked Dutch and Cologne sources were and that Jansz was exporting his corantos to Cologne. He studied the first two disputed corantos and concluded, 'on typographical grounds and from the fact that the second one is a translation from one of (Broer Jansz's) own Dutch originals, I do not hesitate in declaring them to have been printed by him', 171. Dahl does not however resolve the question Hanson raised about the 9 April issue, which was almost identical to Veseler's English coranto of that date. Hanson argued that Jansz would not have

pirated work from Veseler. Hanson further argued that Jansz usually used Black Letter for corantos. The English series are in a print generally available in both England and Europe at that time; 5 of them have Roman 81 which Jansz probably didn't possess; the other is in Roman 94, but it is not like his Roman 94. Hanson noted the significance of the fact that the names Amsterdam and Jansz are distinctively anglicised and miss-spelt as 'Amstelredam' and 'Jonson', 'Jansen' or 'Johnson'. A further anomaly is that Broer Jansz is described as Currantier to the Prince of Orange. This is a title that ended in 1619. Jansz himself when using it always used the word 'formerly' to make this clear and this word is omitted in these translations. Dahl did not answer points that Hanson raised about the fonts used in this series, which Jansz did not possess, nor the distinctive misspellings.

A confirmation that both the Broer Jansz and the miss spelt Veseler issues came from London presses is to be found in a later newsbook which was undoubtedly published in London in 1624 and part of the officially recognized continuing series running at that time. This has many of the typographical hallmarks of the disputed 1621 issues, including the distinctive misspellings 'Joris Veseler', 'Broer Janson' and was printed by Edward Allde. (*S.T.C.*18507.152; Ch. 2, n. 41). I conclude therefore that all the corantos identified by Dahl in his bibliography as coming from the press of Broer Jansz seem most likely to have been printed in London and up to four of those attributed in their imprints to Veseler may also have had a London publication (where Veseler's name is misspelled and the text is roman).

If we accept that all the corantos stating that they were printed by George Veseler and in a font used by him are genuine, but that others (with imprints for George Veseler but with roman text, imprints for Broer Janz, and those from 'Altmere' and the Hague) were published and printed in London with false imprints, we get a single series of surviving genuine Dutch imports until 9 April 1621, followed by eight surviving genuine Veseler printed corantos after that. Surviving corantos with false imprints then run from 9 April to 10 August 1621, culminating with one claiming to be for Adrian Clarke at the Hague. This brings the potential number of surviving issues with false imprints which appeared in London between December 1620 and August 1621 to up to 14. This conclusion could also help to explain the disappearance of de Keere's name from the imprints of the Veseler series after 9 April. That day, two issues, almost identical except for the imprints, appeared and the one was almost certainly pirated. De Keere would have been aware of developments in London.

Reverend Joseph Mead's Correspondence - Transcripts in Harl. MS. 389 for 1621

Folio No.	London summaries of foreign and domestic news	MS news copied from Corantos	Printed Corantos	Other content details
2	26 Jan 1621			
3-4		Cullen 29 Feb 1621, S. N.		'All of this is contradicted by other letters from Cullen' NB the use of 'other' here suggests he may have been referring to another coranto
5				parliamentary speech extract not in Mead's hand
7-8	2 Feb 1621			
9				Letter signed by Mead includes datelined reports
11				Letter from Mead 9 February 1621 says he got Cologne transcripts from an unnamed clergyman in the City, '(as being not so continual yet better then those of the Hague) he having an opportunitie of neighbourhood',
13				Mead copied the Amsterdam broadside 1621, Ch 1, n. 31.
16-17		Cullen 12 and 19 Feb 1621, S. N.		Letter from Mr Pettie in Venice is added at end. Also margin note in Mead's hand referring to 'a postscript' added by the translator
18	23 Feb 1621 from Dr Meddus, on verso, from Mr F.			
24				From Dr Burgess Frankendale 26 Feb
25-6	On verso of 26 from Dr Meddus			From Mr Heape, Frankendale
27		16 March 1621		
28	2 March 1621 summary of news mostly foreign			

30				Letter from Mead includes extract from King's speech
32-3		Cullen 4 March 1621		4 March from Holland on second sheet
34-5	9 March 1621			First 2½ sides direct from corantos, followed by London news then letters from Hamburg
43-4	30 March 1621			Refers to letter from Henry Balam from Berlin
45				Mead's letter includes list of Acts of Parliament
50-1	6 April 1621			Summary of foreign news reports with a little from London
52				Letter from Mead quotes letter from Cullen on verso
54-5	13 April 1621			All foreign
56			9 April	
57-8	20 April 1621			News that Union has dissolved. Letter from Dr Burgess
61			See note	Letter from Mead, Then in a later Courrante, then this I send you, I have seen it but I could not be the owner...'
63-6	Domestic news begins at the bottom of fo. 65	Cullen 29 April, Amsterdam 1 May 1621, S. N.		Margin notes refer to another from Cullen
67				Letter from Mead describes news from Dr Meddus, including transcript of a letter from the Hague
68			22 April	
70-1				Transcript of a speech in a different hand
72-3	11 May 1621	On verso fo. 73 'Out of a printed Corrante'		Refers to letter from the Hague
74	18 May		See note	Margin notes refer to 1. this week's letter 2. letter from Amsterdam 3. 'the corranto'
75		More out of the coranto from Amsterdam 24 S. N.		
77-8	25 May 1621			Ends with letter from Hague

79			25 May	
80	28 June 1621			Mostly foreign news
81				Printed letters patent
82			25 June	
83			3 July	
84			9 July	
85				Short letter with foreign news snippets
87			6 June	
88-9	1 June			A little foreign new summarised
92	8 June			'We have not had anything (save from Fraunce) since this day fortnight, & therefore can write nothing of Germany, Denmark or the Low Countries'
96-7	22 June 1621			
104			20 July	
106			20 June	
112	2 Aug 1621			Message from the Palatinate
114	7 Sept			Starts with news from the Hague
116-7	10 Sept 1621			News arrived at St Katherine's from Antwerp, after domestic news there is news of a royal birth and death in Spain
120	Sept 1621			Includes E. India Co. news
123	28 Sept 1621			
124	5 Oct 1621			Heidleberg – scrappy addition
145			See note	Letter from Mead 16 Feb 1622 'the corrantoes now confirm'
151			See note	PS. 'I forgot to tell you out of a corranto...
218				Verso 'partly out of printed newes'

Notes

This Table demonstrates the wealth of continental news available to Mead in 1621 in a variety of formats. It also demonstrates that Mead was aware of the material coming from different cities, primarily Cologne and Amsterdam. (See page 91 above).

Columns 2 and 3 identify the source of the transcripts that Mead was copying from. Transcripts are clearly identifiable; they are on smaller paper with a left hand margin.

Column 2 transcripts summarise news from a variety of sources, including letters and corantos from Europe and domestic news. Mead appears to be transcribing summaries assembled in London.

Column 3 transcripts have datelines and text apparently word for word from European originals.

Other transcriptions referring to foreign sources, whether included in the London Summaries (Column 2) or in Mead's letters, are less likely to have datelines and text in a form that suggests they have been copied directly.

Mead's letters are not included unless they have evidence of a coranto or foreign news source as shown in column 5.

Table 1: Estimated average print runs assuming a constant survival rate

Series	Dates	Surviving issues	Number of Copies Extant	Estimated No. of copies	Last known Number	Issues in series	Estimated av. print run
1	15 Oct 1622 to 2 Oct 1623	46 (2 variant versions)	80	80,000	50 (Oct)	50	1600
2	11 Oct 1623 to Dec 1624	29	41	41,000	43 (Dec)	48	854
3	Jan 1624 to Jan 1626	20	28	28,000	49 (Jan)	50	560
4	Jan/Feb 1626 to Dec 1626/Jan 1627	7	7	7,000	42 (Dec)	42	167
5	Jan/Feb 1627 to June 1628	15	16	16,000	50 (June)	50	320
6	June 1628 to Dec (?) 1629	7	10	10,000	43 (Sept)	48	208
7	Early 1630 to 29 Nov 1631	28	37 (excl. STC.216)	37,000	50 (Nov)	50	740
8	29 Nov 1631 to 12 Oct 1632	42 (1 variant version)	80	80,000	50 (Oct)	50	1600
9	16 Oct 1632	1	1	1000	1 (Oct)	1	1000
10	20 Dec 1638 to July 1639	37	38	38,000	86 (June)	100	380
11	July/August 1639 to March 1640	13	13	13,000	95 (Feb)	100	130
12	March 1640 to Jan/Feb 1641	21	25	25,000	49 (Jan)	50	500
13	Feb 1641 to Sept 1641	18 (1 variant version)	29	29,000	32 (Sept)	32	900
		Total 284	Total 405	Total print 405,000		Total 671	

Notes:

Pages 131-5 above discuss the survival of copies of newsbooks and the relationship to the size of print runs and consequently the numbers of copies of newsbooks in circulation and their potential impact.

Column 1 Following Frearson's example I have eliminated uncertainty about the number of issues published as far as possible by excluding from the calculations the single sheet corantos, unnumbered newsbooks. This meant excluding those before October 1622 and those that Dahl grouped into a 14th series for 1642, and Archer's separate series between 1624 and 1628 because of uncertainty as to how many different issues there were. (See pages 131-3 above for survival of issues and the note below on Columns 6 and 7.)

Column 3 and 4 The number of copies extant is based on *S.T.C.* for Series 1 to 12 and N.&S. listings for Series 13. Wing also identifies some newsbooks but these are either also in N&S or were published later than the 13th Series. (See also page 16 above.)

Column 5 A credible picture is created by assuming a constant survival rate nearer to one in a thousand for all the series. This seems to work well for but Series 13 where the figures suggest there may have been a higher survival rate. Generally however, there is a good case for assuming such a low survival rate overall. Newsbooks were a weekly product printed on the cheapest of paper. They were soon rendered redundant by the arrival of a more recent issue. It is clear, even from reading contemporary correspondence and writings that there were many corantos and newsbooks and only a small sample of issues has survived. All pamphlets and newsbooks plus many broadsheets were no doubt treated as ephemeral and disposed of once a newer copy was available. Coupe, in his study of German illustrated broadsheets from the seventeenth century, drew similar conclusions about low survival rates. He suggested it was reasonable to assume that the ratio of sheets that have survived approximates broadly to the ratio of sheets actually produced. (See page 133 above).

Columns 6 and 7 Even with numbering and dating, an element of uncertainty remains about the length of each series because we have no evidence for some series that the number of issues intended was produced. In these cases it is necessary to consider the possibility that the

series was incomplete, especially when production numbers were low and sales slow. Column 6 shows the last known number and its month. Looking at the date of the start of the next series can also give some indication of whether a new series started immediately after or whether there was time to complete the series. Column 7 shows the number of issues I have assumed there were in the series in order to form a view about average print runs.

Column 8 Provides average print runs for a series calculated from the estimated number of copies (Column 5) divided by the number of issues in a series (Column 7). Series 1, 2, 8 and 9 (1622-3 and 1631-2) show high print runs during the years of most intense interest and contemporary comment. Ballads prints were between 1 and 2000 copies. None of these calculations take the estimates for individual print runs above this maximum and while pamphlet edition numbers were limited from 1586 until 1637 by decree to 1,250-1,500 for ordinary books and 3,000 for books in small type we have no reason to assume it would have been applied to the publication of newsbooks. So even the highest print runs here seem entirely credible.

This calculation also shows that in Series 4, 6 and 11 (1626-8 and 1639-40) there were particularly low print runs. The smallest print run for which a printer would set up type was about 200 copies. Printing news only started to make financial sense when sales were at 3-500 per issue. This calculation can therefore explain the breaks in production in 1628 and then again in 1639/40. It also yields a range of print runs that realistically fit fluctuating circumstances. It accommodates Dahl's earlier estimates (200 and 400) for years of dwindling interest, while allowing for higher runs which are more in line with Frearson's estimate of 1000+ at times of heightened interest in the 2nd and 7th Series as well as in the 1st, 8th and 9th Series. This is also in line with estimates for German newspapers at this time, and for France in 1630s, and has the additional merit of giving more average print runs not far off 500. In other words, at times when the business was neither booming, nor failing (for example, in the 3rd, 5th, 10th and 12th series), print runs were normal for pamphlets in the early 1600s. Similarly, this approach gives an overall average of around 600 copies per issue, which again, is closer to what might reasonably be expected for a news pamphlet at that time.

Table 2: Estimated number of copies per month, allowing for variable frequency of publication

Series	Years	Range of print runs	Issues per month	Estimated copies per month
1	1622/3	1000-2000	4	6000+
2	1623/4	500-1000	3 (varies from 2 to 6)	2500
3	1624/6	500 with a few larger prints	4-5	2000+
4	1626	200 with wastage	3-4	600
5	1627/8	200-400 then a 5 month break in production	4	800
6	1628/9	200	3-	500
7	1630/1	500-1000	5 (varies from 2 to 5)	2500
8	1631/2	1000-1500	4+ (varies from 3 to 6)	6000+
9	1632	1000 one issue	1	1000
10	1638/9	400 very short editions	12.5	4-5000
11	1639/40	200 with wastage, very short editions	12.5	2000
12	1640/1	500	3 (varies from 2 to 8)	1500
13	1641	400-500	2-6	1500

Column 3 shows the likely range of size for actual individual print runs. This gives some print runs of over the legal limit of 1250, but we know that in 1621 demand for printed corantos outstripped supply as the publishers struggled to get to grips with the production process. By 1622 several publishers and several printers were involved so it is reasonable to assume they went for maximum print runs especially since, by early 1623, they were reprinting some issues.

Column 4 Figures here are based on what we know of the frequency of publication from the dates of issues and where we know the start and end dates, also the number of issues in a series over a given period of months.

Column 5 Once the frequency of publication is built into the calculations, we get a profile of production that reflects the significant fluctuations in trade. It shows the down turn which almost put the publishers out of business in series 4, 5 and 6 and that the number of issues in a month was particularly high in the early 1620s and again in the early 1630s. This is consistent with the fact that five publishers were involved at the height of the trade and with the extent to which these publications are mentioned in contemporary correspondence, journals, sermons and drama during these periods.

I have allowed for the survival rate for the two most successful series (1 and 8) to be slightly higher than in other series. During times when the content was of greater interest some issues may have been kept as souvenirs. (If the survival rate were completely constant then the number of copies in circulation in the busiest periods would have been nearer 7000 than 6000 a month ($80,000/12=6666.66$).)

Similarly, the survival rate in the least successful series was probably lower, partly because the news was so lacking interest that very few people were motivated to keep their copies but also because the publishers may well have been left with copies on their hands which they destroyed (see reference to assumed wastage).

This calculation based on frequency of publication provides evidence to suggest that the output was remarkable. The accessibility of periodical news meant its presence was experienced more keenly and continuously in English publishing than ever before. Periodicity resulted in production numbers at unprecedented levels and meant that in the first decade of the numbered series nearly a quarter of a million newsbooks went in to circulation.

Table 3: Licensing and Registration from August 1627

2 August to November 1627 entries in Company register, Arber, Vol. IV, 148-52	'printed by authoritie'	Issues known to have been published
7 August		8 August
16 August		17 August
20 August issue numbers 30 & 31		N. E.
25 August		N. E.
		12 September
22 September issue number 35		N. E.
4 October issue number 36		4 October
		9 October
	yes	17 October
23 October issue number 39	yes	24 October
30 October	yes	1 November
	yes	7 November

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Additional MS 64,892, B.L., Miscellaneous correspondence and petitions from
2 January 1627- 22 August 1627.

Additional MS., 72433, , B.L., Trumbull Papers, Weckherlin Diary, 16
December 1633- 17 May 1642.

Additional MS., 72439, , B.L., Correspondence including letters to Elizabeth
Trumbull from G. R. Weckherlin, Trumbull Papers, 1626-1631.

Harleian MSS., 389-390, B.L., Correspondence of Joseph Mead to Sir Martin
Stuteville 1621-1625.

The National Archives

State Papers Domestic, James I - Public Records Office.

Printed Sources

(i) Corantos and Newsbooks

Amsterdam

The new tidings, Veseler (Amsterdam, 2 December 1620), *S.T.C.*18507.1

Corrant out of Italy, Germany etc, de Keere, Veseler (Amsterdam, 23 December
1620), *S.T.C.*18507.2

Corrant out of Italy, Germany, de Keere, Veseler (Amsterdam, 4 January 1621),
*S.T.C.*18507.3

Corrant out of Italy, Germany, de Keere, Veseler (Amsterdam, 21 January
1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.4

Courant out of Italy, Germany, de Keere, Veseler (Amsterdam, 31 March
1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.5

Courant out of, G. Veseler (Amsterdam, 5 July 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.10

Courant out of, G. Veseler (Amsterdam, 9 July 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.11

Courant out of, G. Veseler (Amsterdam, 15 July 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.12

Courant out of, G. Veseler (Amsterdam, 6 September 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.14

Courant out of, G. Veseler (Amsterdam, 12 September 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.16

Courant out of, G. Veseler (Amsterdam, 18 September 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.17

Amsterdam - Resumption

*Briefe relations from merchants letters, with some other occurences ... printed
publiquely in the Low Countries and nowe translated...*
(Amsterdam, 1633), *S.T.C.*18507.359

The Continuation of newes from diverse parts (Amsterdam, about February
1633), *S.T.C.*18507.360)

The last weekes letters (Amsterdam, February 1633), *S.T.C.*18507.361

London

Corante, or, newes, false imprint (13 June 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.8

Corante, or, newes from Italy, false imprint (20 June 1621), *S.T.C.*18507.9

Newes from, false imprint (9 August 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.13
The Courant out of, false imprint (12 September 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.15
Corante, or, newes from, false imprint (9 April 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.18
Covrante, Or, Newes from, false imprint (22 April 1621), *S.T.C.* 18507.19
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