# ‘A knowing but a discrete man’: scribal news and information management in Restoration England

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Abstract

This article builds upon recent interest in scribal news by analysing official uses of manuscript newsletters during the Restoration, in domestic contexts as well as in relation to Anglo-Dutch affairs. It uses official correspondence and diplomatic archives to trace official attitudes to scribal news, as well as the processes devised for utilising newsletters. In part, this is a study of ‘information management’, and it explores the methods used for acquiring and analysing intelligence, as well as the personnel involved, but it also emphasises that officials were conscious of the shifting landscape of news across the seventeenth century, and of popular demand for both printed and scribal news. As such, intelligence strategies involved more than just spies and intercepts, in terms of the need to both ‘consume’ and produce scribal news, to develop relationships with intelligencers and journalists, and to exchange information. Mapping this complex news ecosystem enhances our appreciation of the ongoing relevance of scribal newsletters, but it also highlights some intractable challenges faced by the government, in terms of the tensions between disseminating information to friendly correspondents and imperilling some of its most valued intelligencers.

Keywords

Scribal news; newsletters; newsbooks; Restoration; intelligence; diplomacy

This article explores official attitudes to 'scribal' news in Restoration England, building upon recent interest in handwritten newsletters to examine the challenges of 'information management'. This involves a 'processual' approach, which analyses the practices associated with the acquisition and use of intelligence, but it also involves situating such strategies within the wider landscape of news culture, recognising that newsletter genres evolved over time, and appreciating that such changes were profoundly influenced by developments in print culture. In other words, analysing how the Restoration state coped with the threat of 'information overload' – a particularly acute problem in the context of international conflict – requires the perspectives of both the 'parachutist' and the 'truffle-hunter', understanding decades of experimentation regarding censorship and propaganda, and appreciating audience responses to the 'news revolution'.

In many ways, of course, the importance of scribal texts has been recognised in a body of scholarship produced in response to claims about the print revolution. Thus, while historians have rightly devoted considerable attention to print genres to gain a better understanding of contemporary political culture, meaningful analysis of the 'communications revolution' also involves appreciating the persistence of scribal modes for circulating information and ideas.[1] Accordingly, historians and literary scholars have devoted considerable attention to a variety of handwritten genres, from letters to manuscript 'separates'.[2] Particularly important have been studies of early modern news, as historians have complemented investigations into printed corantos, gazettes, and newsbooks with scrutiny of manuscript news, either in terms of private correspondence or commercial newsletters, or some mixture of the two. Scholars are now familiar with men like John Pory and John Chamberlain, Edward Rossingham and Joseph Mead, and with the networks to which they belonged, as well as with the post-Restoration newsletters of Henry Muddiman, Joseph Williamson, and John Dyer.[3] Indeed, while the existence of scribal newsletters is

hardly a new discovery, recent interest has heightened awareness regarding the ongoing importance of such material into the eighteenth century. In other words, since scribal genres were not displaced by developments in print culture, it has proved necessary to reflect upon contemporary attitudes towards newsletters and separates, and to understand the utility of such material in relation to printed genres.

Nevertheless, there remain important gaps in our understanding of both scribal culture and the early modern 'communications revolution'. Attention sometimes focuses too narrowly upon technological developments, upon the speed with which information and ideas circulated, and upon how a 'communications infrastructure' facilitated the *transmission* of information and ideas, not least in terms of the inclusivity and accessibility of texts and their social and geographical 'reach'.[4] Beyond this, analysing the textual dimensions of politics and governance has often revolved around the emergence of new modes of communication between regimes and various 'publics', in terms of propaganda, censorship, and the 'public sphere', and what Daniel Bellingradt calls 'public dynamics'.[5] In the context of the Restoration this has involved focusing upon journalists and polemicists like Henry Muddiman and Sir Roger L'Estrange, upon the suppression of Whig and nonconformist literature, and upon the lapse of licensing in 1679, as well as upon the circulation and finances of the *London Gazette*.[6] These are all vital issues, but they are not the only ways of exploring communications revolutions, and the aim here is to focus instead upon how information was *processed*. In the context of newsletters this means being attentive to issues of genre, in terms of the relationship between different kinds of scribal text and how these related to changes in the landscape of print news, and in terms of how texts were perceived and received. In ways that were long true of printed newsbooks, scribal newsletters have often been exploited as repositories of evidence, rather than as phenomena requiring careful scrutiny, regarding how they were produced, by whom, and for what reasons.[7] In terms of

how contemporaries engaged with scribal material, attention has more obviously been paid to 'sociable' authorship and the circulation of texts than to their 'reception', an issue where analysis has largely been confined to reading practices associated with print culture, and to readers' tactics for coping with 'information overload'.[8] Assessing how contemporaries responded to news has proved particularly challenging, although David Randall has highlighted the possibilities for exploring the consumption of scribal texts. Crucially, Randall highlights the need to consider not just the relationship between authority and credibility, but also how perceptions of scribal news were affected by the emergence of printed newsbooks.[9] Nevertheless, more needs to be done to supplement evidence about the government's attempts to disseminate news with evidence about how officials acquired and processed reliable intelligence, and how attitudes to scribal news were coloured by the landscape of print and by consumer demand for print and manuscript genres.

This article uses scribal news to address these neglected aspects of the early modern communications revolution, focusing upon official practices of information management, and arguing that these were predicated upon awareness of the evolving landscape of early modern news culture, in terms of its genres and its audience. It explores the *kinds* of information that the government procured, in terms of the relationship between intelligence, scribal news, and printed newsbooks, and it studies the *methods* used for acquiring and processing information. Like all contemporaries, officials grappled with the possibility that there was 'too much to know', and while a small state needed to gather information, it also ran the risk of being overwhelmed by the available evidence, and of struggling with the complex task of managing sizeable volumes of intelligence. As such, the article relates to Nicholas Popper's argument about the emergence of an 'information state': a government increasingly preoccupied by the business of collecting, interpreting, and disseminating information to exercise and maintain power; and a government that needed to develop new strategies and processes.[10] The aim is to

build upon the existing historiography on ‘intelligence’, focusing less upon motivations involved – including the need to undermine Whig ‘fanatics’ – than upon the processes used, and less upon the world of ‘spies’ and intercepts than upon the practices devised to collate evidence from trusted sources.[11] The article highlights contemporary concerns regarding the credibility of news sources, the relationships that developed between officials and intelligencers, and the ways in which scribal and printed news informed rather than just represented government perspectives, as well as the ways in which official attitudes acknowledged broader changes in news culture.

## I

Processes of information management in Restoration England were predicated upon a culture of scribal news, rather than simply one of spies and intercepts, and appreciation of scribal news was inseparable from developments in news culture during the English revolution. This may seem perverse, given that scribal news all but disappeared during the 1640s, but this period is crucial for developing Ian Atherton’s argument that newsletter genres adapted to the rise of print news, and that these changes affect public trust in the media. As such, there is scope to map – somewhat schematically – the shifting landscape of news in the period before 1660, and to suggest that, while scribal news survived the civil wars and Interregnum, it did so in radically altered ways.[12]

As scholars have shown, pre-civil war scribal news involved both sociable and commercial genres. The former involved letters by news gatherers like Joseph Mead and John Chamberlain, whose efforts were undertaken as part of private networks, and as extensions of the kind of private correspondence that blended public news with personal affairs. Commercial news, meanwhile, involved professional reporters – ‘decayed gentlemen’ – like

John Pory and Edmund Rossingham providing services for wealthy clients like the Earl of Northumberland and Viscount Scudamore, who paid as much as £20 per year for weekly letters. One contemporary noted that Rossingham 'sets so high a rate upon his news 'tis scarce credible to report'.[13] Of course, the distinction between commercial and sociable genres was fuzzy, since commercial newsletters could be personalised, while sociable newsletters sometimes included material drawn from commercial sources.[14] The examples of John Castle and John Beaulieu, meanwhile, suggest a third genre, involving news gatherers working exclusively for specific patrons, rather than in an entrepreneurial fashion.[15] Whatever the differences between these sub-genres of scribal news, the result was a heavily circumscribed news community.

Crucially, scribal genres raised complex issues regarding the 'authority' and 'credibility' of news. Men like Mead monitored from whence news came, to minimise the number of links in the chain of contacts separating them from a story's source, and they were careful to comment upon the reliability of their reports. However, their trustworthiness was also affected by the emergence of commercial news, and to the extent that they became reliant upon 'professional' newsmongers it became harder to trace stories back to identifiable individuals. As such, readers were prompted to read texts more intensively, and to engage in 'extensive' reading, and the use of multiple competing accounts can certainly be observed in Mead's letters, as well as in the diaries of William Whiteway and John Rous, both of whom endeavoured to cross-check – and revisit – specific stories.[16] For readers of commercial newsletters, meanwhile, credibility was premised upon the proximity of individual reporters to centres of power, and such men probably observed comings and goings in Whitehall, as well in Parliament, at first hand. Indeed, the cost of Rossingham's letters may have been regarded as a proxy for their reliability, the latter of which was certainly commented upon.[17] In other words, the 'authority' of pre-civil war scribal news was predicated upon exclusivity,

and upon the proximity of those involved to credible sources of information, but not on the idea that they worked for the authorities. Apart from hints regarding Georg Weckherlin's digests of continental news, there is scant evidence that early Stuart regimes participated actively in the circulation of news.[18]

One striking effect of the print revolution was an undermining of exclusivity, as newsbooks achieved greater social and geographical reach, as sociable news gathering was eclipsed, and as the link between commercial news and privileged information became less clear. The period after 1641 witnessed the disappearance of both sociable and commercial newswriters ('Rossingham's undone and lost'), and a dramatic decline in news reporting within familial letters.[19] As even Mead began to do, it became increasingly common for correspondents to enclose printed newsbooks as a substitute for personal commentary, not least amid fears that letters might be intercepted. Rossingham's trade was 'engrossed' by a new breed of journalist, initially in the form of scribal texts ('Diurnall occurrences') and then in the form of printed newsbooks. The new breed was epitomised not just by Marchamont Nedham, John Berkenhead, and Henry Walker, but also by John Dillingham and Daniel Border, who previously wrote newsletters for specific patrons.[20]

However, while such developments clearly influenced the perceived authority of news, contemporaries adapted to, rather than rejected, printed news. Mead was troubled by the credibility of corantos, but did not ignore them; Pory described them as 'toys', but shared an address with Nathaniel Butter, one of the genre's pioneers.[21] Indeed, while some contemporaries consumed newsbooks less than seriously – listing them among 'idle expenses', and calling them 'factious' or 'frivolous' – readers grappled with their credibility.[22] Like many others, Henry Oxinden admitted that 'I can write you no news but what the diurnalls have', and that 'for news I know none but what is in this diurnall'. This did not imply trust, and it is noticeable how frequently contemporaries used phrases like 'you *see*

by the London print', 'I *see* by the Gazette', and 'you will *find* in the London prints'. This was distancing language, which suggests that readers were critical and sceptical but not necessarily dismissive, and contemporaries clearly reflected upon what they read: '*if* the print say true', '*if* one may guess by the books', and 'it *seems* by the books'. Some referred to 'the hard digestion of the prints', picked holes in particular reports, and wondered about what was not being reported. Some argued that newspapers were 'empty', that old news was being recycled, and that 'the omissions are more observable than the relations'. Scepticism sometimes morphed into cynicism, as evidence emerged about journalists whose work reflected the agendas of patrons, factions, and the government, reaching a peak with Marchamont Nedham in the 1650s. One commentator claimed that 'the news… is very uncertain, being represented through *Politicus* his spectacles', and it was said that Nedham 'hath his orders', and that Cromwellian newspapers would 'hardly be worth reading nor the money for postage'.[23]

Nevertheless, doubts about the credibility of print journalism fostered new practices – more intensive and extensive reading – rather than despair.[24] Individuals can be observed acquiring two or more newspapers each week, reading across the political divide, and even privileging perspectives other than their own, or seeking a blend of serious and racy titles, and works that were 'mischievous'. Readers can also be observed comparing different accounts of the same event, and gathering further evidence with which to revisit, amend, and correct texts with annotations and comments. Newsbooks could thus be read even though their accounts were considered questionable, and contemporaries were certainly capable of distinguishing between evidence and interpretations. In 1647, Sir Arthur Hopton explained that 'for matters of fact you will have it in the *Diurnall*, which is the best intelligencer', even though it was hard to make 'a judgment upon matter of fact'.[25] Newsbooks, in other words, were problematic, but better than nothing, and they might even be considered useful,

providing an interpretative tool, and a guide to 'the variety of opinions'. The earl of Clarendon (Edward Hyde) professed to 'learn much by them' because they 'prove somewhat as they do not think of'. However, any sense that they might be useful for understanding popular politics, on the basis that they 'might take with the people of ordinary capacity', was qualified by concerns that ordinary readers might be 'poisoned', 'dazzled', and 'captivated', and that newsbooks would not be handled with the requisite care. For political elites, the popular appetite for printed news provided the impetus for producing an 'antidote' to the 'poison' promulgated by political opponents.[26]

In other words, while pre-civil war scribal news was predicated upon exclusivity and proximity to reliable sources, printed news fostered accessibility, raised questions about credibility, and provoked politicians to wonder whether audiences would be sceptical or gullible. This conjuncture helps to explain increasingly pro-active approaches to news management, and it also provides the context for a resurgence in scribal journalism, and a remodelling of manuscript newsletters. Outside elite royalist circles, this first became evident during the republic, in terms of the revival of sociable newsletters, of the kind provided by agents and employees in London, as well as attempts to create new subscription services.[27] Nedham at least contemplated quitting newsbooks to 'imprison his pen within the narrow confines of private correspondence', having apparently 'settled with a considerable number of honour and quality' who would pay £10 per annum. Another royalist – styled 'Pragmaticus' after a leading newsbook – offered to write 'pretty correspondence' for 18*d*. per letter, boasting that recipients would no longer need to purchase 'corrantos, gazettes… [and] mercuries… from noddy-land'.[28] Such initiatives suggested that readers would willingly pay a premium for credible and privileged information, but while this was acknowledged by Charles II's government, officials were reluctant to allow a return to Rossingham's world. One adviser argued that pre-civil war scribal news 'did as much hurt' as

printed news, 'if not more', because journalists could be 'bolder' in script than 'they durst in print'. Banning older kinds of scribal news would thus 'cool the nation'.[29] At the same time, it was no longer deemed feasible to suppress printed newsbooks, and L'Estrange famously responded to concerns that print made ordinary subjects into 'statesmen' by arguing that 'tis the press that has made 'em mad, and the press that must set 'em right again'.[30]

As such, the Restoration regime accepted the demand for both newsbooks and scribal newsletters, and sought to achieve a blend of exclusivity, accessibility, and political control. This involved combining strict censorship with the publication of official news for a general audience, and officials like George Downing were pleased that the *London Gazette* 'takes infinitely, particularly because of its being so portable, which makes it every man's money'.[31] However, the government also experimented with a new kind of subscription newsletter, produced officially by the editor of the *Gazette*, Henry Muddiman, such that the distinction between printed and scribal news became more hazy than ever.[32] Muddiman quickly became a controversial figure, however, and his service was supplemented by another official newsletter, from the office of Joseph Williamson. In both cases, however, the strategy involved appealing to public demand for credible sources of information, of a kind that was not made available in print, not least parliamentary news. News from Westminster had certainly been supplied by Rossingham, and it remained a feature of scribal news after 1660.[33] Moreover, while some officials became concerned when readers grew frustrated by the *Gazette* – because it was 'wanting domestic intelligence', and because 'they have nothing in them as to the proceedings of Parliament' – they also recognised that many readers acquired both newsletters and newsbooks.[34]

The Restoration, in other words, witnessed a conscious attempt to synthesise previous experiments, based upon a symbiotic relationship between printed and scribal genres. It is noteworthy, therefore, that the *Gazette* and official newsletters both drew upon printed

sources of news, not least European newsbooks.[35] More importantly, the newsletter was not only meant to be authoritative, but also to be less exclusive than its predecessors. Individual newsletters may have sold for as little as 6*d*., and annual subscriptions appear to have cost between £1 10s. and £7 10s., and while Rossingham had perhaps twenty-five customers, the circulation of Muddiman's newsletter was as high as 150. The readership was also more mixed, including clerics, booksellers, mayors, and town clerks, as well as postmasters and postmistresses. Eventually, newsletters may have been distributed even more widely, and made available in coffeehouses, even if this made Williamson rather nervous.[36] Moreover, while the readership of Williamson's newsletter may have been slightly more limited, it was no less socially diverse. It included noblemen (and noblewomen) as well as senior clerics and officials, but it also included the mayors of Bristol, Preston, and York, and customs officials and postmasters from across the country, and Williamson's correspondence with men like James Hickes indicates that many such recipients also received copies of the *Gazette*, and that they paid as little as £2 for weekly intelligence.[37]

The final point to note about the informational landscape with which officials grappled is that it eventually became more diverse, in terms of the challenge of maintaining press censorship, and in terms of an increasingly vibrant scribal culture. This partly involved the proliferation of unofficial commercial newsletters, which provided outlets for Whig perspectives, and which also became cheaper and less easy to distinguish from printed newsbooks. However, it also involved fuzzy boundaries between other kinds of newsletters, on a spectrum from ambassadorial reports to unsolicited accounts by informers, and including letters that were more or less sociable, formal, and regular. The key conclusion for the authorities was that, whether or not news was susceptible to governmental control, official policies and processes needed to acknowledge the appetite for both scribal and printed news, and to capitalise upon the possibilities offered by newsletter genres.[38]

II

It is this shifting landscape of scribal and printed news that provides the context for analysing government processes for managing flows of information. Like ordinary readers, government officials grappled with the task of securing reliable supplies of credible information, and in both domestic and European contexts this involved not just spies, informers, and intercepts, but also scribal and printed news.

First, the intelligence gathering machinery of men like Joseph Williamson involved a serious engagement with printed news, as well as a dependence upon the appetite for scribal newsletters. Officials went to considerable lengths to secure reliable supplies of foreign gazettes, and in doing so they built upon changing attitudes towards such material within diplomatic and official circles. Over time, newsbooks ceased to be treated as mere 'entertainment', and greater effort was devoted to the business of obtaining, circulating, and discussing a diverse range of titles. Such practices are evident not just from official correspondence but also from financial accounts, which record that after 1660 considerable sums were spent upon 'gazettes… from all parts'. Williamson certainly amassed a large library of newsbooks, and his own accounts for 1660-2 reveal an outlay of over £16 on such material.[39] As has occasionally been noted, official accommodation of the news landscape also involved capitalising upon the audience for newsletters in order to secure supplies of domestic intelligence.[40] Government newsletters were not only sold by subscription, but also traded for local intelligence, which probably explains the eagerness with which postmasters and customs officials were added to the list of Williamson's correspondents. One such recipient was Captain Silas Taylor, storekeeper at Harwich, who frequently forwarded information gleaned from Dutch ships, as well as copies of Dutch gazettes, and who clearly

expected to receive news in return.[41] Another was Daniel Fleming, a prominent gentry figure in Westmorland, who had a close personal relationship with Williamson, but who also provides evidence about the appetite for official newsletters, which he was anxious to acquire, and which he preserved in large quantities. Like Taylor, Fleming reciprocated with well-received intelligence reports, and although he sent money to Williamson's office, this merely involved a voluntary 'reward' – of 50s. per annum – to the clerks, rather than payment for the letters themselves.[42] For Williamson, in other words, the process of gathering credible intelligence involved transactional relationships grounded in the popular appetite for news.

Williamson's reliance upon the contemporary news ecosystem – with its symbiosis of print and scribal genres – is also apparent in the acquisition of intelligence from the Dutch Republic. Here, the logic was explained by the English ambassador, Sir William Temple, who was frustrated to discover – 'by the gazettes' – that the man who 'furnishes… intelligence from hence is but at random', but who was also determined that 'the constant occurrents should come from any hand than mine'. In other words, since supplies of intelligence might be erratic, and since his own reports needed to concentrate upon high-level diplomacy, it made sense to hire 'pensioners' to secure regular supplies of scribal news.[43] The process of finding a suitable intelligencer may not have been easy, and while reference was made in October 1668 to someone who offered to furnish news 'every Tuesday', Temple subsequently complained about being 'much out of heart with my correspondent here', adding that he was endeavouring to 'search after another'. Another report referred to 'a new offer made me of an intelligencer here of the same kind with what I had at first, which I have promised to try next week and shall treat accordingly as I find, for the last I discarded wholly some time since'. Eventually, in January 1670, he reported to Williamson that, 'after much search and industry', he had 'found… a correspondent here who will I hope abundantly supply the loss I had of our old man soon after my arrival here'. Although Temple professed

to ‘know nothing of the person myself, being helped to him by a third hand’, he ‘judged him by this his last week’s paper’, and concluded that he was ‘not only a knowing but a discrete man’. The following week, William Blathwayt (Temple’s secretary) reported that he had received ‘the first fruits of our new intelligencer, which I shall always continue to do though but once a week’, and Temple described the weekly ‘paper of intelligence’ as being ‘so exact that I can add little to it’.[44] Recruiting intelligencers in this way did mean that supplies of news were imperilled when ambassadors returned to England, and one reason for keeping Blathwayt in The Hague in July 1671 was that the ‘ordinary intelligence… failed since Sir William Temple’s revocation’. Blathwayt explained that, unless Temple could persuade his intelligencer to resume work, new orders would be needed ‘for the procuring some new intelligence’, and subsequent ambassadors evidently needed to find their own way. In 1680, for example, Henry Sidney (later earl of Romney) reported that ‘there is a man here that makes it his business to furnish everybody with news, and sometimes he does it very well’.[45] Nevertheless, it is striking that ambassadors went to such lengths to acquire regular intelligence.

In dealing with ‘intelligencers’, moreover, English officials tapped into a community of established newsletter-writers, some of whom also edited printed gazettes.[46] When he arrived in The Hague in 1681, the envoy Thomas Plott not only referred to one intelligencer – who quickly became ‘my friend’ – as someone who had been ‘pensionary’ to Henry Sidney, but also described him as the French ‘gazetteer’, who supplied both printed and scribal news. Plott also referred to having ‘another intelligencer here who is paid for it, that gives me twice a week what comes to his hands, whose original papers and likewise those of the French gazetier [sic] I shall hereafter send you’. Of course, using established journalists did not solve every problem. Plott was acutely aware of the problems involved in securing steady supplies, adding that, ‘when I return for England I shall settle a correspondence between you and them,

that you may have a continuance of their news'.[47] Others were conscious that newsmen might prove unreliable. In May 1682, Thomas Chudleigh apologised to Lord Conway 'that after all my endeavours and the hopes I had of settling a private correspondence, I find myself at last disappointed by the person I had made account of for it'. Nevertheless, he promised to 'endeavour some other way to bring it about, and your lordship may be assured that if I cannot do it to good purpose, at leastwise His Majesty's money shall be saved, in the well disposing whereof I shall be more careful than I would be of my own'.[48]

Such evidence reveals the effort involved in securing reliable supplies of credible intelligence, and the frequency with which officials paid for a newsletter service. Here too a revealing picture emerges about the reliance upon contemporary news culture. In July 1671, when Blathwayt referred to 'the intelligence which I have hitherto transmitted you from these parts', he also explained the need for 'procuring an allowance for some other which may be equivalent with the former'. The accounts of George Downing for 1671/2 indicate that his 'extraordinary charges for letters, expresses and intelligence at the Hague' came to 168 guilders, while Temple's accounts between May 1675 and May 1676 included £364 for 'intelligence and expresses'.[49] Such evidence also confirms that the government relied upon professional newsmen. Between June and December 1682, Chudleigh's 'extraordinary' disbursements included fifty guilders to Leiden man for the *gazette a la main,* or scribal newsletter. In November 1668, Temple explained to Williamson that 'I continue to send you the papers which come weekly to my hands, both here and from France, as I receive likewise your weekly accounts', and he asked to know 'whether you desire these French *gazettes a la main,* which cost £15 a year'.[50]

In other words, while the government and its agents sought to secure steady supplies of reliable intelligence, the relationships involved were transactional, and officials were somewhat reliant upon prominent figures from the world of commercial news, whose work

involved scribal news services or printed gazettes, or both. For men like Williamson, in other words, intelligence gathering mirrored the structures of news production with which they were involved in England.

In identifying their suppliers, of course, little precise evidence survives, and it also seems likely that intelligence networks extended far beyond such trusted specialists. More work is needed to analyse the mass of loose and mostly unsigned newsletters in the State Papers, which perhaps involved unsolicited information from numerous correspondents.[51] Likewise, it is difficult to establish the nature of Williamson's relationship with Thomas Gwynne, who offered to supply news in 1668, or indeed with Joseph Bampfield, many of whose intelligence letters survive from 1663 onwards, but who was evidently treated with a degree of suspicion.[52] It would be naïve, in other words, to discount the possibility that Williamson's intelligence network was large and complex, and that different suppliers raised different challenges in terms of their credibility and trustworthiness.

Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that Williamson became somewhat reliant upon a limited number of intelligencers, one of whom – Abraham Casteleyn – reinforces the link between intelligence, scribal news, and printed gazettes. Casteleyn is well known as the pre-eminent Dutch journalist of the age, but his business model also involved scribal newsletters, based upon his ability to provide intelligence beyond what appeared in the *Haarlem Courant*. It was by virtue of being unusually well informed that Casteleyn became an intelligencer for the English government, and his letters occupy a prominent place within Williamson's extensive collection of Dutch newsletters. A volume covering 1667-8, for example, contains no fewer than 119 of Casteleyn's letters, and although these were unsigned, they were written in a distinctive hand, and were invariably endorsed as having been sent from Haarlem. Occasionally, it was explicitly noted that they came from Casteleyn.[53] What set Casteleyn apart was that his letters, while often brief, contained high-

grade intelligence and commentary. He provided evidence about debates and resolutions within the States General, not least regarding diplomatic manoeuvres and disputes between the provinces, and he conveyed the mood of 'most men' within the Dutch political elite, as well as prevailing sentiments regarding the English king and his ambassadors, not to mention expectations about how they would behave. All of this was based upon 'talk' within elite political circles, to which Casteleyn clearly had privileged access.[54] Of course, Casteleyn was not the only person who could provide such intelligence, and in 1672 a deal was struck with Heinrich Hildebrand – Dutch agent of the Duke of Saxony – for 'punctual advice of all affairs'. Here, explicit reference was made to the fact that Williamson did not need 'the common news of the gazettes', but 'what secretly is consulted and concluded in the States General'.[55] Nevertheless, it is revealing that the best documented of Williamson's relationships with his intelligencers involved a professional newsman.

## III

What also emerges from Williamson's archive, and from his correspondence with Casteleyn, are the processes devised for analysing the intelligence that poured in from across Britain and the Continent. These can be explored by re-evaluating contemporary evidence about the government's control of the Post Office, and about its production of propaganda, and by focusing less upon the urge to 'intercept' the mail and manipulate the public sphere than upon the practices associated with information management.

Official reading practices can be observed in different ways and in relation to different kinds of information. Sometimes this involved European newsbooks. These might be considered irrelevant to this discussion, not least because official analysis was often predicated upon concerns about how English news was reported on the Continent, and about

such gazettes being read in England. Nevertheless, surviving evidence is revealing, because it provides an unusual indication of the care with which news could be read, and because of the central role played by officials like Hickes and Sir Philip Frowde.[56] It was such men who made extracts from the Rotterdam gazette in July 1667, which provided a non-conformist and old Cromwellian perspective on English affairs, and an unflattering account of a political situation that was 'growing every day worse and worse'.[57] Moreover, it was careful reading of other newsbooks that indicated how far Muddiman not only drew upon European newspapers and 'Dutch letters', but also did so by exchanging information. More than once in the early 1660s, Downing noted that the Haarlem gazette repeated 'word for word' the Whitehall newsletters, and in 1666 Hickes identified passages in Casteleyn's newsbook 'that could never have come there if not from Mr Muddiman'. Hickes' fear was that Muddiman had set up a private and unauthorised channel of communication with a foreign journalist. This not only sheds further light upon the tensions between Williamson and Muddiman, but also upon the centrality of Casteleyn to English news culture, and the complex interdependence of different kinds of news, and of newsletters that were read and produced by English officials.[58]

Another tangential issue that sheds valuable light upon information management involves official attempts to supply information to the *London Gazette*. Here, evidence can be used less to think about the propaganda impulse, and about print, than about the processes by which intelligence was analysed, not least through documents and notes annotated to indicate that they were destined 'for the Gazette'.[59] These involved suggestions, or indeed instructions, about stories that might usefully be covered. Whether these came from the Privy Council, from individual courtiers, or from correspondents across the country they were based upon the idea that the intelligence system was collaborative, and that Williamson was responsive to those who read the *Gazette* and who supplied him with news. They also reveal

awareness that Williamson was helped to finalise the text of the *Gazette*.[60] On one occasion Williamson was sent papers about Anglo-Dutch issues that were thought suitable for publication because they would 'enflame all England against the Dutch'.[61] More importantly, such documents reveal the processes involved in selecting and analysing intelligence, for reasons beyond propaganda. These processes not only involved the much-discussed interception of letters at the Post Office, but also correspondence from established contacts, perhaps including those with whom intelligence was traded for copies of the *Gazette* and official newsletters.[62] It is certainly possible to observe how letters were copied by Robert Yard (under-secretary of state) or edited by Williamson before being directed to the *Gazette*, and how intelligence directed to Hickes was extracted for publication. In the spring of 1669, for example, it is possible to compare a series of letters that Hickes received from ports on the South coast with the edited highlights that were prepared for officials. Only one extract – news from Lyme Regis dated 3 April – appeared in print, which perhaps suggests that the synopsis was primarily intended for the secretary of state, rather than for the editor of the *Gazette*.[63]

With European letters, meanwhile, Frowde, Hickes, and Yard, as well as Robert Francis, were employed in 'extracting, copying, translating… all matters of correspondence'. This too involved the *Gazette*, but the process was more complicated, and in 1669 Williamson insisted that Francis should 'watch the letters when they come in, and as well to extract them, as to frame out of them, what is fit for the gazette'. This suggests that the extracts were made for Williamson's use, rather than simply for the *Gazette*, and that they were forwarded to Whitehall as well as to the newsbook.[64] Beyond this, Williamson also received bundles of letters, presumably after they had been extracted, and although this was occasionally done so that he could 'view and judge the fitness of communicating some part of the same', it also seems clear that this process was used to inform official thinking.[65] What

can be observed, in other words, is a process in which intelligence, from various kinds of scribal news, was fed to, and analysed by, Williamson and his clerks, and this certainly included Temple's ambassadorial reports, which were systematically annotated with marginalia, and occasionally extracted.[66] That Williamson was keen to utilise such material seems clear. His correspondence demonstrates an acute sense of the need for such material to be processed rapidly, even as he recognised the need for caution. Henry Oldenburg once described how he raced to make extracts from foreign letters, not least for the *Gazette*, and Williamson's eagerness to receive the latest supplies was also driven in part by his determination to get supplies to his news editors. More generally, however, Williamson's associates were habitually poised to act as soon as letters arrived, forwarding letters 'immediately… by an express', generally on a daily basis.[67] At the same time, the decision to delay the publication of certain stories indicates that attempts were occasionally made to reconcile different versions of events from different sources.[68]

Other evidence indicates how Williamson analysed the news he received, by preparing an index of his Dutch papers, and by compiling notebooks on Dutch affairs. The latter offer intriguing insights into his methods, in terms of his sources and the speed with which he worked. He referred to 'yesterday's letters from Holland' and 'letters just now arrived', as well as to 'Holland letters of Friday last arrived this morning', and 'Dutch letters arrived this morning', not to mention domestic suppliers like Silas Taylor. It also seems clear that he and Muddiman both collected information from Dutch 'letters' as well as from the *Haarlem Courant*, and that with Dutch correspondence both men worked from the same source, presumably the extracts prepared by Williamson's team.[69] This is evident from the occasions when Muddiman's newsletters and Williamson's notebooks contained precisely the same reports in exactly the same words. Both men cited the report that 'De Witt talks big, tells the people all our offers are but arts and tricks, and so prepares vigorously for the war',

and both men added that De Witt had 'lost a great point in the business of the treaty, the provinces having declared they will each send one or two apiece as their plenipotentiaries to Breda'. Both men also noted that 'Zeeland and Gelderland continue extremely zealous for the peace, and Zeeland desires much that our ambassadors may in their way to Breda pass by Middleburg'.[70] Similarly, both men picked up the story that 'De Witt is now become a great Spaniard, and having occasion in the assembly to speak of the great design France discovers to have upon Flanders, he replied they should now see who was furthest from being a Frenchman, he or they that accused him all along to be so'.[71] Finally, both men noted the letter from May 1667 in which it was claimed that 'De Witt's faction hath prevailed upon false suggestions that we and France understand one another and will force them to a disadvantageous peace at Breda'. According to this report, De Witt had been 'tampering with the Prince of Orange's friends to have him disown forever all his pretensions or claims to the office of stadtholder or governor of the province of Holland, and upon this condition De Witt offers to make him admiral and general at land immediately'. Both men also noted the suggestion that 'this trick will not take'.[72] Although it is possible that Williamson was taking notes from Muddiman's newsletters – and attempts were certainly made to monitor the latter's reports – a more likely explanation is that both men were drawing their intelligence from the same pool of translated and extracted Dutch newsletters.[73]

It also seems clear that this process involved correspondence intended for Williamson, rather than intercepts. When Yard sent Williamson letters from the Post Office in May 1673, he explained the absence of material from the 'French packet' by noting that the latter contained no material intended for Williamson, barring a copy of the French gazette.[74] As such, it seems likely that at least some of the material that Williamson received from the Post Office involved scribal news rather than private correspondence, and material that arrived as part of arrangements with a range of suppliers, each of whom received official newsletters in

return. In addition to its many domestic recipients, therefore, Williamson's newsletter was also sent to diplomats like Essais Pufendorf, the Swedish resident in Paris, as well as to professional newswriters, including the Brussels-based journalist, Francois(?) Foppen, and Casteleyn himself.[75] Indeed, Casteleyn's letters also reveal evidence of careful scrutiny, in terms of passages translated and highlighted by different hands. In 1668, therefore, the following passage from Casteleyn's letter of 31 July (new style) was translated and then highlighted by Williamson's clerks:

> We have very bad news for the French out of the Indies, that they being arrived at Madagascar had engaged themselves in the war that was between the kings there, where they had lost abundance of men, and that they were grown to that height of pride, that they would not bear their arms themselves but forced the inhabitants to bring them after them, who taking that opportunity had fallen upon the French and destroyed them, those that remained alive suffering hunger and many other hardships there resolved to go to Suratte where they arrived in December last, but they having no great desire to stay there had gotten a French ship which arrived the 6 of April at the Cape of Good Hope, desiring that they might return home in the company of our ships, but our commander in chief, having no orders so to do, did excuse it, in the meantime, we have yet no news of the arrival of the said ships in France.[76]

That this story subsequently appeared – almost word for word – in the *Gazette* is clearly significant, although given the importance that Williamson attached to his relationship with Casteleyn, and his wider obsession with 'Dutch letters', it also seems likely that this process of translation and extraction served other purposes in terms of information management.[77] The same presumably applies to other stories that were culled from Casteleyn's letters and

then appeared in the *Gazette*, such as the report about a decision in the States General to enhance De Witt's salary, and to provide 60,000 guilders 'by way of present', in acknowledgement of his 'good service'.[78]

IV

Pivoting away from discussions of intercepts, censorship, and propaganda thus makes it possible to highlight the central role of scribal news in the government's intelligence operations, and to probe the processes used to secure and sift credible and reliable supplies of information, as well as the personnel involved. It highlights the importance of information management and suggests ways in which this task could be made feasible, which is not of course to deny that it could also be fraught with difficulties, not least in cross-border contexts, and in situations where the gathering and analysis of intelligence was intimately connected with the popular appetite for news, and with the need to produce various kinds of 'propaganda'. In short, the imperatives to publicise information sometimes came into conflict with the processes by which it was acquired. Thus, amongst the many complaints that surfaced about stories in the *Gazette*, worries were expressed that the incorporation of sensitive Dutch intelligence might put supplies in jeopardy.[79] In 1670, for example, Temple urged Williamson to treat the weekly 'advices' with care. He was nervous about the possibility that they would 'fall into the hands of the ordinary intelligencer', and suggested that 'discretion' should be used 'in drawing what he will out of them for furnishing his gazette', and he was worried 'least the publishing of them… may occasion an inquiry here into their source'. Indeed, Temple explained that specific stories in the *Gazette* 'had very near broke off my intelligence, and I should be very sorry to lose it, because he gives me what passes in the States of Holland as well as General, which is not usual'. Blathwayt also

recommended ‘secrecy’, because newsletter writers were concerned about the ‘severity’ with which the Dutch government might treat those peddling intelligence, a reference to what Temple described as ‘the late rout among the clerks’. In July 1671, Blathwayt explained that his Dutch intelligencer ‘dares not venture any further’, because the States General was ‘offended’ by passages in the *Gazette* culled from his letters. Indeed, the story in question came from a Casteleyn newsletter, and Blathwayt indicated that maintaining supplies of intelligence would require not just the payment of a healthy ‘allowance’, but also ‘better management for the future’.[80]

However, such challenges merely provide further evidence that the task of information management provides a useful way of addressing the ongoing relevance of scribal news. Here, this has involved reflecting upon the fuzzy boundaries between intelligence and scribal news, examining how scribal news was constructed, deployed, and read, and analysing complex relationships involving producers and consumers. With respect to the latter, the article has demonstrated that officials recognised and responded to the changing landscape of news across the seventeenth century. Before the civil wars, when news culture was exclusive, expensive, and authoritative, texts were generally unofficial, but could be regarded as credible by virtue of proximity of their authors to reliable sources. During the civil wars, meanwhile, news became commonplace and cheap, but problematic in terms of its reliability and truthfulness, thereby incentivising reading practices that were more intensive and extensive. It became harder to claim that news was authoritative by virtue of journalists being close to credible witnesses, and more obvious that it was being manipulated by political authorities. Moreover, if civil war news culture represented the antithesis of early Stuart news culture – a contrast symbolised by the disappearance of scribal newsletters and the dramatic arrival of printed newspapers – then a synthesis seems to have been achieved after 1660. This involved newsletters and newspapers operating in tandem rather than as competitors; a

commitment to the idea of news being commonplace, even to the extent that scribal news was dramatically reduced in price; the relative absence of the opportunities for extensive reading (at least initially); and a much more obvious sense that news was 'authoritative' in terms of being officially controlled.

This story matters because government policies needed to acknowledge the demand for, and availability of, different kinds of scribal and printed news, and because officials needed to secure and produce scribal newsletters, rather than just to read and print gazettes. This means recognising that newsletters had become entangled with newsbooks and gazettes, and successful information management required obtaining large quantities of information, establishing relationships with credible suppliers of high-grade reports, and processing incoming evidence. Moreover, to the extent that intelligence gathering became a more pressing issue, officials not only grappled with the potential for 'information overload', but also with the need to diversify supply-lines, beyond diplomats and envoys, and beyond letters intercepted at the Post Office. It seems plausible to suggest that this involved a 'core and periphery' model, in which the government amassed evidence from a wide variety of sources while also relying heavily upon a small group of intelligencers, amongst whom professional journalists and newsletter writers were prominent. However, to the extent that officials co-opted commercial newsletter services, strategies for obtaining intelligence – and different kinds of scribal news – were also predicated upon popular demand for news (both in scribal and printed forms), and upon the need to establish processes for exchanging information. Indeed, in a situation where the government was both a consumer and a producer of scribal news, officials encountered complex and perhaps incompatible imperatives. For those involved in information management, therefore, the dissemination of authoritative news in the *Gazette* and scribal newsletters could be central to the process of securing regular intelligence, from readers and officials at home, as well as from agents and journalists

abroad, but it could also be inimical to the task of obtaining reliable scribal news, by imperilling the very challenges of communication upon which the government relied. Such challenges were made particularly acute by European entanglements and diplomatic imperatives, and they indicate how complex issues of information management became in terms of tensions between secrecy, publicity and the gathering of intelligence, and in terms of the need to navigate a shifting news ecosystem.

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[1] Richard Cust, 'News and politics in early seventeenth-century England', *P&P*, cxii (1986), 60-90.

[2] Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993); Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, 1995); Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998); Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham, eds, *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700* (Cambridge, 2004); Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Cranbury, NJ, 2005); H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford, 1996); Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2017).

[3] Ian Atherton, '"The itch grown and disease": manuscript transmission of news in the seventeenth century', in *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Joad Raymond (London, 1999), 39-65; F. J. Levy, 'How information spread among the gentry, 1550-1640', *JBS*, xxi.2 (1982), 11-34; Sabrina A. Baron, 'The guises of dissemination in early seventeenth-century England: news in manuscript and print', in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London, 2001), 41-56; David Randall, 'Joseph Mead, nouvellante: news, sociability and credibility in

early Stuart England', *JBS*, xlv.2 (2006), 293-312; Henry L. Snyder, 'Newsletters in England, 1689-1715, with special reference to John Dyer', in *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism*, ed. Donovan H. Bond and W. Reynolds McLeod (Morgantown, 1977), 3-19; J. G. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist, 1659-1689* (London, 1923); J. B. Williams, 'The newsbooks and letters of news in the Restoration', *EHR*, xxiii (1908), 252-76; Rachael Scarborough King, 'The manuscript newsletter and the rise of the newspaper, 1665-1715', *HLQ*, lxxix.3 (2016), 411-37; Lindsay O'Neill, 'News and the personal letter, or the news education of Theophilus Hastings, 7th earl of Huntingdon, 1660-71', in *Connecting Centre and Locality: Political Communication in Early Modern England*, ed. Chris R. Kyle and Jason Peacey (Manchester, 2020), 193-208.

[4] Wolfgang Behringer, 'Communications revolutions: a historiographical concept', *German History*, xxiv.3 (2006), 333-74; Heiko Droste, 'How public was the news in early modern times', in *Handwritten Newspapers. An Alternative Medium during the Early Modern and Modern Periods*, ed. Heiko Droste and Kirsti Salmi-Niklander (Helsinki, 2019), 29-44.

[5] Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Farnham, 2004); Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013); David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton, 2000); Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 2016); Daniel Bellingradt, 'The early modern city as a resonating box: media, public opinion, and the urban space of the Holy Roman Empire, Cologne and Hamburg ca. 1700', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xvi (2012), 201-40.

[6] Muddiman, *King's Journalist*; *Roger L'Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture*, ed. Anne Dunan-Page and Beth Lynch (London, 2008); Peter Hinds, *The Horrid Popish Plot: Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Politicsl Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century*

*London* (Oxford, 2009); Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-1681* (Cambridge, 1994); Phyllis Handover, *A History of the London Gazette, 1665-1965* (London, 1965); John Childs, 'The sales of government gazettes during the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-81', *EHR*, cii (1987), 103-6; Thomas O'Malley, 'Religion and the newspaper press, 1660-1685: as study of the London Gazette', in *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Harris and Alan Lee (London, 1986), 25-46.

[7] A good example involves the 'Newdigate' newsletters, named after their recipient, rather than analysed in terms of their origins: Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, L.c.1-3950. For a key exception, see: Peter Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State and their Monopoly of Licensed News, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1956).

[8] Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore, 1999); David Hall, *Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Philadelphia, 2008); Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, 2000); *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Stephen Zwicker, (Cambridge, 2003); William Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, 1995); William Sherman, *Used Books. Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, 2007); Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, 2010).

[9] Joad Raymond, 'Irrational, impractical and unprofitable: reading the news in seventeenth-century Britain', in *Reading, Society and Politics*, ed. Sharpe and Zwicker, 185-212; Randall, 'Mead'; David Randall, *Credibility in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Military News* (London, 2008).

[10] Nicholas Popper, 'An information state for Elizabethan England', *JMH*, xc.3 (2018), 503-35.

[11] For these approaches, see: Alan Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II, 1660-1685* (Cambridge, 1994); Fraser, *Intelligence*.

[12] This section draws heavily upon: Atherton, 'Manuscript transmission'; Peacey, *Politicians*; Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*.

[13] Bodl. MS Tanner 65, f. 78; BL, M390 (Alnwick Castle, U.I.5). See: Baron, 'Guises of dissemination', 48; Randall, 'Mead', 301. For Rossingham newsletters, see: Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, HA 9597-8; Staffordshire RO, D603/K/2/1; BL, Add. MS 11045; TNA, C 115/106/8426-54; Bodl. MS Carte 77, ff. 346-428. For Pory, see: TNA, C 115/106/8317-8425; William Stevens Powell, *John Pory, 1572-1636* (Chapel Hill, 1977).

[14] For Mead's use of Rossingham, see: Northamptonshire RO, IC210.

[15] For Castle, see: Henry E. Huntington Library, EL7807-7863; BL, Add. MS 72275. For Beaulieu, see: BL, Add. MS 7010.

[16] Randall, 'Mead'; *William Whiteway of Dorchester his Diary, 1618 to 1635* (Dorset Record Society, 12, 1991); *Diary of John Rous*, ed. M. A. E. Green (Camden Society, 1856).

[17] Bodl. MS Tanner 65, f. 78.

[18] For Weckherlin, see: Atherton, 'Manuscript transmission', 41-2; TNA, C 115/106/8455-83.

[19] *The Great Assizes Holden in Parnassus* (London, 1645), 2.

[20] For 'Diurnall occurrences' (1640-1), see: Durham UL, Mickleton and Spearman MS 30. For Border, see: BL, Add. MS 70122, unfol. For Dillingham, see: Warwickshire RO, CR1886, volume 1, unfol.; E. S. Cope, *The Life of a Public Man: Edward, First Baron Montagu of Boughton, 1562-1644* (Philadelphia, 1981), 157-8, 168-9, 184-5, 197. For fears that the circulation of newsletters would result in punishment, see: BL, Add. 78303, f. 45.

[21] Randall, 'Mead', 302, 305-7; Levy, 'Information', 23.

[22] Longleat House, Thynne Papers 66, f. 77; BL, Add. MS 78220, f. 14.

[23] *The Oxinden and Peyton Letters, 1642-1670*, ed. Dorothy Gardiner (London, 1937), 96; BL, Add. 28002, f. 174; BL, Add. MS 78194, f. 99; BL, Add. MS 78195, ff. 75, 103, 110; BL, Eg. MS 2535, ff. 88, 118, 214, 284v, 301, 478; BL, Eg. MS 2534, f. 236; Bodl. MS Clarendon 67, f. 246v.

[24] Randall, 'Mead', 307.

[25] *Sydney Papers*, ed. R. W. Blencowe (London, 1825), 68; BL, Add. 78191, f. 133.

[26] BL, Add. MS 78198, f. 21; Bodl. MS Clarendon 29, f. 183; BL, Eg. MS 2535, f. 557; Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion*, ed. W. Dunn Macray (6 vols, Oxford, 1888), ii, 64, 69, 71, 74, 84, 134, 226, 309, 376, 389, 394, 405, 424.

[27] Staffordshire RO, D593/P/8/2/2. See: Jason Peacey, 'Marchamont Nedham and the Lawrans letters', *Bodleian Library Record*, xvii.1 (2000), 24-35.

[28] *Oxinden and Peyton Letters*, ed. Gardiner, 149; BL, Add. MS 78298, f. 41v.

[29] *Ideology and Politics on the Eve of the Restoration. Newcastle's Advice to Charles II*, ed. T. P. Slaughter (Philadelphia, 1984), 56.

[30] *The Observator*, 1 (13 Apr. 1681).

[31] *CSP Dom 1670*, 704.

[32] For Muddiman newsletters, see: Henry E. Huntington Library, HA 9600-9631. For overlaps see: *CSP Dom 1680-1*, 375, 477.

[33] Baron, 'Guises of dissemination', 53-4; *CSP Dom 1670*, 88; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 54; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, 175. Dyer's parliamentary reporting sometimes landed him in trouble. See: Snyder, 'Newsletters', 5. Francis Benson, one of the clerks who worked with Williamson, sent scribal newsletters to Leoline Jenkins during the Treaty of Nijmegen (1676-9): Henry E. Huntington Library, HM 30314-15.

[34] *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 16, 282; *CSP Dom 1667-8*, 102; TNA, SP 29/225, f. 211. Other readers complained when gazettes were late and out of date: *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 20, 35-6; *CSP Dom 1667*, 476.

[35] *CSP Dom 1670*, 392; *CSP Dom 1679-80*, 569; *CSP Dom 1680-1*, 447, 457, 460, 526; *CSP Dom 1682*, 193. See: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 52; King, 'Manuscript newsletter', 415.

[36] *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 167, 209, 386; TNA, SP 29/183, f. 125; *CSP Dom 1670*, 188; TNA, SP 29/275, ff. 47-8; *CSP Dom 1672-3*, 585; *CSP Dom 1676-7*, 368; Atherton, 'Manuscript transmission', 52-4, 58.

[37] *CSP Dom 1667*, 311, 499; TNA, SP 29/218, ff. 128-234; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 140-4; *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 459; TNA, SP 29/188, f. 214.

[38] For the variety of newsletters during the Exclusion Crisis, see: Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, 175. During the Exclusion Crisis, and towards the end of the seventeenth century, the story of government-backed newsletters is more difficult to reconstruct: *ibid*, p. 176. For examples, see: Henry E. Huntington Library, HA 9622-57 (1691-2). Eventually, there emerged hybrid genres, in which scribal news was appended to copies of printed newspapers, and in which printed newsbooks were given the appearance of scribal newsletters. See: King, 'Manuscript newsletter'; Atherton, 'Manuscript transmission', 55. Dyer's newsletter cost perhaps £4 per annum: Snyder, 'Newsletters', 8.

[39] TNA, SP 84/86, ff. 107-8; SP 84/216, f. 162; BL, Eg. MS 2543, ff. 115-16; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 138. See: Jason Peacey, '"My friend the gazetier": diplomacy and news if seventeenth-century Europe', in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Leiden, 2016), 420-42.

[40] Atherton, 'Manuscript transmission', 54; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 30, 33, 140.

[41] Fraser, *Intelligence*, 143; *CSP Dom 1668-9*, 588; *CSP Dom 1671-2*, 536; *CSP Dom 1672*, 113; *CSP Dom 1672-3*, 35; *CSP Dom 1675-6*, 243-4, 255, 260, 282, 357; *CSP Dom 1676-7*, 238.

[42] HMC, *Le Fleming*, 35-168.

[43] TNA, SP 84/185, f. 51.

[44] TNA, SP 84/184, f. 50; SP 84/185, ff. 51, 78, 210, 211; SP 84/186, f. 62v.

[45] TNA, SP 84/187, f. 84; SP 84/216, f. 54.

[46] For Muddiman's use of informers for his newsletters, see: *CSP Dom 1665-6*, 15.

[47] *The Dispatches of Thomas Plott (1681-2), and Thomas Chudleigh (1682-5), English Envoys at the Hague*, ed. Frederick Arnold Middlebush (The Hague, 1926), 1.

[48] BL, Add. MS 37980, f. 119.

[49] TNA, SP 84/187, f. 89; SP 84/188, f. 148; SP 84/201, f. 222. L'Estrange paid spies £500: *CSP Dom 1665-6*, 17.

[50] BL, Add. MS 37980, f. 269; TNA, SP 84/184, f. 77.

[51] TNA, SP 101. The correspondence that is preserved is particularly dense for certain periods, and successive boxes cover 1594-1622, 1623-6, 1627-65, January-April 1666, and May to July 1666, after which there are normally 1-2 boxes per year until the late 1680s.

[52] TNA, SP 84/184, f. 3; SP 84/167, ff. 105-290.

[53] TNA, SP 101/51; SP 101/54. See: Jason Peacey: 'Abraham Casteleyn and the English government, 1660-1681', *Media History*, xxii.3-4 (2016), 1-17. References were also made to sending copies of the *Haarlem Courant*: SP 101/51 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 9/19 Aug. 1667). Casteleyn appeared in Williamson's address book, but stopped sending letters during the third Anglo-Dutch war: TNA, SP 9/32, ff. 211-30; See: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 44, 102-3; SP 101/55 (22 March, 26 March, 2 April, 30 April 1673). Other archives also reveal that similar newsletters were sent to men like William Blathwaite, at least during 1669: BL, RP 3189.

[54] TNA, SP 101/51, unfol. See: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 5, 44-6, 91-2. Later, Casteleyn helped Williamson by providing his letters in French rather than the more difficult Dutch.

[55] Fraser, *Intelligence*, 103-4.

[56] *CSP Dom 1667*, 16. This concern with European publics led to tactics for intervening in the continental public sphere: Peacey, 'My friend the gazetier'.

[57] *CSP Dom 1667*, 294, 312; TNA, SP 29/209, f. 126.

[58] *CSP Dom 1665-6*, 246; TNA, SP 29/148, ff. 8-v; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 44. This was used as part of an unsuccessful attempt to dismiss Muddiman. For links between the translator of the *London Gazette*, Monsieur Morainville, and the editor of the Amsterdam gazette, see: *CSP Dom 1671-2*, 269.

[59] *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 16; *CSP Dom 1672*, 270, 370; TNA, SP 29/311, f. 319; SP 29/313, f. 30; *CSP Dom 1678*, 575; TNA, SP 29/366, f. 333.

[60] *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 120; *CSP Dom 1673*, 312; *CSP Dom 1673-5*, 304. For other correspondence, see: *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 125, 160, 359; *CSP Dom 1667*, 89, 427. For Williamson, see: *CSP Dom 1671*, 318.

[61] *CSP Dom 1671-2*, 388; TNA, SP 29/306, f. 135.

[62] Fraser, *Intelligence*, 33, 59.

[63] *CSP Dom 1672*, 84; TNA, SP 29/310, f. 12a; *CSP Dom 1673*, 338. For the synopsis of South coast news, see: TNA, SP 29/258, ff. 160-v. For the original letter, see: *CSP Dom 1668-9*, 254-65. For the printed extract, see: *The London Gazette*, 354 (5-8 Apr. 1669).

[64] *CSP Dom 1668-9*, 452, 494, 544; *CSP Dom 1671*, 314; TNA, SP 29/264, f. 83; SP 29/290, f. 247; *CSP Dom 1660-85*, 403; TNA, SP 29/441, ff. 305-6; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 59.

[65] *CSP Dom 1668-9*, 474; *CSP Dom 1665-6*, 246; TNA, SP 29/148, ff. 8-v.

[66] TNA, SP 84/196, ff. 219-72; SP 84/197, ff. 1-131; SP 84/198, ff. 5-203.

[67] *CSP Dom 1672-3*, 569; TNA, SP 29/333, f. 182; *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 193; *CSP Dom 1668-9*, 488; *CSP Dom 1671*, 314; TNA, SP 29/290, f. 247.

[68] *CSP Dom 1672-3*, 530.

[69] TNA, SP 9/164; SP 29/231, ff. 4-v, 6v, 7v-8v, 10-11, 16, 17v-18, 20v, 21v-22, 23v-24v, 26, 31v, 33, 39, 43v, 45, 46v, 51, 56-9, 63-4, 67-v, 82v; SP 29/319a. Muddiman sometimes referred to the *Haarlem Courant*, but sometimes to 'the Dutch print', and he also referred to Dutch letters, and like Williamson he had access to high-grade intelligence. See: Henry E. Huntington Library, HA9611; Longleat House, Thynne Papers 41, ff. 10, 23, 28, 34v, 43, 45, 75, 156v, 161, 440. There is scope to work on his Longleat notebook, which contains the notes from which he selected material for the newsletter: Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, 175-6; HMC, *Third Report*, 184.

[70] Longleat House, Thynne Papers 41, ff. 52v, 55, 56; TNA, SP 29/231, ff. 7v, 10-11.

[71] Longleat House, Thynne Papers 41, ff. 63; TNA, SP 29/231, f. 17v.

[72] Longleat House, Thynne Papers 41, f. 70; TNA, SP 29/231, f. 24v.

[73] *CSP Dom 1665-6*, 246; TNA, SP 29/148, ff. 8-v; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 44; Muddiman, 'Newsbooks', 275.

[74] *CSP Dom 1673*, 251.

[75] Fraser, *Intelligence*, 64, 70, 73, 153-5.

[76] TNA, SP 101/51 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 31 July 1668).

[77] *London Gazette*, 281 (23-27 July 1668).

[78] *London Gazette*, 283 (30 July-3 Aug. 1668); TNA, SP 101/51 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 7 Aug. 1668). For the possibility of newsletters that were sent to Williamson making their way into the *Gazette*, see: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 90.

[79] *CSP Dom 1666-7*, 359; *CSP Dom 1672*, 156.

[80] TNA, SP 84/187, f. 79; *London Gazette*, 575 (18-22 May 1671); TNA, SP 101/54 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 26 May 1671). For other concerns about the need for secrecy, in response to the tendency for evidence about the Privy Council to appear in print within hours, see: *CSP Dom 1680-1*, 532.