

INTRODUCTION

I THE DIARIST¹

When he began to keep his diary in 1660, Pepys was a young man of close on 27, employed in a double capacity – as a household official in the service of his cousin Edward Mountagu (Cromwellian politician and naval commander), and as a clerk in the Exchequer. He had been educated at St Paul's School and at Cambridge, and in 1655 had married Elizabeth St Michel, an Anglo-French girl seven years his junior. He and his wife – they had no children – had settled in 1658 in a house in Axe Yard, off King St, Westminster, within a short walking distance both of Mountagu's official lodgings in Whitehall Palace and of the Exchequer building close by Westminster Hall. Almost a mile to the east, reached through crowded streets or more easily by river, lay the city of London, which was not only the commercial and financial capital of the country but also at that time a place where people lived as well as worked. It was to the city – to Seething Lane, not far from the Tower and the port – that Pepys moved house when in June 1660 he took office as Clerk of the Acts to the Navy Board, there to begin his career as a naval administrator. In later life, after the diary period, Pepys settled in other houses, but always (until his last illness, when he moved to Clapham) in London or Westminster.

His natural habitat consisted of these few square miles of urban territory. He was as much a Londoner as Samuel Johnson, and his diary is in one sense a history of his London neighbourhood. Never, even in his affluent retirement, did Pepys try to become a country gentleman. He enjoyed visits to East Anglia, the homeland of his forebears, and he took a townsman's pleasure in short retreats to the countryside, but, as we may gather both from his diary and from his letters, he always felt life in the country to be a form of exile.² London was the centre of Pepys's civilisation. It was at that time unchallenged in its eminence among English cities. The metropolitan area held about

1. This section summarises Pepys's career principally before and during the diary period. Additional biographical details (with fuller references than are given here), together with some account of his intellectual interests, will be found in the *Companion* articles ('Books', 'Health', 'Music', 'Science', 'Theatre', etc.).

2. Cf. 14 July 1667; *Priv. Corr.*, ii. 1. He rented a weekend villa at Parson's Green near Fulham, c. 1667–81: Bryant, ii. 183, 360.

half-a-million inhabitants – perhaps five-eighths of the total urban population of the country. (Bristol, its nearest rival in size, had only about 30,000.) Yet, from the point of view of the people living in it, London was not over-large. All that Londoners needed for a full life was there, yet contained in a space so small that it was easy to escape for an hour's airing to fields or river walks. It had taverns, clubs, shops and (after the Restoration) public playhouses. Its musical life – at a time when music held a high place in English culture – was the best in the country. It housed scholars, writers, artists and publishers. In its churches and conventicles was offered an inviting variety of sermon and service. Above all, it was the centre of English political life – the home of royalty, of parliament, of high finance and of the governing *élite*.

Politics fascinated Pepys. As an impressionable boy he had lived through civil war and revolution; he was now to witness the miracle of a bloodless restoration – even to play a small clerical part in it. In an age of violent partisanship – but also of widespread neutralism – Pepys came to have no very strong political convictions, unless a belief in governmental efficiency may be counted as one. By 1660, he was ready, although a servant of the Republic, to welcome a return to monarchy simply because it would give stability. Similarly, his ecclesiastical views (at any rate when he was a young man) did not spring from doctrinal principles or from the inner motions of a spiritual life. They were simply the working rules of a worldly man who favoured ecclesiastical uniformity for the sake of civil peace. In religion, as in all things, he was curious; he enjoyed sermon-tasting in several churches on a single sabbath, and was willing to listen even to the Presbyterian preachers who preached long and hard. But he was clearly in 1660 an Anglican by habit and by sentiment, and had for some years been attending by preference the illegal prayer-book services which so often had little difficulty in prospering in Cromwell's capital.³ The puritan fanatics he abhorred and distrusted.

Pepys had not been born to wealth or power, and he had not inherited any great legacy of culture from his parents,⁴ but by the time

3. See esp. 4 March, 8 April 1660; Grey, ii. 426. He did not, however, attend communion: below, 30 March 1662.

4. They were not highly cultivated (his mother was quite uneducated), but his father's possessions included maps, books and virginals (*Family Letters*, pp. 13–15), and his younger brother Tom, a working tailor, knew French (15 March 1664).

the diary opens he was clearly beginning to be ambitious to take a place of his own among both the politicians and the virtuosi of London. He had grown up to think of himself, in the words of his favourite Baconian essay, as '*faber fortunae*', and there were means of entry to these circles, even to young men of small inheritance, provided they had the right abilities and connections. Politicians, such as his cousin Mountagu, needed their 'men of business' to keep their accounts, manage their households and fend off importunate petitioners. The other side of Pepys's ambition – that of becoming a virtuoso – may have been slower in forming because it was not so directly associated with the business of making a career. But by 1660 he had already acquired (like so many of the lively-minded young men of his generation) the elements of the best general culture of the day: a classical and mathematical education, together with a curiosity about the fine arts and the sciences, if not yet an informed interest in them. Besides cultivating his music, he was beginning to make collections of books, prints and mathematical instruments.

The 'man of business' and the 'virtuoso' – both important and fashionable types in late seventeenth-century England – were perhaps the two roles in which Pepys in his serious moments saw himself most clearly in 1660. Another favourite role (also fashionable) was, in the language of the time, that of the 'goodfellow' – the man of pleasure. London offered him all the diversions he craved for: music and women (to the beauty of both he stood in a 'strange slavery'⁵), friendships, the casual sociableness of the taverns, above all – what only a great town can give – the constant stimulus of new experience. Pepys was always 'with child to see any strange thing'⁶ – living and savouring every moment of his life with an intensity which never failed, despite occasional spasms of guilt. There can have been few young men in London with an appetite for pleasure to compare with his in sharpness and range.

He had been born on 23 February 1633 in Salisbury Court, off Fleet St. There, in a roomy house backing on to the churchyard of St Bride, his father John carried on his business as a tailor. John Pepys had married Margaret Kite, sister of a Whitechapel butcher, seven years before, and Samuel was the fifth in a line of eleven children born to them. His father had several relatives at this time who had settled in business in London, but by origin the Pepyses were country-folk who, from the thirteenth century onwards, had held land as

5. 6 September 1664.

6. 14 May 1660.

villeins in or near Cottenham in Cambridgeshire. In the fifteenth century they had produced several men of ability who had served the Benedictine house of Crowland as reeves and bailiffs, and in Elizabeth's reign the grandfather of John Pepys had by a shrewd second marriage equipped himself to buy the manor of Impington, near Cambridge. His daughter Paulina had been married in 1618 to a brother of the 1st Earl of Manchester, Sir Sidney Mountagu, who in 1627 had acquired the house and estate of Hinchingbrooke, near Huntingdon. The Pepyses had thereby established a connection with one of the most prominent of East Anglian families. Another branch of the family, established at South Creake, Norfolk, in the reign of Henry VIII, had prospered in trade, become landowners, and since at least 1563 had been allowed a coat of arms.

Numerous and widespread by the time of the diarist's birth, the Pepyses enjoyed a certain pride of achievement and kinship, and counted among their number a variety of types: yeomen and gentry, tradesmen and lawyers. The lawyers were particularly noteworthy. The administrative ability which had marked many of the Pepyses in medieval times seems to have shown itself in the seventeenth century in a flowering of legal talent. In the generation to which Pepys's father belonged, there were three cousins who all became lawyers of some distinction: Richard Pepys (d. 1659), Cromwellian Lord Chief Justice of Ireland; Roger Pepys, M.P. (d. 1688), Recorder of Cambridge (as was his father before him); and John Pepys, LL.D. (d. 1692), civil lawyer and for a time Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. A more distant relative of the same generation, John Pepys of Ashted, Surrey (d. 1651), served Chief Justice Coke as his confidential and much-loved secretary.

Family tradition might easily have led Pepys himself to a career in the law. Perhaps only the accident of civil war and the influence of the Mountagus determined otherwise. Eldest of four surviving children by the time he was seven, he was sent off after the outbreak of war in 1642 to Huntingdonshire, where he lived in all probability with his uncle, Robert Pepys of Brampton, a man of some substance, who appears to have served in the household of his relatives, the Mountagus of nearby Hinchingbrooke. Samuel almost certainly attended the grammar school at Huntingdon, which counted among its ex-pupils not only Oliver Cromwell but also Edward Mountagu, the young squire of Hinchingbrooke. The latter – eight years Pepys's senior – inherited the estate in 1644 from his father, Sir Sidney. It was in

his service that Pepys was to find his chance of making a career, following much the same path, *mutatis mutandis*, as many of his medieval forebears. They had served abbots; he, in the new fashion, was to serve the lay landlord who had succeeded to monastic property. (Hinchingsbrooke was founded on the spoils of a nunnery.) Edward Mountagu, with his more prominent cousin of Kimbolton, Huntingdonshire, the 2nd Earl of Manchester, now acquired in the civil war a new importance as a leading member of the parliamentary army of the Eastern Association. He saw active service as one of Cromwell's 'young colonels' and sat in parliament as member for Huntingdonshire.

Pepys returned to London after the war had ended and entered St Paul's School, there to be given a grounding in classics and mathematics. He later recalled in his diary⁷ that with a schoolboy's enthusiasm he had rejoiced in the execution of Charles I. Mountagu, on the other hand, broke with his army colleagues over this and other acts of extremism. He went out of politics between 1648 and 1653 and lived quietly at home as a country gentleman. Meanwhile, his young kinsman had passed from school to Cambridge with the help of a leaving exhibition. He was entered first at Trinity Hall (very much a lawyer's college), and then transferred to Magdalene, whose Master John Sadler was a neighbour in Salisbury Court.⁸ His election to college scholarships in 1651 and 1653 suggests some academic success. He retained throughout life a taste for the Latin classics – particularly for Cicero and Ovid – and an interest in mathematics. He learned shorthand.⁹ His intellectual interests, if yet a little superficial, were wide. Music, an early passion, was first among them. By 1660, when the diary opens, he played the lute, the viol and the flageolet, was interested in other instruments, sang well, and was about to make an attempt at composition. As a boy he had been cast for a female part in a privately produced play,¹⁰ and as an undergraduate he had tried his hand at writing a romance. In 1664 the manuscript still survived, unfinished, but impressively entitled: '*Love a Cheate*.¹¹

He took his bachelor's degree in March 1654, and it is likely that it was not long before he entered the service of Edward Mountagu as his secretary and agent in London. Mountagu had returned to politics

7. 1 November 1660.

8. J. Hutchins, *Hist. Dorset* (1796–1815), i. 260.

9. See below, pp. xlix–l. 10. 30 May 1668.

11. 30 January 1664.

in the summer of 1653 when he sat in Barebone's Parliament; soon afterwards he was serving on the Council of State and on two of its committees. Like so many of his sort, an empiric rather than an enthusiast in politics, Mountagu now cast in his lot with the cause of firm government; the old association with Cromwell was restored, and with the establishment of the Protectorate in December 1653, he quickly became an active member of the new Council of State and of the Treasury Commission. He received a salary of £1000 p.a. for each of these posts and was given official lodgings in Whitehall Palace. He now needed a secretary and London agent, while Pepys, trained for no profession, needed a career. By late 1654 or early 1655 it is probable that Pepys had begun to work for him, although there is no documentary proof of the fact until a year or so later.¹² The supposition is strengthened by the fact that by December 1655 Pepys had married the fifteen-year-old daughter of a penniless Huguenot exile¹³ — Elizabeth St Michel, a wife he could not have taken without having an assured income.

In Mountagu's household Pepys mastered his first lessons as an administrator. For many men of ability but limited means, the route to state preferment lay through private service. Attachment to the household of a great personage gave a blend of the right experience and the right acquaintance.¹⁴ Pepys, living with his wife in a single room in his master's lodgings,¹⁵ looked after Mountagu's Whitehall household and helped with his London business generally. Mountagu's duties mounted rapidly. He was soon appointed to the Admiralty Committee in addition to his other posts, and in January 1656 was made a General-at-Sea. In the four successive summers of 1656–9 he was abroad on naval service; in the winters he would spend weeks on end out of London with his large and growing family at Hinchingsbrooke. With every absence Pepys's responsibilities were enlarged. He

12. There is among Mountagu's papers a memorandum of 15 December 1655 in Pepys's hand (Carte 74, ff. 18–19) and a letter of 11 March 1656 addressed by Mountagu to 'my Servant Samuëll Pepys at my Lodgings in Whitehalle' (ib. 223, f. 170r).

13. This is the date of the civil ceremony. It seems likely that a religious ceremony had taken place in the previous October: see below, ii. 194 & n. 3.

14. Among Pepys's contemporaries, or near-contemporaries, Sir Stephen Fox, Paymaster-General of the Army, started off as a household servant of Lord Percy; James Carkesse, of the Ticket Office, later a junior colleague of Pepys, graduated from the household of the 1st Marquess of Dorchester.

15. 25 February 1667.

managed the servants, collected Mountagu's salaries and fees, and conducted the multitude of transactions with tradesmen and bankers which the affairs of a scattered and busy family demanded. There was at least one lapse of vigilance: in December 1657 Mountagu had to replace one of the London maidservants, and it appeared that a contributory cause of the trouble was that the young and pleasure-loving major-domo was not always at home.¹⁶ But Pepys was on the whole a faithful steward – prompt in the execution of orders, punctual and systematic in his financial accounts, a servant whose diligence and honesty were coming to be taken for granted.

He was introduced by Mountagu some time after 1656 to a post in the public service, becoming clerk to George Downing, a Teller of the Receipt in the Exchequer. In return for a small salary, supplemented by fees and gratuities, Pepys there performed duties (mostly of paying out cash) which did not require long or fixed hours of attendance. His posts suited him well, and he was on the whole a happy and successful young man. But he had his setbacks. At some unknown date in 1656–8 and for some unknown reason, he and his wife had 'differences' and separated, Elizabeth going to live for a short time at Charing Cross.¹⁷ And in March 1658 he underwent a dangerous operation for the removal of a bladder stone. For years afterwards he celebrated his recovery by an annual banquet. In August 1658, or thereabouts, a new phase of his life began, when he and his wife set up their own household in Axe Yard, Westminster.¹⁸ He remained attached to Mountagu's service, though by the time the diary opens in January 1660 his duties had been for the most part reduced to a supervision of the family accounts.

Shortly after the Pepyses moved into their new home Oliver Cromwell died, in September 1658, and the state lost the only leader capable of holding together the revolutionary government. Mountagu was identified with the late Protector's personal following. He had supported (in vain) every proposal to make the protectorate hereditary, as well as the more radical proposal of 1656–7 to make Oliver King. In early 1658 he had accepted a Cromwellian barony and membership of the short-lived Upper House. After Oliver's death he transferred his allegiance to the successor, Oliver's son Richard, but the

16. Carte 73, ff. 175r, 187r, 190r.

17. 13 August 1661; 15 August 1663.

18. The date is roughly established by his reference at 26 August 1661 to having then had a maid of his own for exactly three years.

new Protector was too diffident a politician to survive for long in the jungle rivalries which now broke loose. With Richard's overthrow in April 1659, Mountagu became in effect alienated, like so many other moderate 'Presbyterian' politicians, from the revolutionary cause. He continued to serve the state, but with silent and significant reservations. Despatched with a fleet to the Baltic in March 1659 to mediate in the war between Sweden and Denmark, Mountagu found himself more and more at loggerheads with the government, in which outright republicans were now in the ascendant. Not only did he take part in secret negotiations with the exiled Charles II, but in August he brought home his fleet in circumstances which suggested that he was eager to make contact with the royalist risings of that month. Arriving too late, he found himself in disgrace, and retired to Hinchingbrooke for the winter. Pepys, who at the end of May had paid him a brief visit in the Baltic carrying letters from the government,¹⁹ remained in charge of his affairs in London. His letters to Mountagu on public as well as private affairs were one of the means whereby his master kept in touch with events.²⁰

In October 1659 the general officers of the army took over the government, dismissing the Rump which had been in session since Richard's fall in April. Thereupon it gradually became clear that, if anarchy

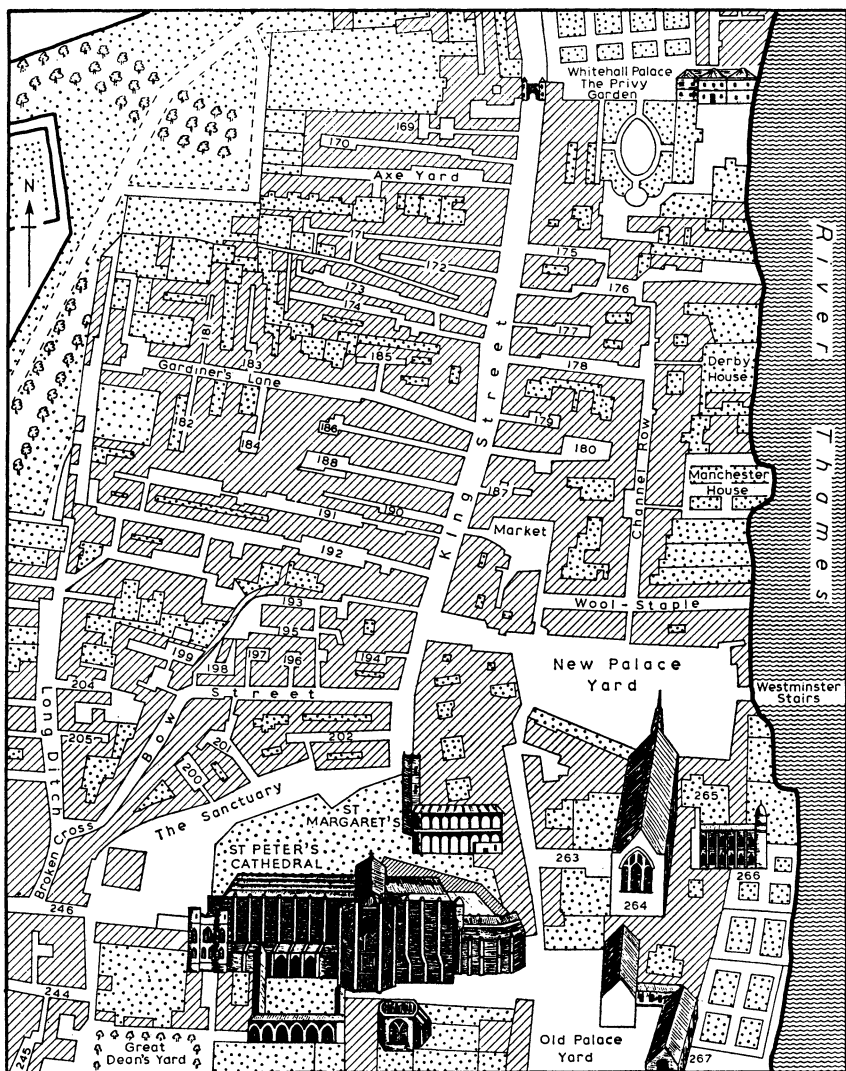
19. Sandwich, pp. 33, 35. Pepys was with the Baltic squadron for two days.

20. Carte 73, ff. 320r, 322r, etc.

KEY TO MAP OPPOSITE

169 Hamlin's Yard	184 Bowman's Court	200 Vine Court
170 Duffin's Alley	185 Poulterers' Yard	201 Green's Alley
171 Sea Alley	186 White's Alley	202 Little Sanctuary
172 Bell Court	187 Clinkers Court	204 Red Cross Alley
173 Rose and Crown Inn	188 Falcon Alley	205 Ogilby's Yard
174 Chequer Alley	190 Antelope Alley	244 King's Alms Houses
175 Pensioners' Alley	191 Blue Boar Yard	245 Little Almery
176 Brewer's Yard	192 George Yard	246 Gatehouse
177 Rhenish Wine Yard	193 Bell Alley	263 Fish Yard
178 Stephen's Lane	194 Fountain Court	264 Westminster Hall
179 Lady Court	195 Frogget's Alley	265 Exchequer
180 White Horse Inn	196 Spread Eagle Alley	266 House of Commons
181 Braceby's Alley	197 Star Alley	267 House of Lords
182 Whiting's Alley	198 Scott's Alley	
183 Pitman's Alley	199 Round Court	

The gateway across King St was Holbein's Gate



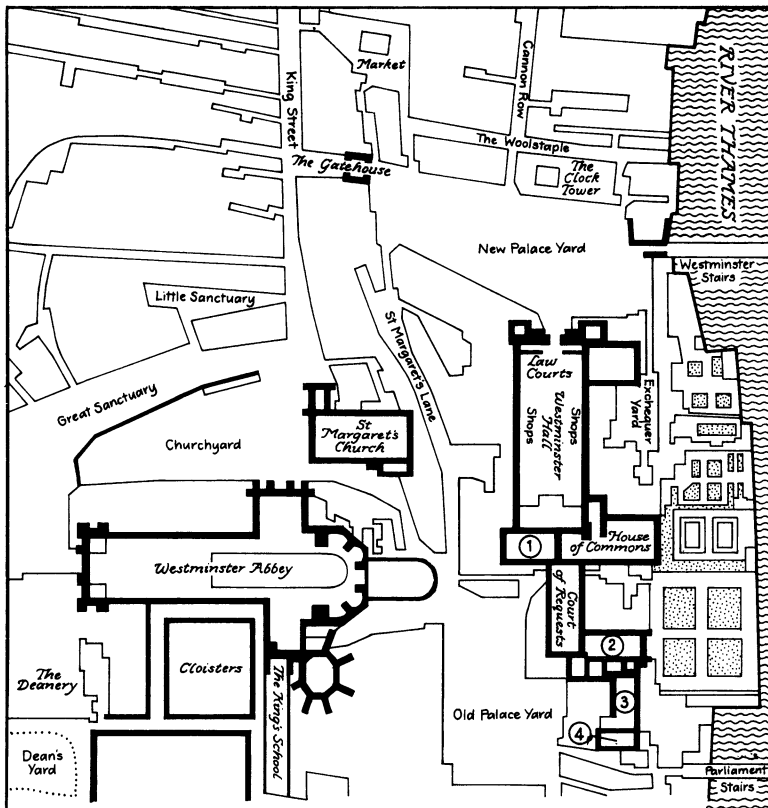
WESTMINSTER: AXE YARD AND KING STREET

Map prepared by the late Professor T. F. Reddaway from R. Morden and P. Lea, *A prospect of London and Westminster* (1682)

were to be avoided, the choice before the country was between military dictatorship and a Stuart restoration. Other methods – the reformed protectorate which Mountagu had once favoured, or the parliamentary republic which leaders of the Rump stood for – were proven failures. The public, sick with fear of another civil war, and tired of sterile experiments, high taxation and irresponsible leadership, gradually set what hopes it had in the direction of a return of the old scheme of things, or something like it – a monarchy and a parliament. The army officers no longer commanded a revolutionary army worth the name. They had no confidence that their men, with pay badly in arrears, would any longer obey orders. Moreover, the most powerful section of the army, under General Monck in Scotland, had declared its opposition to the October *putsch* and had moved south towards the border, giving silent encouragement to the hope that it would support the cause of a restored parliament. It was in or near to London, where Pepys was watching developments, that a succession of events occurred in December 1659 which had the effect of completely altering the political situation by the end of the year. On 5 December the apprentices in the city mobbed the soldiers. On the 13th the fleet in the Downs declared for a parliament, its example being followed soon afterwards by the Dublin garrison and most of the army in Ireland. On the 19th the Common Council of the city of London, already in touch with Monck, secured a promise of a free Parliament from Fleetwood, Commander-in-Chief of the army, to whom a parliament now represented the only hope of pay for his men. On Christmas Eve the rank and file of some of the London regiments demonstrated in favour of a parliament, and on Boxing Day the Rump was allowed to reassemble. Finally, on 1 January 1660 Monck moved his leading troops over the Tweed, and began to march south.

On that same New Year's Day Pepys began to keep his diary. Probably it was his first attempt – certainly he later spoke of it as though he had never kept one before.²¹ The impulse to do so now came principally from the alarms and excitements of these public events of December 1659. The first five months of the diary, before the restoration of Charles II, are crowded with political news. This political crisis may explain his choice of the moment at which to begin the diary, but no doubt there were other impulses which led him to

21. 9 March 1669. It is perhaps remarkable that he does not appear to have kept a journal of his Baltic voyage in 1659.



Westminster

The Abbey and the Houses of Parliament

- 1 Court of Wards
- 2 Painted Chamber
- 3 House of Lords
- 4 Prince's Chamber



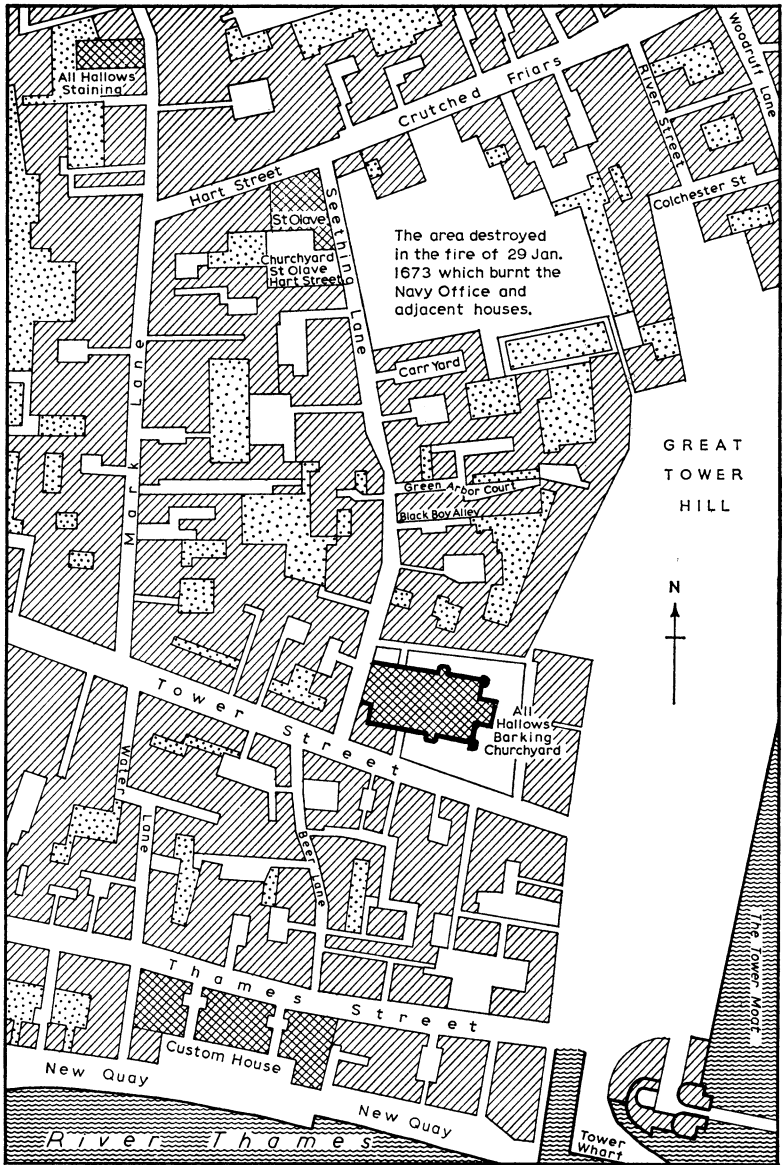
Based on a map prepared by the late Professor T.F. Reddaway

keep it.²² After all is said, the origins of so deeply personal a document must themselves be personal. One origin is certainly the vanity which is so clearly marked a feature of Pepys's character. Another, equally certainly, is his love of life. The diary is a by-product of his energetic pursuit of happiness. The process of recording had the effect, as he soon found out, of heightening and extending his enjoyment. It enabled him to relish every experience more than once – not only at the moment of its happening but also in its recollection. But possibly the most important part of the explanation may have been his concern for neatness, which showed itself throughout his life in many forms – in his carefully arranged library of books marshalled by size, or in his taste for formal gardens and English Renaissance architecture. His handwriting was small, shapely, controlled. The very inditing of the quick slim symbols of shorthand probably gave him a palpable satisfaction. Similarly, it is likely that the diary itself, fully and regularly kept, tidy and neat, had the effect of making life itself seem neat and tidy – the quotidian chaos reduced to order, each day's events packaged and tied up in a rounded summary. He was by nature a man of system,²³ and one to whom the keeping of records was necessary to the art of living. The diary was one of a series of records, which by the 1660s included petty-cash books, account books, letter-books, memorandum books and also more idiosyncratic records such as his 'book of tales' and his list of private vows.²⁴ All were means to a disciplined life, methods of canalising the stream of experience – the diary best of all, because it was the most comprehensive and the most intimate. As a young man, he took vows on several matters of conduct, but never a vow to keep a diary; that came naturally. In the whole diary there is

22. Cf. below, pp. cvi+, cxiv. His patron Mountagu was by 1660 already keeping notebooks and admiral's logs, but they were very different in character from Pepys's diary and cannot be assumed to have had any influence on it. There is a pocket-book of Mountagu's notes (1655–68) in the Bodleian (MS. Lyell empt. 29), and miscellaneous jottings, astronomical calculations, etc. (1652–9) in the first volume of his 'Journals' (ten vols, with App., in the Sandwich MSS at Mapperton, Dorset). His journals, strictly so-called, in that collection are admiral's logs (covering his voyages during 1659–65, printed by R. C. Anderson in 1929). The rest (and much the greatest part) of the 'Journals' consists of miscellaneous travel-notes and drawings dating principally from the time of his embassy to Spain (1665–8). Sections of the ten volumes were written out by his clerks, but none by Pepys himself.

23. Clarendon later said of him: 'No man in England was of more method': below, 14 February 1667.

24. For these two last, see, e.g., 24 October 1663; 21 August 1664.



THE CITY: THE NAVY OFFICE AND TOWER HILL

Map prepared by the late Professor T. F. Reddaway from J. Ogilby and W. Morgan, *A large and accurate map of the city of London* (1677)

no complaint that it was a drudgery to keep it, although there must have been occasions when to make time for it was not easy.

He had begun it at a time when his own affairs as well as those of the nation were about to take a sudden turn. By 25 April 1660, when the newly elected parliament demanded by public opinion had met, agreement had been reached secretly between Monck and the exiled court on the terms of a royalist restoration. Mountagu, back in office (as Councillor of State and General-at-Sea) as soon as Monck took over the government in February, joined the fleet in the Thames on 23 March, carrying Pepys with him as Admiral's secretary. John Creed, another of his East Anglian *protégés*, had held this post in 1659 and was to hold it again under other admirals, but Mountagu preferred Pepys on this occasion. Perhaps there were personal reasons, or Creed's strong Puritanism disqualified him; or Pepys's knowledge of shorthand and ciphers (already considerable) was in the circumstances of 1660 held to be an advantage. On 11 May the fleet sailed to Holland to bring Charles II back to his kingdom. Pepys worked hard at his letters and accounts, as well as at the notes for his diary; he delighted in the friendliness and excitement on board the *Naseby* (soon renamed the *Royal Charles*); he wandered ashore, agape and marvelling, through the strange Dutch streets. He was presented to the King and his brother the Duke of York at The Hague; he made himself useful and pleasant to naval officers and courtiers; above all he established his reputation with Mountagu himself. On the return of the fleet to England, Mountagu was showered with titles and offices – and property worth £4000 p.a. to sustain his new dignities. He became a Knight of the Garter, Earl of Sandwich, Vice-Admiral of the Kingdom, Master of the Great Wardrobe, and Clerk of the Privy Seal. He now promised Pepys that they would 'rise together',²⁵ and in June 1660 he acquired for his assistant a government post of some importance – that of Clerk of the Acts to the Navy Board – as well as making him one of his deputies at the Privy Seal. Pepys, alone among Mountagu's entourage to be so highly favoured, moved house from Axe Yard to the Clerk of the Navy's official lodgings in Seething Lane in the city. The lodgings were part of a range of buildings which housed (besides the office itself) several senior officials, some clerks and a housekeeper. There Pepys lived, with his growing family of servants and clerks, until the building was destroyed by fire in 1673.

With this appointment Pepys's apprentice days were over. He was

25. 2 June 1660.