


ARTICLE

## Women and the History of Samuel Pepys's Diary

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### Abstract

Through focusing on the lives of women, this article examines silences and obfuscations in Samuel Pepys's diary and in the histories we tell about this most famous of Restoration sources. It begins by considering how the ways we read the diary today remain influenced by Pepys's decisions when preserving his papers. While his diary has increasingly been studied for what it reveals about early modern sex and/or women's lives, historians have faced difficulties in assessing and representing this content, partly because of measures devised by Pepys. Knowledge of his methods, together with close reading, can help us attend to what this source omits and elides. Historiography has often followed Pepys's lead when discussing his diary's sexual content, and it has also followed his lead in researching his kin. His father's family has been tracked over generations; meanwhile, basic facts about his mother and her family have remained unknown. The article traces Pepys's maternal kin, comparing new evidence with the diary's representation of social status and kinship networks. Pepys's diary is a vital source on the seventeenth century, but fully exploiting that source requires factoring in Pepys's methods of writing and preservation, and attending to what has gone unwritten.

In recording the natural and political disasters of the 1660s in his diary, Samuel Pepys also recorded how he protected that diary from them. During the Great Fire of London he sent his journal, along with many of his valuables, to the home of Sir William Rider, outside the City.<sup>1</sup> Less than a year later, the diary faced another threat. In June 1667, news that the Dutch had broken through English naval defences sparked panic in London. Pepys feared either that the Dutch would sack his home or that Londoners, enraged at the

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<sup>1</sup> *The diary of Samuel Pepys: a new and complete transcription*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (11 vols., London and Los Angeles, CA, 2000; first published London, 1970–83), VII, pp. 272, 282. Hereafter 'Diary'.

navy's failures, would beat the Dutch to it. Deliberating how to protect his valuables and his personal papers, he finally decided that the papers would be safest with a female relative: 'I sent for my cousin Sarah and her husband; who came and I did deliver them my chest of writings about Brampton, and my brother Tom's papers and my Journalls, which I value much.'<sup>2</sup> His initial plan had been to send his cousin his store of gold; instead she was entrusted with what would become a priceless document of Restoration history.

Pepys took multiple steps to protect both his diary and its contents, including deterring would-be readers by keeping it in shorthand. Yet he ultimately chose to preserve it after his death in circumstances that meant it would find readers. It is a premise of this article that our understanding of this source should be informed by sharper reflection on Pepys's methods of protection when diary-keeping and his decisions when preserving it. Both these interests, while focused on Pepys's intentions, approach the journal in ways that encourage the investigation of others' experiences. I begin by considering how Pepys's diary was preserved and published. Taking the material that he was most keen to keep private, his 'amours', I then examine the diary's accounts of sexual activity and how these have been read.<sup>3</sup> Pepys's diary has sometimes been said to offer near 'scientific impartiality in his self-observation', along with 'full objective reporting' and 'a fair record' of his sexual encounters, although close reading suggests otherwise.<sup>4</sup> While his diary has increasingly been studied for what it can tell us about women's lives, historians have encountered recurring difficulties in assessing and representing this content, partly because of measures put in place by Pepys. The issues of preservation, publication, and whose histories merit attention are closely inter-related.

A case in point is the 'cousin Sarah' to whom Pepys entrusted his diary and family papers. Almost nothing has been established about her, aside from her being a relative of some sort on his mother's side ('cousin' could mean 'kinswoman', rather than a more specific relation).<sup>5</sup> Little is known of Sarah Giles, because little is known about Pepys's mother and her family. This is, in part, a consequence of Pepys's preoccupations: he felt he had little in common with his mother's family and evidently judged their history unworthy of record. In contrast, he was keen to research his father's family. Pepys (whose claims to gentility were not as secure as he would have liked) saw knowledge of his paternal lineage as a potential asset, for this side of the family included the landed gentry, lawyers, and MPs.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in the same entry in which Pepys described the Dutch attack, he took the time to note a discussion with his

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 262, 264.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, p. 564.

<sup>4</sup> [James Sutherland], 'A man "with child to see"', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3586, 20 Nov. 1970, pp. 1341–2; *Diary*, I, p. cx; Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: the unequalled self* (new edn, London, 2013), p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Giles is misidentified in the Latham and Matthews edition as a Cripplegate Quaker (*Diary*, X, p. 156).

<sup>6</sup> *Diary*, X (*Companion*), p. 314. On the gentry's prizing of family history, see Daniel Woolf, *The social circulation of the past: English historical culture, 1500–1730* (Oxford, 2003; repr. 2005), pp. 75–6, 88, 113–14; Katharine Hodgkin, 'Women, memory and family history in seventeenth-century

paternal cousin Roger Pepys MP about their Elizabethan forebears.<sup>7</sup> Historians have followed Pepys's lead: the Pepys family has been laboriously traced over five generations; meanwhile, his mother's background and the identity of many of her relatives remained mysterious.<sup>8</sup> It is surprising that one of the most studied figures of the seventeenth century – who features regularly in work on kinship or networks – is missing half of his family tree, and it is telling about our own historiographical blind spots that this asymmetry has escaped comment.<sup>9</sup> In tracking Pepys's mother's family, this article remedies that absence and reflects on the nature of the diary's evidence on kin and London society. Pepys's diary is a rich source on certain groups who are under-represented in the wider archival record, but we are not as proficient as we could be in recognizing omissions or problems with the diary's evidence, and in discussing them when recognized. The diary contains valuable information on the history of early modern women: a focus on two strands – the women who feature in Pepys's accounts of his sex life and his maternal kin – can in turn prove valuable in assessing this influential source on the period, and the histories we choose to tell using it.

## I

The early modern diaries that survive today were often initially preserved by the writer's kin (for whom they were also often written) or made their way haphazardly into public collections. Pepys's journal was clearly not written for kin and followed neither of these routes to preservation. Having risen to become secretary for the Admiralty under Charles II and James II, Pepys spent his retirement curating his library and ultimately chose to preserve his diary as part of it. The library included a selection of his political and professional papers, along with his wider collections on naval history. He had long intended to use these to write his own grand history of the navy, but collecting proved more alluring than writing.<sup>10</sup> Pepys's final 'Scheame' to preserve his library 'for the benefit of Posterity' was laid out in a codicil to his will of May 1703. Pepys did not believe that his family could act as safe custodians for his collection, since 'the ordinary Fate of such Collections' was eventually

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England', in Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann, Johannes Müller, and Jasper van der Steen, eds., *Memory before modernity* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2013), pp. 297–313, at pp. 299–300.

<sup>7</sup> *Diary*, VIII, p. 261.

<sup>8</sup> Edwin Chappell, *Eight generations of the Pepys family, 1500–1800* (London, 1936).

<sup>9</sup> Studies on kinship and/or networks using the diary include Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English family, 1450–1700* (London and New York, NY, 1984; repr. 1993), pp. 56–8; Karl E. Westhauser, 'Friendship and family in early modern England: the sociability of Adam Eyre and Samuel Pepys', *Journal of Social History*, 27 (1994), pp. 517–36; Ian W. Archer, 'Social networks in Restoration London: the evidence from Samuel Pepys's diary', in Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington, eds., *Communities in early modern England* (Manchester and New York, NY, 2000), pp. 76–94, at pp. 87–9; Bernard Capp, *The ties that bind: siblings, family, and society in early modern England* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 143–56.

<sup>10</sup> Kate Loveman, *Samuel Pepys and his books: reading, newsgathering, and sociability, 1660–1703* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 130–3.

to fall 'into the hands of an incompetent Heire' and then be 'sold dissipated or imbezzled'. In bequeathing the library to his nephew John Jackson, he therefore urged Jackson and his executor Will Hewer to identify a college to host the collection. Pepys's first preference was Magdalene College, Cambridge, where both he and Jackson had studied. The college, he instructed, should keep the collection housed in its own room, the 'Bibliotheca Pepysiana', where the books and manuscripts would be organized according to Pepys's method. To aid this, the volumes were to be accompanied by his bookcases and library catalogues, all designed by Pepys. This library was to be controlled by the master; books could not be removed, except to the master's lodge.<sup>11</sup> After Jackson's death, the library was duly passed to Magdalene where it has been held according to Pepys's instructions since 1724.<sup>12</sup>

This scheme for preserving the library intact was also, implicitly, a scheme to control the conditions under which Pepys's personal and professional papers – his life – could be read. Pepys was seeking to ensure that his papers would be seen only as part of that library and within a college setting that was designed to impress the munificence, taste, and learning of the library's donor. A reader of the diary would also need to be an unusually determined scholar, given that it was almost entirely written in shorthand. Pepys used Thomas Shelton's system, which was widely available in manuals published from 1626 and throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>13</sup> This shorthand would, however, have been sufficient to forestall most readers. Some, but not all, of Pepys's records of his sexual activity were additionally protected by a polyglot: a mix of Spanish, French, English, Latin, and other languages, including the odd bit of Greek. When he came to preserve his diary, Pepys took care that the shorthand would not prove a permanent obstacle to its appreciation: his library contained three manuals on the relevant system. His subject catalogue, the 'Appendix Classica', compiled under Pepys's close supervision, listed Mr Pepys's 'Diary in Short-hand' under the heading for the manuscripts he authored, alongside certain of his naval writings. For any historian interested in the library's creator, the Appendix Classica left a trail to follow, including a tacit prompt to check the 'Short-hand Collection' listed in the same volume.<sup>14</sup>

Pepys preserved his diary under conditions which encouraged readers to approach it as a worthy historical source, while controlling how it could be read and by whom. Through the Appendix Classica, it was presented primarily as a contribution to naval history, and this was presumably how Pepys envisioned its being employed: a sympathetic scholar, writing a history of the navy or of the times, would file and summarize information from the diary

<sup>11</sup> The National Archives (TNA), Prob 1/9, will of Samuel Pepys, codicil of 12 May 1703.

<sup>12</sup> As recounted in *Diary*, I, p. lxxii; Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, p. 381.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Shelton, *Tachygraphy* (Cambridge, 1641). On shorthand, see *Diary*, I, pp. xlvi–lii; Frances Henderson, "'Swift and secrete writing' in seventeenth-century England, and Samuel Shelton's *Brachygraphy*", *Electronic British Library Journal* (2008), article 5, [www.bl.uk/ebj/2008articles/pdf/ebjarticle52008.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/ebj/2008articles/pdf/ebjarticle52008.pdf) (accessed 1 Dec. 2021); Alan Stewart, *The Oxford history of life-writing*, II: *Early modern* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 254–9.

<sup>14</sup> David McKitterick, ed., *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge*, VII, *facsimile of Pepys's catalogue* (Cambridge, 1991), part II, 'Appendix Classica', pp. 10, 163–4.

and other library sources, all with due honour to the erstwhile secretary for the Admiralty. Any such scholar would also need the sanction of the college's master to circulate the diary contents – and Pepys could be confident that the college would want to protect its benefactor's good name. Something very like this played out. In 1825, the diary was first published in a limited selection edited by Lord Braybrooke, whose brother was master of Magdalene. It had been transliterated by John Smith, a student employed for the purpose, who did not have the benefit of using a shorthand manual (here Pepys's cue was missed). To protect readers' sensibilities and Pepys's reputation, Braybrooke excised anything he deemed offensive or trivial, including most of Pepys's personal life.<sup>15</sup> More expansive editions would follow, but it was not until the 1950s that work on a complete edition began, under the editorship of Robert Latham and William Matthews.<sup>16</sup> Published between 1970 and 1983, this remains the best and only complete edition. However, even here Pepys's sexual activities stay cloaked, for the polyglot is not translated at any point. This has had lasting consequences for the diary's reception. Even dedicated readers struggle to understand these passages and there is a tendency among historians who quote the polyglot not to translate it, which begins to look very much like collective avoidance of a tricky task.<sup>17</sup> It is not too hard to get the gist of what is going on in sentences such as: '[I] did what I will with her et tena grande plaisir con ella, tocando sa cosa con mi cosa, and hazendo la cosa par cette moyen'.<sup>18</sup> Evidently something Pepys experiences as both illicit and pleasurable is happening. However, understanding word-for-word and then interpreting what is meant require contending with seventeenth-century languages and with Pepys's sexual idioms. In this case, a literal translation would be '[I] did what I will with her, and had great pleasure by [or with] her, touching her thing with my thing and doing the thing by this means'. In other words, he touched her genitals with his penis and then orgasmed.<sup>19</sup>

It is worth pausing for a moment on Pepys's use of polyglot because, while it is often seen as important to understanding Pepys's motivations for diary-keeping, most commentators are reliant on printed editions and have not looked at or read the manuscript.<sup>20</sup> Pepys did not employ his polyglot consistently: not all shorthand passages dealing with sex are in polyglot and there are

<sup>15</sup> *Diary*, I, pp. lxxvi–lxxvii; *Memoirs of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Richard, Lord Braybrooke (2 vols., London, 1825).

<sup>16</sup> Robert Latham, 'Pepys and his editors', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 132 (1984), pp. 390–400.

<sup>17</sup> For examples of readers trying to work out the polyglot, see annotations to 16 Jan. 1664 and 2 Sept. 1665 on [pepysdiary.com](http://pepysdiary.com), [www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1664/01/16/#annotations](http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1664/01/16/#annotations) and [www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1665/09/02/#c241447](http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1665/09/02/#c241447) (accessed 1 Dec. 2021).

<sup>18</sup> *Diary*, VII, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Cosa/thing was a polysemous word in Pepys's lexicon: it served for male or female genitals, orgasm (*Diary*, VI, p. 132; VII, p. 365; VIII, p. 588), and sex acts where the context and comments elsewhere indicate penetrative sex (*Diary*, VIII, pp. 382, 440; IX, p. 527).

<sup>20</sup> On the polyglot, Harry Berger, Jr, 'The Pepys show: ghost-writing and documentary desire in "The diary"', *ELH*, 65 (1998), pp. 557–91, at pp. 563–6; and Aaron B. Kunin, 'Other hands in Pepys's diary', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 65 (2004), pp. 195–219, at pp. 205–6 (this mistakenly states shorthand cannot be used for foreign words or proper names; Pepys uses it for both).

words in longhand. Meanwhile, some passages that employ polyglot are not overtly sexual. Matthews suspected that, in the latter cases, the polyglot was intended to be ‘playful’ rather than secretive.<sup>21</sup> James Grantham Turner and Alan Stewart have expanded on this point, suggesting the polyglot is best viewed as a way of adding ‘worldly sophistication’ to these experiences or that the appearance of secrecy added to the sexual intensity for Pepys in re-reading.<sup>22</sup> These are credible motivations, but it is important not to underestimate Pepys’s efforts at disguise. These were not systematic, but they were escalating and they were, and are, genuine obstacles to comprehension. First (and I am writing from hard-won experience) Pepys’s changing languages considerably complicate shorthand transliteration. Second, his measures show that concerns about prospective readers developed as he wrote. In January 1664, the sexual passages in shorthand began to include French; in June 1665, he introduced polyglot shorthand; in May 1667, he started inserting extraneous letters into his English shorthand and, nine days later, started adding those extraneous letters to polyglot shorthand, further complicating transliteration. About this time, as Matthews notes, Pepys also reduced his use of words in longhand in the diary.<sup>23</sup>

This escalating protection was in keeping with Pepys’s growing awareness that the diary might do serious harm if members of his family, his colleagues, or his enemies in government became aware of its contents – and the diary had been out of his possession twice in the later 1660s. Yet by 1700, when he composed his library catalogues, he had decided that this diary, or at least sections of it, deserved to be read by scholars. Shorthand and polyglot therefore ultimately acquired a usefulness that went beyond secrecy, titillation, or demonstrating sophistication. Like the laying out of terms for the library’s preservation, these steps ensured that any prospective reader of the diary in its entirety would need to be cast in Samuel Pepys’s image, in so far as they would need to share elements of his education and skillset. They would need to be welcomed by his *alma mater*, to navigate his library, to master the shorthand, and to know foreign languages – and they would need to be sufficiently interested in the library’s owner to bother working carefully through his diary. When Pepys decided to leave his journal behind him, he had conceived an array of measures to try and ensure that the first readers of his manuscripts, and those who controlled his papers’ circulation, would be sympathetic to their creator’s interests and protective of his reputation. To an impressive degree, that ‘Scheame’ worked.

## II

Pepys’s measures to preserve his papers and his reputation continue to have influence, decades after the passages that he was most concerned to protect

<sup>21</sup> *Diary*, I, p. lxi.

<sup>22</sup> James Grantham Turner, ‘Pepys and the private parts of monarchy’, in Gerald MacLean, ed., *Culture and society in the Stuart Restoration* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 95–110, at pp. 96–8; Stewart, *Oxford history of life-writing*, p. 271.

<sup>23</sup> *Diary*, V, p. 17; VI, p. 132; VIII, pp. 244–5; VIII, p. 255.

appeared in print. Writing in 1983, E. Pearlman identified a 'traditional' view that celebrated Pepys as "a man who truly loved a pretty wench" or that saw him as, at worst, "unheroic" towards women. Pearlman argued that, with the recent publication of the full diary, these could only be seen as 'immensely euphemistic' descriptions of 'casually exploitative and occasionally brutal' relationships.<sup>24</sup> Over the next forty years, in works targeted at both academic and popular audiences, the default language for discussing Pepys's sex life has remained playful and celebratory. Pepys has 'adventures', 'sexual frolics', 'extramarital pursuits', 'extra-marital exploits', 'love affairs', 'romances', and 'romantic liaisons'.<sup>25</sup> These are used as catch-all terms to cover a range of sexual contact: some of it mutually enjoyed but much of it, by Pepys's own account, with girls and women who were upset or angered by his behaviour, or whose reactions went unnoted. Since the 1980s, the diary has increasingly been used for information on early modern women and on sexual mores, thanks to being one of the 'few surviving records that describe sexual matters from any angle other than the disciplinary'.<sup>26</sup> Scholarship on the diary is now much more likely to acknowledge the exploitation in many of Pepys's relationships, but there remains hesitancy in registering coercion, abuse, or, indeed, violence.<sup>27</sup> The difficulties that historians encounter are now chiefly due to the compelling nature of Pepys's own narrative and his language: Pepys, for all his unusual explicitness and detail, is frequently euphemistic, obfuscating, and mitigating in ways that are hard fully to identify. There are parallels here with the evidence that is most often used to investigate early modern sex: court depositions. As researchers have argued, the language of these documents also obfuscates experiences, albeit for different reasons. Laura Gowing, analysing rape trials, has drawn attention to the importance of registering what women who alleged rape did not say, namely their 'testimonies typically underplayed or erased the actual act of sexual penetration that defined rape legally'. She points to Garthine Walker's work to help explain this absence: Walker argues that the act of penetration was seen to imply a woman's submission and that there was no 'popular language of sexual non-

<sup>24</sup> E. Pearlman, 'Pepys and Lady Castlemaine', *Restoration*, 7 (1983), pp. 43–53, at p. 43, quoting John Harold Wilson and Richard Ollard.

<sup>25</sup> For example, John Vance, 'Pepys, Lady Castlemaine and the Restoration frame of mind: a rejoinder', *Restoration*, 9 (1985), pp. 31–6, at p. 32; Berger, 'Pepys show', p. 564; Paul Hammond, ed., *Restoration literature: an anthology* (Oxford, 2002), p. 265; Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, pp. 207, 269; Ian Mortimer, *A time traveller's guide to Restoration Britain* (London, 2017), p. 111; and in my own work, 'Samuel Pepys and Deb Willet after the diary', *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), pp. 893–901, at p. 893.

<sup>26</sup> Laura Gowing, *Common bodies: women, touch and power in seventeenth-century England* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2003), p. 83. Examples of such studies: Faramerz Dabhoiwala, 'The pattern of sexual immorality in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London', in Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner, eds., *Londinopolis* (Manchester and New York, NY, 2000), pp. 86–106, at pp. 89–90; and David M. Turner, *Fashioning adultery: gender, sex, and civility in England, 1660–1740* (Cambridge, 2002; repr. 2004), pp. 29–35.

<sup>27</sup> Timothy Meldrum, *Domestic service and gender, 1660–1750: life and work in the London household* (Harlow, 2000), p. 109; Bernard Capp, *When gossips meet: women, family, and neighbourhood in early modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 141–2, 158–9.



consent' available to women.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, Frances Dolan, looking at depositions on adultery, has argued for applying to them the analytical techniques that we might apply to stories: using 'slow, wary reading practices', attending to matters such as form and convention, and being aware of how editorial practices might impose readings.<sup>29</sup> This kind of attention can be profitably applied to Pepys's records in order to identify perspectives that we (readers, historians, editors) have traditionally not been good at acknowledging. To illustrate this, we can look at instances of how Pepys related his sexual activity with several women and girls.

Timothy Meldrum identifies 1665 as the first time Pepys 'fondled and kissed' one of his servants (the verbs here, ones often used by critics, echo those used by the *Diary's* editors).<sup>30</sup> This was Susan. Her age and status suggest why Pepys chose her as his first recorded target among his servants, for they made her vulnerable. She was 'Susan, a little girl' when she was hired in 1663. With no surname recorded, her age cannot be established, but she was 'little' in both age and stature. Susan had been hired to replace an inexperienced 'parish-child' and was constantly treated as the most junior maid. In 1665, she was passed over for promotion to cookmaid; since her employers otherwise had a high opinion of her, this was presumably because she was too young. In 1666, when she was promoted, Pepys worried that she would not sufficiently intimidate the junior maid, for 'the girl, though young, is taller and bigger than Su, and will not I fear be under her command'.<sup>31</sup> All this points to Susan being younger than fourteen (an age commonly associated with adulthood, first employment, and sexual maturity) when she was hired in 1663, and probably several years younger.<sup>32</sup> She was still the 'little girl' in August 1665 when Pepys wrote:

dressed and had my head combed by my little girle, to whom I confess que je sum demasiado kind, nuper ponendo sæpe mes mains in su dos choses de son breast. Mais il faut que je leave it, lest it bring me to alguno major inconvenience.<sup>33</sup>

(... to whom I confess that I am too kind, lately often putting my hands on her two things of her breast. But it is necessary that I leave it, lest it bring me to some major inconvenience.)

<sup>28</sup> Gowing, *Common bodies*, pp. 92–3; Garthine Walker, 'Rereading rape and sexual violence in early modern England', *Gender & History*, 10 (1998), pp. 1–25, at pp. 6, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Frances E. Dolan, *True relations: reading, literature, and evidence in seventeenth-century England* (Philadelphia, PA, 2013), p. 152.

<sup>30</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic service*, p. 109 and n. 82; *Diary*, XI (*Index*), for example, 'Mercer, Mary', p. 168, 'Willet, Deb', p. 311.

<sup>31</sup> *Diary*, IV, pp. 282, 283–4, 438; V, p. 55; VI, p. 70; VII, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Toulalan, "'Unripe" bodies: children and sex in early modern England', in Kate Fisher and Sarah Toulalan, eds., *Bodies, sex and desire from the Renaissance to the present* (Houndmills and New York, NY, 2011), pp. 131–50, at pp. 134, 136–7; Toulalan, "'Is he a licentious lewd sort of a person?": constructing the child rapist in early modern England', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 23 (2014), pp. 21–52, at pp. 30–1, 33.

<sup>33</sup> *Diary*, VI, p. 185.



It is worth registering what is missing from Pepys's account. First, this is only the first time he has written about groping Susan, not the only time it has happened: the diary under-records his sexual activity, including his attempts on servants. If this 'combing' scenario was not already established as a predatory strategy, it soon was. Early in 1666, Pepys also targeted another 'little girl' by getting her to comb his hair. Frances Tooker, a family friend, was, like Susan, repeatedly called 'little' and was prepubescent. It is easy when reading the diary not to register the circumstances, including the ages, of those Pepys targeted. The passage I quoted earlier to illustrate Pepys's polyglot is from when he had Frances Tooker comb him, and reads differently when we register it is about someone he called a 'child': 'I kept her very late, talking and making her comb my head; and did what I will with her et tena grande plaisir con ella, tocando sa cosa con mi cosa, and hazendo la cosa par cette moyen.'<sup>34</sup>

Second, in Susan's case, Pepys was minded to stop not because of concern for her welfare, nor because of guilt, but because of the potential 'inconvenience' to himself, meaning the disruption and shame that he would experience if his behaviour was discovered by his household. Finally, Pepys recognized this act was wrong, but described it as an error of overindulgence, of being 'demasiado kind' to Susan ('kind' being a polite synonym for 'lustful'). Since Pepys was putting at risk Susan's emotional well-being, her job, and her reputation, clearly an antonym of kind – 'cruel' – would be more accurate.

This example is a clear instance of Pepys's mitigating language, albeit one that has escaped comment. Further evidence of how this mitigation operates comes when Pepys meets with emphatic resistance – that is, when he encountered resistance from women and girls that he felt was significant enough to merit registering. In 1667, Frances Udall was working at her uncle's tavern and repeatedly having to fend off Pepys. On 9 April 1667, 'la little mosa' (the little girl/maid) was 'enojado' (angry) when Pepys made her 'tocar' (touch) his penis, but he gave her money 'and so', he said, 'all well'. On 20 May, he tried 'tumbling of la little fille', but was 'ashamed', when her uncle found her with 'her neckcloth off'. On 30 September, he tried again: 'to the Swan; and there I did fling down the fille [girl] there upon the chair and did tocar [touch] her thigh with my hand; at which she begin to cry out, so I left off and drank, and away to the Hall'.<sup>35</sup> Udall's crying out, with people within earshot, was the kind of resistance that Pepys could not dismiss as token. It was an emphatic form of dissent and a legally recognized one, for 'crying out' was a criterion that the courts used to determine whether a rape had occurred.<sup>36</sup> Pepys's 'flinging down' of Udall and his 'touching' of her thigh are high-spirited or gentle words for what she evidently perceived as threatening and violent – a perception Pepys recognized others might

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., VII, p. 5. Fourteen months later, Frances Tooker was 'grown a little woman' (VIII, p. 114). She is a 'child' at *Diary*, VI, p. 262, and VII, p. 50; uses of 'little' include VI, p. 278, and VI, p. 284. For combing see also IX, p. 277.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., VIII, pp. 158–9, 224, 456. 'Touch' is used in equivalent passages in English, e.g., IX, p. 55.

<sup>36</sup> Mary R. Block, 'For the repressing of the most wicked and felonious rapes and ravishments of women: rape law in England, 1660–1800', in Anne Greenfield, ed., *Interpreting sexual violence, 1660–1800* (London and New York, NY, 2013), pp. 23–33, at pp. 26–7.

share. When he referred to ‘tumbling’ Frances Udall in May, this is a verb he uses elsewhere to dismiss a violent sexual assault. In 1667, Doll Lane (one of Pepys’s willing partners), came to Pepys and her sister ‘blubbering and swearing’ against Captain van den Anker who had ‘pulled her into a stable by the Dog tavern and there did tumble her and toss her; calling him all the rogues and toads in the world’. Pepys felt Lane’s objections were hollow since ‘ella [she] hath suffered me to do anything with her a hundred times’.<sup>37</sup> Pepys’s sexual language of being ‘kind’, ‘touching’, and ‘tumbling’ emphasized his indulgence and playfulness, while masking coercion and violence; meanwhile, Lane’s claims of assault he regarded as exemplifying a woman’s ‘falseness’, not because he thought there had been no violence, but because she had no moral right to protest.

The entries concerning Frances Udall on 30 September 1667 and Doll Lane on 6 July 1667 offer two clear examples of women who experienced sexual assaults, one of them at the hands of Pepys. There are other instances of assaults by Pepys, including at least one that by his own account (the only one we have) has the characteristics of a rape. ‘Rape’ is a word very seldom used in discussion of Pepys’s diary, and commentators avoid considering him as a ‘rapist’.<sup>38</sup> This presumably has more to do with Pepys as an engaging narrator of his own life, and his cultural position as an amusing, naughty informant, than with a close assessment of what he relates or of the contemporary contexts, because that close assessment has not been done – and so seems warranted here. Rape was a felony in the early modern period, but there was no specific definition of the act in statutes. As Mary R. Block has shown, legal commentators defined rape as ‘the carnall abusing of a woman against her will’ – a loose definition that was widely accepted. When applied in court, where conviction meant death, the proofs for rape became far more stringent. If both penetration *and* ejaculation could not be proved, then acquittal was a distinct possibility, regardless of other evidence. Few cases reached trial: Walker’s analysis reveals that 1674 to 1749 saw an average of just two rape trials per year at London’s main criminal court.<sup>39</sup> Rape was regarded seriously enough to be a capital crime, but rapists were at no serious

<sup>37</sup> *Diary*, VIII, p. 323. An episode also discussed in Laura Gowing, ‘Women in the world of Pepys’, in Margarette Lincoln, ed., *Samuel Pepys: plague, fire, revolution* (London, 2015), pp. 73–9, at p. 76.

<sup>38</sup> Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The origins of sex: a history of the first sexual revolution* (London, 2012), pp. 146–7, discusses Pepys’s predations but stops short of considering his acts as potential rapes. Geoffrey Pimm is prepared to consider that Pepys committed rape and his book’s promotional material uses the term ‘rapist’. However, the tone and depth of this consideration can be conveyed by Pimm’s comments that the woman concerned ‘did not come quietly’ and that Pepys records ‘resorting to rape when the lady became completely intractable’ (Geoffrey Pimm, *The dark side of Samuel Pepys: society’s first sex offender* (Barnsley, 2017), pp. 106, 152). Among other problems, this work is often confused in glossing Pepys’s language (including not just the polyglot but his English, such as relating pronouns to the right person), e.g., pp. 80–1, 99, 110–11, 130–1. While it indicates it employs the Latham and Matthews edition (p. x), it repeatedly uses what appears to be Wheatley’s Victorian text, e.g., pp. 36 (1 Aug. 1666, 6 July 1667), 103 (15 Nov. 1664), pp. 112–13.

<sup>39</sup> Block, ‘Repressing of the most wicked’, pp. 23–33, especially p. 31; Henrie Finch, *Law, or a discourse thereof* (London, 1627), p. 204; Garthine Walker, ‘Rape, acquittal and culpability in popular

risk of prosecution, let alone conviction. This legal context is a relevant one, but it would be a mistake to think that legal criteria were the sole measure by which rape was judged – after all, most Britons today do not have section 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 memorized as their standard for understanding rape. Gowing's investigation of non-capital trials for sexual crimes leads her to argue that seventeenth-century women were clear both about men's use of physical force and about consent, in ways that show 'a substantial gulf between legal and popular understandings of rape'. If rape was rarely prosecuted and hard to convict, she argues, 'the violations of sexual assault and forced sex were familiar social facts, as well as personal experiences'.<sup>40</sup> The frequency with which Pepys sought gratification from women and girls who had to either physically defend themselves or who were not in a position to resist coercion bears out that view.

Gauging consent, coercion, or the use of force in the diary is, however, complicated because Pepys often says little about the girls' or women's reactions and because in the seventeenth century, the discourse used to describe sex, including consensual sex, routinely included the language of force or violence. Conventions of courtship and seduction meant that willing women were expected to evince initial unwillingness, while – as Walker, Gowing, and Faramerz Dabhoiwala have discussed – representations of sex were dominated by men besieging, occupying, or conquering women.<sup>41</sup> Pepys's language, as with his talk of 'flinging down', follows these patterns. His favourite phrase for describing his satisfactory sexual encounters was 'I did what I would.' This phrase was employed whether he was exploiting a child or enjoying a rendezvous with a willing woman – as when he kept 'little Mrs. Tooker...in my chamber all the afternoon, and did what I would with her' or 'did what I would' with Betty Martin, a linendraper.<sup>42</sup> His pleasure here lies in achieving his will, not in the details of what he did. This ambiguity – the focus on his will, rather than his actions or the woman's or girl's actions – often makes Pepys's diary less explicit than its reputation would suggest. It should not be assumed that what he wanted and got was always penetrative sex. Surveying personal and official records, Tim Hitchcock argues that non-penetrative sex was the norm outside marriage in the seventeenth century.<sup>43</sup> Pepys certainly preferred to keep penetrative sex within marriage (just not within his own marriage), because any pregnancy could be attributed to the husband. In relations with married women, 'I did what I would' therefore did sometimes mean penetrative sex. For instance, one episode of 'haze what jo would' with Betty Martin in early June 1667 led to a pregnancy scare in July when her period was late.<sup>44</sup>

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crime reports in England, c. 1670–c. 1750', *Past & Present*, 220 (2013), pp. 115–42 (pp. 125 n. 39, 128–30, 134).

<sup>40</sup> Gowing, *Common bodies*, p. 101.

<sup>41</sup> Walker, 'Rereading rape', p. 6; Gowing, *Common bodies*, p. 100; Dabhoiwala, *Origins of sex*, p. 148.

<sup>42</sup> *Diary*, VII, pp. 61, 153.

<sup>43</sup> Tim Hitchcock, *English sexualities, 1700–1800* (Houndmills, 1997), ch. 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Diary*, VIII, pp. 255–6, 318, 323.

As Pepys largely sought penetrative sex with married women and, as his means of obtaining gratification could include violence, it is with a married woman where he most clearly records the extent of his physical force in terms that mirror those used to describe rape. In the summer of 1663, a ship's carpenter, William Bagwell, and his wife began to cultivate Pepys as a patron, while Pepys cultivated Mrs Bagwell as a mistress. Mrs Bagwell's first name is not mentioned by Pepys, but she was almost certainly called Elizabeth.<sup>45</sup> She came to his office, and they met in alehouses, where after her 'many protestings, by degrees I did arrive at what I would, with great pleasure'.<sup>46</sup> Mrs Bagwell's behaviour indicates she was prepared to offer some sexual contact in return for her husband's promotion. There were, however, limits to what she would allow, limits that Pepys disregarded. In December 1664, Pepys dined with the Bagwells, found an excuse to send William out, and 'alone avec elle je tentoy à faire ce que je voudrais, et contre sa force je le faisoy, bien que pas à mon contentment' ('alone with her I tried to do what I would, and against her will I did it, though not to my satisfaction').<sup>47</sup> The French word 'force' (here translated as 'will') literally means 'strength': Mrs Bagwell tried to fight him off. Over the next few months, Mrs Bagwell continued to seek Pepys out at his office, requiring the assistance he had promised but had yet to deliver. On 20 February 1665, Pepys told her:

to go home and I would do her business; which was to write a letter to my Lord Sandwich for her husband's advance into a better ship as there should be occasion – which I did; and by and by did go down by water to Deptford-yard...and it being dark, did privately entrer en la maison de la femme de Bagwell, and there I had sa compagnie, though with a great deal of difficulty; néanmoins, enfin je avers ma volonté d'elle. And being sated therewith, I walked home to Redriffe, it being now near 9 a-clock; and there I did drink some strong waters and eat some bread and cheese, and so home –

Or translated, 'it being dark, did privately enter Bagwell's wife's house, and there I had her company, though with a great deal of difficulty; nevertheless, finally I had my will of her'. The focus is on her resistance and his triumph, rather than what was said or done. However, the next entry illuminates what he meant by 'a great deal of difficulty': 'Up, and to the office (having a mighty pain in my forefinger of my left hand, from a strain that it received last night in struggling avec la femme que je [with the woman that I] mentioned yesterday), where busy till noon.'<sup>48</sup> The 'great deal of difficulty' had in fact involved a violent struggle. Pepys bore the marks of it, and it is more than likely Mrs Bagwell did too. The phrase Pepys uses to describe his success, 'je avers ma volonté d'elle' ('I had my will of her'), could be used of seduction,

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, p. 222; TNA, Prob 11/443/275, will of William Bagwell, 1697.

<sup>46</sup> *Diary*, V, p. 322.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, V, p. 351.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 39–40.

but in a range of literature from scriptural exegesis to ballads, and in the courts, 'to have one's will' of or on someone also meant 'rape'.<sup>49</sup> To take a couple of examples: in 1668, a witness to the rape of Mistress Mennerell described how she had initially fought off the accused's attempt to have 'his will on her', while in 1681, William Woodbridge was alleged to have 'by Violence obtained his Will on' his mother's servant.<sup>50</sup> Pepys was not an opportunistic assailant and there are signs of planning that he does not make explicit. When Mrs Bagwell came to the Navy Office on 20 February, the timing was significant. She had last attended on 14 February, saying she hoped to claim Pepys as her valentine. This was both an encouragement to continue the relationship and a reminder that he was obligated to her: a man was expected to give his valentine a gift. However, on 23 January, Pepys had sworn off women 'for a month' and so, he says, 'my oath preserved me from losing any time with her'.<sup>51</sup> That Mrs Bagwell just happened to return on 20 February suggests he told her when she should return and that he did so with the oath's expiry in mind: he was given to retrospectively interpreting the letter of his oaths as best suited his passions and in this case a month seems to have meant exactly four weeks.<sup>52</sup> When Pepys arrived at Mrs Bagwell's home later that day and coerced her into sex – an encounter he describes as involving struggle and injury, and of which he uses the language often used of rape – it was carefully timed to avoid breaking his vow.

Pepys did not describe his attack on Mrs Bagwell as a rape. What she would have called it, we do not know – though the fact that she did not see Pepys for nearly five months afterwards is suggestive.<sup>53</sup> It has proved easy for readers to make light of Pepys's assaults on Mrs Bagwell, including dismissing her resistance as 'a token struggle'.<sup>54</sup> Along with other women and girls who continued contact with Pepys after he assaulted them, Mrs Bagwell's behaviour does not comply with 'rape myths': mistaken ideas about how survivors of attacks behave that (in the Restoration and today) are used to judge whether or not an attack happened. A woman who is assaulted, for example, is supposed to immediately protest, to report the incident, and to take every step to avoid her attacker thereafter; if she cannot demonstrate that she followed these steps impeccably, then doubts are raised about whether there was any such assault. The idea that a rape can occur within a relationship and yet that relationship continue is one with which British juries continue to struggle.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> For example, John Trapp, *A commentary or exposition upon the XII minor prophets* (London, 1654), p. 42; *A lamentable ballad of the tragical end of a gallant lord, and a vertuous lady* [London, ?1658–64].

<sup>50</sup> Chester City Record Office, MF 86/125, examination taken 5 Aug. 1668, qu. in Walker, 'Rereading rape', p. 10, see also p. 6; trial of William Woodbridge, 7 Dec. 1681 (t16811207-1), *Old Bailey proceedings online*, [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 8.0 (accessed 2 Dec. 2021).

<sup>51</sup> *Diary*, VI, pp. 20, 35.

<sup>52</sup> On vow interpretation, see *Diary*, V, pp. 3, 33, 230, 232, 236, 240.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 158.

<sup>54</sup> E.g., Lawrence Stone, *The family, sex and marriage in England, 1500–1800* (London, 1977), p. 556; Pearlman, 'Pepys and Lady Castlemaine', p. 44.

<sup>55</sup> Louise Ellison, 'Credibility in context: jury education and intimate partner rape', *International Journal of Evidence and Proof*, 23 (2019), pp. 263–81, especially pp. 270–1; compare Walker, 'Rape, acquittal and culpability', p. 135.

Another factor in the trivializing of these episodes, as will now be manifest, is that Pepys himself minimizes them, seeing coercion as unremarkable or, indeed, as an achievement. In writing, he is brief, moving quickly to his next point. He uses euphemisms and foreign languages, the violent implications of which are easily missed. He does not need to make explicit to himself the extent of the strategizing involved. Recognizing the evidence for interpretations other than Pepys's own therefore requires reading the diary against the grain: focusing on elements that he sought in various ways to mask and that he assumed the guardians of his legacy would suppress. It requires the kind of 'slow, wary' reading that Dolan recommends of court reports, and going further: treating Pepys as an unreliable narrator, rather than a frank, explicit authority. In sexual matters, and in other areas, we need to weigh his words and watch for patterns that he does not wish to dwell on nor care to consider.

### III

One such pattern is a network that Pepys alludes to frequently, but on which he did not want (in writing and apparently often in life) to expend too much of his attention – his mother's family. Editors and biographers have felt similarly: a 'Pedigree of the Pepys Family' prefaced the diary's first edition, but it was not until over a hundred years later that Pepys's mother was identified as Margaret Kite, following the discovery of her brother William Kight's will ('Kight' was the family's usual spelling).<sup>56</sup> British concepts of the family continue to privilege patrilineal descent, while women, especially non-elite women, are difficult to track in the archives. As a result, knowledge about Margaret and her family has not moved on much since 1927, continuing to rely on William Kight's will and on her son's sometimes less than reliable diary. She is known to posterity as 'Margaret Kite of Newington Green, a girl of simple birth who had been a washmaid in her youth' – her role as a 'washmaid' being commonly used to introduce her in accounts of her son.<sup>57</sup> Pepys's judgements of his maternal kin include terms such as 'humble', 'poor', and 'pitiful'. For want of other information, commentators have not been able to assess or nuance this verdict.<sup>58</sup> However, it is possible to piece together some of the history of his mother's family and to gain a view of this network that is not wholly dependent on Pepys – one which reveals the value of 'humble' kin and illuminates the diary's account of Restoration society.

Pepys thought his parents had married in 1626 'at Newington in Surry [sic]'. It is suspected that he meant Newington in Middlesex, just north of London, where his mother had once lived; however, no marriage record can be

<sup>56</sup> *Memoirs of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Braybrooke, I; Walter H. Whitear, *More Pepysiana* (London, 1927), pp. 35–6.

<sup>57</sup> *Diary*, X, p. 318; Arthur Bryant, *Samuel Pepys: the man in the making* (London, 1933; 2nd edn 1947), p. 4; Archer, 'Social networks', p. 88; and – I having done the same – *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Kate Loveman (London, 2018), p. viii.

<sup>58</sup> *Diary*, II, p. 179; IV, p. 164; V, p. 158; and VII, p. 174 n. 3; Houlbrooke, *The English family*, p. 56; Archer, 'Social networks', p. 88.

located.<sup>59</sup> His father John was from a Cambridgeshire family whose members had achieved the status of minor gentry and prominence as lawyers. John, being a younger son, was sent to London aged fourteen to apprentice as a tailor. John's status as a tradesman occasionally caused Pepys unease, but the support of his father's kin was a major asset.<sup>60</sup> Pepys's first cousin once removed was Sir Edward Mountagu, who became the earl of Sandwich and greatly assisted his younger relative's career. Meanwhile, Pepys felt the gentlemen, ladies, lawyers, and office-holders on his father's side made for fitting company.<sup>61</sup>

With the exception of his parents and siblings, Pepys wanted his intimate and effective kin to be literally effective: able to assist him materially, socially, politically, and, to a lesser degree, emotionally.<sup>62</sup> He was willing to assist them, especially if this improved or protected his own status, but was wary of being 'burdened'.<sup>63</sup> When relatives looked like becoming more burdens than assets, he limited his contact: it was a fate suffered even by Sandwich when his influence waned.<sup>64</sup> Margaret Pepys's kin, on the face of it, therefore had little to offer her son. In the 1660s, her effective kinship network was based on blood ties between women, who – where their husbands were known to Pepys – were married to tradesmen. Three of Margaret's sisters are mentioned in the diary: Katherine Fenner (d. 1661), Lissett Haines (later Howlett), and 'aunt Ellen' Kite. Pepys also refers to Sarah Giles (also called 'Sarah Kite'), 'aunt James' (d. 1666), and to Katherine Fenner's two daughters, Kate and Mary.<sup>65</sup> Kate and Mary, who had married the brothers Anthony and William Joyce, lived in London, as did Sarah Giles. If Pepys made any effort to find out about earlier generations, that effort and what he learned went unrecorded.

Pepys did, however, know that his mother was not originally from Newington Green, as editors have deduced, but from Winchcombe in Gloucestershire. Margaret Kight was a migrant like her husband and, like her son, was determined to improve her lot. In the medieval period, Winchcombe thrived as a centre of pilgrimage and of the wool trade. Yet by the early seventeenth century, it had endured decades of decline. Few commentators had anything good to say about 'roguish Winchcombe'. Fuller's *History of the worthies* (1662) described the town as 'formerly famous for a rich Abbey, now for plenty of Poore therein'.<sup>66</sup> Pepys's Aunt Lissett agreed with this verdict, telling him in 1667 that it was 'a miserable poor place'.

<sup>59</sup> *Diary*, V, p. 360; X, p. 215.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, p. 121; VII, p. 173; X, pp. 314, 318.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, III, pp. 26–7. For example, IV, pp. 272–3; VII, pp. 387–9.

<sup>62</sup> On definitions of 'effective' and 'intimate' kin: Elizabeth Bott, *Family and social network* (2nd edn, London, 1971), pp. 120–1; Alan MacFarlane, *The family life of Ralph Josselin* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 157.

<sup>63</sup> *Diary*, IV, 155; Houlbrooke, *The English family*, pp. 56–7.

<sup>64</sup> *Diary*, VII, p. 6; IX, p. 321.

<sup>65</sup> For example, *ibid.*, IV, pp. 131, 154–5, 164–5.

<sup>66</sup> *Harry Hangman's honour* [London, 1655], p. 9; Thomas Fuller, *The history of the worthies of England* (London, 1662), p. 354 (sig. Zz3v).



She had good reason to know, since it turns out she was living there at the time. On this occasion – one of his aunt’s visits to London – Pepys, unusually, was interested enough in his aunt’s speech to record it because she offered some political news. Lissett revealed that soldiers dispatched to suppress a rumoured ‘insurrection’ had in fact been sent to Winchcombe to destroy the tobacco illegally grown there.<sup>67</sup>

The Kight family themselves had form when it came to defiance of the authorities. Margaret and Lissett’s father was Richard Kight, a victualler who had become a burgess of Winchcombe in 1596.<sup>68</sup> Registers for St Peter’s Winchcombe record the births of Richard’s children: Katherina (Katherine) in 1602; Willus (William) in 1609; Lisetta in 1612; and Elnora (Elenor) in 1615. Along with the siblings who appear in the diary, there were other children, including an eldest son Richard (b. 1600).<sup>69</sup> This son remained in Winchcombe and had children of his own, including Sara (b. 1627), the woman Pepys refers to as his ‘cousin’ Sarah Kite/Giles.<sup>70</sup> Missing from the occasionally muddled parish registers is Margaret herself. However, the list of her siblings in William Kight’s will (with the distinctive Lissett and Elenor/Ellen), together with Lissett’s news from Winchcombe and, as we will see, evidence from another family will, show the Winchcombe clan are undoubtedly Margaret’s family.

In the 1630s, one ‘Richard Kyte’ was a ringleader in civil disobedience in the town – this fearsome character was either Margaret’s elderly father or her brother.<sup>71</sup> In 1638, the lord of the manor, Sir William Whitmore, accused Kight and two others of orchestrating a rent strike. Before the commissioners for the exchequer, Whitmore sought to portray the three as rebels: men who were perfectly capable of paying their rent but who had instead outrageously defied his authority and the king’s. Whitmore’s witnesses testified that Kight was a man of ‘good reputation and Credit’ who, with the others, had gone ‘upp and downe’ Winchcombe to persuade the inhabitants to ‘stand out against’ Whitmore. When Whitmore’s officers came to Kight’s shop to collect his rent, Kight had abused them with ‘most uncivill speeches’ and offered ‘to runn att them or some of them with a spitt’. Kight and his fellows countered that Whitmore had failed in his duties: he had extorted from the inhabitants and contributed to the town’s decay.<sup>72</sup> The evidence that Kight was

<sup>67</sup> *Diary*, VIII, p. 442.

<sup>68</sup> Winchcombe bailiffs’ accounts, Gloucester, Gloucestershire Archives (GA), P368/1/MI/1/2, fo. 5v (reverse foliation).

<sup>69</sup> The registers have ten children of Richard Kight (either ‘de Winch.’ or without toponymical by-name, which implies Winchcombe residency). Their mother is not named. GA, P368/1/IN/1/1 and P368/1/IN/1/2, registers of Winchcombe St Peter.

<sup>70</sup> GA, P368/1/IN/1/2, ‘Sara the daughter of Richard Kight’, b. 21 Oct. 1627. This would be Richard junior: by Nov. 1630, parish records had taken to specifying ‘Richard Kight Senior’.

<sup>71</sup> Both Kights were alive in 1637: Winchcombe Easter Book, Spittelend and Hayles Street, 1637, GA, GDR/141A. In 1608, Richard Kight senior was ‘about Forty’. ‘Men and armour’, GA, D678/1/Z6/2/2, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>72</sup> Sir William Whitmore, Knt. v. John Harvey, Richard Kite, John Evans alias Tucke, 1st and 3rd depositions for Whitmore, and ‘interrogatories’ on behalf of defendants, TNA, E134/14Chas1/Mich31.

financially of 'good reputation and Credit' suited Whitmore's agenda, but there was evidence from both sides of Kight's standing within the town: he and his co-defendants were able to muster a battalion of witnesses to support their allegations of Whitmore's failings.

In the 1620s and 1630s, members of the Kight family remained in Winchcombe, with a senior family member acting as a local leader, ready to defend the town's interests at considerable risk to himself (and to hapless rent collectors). Meanwhile, at least five of the Kights went to seek opportunities in London. In this, their behaviour tallies with migrant patterns identified by Vivien Brodsky Elliott and Timothy Meldrum. Female migrants to London often arrived in their late teens and worked as domestic servants. Service, in addition to allowing them to support themselves, could help accumulate a dowry.<sup>73</sup> There are clues as to how Margaret managed to make her way to London in her son's diary. In 1661, Pepys mentions talking to an acquaintance who 'knew my mother washmaid to my Lady Veere'. Lady Mary Vere had a home at Clapton, north of London. She was living there perhaps as early as 1607, when she married Sir Horace Vere, who became Baron Vere of Tilbury in 1625. Crucially, Mary Vere's family roots, like Margaret Kight's, were in Gloucestershire. She had been born Mary Tracy in Toddington and her first husband, William Hoby, came from Hailes in Gloucestershire.<sup>74</sup> Toddington and Hailes are parishes immediately adjoining Winchcombe parish. Margaret Kight had therefore found work in London with a local gentry family. As Jacqueline Eales has shown, the Veres were known in the 1620s for their Calvinism, and their daughters subsequently married members of the opposition to Charles I. The funeral sermon for Mary Vere, given in 1672, indicates the kind of piety that Margaret may have encountered as a new arrival in London. Vere's household worshipped twice a day, with the servants singing psalms on Sundays and being quizzed on that day's sermon.<sup>75</sup> Margaret seems to have shared some of the reforming beliefs of her employers, since in 1660 Pepys argued with his mother 'in defence of the Religion I was born in' (implying he favoured the episcopal church while his mother did not).<sup>76</sup> A period of service was a standard part of the lifecycle for women.<sup>77</sup> Although Margaret Kight's work as a 'washmaid' is recognized as evidence for her low status by historians, this job was hardly intended to be her defining role, and for her and her peers it probably represented not degrading work, but evidence of her family's success in exploiting connections within local gentry households to get employment in the metropolis.

<sup>73</sup> Vivien Brodsky Elliott, 'Single women in the London marriage market: age, status and mobility, 1598–1619', in R. B. Outhwaite, ed., *Marriage and society* (London, 1981), pp. 81–100; Meldrum, *Domestic service*, pp. 18–21.

<sup>74</sup> *Diary*, II, p. 31; Jacqueline Eales, 'Vere [née Tracy; other married name Hoby], Mary, Lady Vere (1581–1671)', *ODNB*.

<sup>75</sup> Eales, 'Vere, Mary', *ODNB*; William Gurnall, *The Christians labour and reward* (London, 1672), p. 133.

<sup>76</sup> *Diary*, I, p. 76, and X, p. 319. The *Companion* dubiously suggests Margaret was a 'sectarian': Pepys's expression also allows for Presbyterianism.

<sup>77</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic service*, pp. 4, 16–17.

Three of Margaret's siblings also headed for London. Katherine was there by 1633 when she married at St Bride's, where Margaret was living. William, who worked as a butcher, was in London by 1636 when he married at St Gregory by St Paul.<sup>78</sup> Elenor Kight followed Margaret in going into service. In 1664, Pepys went on a tour of places from his youth, including 'Newington-green and saw the outside of Mrs. Herberts house where she lived, and my aunt Ellen with her'. From Elenor's will of 1665, 'Mrs. Herbert' can be identified as Mary Herbert, the wife of Henry Herbert (d. 1656) of Coldbrook, Monmouthshire. Henry Herbert was an MP and a member of the republican council of state.<sup>79</sup> Once again this looks like successful working of connections by the Kights. Margaret and Elenor had found jobs in parliamentary gentry households just north of London, less than two miles apart, and with each household having roots in the west.

Although Pepys was apt to disparage the Kights, none of whom can have had much by way of financial resources when they reached London, the siblings mentioned in the diary had all done well for themselves. The Kights managed either to establish themselves as successful tradesmen or to marry such tradesmen with remarkable consistency for a supposedly poor family.<sup>80</sup> Margaret Kight wed a man with a business and a house in the City liberties. These were both serious advantages on the marriage market – at least this was Pepys's position in the early 1660s when he was hunting for a bride for his brother, who had taken over their father's house and trade.<sup>81</sup> By that reckoning, Margaret must have had assets of her own (such as useful skills, charm, or valuable connections) to win such a marital prize. Katherine married Thomas Fenner of St Sepulchre's parish, whom Pepys described as of 'Quality'. Fenner described himself as 'a freeman of the company of Blacksmys', but he was not necessarily working in this trade. He sold goods and owned several leases to London properties, while his bequests on his death in 1664 included £300 to his wife.<sup>82</sup> Lissett married twice. Her second husband was John Howlett of Winchcombe, a yeoman and churchwarden (one of the more prestigious positions in the vestry).<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Fenner and Katherin Kyte, 17 Feb. 1632/3, LMA, P69/BRI/A/002/MS06537; William Keighte and Julian Larorock, 19 Apr. 1636, LMA, P69/GRE/A/003/MS10233.

<sup>79</sup> *Diary*, V, p. 132; will of Elenor James, 1665/6, Aberystwyth, Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru – The National Library of Wales (NLW), vtls003828014; A. H. Dodd, 'Herbert, Henry (1617–1656), parliamentary soldier and statesman', in *Dictionary of Welsh biography* <https://biography.wales/article/s-HERB-HEN-1617> (accessed 21 Oct. 2021).

<sup>80</sup> William Kight (d. 1652), left £80 to his daughter and the rest of his estate to his wife. £80 was two years' wages at a craftsman's rate. TNA, Prob 11/224/688; Jan Luiten van Zanden, 'Wages and the cost of living in southern England (London), 1450–1700', *International Institute of Social History*, [www.iisg.nl/hpw/dover.php](http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/dover.php) (accessed 21 Oct. 2021).

<sup>81</sup> *Diary*, II, pp. 159, 165; III, pp. 3, 232.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, II, pp. 176, 179; TNA, Prob 11/314/155. It is not a direct comparison, but Alexandra Shephard's work gives the mean charge for Kent gentlemen's probate in the period as £240. Alexandra Shephard, *Accounting for oneself: worth, status, and the social order in early modern England* (Oxford, 2015; repr. 2018), p. 94.

<sup>83</sup> GA, P368/1/IN/1/1, 14 Sept. 1663; H. R. French, *The middle sort of people in provincial England, 1660–1750* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 121–2. Will of John Howlett, 1674, GA, GDR/R8/1674/50.

The 1666 will of the youngest sister Elenor Kight offers a counterbalance to Pepys's evaluation of kin and status. Elenor Kight proves to have been the 'Aunt James' of the diary, resolving one confusion among editors. In the 1660s, it transpires, she was living in Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. Meeting her in London, Pepys found 'a poor, religious, well-meaning, good humble soul, talking of nothing but God Almighty, and that with so much innocence that mightily pleased me'. Less pleasingly, an impoverished 'cousin of my poor aunts' came too, who was 'a parson among the fanatiques'.<sup>84</sup> Judging by her will, made when she was a widow, Elenor James was indeed deeply religious for her charitable bequest was unusually generous. She left the proceeds from the sale of her household goods to the poor of Abergavenny and Winchcombe, with 'speciall regard to be had to those of them that feare the lord'. There are other signs in her will that she was a nonconformist. The will, however, indicates that Pepys's descriptions of her as 'poor' should not be taken literally. Excluding the value of her goods sold for the poor and her clothes, she left legacies totalling £71 (in a period where £10 of moveable goods, exclusive of debts, was taken as an indication of relative poverty or lack of means).<sup>85</sup> Elenor James acknowledged a wide range of kin in her will, with (reading between the lines) particular concern for younger or poorer relatives, such as Sarah Giles's children. Margaret Pepys received Elenor's 'silke gowne and silke Mohayre petticoate'. The will ended with a list of twenty-one 'friends' (a term that covered both kin and close associates) who were to get 'gold enamell'd' rings, worth ten shillings each. Among the ring recipients were the Joyces and 'My Cousen Samuel Pepys & his wife'. Elenor's gift of rings had the effect of putting most beneficiaries on the same footing – a means of acknowledging bonds without fuelling jealousies. Heading this list were 'Mrs Herbert of Cowldbroke' and her three grown children, the gentry family that Elenor James had once served and with whom she had evidently remained close. That bequest implies that whatever capacity she had worked in, it was not ultimately as a lower servant. While James was humble in her demeanour, she was certainly not impoverished; she had some gentry connections of her own and was able to contribute to, and to draw on, three family networks (the Kights, the Jameses, and the Herberts). If she struck Pepys as a simple soul, her will shows considerable astuteness and tact in the use of her estate to acknowledge and assist her kin. Pepys's judgement of her was that of a man who prided himself on his genteel status, who curtailed his interactions with her, and who was not well-apprised of her social or financial resources.

Pepys's ability to gauge the status and influence of his maternal relatives in their own communities was restricted because he chose to restrict his contact with them. He was aware this could be seen as neglecting his obligations: in 1664, he wrote 'I do condemn myself mightily for my pride and contempt of my aunt and kindred that are not as high as myself' – this comment was primarily in reference to Elenor James and Kate Joyce who had been trying to visit him. His maternal relatives – whose network took in London,

<sup>84</sup> *Diary*, IV, p. 164.

<sup>85</sup> NLW, will of Elenor James; Shephard, *Accounting for oneself*, pp. 104–6.

Winchcombe, Abergavenny, and Brampton in Huntingdonshire – occasionally solicited his help for loans, to serve as an executor, or to exercise political influence in emergencies.<sup>86</sup> However, the routine requests made of him were few. The result was that, while Pepys's status as wealthy *de facto* head of the family was acknowledged, he was peripheral to this network in terms of the day-to-day services he performed and, apparently, in the amount of information he received. Indeed, he was misinformed in some cases without realizing it. For example, the information he recorded about Elenor James's will, which came to him via his wife from William Joyce, does not reflect its contents.<sup>87</sup>

Pepys's account of the abilities and resources of his maternal kin lacked nuance and accuracy, which may well reflect wider gaps in his knowledge and estimation of social networks. Kate Joyce's husband, Anthony, for instance, came in for derision from Pepys. Anthony was a member of the Leathersellers' Company and a tallow-chandler by trade. The impression that emerges from the diary (including the editorial material) is that Anthony Joyce was a 'fool', 'sorry company', and always and undoubtedly Pepys's social inferior – an impression not borne out by external evidence.<sup>88</sup> When Pepys began his diary, his claims to gentility rested on his Cambridge education, his manners, and his precarious employment as a clerk. In practice, he struggled to pay his quarterly rent. Meanwhile, Anthony Joyce had recently inherited the leases to multiple properties to add to other business assets: in 1660, he was one of the richest men whom Pepys entertained at his home.<sup>89</sup> In 1661, Joyce was able to lend his parish the substantial sum of £200, at interest.<sup>90</sup> This was no doubt a reputational as well as a financial investment, demonstrating his value to fellow parishioners. If Pepys had a low view of Anthony Joyce's abilities, the evidence points to Joyce being respected in civic and financial dealings, before the Great Fire destroyed many of his properties. With this context, Pepys's denigration of Anthony and his brother William appears not just a way to vent his irritation, but a means of affirming to himself his own superiority – a means begun in circumstances where that superiority was far from secure.

Pepys's view of Anthony's capacities indicates the limitations of his direct social monitoring, and thus of the view of London networks offered in the journal. In the early months of his diary, Pepys had put considerable effort into tracking City politics and fostering contacts, because City office-holders were at that point major players in the nation's fate. Thereafter, he turned his attention to Whitehall and, a little later, to cultivating rich merchants for naval business: he no longer had the motivation to monitor the City so widely or intensively. As he rose in power and began to accumulate thousands of pounds from his navy work, the Joyces – Anthony, Kate, William, and Mary – appeared

<sup>86</sup> *Diary*, V, p. 263. For example, *ibid.*, II, pp. 179; IV, pp. 154–5; IX, pp. 32–4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, p. 36.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, III, p. 62; V, p. 222; VII, p. 396; X, p. 212.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 2, 6, 14, 29; TNA, Prob 11/276/277, will of William Joyce, 1658.

<sup>90</sup> LMA, P69/SEP/B/019/MS03146/001, St Sepulchre, Holborn, churchwardens' account book, fo. 121v.

less able to offer Pepys services that he valued. Nonetheless, it was worth retaining ties. He resolved in 1663 'to keep in with the Joyces against a bad day, if I should have occasion to make use of them'.<sup>91</sup>

Pepys appears to have recognized that members of his maternal kin, such as the Joyces, might prove useful precisely because their social connections and their resources did not substantially overlap with his.<sup>92</sup> This made him, and the kinship support system, more resilient against threats. Strikingly, the characteristics that made members of the Kight family uninteresting to Pepys in times of security and prosperity – being female, being of non-genteel status, dwelling in unfashionable areas of London, and lacking extensive education – in fact made them well qualified to help when crisis loomed. This brings us full circle, for the assistance Pepys requested from his maternal kin included ensuring the survival of his diary. During the Dutch attack of 1667, Pepys summoned 'my cousin Sarah and her husband' to take away the paternal family papers and his diary and then sent 'my two silver flagons to Kate Joyce's: that so, being scattered what I have, something might be saved'.<sup>93</sup> It was, notably, his two female blood relatives, not their husbands and heads of household, whom he named here. Pepys's Kight relatives were 'scattered' in that Sarah Giles appears to have lived in Whitechapel (east of the City) while Kate Joyce lived in the north, running the Red Lion Inn in Grub Street.<sup>94</sup> In the face of invasion and attacks targeting navy officials, the fact that neither Sarah nor Kate shared the Pepys name was presumably an asset. Unlike other members of the Kight family, Sarah and her husband Thomas were poor and struggling: they had reluctantly borrowed money from Pepys and from Thomas Fenner that they could not repay. Pepys knew Thomas Giles was ashamed about this, and that the couple recognized they were literally in his debt.<sup>95</sup> Keeping his papers safe was one way to repay him. It is also likely they were selected to guard Pepys's family archive and his diary because their poverty (and possible illiteracy) made it less likely that they would be able to exploit the papers' contents. The diary was safely returned some weeks later.<sup>96</sup>

This was not the last time the preservation of the diary fell to Pepys's female kin. The standard history of the diary's survival that I recounted at the start of this article – how Pepys left it to his nephew, who passed it to Magdalene – leaps over an essential contribution. In his will, Pepys had voiced fears that a 'Succession' of competent familial heirs could not be relied on.<sup>97</sup> Events proved him right. Jackson admirably fulfilled most of Pepys's wishes

<sup>91</sup> *Diary*, IV, p. 265.

<sup>92</sup> Such an understanding of social networks is explicit in his information gathering in the City; see Loveman, *Samuel Pepys and his books*, pp. 99–102.

<sup>93</sup> *Diary*, VIII, p. 264.

<sup>94</sup> A Sarah Giles of St Mary, Whitechapel, fits the information on Pepys's cousin, e.g., register of St Mary, Whitechapel, LMA, P93/MRY1/004, birth of Thomas Gyles, 4 Nov. 1666; compare *Diary*, VIII, p. 442. LMA, CLA/002/02/01/0059, court of orphans, City of London, inventory of Anthony Joyce, 1667.

<sup>95</sup> *Diary*, V, p. 266; TNA, Prob 11/314/155.

<sup>96</sup> *Diary*, VIII, p. 262, note b.

<sup>97</sup> TNA, Prob 1/9, will of Samuel Pepys, codicil.

for the library, but he omitted the vital step of making his own will. When he died intestate in October 1722, sorting out his affairs fell to his wife, Anne. Anne Jackson, born Anne Edgeley, was the first cousin once removed of Will Hewer (Pepys's surrogate son), while her brother was Hewer's principal heir. Pepys had been a presence in Anne Jackson's life since she was a child.<sup>98</sup> Soon after Pepys's death, Hewer and John Jackson had made initial, non-binding arrangements with Magdalene for the library to eventually be housed there. However, it was Anne Jackson who arranged for the library to be sent to the college and it was she who signed the covenant holding the college to the conditions that Pepys had set out.<sup>99</sup> Anne Jackson did this at a point when she had other pressing concerns, most notably the care of seven fatherless children under the age of ten. She was under no legal obligation to hand over the library. Selling it off at auction (the 'dissipation' Pepys feared) would have raised considerable sums. Anne Jackson, however, proved Pepys's heir in spirit as well as in law. She took the steps that her husband had failed to, securing Pepys's papers and his legacy.

#### IV

This article has considered some of the women who appear in the history of Pepys's diary: women who feature in the shorthand record itself and who were involved in that document's preservation. Pepys had a highly instrumental view of kinship, one which prioritized the ways his relatives could bolster his social status. Yet one of the many facts the diary affirms, by its survival as much as in its contents, is that the resilience of kinship networks in the face of sudden threats and long-term challenges did not just lie in having members who commanded great resources and influence. It was beneficial to have kin who were socially diverse or dispersed and, moreover, members could prove effectual precisely because of traits that, for much of the time, were held to their detriment: their gender, relative poverty, lack of refined manners, or education. Cynically, this might make them more useful to powerful kin like Pepys because they were more easily controlled, but – more unexpectedly – it was an advantage to have kin who would be discounted or overlooked by others less familiar with the network. Sarah Giles and her husband were called on in an emergency to protect Pepys's paternal archive, for they were individuals whose maternal affiliations and own lack of resources would ensure it would not be exposed. Fifty-five years later, Anne Jackson proved a different kind of emergency fallback: Pepys had spent years training up male successors in Will Hewer and John Jackson who would protect his reputation and legacy, only to have a female custodian finish what her three male kin had begun – and subsequently be overlooked by posterity.

<sup>98</sup> Burial of John Jackson, 4 Oct. 1722, register of Holy Trinity Clapham, LMA, P95/TRI1/088; TNA, Prob 6/99, fo. 42v; *Diary*, X, p. 184; *Private correspondence and miscellaneous papers of Samuel Pepys, 1679–1703*, ed. J. R. Tanner (2 vols., New York, NY, [1926]), II, pp. 13, 315.

<sup>99</sup> 'Indenture between Anne Jackson...and the master and fellows', 1 June 1724, Cambridge, Magdalene College archives, A/41/1.



Pepys, as we have seen, did not just take careful steps to ensure his diary and wider collection survived ‘for the benefit of Posterity’, he also sought to shape that posterity: to determine who could read his diary, in what circumstances, and which parts they could read – and thus to influence the kinds of interpretations that could easily be placed upon it. Even with a full text of the diary published, those decisions have had profound effects on the way it is read and on its uses in popular histories and in academic studies. Appreciating those decisions therefore offers insight into Pepys’s changing intentions for the diary and into how we use his records. For example, the increasing levels of protection for sexual passages indicate Pepys was growing more conscious of prospective readers over his nine years of writing – and that he wanted to frustrate those readers. Yet it is his euphemistic language (‘touch’, ‘tumble’) and his focus on his own pleasure that has ultimately proved more effective in protecting his reputation than his deliberately garbled shorthand. As a result, Pepys is known for his sexual ‘adventures’, while the extent to which this involves coercion and violence evades notice. If, in discussing the diary, we indiscriminately adopt Pepys’s register and language in these cases, presenting this as neutral description or introducing other terms along the same lines (‘romantic liaisons’, etc.), then we join him in eliding instances of consensual sex with manifest abuse, and in masking predation and violence. Reflecting on Pepys’s account, in other words, can help us see what may be missing or trivialized in our own representations of the past and, indeed, of the present. The diary is rich enough to be used to produce the kinds of histories that its writer never intended, including histories of women and of kinship. We are much better equipped to realize the source’s potential in this regard if we understand the methods employed across its history to protect its contents from readers, to present the document to posterity, and to magnify its writer’s reputation.

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