

GOING TO COURT IN 1700:

A VISITOR'S GUIDE

by R. O. Bucholz¹

ON 7 SEPTEMBER 1662, Samuel Pepys went to court; specifically, to the court of the queen mother, Henrietta Maria, at Somerset House. There, in the presence chamber, he saw the queen mother and, sitting at her left hand, the queen consort, Catherine of Braganza. As the diarist continues:

... here I also saw Madam Castlemayne and, which pleased me most, Mr. Crofts the King's bastard [the future duke of Monmouth], a most pretty sparke of about 15 year old ... By and by, in comes the King, and anon the Duke [of York] and his Duchesse; so that, they being all together, was such a sight as I could never almost have happened to see with so much ease and leisure.²

This passage illustrates one of the great, if paradoxical, virtues of Pepys's journal: its ability to juxtapose qualities, emotions and desires which are universal in human nature with situations and experiences specific to his own time. As a result, the *Diary* has been popular with the general reader ever since its initial publication. Who among us does not derive, as Pepys seems here to derive, an enhanced feeling of self-importance from making contact with those who are so obviously important?

And yet, historians have always valued the *Pepys Diary* for its ability to open a window onto beliefs and practices which were very much of its author's time and place. If Pepys's attraction to celebrities is universal, his opportunity to gratify that inclination is not. This is a point so obvious that scholars of the early modern period have very largely ignored or under-played it: Samuel Pepys and his contemporaries had a degree of access to their rulers—in terms of sight, sound and even touch—which would be unthinkable in today's era of high security, carefully managed public appearances and 'spin'. It is a singular and largely unexplored fact that at the courts of *ancien régime* Europe, it was possible for any reasonably prosperous looking individual to wander the halls of his sovereign's abode; explore the rooms **within** which he lived; examine his most treasured possessions; observe him at his dinner; and, if properly introduced, engage him in conversation.³

1 This article is a revised version of an illustrated talk commissioned by Giles Waterfield FSA, for presentation to Royal Collection Studies, Windsor Castle in 1997. Subsequent versions of this talk have been presented to seminars at the Huntington Library, the Newberry Library and the Department of History of Loyola University. The author would like to thank his colleagues and students who participated in those seminars, as well as all those who have read the article in manuscript, in particular Dr Philip Mansel, for their comments and suggestions. He owes an especial debt to Dr Simon Thurley, who answered, promptly and patiently, a number of detailed queries about the architecture and history of Hampton Court Palace. Any errors of interpretation which remain are the sole responsibility of the author. The reproduction of the images contained herein was made possible by a grant from Loyola University. Finally, the author would like to express his gratitude to the Prince of Wales Foundation for Architecture in America, which made possible his participation in Royal Collection Studies. A note of abbreviations and conventions used is given at the end of the article. The illustrations can be found between pages 208 and 209.

2 *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews, 11 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970–83) II, 191.

3 In fact, the courts of absolutist France were even less exclusive than their English counterparts: see J. Brooke, *King George III* (New York, 1972), p. 293.

The purpose of this article is to explore the nature of that access for the English court in the half-century after the Restoration. More specifically, it seeks to explain, briefly, why subjects of the English crown were drawn to the court as employees, as habitués or as mere observers; to evoke something of their experience while there; and to offer some thoughts on whether, when and how both their right to—and their interest in—that access waned in the century after our period. At the heart of this piece will be an explanation of the functions of the public rooms and their attendants, which will attempt to build upon the pioneering work of Hugh Murray Baillie and his successors,⁴ and of the requirements for admission to these rooms and into the monarch's presence and conversation.

Before attempting this already ambitious programme, the author would like to disclaim any wider purpose. It is beyond the scope of this article to treat in detail the magnificent but occasional public and semi-public spectacles of monarchy such as coronations, progresses, entries, marriages, thanksgiving services, funerals, etc. Fortunately, there is already a thriving scholarship on these subjects for many of the courts of early modern Europe.⁵ Our primary subject is, rather, the day-

4 H. Murray Baillie, 'Étiquette and the Planning of the State Apartments in Baroque Palaces', *Archaeologia* CI (1967), 169–99. See also B. Jestaz, 'Étiquette et distribution intérieure dans les maisons royales de la Renaissance', *Bulletin Monumental* CXLVI (1988), 109–20; Y. Bottineau, 'Essais sur le Versailles de Louis XIV I: La distribution du château et le plan du domaine et de la ville', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* CXXX (1988), 77–98. For the evolution of the public rooms in English palaces, see also D. Starkey, 'The King's Privy Chamber, 1485–1547' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1973); D. Starkey, 'Intimacy and Innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485–1547' in D. Starkey, ed., *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (1987), pp. 71–118; S. Thurlley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: architecture and court life 1460–1547* (London and New Haven, 1993); S. Thurlley, *Whitehall Palace: an architectural history of the royal apartments, 1240–1698* (London and New Haven, 1999); S. Thurlley, *Hampton Court Palace: the official guidebook*, ed. C. Murphy and A. Fletcher (1996); S. Thurlley, *Hampton Court Palace: the King's Apartments: souvenir guide* (1992); N. Cuddy, 'The Revival of the Entourage: the Bedchamber of James I, 1603–1625' in Starkey, *English Court*, pp. 173–225.

5 For European courts in general, see P. Behar and H. Watanabe-O'Kelly, eds., *Spectaculum Europaeum: theatre and spectacle in Europe; Histoire du Spectacle en Europe, 1580–1750* (Wiesbaden, 1999); R. C. Strong, *Splendour at Court: Renaissance spectacle and illusion* (1973); J. M. Bak, ed., *Coronations: medieval and early modern monarchic ritual* (Berkeley, 1990). For the French court, see R. A. Jackson, *Vive le Roi! A History of the French Coronation from Charles V to Charles X* (Chapel Hill, 1984); R. E. Giesey, *Cerémonial et puissance souveraine: France, XV^e–XVII^e siècles* ([Paris], 1987); J.-M. Apostolides, *Le roi-machine: spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1981); A.-C. Gruber, *Les grandes fêtes et leurs décors à l'époque de Louis XVI* (Paris, 1972); V. E. Graham and W. McAllister-Johnson, eds., *The Royal Tour of France by Charles IX and Catherine de' Medici: festivals and entries 1564–66* (Toronto, 1979); V. E. Graham and W. McAllister-Johnson, eds., *The Paris Entries of Charles IX and Elizabeth of Austria 1571* (Toronto, 1974); M. C. Moine, *Les fêtes à la cour du Roi-Soleil* (Paris, 1984); H.-J. Martin, *Entrées royales et fêtes populaires à Lyon (XV^e–XVII^e siècles)* (Lyon, 1970); L. M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: politics, ritual and art in the Renaissance* (Geneva, 1986); L. M. Bryant, 'Royal Ceremony and the Revolutionary Strategies of the Third Estate', *Eighteenth Century Studies* XXII (1989), 413–50; I. D. Macfarlane, *The Entry of Henri II into Paris 16 June 1549* (Binghamton, New York, 1982); G. Antonetti, 'Gloire dynastique et puissance nationale: le mariage du Grand Dauphin (1680)', *Mémoire V* (1986), pp. 91–105; S. Hanley, *The Lit de Justice of the Kings of France: constitutional ideology in legend, ritual and discourse* (Princeton, 1983); R. E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva, 1960). For the Spanish court, see J. E. Varey, 'The Audience and the Play at Court Spectacles: the role of the king', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* LXI (1984), 399–406; J. E. Varey, 'Processional Ceremonial of the Spanish Court in the Seventeenth Century', *Studia Iberica: festschrift für Hans Flasche*, ed. K. H. Körner and K. Rühl (Bern, 1973), pp. 643–52;

to-day experience of going to court and the routine etiquette which any courtier would have had to know to make his or her way there. Despite the lead given by works like Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process*, these matters have been the object of far less scholarly study than has been accorded the grand state occasions noted above.⁶ In part because of that relative neglect, this article will spend far more time describing the etiquette of going to court than it will in explaining the significance of the etiquette so described. That is, as this ground is relatively untilled (for the English court at least), the author has undertaken to lay a foundation of empirically verifiable fact before subjecting it to the superstructural burden of interpretation. It is his hope that, once that foundation is laid and tested, the erection of such an edifice will become possible.⁷

L. Cortes Echánove, *Nacimiento y crianza de personas reales en la corte de España 1566–1886* (Madrid, 1958); S. N. Orso, *Art and Death at the Spanish Habsburg Court: the royal exequits for Philip IV* (Columbia, Missouri, 1989). For Italian courts, see M. Bonner, *The Majesty of the State: triumphal progresses of foreign sovereigns in Renaissance Italy (1494–1600)* (Florence, 1986); E. Borsook, 'Art and Politics at the Medici Court I: the funeral of Cosimo I de' Medici', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz* XII (1965), 31–54. For central and northern European courts, see E. Straub, *Repräsentatio Maiestatis oder churbayerische Freudenfeste: die höfischen feste in der Münchner Residenz vom 16. bis zum ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1969); R. Alewyn and K. Salze, *Das grosse Welttheater: die epoche der höfischen feste in dokument und deutung* (Hamburg, 1959); J. B. von Rohr, *Einführung zur Ceremoniell Wissenschaft der Grossen Herren*, ed. M. Schlete (Weinheim, 1990); K. Vocolka, *Habsburgische Hochzeitzeiten 1550–1600: kulturgeschichtliche studien zum manieristischen repräsentationsfest* (Vienna, 1976); M. Wade, *Triumphus Nuptialis Danicus: German court culture and Denmark. The Great Wedding of 1654* (Wiesbaden, 1996). For the English court, see S. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969); R. C. Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan portraiture and pageantry* (1977); C. Edie, 'The Public Face of Royal Ritual: sermons, medals and civic ceremony in later Stuart coronations', *Huntington Library Quarterly* LIII (1990), 311–36; E. C. Ratcliffe, *The English Coronation Service* (1936); R. M. Smuts, 'Public Ceremony and Royal Charisma: the English royal entry in London, 1485–1642', in A. L. Beier, D. Cannadine and J. M. Rosenheim, eds., *The First Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 65–93; P. Fritz, 'The Trade in Death: the royal funerals in England, 1685–1830', *Eighteenth Century Studies* XV (1982), 291–316.

N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: the history of manners* (New York, 1978). However, see J. Levron, *Daily Life at Versailles in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. C. E. Engel (New York, 1968); J. Saint-Germain, *Louis XIV secret* ([Paris], 1970); F. Funck-Brentano, *La cour du Roi Soleil* (Paris, 1937), esp. chaps. 11 and 12; O. Ranum, 'Courtesy, Absolutism and the Rise of the French State, 1630–1660', *Journal of Modern History* LII (1980), 426–51; L. Pfandl, 'Philip II und die Einführung des burgundischen Hofzeremoniells in Spanien', *Historisches Jahrbuch* LVIII (1958), 1–33; A. Rodríguez Villa, *Étiquetas de la Casa de Austria* (Madrid, 1913); D. de la Válgoma y Díaz-Varela, *Norma y ceremonia de las reinas de la Casa de Austria* (Madrid, 1958); Y. Bottineau, 'Aspects de la cour d'Espagne au XVII^e siècle: l'étiquette de la chambre du roi', *Bulletin Hispanique* LXXIV (1972), 138–57; C. Hofmann, *Das spanische Hofzeremoniell von 1500–1700* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985); M. de Ferdinandy, 'Die theatrale Bedeutung des spanischen Hofzeremoniells Kaiser Karls V', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* XLVIII (1965), 306–20; M. de Ferdinandy, 'La forma de vivir del monarca español: El ceremonial de la corte y su significación simbólica', *Eco* XXIX, no. 176 (1975), 113–33; J. H. Elliott, 'Philip IV of Spain: prisoner of ceremony' in A. G. Dickens, ed., *The Courts of Europe: politics, patronage and royalty 1400–1800* (New York, 1977), pp. 168–89; E. Persson, *Servants of Fortune: the Swedish court between 1598 and 1721* (Lund, 1999), chap. 3; D. Starkey, 'Representation Through Intimacy: a study in the symbolism of monarchy and court office in early-modern England' in I. Lewis, ed., *Symbols and Sentiments: cross-cultural studies in symbolism* (1977), pp. 187–224. For the English context, generally, see J. Wildeblood, *The Petite World: a guide to the deportment of the English in former times* (1973).

Many of the tools and theoretical approaches with which to address the underlying meanings of the habits, gestures, places, times and ceremonies to be described below have been tested by practitioners in a variety of disciplines on the interpretation of ritual and ceremony, as noted above. These

In the meantime, some rudimentary interpretation is necessary, if only for the sake of justifying the enterprise and proceeding further. This article assumes that etiquette exists, fundamentally, because in order to live together human beings require, or at least take comfort in, rules of conduct. This was no less true of the vast assemblage of early modern court officers, habitués and their attendants—divided by rank, duty, jurisdiction, factional loyalty or political interest—at Whitehall or St. James's, than it was in the contemporaneous borough or village. If it is also true that all power is, to some extent, contested, then court rituals and ceremonies provided a way to ameliorate or domesticate that contest in the king's own house. Thus, political opponents were required to bow to each other; subordinate officers to submit to their superiors (formally following any suspension for insubordination); and violence, particularly in the royal presence, to be punished severely (at least in theory).⁸ But the etiquette of a court had significance beyond its walls, for it was specifically designed to reinforce, or model, the organization of the society over which that court presided. Thus, the 'Household Ordinances' of Charles II articulate their purpose as 'to Establish good government and order in Our Court, which from thence may spread with more honour through all parts of Our Kingdoms'.⁹ This pious hope was all the more urgent in the later Stuart period because of the civil turmoil and political violence which preceded it; hence the extensive reissue and revision of early-Stuart court ordinances in the 1660s and

tools and approaches may be found in the fields and sub-fields of social anthropology, sociology, semiotics, iconography and the histories of art and architecture as well as social and cultural history. In attempting to construct a 'universal field theory of court etiquette', one might begin with the following works, seminal in a variety of those fields: D. Cannadine and S. Price, *Rituals of Royalty: power and ceremonial in traditional societies* (Cambridge, 1987), esp. Professor Cannadine's introduction; R. Firth, *Symbols: public and private* (Ithaca, New York, 1973), esp. chap. 9; J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, trans. T. Burger and E. Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989); D. Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: towards an anthropology of public events* (Cambridge, 1990); E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), esp. chap. 4; D. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, 1988); S. Lukes, *Essays in Social Theory* (New York, 1977), esp. chap. 3; E. W. Rothenbuhler, *Ritual Communication: from everyday conversation to mediated ceremony* (Thousand Oaks, California, 1998); V. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago, 1969); V. Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca, New York, 1974); S. Wilentz, *Rites of Power: symbolism, ritual and politics since the middle ages* (Philadelphia, 1985). For the application of some of these approaches to specific historical subjects, see P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian ceremony and civic life in late medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, New York, 1996); J. W. Merrick, *The Desacralization of the French Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, 1990); E. Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981); E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), esp. chap. 4; R. S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: myth and ceremony in Russian monarchy, vol. 1: From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton, 1995).

8 For bowing, see J. Swift, *Journal to Stella*, ed. H. Williams (1948), pp. 440, 607; HMC, *Portland MSS V*, 463. For suspensions for insubordination, insolence or neglect, often followed by the formal submission of the offending official, see PRO, LC 5/143, pp. 120, 139; LC 5/151, p. 207; LC 5/153, p. 134; LC 5/158, pp. 224, 226, 241, 260, 528; LS 13/115, ff. 61, 62, 93r and v; LS 13/116, ff. 16, 20, 23v, 29v; LS 13/172, entries of 31 Dec. 1684, 6 Jan. 1684/5, 9 Jan. 1684/5; LS 13/174, p. 38, f. 98v. For the maintenance of peace and the punishment of violence within the verge of the court, see E. Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia* (1669), pp. 234–6, 286–9; however, cf. Pepys, *Diary IX*, 451–2 for an example of lax enforcement. Matthew Szostomka is currently at work on the issue of violence and the courts of the verge of the King's court.

9 *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household... from King Edward III to King William and Queen Mary* [hereafter *Household Ordinances*] (1799), p. 352.

1670s.¹⁰ The rules and habits of court etiquette sought to defuse that turmoil, by paying reverence to society's keystone, the fount from which all order and distinction flowed, the semi-sacred being who represented divine power on earth—and whose divinity had been first questioned, then trampled on during the English Civil War—the sovereign.

For his part, a shrewd monarch could use court etiquette, tightening or loosening its bonds to further more immediate purposes—and thus gain advantage in the incessant contest for power. When Charles II greeted foreign ministers in his bedchamber, standing and hatless; when James II refused his hand to political enemies; when William III and Mary II ordered their guards not to stand at attention for Princess Anne; or when, at the beginning of her reign, Anne publicly took the staff of comptroller of the household from the arch-Whig Lord Wharton and handed it to the arch-Tory Sir Edward Seymour, they were making political and diplomatic statements of the first order.¹¹ On the most basic level, these actions called attention to and so reinforced the monarch's special status, sometimes by asserting it (James II), sometimes by withdrawing it from a member of the royal family (William and Mary vs. Princess Anne), sometimes by graciously laying it aside (Charles II). In each case, royal ritual and courtly etiquette served, further, to promote social solidarity or political amity with and among participants (the foreign ministers, Seymour) while casting out—sometimes literally, sometimes metaphorically—those excluded from such participation (Whig exclusivists, Princess Anne, Wharton). Thus, the etiquette of the court was a language signifying power and social relations. Like any other language, it was a means both to make known and to modify those relations. This rendered it a weapon in the arsenal of monarchy, as potent as any work of polemic or art; more flexible and subtle than any army or navy. Finally, it should not be forgotten that the codes of behaviour at a court served the courtier as well, if only by ensuring his advantage over those who did not know them and who looked foolish in consequence. This, too, reminds us that the rules of etiquette served to divide as well as to unify.

Indeed, it was a hallmark of such codes that they were passed down from generation to generation within courts and within court families, probably orally.¹² Certainly, apart from the generalized ordinances noted above, codes were rarely written down. Given the assumed nature of such codes, how does the modern historian come to know them? One not unreasonable approach is to study the surviving contemporary conduct-books and guides for courtiers. However, such

10 See the seventeenth-century ordinances printed in *Household Ordinances* and PRO, LC 5/139, pp. 11–12, 15–16; LC 5/140, pp. 493–4; LC 5/141, pp. 29–31; LC 5/143, pp. 329–31; LC 5/145, p. 211; LC 5/147, pp. 187–8; LC 5/151, pp. 294–6; LC 5/201, pp. 65–7, 99–111, 259–61; BL, Stowe MSS 563; Add. MSS 50842 and 61419. The impression derived from an examination of this material is that there was a flurry of reissued and revised Caroline ordinances immediately following the Restoration, with further revisions in 1685. The issue of such ordinances stopped almost entirely after 1688. This raises the question of whether or not they were still being enforced in the eighteenth century. As indicated below, that question is best answered by the careful reading of contemporary correspondence, diaries and memoirs.

11 PRO, LC 5/2, pp. 48, 38; HMC, *Ormonde MSS* n.s. VII, 327; E. Gregg, *Queen Anne* (1980), pp. 88, 156.

12 In this regard dancing masters seem to have been particularly important: see BL, Add. MSS 61474, f. 16r and v.

study is of limited usefulness for the later Stuart and early Hanoverian periods. First, many 'contemporary' guidebooks, such as Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* or Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentleman*, turn out not to be contemporary at all, having been written during the first half of the seventeenth century for the courtiers of the early Stuarts.¹³ The most popular such guidebooks which were contemporary to our period, such as *The Courtier's Calling*, were translations from the French, and so of equally limited usefulness for English court usage under the later Stuarts. This is, of course, a reminder of the degree to which fashions in etiquette came to be influenced by the French court, as opposed to the Spanish or Italian courts, by 1650.¹⁴ But it may also have something to do with a decline in the political and social dominance of the court among the ruling class in England for which a number of scholars, including the present author, have argued elsewhere.¹⁵

This article will return to the question of the court's decline towards its conclusion. In the meantime, whatever the reason for the relative scarcity of manuals of conduct at the Restoration and Augustan courts, the major problem with such works for our purposes is that their descriptions of etiquette are often so generalized and stereotypical as to be very shaky guides to actual practice. Indeed, it is clear from eyewitness testimony that even the ordinances issued by the household itself were not strictly adhered to.¹⁶ Anyone with long experience of courts will have learned that such evidence is often more useful for understanding the ethos behind a set of practices, than for pinning down what those practices were. To put it more simply—and this is always a good rule of thumb for the courtier or the student of courtiers—it is far more advisable to pay attention to what the inhabitants of a court can be proved to have actually done, than to what they were supposed to have

done according to some ordinance or guidebook. Therefore, the following discussion will rely mainly upon the accumulation of eyewitness testimony to be found in contemporary diaries, letters, newsletters and newspapers. Throughout it will follow usage rather than prescription; description rather than rubric.

Who Sought Access to Court and Why?

In an age when monarchy was both personal and powerful, it was inevitable that its subjects would be drawn to court. For many, like Celia Fiennes or the German tourist Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, the attraction must have been one borne of curiosity.¹⁷ For others it was, perhaps, a desire to make some form of contact with a person who, even after the Glorious Revolution, was still heralded from the pulpits as God's lieutenant on earth. Great court officers were frequently asked to introduce visitors to the monarch for no other obvious reason than this.¹⁸

Probably typical was a Jacobite country gentleman who found himself 'transfixt with so many beams of majesty' upon being introduced to Queen Anne that he 'was effectually struck dumb' and so had to beg his patron, Archbishop Sharp, to

pleas to let hir know y^t I was so highly delighted, so very much affected, by y^e wonderfull sweetness & humanity where wth she rec^d me, y^e small moment I enjoyed through y^e Grace's favour in y^e Closet has given me full compensation for all y^e troubles I suffered on hir father's account for y^e space of eleven years.¹⁹

Loyalty was not always purchased so easily. While contact with royalty may have been an end in itself for this ancient adherent of the Stuarts, most courtiers saw it as the means to a variety of goals more ambitious, tangible or pleasurable. It is difficult for us today to comprehend just how magnetic the later-Stuart court must have been to its adherents, not least because its attractions were so various. For the first half of our period at least, it was, in the words of Walter Bagehot, 'the focus where everything fascinating gathered, and where everything exciting centred.' Put rather more crudely, it was Whitehall and Capitol Hill, but far more: Hollywood and Bloomsbury, Monte Carlo and Parnassus, 'an unequalled club', a salon to end all salons and a party without end, all concentrated in one place.²⁰ More specifically, the courts at Whitehall and, later, St. James's were first, at between 1,200 and 2,000 places at any given time, the largest single employer of the central government—indeed, possibly in British society at large—in one location.²¹ If we define the court more widely to include all the offices of the central

17 See C. Fiennes, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. C. Morris (1949), pp. 59–60, 274–81, 292–305, 353–61; Z. C. Von Uffenbach, *London in 1710: from the travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach*, trans. and ed. W. H. Quarrell and M. Mare (1934), pp. 35, 79, 104, 115, 132–3, 153–8. See also, for a later period, S. von La Roche, *Sophie in London 1786 Being the Diary of Sophie v. La Roche*, trans. C. Williams (1933), pp. 200–5; J. Yeoman, *The Diary of the Visits of John Yeoman to London in the Years 1774 and 1777*, ed. M. Yeardsley (1934), pp. 20, 43.

18 See Brooke, *George III*, p. 294.

19 Gloucester RO, Granville Sharp MSS Box 3, D 17: Whortley Whorwood to Archbishop John Sharp, Tues., n.d., 1703.

20 W. Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (Oxford World's Classics Edition, 1928), p. 45.

21 This figure includes not only the principal royal household of the sovereign, which ranged from about 800 to nearly 1,400 places under the later Stuarts, but also the subordinate households of

13 H. Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman, Fashioning him Absolute in the Most Necessary ... Qualities Concerning Minde or Bodie Required in a Noble Gentleman* (1622); R. Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman: containing sundry excellent rules, or exquisite observations, tending to direction of every gentleman, of selected ranke and qualitie; how to demean or accommodate himself in the manage of publike or private affaires* (1630); see also R. Allestree, *The Gentleman's Calling* (1660).

14 E. du Refuge, *Traité de la Cour* (Paris, 1616), trans. by E. Walsingham, et. al. as *Arcana Aulica or Walsingham's Manual, or Prudentiall Maxims for Statesman and Courtier, with Instructions for Youth, Gentlemen and Noblemen* (1728); N. Faret, *L'Honnête homme ou l'art de plaire à la Cour* (Paris, 1630), trans. by E. Grimstone as *The Honest Man: or, the art to please in court* (1632); J. de Callières, *Traité de la Fortune des gens de qualité* (Paris, 1658), trans. as *The Courtier's Calling: showing the ways of making a fortune and the art of living at court, according to the maxims of policy and morality* (1675); A. de Courtin, *Nouveau Traité de la Civilité* (Paris, 1670), trans. as *The Rules of Civility; or, Certain Ways of Deportment Observed in France, Amongst all Persons of Quality upon Several Occasions* (1671).

15 R. O. Bucholz, *The Augustan Court: Queen Anne and the decline of court culture* (Stanford, 1993); M. Foss, *The Age of Patronage: the arts in England 1680–1750* (Ithaca, New York, 1971); J. Carré, ed., *The Crisis of Courtesy: studies in the conduct-book in Britain, 1600–1900* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 3–5.

16 Note, for example, that during a dispute over the respective rights of the lord chamberlain and groom of the stole in 1683, the former was able to argue, with some success, that, whatever the Bedchamber ordinances said, they had not been followed of late and so should not be the basis for resolution of the dispute: See PRO, LC 5/201, pp. 9–47, 73–5; HMC, *Ormonde MSS* n.s. VII, 27–32; E. M. Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton: being chiefly letters addressed to Christopher first Viscount Hatton A.D. 1601–1704, 2 vols* (Camden Society, 1878) II, 21–22; and, esp. Hereford and Worcester RO, BA 2252/5 (Caspar Frederic Henning Papers)(i), p. 12. Another example of non-enforcement is the ordinance that required persons of quality to wait to see the king in the withdrawing room (BA 2252/2, p. 69). More often, and increasingly over the period, they did so at the backstairs (see below).

(i.e., London-based) government, that number trebles by the 1720s.²² The court was, further, the epicentre of politics, government, finance, religion, social and cultural life, entertainment and royal favour. This last, in particular, might lead to political, social or cultural influence, patronage, titles, land or other forms of wealth. It is true that during the later Stuart period household servants were not always well or promptly paid.²³ But many found compensation in sinecure, pluralism, fee-taking, free meals and lodgings, sale of office, *de facto* life tenure or placement on an established pensions list which grew to £180,000 per annum—15 per cent of the established royal revenue—by the end of Charles II's reign.²⁴ Such financial largess was available not only to those who served the monarch, but to those who merely attended his court. Courtiers could vie for pensions paid directly out of the revenue; grants of royal lands or leases at preferred rates; individual payments out of the secret service and privy purse; and hundreds of sinecures outside the household, many of them in the customs service or on revenue commissions.²⁵ Indeed, the court was the great emporium for the acquisition of places of all kinds, not only in the household, but in the Church, the judiciary, the foreign service, the revenue services (customs, excise, land tax, etc.), the armed forces, local government, etc. The correspondence of prominent

other members of the royal family, such as the duke and duchess of York and their children; the queen mother, Henrietta Maria; and various royal consorts. For the size of the sovereign's household, see J. C. Sainty and R. O. Buchholz, comps., *Officials of the Royal Household Part 1: department of the lord chamberlain and associated offices* (1997), Figures **ix** and **ixb**, pp. xcii–xciii. For the subordinate courts, see various editions of E. and J. Chamberlayne, *Anglia Notitia and Magnae Britanniae Notitia*. For the suggestion that the court may have been the largest single employer in one place in Britain, the author is indebted to Professor Jo Hayes.

²² See the discussions in J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: war, money and the English state, 1688–1783* (New York, 1989), pp. 64–8 and G. S. Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: late Stuart and early Georgian Britain 1660–1722* (1993), pp. 257–65. Neither Brewer nor Holmes distinguish between officials employed at the centre and those in the localities; hence the relative imprecision of the figure given above.

²³ Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 21–2, 29–30, 126–44.

²⁴ For sinecures, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 13, 41, 113, 115, 117–18, 120, 122, 124–5, 132, 136, 150, 238. For pluralism, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 118, 122–3, 136, 319 n.112. For life tenure, see HMC, *Ormonde MSS* n.s. IV, 290–4; *CTB* III, 383; IV, 747; V, 296, 649, 653, 661, 668, 991. For sale of office, see HMC, *Ormonde MSS* n.s. III, 43, 78, 232; IV, 291; V, 79, 79, 104–5, 122, 147; HMC, *Fifth Report App.*, p. 186; HMC, *Seventh Report App.*, pp. 371, 478, 491; HMC, *Twelfth Report App.*, V, 45–52; App. VII, 56; HMC, *Fourteenth Report App.*, IX, 442; HMC, *Portland MSS* VIII, 365; HMC, *Finch MSS* II, 62–3; HMC, *House of Lords MSS* n.s. V, 155; PRO, SP. Dom. 34/36, f. 304; W. D. Christie, ed., *Letters Addressed From London to Sir Joseph Williamson while Plenipotentiary at the Congress of Cologne in the Years 1673 and 1674*, 2 vols. (Camden Society, 1874) I, 88, 104; A. Bover, *History of the Reign of Queen Anne Digested into Annals*, 11 vols. (1703–13) VIII, 369; John Macky, *Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky*... (2nd edn., 1733), p. 43; J. H. Wilson, *The Court Wits of the Restoration* (Princeton, 1948), p. 48 and n.; PRO, LC 5/150, p. 366; BA 2252/6 (f). An Account of the Lord Chamberlain's Office by M^r. Cooling; and 'Places in the Lord Chamberlain's Disposal'. For lodgings, see LC 5/201, pp. 79–89; Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 129–30, 135. For meals provided to court officers and their guests, see R. J. Minney, *Uxington Court* (1972), p. 164; Pepys, *Diary* I, 193; IV, 63; VII, 218; IX, 118, 468, 563; J. Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. De Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1955) III, 265, 270, 284, 292, 308, 330, 331, 341, 343, 351, 354–8, 360, 435, 437, 478, 528, 577, 597, 612, 621, 626; IV, 2, 37, 30, 82, 93–7, 102–3, 106, 124, 126–8, 130–1, 156, 160, 163, 167–9, 193, 202. For fee-taking, see J. M. Beattie, *The English Court in the Reign of George I* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 189–98; Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 126–44. For pensions, see C. D. Chandaman, *The English Public Revenue 1660–1688* (Oxford, 1975), p. 270.

²⁵ See Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 13–16, 126–44 and sources cited therein.

courtiers with strong local connections, such as Thomas Coke of Derbyshire, vice-chamberlain of the household 1706–26, is full of requests from relatives and friends back home for benefices, army commissions, customs offices, or the favour of being absolved of the obligation to act as sheriff. If we recall J. H. Plumb's point that, during this period, because of the demands of foreign wars, 'the institutions of executive government expanded at a rate capable of absorbing or obliging, and thereby satisfying, an effective segment of the political nation', then it should be obvious that the court was a crucial factor in the growth and maintenance of political and social stability in Great Britain.²⁶

Of perhaps equal significance to such stability, the court was also the greatest marriage market in Britain. For those with more limited ambitions, it provided free meals, magnificent sights and sounds—impressive architecture, splendid parks, sumptuous decor and furnishings, dramatic ceremonies, balls, concerts, plays, the royal art collection, etc.—and an endless source of gossip.²⁷ For the pious, the Chapel Royal provided the premier choral establishment in England and, in the delighted words of John Evelyn, 'excellent Preaching which there constantly is by the most eminent Bish: & Divines of the Nation'.²⁸ The various possibilities are amply illustrated by the disparate court careers of Evelyn, his friend Pepys, William Chiffinch, Thomas, Lord Clifford, Arnold, Earl of Albemarle, Grinling Gibbons, Henry Purcell, John Dryden, Jonathan Swift, Margaret Godolphin, Nell Gwynn, Louise, Duchess of Portsmouth and innumerable Cavendishes, Churchills, Granvilles, Killigrews, Russells and Villiers. Finally, as Pepys reminded us at the beginning of this article, the court afforded ample satisfaction of the simple human desire to have a look at the great.²⁹ In short, for most of the period in question, anybody who was, who wanted to be, or just wanted to see, somebody, went to court.

Who Could Go to Court?

Access to the sovereign and his court was regulated by location in combination with occasion and the office or social rank of the would-be attender. Out of doors, the average Londoner or tourist to the metropolis had fairly frequent opportunities to see the monarch and his entourage. Formal occasions, such as Charles II's entry in 1660 or coronation procession in 1661; William III's triumphal entry on the taking of Namur in 1695; or Anne's near-annual processions to St. Paul's to give thanks for Marlborough's victories, were, admittedly, rare. However, the sovereign could frequently be seen in transit between royal residences. Moreover, Charles II regularly took the air on foot in St. James's Park and the Mall (which was really a sort of vast outdoor gallery connecting the palaces of Whitehall and St. James's) or

²⁶ J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675–1725* (1967), p. 112. See chap. 4, *passim*. For the correspondence of Thomas Coke, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, p. 178.

²⁷ See Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 15–17, 203–48.

²⁸ Evelyn, *Diary* IV, 6.

²⁹ See, for example, Pepys, *Diary* I, 265–6, 299; II, 164, 374; III, 197, 297, 299; IV, 56, 63, 142, 229–30; V, 161, 214, 268; VI, 73; VII, 48, 162, 306, 347, 373–2, 408; VIII, 70, 365–6, 464; IX, 294, 331, 334, 382, 515, 534–56; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 257; IV, 29; Swift, *Journal*, pp. 467, 659 and the sources cited in n. 17, above.

by coach in Hyde Park. His habit of sauntering about the royal parks was revived by George II. According to a 1733 account by Baron von Pollnitz, these alfresco strolls attracted great crowds:

The grand walk they call The Mall is full of people every hour of the day, especially in the morning and evening and their Majesties often walk in it, with the Royal Family, who are attended by only half a dozen Yeomen of the Guard and permit all persons without distinction of rank or character to walk there at the same time with them, for which reason the crowd is sometimes too great, and it forms one of the most diversified scenes imaginable.³⁰

Theoretically, any person could approach the monarch on these less formal occasions. However, the presence of the yeomen of the guard should not be seen as merely decorative. In the famous painting of Charles II strolling through St. James's Park by Danckerts [Figure 1] it is obvious that the aspirant to personal contact with his sovereign had to make his way through a phalanx of attendants and confidants. While the 'Merry Monarch's' early morning saunters therefore provided the possibility of contact with his subjects, verifiable instances are much less easy to come by than they are for the royal family's evening walks along the terrace at Windsor or in Kew Gardens during the reign of 'Farmer' George III.³¹ On the other hand, it can be demonstrated that Queen Anne, who was both a more formal and a more reclusive character than her uncle, could be approached by petitioners as she entered or alighted from her coach or while it was stationary.³²

Obviously, such accessibility exposed the sovereign to attempts on his or her life in a world in which political assassinations were not unknown. The most famous example of these dangers was the discovery in 1696 of a Jacobite plot to shoot William III on his return from hunting at Richmond.³³ Nor were threats to a public monarch limited to the firearms of the politically disaffected. In January 1678 a lunatic named Richard Harris was committed to Bedlam after having thrown an orange at the king in St. James's Park.³⁴ All of this helps to explain why, when out in his coach or on horseback, the sovereign was accompanied by an equestrian and a detachment of the Life Guards.³⁵

³⁰ Quoted in B. Weinreb and C. Hibbert, eds., *The London Encyclopaedia* (Bethesda, Maryland, 1986), p. 491. For examples of Charles II or the duke of York sauntering or riding in the parks, see Pepys, *Diary* I, 173; III, 47, 60, 81; IV, 95, 123; VI, 39; VIII, 67–68, 507; IX, 105, 118, 415; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 437, 614.

³¹ See Brooke, *George III*, pp. 285–6.

³² For Charles II's concern for privacy and resulting relative inaccessibility, see Allen, 'Charles II's Chiffinch', pp. 279–80. For Anne's accessibility while in transit, see PRO, SP Dom, 34/32, f. 131; 36, f. 16.

³³ S. B. Baxter, *William III and the Defense of European Liberty 1650–1702* (New York, 1966), pp. 336–7. An alternative plan was to attack the king on his return from chapel at St. James's.

³⁴ PRO, LS 13/104, f. 51. See also the case of Deborah Lyddall, who threatened to throw a stone at the queen in St. James's Park in 1677: LS 13/104, f. 48.

³⁵ For the practice of having equestries ride by the side of the royal coach, see J. J. Cartwright, ed., *The Wentworth Papers, 1705–1739* (1883), pp. 424, 469; BL Add. MSS 31444, ff. 247–8, 257v. This practice seems to have been dropped during the reign of George I: see *The Present State of the British Court* (1720), p. 57. For the role of the Life Guards, see G. Mlege, *The Present State of Great Britain and Ireland* (1711), p. 273. For a visual representation, see also *Queen Anne in her State Coach*, attributed to van Gaaen.

In theory, the ruler was more secure from unwanted contact with his subjects within the precincts of his own house. Porters at the gate, provost or under-marshals, the yeomen of the guard and the servants of the public rooms were repeatedly ordered to prevent the entry of unsuitable persons. However, the frequency of such orders belies their effectiveness. One such from 1687 begins:

Whereas it is Notorious, that severall idle p^{sons}, Men, Women and Children, Vagrants & Beggars doe frequent the Court, or about the Gates, and are commonly scene within the King's Pallace, and St. James's Parke, who can give noe Acc^{of}. of themselves, nor have any just cause to be there . . .³⁶

Prior to its destruction by fire in 1698, the palace of Whitehall must have been particularly difficult to police, given its irregular ground plan and its accessibility to the river and the park.³⁷

Within doors, access to the court was supposed to be limited to the respectable classes. That is, the servants of the public rooms under the lord chamberlain were to 'take care to stop all strange persons that can give no good account of themselves, or of their business at court'. Moreover, the privy lodgings were expressly off-limits to 'all people in Liveries' and 'any persons wearing cloakes or greater coates'.³⁸ What this effectively meant was that, when no court event was scheduled, virtually any person capable of dressing well and talking fast could get into the public galleries and rooms of a royal palace. From the late seventeenth century onwards dressing well, i.e., with connotations of gentility, meant, for a man, a full bottomed wig and sword, coat and waistcoat to the knees; for a woman, a mantua (originally a loose gown, but by the mid-eighteenth century fitted above the waist, with a long, full skirt, often made into a train, from 1710 increasingly hooped, and open to reveal a petticoat).³⁹

Pepys and Evelyn record frequent occasions of wandering the public rooms and galleries of Whitehall while waiting for ministers to emerge from a meeting, or to view the king's art collection, or simply to meet fellow courtiers and gather information. On numerous occasions Pepys recalls walking 'up and down the House to hear news', 'talking with this man and that'.⁴⁰ A skilful courtier had to be careful

³⁶ PRO, LS 13/173, pp. 106–7. For additional orders to the porters and under marshals, see LS 13/115, ff. 25, 128; LS 13/171, pp. 316, 355; LS 13/172, entry of 7 May 1683; LS 13/174, pp. 10, 55; LS 13/176, p. 51. For the apprehension of vagrants at court, see LS 13/176, p. 41. For decisions by the board of green cloth about vagrants and lanatics so apprehended, see LS 13/104, *passim*.

³⁷ This point is born out by a glance at the Danckerts painting, Figure 1, or at any of the formal plans of Whitehall Palace: see esp. S. Thurlley, *The Whitehall Palace Plan of 1650* (London Topographical Society, 1998) and the plans and illustrations reproduced in Thurlley, *Whitehall Palace*, pp. 101, 110, 120, 122–3, 129. For an attempt to improve security at Whitehall, see Pepys, *Diary* IX, 269.

³⁸ PRO, LC, 5/145, p. 208; LC 5/147, p. 313; LC 5/150, p. 359; LC 5/201, p. 288.

³⁹ A. Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, 1979), pp. 13–36; N. Arch and J. Marschner, *Splendour at Court: dressing for royal occasions since 1700* (1987), pp. 35–43.

⁴⁰ Pepys, *Diary* IX, 351, 516. For other examples, see Pepys, *Diary* I, 186–3, 188–9, 193, 207, 300; II, 38, 74, 154; III, 85, 236, 239, 282, 283, 287, 292, 297; IV, 3, 75, 97, 152, 204, 319, 341, 360, 366, 394, 401, 418, 435; V, 20, 50, 84, 107, 149, 209, 223, 303–4, 313, 333, 337; VI, 22, 79, 120, 129, 138; VII, 67, 87, 97, 158, 163, 177, 207, 213, 252, 260, 308, 348, 352–4, 358, 409; VIII, 15, 31, 91, 181, 295, 329, 412, 416, 449, 478, 564, 570, 590; IX, 2, 10–12, 46, 69, 86, 109, 118, 126, 165, 169, 205, 269, 279, 294, 307–8, 407–8, 417, 425, 491, 516, 557; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 386, 389.

to be seen to give enough attendance to appear loyal, but not so much that he was perceived by men of business as being idle:

And then up to walk up and down the House; which now I am well known there, I shall forbear to do, because I would not be a-thought a lazy body by Mr. [William] Coventry [secretary to the duke of York and commissioner of the navy] and others, by being seen, as I have lately been, to walk up and down doing nothing.⁴¹

In fact, a chance meeting could be parleyed into an opportunity to do political or administrative business or, in the case of a visitor whose respectability extended only to his or her dress, a tryst.⁴² Indeed, the long galleries of Whitehall and the open outdoor spaces of the park may be said to have provided an opportunity not only for the physical exercise of monarchs, ministers and courtiers, but also for a circulation of humanity conducive to a wide variety of informal contacts among them. This traffic disappeared after 1698 when the destruction of Whitehall forced the court to move to the more confined spaces of St. James's and Kensington.

Pepys's occasional encounters at court with flirtatious women of unknown provenance remind us that, if the only requirement for entrance to the public rooms was the ability to bring off a plausible appearance of 'quality', then its only barrier was the attention, discrimination and interpretive ability of the officers who manned those rooms. At times of heightened political tension the guards might be doubled⁴³ and an unknown gentleman challenged, as Pepys was in the fall of 1662. But even in this case there is an air of apology about the matter:

Thence to White-hall and walked long in the galleries till (as they are commanded to all strange persons) one came to tell us, we not being known and being observed to walk there four or five hours ... he was commanded to ask who we were; which being told, he excused his Question and was satisfied.

That even this minimal level of security was unusual is indicated by Pepys's concluding comment, 'These things speak great fear and jealousy.'⁴⁴ In fact, access to even the innermost reaches of the court, such as the royal bedchamber and closet, could be gained when the monarch was not in residence by offering a small gratuity to the servants whose duty it was to keep these rooms secure. Though efforts were made to discourage the practice, it was bound to continue as long as the payment of those servants remained low and uncertain.⁴⁵

41 Pepys, *Diary* IV, 3. For fears that the earl of Sandwich would be perceived as disloyal or out of favour because he was not giving enough attendance in the mid-1660s, see Pepys, *Diary* IV, 379, 387; VI, 287, 302, 311; VII, 8.

42 For the former, see, for example, Pepys, *Diary* VI, 129; VII, 87; VIII, 16, 110, 239, 303, 515; IX, 373; for the latter, see Pepys, *Diary* VIII, 564; IX, 452-3.

43 See, for example, PRO, LS 13/104, f. 53v; *British Apollo* III, no. 156, 21-23 May 1711; *Evening Post* no. 515, 25-27 Nov. 1712; Boyer, *Annals* XI, pp. 306-7; PRO, 31/3/201, ff. 16v-17; *Memoirs of the Marquis of Torcy, Secretary of State to Lewis XIV (1757)* II, 277-8; HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. III, 99-100, 107-8; Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p. 248.

44 Pepys, *Diary* III, 289.

45 For the payment of inferior servants, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 140-4. For access to the private apartments in the absence of the royal family, see Pepys, *Diary* I, 257-8; II, 79; V, 188-9; VI, 17; VIII, 403; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 260-1; IV, 9; Fienes, *Journeys*, pp. 274-81, 353-9; Uffenbach, *London in 1710*, pp. 104, 153-8. For an attempt to regulate this access, see PRO, LC, 5/150, p. 155.

Nor was access much more restricted on formal court occasions. These may be divided into a rough hierarchy based upon infrequency and exclusivity. Gambling during Christmas-time apart,⁴⁶ the later Stuarts do not appear to have made much of the old Tudor principal feasts: Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, Whitsuntide and All Hallowtide all involved attendance at chapel, nothing more. Nor did they ostentatiously commemorate the great political anniversaries of 30 January (Royal Martyr); 29 May (Restoration); 5 November (Gunpowder Treason); and 17 November (Queen Elizabeth's Accession), perhaps because each had increasingly partisan connotations.⁴⁷ Rather, the Restoration and Augustan courts expended their celebratory energies on the great anniversaries personal to the currently reigning monarch: that is, of his or her birth, accession and coronation. To this should also be added New Year's Day. These occasions were distinguished by elaborate preparations by the court and its guests. The day generally began with a congratulatory *levée* with trumpets and kettledrums, followed by attendance at chapel, the performance of music (on New Year's Day and the royal birthday, an ode, usually but not exclusively by the poet laureate and set by the master of the music or some other court composer), and possibly a play, a ball, gambling or other entertainments.⁴⁸ On the royal birthday, in particular, courtiers were expected to appear in splendid new clothes—the original significance of the term 'birthday suit'—especially tailored for the occasion.⁴⁹ By the late seventeenth century, these were distinguished by silver tissue and elaborate gold and silver trim [Figure 2: A. S. Belle, *Portrait of an Unknown Man* (once thought to be Matthew Prior), c.1713-14]. Moreover, women were expected to wear the full complement of their family's jewels upon such occasions; indeed, to make the greatest show, jewels were frequently borrowed. At Queen Anne's birthday in 1711, the first such anniversary after the fall of a Whig ministry, the Tory duchess of Buckingham and Lady Poulett 'were scarce able to move under the load of jewels they had on.'⁵⁰ Celebration of the royal birth was particularly fraught with political significance during Anne's contentious final years. Tories showing their support for royal policy by especial extravagance, Whigs expressing disapproval by non-attendance

46 See Pepys, *Diary* IX, 2-3; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 308; HMC, *Montagu at Beaulieu*, p. 191; HMC, *Pohwarth MSS* I, 166; BL, Add. MSS 6339, f. 25.

47 See Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 213-15, 226-27.

48 For New Year's and birthday odes, see R. McGuinness, 'The Origins and Disappearance of the English Court Ode', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Society LXXXVII* (1960-61), 69-82; R. McGuinness, 'A Fine Song on Occasion of the Day was Sung', *Music and Literature* I (1969), pp. 290-5; P. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: the violin at the English court 1540-1690* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 327, 420-4. For trumpets and drums at the *levée*, see C. Jones and G. S. Holmes, eds., *The London Diaries of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle 1702-1718* (Oxford, 1985), p. 156. For additional entertainments, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 216-19, 231-4; Pepys, *Diary* VII, 371-2; IX, 565; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 518, 630.

49 For examples of elaborate dress on royal birthdays, see Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, chap. 3, *passim*; Arch and Marschner, *Splendour at Court*, pp. 35-43; A. Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (New York, 1986), pp. 99-100; HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. V, 21, 31; App. IX, 55; HMC, *Fifteenth Report* App. IV, 657; HMC, *Buckleuch at Montagu House* I, 338; BL, Add. MSS 22226, f. 290; 61434, f. 55; 61455, f. 4.

50 HMC, *Fifteenth Report* App. IV, 657; [Edward Harley] to Abigail Harley at Eywood, 6 Feb. 1710/11; Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 15.

or appearance in 'undress'.⁵¹ In this case as in others, ceremony and ritual served to divide Augustan society into those in sympathy with the regime and those in opposition.

Especially extravagant in birthday attire was obviously a very expensive way of honouring the monarch or making a political point. In 1676, Miss Fraser's 'gowne black velvet imbroydered with all sorts of slips inbost worke of gold and silver and peticote one broad ermine and gold lace all over' was rumoured to have cost her £300—a sum so extravagant that it was thought to have frightened Sir Carr Scroope 'from marrying her, saying his estate will scarce maintaine her in clothes'.⁵² In 1666, Lord Herbert dared not appear at court, not thinking himself 'fine enough'.⁵³ Still, if such clothing was necessary, it was not, in itself, a sufficient condition for *entrée* into the drawing room at a royal birthday or anniversary. Thus, despite being dressed in his 'best clothes and laced ruffles' the diarist Dudley Ryder, a young man lacking social connections, only got past the ushers stationed at the doors at one such event during the reign of George I by pretending to be part of the train of the grandee in front of him.⁵⁴

Slightly less exclusive, but of potentially equal entertainment value because of the clash of cultures, were the formal entrances, audiences and departures of foreign ambassadors and dignitaries.⁵⁵ Even more exotic were the services, usually held in the Banqueting House, in which the later Stuarts performed ritual healing of 'King's Evil'. Pepys may have thought the ceremony 'an ugly office and a simple one', but years later Dr. Johnson, who had been touched as a boy by Queen Anne, always retained a 'solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds'.⁵⁶ As Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland first noted, these ceremonies, in which hundreds were ministered to by their sovereign at one time, may have been an effective way of temporarily expanding the court's audience and increasing royal popularity:

The passionate love that the people bore to 'their good queen Anne', was partly founded on her condescension in thus suffering the most wretched and pitiable of her subjects to approach her, when she with alms, with benedictions, soothed their miseries for the love of God... One thing is certain, that never was any measure better contrived by the most sagacious statesman to fix the sovereign in the love of a populace.⁵⁷

51 Jonathan Swift reports of the 1712 birthday: 'I saw lady Wharton, as ugly as the Devil, coming out in the crowd all in an undress; she had been with the Marlborough daughters and lady Bridgewater in St. James's, looking out of the window all undressed, to see the sight.' Swift, *Journal*, p. 481. See also *British Apollo* III no. 144, 21–23 Feb. 1711.

52 HMC, *Twelfth Report App. V*, 31–2; G., Lady Chaworth to Lord Roos, 2 Nov. 16 Nov. 1676].

53 HMC, *Twelfth Report App. IX*, 55; Lord Herbert to Lady Herbert, 17 Nov. 1666.

54 See PRO, LC 5/2–3; Pepys, *Diary* I, 247; 275; II, 57; III, 267–8, 297; IV, 4; VIII, 428; IX, 284; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 248, 254, 344, 349, 356, 411, 506, 513, 515; 537; IV, 262–3. For the crowds at such events, see LC 5/3, p. 8. For the clash of cultures which such events could produce, see esp. LC 5/2, pp. 135–7; Pepys, *Diary* VIII, 428; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 349; IV, 262–3, 267–9.

55 For Pepys, see *Diary* I, 182; II, 74; VIII, 161; for Johnson and Queen Anne, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 210–13. See also Evelyn, *Diary* III, 250–1.

56 A. and E. J. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England, From the Norman Conquest*, 8 vols. (1857) VIII, 207.

If so, then the abandonment of the practice by William III and the Hanoverians was, theological considerations apart, a serious error of public relations.

Regular chapel services on weekdays, Sundays and collar days (upon which the monarch made an offering)⁵⁸ seem to have been easy to attend. This was especially true of the morning service for the royal household, held at 10.00am on weekdays, 9.00am on Sundays, though one might have to bribe the groom of the vestry. This explains how Thomas Allen, a baker, could have had his pocket picked by James Burke, a vagrant, in the Chapel Royal during a service in 1686.⁵⁹ The afternoon service held at 4.00pm for the king and his most prominent courtiers was probably more exclusive, but even early in his career as an obscure clerk of the acts of the navy board, Pepys was able to get in 'with ease by going before the Lord Chancellor with Mr. Kipps'.⁶⁰ For Pepys, much of the attraction to doing so was the chance to hear the latest compositions of Child, Cooke, Locke, Humfrey and (later, presumably) Blow and Purcell, performed by the leading choral establishment in England.⁶¹ For John Evelyn, as we have seen, it was the sermon. If one's interest was less aesthetic or spiritual than simple curiosity to look at a king or a queen, such occasions provided the opportunity by means of a procession to chapel through the privy gallery. The German tourist Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach availed himself of such an opportunity in 1710:

The Queen walked with great ceremony up the centre aisle into a seat near the altar, that was like a pew. Most of her retinue preceded her, a sword and four great sceptres with crowns being carried in front of her. Then came the Queen with her 'dames d'honneur' behind her.⁶²

58 'Twelve Days in the Year, being high and principal Festivals, his Majesty after Divine Service, attended with his principal Nobility, adorned with their Collars of the Garter, together with the Heralds, in their rich Coats, in a grave solemn manner at the Altar, offers a Sum of Gold to God, in signum specialis Domini, that by his Grace he is King, and holdeth all of him? The twelve days were New Year's Day, Twelfth Day, Candlemas, the Annunciation or Lady Day, Easter, Ascension, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, Michaelmas, All-Saints and Christmas: E. Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia* (1704) II, 166. For a slightly different list also based on contemporary sources, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, Table 7.3, pp. 214–15.

59 PRO, LS 13/173, p. 45. For the hours of services, see E. F. Rimbault, ed., *The Old Cheque-Book, or Book of Remembrance, of the Chapel Royal, from 1561 to 1744* (Camden Society, 1872), p. 82; Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia* (1669), p. 231. Under Queen Anne, the main Sunday service was at noon: BL, Add. MSS 22226, f. 32.

60 Pepys, *Diary* I, 195; see also V, 96. For Pepys's subsequent attendance at chapel services, see *Diary* I, 210, 220, 237, 265–6, 276, 313; III, 42, 60, 67–8, 84, 190, 281, 287, 292; IV, 36–7; VI, 86–7; VII, 94, 99, 245, 382–3, 409, 418; VIII, 32, 41, 115–17, 144, 255, 425, 515; IX, 163, 251, 294, 541. John Evelyn's attendance at chapel, particularly during Lent, was so regular as to make citation impractical: see *Diary* III–IV, *passim*. For evidence that even the afternoon chapel service was open to the ranks of small craftsmen, see PRO, LS 13/171, p. 368.

61 See Pepys, *Diary* I, 195, 265; II, 197; VIII, 32, 425, 515. Evelyn was also interested in music: see *Diary* III, 262, 347.

62 Uffenbach, *Londoni in 1710*, p. 115. See also the ensuing physical description of the queen. For Uffenbach's curiosity, see *Londoni in 1710*, p. 35. For additional examples, see Swift, *Journal*, pp. 112, 659. See also Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia* (1669), pp. 230–1. Later Stuart courtiers attended chapel for social reasons as well: see J. Hartley, *Music in Purcell's London: the social background* (1968), pp. 78–9.

In Tudor times such processions allowed for the possibility of halting the train and presenting a suit to the waylaid monarch, but this was forbidden under later Stuart ordinances.⁶³ What they certainly did provide was provocation for disputes over precedence: such squabbles were a pastime of the status-conscious courtly upper classes.⁶⁴ They might strike us, as they undoubtedly did some contemporaries, as much ado about nothing. But they become more understandable when it is recalled that one's proximity to the monarch in procession was a clear indication of one's status at court and in society at large. What Edward Muir has written about Renaissance Venice is not less true of later Stuart England—that such cavalades were, 'in effect ... the constitution' laid out horizontally.⁶⁵ Finally, it should be recalled that the existence at court of Catholic chapels up to the period of the Glorious Revolution and Lutheran, French and Dutch Protestant chapels thereafter allowed for the satisfaction of a different kind of curiosity. Pepys and Evelyn could not have been alone in taking advantage of this, to the alarm of most loyal Anglicans.⁶⁶ Their fears notwithstanding, the relative diversity of opinion and opportunity available at the later-Stuart court was, almost certainly, an attraction and, in the long run, a strength.

After chapel there was often a drawing room, one of two or three held per week, generally in the afternoon or early evening, during the court season.⁶⁷ Prior to the nineteenth century these assemblies or 'courts', as they were sometimes called by contemporaries, provided the easiest and most regular access to the monarch in his court. To attend, one merely had to maintain the appearance of gentility, though a somewhat more elaborate dress than everyday wear was recommended: by 1700, lace, gold and silver brocade on men's suits (especially waistcoats) and women's dresses was becoming more common even on these occasions. This did not prevent young Ryder from attending several drawing rooms, on one occasion being accompanied by a cousin in a borrowed coat and wig.⁶⁸

Going to Court

Let us assume that we possess both the inclination and the sartorial equipment to attend a drawing room at Hampton Court Palace, sometime during the decade which began in 1700. Admittedly, that palace was, like Windsor, largely a summer residence, at least after 1702; nor were its physical arrangements in every particular typical of the English court. Nevertheless, we will make our imagined visit to Hampton Court because today it best preserves the architectural arrangements and ambience of the period—a fact attributable in large part to the spectacularly

63 *Household Ordinances*, pp.374–5. However, cf. Uffenbach, *London in 1710*, p.133.

64 For disputes over 'precedency' in general, see PRO, LC 5/201, pp.355–67; HMC, *Seventh Report* App. MSS II, 349.

65 Muir, *Civic Ritual*, p.190. See the discussion in Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, pp.105–7.

66 See Pepys, *Diary III*, 202; IV, 430; V, 63; VII, 87, 94, 97, 99, 107; VIII, 116, 154, 427–8, 588; IX, 319–20, 515; Evelyn, *Diary III*, 612; IV, 534–5, 537.

67 *Buchholz, Augustan Courts*, p.487 and sources cited, p. 354 n.175; Bl., Add. MSS 22226, f.32. For the schedule during the later years of Anne's reign, see n.108, below.

68 Beattie, *English Courts*, p.16. Note that Jonathan Swift was surprised to be accosted by someone at court wearing a red coat and no sword: *Journal*, pp.137–8.

successful restoration, following the fire of 1986, performed by the staff of Historic Royal Palaces.⁶⁹

And so, having adorned ourselves appropriately, we order our coach or hail a chair—nobody who is anybody would dare to arrive on foot. If we possess a coach it deposits us at the palace gates [Figure 3]: despite several temporarily successful forays by the French ambassador, no coach but the sovereign's may go farther.⁷⁰ If arriving by chair, we may be carried into the courtyard.⁷¹ If this were a major court day, say a royal birthday, we would have much ado to get past the crowds at the gate who, like those who flock to a film premiere today, would be most interested in our clothing.⁷² The major obstacles to prevent the influx of the crowd are the porter and the under-marshal at the gate. The former carries out the routine tasks with which we associate college porters today. The latter functions very much as does the police contingent at the gates of any royal palace—albeit less scrupulously than his modern counterpart. Porters and under-marshals had a difficult task, for, as we have seen, they were the first line of defence against unwanted intruders and disorder of any kind.⁷³ There are numerous examples of these officers guessing wrongly about the appropriateness of allowing in a particular person. This led to injured dignity, harsh words and, sometimes, physical violence—which usually led, in turn, to the suspension of the under-marshal.⁷⁴

Having impressed—or intimidated—the porters and under-marshals at the gate sufficiently to allow our passage, we enter a large courtyard, the Base Court, manned by footguards [Figure 4].⁷⁵ If we were members of the royal family or

69 The author is grateful to Dr Simon Thurley for the point about Hampton Court's uniqueness, especially in regard to the arrangement of the bedchamber and closet and the private apartments on the ground floor. The following discussion relies heavily on the various guidebooks to the palace, in particular Thurley, *King's Apartments*; from which the photographs in Figures 3–6, 8–10, 12–13, and 15 have been taken with the permission, herein gratefully acknowledged, of Her Majesty the Queen and Historic Royal Palaces.

70 PRO, LC 3/5, p.7. See the dispute over Marshall Tallard's coach in 1698: HMC, *Bath MSS III*, 223. See also HMC, *Dorsetshire MSS I*, 79. Hackney coaches seem to have congregated around the palace gates waiting for fares: see LS 13/172, entry of 25 Jan. 1682/83.

71 PRO, LS 13/171, p.355 contains an order of 1 Aug. 1676 prohibiting chairmen from bringing people within the gates of Whitehall Palace, implying that this was a prevalent practice: LS 13/171, p.355. Despite this order, the practice appears to have continued: see LS 13/177, f.16v, an order of the board of green cloth to the porters and under-marshals dated 11 Dec. 1728, noting that hackney chairmen 'doe very much Incommode the Court at St. James's by standing with their Chaires at the foot of the Guard Chamber Stairs & in other Passages & Places within the Gates. From henceforward, they were to deposit their fares and wait outside the gate or in the park. See also LS 13/116, f.54.

72 See, for example, Swift, *Journal*, p.481.

73 The household ordinances specify that the porters were 'not to permit [to enter] any stragling and masterlesse men, any suspicious persons, or uncivill, uncleanly, and rude people, or beggars; suspicious persons that presume to bring with them any pistols, daggs [small, vest-pocket pistols], diggers, cudgells, or other unitt weapons; clergy not properly attired in gowns; and all such men and women of inferior quality as come muffled, masqued or otherwise disguised'. The under-marshals were charged with punishing and removing 'vagrant persons, rogues, and all sorts of beggars, idle and loose people': *Household Ordinances*, pp.352, 353.

74 See, for example, PRO, LS 13/115, ff.56, 61; LS 13/117, pp.65–9, 129; LS 13/176, p.54.

75 The exterior household guard was, in fact, provided by two regiments of footguards (the King's or Queen's and the Coldstream) and three troops of the Life Guard or Horse Guards (the first troop of which was named for the sovereign, the others for their respective captains. A fourth was also distinguished as the Scots Troop). In all, the household troops, excepting the yeomen of the guard and gentlemen pensioners, came to about 2,500 men. At any given time the outer guard was

visiting dignitaries making our entrance, their officer of the day would salute us; they would stand to attention in rank and file; and the court drums would beat a tattoo.⁷⁶ After a short diagonal walk across Clock Court we come to the king's or great staircase [Figure 5—'a' on the Plan (Figure 16)]. The decoration is by Antonio Verrio, the ironwork by Jean Tijou.⁷⁷ The symbolic significance of ascending to meet the sovereign—common to all royal palaces since Tudor times—is not lost on us. Nor is the presence of the yeomen of the guard. These are the effective internal palace guard, forty of whom are on duty, lining the staircase and the first of the public rooms, the guard chamber.⁷⁸ At the top of the staircase, a yeoman usher opens the door to the latter.

The guard chamber [Figure 6—'b' on the Plan], also still called the great chamber, is descended from the old Tudor great watching chamber, which was, in turn, a successor to the medieval hall.⁷⁹ Readers of *Beowulf* or the Arthurian romances will remember, in addition to its culinary significance, the military associations of the hall, still commemorated in the presence of the yeomen and by its martial decor, arranged by William III's gunsmith, John Harris.⁸⁰ In addition to the yeomen, the guard chamber is manned by two grooms of the great chamber, who serve as court messengers; and two messengers in ordinary, who go farther afield on the business of the secretary of state.⁸¹ This room is accessible to all who pass the palace gates, except liveried servants such as footmen.⁸² It seems to have been a popular resort for people of the middling sort to gather on important occasions to have a look at those celebrities who were allowed to go farther into the king's apartments, their way cleared by yeomen ushers shouting 'Stand by!'—a ceremony known as 'the honours of the Guard Chamber'⁸³ [Figure 7: Rowlandson's depiction of the procession to a drawing room in 1808]. Thus Swift writes 'I was to-day at Court, and saw Raymond among the Beef-eaters, staying to see the queen', probably on her way to chapel.⁸⁴

After a walk of about sixty feet we turn left and encounter a gentleman usher, quarter waiter. He will scan our faces and attire and, if he takes us to be persons

provided by detachments of two squadrons, consisting of fifty men apiece drawn from the four troops of the Life Guards, the gentlemen of the guard on horseback, grenadiers on foot (outside the palace walls); as well as companies of the footguards within. These rotated, each set of two squadrons serving one day in six. Detachments of Life Guards attended the sovereign on horseback when he ventured beyond the palace; see G. Miede, *The Present State of Great Britain and Ireland* (1711), pp. 273–4; E. Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia* (1704) II, 183; J. Chamberlayne, *Magna Britanniae Notitia* (1755) I ii, 107–8.

⁷⁶ *Evening Post* no. 610, 4–7 July 1713; PRO, LC 5/2, pp. 40, 191, LC 5/3, p. 17. But cf. LC 5/3, pp. 7–8, which seems to indicate that drums were to be reserved for the monarch.

⁷⁷ Thurley, *King's Apartments*, p. 11.

⁷⁸ *Household Ordinances*, p. 353.

⁷⁹ For the decline of the hall and rise of the guard chamber, see Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, pp. 113, 119–22.

⁸⁰ Thurley, *King's Apartments*, pp. 12–13. The guard chambers at St. James's and Windsor were decorated similarly; see Rowlandson's depiction of the former in 1808, Figure 7, below; and Fiennes, *Journeys*, pp. 277–8.

⁸¹ For the attendance of servants in the public rooms at Hampton Court, see PRO, LC 5/152, p. 230.

⁸² *Household Ordinances*, p. 354. Footmen and pages to members of the royal family could enter, but could go no further.

⁸³ Baillic, 'litiquette', pp. 173–4.

⁸⁴ Swift, *Journal*, p. 112.

of gentlemen of quality, and of good fashion, [or] the gentlemen that attend Our great officers and privy councillors ... [or] wives and daughters of the nobility, and their women that attend them ... [or] ladies of good rank and quality, he will open the door to the presence chamber [Figure 8—'d' on the Plan]. In other words, non-liveried but still inferior servants and those whom the household ordinances describe as 'Mean or Ordinary Persons' could not enter the presence chamber.⁸⁵ It was presumably at this stage that those who had been formally banished from the court for political or diplomatic reasons, usually by written order of the lord chamberlain or secretary of state, were barred from proceeding further, if they had displayed the temerity to come this far.⁸⁶ Such banishment was the most significant indication of royal displeasure short of imprisonment, signifying a kind of political or social death for the unfortunate person so singled out. Once again, access to the court and royal presence is a clear marker of who belongs and who does not.

The presence chamber had emerged from the guard chamber in the English court during the later middle ages to provide a proper ceremonial setting for the king, his immediate entourage and important guests.⁸⁷ By 1700, it was used almost exclusively on formal ceremonial occasions: it was in the presence chamber that the monarch received some ambassadors and, at most royal palaces, dined in state. At Hampton Court, the presence chamber was, in effect, divided into two, the latter activity being performed, logically enough, in the adjacent eating room.⁸⁸ On important occasions, the presence chamber was lined by gentlemen pensioners and sergeants at arms. Just as the social pretensions of these officers were higher than those of the yeomen of the guard and messengers, so this room is more ornately decorated than the guard chamber. This decor includes two of Henry VIII's tapestries, 'The Labours of Hercules' and 'The Triumph of Bacchus' as well as an equestrian portrait of William III by Sir Godfrey Kneller.⁸⁹ But the most spectacular object in the room may be found opposite, facing the painting.

As its name implies, the presence chamber is the official throne room, and at the end of its forty foot length we find a chair of estate under its elaborate canopy. The etiquette regarding the chair of estate was precise. No one but the monarch was, of course, allowed to sit in it; nor, regardless of the monarch's presence, could one stand under the canopy without committing a grave act of *lèse-majesté*. Thus, at the drawing room following the acceptance of the crown by William and Mary on 13 February 1689, Princess Anne, having discovered that

⁸⁵ *Household Ordinances*, pp. 355–6. See also PRO, LC 5/138, p. 342; LC 5/141, pp. 35, 36.

⁸⁶ See, for example, Nicolson, *Diaries*, pp. 176, 442 n. 64; PRO, LC 5/3, pp. 10–12, 16; Gregg, *Anne*, p. 342; HMC, *Seventh Report* App. I, p. 485; HMC, *Eighth Report* App. II, 98; HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. VII, 83, 189; HMC, *Fourteenth Report* App. II, 274, 393; HMC, *Ormonde MSS*, n.s. VI, 244, 376; HMC, *Bath MSS* I, 249; Bl., *Portland Loan* 29/36, 22 Feb. 1728/29.

⁸⁷ See Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, pp. 122–4.

⁸⁸ For dining in state in the presence chamber, see Bodl., MS Carte 60, ff. 12v–13; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 490–1, 513; HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. VII, 52.

⁸⁹ Thurley, *King's Apartments*, pp. 14–15.

The attendants had placed her tabouret too near the royal chairs, so that it was partly overshadowed by the canopy of state ... [she] would not seat herself under it, until it was removed to a correct distance from the state-chair of the Queen her sister.⁹⁰

Courtiers were required to bow three times in the direction of the chair of estate even when it was unoccupied. At night, when the room was slept in by an esquire of the body for the king's protection, he turned the chair to the wall, 'thus neutralizing it'.⁹¹

Having done our duty to the chair of estate, we come next to the eating room ['e' on the Plan], where, at Hampton Court, the monarch occasionally dined in public, served by his Bedchamber staff and cupbearers, carvers and sewers, the last three on bended knee. These occasions were open to 'persons of good fashion and good appearance that have a desire to see Us at dinner ... and not any inferior, meane or unknowne people'.⁹² Charles II frequently dined in state at Whitehall, sometimes to the accompaniment of his twenty-four violins,⁹³ but the practice grew rare after 1685. None of his Stuart successors nor George I seem to have had much desire to be put on such public display, choosing, instead to eat most of their meals in a private dining room.⁹⁴ This was almost certainly, like the nearly contemporaneous abandonment of touching for King's Evil, a failure of public relations and was one of numerous factors contributing to the decline of the monarchy's emotional hold on its subjects at the end of the seventeenth century. George II and Caroline, both as prince and princess of Wales and as king and consort, revived the practice periodically, and it seems to have been popular. On one occasion, held in the queen's apartments in 1727, 'The room was so throng'd with spectators there was no stirring'. The effect of such spectacle upon those who beheld it was not lost on another commentator: 'y^e People are mightily pleas'd wth their dining in Publick, & I am told by very reasonable people y^t it has had a mighty good Effect among y^e ordinary common sort, hereabouts'.⁹⁵ That effect was not maintained: by 1782 the positions of cupbearer, carver and sewer were notorious sinecures, abolished as part of Burke's Economical Reform of that year.⁹⁶

Such occasions being rare even c.1700, we traverse the thirty feet of this probably empty room, reaching a door manned by a groom of the Privy Chamber. He eyes us warily, noting that we are not peers, privy councilors, or officers of the court, government, army or navy in attendance upon the king, but that we do seem to be 'gentlemen of good ranke and note who have occasion to adresse themselves unto

⁹⁰ Strickland, *Queens of England* (1852) VII, 198, quoted in Gregg, *Anne*, pp. 71–2.

⁹¹ *Household Ordinances*, pp. 356, 367; PRO, LC, 5/143, p. 34; Baillic, 'Étiquette', pp. 174, 178.

⁹² *Household Ordinances*, p. 354; MS Carte 60, ff. 12v–13r; PRO, LC, 9/201, p. 259–60.

⁹³ A. Bryant, *England Under Charles II* (1935), p. 175n; I Tolman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 306–7; Pepys, *Diary* III, 60; IV, 407; VII, 218; VIII, 161, 404, 428; IX, 382, 557; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 290–1, 490–1, 513.

⁹⁴ George I made an important and politically rewarding exception during the period of his quarrel with the prince and princess of Wales, 1747–20. On these occasions he was served by footmen, not chamber attendants; see J. M. Beattie, 'The Court of George I and English Politics, 1717–1720', *English Historical Review* LXXXI (1966), pp. 30–1. For evidence that Anne occasionally dined in public, see Uffenbach, *Londaniæ 1690–1710*, pp. 35–6 and below.

⁹⁵ PRO, LC, 9/3, p. 81; Bl., Add. MSS 63463, f. 88v; Mary Cowper to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, Hampton Court, 20 Aug. 1716. See also HMC, *Pelham*, MSS I, 12.

⁹⁶ PRO, LS 13/17, p. 72.

the sovereign. Thus, he allows us to pass into the privy chamber [Figure 9—'f' on the Plan].⁹⁷ This room, in existence since the later middle ages, emerged under the early Tudors as a private room with its own staff, to which the monarch could retreat for relaxation, private dining, etc. As David Starkey has demonstrated, everyone there fore wanted to follow him into it, which, of course, served eventually to defeat its purpose. It was staffed by the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, who, while the room was still the monarch's inner sanctum, provided his most personal attendance—the royal 'body service'. This had led, in turn, to great influence at the Henrician court.⁹⁸ But as later monarchs were forced to seek other places of retreat, their contact with the sovereign diminished, and, with it, the incentive for attendance. Though the 'Household Ordinances' of Charles II specify twelve gentlemen in waiting per quarter; and despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that the post was awarded to members of some of the most prominent families at court and in the countryside, it was almost purely honorary by 1700, having lost all attendance except on ceremonial occasions, and all remuneration except for diet on those occasions.⁹⁹

This room is more ornate than the presence chamber and it contains an even more elaborate chair and canopy of estate. This testifies to the fact that, c.1700, the privy chamber was now fully public and, indeed, intended to be the most important ceremonial room in the palace—hence its central position in the king's state apartments. It was here that the sovereign sometimes heard birthday odes, and was supposed to receive foreign ambassadors at their first, official state entrance. In fact, by the late seventeenth century both types of event were frequently moved to other venues—yet another sign of the decline of the privy chamber.¹⁰⁰ Thus, this chair of estate, albeit the most regal at Hampton Court, sat, most of the time, empty. We pass it, noting its mute testimony to a bygone age of monarchy, only to encounter a gentleman usher of the Privy Chamber. He represents our last but keenest sartorial critic, for he provides *entrée* into the drawing room.¹⁰¹

The withdrawing or drawing room [Figure 10—'i' on the Plan] was, as its name implies, yet another attempt to provide a haven for the monarch. It emerged in its present form in English palaces just before 1600.¹⁰² We note that it is smaller (thirty-two foot by thirty foot) and less richly decorated than its predecessor, with

⁹⁷ *Household Ordinances*, p. 361.

⁹⁸ See Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, pp. 135–9; Starkey, 'King's Privy Chamber'; Starkey, 'Representation Through Intimacy'; Starkey, 'Intimacy and Innovation', *passim*.

⁹⁹ *Household Ordinances*, p. 361; R. O. Bucholz, 'Introduction' to Sainty and Bucholz, *Officials of the Royal Household 1660–1837* Part 1, p. xxiv and n. 20.

¹⁰⁰ See McGuinness, 'Fine Song', pp. 291–2; Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp. 420–3; PRO, LC, 5/2–3, esp. LC 5/3, pp. 1, 8. In 1668 Pepys witnessed a Garter election in the privy chamber at Whitehall; *Diary* IX, 246.

¹⁰¹ The role of the gentleman usher of the Privy Chamber as doorkeeper to the withdrawing room is inferred from *Gentleman Ordinances*, pp. 360, 377; PRO, LC, 5/152, p. 230. In theory, this room was accessible only to the principal Secretaries of State, ... the Master of Requests, members of the Privy Council and ... the chief officers of the court; Thurley, *Hampton Court Palace*, p. 24. In practice, it was open to respectable society on drawing room days.

¹⁰² Baillic, 'Étiquette', p. 174. There was a room called the 'withdrawing chamber' in early Tudor palaces, but it does not appear to have served the same social function as its later Stuart counterpart: see S. Thagabey, 'Henry VIII and the Building of Hampton Court: a reconstruction of the Tudor palace', *Architectural History* XXXI (1988), 1–54, p. 5.

an almost perfunctory chair for the monarch to sit in. This indicates that the withdrawing room is technically not a public room at all: officially, it comes under the jurisdiction of the officers of the Bedchamber.¹⁰³ This obviously liminal room is the setting for that court institution which borrows its name, the drawing room. If the court is 'thronged' as the contemporary saying goes—a likely perception, given the dimensions of the room—then our eyes are accosted by a thick knot of the great, the near great and the hopeful; our ears by the sometimes deafening noise of hearty—but possibly hollow—greeting, the emphatic relation of news and its reception with astonishment, joy or dismay, and, of course, the incessant buzz of rumour.¹⁰⁴

This reminds us that yet another reason to go to court was to hear news and, more specifically, to judge the health of the monarch, the ministry, or the nation itself. Towards the end of Anne's reign especially, when the fate of Europe hung upon the parlous state of that ruler's constitution, foreign ministers used court drawing rooms as diagnostic opportunities. In the spring of 1714, the Dutch resident reported to his superiors that one such occasion had, in fact, been scheduled for the precise purpose of publicly demonstrating an improvement in the queen's health since a recent, near-fatal, illness.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Jonathan Swift found drawing rooms excellent opportunities to assess the health of the current ministry by taking the mood of the court. For example, he notes in the *Journal to Stella* that when news came of Lord Stanhope's defeat at Brihuega during the War of the Spanish Succession 'it was odd to see the whole countenances of the Court changed so in two hours'.¹⁰⁶

Swift's career at court during the final years of Queen Anne's reign also illustrates the potential of court drawing rooms to bring aspirants into contact with a wide variety of potential patrons: according to the *Journal*, such assemblies attracted 'all her Ministers, Foreigners & Persons of Quality'.¹⁰⁷ While most court-

¹⁰³ In keeping with its liminal quality, there is, in fact, some ambiguity about which sub-department had jurisdiction over this room. Successive Bedchamber ordinances claim it for the Bedchamber: see Hereford and Worcester RO, BA 2252/5 (1), P.17, referring to ordinances of 1661 and 1673; BA 2252/5, ordinances of 10 Nov. 1678 clauses 5–7; BA 2252/2, ordinances of 1689, pp. 58–9; PRO, LC, 5/201, p. 99, ordinances of 1685. Indeed, those ordinances were posted in the withdrawing room. However, the lord chamberlain's subordinates clearly had some role in its security: see LC, 5/147, p. 313.

¹⁰⁴ The Hanoverians seem to have revived an earlier practice whereby visitors arranged themselves in a [semi-]circle along which the king moved: see Beattie, *English Court*, p. 16; Brooke, *George III*, pp. 294–5. For evidence of a circle under the early Stuarts, see Smuts, *Stuart Court*, p. 108, Figure 2; see Evelyn, *Diary III*, 361, 568. The author has found no evidence of such formality at drawing rooms under William III or Anne, though the Dutch Resident, J. Hermitage, consistently referred to the practice of holding such assemblies as 'tenir cercle': BL, Add. MSS 17677 BBB, ff. 7, 104, 107; CCC, f. 505; FFF, f. 243v; HHH, ff. 88, 94.

¹⁰⁵ BL, Add. MSS 17677 HHH, ff. 87v–88. For the French ambassador making use of drawing rooms to gauge the queen's current state of health, see PRO Transcripts (Baschet Transcripts) 31/5/202, f. 8. Alternatively, one could simply ask the royal physicians: see Pepys, *Diary VIII*, 524; Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, p. 185.

¹⁰⁶ Swift, *Journal*, p. 139. For the court as a source of news, generally, see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 182–8; Pepys, *Diary IV*, 63, 108, 334; VI, 156; VII, 94, 108, 142–4, 155, 177, 213, 221, 269; VIII, 1, 36, 41, 63, 73, 86, 120–1, 145, 155, 261, 293–4, 297, 323–4, 326, 403, 410, 464, 581; IX, 79–80, 126, 351, 451, 466–7, 560; Evelyn, *Diary III*, 438.

¹⁰⁷ Swift, *Journal*, p. 603.

iers seem to have been too discreet to engage in outright job-solicitation at a drawing room, such occasions afforded the possibility of putting oneself in view, making an initial contact, or transacting some bit of political or social business with a superior to whom one had become known. Thus, the equerry, Peter Wentworth, wrote to his brother in 1713 concerning the latter's impending installation as a knight of the garter: 'to morrow is another Court & if theres any thing stirring about this business, I shall know Lord Treasurer says he dispatches more business in one of those mornings [sic], then he us'd to do at home in a week'.¹⁰⁸ And so, upon entry, we begin the elaborately choreographed mating dance of the would-be favoured: manoeuvring from circle to circle, careful to avoid the gaze of those who are 'out'; only seeking eye-contact with and bowing to those who are 'in'. Swift recounts the hazards of going to a drawing room after his party, the Tories, lost an important vote in parliament in December 1711:

It was mightily crowded; both parties coming to observe each other's faces. I have avoided lord Halifax's bow till he forced it on me; but we did not talk together. I could not make less than fourscore bows, of which about twenty might be to Whigs.¹⁰⁹

In this setting, a shallow bow, a raised eyebrow, a look of indifference can make or break one's fortune—or at least seem to do so. Verbal communication with a social superior is fraught with the potential for glory or disaster.

Still, we should not discount the purely social element to these occasions: as we have seen, Pepys and Evelyn frequently ran into friends and acquaintances in the galleries and gardens of Whitehall and Swift claimed that 'The Court serves me for a Coffee-house, once a week I meet acquaintance there that I should not otherwise see in a quarter'.¹¹⁰ Drawing rooms usually featured cards and, under George I, billiards.¹¹¹ The most prominent court officers were allowed tables of hospitality: as a result, the future dean of St. Patrick's was never at a loss for a dinner during his sojourn at court, especially on Sundays, when royal servants were encouraged to make invitations. Indeed, he often had a choice of tables and hosts.¹¹² Even 'so

¹⁰⁸ BL, Add. MSS 31144, ff. 329v–30; Peter Wentworth to the earl of Strafford, Windsor, 23 Jan. 1712/13. Wentworth contradicts himself in the ensuing passage when he writes 'I suppose you know the days are Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday [sic] from between 12 & one till half an hour after two. This schedule is confirmed by Swift, *Journal*, p. 603.

¹⁰⁹ Swift, *Journal*, p. 440. For an example of courtiers avoiding a fallen minister in the public rooms at court, see T. Carte, *The Life of James Duke of Ormond; Containing an Account of ... Ireland Under his Government*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1851) IV, 593–4. For additional examples of the necessity of bowing, see Swift, *Journal*, p. 607; HMC, *Portland MSS V*, 463. According to Wildeblood, *Politie World*, p. 146, one did not bow to a member of the royal family unless one had been acknowledged by a word or a look. Swift, *Journal*, p. 522. See, for example, Pepys, *Diary I*, 178, 188–9, 193, 207, 223; II, 38, 66, 67; Swift, *Journal*, pp. 322–3, 421, 490, 580, 600.

¹¹¹ HMC, *Polwarth MSS I*, 378–79; HMC, *Portland MSS V*, 541; BL, Add. MSS 36772, f. 173v; Pepys, *Diary VIII*, 70.

¹¹² Under Anne, the board of green cloth, the clerk of the kitchen, the master cooks, the gentlemen waiters, the maids of honour, the chaplains and the women of the guard were granted such tables: PRO, LS 13/43. For Swift's dining at many of these, see *Journal*, pp. 323, 328, 329–30, 356, 361, 363. For Pepys and Evelyn taking advantage of such invitations earlier in the period, see n. 24, above. For the occasional provision of tables under George I, see HMC, *Portland MSS V*, 568; BL, Add. MSS 36772, ff. 173–4. William III was apparently disappointed that his lord steward, the duke of Devonshire, refused to keep tables: Add. MSS 51324, ff. 50, 53; see also 61416, f. 73v.

unlikely a courtier as the future Lady Mary Wortley Montagu turned up at drawing rooms and chapel services late in Anne's reign in order to rendezvous with friends, including her prospective husband.¹¹³ This is significant, for as long as the ruling classes found it enjoyable or necessary to go to court, the ruler had one more powerful hold on their loyalties.

But the primary attraction of such occasions was, for most aspiring courtiers, contact with the ruler. He, or she, is the centre of the dance. Some monarchs, such as Charles II or George II, took the lead by sauntering about the room, bestowing a look, a word or a conversation according to a premeditated calculus of favour. To be pulled aside and taken to a window was especially significant.¹¹⁴ In contrast, Queen Anne's poor health and shyness caused her to remain seated in a chair of estate at the far end of the room, surrounded by a phalanx of ladies in waiting, as shown in several contemporary paintings. The duchess of Marlborough reports that, even at the basset table, 'the Ladies [sat] on both sides of the Queen so close sometimes, that the Queen could hardly put her hand in her pocket'.¹¹⁵ On rare occasions, for example when drawing rooms were sparsely attended during the summer at Windsor, she received visitors in the more intimate surroundings of her bedchamber. But according to Celia Fiennes, she was, even here, set apart from her guests by a 'screen round the bed'.¹¹⁶ Obviously, the courtly dance had to come to her.

This was a problem because one could not simply approach the sovereign, introduce oneself and strike up a conversation. Because of the relative openness of the drawing room, it was necessary to preserve its host from awkward or unwanted chance conversation. As a consequence, court etiquette required that before one could speak to the sovereign, one had to be presented formally by the lord chamberlain, the groom of the stole, the lord or lady of the Bedchamber in waiting or some other great officer. Such presentation consisted of an introduction, followed by the kissing of the monarch's right hand on bended right knee [Figure 11: Peter Angelis, *Queen Anne and the Knights of the Garter* (1713)].¹¹⁷ 'Kissing hands', almost certainly a vestige of the ancient feudal practice of paying

homage and swearing fealty, was necessary, even after initial presentation, before appointment to posts in the crown's gift. It might also signify a return to royal favour.¹¹⁸ Some idea of the seriousness with which this custom was viewed and of its necessity prior to any more specific solicitation of royal favour, is conveyed by the newly-wed countess of Plymouth in a letter to the secretary of state, Robert Harley, written in 1706:

The Duchess of Marlborough [the groom of the stole] did me the honour yesterday to introduce me to the Queen in a very obliging manner, and.... Her Majesty had the goodness to receive me very graciously. I hope, Sir, you will approve of my making this step, which I imagined necessary since the declaring of our marriage, before any application could well be made to her Majesty in favour of Dr. Bisse.¹¹⁹

In contrast, Jonathan Swift never spoke to the lady upon whom his hopes for ecclesiastical preferment depended, for, despite the repeated promises of the earl of Oxford, he was never presented to 'kiss hands'.

Let us imagine that we have succeeded where the future dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin did not: we have been presented. Once conversation begins, it tends to centre around the trivial: the weather; how long we have been in town; the health and activities of our relatives in the country.¹²⁰ As Lord Chesterfield put it: 'There is a court jargon, a chit-chat, a small talk, which turns upon trifles—it is the proper language of levees, drawing rooms and ante-chambers, it is necessary to know it'.¹²¹ But it was not always so. The record of Charles II's meetings with his subjects indicates that he valued wit and substance, and Mary II was a lively conversationalist.¹²² However, after 1685 there was, apart from the latter, a succession of dull conversationalists: James II, William III, Anne, and the first two—or three—Georges. The consequent need to avoid royal embarrassment put paid to the possibility of a real *tête-à-tête* in such a public venue.

Even without verbal contact, the monarch's exalted status is acknowledged by etiquette. For example, no person but the monarch may remain covered—that is, hatted—in the royal presence.¹²³ No one but the monarch may sit unless invited to do so—hence the sparse furnishings of the public rooms.¹²⁴ By the end of the

118 For kissing hands upon appointment, see Pepys, *Diary* VII, 108; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 389, 571; Bl., Add. MSS 61443, f. 3; 61474, f. 16; HMC, *Bath* MSS I, 237. For kissing hands as a sign of a return to favour, see HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. VII, 66; HMC, *Histories* MSS II, 244. In 1685 James II indicated the withholding of that favour by refusing his hand to those who had sought to exclude him from the throne in the previous reign: HMC, *Ormonde* MSS n.s. VII, 327. For similar examples from the reign of Charles II, see Pepys, *Diary* IX, 493, 515.

119 HMC, *Fiftieth Report* App. IV, 322–3; countess of Plymouth to [Robert] Harley [25 Aug. 1706]. 'Dr Bisse' is almost certainly Philip Bisse, D.D., appointed bishop of St. David's in 1710.

120 The record of eighteenth-century royal conversation is pretty consistent: see Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, p. 245; Brooke, *George III*, pp. 295–6.

121 Quoted in Arch and Marschner, *Splendour at Court*, p. 35.

122 Foss, *Age of Patronage*, p. 26; Pepys, *Diary* VII, 105–6; VIII, 68; IX, 150–1, 382; Buchholz, *Augustan Court*, p. 31.

123 An exception was made for peers in the Chapel Royal, at the theatre and out of doors: see HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. VI, 86; *Household Ordinances*, p. 360.

124 See the delicate negotiations surrounding this matter at the Sacheverell trial: Bl., Add. MSS 61422, f. 62r and v.

113 R. Haisband, ed., *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1965) I, 81, 100, 117.

114 For Charles II, see Carte, *Ormonde* IV, 483–4; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 249, 386, 389, 397, 568, 614; Foss, *Age of Patronage*, p. 24. For George II, see Beattie, *English Court*, p. 14. Even the more formal James II and William III were known to wander over to a favoured guest during a drawing room: HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. V, 166–7; HMC, *Fourteenth Report* App. IV, 197. See also Pepys, *Diary* IX, 131, 290.

115 Bl., Add. MSS 61422, f. 62v. For contemporary paintings depicting the queen closely surrounded by her ladies in waiting, see P. Tillemans, *Queen Anne in the House of Lords* and J. Gerhard Huck, *The Presentation of the Treaty of Union to Queen Anne by the English and Scottish Commissioners*, July 23, 1706, engraved by Valentine Green.

116 Fiennes, *Journeys*, p. 359. For evidence from the previous reign that this screen was indeed intended to keep off companies coming near, see Fiennes, *Journeys*, p. 279. For the queen receiving, sometimes in bed, sometimes in a chair in her bedchamber, see Bl., Add. MSS 17677 CCC, ff. 683v, 686r and v; H1114, ff. 9v, 89r and v; 31143, f. 263v; 31144, f. 321r and v; Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, pp. 69, 312; Swift, *Journal*, pp. 328, 361, 451; *Dublin Gazette* no. 383, 18–21 Dec. 1708; D. Green, *Queen Anne* (New York, 1970), pp. 149, 247, 280.

117 See Pepys, *Diary* I, 143–4, 154; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 407; HMC, *Hamilton MSS* suppl., p. 156; Bl., Add. MSS 61417, f. 181; 61456, f. 43r and v; H. I. Snyder, 'The Last Days of Queen Anne: the account of Sir John Evelyn examined', *Huntington Library Quarterly* XXXIV (1971), 262–8; Nicolson, *Diaries*, pp. 126, 528; *Daily Courant* no. 162, 23 Oct. 1702; *Evening Post* no. 409, 22–25 Mar. 1712.

century, the etiquette of these rooms seems to have grown even more formal. At least, the present author has been unable to confirm for the earlier period the absolute prohibition of coughing, sneezing or flinching to which Fanny Burney testifies.¹²⁵ We know that at the later-Hanoverian court, at least, no one to whom the monarch had spoken could leave without royal permission. Such permission could, of course, only be granted if that person had again secured the royal attention. This requirement might prove a severe test for the bladder and intestinal fortitude of the diligent courtier.¹²⁶ Finally, throughout the period, no one who had been acknowledged by the monarch might leave the room by turning his back on that personage. Rather, the proper etiquette was to make three low bows or *congés* (curtsies for women) and exit facing the sovereign. Such entrances and exits took some practice and skill to perfect: in 1694 the family of Anne South, a newly appointed maid of honour, requested a delay before she came into waiting, 'for Mr. Isaack [the court's dancing master] to shoe her how to come into a Roome, for at present she cannot stand still without tottering....'¹²⁷

Having paid our court, made our bows and stood still without tottering, we take our leave, for this is, under normal circumstances, as far as we can go. When the drawing room is over, the sovereign will retreat to a more private area of the court, the royal bedchamber and closet. This complex of rooms was developed as a department separate from that of the lord chamberlain by James I soon after his arrival in England in 1603. It was staffed by the officers of the Bedchamber, who, though subordinate to the lord chamberlain at public ceremonies outside these rooms, were under the jurisdiction of the groom of the stole within them.¹²⁸ The Bedchamber staff in immediate attendance on the sovereign consisted of about a dozen gentlemen or, as they came increasingly to be called, 'lords' of the Bedchamber (for they were always peers); six grooms of the Bedchamber; and six pages of the Bedchamber, also known as pages of the backstairs.¹²⁹ Under a female sovereign, the first of these positions was reserved for peeresses, designated 'ladies of the bedchamber'; the second, for gentlewomen, dubbed 'women of the bedchamber' or 'dressers'. One each of these officials was in close attendance upon the monarch at any given time.¹³⁰

The contrast between the social status of the leading Bedchamber attendants and that of the gentlemen and gentlemen ushers in the public rooms was consistent with the greater exclusivity of the bedchamber and closet. From the time of James I's reorganization of the private apartments, these servants provided noble

¹²⁵ Arch and Marschner, *Splendour at Court*, p. 35; Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, pp. 234–7.

¹²⁶ Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p. 203.

¹²⁷ BL, Add. MSS 6474, f. 16; Elizabeth South to Sarah, Countess of Marlborough, 15 Mar. [?1694].

¹²⁸ See PRO, IC 5/201, pp. 99–103; BA 2252/5 (1): Bedchamber ordinances, 1661 and 1673, pp. 28–30; 2252/2: Bedchamber Ordinances of 1689, pp. 58–9.

¹²⁹ In 1760 the number of pages was doubled, half being designated of the Bedchamber, the other half of the backstairs. Presumably, their duties were split at this time, the former assisting in the body service, the latter manning the bedchamber door and performing outdoor tasks. See Saintry and Buchholz, *Officials of the Royal Household 1660–1837* Part 1, pp. 16–17.

¹³⁰ Also on staff were a seamstress, a stancher, a laundress, assorted necessary women and coffer bearers. According to BL, Egerton MSS 3356, f. 7: Bedchamber ordinances of 1684, an additional gentleman and groom were to be in residence at all times.

or gentle companionship (as noted above in the drawing room, or at the house of Lords), as well as the royal 'body service', that is the personal, sometimes menial duties which would be fulfilled by a *valet de chambre* or a lady's maid in a noble household. Some idea of these duties (and their social division of labour) was recalled by Abigail, Lady Masham, formerly a woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Anne, in 1728:

The bed-chamber woman came in to waiting before the queen's prayers, which was before her majesty was dressed. The queen often shifted [i.e., changed her clothes] in a morning; if her majesty shifted at noon, the bedchamber-lady being by, the bedchamber-woman gave the shift to the lady without any ceremony, and the lady put it on. Sometimes, likewise, the bedchamber-woman gave the fan to the lady in the same manner: and this was all that the bedchamber-lady did about the queen at her dressing.

When the queen washed her hands, the page of the back-stairs brought and set down upon a side-table the basin and ewer; then the bedchamber woman set it before the queen, and knelt on the other side of the table over-against the queen, the bedchamber-lady only looking on. The bedchamber-woman poured the water out of the ewer upon the queen's hands.

The bedchamber-woman pulled on the queen's gloves, when she could not do it herself.

The page of the back-stairs was called in to put on the queen's shoes.

When the queen dined in public, the page reached the glass to the bedchamber-woman, and she to the lady in waiting.

The bedchamber-woman brought the chocolate, and gave it without kneeling.

In general, the bedchamber-woman had no dependence on the lady of the bedchamber.¹³¹

Perhaps the first point to make about this account is that it indicates that the morning dressing ritual at the English court was far less elaborate and public than it was at Versailles. While some allowance must be made for Anne's shyness and poor health, there is little evidence of ritual dressing, let alone a public morning *levée*, at the English court before 1727. As a consequence, the great bedchamber [Figure 12—'j' on the Plan], which was obviously designed for this purpose, must have been under-utilized, although Queen Anne sometimes received in it.¹³² The monarch actually slept in the little bedchamber [Figure 13—'k' on the Plan], and it was presumably here that most of the body service was performed.¹³³

¹³¹ J. W. Croker, ed., *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk* (1824) I, 292–3; John Arbuthnot to Henrietta Howard, London, 30 [sic] May [1728]. For the duties of the Bedchamber staff at the monarch's dressing under James II, see PRO, IC 5/201, p. 101.

¹³² For Anne receiving in her bedchamber, see n. 116, above. For earlier examples, mostly involving members of the royal family other than the sovereign, see Pepys, *Diary* I, 313; II, 213; IX, 558; Evelyn, *Diary* III, 261, 389, 406, 407, 463, 562; IV, 131. For evidence that Charles II at least contemplated a more elaborate, French style morning dressing ritual, see Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, p. 106.

¹³³ But cf. Thurley, *King's Apartments*, p. 23, which states that the king was dressed in the great bedchamber. It is also possible that William III actually slept in an even more private ground floor bedroom: see Thurley, *King's Apartments*, p. 24.

The second point to emerge from Lady Masham's recollections is that what personal service was required by the monarch was performed entirely by the Bedchamber staff: the previously important staffs of the public rooms, in particular the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, had been frozen out. We see this especially clearly in the demise of the ancient ritual of 'All Night'. Intermittently under the later Stuarts, and especially during periods of political crisis such as the Popish Plot, the regular watch of the yeomen of the guard in the guard chamber was augmented by a gentleman usher, quarter waiter and an esquire of the body in the presence chamber; two gentlemen of the Privy Chamber in the privy chamber; the groom of the Bedchamber in the withdrawing room; and the gentleman of the Bedchamber in waiting, each of whom slept on a pallet bed in his respective chamber of attendance, for the king's protection.¹³⁴ But after 1689 the nightly attendance of the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, gentlemen ushers and esquires of the body was dispensed with, and the last position was abolished in 1702. Thereafter, the grooms (or women) and pages of the Bedchamber bore the brunt of the body service, especially when the monarch was ill: Abigail Masham's *entrée* into politics came as a result of her almost continuous attendance as, in effect, Anne's nurse; those familiar with both primary and popular accounts of George III's bouts with madness will remember the similar service to that monarch of the pages of the Bedchamber and backstairs.¹³⁵

Clearly, the bedchamber and closet were not in any formal sense public rooms. And yet, the ostensible privacy afforded by this complex of rooms could facilitate access by select members of the public. After all, if a personal and powerful monarch needed privacy and rest, he or she might also need to make him or herself discreetly accessible to politicians of various persuasions, to boon companions and to intimates of either sex. The secluded nature of the bedchamber and closet were perfect for this purpose.¹³⁶

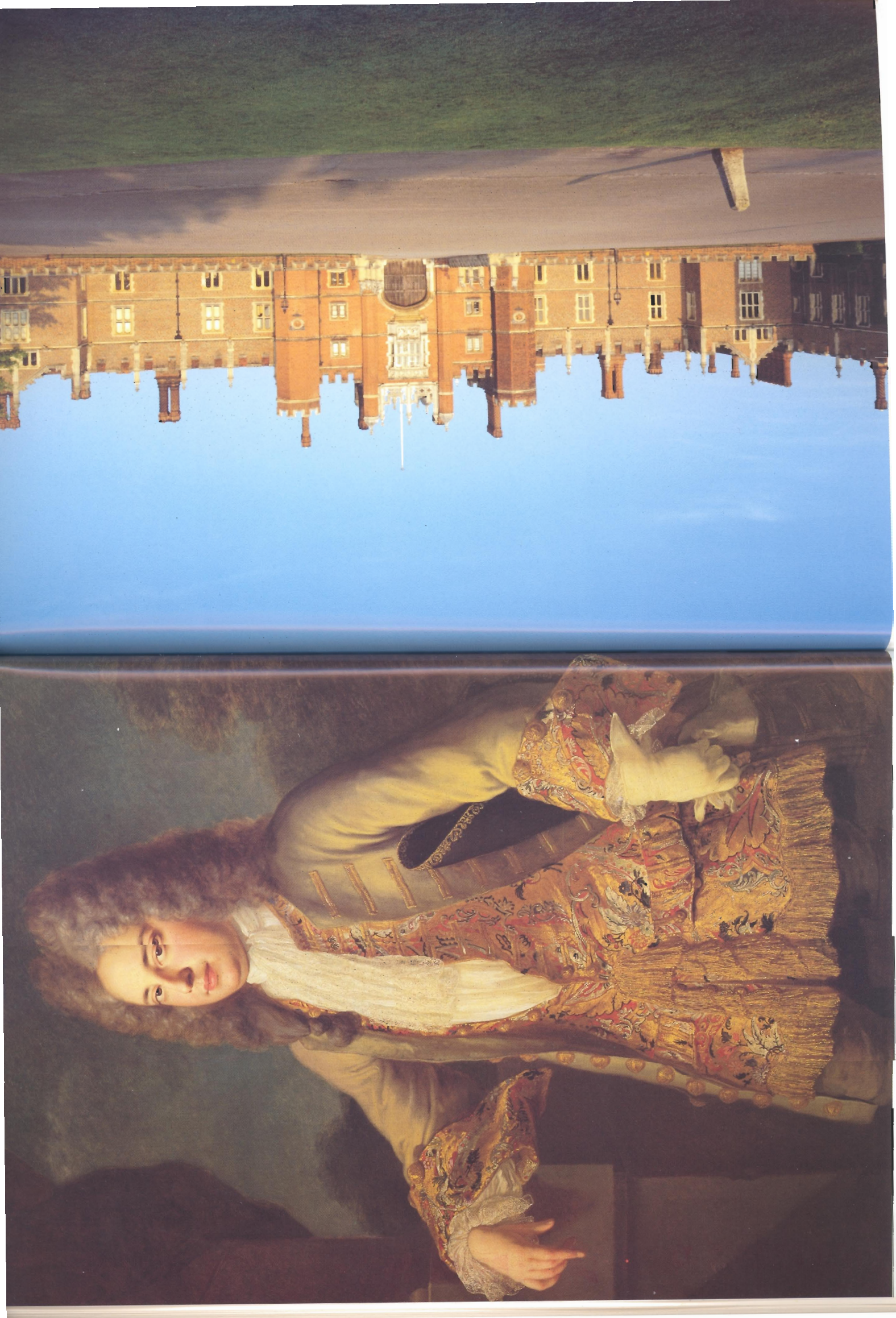
Let us assume that we have a matter of weight and delicacy to convey to the sovereign. Naturally, aspirants to the inner sanctum cannot be made to traipse through the public rooms, with their contingent of observant attendants. Instead, our quest begins at the backstairs [Figure 14]. At Hampton Court there are two sets of backstairs, one for the sovereign's own use, connected directly with the closet

134 *Household Ordinances*, pp. 356, 361, 374; S. Pegge, *Curialia: or an historical account of some branches of the royal household* (1791) I, 17; Bl., Egerton MSS 3350, f. 7; HMC, *Fifth Report App.*, pp. 344-5; PRO, LC 5/69, f. 38; LC 5/141, p. 34; LC 5/143, p. 174; LC 5/146, p. 215; LC 5/147, f. 272; LC 5/201, p. 107; LS 13/104, f. 53v; BA 2252/2, p. 64; Wilson, *Court Wits*, p. 52.

135 Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, p. 124; HMC, *Fifteenth Report App.* IV, 540-41; HMC, *Portland MSS V*, 369, 374; Pegge, *Curialia* I iii, 64-5; J. Fortescue, ed., *The Correspondence of King George III*, 8 vols (1927-28) II, 503; A. Aspinall, ed., *The Later Correspondence of George III*, 5 vols (1962-70) III, 628; A. Aspinall, ed., *The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales 1770-1812*, 8 vols (1963-71) VIII, 201. As implied above, the Bedchamber staff assumed the duty of attendance when the monarch dined as well: see Bl., Add. MSS 3043, f. 486v; 61421, ff. 121r and v, 127v; PRO, LC 5/201, p. 102.

136 For the monarch transacting business or meeting discreetly with subjects in the bedchamber or closet, see Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 181-2, 236; H. Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977), p. 104; Pepys, *Diary VIII*, 198, 360; IX, 447, 506, 523, 558; Evelyn, *Diary III*, 309; HMC, *Thirteenth Report App.* VI, 274; HMC, *Ormonde MSS* n.s. V, 144-5, 467; VI, 204; HMC, *Finch MSS II*, 171; HMC, *Hastings MSS IV*, 107; HMC, *Lindsey MSS* suppl., pp. 270-1; Bl., Add. MSS 61460, f. 26v and nn. 149-52, below.





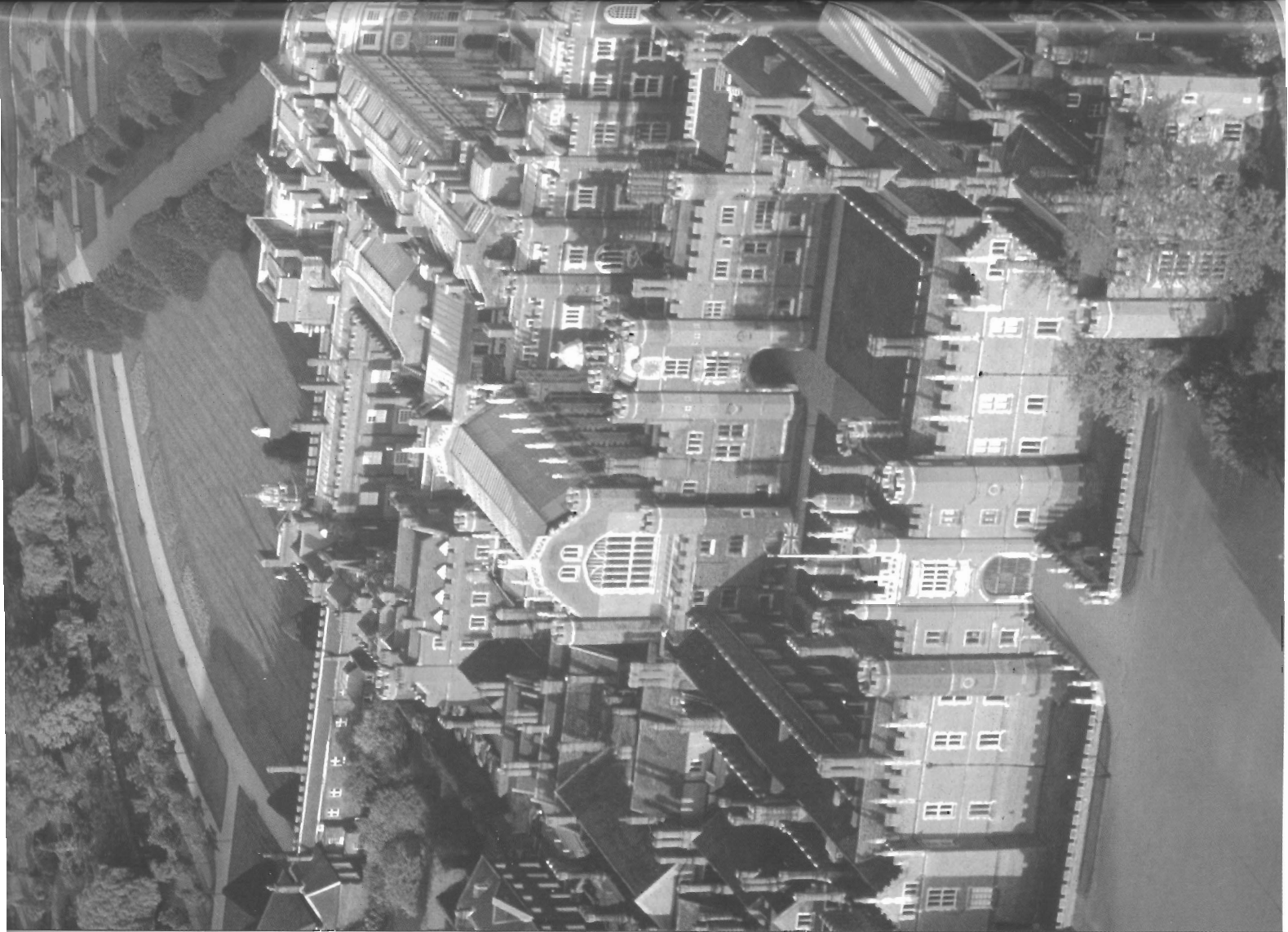






Figure 8 Presence Chamber Hampton Court Crown Copyright: Historic Royal Palaces







and leading into a set of even more private apartments on the ground floor ['q' on the Plan]; the other accessible to courtiers such as ourselves from Fountain Court ['m' on the Plan]. Unprepossessing as it may appear, of all the nooks and crannies in any royal palace, the backstairs was, arguably, of the greatest social, political, even constitutional significance. It was here that the politician out of official favour; the plotter of a coup; the informant; the drinking companion; the paramour, ascended to meet the sovereign.¹³⁷

The backstairs operated as follows. Upon ascending the stairs, one met a page of the backstairs.¹³⁸ The page 'sent in' to ask *entrée* of the groom of the stole or, in his absence, the officer of the Bedchamber in waiting, stationed in a waiting room at the top of the stairs ['l' on the Plan].¹³⁹ According to the Bedchamber ordinances, access to the royal bedchamber and closet was limited to

The Master of Our Roabes... the Keeper of our Privy-Purse,... the Keeper of our Closet and the Barbers... All Our Physitians & Our Chirurgreens,... the Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain, the Secretaries of State, the rest of the Lords and others of Our Privy Councill....

But the ordinance continues:

& such other persons as Our Groome of the Stole shall, with Our leave, mention in a List under his hand, left with the Pages, or appoint to be hung up in any of the Roomes belonging to Our Bedchamber.¹⁴⁰

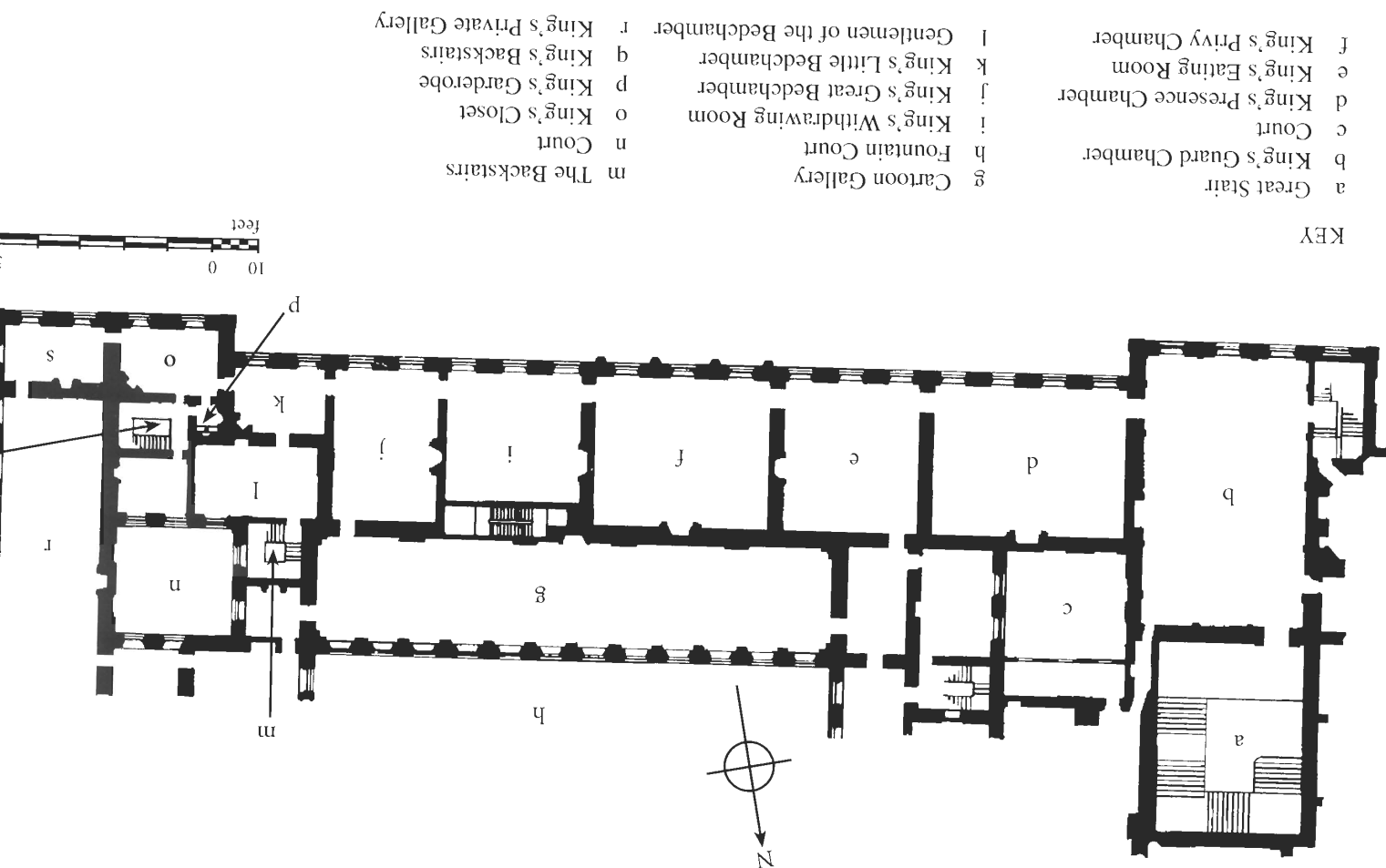
It should be obvious that the groom of the stole or, in his absence, the officer of the Bedchamber in waiting, acting as virtual gatekeepers, had the power to manipulate access to the monarch. Charles II bypassed his groom of the stole, the earl of Bath, delegating much of this power to one of the pages, William Chiffinch, who received the additional title of keeper of the closet. According to Henry Savile, vice-chamberlain of the household and a former groom of the Bedchamber, Chiffinch was 'a man of so absolute authority that foreign as well as domestic ministers are to obey his commands'. That authority led, in turn, to a reputation for facilitating

¹³⁷ Admittedly, such access seems to have been rarely or never granted under William III, but it was quite common under Charles II and Anne: see nn.136, 144, 146–52. The author is grateful to Dr Simon Thurley for his assistance in helping him to negotiate the intricacies of the backstairs. For the political and social significance of the backstairs in general, see Allen, 'Charles II's Chiffinch', pp.279–80, 285–8.

¹³⁸ PRO, LC 5/201, pp. 104–5; BA 2252/2: Bedchamber Ordinances 1689, p.67.

¹³⁹ For 'sending in' see PRO, LC 5/201, p.105; BA 2252/2: Bedchamber Ordinances 1689, pp.69–70; HMC, *Fifteenth Report* App. IV, 43; BL, Add. MSS. 31143, f.486v; Add. MSS. 61460, f.200. For the Bedchamber staff waiting at the backstairs, see Add. MSS. 22226, ff.66, 244, 258; 31144, ff.357–8; 61456, f.144; HMC, *Portland MSS* V, 222; HMC, *Lindsey MSS* suppl., p.52; *Jlattron Corr.* II, 21; P. Roberts, ed., *The Diary of Sir David Hamilton 1709–1714* (Oxford, 1975), p.64; Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, pp.224–35; W. King, ed., *Memoirs of the Duchess of Marlborough* (1930), pp.146–7; 170; J. H. Jessé, *Memoirs of the Court of England from the Revolution in 1688 to the Death of George the Second*, 3 vols (Philadelphia, 1843) III, 120; W. J. Smith, ed., *The Grenville Papers: being the correspondence of Richard Grenville Earl Temple, K.G., and the Right Hon. George Grenville, their friends and contemporaries*, 4 vols (1853; repr. 1970) III, 123; Fortescue, *Corr. of George III* V, 418.

¹⁴⁰ BA 2252/2: Bedchamber Ordinances 1689, pp.67–9.



the king's pleasures which gave rise to the popular attribution of other titles, such as 'Pimpmaster General'.¹⁴¹

If a Bedchamber servant could facilitate access, he or she could hinder it as well. This was particularly an issue during the reign of Queen Anne because her poor health and natural shyness confined her to the precincts of her bedchamber and closet for long stretches of time. During her tenure as groom of the stole, the Whig duchess of Marlborough was frequently accused by the Tories of using her power to isolate Anne from their persons and opinions. For example, during the ministerial crisis of 1710, Swift charged her with 'watching all the avenues to the back-stairs', leaving Anne 'hemmed in, and as it were imprisoned, by the duchess of Marlborough and her creatures'—that is the subordinate Bedchamber personnel (ladies, dressers, laundresses and necessary women) whom the duchess would, as groom of the stole, have recommended or preferred to their posts.¹⁴² But, in fact, this view was exaggerated. As Edward Gregg has shown, the duchess had abdicated much of her power to regulate access by retreating into the courtyard after the death of her son, the marquess of Blandford, in February 1703.¹⁴³ Moreover, later-Stuart and, to a lesser extent, early-Hanoverian monarchs were careful to ensure that no one political party or faction was allowed to dominate the Bedchamber completely. As a result, one could usually find a sympathetic Bedchamber attendant, no matter how one's party stood in royal favour, if one simply waited for the weekly waitings to change. Thus, according to Sir David Hamilton, a Whig physician to Queen Anne,

If some Persons had been in waiting, however Her Majesty inclin'd to speak to me, yet either the Door must be left Open, or if that shut, I to stay no more than a Minute; whereas if others who had a Personal regard for me, had been then in waiting the door might be Shut, and I stay without her Concern.¹⁴⁴

To this extent, a monarch could become a prisoner of his or her closest attendants, a situation of which Anne, in particular, seems to have felt herself to have been a victim.¹⁴⁵

Clearly, for a courtier to have the sovereign's ear with any regularity, privacy or ease, it was necessary to cultivate those who stood on either side of the bedchamber door. It should be equally clear that to understand the inner life of the court, it was advantageous to get to know the pages who attended at the backstairs,¹⁴⁶ and to keep one's own eyes on that architectural convenience as well.¹⁴⁷

141 HMC, *Seventh Report* App. p. 351; Henry Savile to Lord Preston, London, 10 May 1682. See Allen, 'Charles II's Chiffinch', *passim*. Chiffinch, in fact, anticipated the role of personal private secretary; see esp. pp. 277, 282–4; and Pepps, *Diary* IX, 507.

142 J. Swift, 'Memoirs Relating to That Change Which Happened in the Queen's Ministry in the Year 1710' in Swift, *Historical and Political Tracts—English*, ed. T. Scott (1911), p. 374. For the duchess's bedchamber patronage, see Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 66, 75, 83, 92, 103–4, 111. For similar Whig charges against the Tory Abigail Masham, see Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 155–6.

143 Gregg, *Anne*, pp. 169–70. See also Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 155, 324–5 n. 14.

144 Hamilton, *Diary*, p. 35.

145 See Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 80, 183–4.

146 For pages' information, see HMC, *Tenth Report* App. IV, 51; BL, Add. MSS 61417, f. 118v; 61422, f. 24v.

147 See, for example, Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, pp. 128–9, 208, 213, 250; BL, Add. MSS 31144, ff. 410v–11.

Indeed, if one wished to pay court to the great, the backstairs was the most likely place in which to run into them.¹⁴⁸

Suppose that, like Hamilton, we have had our name 'sent in' by a Bedchamber officer who has a Personal regard for' (or political sympathy with) us—and *entrée* has been granted. The officer conducts us through the waiting room and little bedchamber into the closet and, thus, the royal presence. What is our experience once the closet door is shut? The closet [Figure 15—'o' on the Plan] is the most private room in the palace. It is adorned with the sovereign's most personal treasures. Nowhere is the ruler more him or her self. One suspects that here, most of the formal trappings of royal power fell away. Certainly, the record of conversation between Queen Anne and Sir David Hamilton, contained in Hamilton's *Diary*, indicates that discussion was frank and wide ranging, with either party raising sensitive matters. Such frankness and freedom was a constitutional necessity for it was here, and only here, that a sovereign could confer with a treasurer or a favourite;¹⁴⁹ canvass a peer for a vote;¹⁵⁰ probe a servant for word of outside opinion;¹⁵¹ or consort with a friend or a lover in reasonable confidence of privacy.¹⁵² Here, a monarch could dispense with the more ceremonial of his or her two bodies in order to inform or gratify the one that was mortal.

Decline of the Openness of the Court

Having been lit down the backstairs by the page, whom we tip,¹⁵³ we have completed our visit to court. As the eighteenth century wears on, we will find that our access to the court and, perhaps, our desire to make use of it will tend to wane. The attractiveness and openness which characterized court life after the Restoration had, in fact, been on the decline even before 1700. As early as 1663, the court had begun to retrench its tables of hospitality. The process continued throughout the eighteenth century until the elimination of the last such table, that of the yeomen of the guard, in 1813.¹⁵⁴ This meant that many would-be spongers,

148 Hamilton, *Diary*, pp. 4, 55; HMC, *Portland MSS* V, 436; BL, Add. MSS 31144, ff. 274v–75, 288r and v, 296–7; Add. MSS 61443, ff. 44–5. Under Anne, this constant, yet unofficial, traffic and relatively free access raised security concerns. Soon after the attempted assassination of Robert Harley by the marquis de Guiscard in the spring of 1711, the duke of Shrewsbury, lord chamberlain of the household, argued:

I think a particular consideration should be had in what manner to propose to her Majesty not to be so exposed to attempts, as she certainly is, for want of attendance, and by her back stairs every where in all her houses being made the common way to come to her as well for strangers as her nearest domestics. I have lived in four Courts, and this is the first where I have ever seen anybody to go up the back stairs unless such as the Prince would have come to him unobserved. (HMC, *Bath MSS* I, 201; Shrewsbury to [Robert Harley], 25 Apr. 1711).

149 See, for example, Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, pp. 129, 213; BL, Add. MSS 61422, f. 156v.

150 See, for example, HMC, *Buckleigh at Drumlanrig MSS* II, 52.

151 See Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 179–81 and sources cited therein.

152 See Allen, 'Charles II's Chiffinch', *passim*, esp. p. 287. Admittedly, this was less usual for established mistresses, for whom more permanent accommodation might be provided; see Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, pp. 125, 127.

153 For pages lighting the way down the stairs, see BL, Add. MSS 61422, ff. 24–5. For tipping and vails, see Beattie, *English Court*, p. 198n.

154 Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp. 19–20; Bucholz, 'Introduction' to Sainny and Bucholz, *Officials of the Royal Household 1660–1837* Part 1, p. xli.

lacking Jonathan Swift's connections, were forced to get a meal elsewhere. The accessibility, diversity and cosmopolitanism of the court had likewise declined from the early 1660s on, as first Presbyterians and Dissenters, and then Catholics, were made unwelcome—and, in the latter case, sometimes positively illegal—in its precincts.¹⁵⁵ The brief attempt at Catholic restoration under James II left the court still more isolated;¹⁵⁶ later, William III's obsession with business and lack of social graces;¹⁵⁷ Anne's poor health and even poorer conversation;¹⁵⁸ and George I's desire to be left alone,¹⁵⁹ caused drawing room days to grow less frequent. Simultaneously, the 'rage of party' followed by the post-1714 Whig ascendancy dictated that, at any given time, one half of the political world felt unwelcome at court, while the crown's financial position, in particular the diversion of government revenue to the cost of successive European wars, left it less able to sustain patronage of the arts and finer pleasures on the scale maintained under Charles II. The destruction by fire of the vast palace of Whitehall in 1698 eliminated at one stroke both the crown's principal venue for the pursuit of those arts (especially drama and secular music) and pleasures and the one royal palace capable of housing a good proportion of their noble, gentle or courtly pursuers.

Indeed, it could be argued that the failure to rebuild or replace Whitehall marked an abandonment of any pretensions by the later Stuarts or early Hanoverians to maintain a Baroque monarchy as that term is understood in its continental context. None of this is to say that the crown ceased to be an important patron in the eighteenth century; existing royal palaces are filled with the evidence to the contrary. In particular, the court's patronage of the visual arts, including painting, furniture, metalwork and ceramics, remained important well into the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁰ As prince regent and king, George IV had a significant impact on the architecture and topography of the capital, not least through his encouragement of John Nash.¹⁶¹ But royal patronage of the theatre, music, literature and dress was an increasingly pale shadow of the Caroline and Restoration achievement. No longer could the court claim to be the exclusive leader of fashion or the centre—to use Bagehot's metaphor—of political, social or artistic endeavour.¹⁶²

As the author has argued elsewhere,¹⁶³ from about 1680 and accelerating after 1702, that role came to be taken by the metropolis itself. The great aristocratic houses in town and the immediate countryside provided their own brand of

155 See HMC, *Twelfth Report* App. VII, 106; PRO, LC.5/141, p.25; LC.5/143, p.191; LC.5/150, p.118.

156 Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp.25–6; J. Müller, *James II: a study in kingship* (1989), p.173.

157 Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp.31–4.

158 Beattie, *English Court*, pp.11–12, 55, 257–8.

160 The author is grateful to Royal Collection Studies and the staffs of the Royal Collection and by affording him exposure in the summer of 1997 to the wealth of that collection as distributed among the Queen's principal residences in and around London.

161 P. Corfield, 'London and the Modern Monarchy', *History Today* XLIX (February, 1999), 6–13, p.11.

162 Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, chap.7; Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, pp.434–5; Foss, *Age of Patronage, passim*; Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p.234.

163 This paragraph is based on Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, pp.247–8. See also Corfield, 'London and the Modern Monarchy', pp.10–11.

hospitality and culture, which frequently stole the royal thunder. Increasingly, entertainment and companionship could be more easily procured at the public theatre, the concert hall or the pleasure garden. There were, too, hundreds of taverns, coffee-houses and clubs offering all that the royal household offered and more—including food, drink, news, gossip, conversation, and companionship—without the formality necessitated by the royal presence. Moreover, this occurred all day, every day—not merely on a thrice a week schedule when the sovereign was well and the treasury full. Louis XIV's ambassador, Marshal Tallard, noted the increasing role of such institutions in the daily life of the aristocracy at the end of the seventeenth century:

Nothing is so different from the manners of former times as the present style of living among noblemen. They have no intercourse with one another after they quit the House; most of them go to dine at some tavern; and afterwards they repair to places called coffee-houses, where everybody goes without distinction. Of these there is an infinite number in London, and there they remain till they return home.¹⁶⁴

Political clubs, the Kit-cat in particular, operated by 1700 like small kingless courts, toasting a roster of beauties who, a few years earlier, might have been painted by Lely or Kneller for a royal patron. Above all, it was increasingly in these venues, and not at court, that art and literature were commissioned, business transacted, political plots laid and the beau monde put on display.

Despite occasional and extended periods of revival, in 1717–1720, 1727–1737 and for much of 1760–1811, the courts of the Hanoverians seem to have begun a gradual retreat into the sort of formality and seclusion with which we associate most heads of state today. George I's dislike of public occasions is well known and George II seems to have preferred a quiet life after the death of Queen Caroline in 1737.¹⁶⁵ George III and Queen Charlotte revived drawing room days and instituted three *levées* a week in the privy and presence chambers together. But the former events were cut to two per week while the latter were restricted to male attendance only. Moreover, as the monarch's health declined from about mid-reign, such occasions became increasingly rare. When they were held, the king and queen were more particular than their predecessors had been about whom they would receive on such occasions; visitors arranged themselves in a semi-circle, which hindered lively social interaction; gambling was abolished; and, from about 1795, birthday clothes went out of fashion.¹⁶⁶ During the eighteenth century, court dress became, like court etiquette, more formalized, even ossified, and thus ever farther removed from that of the fashionable world. This culminated eventually in the king's introduction of the Windsor uniform. While this distinctive habit undoubtedly

164 P. Grimblot, ed., *Letters of William III and Louis XIV and Their Ministers* (1848) II, 468–70, quoted in A. S. Turberville, *The House of Lords in the Reign of William III* (Oxford, 1913), p.44 n.1.

165 See Beattie, *Court of George I and English Politics*, pp.26–27; Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p.227.

166 Brooke, *George III*, pp.294–5; Boulton, *Amusements of London*, p.133. It is perhaps significant that while the reputedly prudish Queen Anne was willing to have her hand kissed by the old duchess of Cleveland, the former mistress of Charles II, in 1705, Queen Charlotte would not receive women of dubious reputation: see Bucholz, *Augustan Court*, p.355 n.19; Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting*, p.234.

increased the *esprit de corps* of the royal entourage, it also served to demarcate it from more casual, occasional—and fashionable—and fashionable—visitors to court.¹⁶⁷

Still, one must not exaggerate the effects of these changes.¹⁶⁸ George III's drawing rooms remained popular with the elite and continued to serve the function of bringing the king and royal family into contact with it in a setting advantageous to the monarch. Well into the reign, more than one aristocrat continued to echo Swift's sentiment that the court was a 'most admirable coffee house'. Despite—or perhaps because of—the reduction in the frequency of assemblies after 1788, the size of their attendance grew. Contemporaries frequently complained of the crowds and long delays in waiting to make contact with royalty. As late as 1805 a drawing room is described as 'very full and the crowd getting up to the queen intolerable'; a similar event the following year is called 'a dreadful squash'. Nevertheless, it must be recalled that that 'squash' was made up from a more narrow stratum of society than the crowds who had attended later: Stuart drawing rooms; their attendance was less free and the competition for their time and attention more varied and compelling than they had been a century previously.

The custom of holding *levées* and drawing rooms disappeared almost completely after the king went blind.¹⁶⁹ Though George IV kept an intermittently brilliant court at Carlton House and Brighton as prince regent, his declining health forced a retreat into seclusion as king. While William IV and Victoria revived the holding of *levées* and drawing rooms, attendance was now by application.¹⁷⁰ There was, in fact, a flood of such requests, particularly after the queen's re-emergence into public life in the 1870s. If the Victorian court was no longer the centre of political and cultural life that its Restoration counterpart had been, access to it still conferred a high degree of social prestige and presentation to the sovereign remained 'an essential passport into good society both at home and abroad'.¹⁷¹ However, they did so, in part, because such access had grown more regulated and exclusive, less free and open. In short, the monarchy, ever more conscious of threats to its security and its constitutional position, had chosen largely to withdraw from the public eye. When it re-emerged later in the nineteenth century, it did so for strategic reasons, at specified times, on increasingly stage-managed public occasions,¹⁷² or, if at home, with full control of its immediate audience and the mechanics of their access and attendance. The 'ease and leisure' with which Samuel Pepys and his contemporaries could look at a queen were long gone.

167 See Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 21.

168 The following paragraph is based on P. Mansel, 'A Tale of Two Courts: France and England 1780–1848', a talk given to Royal Collection Studies, Windsor Castle, 8 September 2000. The author is grateful to Dr Philip Mansel for sharing this work in manuscript and, by so doing, impressing upon him the continued popularity of later Hanoverian court receptions.

169 Brooke, *George III*, pp. 293–9.

170 The series of invitation lists contained in PRO, LC 6 begins in 1842.

171 J. Ansell, 'The Seal of Social Approval: or "How Girls are Presented at Court"', *The Court Historian* 4, 2 (1999), 151–160.

172 See D. Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: the British monarchy and the "invention of tradition", c.1820–1977' in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*, pp. 101–64.

List of Abbreviations:

BA 2252	Casper Frederic Henning Papers, Hereford and Worcester Record Office
BL	British Library, London
BL, Add. MSS	British Library Additional Manuscripts
BHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Chamberlayne	E. and J. Chamberlayne, <i>Angliae Notitia</i> (1669–1707); <i>Magnae Britanniae Notitia</i> (1708–1755)
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i> , 1547–1702, 94 vols. (1856–1964)
CTB	<i>Calendar of Treasury Books, 1660–1718</i> , ed. W. A. Shaw, 32 vols. (1904–1969)
Household Ordinances	<i>A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household... from King Edward III to King William and Queen Mary</i> (1790)
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
LC	Lord Chamberlain's Papers, Public Record Office, London
LS	Lord Steward's Papers, Public Record Office, London
Miege	G. Miege, <i>The New State of England</i> (1691–1703); <i>The Present State of Great Britain</i> (1707–48)
PRO	Public Record Office, London
RA	Royal Archives, Windsor
RO	Record Office
Sainty and Bucholz	J. C. Sainty and R. O. Bucholz, <i>Officials of the Royal Household 1660–1837</i> , 2 vols. (1997–8)
SP Dom.	State Papers, Domestic Series, Public Record Office, London
	<i>Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.</i>

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