Peep Show

My wife and I have a ritual for opening our summer place. Accompanied by our dog, I go first to get things more or less in order. This gives Sallie time to collect her own clobber as well as the things I normally leave behind in my haste to get away. Given that Sal is not what I would call a systematic packer—unless helter-skelter is a system—her arrival entails the last installment of heavy lifting before a summer of leisure. She disdains to fold down the rear seats of her Forester, preferring to stack clothing on them and then to fill the rear foot wells and the back compartment with things sure to roll and slide about until they illustrate chaos theory.

It's always the same. Opening a rear door precipitates a cascade of dresses, the hooks of their hangers hopelessly entangled, which I normally just save from the ground. I struggle upstairs with this armload, hoping that nothing falls off to be trampled by our Puli, always right behind me, his genes prompting him—in the absence of sheep—incessantly to herd, guard, and supervise *us*. Below the clothes come the magazines—the *New Yorker*s not completely read and saved for summer, a year's worth of *Country Life* to be donated to the library of the Lodge next door, maybe the latest *Foreign Affairs* and *Road & Track*, which will have come after my departure, all of them transformed by the journey to a slithering fan of slicks. Then, finally, in the foot wells, a jumble of books.

In June of 2003 the anchor item turned out to be two large, uniform packages of books in plain brown paper. "It's a surprise, " I was told. And indeed I was

astonished a little later to see eighteen inches of book case supporting the eleven paperback volumes of *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A new and complete transcription edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2000).

"What the hell . . .?"

For a moment, Sallie said nothing, but her look alone was enough to set off my Domestic Tranquility Alarm.

"I thought you'd like it."

Now, it's not as if the Latham-Matthews edition of the Diary was new to me. The hardback version dates from 1970, and I had for years dipped into it for material to enliven my treatment of the Restoration period in the sophomore survey course. A companion volume is helpful on the whole range of contemporary London experience as reflected in the reading list. There are excellent articles on class distinctions; on the place and behavior of the domestic servants and ladies' companions so prominent in the comedies; on who was in and who out at Court or about the Town; on what passed for gallantry or wit among those in the know; on the whole milieu of the theater itself; even on the life of taverns and eating houses, where Pepys often conducted official business and which figure in contemporary writing to signal the class or occupation of fictional characters. I had as well, from time to time, browsed in the Diary itself, but never extensively.

A man does what he has to do. On the very evening of its arrival, I made no little show of taking the first volume upstairs, planning to read myself to sleep with it every night until I could give it up without hurting any feelings.

I'd be surprised if there's anyone here who doesn't at least recognize the name of Samuel Pepys. Some, like Jim Wesner, will know him from an interest in the history of English sea power, for he was a major figure in the development of the British Admiralty. Still more will probably have read bits of the Diary itself, kept between 1660 and 1669 and left by its author, along with his collection of rare books, to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where both are now housed in a handsome library built just for them. Written in a long-forgotten shorthand, the Diary was not transcribed and published until the nineteenth century. Since then, it has been variously notorious for its frank accounts of an uncommonly varied and adulterous love life and famous for its extended set pieces on the last major visitation of the Plague to London in 1665 and the Great Fire of London in 1666. Scholars have combed the Diary for Pepys's voluminous contributions to that monument of public record keeping, the English Calendar of State Papers, as well as for the fruits of his compulsive theater going. Others have been intrigued by his relations with the luminaries of the Royal Society, of which he was a Charter Member and which he later served as President.

More casual readers have been delighted by an endearing willingness to reveal foibles most or us would hide not only from the world but also from ourselves. Engaged in serial and overlapping adulterous relationships, Pepys is nevertheless jealous to distraction of his wife's attentions to the dancing master he has hired to polish her accomplishments. He condemns vanity even as he orders a fancy new costume suitable for being seen with the King and the Duke of York. At church, ever the student of style, he devotes equal attention to the preacher's ability

to clothe a good argument in appropriate language and to the female congregants' ability to dress their attractions to advantage. Among many similar weaknesses, one stands out: his compulsive attendance at the newly opened theaters, an activity that strains the family finances and causes serious dislocations in his workaday routine. A pattern of reform and relapse becomes a *Leitmotiv* throughout the Diary, yet it is as hard to condemn the somewhat scapegrace Pepys for violating his repeated vows as it is not to love the eminently moral Doctor Johnson for lamenting his own habitual failure to keep New Year's resolutions.

I first encountered the Pepys in an undergraduate course in Restoration literature taught by a man equally remarkable for his delight in the material and for the gusto with which he presented it, particularly the ribald bits. He had his all-male audience enthralled from the opening lecture, studded with references to the roistering King Charles and his many mistresses, notable as much for their wit as for their horizontal accomplishments. We learned that the author of *Love in a Wood* was surprised when one of these doxies, later Duchess of Cleveland, called out to him from her carriage, "You, Wycherley, you are a son of a whore." It took the playwright a moment to recognize the veiled compliment, a reference to a song from his play that ends, "Great Wits and Great Braves/ Have always a Punk to their Mother." The same sportive lass, we were told, won a wager with a rival, Louise de Kérouaille, over which of them could finish off more men in a night. (I've always suspected this was a put-up job. Louise was French and a newcomer. Home court advantage: knowing the available talent should have allowed the local girl to fill her bench with quick shooters.) Finally, our mentor favored us with an anecdote

featuring his own favorite among the royal trollops, "pretty, witty Nell" Gwyn as Pepys called her, one time orange-seller and later the period's most famous actress. Mistaken in public for Louise de Kérouaille, whom she also accused of having dirty underwear, Nell is reported to have said, "Pray good people, be civil, I am the Protestant whore."

And of course we were introduced to Pepys himself, with a typically salacious passage, complete with the distinctive use of a weird *lingua franca* doing the work of fig leaves—*su cosa* or the Chaucerian *belle chose* for a woman's privates, *mi cosa* for his own.

One might say this was a cheap way to assure the interest of randy undergraduate males, but in my case it was also an inoculation that took. If the generations of students on whom I've inflicted British literature need someone to blame for starting me on that path, this professor was among the handful most guilty. He in fact taught the course with commendable rigor, leading us through the major authors of the period so thoroughly that, eight years later, I coasted through a Ph. D. exam scarcely needing to review the material, and I still count several works of the era among my very favorites.

Well, as I've said, in 2003 I started the diary with every intention of stopping before long, little realizing that Pepys would occupy my bedside table through seven long summers at the cottage. I was hooked and didn't stop until I had read the entire Diary from New Year's Day 1660 through the end of May in 1669. The undertaking was so engrossing that it often kept me awake longer than I had intended and frequently encroached on my daytime reading.

Long a lover of London, where Sallie and I have spent a total of more than five years, I was first absorbed by Pepys's embodiment—not too strong a word—of his milieu, into which he seemed to throw himself with unexampled interest and vitality, justifying on nearly every page Dr. Johnson's later assertion that ". . . when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

It was not long, though, before I found myself more interested in one particular thread of the developing narrative of the Diary.

As a fledgling member of the so-called "Bacon-faced" generation of *virtuosi,* Pepys reflexively sided with the Moderns against the Ancients and welcomed almost anything that smacked of the new. Luckily for him, there was innovation all about: in literature, in the visual arts, in science, and particularly in administration, where Pepys was to make his career. For there had been under Cromwell a New Model Army, a New Model Navy, and a New Model administration. The Commonwealth and the successor Protectorate largely presupposed that the business of England was business, and enterprises of all sorts were being overhauled and rationalized to yield more pop for the Pound, a process that continued under the restored monarchy.

It was Pepys's role in this process of modernizing his office that increasingly piqued my interest, resulting in something of a paradox. I would never have expected to spend so long exploring the process of an arch-bureaucrat's rise to prominence, yet that is just what happened. Game, set, and match to Pepys.

When he began the Diary on New Year's Day 1660, Pepys was serving two masters, Edward Mountagu and George Downing. Born in London in 1633, Pepys had attended the grammar school at Huntingdon, near which his family had modest holdings. Returning to London, he was enrolled at St. Paul's School from 1646 to 1650 and witnessed the beheading of Charles I in 1649. Awarded an exhibition upon leaving St. Paul's, he ended up at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he won scholarships in 1651 and 1653, earning his B. A. in 1654. It was common for young men of ability and drive but modest means to enter the service of well-connected patrons who might help them to some better employment. Pepys was lucky to find a place as secretary and steward to Mountagu, a distant cousin, eight years his senior, who had fought in the First Civil War with his neighbor Cromwell; had later been handed high posts in the Protectorate; and had distinguished himself as a commander in several naval actions. During the same period, Mountagu had also secured Pepys a post as clerk to George Downing—yes, Downing Street—at that time Teller of the Receipt to the Exchequer and Envoy to the United Provinces in the Low Countries.

Following the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658 and the failed régime of his son Richard, Mountagu was sent by the successor Commonwealth government on a mission to the Baltic. There he was approached by Royalist agents who successfully played on his anti-republican sentiments and discomfort over the continued political instability. Downing, who even earlier had furnished the Royalists useful information during his visits to the Low Countries, was also disaffected with the

Second Commonwealth. Thus, when he began the Diary, Pepys was working for two men ready to welcome Charles to the throne.

They got their chance before long, through the redoubtable General George Monck, who with his northern army had taken control of London in February and would shortly engineer the assumption of the throne by the exiled Charles II. April and May of 1660 found Pepys accompanying Mountagu's fleet sent to fetch the new King home from Holland. Mountagu was soon to be created Earl of Sandwich, Downing to be knighted and continued in his post at the Exchequer. Thanks to Mountagu, on July 29th Pepys would assume the post of Clerk of the Acts to the Navy Board.

This Board, as the name suggests, was charged with the civilian administration of the Navy and answerable to the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral and, ultimately, the King. Its duties included supervision of the dockyards and the purchase of their materials; the building and maintenance of ships; the payment of officers and crews; and the victualling of the fleet. The principal posts, in order of importance, were: the Treasurer; the Comptroller, whose main charge was to audit the accounts of the Treasurer, the Victualler, and the storekeepers; the Surveyor, in charge of the design, building, and repair of ships; and the Clerk of the Acts. There were in addition Commissioners, of whom ten were appointed during the period of the Diary; five of these were dockyard managers, and of the remainder the two most significant were Sir William Penn (father of *the* Penn) and Sir William Coventry.

One entertaining feature of the early parts of the Diary is also somewhat misleading, namely Pepsys's dyspeptic complaints about his colleagues on the Board—Penn, Sir John Mennes, and Sir William Batten—with whom the Pepys household shared quarters across the courtyard from the Board's office in Seething Lane. With only Pepys to rely on, a reader would think these men incompetent at best and, in the case of Batten, corrupt; yet a very different impression emerges from the notes and companion articles of the Latham-Matthews edition and from the recent, excellent biography by Claire Tomalin. Batten and Penn, as Tomalin explains,

> . . .were naval commanders of long service with distinguished fighting records; the Pepyses gave their first dinner party for them in January 1661. Penn had taken Jamaica for the English, and Batten, a man of sixty, had been surveyor of the navy under Charles I and knew everything there was to know about the naval yards where ships were built. To a junior colleague who had been to sea only twice and had no knowledge of ships, they were potentially alarming figures. (Tomalin, 121)

Penn, moreover, had pioneered fighting ships in line to enhance their firepower and had helped under Cromwell to reorganize the Navy Board into the form it largely kept at the Restoration. Bright and industrious, he was soon at work on a masterly revision of his treatise on tactics, released as "The Duke of York's Sailing and Fighting Instructions." Penn's preoccupation with this and other

assignments undertaken outside the office might have justified some complaints about a failure in record keeping, but his behavior hardly justifies the repeated carping, some of which simply appears mean spirited. Outside of the dockyard managers, he was, by all accounts, the most industrious of the Commissioners and would later supplement his service by returning to sea against the Dutch.

Batten, in truth, was uncomfortable as a speaker and was far more at home in the shipyards than anywhere else. He had little patience with paper work, so Pepys had some reason to quibble about the condition of his files, but the charge of corruption is harder to sustain. Batten, sweetening his salary with gifts and other favors like nearly every other office holder of the time, was apparently no less scrupulous than Pepys in seeing to it that such considerations as came his way did not result in his cheating either the Crown or the Navy. The King and the Duke had nothing but good to say of his service as Surveyor, a post to which he was suited by experience and disposition.

In the case of a third colleague, the Comptroller, Sir John Mennes, there were more grounds for complaint. Born in 1559, he had served the Royalist cause with great distinction and been rewarded by Charles II with the major command in the south of England. The editors tell us he was ". . .a man of action, a wit, a learned chemist . . . and a writer of amusing, if usually coarse, verse." Nevertheless, he was completely overmastered by his new position, which to be done well required an expertise in accountancy he simply did not have. Everyone in the office knew this, as presumably did the Duke and the King. All the same, he was kept on till 1669. In

the name of both efficiency and kindness, his colleagues took over ever-larger shares of his work, a process that did not always go smoothly.

While Pepys is inclined to exaggerate the failings of these colleagues, it's clear that he had a point. For, as Tomalin argues,

> He saw that [his work] gave him the chance to prove his capacity, and he realized that, whatever superiority his fellow officers . . . possessed in rank and experience, in intellect and application he surpassed all but one of them. (Tomalin, 134)

That one was William Coventry, Secretary to the Duke of York and member of Parliament, who joined the Board in 1662, just at the time when Pepys began to take his work seriously.

From the start the two took to each other, for they had a common interest, not to say delight, in efficiency, signaled in Coventry's case by his well-known desk, disposed in a circle with himself at the center so he could pivot from one project to another, each with its own pigeonholes. The two shared besides a frustration with the abuses that occurred throughout the Navy's systems of supply and repair.

Reared in the warrens of London's oldest and most notorious quarters, still essentially Medieval in appearance before the Great Fire of 1666, Pepys had known first hand the world of cheats, con artists, and pilferers treated in numberless Elizabethan broadsides. He understood how little skill was wanted to skim the windfall and low-hanging fruit from an orchard as rich as a dockyard, not to

mention what havoc pursers and victuallers might wreak. He hoped Coventry would spend more time at the Board and help him straighten out the mess he saw.

That was not to happen, but Coventry was still valuable to Pepys as a sounding board and mentor. When Pepys confided to him his misgivings about his colleagues, even showing him some entries in the Diary, Coventry advised him in effect to sublimate his grievances and get on with the job. I have said that the frequently snarling references to Batten and Penn, in particular, are somewhat misleading. For it is also the case that Pepys had great respect for these old professional sailors, or "tarpaulins," as they were called to distinguish them from gentlemen captains appointed solely by virtue of their connections, and he greatly enjoyed hearing of their exploits. Let contradiction thrive.

And what was the job Pepys was to get on with? Initially, not much. In recent times, the Clerk of the Acts had acted as little more than a secretary who kept a running account of the Board's activities. But Pepys—in whose mind ambition was somewhat short of the last infirmity—was without question as keen to further his own ends as he was to improve the Board's service to the Admiralty; and by 1662, following the Duke of York's updated Instructions, he had begun to expand his purview in the interest of both his prospects and the Board's performance.

As I have hinted, the real meat of Pepsys's work for the Board is found as much in the apparatus of the Diary as in its scintillating surface. The content of his surveys, reports, and minutes is in the notes, in the Companion articles, or in the papers to which those refer. The Diary gives us the back story, the dirt on whose bailiwick Pepys was invading with each foray into the thickets he wanted to thin. In

the interest of brevity, if not of wit, I'll let four examples stand for the host of incremental assaults on inefficiency he contemplated during the period of the Diary.

The first was a non-starter. A major frustration for Pepys during the whole of his career was one he could not attack from the Navy Board. The navy built up by the Protectorate, among the best fighting forces in the world, was composed almost entirely of sea-going professionals, "tarpaulins" like Batten, Penn, and Mennes. By contrast, the Restoration Navy included a shoal of gentleman captains, of whom only a few were really competent—such commanders as Prince Rupert or Pepys's patron, the Earl of Sandwich. Pepys wanted a Navy like that of the Patrick O'Brian Aubrey-Maturin novels, a fleet in which every captain had been a midshipman. True, connections might help some up the Navy List or hinder others, but almost no one would arrive at command without a lifetime of experience at sea. Work on this problem would have to await Pepys's move from the Board to the Admiralty, which was responsible for oversight of the Navy as a whole.

A second challenge was the shipyards, at the time England's largest industrial concern, which were a snarl of embezzlement, outright theft, and featherbedding. Knowing almost nothing about the actual work of the yards at the outset, Pepys had himself tutored in math, bought models of ships to learn about their construction, and made tours of the shipyards beyond those required by the Instructions. Scandalized by the abuses he and the other Commissioners had found on their visits, Pepys, on October 24th 1662 drew up a plan for call books to be kept by clerks in the yards to record in detail the allocation of men to jobs. After a trial of several months, the new books became the standard for all the yards.

I see this as an archetypal Pepys move, for it was intended to improve the reliability of the yards by avoiding needless duplication of labor and a clutter of 'monbacks whose presence impeded work rather than advancing it or, worse, the larding of the rolls with phantom workers. The goal was not only to save money, but to improve the quality and predictability of the yards' output as well. A further aim, of course, was to give the Board more control over the budgets and the work of the yards. Additional benefits, by no means incidentally, also accrued to Pepys. In suggesting the experiment of the call books, he was functioning less as a member of the Board than as a consultant from an Ur-McKinsey; and, as the collector and conveyor of the information in the books, he was rather less a mere recording secretary than a mid-level manager who could both answer important questions and efficiently communicate orders to the yards. In a bureaucracy, control of information is power.

There were also shortcomings in provisioning. On November 22d, 1665, while reviewing with two of his clerks the control of victualling, Pepys claimed to have shown that ". . . a purser without cheating is a loser, twice as much as he gets." In the same vein, he was a little later to ask Batten, "Is it not manifest . . . that a purser (with the utmost of his present allowed profits) must be a knave or be undon?" To prevent pursers and conniving captains from directly swindling their managers by requesting supplies for ghostly seamen, Pepys appointed muster-masters who were to return their muster books directly to him as Surveyor-General of the Victualling, a post he assumed in December of 1665 and which was largely of his own devising. While this reduced one form of fiddle, it could not stop pursers

from cheating crews by providing food and drink unfit for consumption. Of this problem, Pepys says (in his own *Naval Minutes*):

> Englishmen, and especially seamen, love their bellies above anything else, and therefore it must always be remembered in the . . . victualling of the Navy that to make any abatement of them in the quantity or agreeableness of the victuals is to discourage or provoke them in the tenderest point and will sooner render them disgusted with the King's service than any one other hardship that can be put upon them. (*Companion,* 289-90.)

This analysis, trenchant as it is, led to no cure, at least not under the pressure of the Second Dutch War. Pepys's plans for better provisions came to naught. As Richard Ollard explains in a Companion article, '. . . the government did not pay up. The Victualler eventually went bankrupt, and the seamen were, as they always had been, half starved. (Companion, 290.)

Pepys made many other efforts to clean up the dockyards and the provisioning of the fleet, nearly all taking the same general form: a survey or accounting followed by a report and recommendations. Many of these reports he generously sent up the line under the names of the clerks who prepared them, a gesture bound to assure their keenness in his service. Virtually all of them suggest a grasp of the Board's place in the whole system of the Navy more comprehensive than that of any of his colleagues save Coventry, whose influence with the Duke of York cannot have hurt. I believe Pepys saw the several duties of the Board as reducible to two over-arching requirements on the part of the Admiralty: they needed current and solid answers about the state of ships, crews, materials, and

provisions; and they needed to know that orders passed down the line would reach the right departments with dispatch. His fledgling efforts at reform consistently serve those ends.

Alas, the crushing failures of the Second Dutch War nearly undid the Board, the nascent reforms, and Pepys himself. While the war had begun well with a surprising victory at the battle of Lowestoft in June of 1665, things soon fell apart. Pepys's patron, Sandwich, a hero at Lowestoft, was blamed for letting the Dutch Spice Fleet escape, providing the Dutch with funds to build up their fleet. Later, having captured two East Indiamen, he allowed their rich cargo to be stolen under his nose. Finally, he refused to take his squadron to sea in fierce autumn gales, an act of alleged cowardice that permitted his political enemies to have him removed from his command. In disgrace, he was sent on an embassy to recruit the aid of Spain. This was nervous-making enough for Pepys, but worse was to follow.

The final action of the war, and the only one that need concern us here, was the daring Dutch raid on the Medway in June of 1667, in which the English battle fleet, its protective chain across the river having failed, was largely destroyed at anchor. This loss, coupled with the blows of the Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of 1666, caused such unrest that Charles, who was also nearly broke, feared rebellion. Clarendon, his chief minister, therefore hastily arranged the Treaty of Breda.

On October 23d, 1667, it fell to Pepys to defend before Parliament the Board's management of the war. This was a tall order considering that Pepys had recorded in July his retort to the King by Clarendon that had become common knowledge:

> Treachery? . . . I wish we could prove there was anything of that in it, for that would imply some wit and thoughtfulness; but we were ruined merely by folly and neglect.

After the débacle of the Medway, Pepys, as he had done in the disturbances that followed the Plague and the Fire, sent his gold to the family's seat at Brampton in East Anglia. In July of 1667 he had also written Coventry to resign as Surveyor of the Victualling before being forced to. Persuaded that in any other country he'd have paid with his life, he was certain he would lose principal post as well. Moreover, the Duke of York had told the Board that they should feel free each to pursue his own defense, even at a cost to his fellows.

In these circumstances, Pepys's performance before the House seems almost heroic. He engaged in no special pleading for himself and sought, with only a little strategic prevarication, to absolve the Board of responsibility. He sloughed off responsibility for the loss of Sheerness at the mouth of the Medway onto the Ordnance Department. As to the defense of Chatham, he was content to sacrifice the dockyard manager, Commissioner Peter Pett, who, as he says,

> . . . did make the weakest defense for himself nor to satisfaction nor certain, but sometimes one thing and sometimes another, sometimes for himself and sometimes against him.

The House committee was satisfied with this and discharged the Board, whose surviving members—Batten had died earlier in the year—were mostly grateful, for they had feared the loss of their positions and perhaps even the dissolution of the Board. Pett, who had prospered mightily in the ship-building line simply resigned

and retired to his substantial villa at Chatham. Penn, implicated with Sandwich in the loss of the prize cargo, later faced impeachment and was allowed to retire. We might note here that these fellows fared substantially better than Admiral Bynge was to do a century later for his perceived failure in war. (Thanks, Jim.)

There remains, in the period of the Diary, one more performance before Parliament, this one concerning the fourth major challenge Pepys faced in his early attempts at reform, the pay of seamen. Even after the Board had tried to frighten Parliament into more money by padding their requests—Sound familiar?—there was never enough cash. The Admiralty resorted to what Ollard calls two "time-dishonored evasions": keeping ships in commission to avoid paying off their crews; and paying off in so-called tickets, a scrip supposedly redeemable at the Navy office. As with the pursers, there was no administrative solution to the want of funds, and Pepys fought in vain against these practices, forms of theft that continued until the nineteenth century.

To make it appear that they actually cared if the seamen were paid, the House called on the Board to defend their handling of the tickets. Pepys, by virtue of his earlier success with the House Committee, drew the short straw. Three days before his appearance, set for March 5th 1668, he heard it bruited that the whole Board were to be turned out save, as he says,

> Honest Sir [John] Mennes—who, God knows, is fitter to have been turned out himself than any of us, doing the King more hurt by his dotage and folly than all the rest can do by their knavery if they had a mind to it.

Earlier the same day Pepys had also secured the promise of two benefactors, Sir William Warren and Sir Denis Gauden, not to disclose their considerable gifts to him. Warren, the nation's premier timber merchant, had enjoyed a virtual monopoly with the Navy during the war years; Gauden was the Victualler. For the sake of Pepys's reputation, the less said of these matters, the better.

The speech of March 5th, might better be styled a performance for its resemblance to comic opera. On the Day, Pepys rose early, and after a half-pint of mulled sack at the Dog and a dram of brandy at Mrs. Howlett's, he felt, as he said, "in better order as to courage, truly." The speech itself lasted over three hours. It is abundantly clear from a summary of this speech in the diary of one John Milward, an M. P. at the time, that Pepys told the House nothing they did not already know about the infamous practices of keeping ships in service to avoid paying them off or of the paying off by tickets. The Board was simply doing what it had to do. As to the further charge that the order of payment by tickets had been irregular, he countered that there had never been specified any regular order for such payment. (Milward, 209-9.) When he had finished, Pepys withdrew, to the congratulation, he says "of all my fellow-officers, and all that was within hearing." He was called again briefly to address the question of paying tickets through brokers, another abusive practice that seems in the end not to have bothered the House. He and his fellows hoped for a speedy vote, as did most of the House, but that was forestalled by an interesting Parliamentary maneuver. As Pepys explains:

> . . .my speech being so long, many had gone out do dinner and come in again half drunk, and then there are two or three that are professed enemies to us

> and everybody else . . . these did rise up and speak against a vote now, the house not being full . . .

A vote the next day exonerated the Board, and the Diary brims for days afterward with compliments from a wide variety of persons on an excellent speech that should assure its author a fine career in Parliament or wherever else he might choose to shine.

From this episode I draw the rather cynical conclusions that this particular investigation was largely *pro forma*; that the House had little interest in calling more attention to abuses which in the end saved the government money and which they had every intention of continuing; and that they and others were glad to see that the Navy Board numbered at least one competent spokesman.

Pepys's bosses were pleased. The King exchanged jokes with him about the continuity between the Commonwealth's Navy and his own. A few weeks later, the Duke sent to the Board a letter, written by Pepys, blaming nearly everyone on it but the Clerk of the Acts for failing to heed the Duke's *Instructions* of 1662 and setting forth a series of administrative reforms to be undertaken forthwith by that same Clerk. Pepys had arrived, closing a major chapter in his career as an administrator.

In the same year, 1668, Pepys was discovered by his wife *in flagrante delicto* with Deb Willett, a seventeen-year-old girl who had been taken on as her companion. Heeding *his* Domestic Tranquility Alarm, Pepys foreswore the girl and promised perpetual fidelity, thus closing a chapter in a parallel career.

This seems a fitting place to leave the Diary, as Pepys himself was to do only a few months later, in May of 1669, when gave over the writing of it.

Let us leave Pepys at this closure and move to my own, which, in the interest of fairness, involves a *dis*closure. The more wakeful may recall that I began this paper with a cheap shot at my wife's way of packing her little station wagon. My way, of course, is Pepys's way: planned, controlled, rational. On my solo return from Canada this summer—a journey that involved a detour by way of Peekskill, New York, to pick up a Puli puppy—I achieved a new summit of elegance. For better weight distribution in *my* little wagon, and to avoid questions at the border about a cage, with the seats down I arranged duffel bags and a collapsed dog crate into a sort of Rubik's Cube, so that a minimum of shuffling at the kennel would free the crate to be erected with its gate at the rear passenger door.

Unpacking at home was a cinch. Release the pup to ingratiate himself with his new mistress, remove duffel and crate, pop up the rear seats and . . . what's this? A case of wine that escaped notice at the border? Well, no. It's the Diary of Samuel Pepys, there in case a writer with a deadline might want his source material. Even so, bringing Pepys home was not rational, given that our bookshelves here are filled and then some. It's odds-on that next June I'll haul the Diary back north to its accustomed eighteen inches.

Submitted to the Literary Club 20 September 2010

Randolph L. Wadsworth Jr.

Works Cited:

Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*; The University of California Press; Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 2000. Eleven volumes: I-IX for the *Diary* proper; X, *Companion*; and XI, Index.

Claire Tomalin: *Samuel Pepys*; Alfred a Knopf; New York, New York, 2002

Caroline Robbins, ed.: *The Diary of John Milward*; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, 1938.