

The Pepys Library / [F. McD. C. Turner].

Contributors

Pepys Library.
Turner, F. McD. C.

Publication/Creation

Cambridge : University Press, [1950?]

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THE PEPYS LIBRARY



THE DIARY

THE PEPYS LIBRARY is now sufficiently well known to raise expectations in the minds of those who come to visit it. As they pass through the College 'screens' and the beautiful façade of the Pepys building comes into view, such expectations can hardly fail to receive some further stimulation. In actual fact the building that the visitor now approaches was not erected with any intention of providing a home for Samuel Pepys's books: it was built late in the seventeenth century as an extension to the College, and Pepys with several other graduate members of the College was a generous subscriber towards the cost of its completion. Like many other College buildings put up about this time, it became known as the New Building; and it was only after the arrival of the library that its present name, Pepys Building, seems gradually to have come into use. Visitors should therefore realize that the words *Bibliotheca Pepysiana 1724* above the central arch of the arcade denote the arrival of Pepys's library at Magdalene, and have no reference either to the date of the building, or to the purpose for which it was erected.

Samuel Pepys died on 26 May 1703, and it was only a fortnight before his death in two codicils to his will, dated 12 and 13 May, that he made testamentary provision for his library. In the codicil of 12 May he directs that his nephew John Jackson (now first made Pepys's principal heir in the place of the elder brother Samuel, who had 'thought fit to dispose of himselfe in marriage against my positive advice and injunctions') is to have 'the full and Sole possession of all my Collection of Books and papers contained in my Library. . . during the Terme of his natural Life'. Moreover, 'if it shall not please God in his mercy to restore me to a condition of prosecuting my thoughts', Jackson is to put the library in its final order, and is given very full instructions how to do this. And finally, he and Will Hewer, Pepys's executor, are to 'consider of the most effectual means of preserving the said Library intire in one body, undivided unsold and secure against all manner of deminution damages and embesselments. . . for the benefit of posterity'.

However, the codicil of 13 May relieved Will Hewer and John Jackson of their responsibility for the final disposal of the library. It would take too much space to quote this codicil in full. Preserving John Jackson's life interest, Pepys left the library 'to one of our Universities and rather in that

of Cambridge than of Oxford'. Then to a College rather than the 'publick Library'. Then (assuming Cambridge) to Trinity or Magdalene, and 'rather in the latter for the Sake of my own and nephews Education therein'. If in Trinity 'to have communication with the new [Wren] Library there...and if in Magdalen that it be in the new building there, and any part thereof at my nephews election. 8^{thly} That my said Library be continued in its present form and noe other books mixt therewith.... 12^{thly} And that for a yet further Security herein the said two Colleges of Trinity and Magdalen have a Reciprocal Check upon one another. And that the College which shall be in present possession of the said Library be subject to an Annual visitation from the other and to the forfeiture thereof to the like possession and Use of the other upon Conviction of any breach of their said Covenants. S. Pepys.' We have no record that Trinity has exercised this right of inspection.

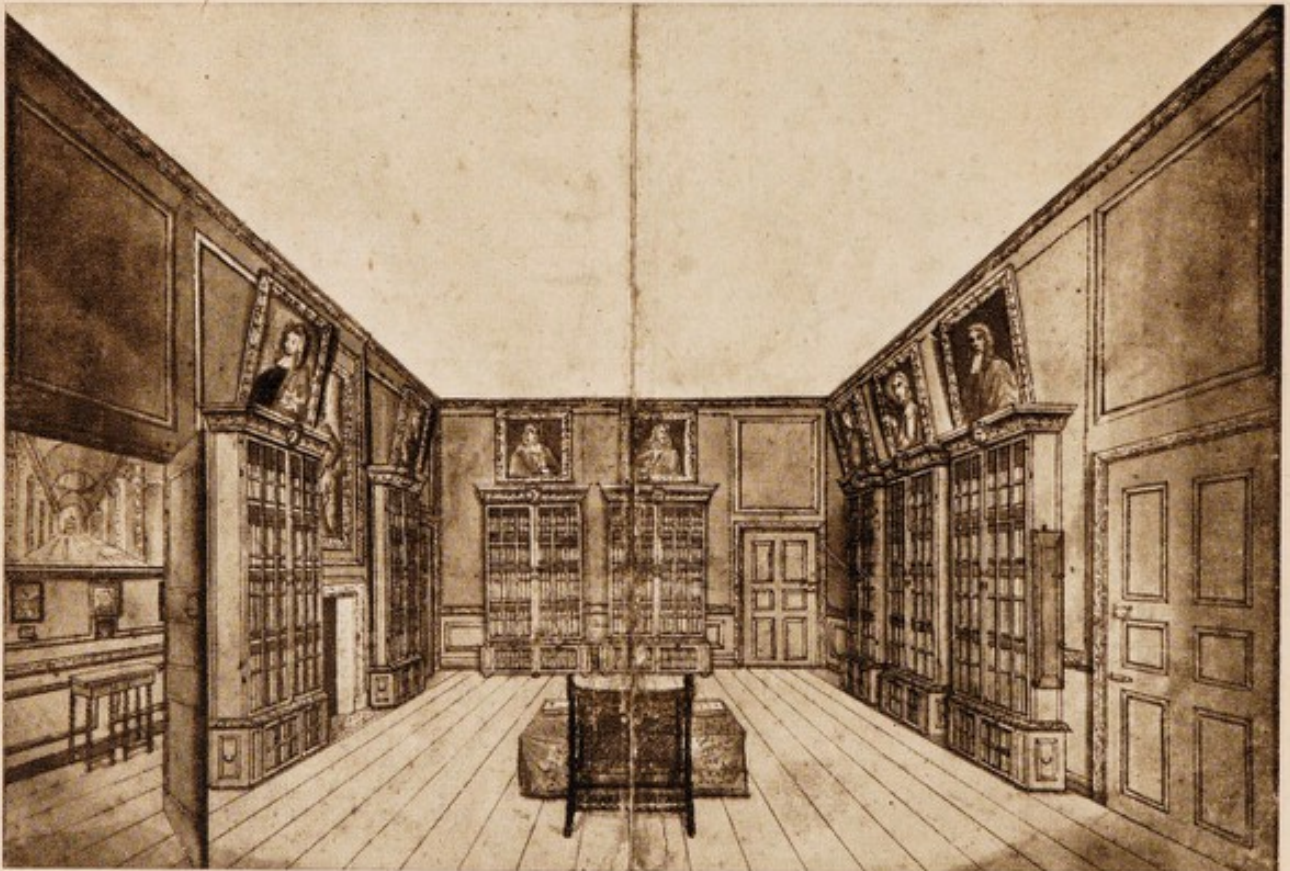
We will assume that the visitor is now entering the library and receiving perhaps a slight shock of disappointment at the smallness of the place; but a very short look round should dispel any such feeling. Instead of the ordinary library shelves, the visitor here sees twelve most beautiful oak bookcases, or 'presses', together with Pepys's own library table, which contains some of the largest books of the collection at either end. These bookcases are of great interest. They are as early as any known to contain books behind glass doors. The visitor should remember that at the Restoration the bookshelf is a still recent feature of the house. The comparatively small collections of the private person were formerly kept in boxes or chests; a use still encountered by Dr Johnson and Boswell on their tour in northern Scotland and the Hebrides, where older customs still lingered. Pepys's presses are elaborately carved in the cornices and again round the upper parts of the lower and wider sections of the cases, designed to house the large folios. The twelve cases are all similar in size and general design, but there are many variations in the detail of the carving. All twelve are the work of the joiner, and not of the cabinet-maker. We know from the *Diary*, that the earliest presses were made by a joiner of the name of Simpson in the year 1666. July 23: 'Then comes Sympson the Joyner; and he and I with great pains contriving presses to put my books up in; they now growing numerous and lying one upon another on my chairs, I lose the use to avoyde the trouble of removing them when I would open a book.' August 24: 'Comes Sympson to set up my other new presses....' This suggests that more than two presses were made in 1666, but there is a reference to 'my two presses' on 10 January 1668. It is probable, therefore, that during the period of the *Diary* (1660-9), Pepys could



ONE OF THE PRESSES



[A] THE PEPYS BUILDING



[B] PEPYS'S LIBRARY IN YORK BUILDINGS

There were then (c. 1688) seven presses, the wall not shown being occupied by windows

manage with two presses, each of which would contain about 250 books. Two pictures contained in Pepys's own catalogue show the library as it was in York Buildings in a room overlooking the Thames. There were now seven presses. Pepys moved to No. 12 York Buildings in 1679, but it was not until early in 1688 that he acquired No. 14 with its river frontage. It seems plain therefore that much of the library was collected during his fourteen years of retirement. And Pepys retained No. 14 York Buildings until 1701 at least, and thus the drawings may well be later than 1688. It is not quite certain that all twelve presses were made in his lifetime, for his own final catalogue, made in 1700, lists 2474 books, which could be contained in ten presses; but he bought many new books during the last three years of his life. The 2474 books were 'Review'd and finally Placed August 1st 1705. J. Jackson. vid. rest of y^e Library in Additament. Catalogue consisting of 526 Books more, making the whole Number just 3000. J. Jackson.' And already in a declaration, dated 20 April 1704, Will Hwer and Jackson had decided that the library 'to the just number of Three Thousand volumes contained in Twelve wainscott Presses and one Table' be offered to 'Magdalen Colledge', provided that they will accept Pepys's conditions.

The visitor looking at these stately cases can hardly fail to be impressed by the neat arrangement of the books within them and by the beautiful appearance of the leather bindings. Among the instructions given to Jackson concerning his books (in the codicil of 13 May 1703) Pepys enjoins: '8^{thly} That the placing as to heighth be strictly reviewed and where found requiring it more nicely adjusted'. And so 'the placing as to heighth' remains to this day. This arrangement is very sensible, and made almost imperative by the double rows in shelves two, three and four in every bookcase. In a collection so miscellaneous any attempt to place books by subject would prove either impracticable or very unsightly. What matters is an efficient system of cataloguing, and in this, too, Pepys was something of a pioneer, supplementing his alphabetical index with both 'class' and subject catalogues. The books are numbered from 1 (the smallest) to 3000 (the largest). A 'table' then quickly tells the librarian on what shelf any required number will be found.

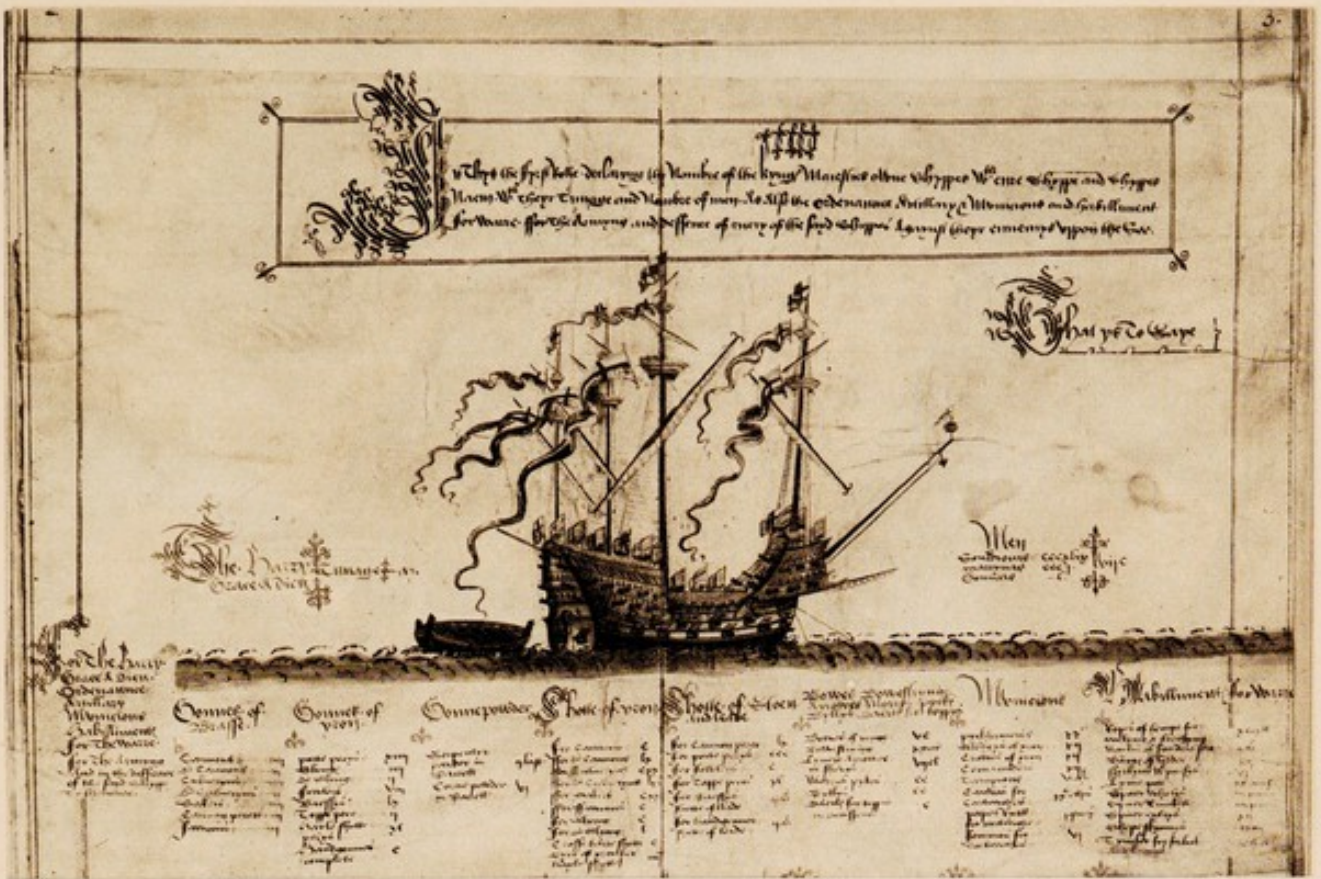
The bindings throughout the library, as is to be expected in a collection made at this period, are uniformly good, and many of them are very fine indeed. In his instructions to Jackson Pepys ordered that 'my Arms or Crest or Cypher be Stampd in Gold on the outsides of the Covers of every booke admitting thereof', and this was done: crest and name, etc., in front, and arms, crest and motto at the back. Nearly all books have the bookplate, an

DESCRIPTION OF THE PEPYS LIBRARY

engraving from the Kneller portrait hanging in the library, and also Pepys's end-plate, a device of ropes and anchors entwined with the initials S.P., and, above, the motto *Mens cujusque is est quisque*. Thus practically every book bears four separate evidences of Pepys's ownership. It is reasonable to suppose that many books were so completed before his death. Sometimes a book bearing this paraphernalia appears on the market, and it is presumed that it has been lost from the library. This is not the case, for the collection being limited to 3000, a certain number of books were removed to make room for others.

To return to the bindings, the great majority are naturally English work, although there are some interesting foreign bindings. A collection of fifteenth-century translations of the Bible into English is very beautifully bound in an earlier style, but the finest work is that executed in Pepys's own life-time. There are many books in red calf beautifully tooled in gold in the simple but satisfying style associated with the King's binders, and there are also examples of great elaboration in that style. Many books, presented or dedicated to Pepys, are splendidly bound, as are also some of his own naval MSS., specially those prepared for the scrutiny of James II. Of all naval books, the prize must be awarded to the Anthony Roll, perhaps the finest binding in the library. Other books, e.g. Barlow's *Aesop's Fables*, have very grand bindings for no apparent reason. The variety is fascinating. There is a type of binding called 'sombre', i.e. black with blind (uncoloured) and gold tooling, of which there are some very fine examples, particularly the compositions of Cesare Morelli, Pepys's private musician. Many books of but few pages, especially music books, are bound in delightfully coloured and designed paper covers, a rather special feature of the library. There is much good work in vellum. Finally, the excellent state of preservation of the books throughout the library adds great lustre to a collection of bindings so various and interesting. For this state of preservation we are chiefly indebted to Pepys's own care and foresight in the instructions he gave to Jackson, and to Jackson's diligence in carrying them out. In the codicil of 13 May 1703, Pepys wrote: 'I do hereby declare that could I be sure of a constant Succession of Heirs from my said Nephew qualified like himself for the use of such a Library I should not entertain a thought of its ever being Alienated from them.' He was quite justified in so writing.

There are some 3000 volumes in the library, but many more titles, many volumes containing several titles, especially among the early printed books. To give any satisfactory account of the books in this short review would be



[A] 'THE GREAT HARRY' FROM THE ANTHONY ROLL



[B] TWO PAGES FROM THE MONKS' DRAWING BOOK



VARIOUS BOOKS OF INTEREST

Top left is Drake's *Pocket Book* and next but bottom on the left is the Caxton *Metamorphoses*

impossible. Pepys was a true virtuoso, as wide in his interests as in his abilities, and the library reflects this. Apart from the large number of contemporary books on every kind of subject, the remainder of the library may perhaps be subdivided something as follows:

1. Medieval manuscripts.
2. Early printed books.
3. Printed books and manuscripts dealing with the Royal Navy, and other closely related nautical matters.
4. The special collections.
5. Books closely connected with Pepys's life.

I. MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS. There are some sixty of these. The most profusely illuminated is an illustrated Apocalypse of about 1350, with text in French and English. The most beautifully written is a version of the New Testament in English of about 1440, beautifully decorated and in a fine binding. There is some interesting music: a finely written Bishop's Choir Office of about the year 1400; a composition of Guillaume de Machaut; and two very interesting collections of polyphonic music of the middle of the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century. The later of these is very well written and decorated. It was called by Pepys *King Henry VII's Music Book*. The gold thread of the covers has now largely worn away. The most interesting of the medieval manuscripts is perhaps a collection of drawings of the fourteenth century called by Pepys *Monks' Drawing Book*. Birds and saints predominate. This is a most attractive and unusual manuscript, and has been reproduced in full (uncoloured) by the Walpole Society, vol. XIII.

2. EARLY PRINTED BOOKS. This is a large and valuable collection for the size of the library, containing nearly 200 titles printed up to 1558, including twenty-five incunabula, nearly all English, seven by Caxton, eight by Wynkyn de Worde, and eight by Pynson. There are nine unique incunabula, and ten others printed early in the sixteenth century. Some of these books are very beautiful. Among the English incunabula is an interesting collection of Latin Grammars, several of which are unique. Together with Caxton's printed books should be mentioned a most interestingly written manuscript, comprising a part of his own translation of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. There seems good reason for ascribing this writing to Caxton himself, in which case it is the only extended example of his writing now known to exist.

3. THE NAVAL COLLECTION. This is a large collection, containing much of Pepys's official correspondence both at the Navy Office and the Admiralty. There are also many large volumes of minutes and memoranda, a great collection of miscellaneous 'sea' and naval matter, many separate volumes of naval statistics and special reports and memoranda. Very little of this considerable mass of manuscript material is in Pepys's own handwriting, it being largely in the form of fair copies made by his clerks. Quite a lot of the material collected was, from Pepys's point of view, antiquarian; for he long meditated, but never achieved, a history of the Navy. The whole collection is naturally of great importance to the naval historian, for every aspect of naval administration is dealt with in much detail, including shipwrihty. There are many printed books on naval matters, including navigation, and all aspects of seamanship. A certain portion of this material has been printed by the Naval Records Society, and some of it calendared in detail by the late Dr J. R. Tanner; but the greater part of the work still remains to be done. Some of the naval manuscripts are of much general interest. The Anthony Roll must be mentioned first. This is an illustrated armament roll of the navy of Henry VIII, made for him in 1541 by Anthony Anthony, one of the Officers of the Ordnance. There were three rolls: 1. Ships; 2. Galliasses; 3. Pinnaces and Row-barges. Charles II gave rolls 1 and 3 to Pepys. Roll 2 is now at the British Museum. Pepys cut up the rolls ship by ship, mounted them on vellum, and made of the whole a magnificent book, superbly bound. Then there is the victuallers' book of the Spanish armada: every ship is listed with its victuals. There is the nautical almanack bearing the signature *F. Drak*, with a map of Western Europe, much thumbed around the entrance to the Channel. *Fragments of Ancient English Shipwrihty* is a well-known early manuscript on shipbuilding of the period 1590-1627, brought up to date by Sir Anthony Deane's *Doctrine of Naval Architecture*, and other manuscript works by Pepys's contemporaries, Sir William Petty, Samuel Fortree, Edmund Dummer, and others.

4. THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS. There are two collections of great distinction, the prints and the ballads; the calligraphical and shorthand collections are also most interesting and valuable in their own sphere.

The print collection is extensive, and is contained in over a dozen very large albums. The works of the early engravers from Dürer onwards are abundantly and beautifully represented, especially in the New Testament volume. The great number of engraved portraits, sometimes supplemented

by drawings, are of considerable historical value. Of topographical importance are many of the maps, prints and drawings in the first of two volumes labelled *London and Westminster*. The second volume so named has much of great social interest: processions, trials, costumes, cries, trade-cards, cartoons, etc. There is an interesting Paris volume. Of Pepys's contemporaries, the work of Wenceslaus Hollar is the most abundant, both in *London and Westminster* and in a special volume in that part of the collection called by Pepys *Prints General*. Altogether, the print collection is of very great interest and importance, and we know from his correspondence that it occupied much of Pepys's time after his retirement.

The ballad collection is also extensive and important. In five large albums are pasted more than 1600 broad-sheet ballads, of which over 950 are unique. Vol. I opens with a manuscript version of the Agincourt Victory song, the polyphony differing slightly from that in the Trinity carol roll and in the British Museum. The ballad collection has been fully investigated and printed by Professor H. E. Rollins in his *Pepysian Garland* and the eight volumes entitled *Pepys Ballads*. There is also a collection of Spanish ballads.

The calligraphical collection is most attractive. It consists for the most part of engraved sheets of the work of the writing-masters. It is contained in three large volumes, English, foreign, and miscellaneous. There is some actual writing, such as the elaborate *Samuel Pepys* here reproduced on the front cover. Vol. I opens with a medieval section showing pages of writing from the seventh century onwards, with two snippets cut from the famous Durham Gospel (seventh century) for Pepys with the Dean's permission.

Pepys wrote his *Diary* in a system of shorthand called *Tachygraphy* invented by Thomas Shelton. It seems likely that Pepys either learned or gained his first interest in shorthand during his time at Magdalene, where there is some evidence that shorthand was fashionable at the time. But there were many systems that had come into being from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, and Pepys did pioneer work in collecting as many of these systems as he could, and listing those that he could not get. The collection is contained in five small volumes of varying size.

Apart from these four collections briefly described, there are several others, such as the volumes called *Old Plays* (containing important editions of John Heywood and others), the *State Papers*, the *Liturgick Controversies*, and so on.

5. BOOKS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH PEPYS'S LIFE. Naturally, many of the manuscript volumes in the naval section belong also to this

category. Some of these are in diary form, full of personal touches, but it is the *Diary* itself, which must take the place of honour here. There is also the shorthand account, which Pepys took from Charles II at Newmarket in 1680, of the latter's adventures after the battle of Worcester until his escape to France. There are two large manuscript books, which Pepys enigmatically names 'My volumes of *Mornamont*'. During the years of the Popish Plot, Pepys, through his close connexion with the King and the Duke of York, was in great danger from the Shaftesbury faction. In these two volumes, the actions of his accusers, in particular the infamous 'Colonel' Scott, are closely recorded, and the evidence against them marshalled. There is his only printed work, *Memoires of the Royal Navy, 1679-88*, published in 1690, in which Pepys in no uncertain terms vindicates his administration at the Admiralty under Charles II and James II. Perhaps here should be mentioned, too, the first edition of Newton's *Principia*, published in 1686 when Pepys was President of the Royal Society, and bearing his *imprimatur* on the title page. A volume of Christ's Hospital papers bears witness to Pepys's energetic, but in part unavailing efforts as a Governor of that institution. There are many other records of Pepys's activities outside the sphere of naval administration, including the manuscript of his own song *Beauty retire*, set with a guitar tablature.

The *Diary* is contained in six volumes, of which the first is smaller than the remaining five. The binding is uniform, brown calf with gold tooling, arms and crest. The *Diary* records a period of nine years and five months, from 1 January 1660 to 31 May 1669; nevertheless, it is a million and a quarter words long, more than one-and-a-half times as long as the Bible. That it is contained in six medium sized volumes is owing to the fact that it is written in shorthand. It was often written late at night by a tired man with overstrained eyes in candlelight. Yet we may turn over page after page of uncorrected, meticulously clear writing: a great tribute to the clarity of thought and strength of mind of the author. Did he intend it for the public eye? Diaries were not published in the seventeenth century; nevertheless, he meant it to be preserved, for here it is in the library, placed and catalogued by Pepys himself; and we know he meant the library to be preserved 'for the benefit of posterity'.

The *Diary* is immortal, and its merits need no enumeration here; but it is, perhaps, still worth pointing out that had the *Diary* never been written, Pepys would on at least three counts be well known to us to-day: as a great administrator and civil servant, the creator of the Navy that with the genius of

a.

M^r—



Evelyn.

S^r. Anth. Deane.

S^r. James Houblon.

b.



c.



d.



M^r. Pepys.

e.



D^r. Gale - Dean of York.

f.



M^r. Kewer.

PEPYS AND HIS FRIENDS

A page from the print collection. The portrait of Pepys (engraved from the Kneller painting) is his book-plate



PORTRAIT OF SAMUEL PEPYS BY KNELLER

DESCRIPTION OF THE PEPYS LIBRARY

Nelson defeated Napoleon a hundred years after his death; as a virtuoso, President of the Royal Society, intimate friend of Evelyn and many of the leading intellects of his day; and lastly as the creator and preserver of this exceedingly beautiful and fascinating library.

The whole library is redolent of Pepys; it is various as the topics of the *Diary*, fastidious as he alone knew how to be; and it has a kind of intimacy that he was careful to retain. For he drew a distinction between a private library 'and the more pompous collections of princes'. He never wished it to be larger than it is; the library of an educated man should be what he himself can compass, reflecting his own interests and activities. *Mens cujusque is est quisque*: it is indeed fortunate that Pepys's mind was so capacious. To sit alone in silence surrounded by those books and presses and before that somewhat austere gaze, so penetrating, sober, and wise, is an experience both precious and humiliating.

F. M^CD. C. TURNER

CHIEF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF SAMUEL PEPYS

- 1633 *February 23.* Born at Salisbury Court, Fleet Street.
- c. 1644 Living at Brampton with his uncle Robert Pepys. Attended Huntingdon Grammar School.
- c. 1646-50 At St Paul's School.
- 1651 Began residence at Magdalene College, Cambridge. B.A. 1654; M.A. 1660.
- 1655 Married Elizabeth S. Michel.
- c. 1656 Steward in London to his cousin Sir Edward Montagu, created 1st Earl of Sandwich at the Restoration.
- c. 1658 Appointed a Clerk of the Exchequer.
- 1658 *March 26.* Operated on for the stone.
- 1660 *January 1.* Begins the *Diary*.
March 22. Appointed Secretary to the Generals at Sea of the Fleet sailing to Holland to bring back Charles II (i.e. virtually Montagu's secretary, with whom he set sail on 5 April).
June 29. Appointed Clerk of the Acts of the Navy Office, of which he now becomes a Principal Officer.
- 1665 *March 20.* Appointed Treasurer for Tangier.
June to September. Great plague. Pepys remains in London.
September 2. Fire of London begins.
November 8. Appointed Surveyor-General of Victualling.

CHIEF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF PEPYS

- 1668 *February 27.* Marriage of his sister Paulina to John Jackson (senior).
March 5. Successful speech at the bar of the House of Commons in defence of the Navy Office during the 2nd Dutch War.
- 1669 *May 31.* Diary discontinued owing to eye-strain.
June to October. Tour with Mrs Pepys in Holland and France.
November 10. Death of Mrs Pepys.
- 1673 *June 18.* Appointed Secretary of the Admiralty; resigned from Clerkship of the Acts.
- 1676 Master of the Trinity House; Governor and member of Schools Committee of Christ's Hospital.
- 1677 Master of Clothworkers Company.
- 1679 M.P. for Harwich.
March 21. Under pressure from Shaftesbury faction resigned from the Admiralty and from Treasurership of Tangier.
March 22. Committed to the Tower.
July 9. Released on bail.
- 1683 *July 30.* Set out with Lord Dartmouth as Secretary of the Tangier Expedition.
- 1684 *March 30.* Returned from Tangier and a tour of Spain.
c. May 12. Reappointed Secretary of the Admiralty.
December 1. Elected President of the Royal Society, of which he had been a member since 1665.
- 1689 *February 20.* Resigned from the Admiralty owing to the Revolution.
- 1690 *June 25-30.* Imprisoned in the Gatehouse on suspicion of being 'affected to King James'.
Published his *Memoires relating to the state of the Royal Navy.*
- 1701 *c. June.* Finally retired from York Buildings to Clapham.
- 1703 *May 26.* Died.
June 4. Buried in St Olave's, Hart Street.
- 1722 *March.* Death of John Jackson.
- 1724 *July.* Library removed to Magdalene College.



BINDINGS

Morelli's *Music Book* is on the right of the second row, and Barlow's *Aesop* bottom centre

- 11.55
- r. - 12.52 via Leicester
- r. - 3.09
- 3.42
- 4.55 via Leicester
- 5.58

