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# 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Nichols Newspapers Collection

# History and Contents



**The *17th and 18th Century Nichols Newspapers Collection* features the newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets and broadsheets that form the Nichols newspaper collection held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.**

**All 296 volumes of bound material, covering the period 1672-1737, are presented in a newly digitised format.**

# The History and Development of the Nichols Collection



"Meditations on the Royal Oak", *The London Mercury*, May 20 1721

The following information is based on Julian Pooley's essay *John Nichols and his Collection of Newspapers, Pamphlets and News Sheets, 1760–1865*, which provides a comprehensive overview of the history of the collection. To read the full essay, visit our website at

[www.gale.com/nicholseessays](http://www.gale.com/nicholseessays)

# History of the Nichols Collection



'John Nichols' by Charles Theodosius Heath © National Portrait Gallery, London / cropped from original

John Nichols (1745-1826) began his collection of early newspapers in the late 1770s, when he also purchased a significant share in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a highly notable publication that included Samuel Johnson among its employees. Nichols himself had been writing for the magazine since the mid-1760s.

A rapid expansion of the collection came in 1779, when Nichols received a donation of a thirty-five volume archive from the radical politician and journalist John Wilkes (1727–1797). This donation became the backbone of Nichols' collection, forming the core that was added to over the next few decades.

# History of the Nichols Collection

The next significant acquisition came in early 1786, when Nichols made large purchases at the sale of Edward Wynne's (c. 1734-1784) library. Wynne's library contained the collection of Narcissus Luttrell (1657-1732), a diarist, historian and politician whose documents covered many of the major political and legal events of his lifetime. This added several notable publications to Nichols' collection, including *The Flying Post* and *The Post-Boy*.

A major disaster hit the collection in 1808, when a fire destroyed the printing office and the warehouse of the premises where the collection was stored. Nichols had moved away from the house adjoining the printing office in 1805, when the business had been taken over by his son John Bowyer Nichols (1779-1863).

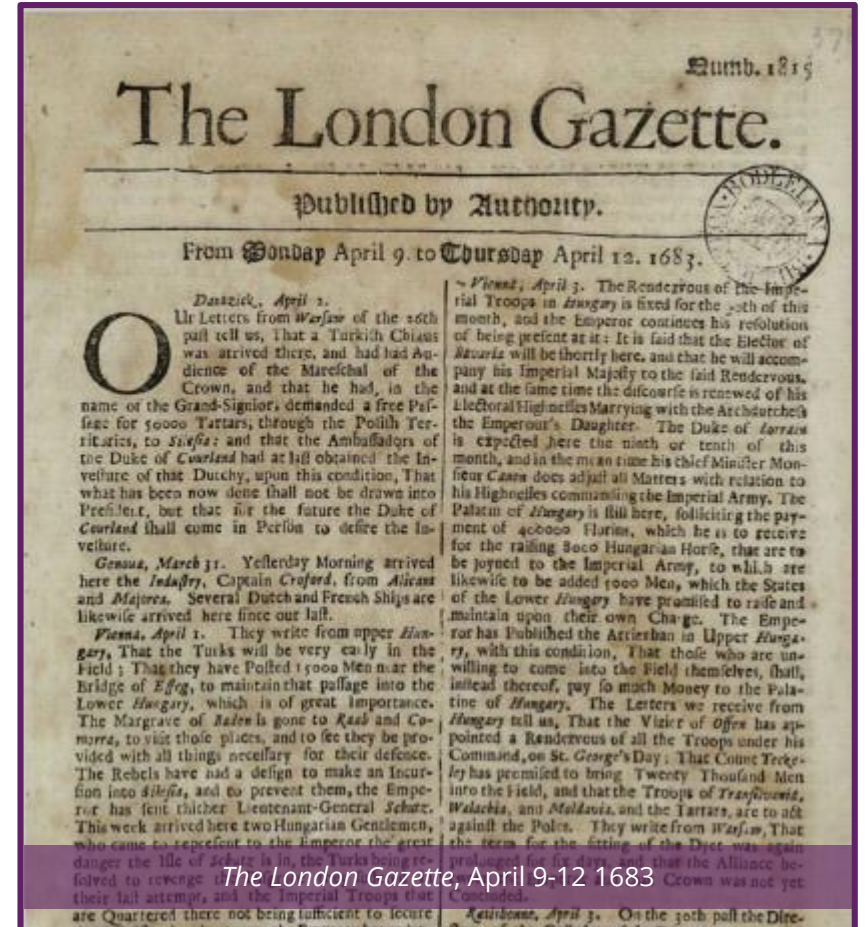


# History of the Nichols Collection

Remarkably, the collection survived, as the dwelling house and the garret in which the newspapers were stored escaped damage during the fire.

Unfortunately, the full collection did not survive a second disaster, when a servant abused the trust placed in them by Nichols and (according to Nichols himself) stole a significant number of newspapers that were never subsequently traced.

This series of events may have dimmed Nichols' enthusiasm for his collecting, and in 1812 he offered his collection to the Trustees of the British Museum for the price of £500. Although they were impressed by the collection and made an offer for the *London Gazette*, Nichols rejected this, opting not to split his collection.



# History of the Nichols Collection

After his death in 1826, Nichols' daughters compiled a catalogue of part of the collection in preparation for a sale by Sotheby's in 1828, with the remainder having been sold to their brother the previous year. Sotheby's made the first sales of John Bowyer Nichols' collection over two sales in 1864 (including titles that suggested John Bowyer added to the collection after his acquisition). John Bowyer's executors sold another 95 volumes to the Bodleian Library in 1865, containing the publications from 1672 to 1737.

As well as collecting the newspapers, Nichols also explored the history of these publications. He first compiled a catalogue of 913 titles for the period 1588–1804 which he published in his *Literary Anecdotes* and updated in 1708. He later added 208 titles spanning 1642-1800.

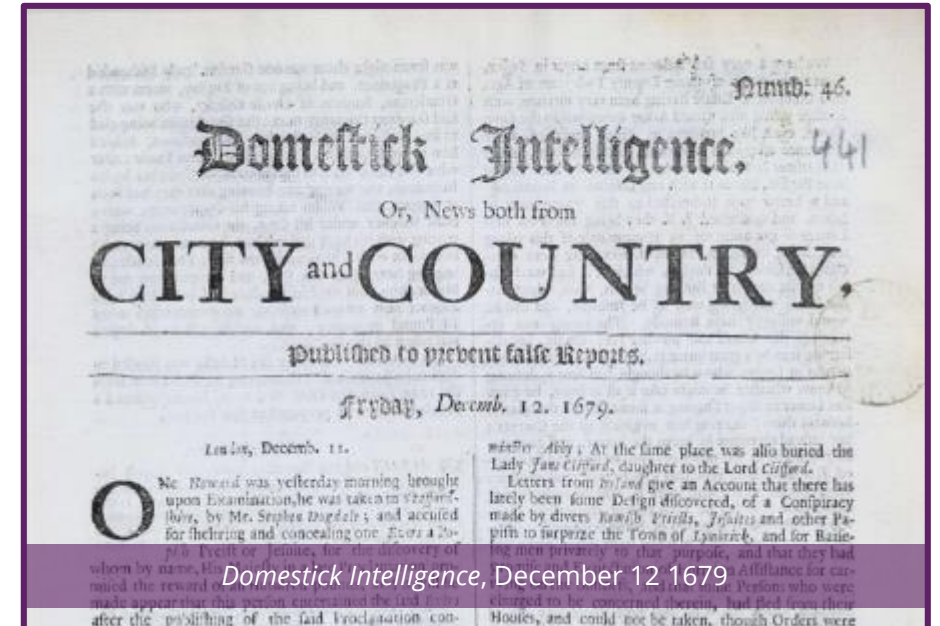




# History of the Nichols Collection

As a scholar himself, Nichols also saw the value of his collection as a primary source for research. He allowed many historians and researchers access to the newspapers, including notable figures such as Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820), the respected naturalist and botanist who travelled with Captain Cook, held the post of President of the Royal Society for over 40 years and was instrumental in the development of Kew Gardens.

Nichols also wrote notable books himself, including the *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, the first biography of the county. He used his newspapers extensively in his research, often referencing the newspapers and pamphlets as sources. He also used the collection to support his earlier work on the *History and Antiquities of Hinckley*, which he wrote after becoming involved in a legal case relating to ancestors of his first wife.



# Contents

( 2579 )



SATURDAY, April 27, 1723.

To the Author of the Original Journal.

S I R,



HAVE been often reflecting in my own Thoughts upon the miserable Condition of this Nation, upon its being so wretchedly divided among ourselves, and have as often Thought to write to you upon this Subject, which I thought indeed a very melancholly Thing ;

but I found it so Copious and Extensive a Subject, that I thought it was fit rather for a Book in Folio, than a Paper in your Reading ; nay, even before you could get into it.

quer'd, and all the Parties either fully, and cheerfully acquiesc'd, and joyn'd in the Restoration, or departing of any way to restore the Ruinous Fabrick they had been before engag'd in, pretended to do so : *Richard Cromwell* was so far from offering to set up the Usurpation, he was once cloth'd with, that he seem'd really to disapprove of it, withdrew, and went Abroad to Travel, resolving neither to Head any Tumults, or encourage others to do so ; in a Word all Faction was laid asleep in the Restoration ; Peace and good Neighbourhood was to the Astonishment of the World restor'd, and my Lord *Clarendon* then Lord High Chancellor of *England*, in his Speech to the Parliament, by his Majesties express Command exhorted the two Houses, and by them the whole Nation to lay aside all their Feuds, bury

Front cover from *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, April 27 1723

# Contents

The *17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Nichols Collection* contains many notable titles, including the list below. For a full title list, visit [TBC].

• A Continuation of the Proceedings in Scotland	• The Evening Post	• The Observer
• Baker's News, or the Whitehall Journal	• The Female Tatler	• The Observer in Dialogue
• Domestick Intelligence, or News both from City and Country	• The Flying Post, or the Post-Master	• The Original Weekly Journal
• Mercurius Civicus or, an Account of Affairs both Forreign and Domestick	• The Haerlem Courant, Truly Rendred into English	• The Post Boy
• Mercurius Infernus, or News from the Other World	• The Impartial Protestant Mercury, Or Occurrences Foreign and Domestick	• The Protestant (Domestick) Intelligence
• Mercurius Publicus, being a Summary of the Whole Weeks Intelligence	• The Lacedemonian Mercury	• The Spectator
• Mist's Weekly Journal	• The Ladies Mercury	• The Tatler
• Poor Robbins Intelligence, Revived	• The London Gazette	• The True Domestick Intelligence
• The Athenian Mercury	• The London Mercury	• The True News, or Mercurius Anglicus
• The City Mercury, or Advertisements Concerning Trade	• The Loyal Impartial Mercury, or News both Forreign and Domestick	• The True Protestant Mercury, or Occurrences Foreign and Domestick
• The Currant Intelligence, or an Impartial Account of Transactions both Forraign and Domestick	• The Loyal London Mercury, or the Current Intelligence	• The Weekly Discovery of the Mystery of Iniquity
• The English Currant, or Advice Domestick and Foreign	• The Loyal Protestant, and True Domestick Intelligence	• The Weekly Intelligence
• The English Intelligencer	• The Moderator	• The Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Germany, or the History of the Reformation of Religion There

# Serial Publications

*The Wonderful Machine; being a great Amusement for the Curious.*



**A**T the Crown Coffee-House by the Royal Exchange is to be seen a most surprizing *Astronomical and Musical Clock.*

Its chief Performances are as follows, viz.

It shews the Rising and Setting of the Sun, the Lengthning and Shortning of the Days, even as Nature it self performs them.

Likewise it shews the Sun's place in the Ecliptick, with the Southing of Sixteen of the most noted fixed Stars.

It likewise shews the Increase, Decrease, Full and Change of the Moon, with the Aspects she makes to the Sun, and her Distance both in Signs and Degrees from

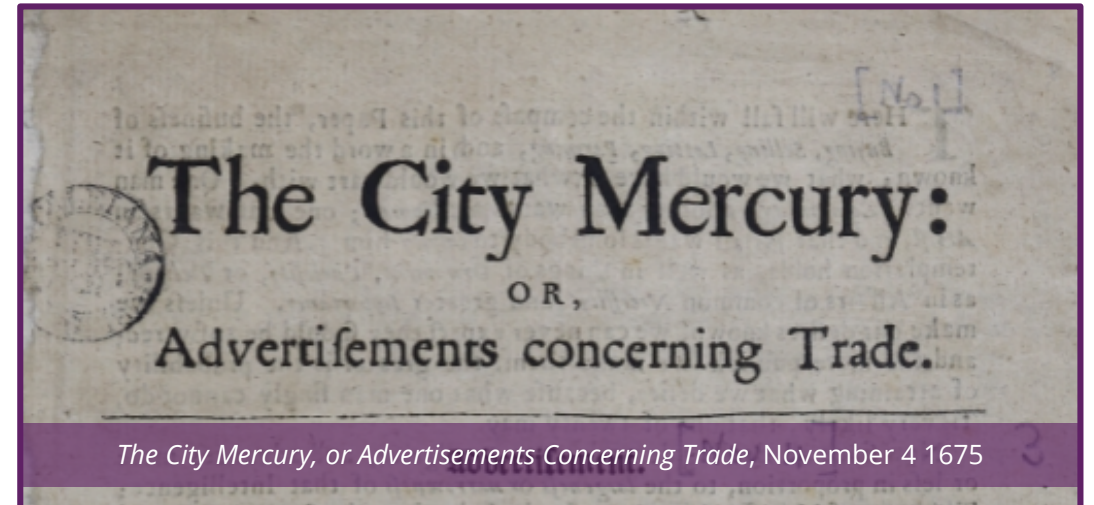
It also shews the time

From *The Flying Post*, October 18 1716

# Serial Publications

The first newspaper in the collection is *The City Mercury*, owned by Roger L'Estrange, the official Licenser of the Press from 1663. The zealously enforced state monopoly over news publication at the time is evident in the collection, as until the lapse of the Licensing of the Press Act in 1679 only two other newspapers are found: *Poor Robin's Intelligence* and *The London Gazette*. The lapse of the act was followed by a surge of new publications, often short-lived, covering events such as the Popish Plot episode between 1678 and 1681.

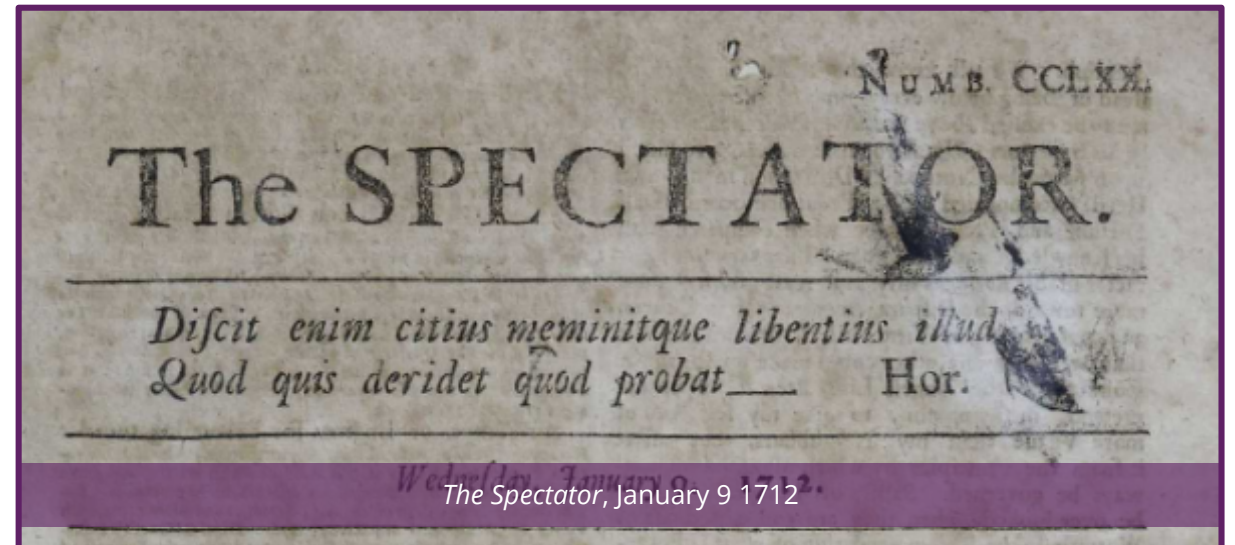
Between 1679 and 1685, when the renewal of the Licencing Act led once again to a drop in new publications, the Nichols Collections holds issues of 84 titles, from *Domestick Intelligence, or News both from City and Country* to *The Jockeys Intelligencer*. This breadth of material provides fascinating insight into the range of political and religious opinions of the period.



# Serial Publications

Journalistic activity intensified in the years 1688-1689 with the dramatic events of the Glorious Revolution as fuel for the printing presses. Many new titles appeared, largely in favour of William and Mary, such as the *Orange Gazette* or the *English Currant*. These provide a detailed view of preoccupations, opinions and events at the time. The late 17th century and early 18th century were also marked by the rise of serial publications focussed on knowledge and entertainment.

These 'periodicals' were different from the Currants and Gazettes that came before, and the Nichols Collection features extensive runs of titles such as *The Lacedemonian Mercury*, *The Athenian Mercury*, *The Tatler*, *The Female Tatler* and *The Spectator* among many more. *The Athenian Mercury* also briefly produced *The Ladies Mercury*, targeted at women, although the title only survived for four issues (all present in the Nichols Collection).



# Serial Publications

The final lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 once again saw a proliferation of new titles published, many of them long-lived. Thus, the collection includes extensive runs of *The Flying Post* (1695-1733), *The Post-Boy* (1695-1728), *The Post-Man* and the *Historical Account* (1695-1730), *Dawks's NewsLetter* (1703-1716) and *Evening Post* (1709-1733). The Stamp Act of 1712 imposed a new tax on newspapers, pamphlets and on advertisements, which lead to the closure of many publications, most famously *The Spectator*.

Yet, the reduction in publication numbers was brief, as proprietors found various ways to circumvent this "tax on knowledge".

Newspaper publication continued to develop, as political fervour and public appetite for news grew and an overt newspaper war raged between political factions of the day. Publications of this period include *The Examiner*, *The Medley*, and *The London Journal*.



# Monographs

THE  
**TRIAL**  
OF  
William Viscount Stafford  
FOR  
**HIGH TREASON,**  
In Conspiring the Death of the KING,  
The Extirpation of the PROTESTANT RELIGION,  
The Subversion of the GOVERNMENT, And  
Introduction of POPY into this Realm,  
Upon an  
**IMPEACHMENT**

"The Trial of William Viscount Stafford", John Bill, Thomas Newcomb *et al*, 1680



# Monographs

The collection contains around 300 pamphlets and broadsheets, most prevalent in the 1672-1682 period. These illustrate the transition from early newsbook publications to the newspaper format. The pamphlets cover a broad range of topics often in greater detail than the newspapers, such as battles, political and religious plots and intrigue, royal speeches and petitions. In this online archive, all the pamphlets in the Nichols Collection were collected together as “Monographs”, for easy access.

To find out more about the archive, including notable titles and an interview with the product manager, visit

[www.gale.com/explorenichols](http://www.gale.com/explorenichols)



Various images from the Nichols Collection

If you have any questions,  
or would like to discuss  
purchasing options, click  
the link below or visit our  
website.

[www.gale.com/rep](http://www.gale.com/rep)



Various images from the Nichols Collection