

Questions from Week 2 of *Samuel Pepys' London: Fire, Plague, & Revolution*

Q1: What was the cost of looking like a gentleman & a gentleman's wife?

Clothing was an investment for an up-and-coming gentleman and gentleman's wife. It was bought on credit, worn a lot, and even at the height of Pepys' wealth later in the decade would have been nowhere close to what we count as a "full wardrobe" (Pepys might have had 2 complete suits in his closet, Elizabeth 4-8 dresses).

Q2: Was the sword that we see in the 1669 set of clothing ornamental or functional?

Yes. 😊 It was mainly ornamental, but could be functional in a pinch. However, to our knowledge Pepys was not trained at sword-fighting, and never mentioned using the sword in his diary, so it probably remained ornamental for him.

Q3: How did Pepys know when to get up?

There were no mechanical alarm clocks yet, and he probably *did not* use church bells to tell the time. Most churches at this time only used bells for specific church or other special events. The ones that rang more frequently to tell the time, such as Old St. Paul's, were probably too far away to always hear and thus would be unreliable. Instead:

- He probably had what was called a chamber clock in his bedroom (fairly common by this point). All types of these clocks struck the hour, and some struck the half hour.
- In addition, scholars assume that he had a pocket watch, since it was part of a gentleman's attire then. He did seem to have a general awareness of time consistently, which indicates the use of a pocket watch.

Q4: I took the question “Who wrote the pamphlets in the coffeehouses?” and expanded it to “**What was on the coffeehouse tables?**”

First, there were primarily publications with very definite argumentative points of view.

- They were either in the form of pamphlets (multiple pages sewn together) or broadsheets (single page, front-only, usually one printing), and could be written by:
 - Pro-Government loyalists such as Roger L'Estrange, who published *The Observator*, or the poet John Dryden
 - Quoted excerpts from exiled / suppressed thinkers - John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, who held opposing points of view and could be used against each other as reference in arguments
 - Ordinary Citizens: merchants, clergymen, lawyers, political activists - really, anyone with printing access and a cause
 - Special broadsheets like the Bills of Mortality, and which we will get to in the 3/17 class

Finally, they could be informational, pro-government *newsletters* like the one you see in the middle of the image. They were written by hand and distributed to subscribers. The most popular newsletters were by Henry Muddiman – early journalist for the *Oxford*, later the *London Gazette*, the newspaper mouthpiece of the Restoration government.

Q5: What kind of notebooks did Pepys use for his diary?

He used small, blank leather-bound notebooks filled with pre-ruled or slightly ruled rag paper - paper made from linen and cotton. These notebooks were specifically designed for personal record-keeping.

Pepys wrote these entries using a quill dipped in iron gall ink, which bonded well to the very durable paper — part of why the diary still survives legibly.