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Bear journeys in early modern England

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ABSTRACT

This article offers unprecedented insight into the domestic movements of early modern commercial entertainment producers based on fresh archival and archaeological details about bears and bearwards, centring on a surviving two-month journey record. We plot roadways taken and the lengths and times via GIS mapping, offering a fresh spatial humanities methodology to explore commercial life on the road and its consequences. Together, these sources and our interdisciplinary methodologies (uniting archival research and cultural history with spatial humanities, GIS mapping, and zooarchaeology) illuminate what it meant more broadly to travel on foot in early modern England.

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England witnessed an astonishing rise in its human population between 1500 and 1700, with major consequences for migration, labour, urbanisation, and consumer behaviour.[1] Humans living through this period would have observed another remarkable population phenomenon: the number of bears who lived and journeyed alongside people across the whole country. While there have been increasing studies of mobility both within and beyond England in the context of the population and urban expansion in this period, reconstructing the often lengthy pedestrian movements of non-elite commercial travellers outside the vagrant poor (or other than in conceptual terms) remains a complex task.[2] One avenue for gaining an insight into the widespread commercial movement of the period is via (in Paola Pugliatti's term) 'arts- and entertainment-producers', such as bearwards.[3] We accordingly take up Rosa Salzberg's invitation to think about the 'ever-greater movement of people and goods' in early modern Europe by unpicking some of the 'lasting traces' they left: 'on settled communities, on urban and rural landscapes, and on cultural formations'.[4] Entertainment producers like bearwards spanned both legitimate and proscribed forms of national travel: some operated as licensed or patronised

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[1]Shammas, *Pre-Industrial*; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*; Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England*.
[2]Salzberg, *The Renaissance on the Road*, 1–3; Fumerton, *Unsettled*. See Das, et al., *Keywords of Identity* for conceptual understandings of human mobility in this period, especially 9–19.
[3]Pugliatti, 'my good sweet mouse,' 9. For their provincial operation, see Davies, 'The Place of Bearwards'.
[4]Salzberg, *The Renaissance on the Road*, 3.

players and purveyors, while others acted as 'independent' parties who were legally regarded as equivalent to the 'mobile poor, along with other itinerant groups such as gypsies [who] were increasingly criminalized and persecuted'.[5] Bearwards accordingly serve as an ideal lens for seeing the ambiguity and precarity of non-elite commercial travel and serve for us – as for contemporaries – as one of the key cruxes of regulatory intransigence with increasingly connected models of consumption and commercial appetite. The movements and timings of bear and bearward travel are also more fully documented than almost any travellers of equivalent status, not least dramatic players: surviving records include itineraries and detailed memoranda, as well as hundreds of recorded touring stops. Here, we draw on bearwards' autographic journey notes as well as the popular and legal reception of bears' movements to determine some of the key footways that reshaped the growing commercial, urbanising landscape of early modern England. In doing so, we bring into focus a vision of life on the road with commercial entertainment producers and start to set out their expansive contribution to the socio-economic world, alongside the physical landscape, of early modern England.

Following the national movements of bears and their bearwards (both licensed and unlicensed) offers valuable insight into many of the themes arising from historical demography as well as building on a growing number of studies into historical mapping of documents and leisure events, entertainment travels and circuits, and zooarchaeological research into animal movement. As one of the most prominent, high-profile, and expensive animals regularly encountered in the period, bears provide a headline example of what it meant to move across highly specific and often specialised routes that shaped the country's economic and social development. Yet bear movements have, to date, been little explored or mapped, even though the 'sport' or 'game' of baiting that underpinned their journeys formed a cornerstone of the medieval and early modern English leisure industry for royal, elite, and popular audiences alike.[6] The UK Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded *Box Office Bears* project (from which this article emerges) has examined baiting and its commodification of bears, dogs and other animals, through an expansive early modern network by drawing together zooarchaeology, archaeogenetics, archival research, and performance studies.[7] Our archival and archaeological findings and collations allow us to plot here a dense array of journey points in baiting travels in a way that parallels work established on dramatic troupes. In turn, we can model detailed archival documents – here, a full two-month journey schedule preserved in a bearward's memorandum book – via GIS mapping and analysis to envisage the precise roadways taken and the lengths and times of journeys. We establish in the third and fourth sections of the article a new method for mapping early modern pedestrian movement, which takes a spatial humanities approach combining documentary detail and historical topographical sources (chiefly William Smith and John Ogilby) with GIS analysis, to determine journey routes and lengths. Doing so provides unprecedented insight into the domestic movements of early modern bears, but it also reveals key roadways, pacing, and stops

[5]Salzberg, *The Renaissance on the Road*, 3.
[6]Lewis and O'Regan, 'The Origins of Bear Baiting: Evidence from Medieval England and France'.
[7]For further information, visit the Box Office Bears website, see <https://boxofficebears.com/> [last accessed 15.01.2025].
This work was funded by the UK *Arts and Humanities Research Council* project (AH/T006552/1) *Box Office Bears: Animal Baiting in Early Modern England*.

(often outside of places marked on the period's maps) that illuminate what it meant more broadly to travel on foot in early modern England.

Our fresh interdisciplinary approach accordingly draws together surviving clues to domestic movement of bears to build on existing scholarship. Theatre historians such as Laurie Johnson, Siobhan Keenan, Sally-Beth MacLean, and Barbara D Palmer have mapped out journeys and routes for dramatic playing companies based on archival details throughout England.[8] Julie Sanders recognises that bears 'formed part of a complex flow of bodies and cultural practices around the nation' that constituted 'circuits of knowledge' within regions and beyond.[9] Mark Brayshay similarly notes that bears were part of a wider network of local and national movement and that 'their passage along the highways of the realm would certainly not have gone unnoticed', aligning bears with the 'sizeable corps of touring entertainers' who sat alongside the other 'growing volume of road traffic' of early modern England.[10] This article seeks to offer the most robust and detailed insight to date into such touring practices as they relate to bears and bearwards.

As well as indicating geographical patterns of baiting, our study takes us 'on the road' with bears in early modern England, bringing us closer not only to their itineraries but to the experience of sustained human-animal travel. Such details provide broader insight into social and commercial movements and routes more generally across England through this period and address the consequences of ursine travel for human journeys, entertainment regulation, and the practicalities of human-animal movement and congregation. We compare the resulting details to visual and material culture that corroborates our insight into life on the road. Our exploration here, and our retracing the steps of bears past, also recognises the animal bodies at the centre of such movements. We accordingly take up the call of Erica Fudge to attend to the 'absent-presence of animals'[11] in the human-animal interactions that underpinned these journeys, alert to the relationship between care and exploitation sustained by baiting and placing the industry within wider patterns of commercial travel.

1. On the road with bears, part 1: infractions and infrastructure

> The Constable ere next Assises shall loose both his eares
>
> ffor serving a warrant vpon my lord strang his beares [12]
>
> (A couplet from an early modern libel)

By the late Middle Ages, bears were extinct from the British Isles,[13] yet they formed a fundamental part of England's road traffic. Bearwards were responsible for the keep of

[8]Laurie Johnson, *Leicester's Men*; Keenan, *Travelling Players*; MacLean, 'Tour Routes'; McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*; Manley and MacLean, *Strange's Men*; Palmer, 'Early Modern Mobility.'
[9]Sanders, *Cultural Geography*, 8.
[10]Brayshay, 'Waits, musicians, bearwards and players,' 451. Brayshay also speculates on how bearbaiting's commercial arrangements influenced the traffic and movement of animals: 'bearwards were permitted to collect entrance charges from other spectators who came along to the bear-garden to see the show' 443.
[11]Fudge, *Perceiving*, 2.
[12]Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *Records*, 751–52.
[13]For the dating of the extinction of bears in the British Isles, see O'Regan, 'The presence of the brown bear,' 240.

the animals baited in arenas and playing places, and in early modern England animal baiting rivalled dramatic performance in popularity. From the early sixteenth century, the 'game' grew in commercial potential, generating an array of fixed arenas or playing places and an expansion in nationwide touring routes.[14] Contemporary sources suggest that several dogs were brought into a yard tied up, then a bull or bear brought in and tied to a stake. Dogs would then be set upon the bull or bear, with one eyewitness account of bull-baiting stating the aim was to catch the bull above the shoulders, and ideally on the nose.[15] Dogs were killed in the process.[16] Meanwhile, spectators and dog owners were invested in the outcome of proceedings. Other variations on this practice also took place, either with different species used for baiting (such as bulls, horses, and monkeys) or with events taking place in different types of venue (such as streets and town squares); the sport was also occasionally associated with the performance of humans and other animals. Accordingly, bears were procured, traded, and transported for this booming entertainment industry.[17]

Archival records allow us not only to reimagine routes but to demonstrate the complex responses journeying bears generated from onlookers. The human perspective adds an inevitably subjective component to the types of encounters under discussion here – in Fudge's terms, 'reading animals is always reading through humans, and [. . .] reading about humans is reading through animals'[18]—yet these individualised responses complement the study of the archaeological record, which brings us perhaps closer to the bodies of the animals themselves. Bear remains are rare archaeologically, but the early modern period sees a spike in numbers owing to extensive excavations that have revealed the premises of the 'Masters of the Game' on Bankside, London. Here, around the so-called bear gardens, the masters and their deputies kept bears, bulls, and dogs for public baitings and in anticipation of royal command performances.[19]

The couplet that begins this section, taken from an early modern libel (a circulated text that impinged upon the reputation of a person or institution), demonstrates that bears did not travel the country without issue. Complaints and legal proceedings offer substantial detail about the nature of ursine travel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An incident in 1595 offers an insight into the travels of bears just outside Canterbury: bearward John Blye was fined for 'annoying the Queen's high way with the soilage of two Bears'.[20] Bears, like other large mammals, produce enough waste for it to be recorded as a notable intrusion into public life. It would have been no easy feat to travel the country with a bear, let alone two, and there were manifold financial implications for those involved, especially where their movements affected infrastructure or regulation.

Elsewhere we find finer details about travels with bears. In 1633, Richard Laythwait of Westhaughton in Lancashire petitioned the Quarter Sessions about the density of bear movements in the area. His complaint invokes women and children to emphasise the

[14]Davies, *What is a Playhouse?*, 53–60, 126–37.
[15]See Crosfield's diary in Elliott Jr et al., *Records*, 535; Dekker, *Worke for armorours*, B2r.
[16]Dulwich College Archives MSS002 013, letter from Edward Barrett to Edward Alleyn on 11 June 1610 mentioned, for instance, how Little Bess of Bromley killed several dogs during a bearbaiting course.
[17]For one example, see Baldwin's discussion of bear-seller and patronised bearward John Seckerston, based in Nantwich; 'John Seckerston,' 95–103.
[18]Fudge, *Perceiving*, 3.
[19]Mackinder et al., 'The Hope Playhouse', 10–25.
[20]Gibson, *Records*, 233.

proximity between ursine pathways and domestic life: 'diverse times bellwards [bearwards or bullwards] with their bears Refuse the broad way and Cometh with their bears the said foot way, which lyeth by the Cheek of the house door of your petitioner, and hath sometimes broken in and frighted your petitioner's wife and family.'[21] Court records, such as Laythwait's petition, suggest that the flow of bear traffic translates to a pattern or rhythm. His complaint refers to the bears owned by Alexander Ascrofte, alias Ornishawe, a bearkeeper of Wigan who is named in the petition. Westhaughton and Wigan are some 5 miles apart, indicating a movement of some distance, not once but repeatedly through this patch of ground in the early 1630s. Laythwait's record alerts us to the distinction between different forms of roads or paths and their perceived appropriateness for large animals journeying the local area.

Cheshire and Lancashire were particularly hotly regulated during the early years of the seventeenth century, partly as a result of the religious and social attitudes of local magistrates.[22] Their regulation took aim at those 'employing the illegal way of life, called in English "a bearward",' as well as those with official or even royal patronage.[23] Bearward journeys therefore conflated sanctioned entertainment travel with the proscribed forms of vagrant or rogue 'rural' travel.[24] As such, the uneasy category of 'bearward' (captured so perfectly in the painfully loaded phrase 'way of life' in the above Chester legal presentation) united various forms of non-elite movement, and as such their journeys represent the legal as well as the financial precariousness of travel for commercial tourers in this period.

The plethora of legal documentation arising from Cheshire's and Lancashire's enthusiasm for prosecution helpfully maps out a series of journeys even beyond highways or footways that expand our sense of the commercial patterns of movement across the early modern provinces. When Thomas Fyney visited an alehouse in Hale in 1637–8, he noted that 'the howse was soe full of people that were come to the bearbeate that a man could not stoope in the howse to take vpp any thinge that was fallen', with 'abundance of people on both sydes of the howse, and so great a throng that he had noe roome to drinke in'. This phenomenally large crowd gathered in a quiet rural village despite the fact that 'the howse was not placed neare vnto any high way but only neare vnto an obscure foot way'. Although the constable warned against 'bring[ing] out their beares', the bearwards did indeed do so in the afternoon.[25] It was not only bears who wandered the smaller footways; they occasioned what Fyney describes as a 'great assembly & concourse of people' to come to a village so small it does not feature on the Christopher Saxton and William Hole's 1610 map of Cheshire (as featured in William Camden's Britannia; see Figure 1). These bear journeys, then, had major consequences for the movement of people too, occasioned by the confluence of commercial leisure and conviviality but bringing with it the risk of personal danger, damage, and disobedience. Such journeys

[21]Lancashire Archives, QSB 1/120.
[22]See Davies, *What is a Playhouse?*, 112–43.
[23]Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *Records*; translated form the Latin on p. 985. Original Latin on p. 781 reads 'se gerens vtens modum ^[et] illict*um* vivend*i* vitam angl*ice* dict*um* a bereward'. For local governance regulating aristocratic entertainers, see the libel that begins this section; for local governance regulating royally-sanctioned entertainers, see Davies, 'The Place of Bearwards', 308.
[24]See Dionne, 'Fashioning Outlaws', 44–5.
[25]Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *Records*, 682–3.

Figure 1. Map of Cheshire, from William Camden's *Britain, or a chorographicall description*. STC 4509 copy 1. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a creative commons attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 international license.

offer to rewrite, or to reconceptualise, our cartographic understanding of movement around early modern England, taking us off the beaten track and onto the baited one.

Blye's fine, Laythwait's petition, or Fyney's struggles with bending down are just three examples that indicate the peripatetic nature of the baiting industry across all regions of the country. However, there are limits to the pressures local people felt communities and domestic environments could withstand from animals who were part of everyday life but were not domesticated. The bears' journeys offer to reshape not only the cultural map (of where early moderns found bears and so what settlements make their way into the documentary record) but to physically alter the landscape, through waste or through damage to apparently inappropriate pathways. It is no surprise, then, that we find expenses paid out by bearwards 'for the harme wich the bares the did'.[26] Following bears on the road offers a different 'tour' of early modern England than might be obvious from other cultural histories that prioritise human population or cartographic representation.

[26]Dulwich College Archives MSS002 010, fo. 3 r.

2. On the road with bears, part 2: mapping journeys

The patterns of movement of bears in early modern England included recurring local- and national-length journeys alike. Archival details and legal citations sometimes even set out a local route or circulation. The bearward Peter Broome, for instance, appears eight times over nine years between 1612 and 1621 solely in areas around Northwich and Middlewich in Cheshire. His county-man John Boland similarly appears between 1618 and 1623 in areas in and near to Cheshire, cited like Broome in the Quarter Sessions, while the local family of the Whitestones were rooted in Lancashire and active there with their bears over three generations.[27] Yet, as we have seen, Cheshire was especially eager in its prosecution of unlawful games in the early seventeenth century. Of the seven citations of John Boland, four are from Quarter Sessions records, where he is deemed a rogue, abusive, or acting against orders restricting baiting. The remainders are payments for baiting from the corporation of Congleton. The only record outside of Cheshire we have yet encountered associated with Boland puts him in Norwich in 1624, when he was paid by the mayor's court as a deputy to Edward Alleyn and awarded 'leave to use Bearbaiting'.[28]

In Congleton, Cheshire, as across the country, individuals were tasked with 'procuring' bears for wakes or special occasions or for commercial recreation. One such procurer, William Hordren, served Congleton in this capacity on several occasions and in 1614–15 was paid 'for goeyng in the night to procure A belward to Norwych'.[29] The record poses several questions: is 'Norwych' (as it is spelled originally) in fact Northwich, nearby in Cheshire, or is it Norwich in Norfolk, where the possibly 'local' Boland ends up ten years later? Perhaps there is a defined ursine connection here if Boland were involved in travel and trade of bears across the full scope of England, in a way similar to the seller John Seckerston, who travelled beyond Nantwich even to Somerset.[30] These acts of procuration map not only bearward-led routes, with keepers taking their bears from town to town on planned or *ad hoc* journeys, but also last minute summons. For example, Elizabeth I ordering a baiting with only a few days notice, to the dismay of John Dorrington, the Master of the Bears: 'I haue Recevid a letter to haue hir ma{ies}ty games to be at the court of mvnday next so short a warning as I never knew the lycke and my self not well … '[31] Baitings, then, happened at both long and short notice, suggesting an efficient (or at least manageable) network of procurers, bearwards, and travel routes and enough animals to make such events happen. Alongside indications of relatively direct long-distance journeys, the shorter journeys mentioned above via Cheshire bearwards shows some bears had a more local 'circuit' as well.

The details we find about journeys with bears in the archives add complexity to the ways we can think about bear movements and can also shed light on travel across England in this period more broadly. The High Constable's arrest of Boland in 1618 describes him 'travelling with his bears from place to place' without licence or permission; six years later it seems he had an official deputation over 200 miles away. These

[27]Davies, 'The Place of Bearwards', 303–24.
[28]Galloway, *Records*, 187.
[29]Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *Records*, 639.
[30]Baldwin, 'John Seckerston', 97.
[31]Dulwich College Archives MSS 002 003.

cumulative citations testify to the bearward's evident local network around Cheshire but raise questions about whether he had always, or perhaps eventually, operated on a wider scale across the country. Although Cheshire's records can skew the picture, given their jurisdictional peculiarity, other recurring bearwards across different records, such as Lord Chandos's bearward (active in the 1570s and 1580s), place them in locations as far afield as Bristol, Plymouth, Southampton, and Coventry. The challenge for reconstructing bear journeys here is to establish what precise routes bears and bearwards took through the country and so consider where and how they would be encountered by other travellers of the period.

Early modern long-distance travel frequently appears in records, although the detail of these journeys is often left unclear. As Fyney's account of an obscure village teeming with visitors to see the bears indicates, early maps depicting only major towns and religious centres provide limited evidence from which to reconstruct a network of contemporary ursine travel routes. In any case, it is possible that lines depicted on these maps were not intended to be read as roads in the sense of defined trackways at all.[32] Previous attempts to reconstruct travel networks have instead utilised royal itineraries, with Calendars of State Rolls or purveyance accounts providing further indirect evidence of routes in contemporary use.[33]

The 1588 manuscript of William Smith's *Particular Description of England* provides an alternative source to inform journey reconstruction: it gives detailed itineraries for travellers, with stopping points suggesting the rhythm of these journeys. These points can then be connected to enable a reconstruction of the major network of 'highways . . . from one notable town to another'.[34] Here, Smith's named places were identified and assigned geographic co-ordinates using Google's Geocoding API, with the results tested for feasibility and manually adjusted where required (for example, by moving the location to the historic centre of each settlement rather than its modern geographic centre). An initial framework of routes between these points using the modern road, footpath, and permissive byway routes of England (as accessible to pedestrians) was then calculated.[35] Ogilby's *Britannia* (1675) details highway routes that correspond closely with Smith's itineraries, though the illustrated strip-map format it employs provides a more experiential traveller's-eye depiction of each journey.[36]

The *Britannia* illustrations were used to follow the initial calculated framework, turn-by-turn along each route, and make adjustments to the network as needed to correspond to the illustrated roads.[37] Both Ogilby and Smith prioritise north-south journeys, with east-west routes being primarily those radiating out from London. However, when combined with one another and with other contemporary maps and itineraries these

[32]Hindle, 'The road network', 211.
[33]Edwards and Hindle, 'The transportation system' 125; Hindle, 'The road network', 212–3; Jones, 'River navigation', 62–3.
[34]Smith, *Particular Desscription*. As the 1879 editors note, Smith's distances often correspond poorly with standard units; however, our digitization process produces a more detailed picture of these journeys, along with more accurate milage calculations.
[35]Analysis carried out in QGIS using the ORSTools plugin, using the OpenRouteService API with the travel mode foot-hiking, and travel preference for shortest route.
[36]Ogilby,*Britannia*.
[37]Perhaps surprisingly, relatively few manual adjustments were required: England's modern network of roads and pedestrian routes still includes at its core the early modern paths illustrated by Ogilby. Where manual re-drawing of lost paths was required, disused routes were often still identifiable in first edition OS maps, and lost gates in/out of walled medieval towns could be identified on historic city plans.

sources enable a closer look at the long-distance routes of bearwards across England. To take the example of Boland's possible journey from Chester to Norwich, using our reconstructed highway network we can suggest a route that headed eastwards, leading through to Grantham in Lincolnshire. After this Boland would likely have followed the major north-south route down to St Neots in Cambridgeshire before turning eastwards to Norfolk via Cambridge; where journey details exist, bearwards favoured road over water routes.[38] Boland's appearance in Norwich opens up other queries about the scope of bear journeys, which can be explored in more meticulous detail thanks to a fuller surviving itinerary.

3. On the road with bears, part 3: the bearward's diary

In 1608, a jobbing bearward kept a travel 'diary' while working for the Masters of the Game, Edward Alleyn and Philip Henslowe. The document is more accurately a memorandum book, or book of accounts, although 'diary' works neatly as shorthand and as a nod to the life-writing these ostensibly practical texts reflect.[39] The text charts the bearward's travels westward out from Kensington in London, through Reading (Berkshire) and down to Salisbury (Wiltshire), up north of Gloucester (Gloucestershire) and round back to London through Berkshire. Our reconstruction of the bearward's journey from 13th August to 21st September 1608 is depicted, alongside the underlying network of reconstructed highways and Smith's 'notable towns', in Figure 2.

The journey recounted in the bearward's diary points more cohesively to routes for bear-traffic over roadways than those extracted from discrete archival details above.[40] Plotting the bearward's sequential whereabouts against the reconstructed highway network, using a shortest-path algorithm, allows insight into the routes taken between stopping points (which are variously locations where baiting occurred, where meals were taken, or where the group stayed overnight). Here, we can see how bears travelled some of the key highways of early modern England, such as part of the Great Western Road and the London-Aberystwyth road. Sections of the route follow the highway network reconstructed from Smith and Ogilby, and in places the group utilise surviving stretches of Roman roads.[41] However, unlike the direct long-distance journey described in the previous section, our travellers here are treading a local circuit: at several points they leave the highways and venture across the (quite literally) uncharted territory of rural England, perhaps drawing unexpected crowds en route as vividly described by Fyney. Again using the approach of working backwards from surviving footways, we are

[38]The route from Chester passing through Newcastle-under-Lyme, Uttoxeter, Derby, and Nottingham before reaching Grantham. Boland's journey, in 1624, pre-dates Cornelius Vermuyden's drainage works which involved the creation of new roads across the Fens, hence the less direct route after Grantham.

[39]As Adam Smyth notes, in a period 'before the diary or autobiography began to dominate attempts to arrange a written life – that is, before the later seventeenth century – individuals seeking to produce textual records of their lives experimented and improvised with other available forms', Autobiography, 2. Hugh Oldcastle's advice to those keeping account books, in 1588, emphasises that such texts are 'used and compiled of many things', *A briefe instruction*, E4v.

[40]Dulwich College Archives MSS 002 010. A provisional full transcription, both diplomatic and modernised, is available at'Bearwards Diary, 1608' on the *Box Office Bears* website, at <https://boxofficebears.com/resource/bearwards-diary-1608/>.

[41]Comparison to the DARMC's road shapefile also reveals many sections of Roman road which had apparently fallen out of use by this period; McCormick, 'Roman Road Network'.

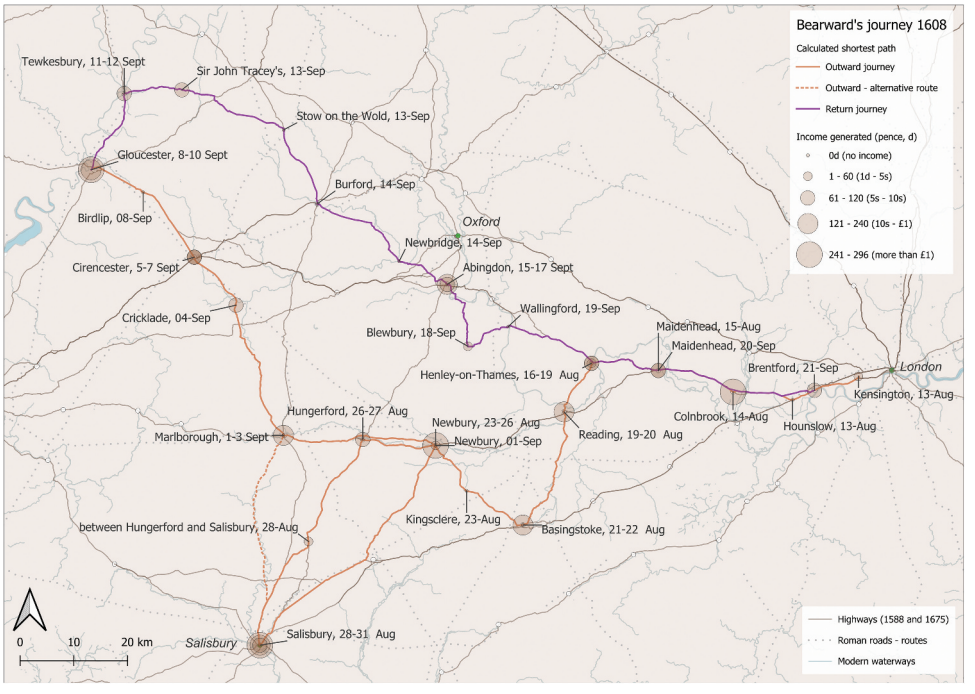

Figure 2. The Bearward's route with at least two bears from 13th August to 21st September 1608.

able to reconstruct the most likely route of the bearward's travel across this territory – and as the group leave the highway system their journey reveals the hidden network of minor roads and byways intersecting with the major routes (only hinted at by the many turnings and crossroads illustrated by Ogilby).

Unlike with a direct procuration to a town (as from Northwich or Norwich to Congleton), on this circuit the bears were put to 'game' at many of the stops. Figure 2 indicates the income generated at each stopping place, with ledger entries variously referring to 'baiting' and 'courses' as the money-earning activity. Monies earned surpassed £1 on four days (at Colnbrook, Newbury, Salisbury, and Gloucester); smaller towns typically brought lower incomes, with a mean income per baiting of just over 12 shillings. Figure 2 also demonstrates, however, that no income was generated at 19 of the 48 recorded stops on this journey: the bears were not baited every day, or at every location visited, even though the opportunity may have presented itself. On 28th August the diary seems to record such an *ad-hoc* baiting opportunity on the journey route: stopping for dinner in a village between Hungerford and Salisbury, the Bearward records his expenses for the meal, but also 2s 6d income.[42]

At most locations, the writer indicates the overnight arrangements for the group through their expenses: 'room for the bears and for lodging' is a typical entry.[43] These lodgings in most cases appear to be roadside inns or similar venues. Although precise

[42]The location is unique in the diary in that no name is given; we have identified the most likely location as the village of North Tidworth, Wiltshire, based on the reconstructed route for this section of the journey.
[43]Dulwich College Archives MSS 002 010, 2 v.

identification can at times prove difficult, there are some instances where a specific inn or lodging can be proposed. On the 14th September, for example, the group stopped at Newbridge, Oxfordshire, a hamlet of only one or two buildings. A traveller in 1659 referred to one of these as a hermitage, but notes that 'beyond the memorie of man it hath been an ale house or pettie-inne for travellers, called The Checquer'.[44] On occasions the group also performed at private residences (such as Sir John Tracey's house, 13th September), but they did not stay overnight.

Alongside breaks from baiting, the 1608 diary also indicates that baiting circuits should not be thought of as continuous journeys; rather, they followed a stop-start pattern where each day of movement would be followed by a day without travel. Figure 3 demonstrates this rhythm of the 1608 journey along with the distances travelled each day (as reconstructed in Figure 2). On days with movement the mean distance travelled is 14.5 miles; as travel days are almost always followed by stationary days (with or without baiting) the mean daily distance across the journey period as a whole is lower, at 6.8 miles.[45] The most intensive section of the route – three consecutive days of travel including two of the four 20+ mile days in this journey – was seemingly offset by a corresponding break from baiting.

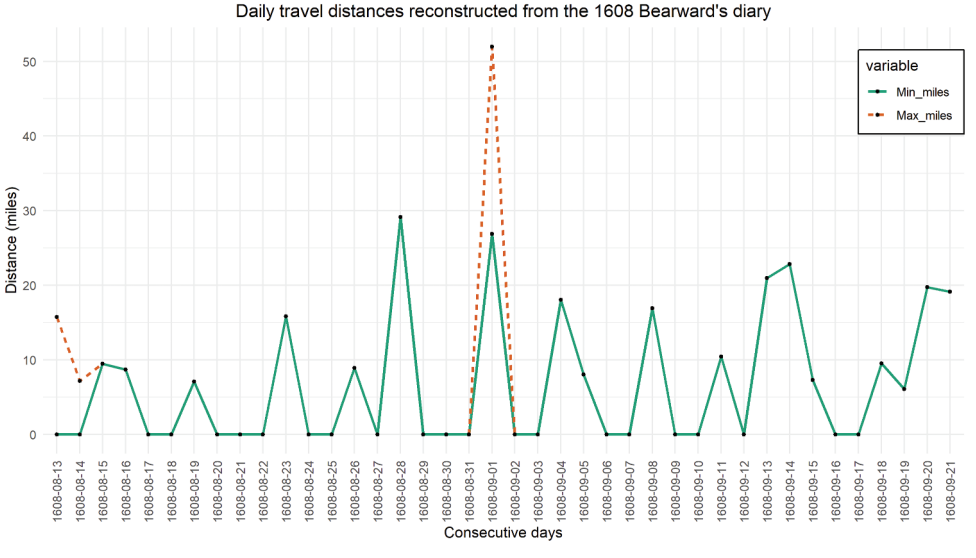

Figure 3. The distance travelled per day by the bearward and bears from 13th August to 21st September 1608. Minimum and maximum distances are given where there is uncertainty about either the route or the day on which travel occurred.

[44]Clark, *The life and times of Anthony Wood. Volume I. 272–3*.

[45]The averages given here exclude the outlier 'maximum' value for 1st September, a day when the bearward travelled from Salisbury to Marlborough. The ledger also records monies received from Newbury on this day, but incorporating this stop results in an exceptionally long daily journey and a doubling back of the route. Figure 2 shows this path alongside a proposed alternative, travelling directly from Salisbury to Marlborough, to indicate the possibility that the Newbury date corresponds to receipt of income rather than the performance itself (following Brayshay, 'Waits, musicians, bearwards, and players', fn 89); the minimum and maximum distances for this day in Figure 3 also reflect these two possibilities. The min/max values at the start of the journey result from uncertainty about the time of day when each destination was reached; this is otherwise made clear in the diary.

Although this pattern of activity would be reasonable for a human traveller, and the 'rest days' suggest care was taken with pacing, the distances covered are still farther than bears would naturally want to travel in a day: although they can range over large distances in the wild, they travel incrementally through a pattern of short-distance daily movement. Recent GPS-tracking studies of Eurasian brown bears have revealed they travel an average of 3.4 miles/day when 'resident' in an area[46] or 4.5 miles/day when migrating.[47] The longest journey a wild bear would undertake is dispersal to a new home range before reaching adulthood. One dispersing bear was observed to travel 21.6 miles in a single day in 2015, but this was an exceptional event; his movement throughout this once-in-a-lifetime relocation averaged only 5.8 miles/day, considerably less than that required of the bears on the baiting circuit.[48] The careful pacing of the bearward's journey, then, appears to align more closely with the needs of the humans than those of the bears.

The total distance travelled on this 40-day tour was a not-inconsiderable 297 miles. Distances between individual stops range from 6 to 27 miles and daily travel distances from 0 to 29 miles. Previous examinations of the tours undertaken by other early modern entertainers – dramatic troupes or travelling musicians – provide a point of comparison. For example, the Queen's Men (the troupe formed in 1583) travelled extensively across England; Brayshay calculates the mean distance between their appearance locations as 57.4 miles.[49] However, there are lengthy gaps between their recorded appearances, leaving their day-by-day movements between these points unclear.[50]

Smith's travel itineraries give a mean distance of 14.2 miles between consecutive stops: remarkably close to the 14.5 mile average distance we have reconstructed for the 1608 journey. Rather than representing an unusual or atypical form of travel, then, the bear journeys undertaken in the service of baiting seem instead to provide an unusually detailed insight into typical long-distance foot journeys of the early modern period. The patterns and paths followed by bears and bearwards reflect 'the quotidian mechanics of travel'[51] for the increasing number of other road users in this period, human and non-human alike. They demonstrate that long-distance foot travel could – and did – occur, but at a slow pace, punctuated by regular breaks and encounters with other travellers. This finding is not in conflict with research into the developing network of 'efficient' travel of this period: this similarly relied on 15-mile sections or post-stages, demonstrating that this punctuated form of movement was the norm for almost all road users of the period, regardless of their speed.[52] We return to the mechanics of travel in the next section.

Alongside the journey itself, the diary records also enable some reconstruction of the travelling party. Along the way, the bearward is accompanied by two companions: Ned the butcher and Bryant, presumably both instrumental to the care and feeding of the bears, as well as the smooth journeying and managing of the cruel sport itself. There were also at least two bears, one of them blind, as an expense is recorded for 'ouyl for the blynd bare'.[53] Alongside the evidenced rest

[46]Bartoń et al., 'Bears without Borders', 4-5.
[47]de Angelis et al., 'Environmental and Anthropogenic Correlates', 62 (Table 2).
[48]Bartoń et al., 'Bears without Borders', 4-5, Supplementary material (A) Figure A.1.
[49]Brayshay, 'Waits, musicians, bearwards, and players', 448.
[50]Brayshay, 'Waits, musicians, bearwards, and players', 448.
[51]To borrow a phrase from Salzberg, *The Renaissance on the Road*, 4.
[52]Cooper, 'Speed and Efficiency'.
[53]Dulwich College Archives MSS 002 010, 5 v.

days and non-baiting days in the journey, expenses such as these give a sign of the economic imperatives in an industry that relied on keeping bears alive and fighting fit; but they also, perhaps, indicate the care taken and the affective relationships between human and animal in an otherwise violently exploitative industry.[54]

The 'diary' not only marks a defined route but also tells us something about a bearward's life. It seems likely this record was compiled whilst journeying, at the moments between baiting 'courses', and at some of the locations noted within. Indeed, the bearward seems to have a jobbing literacy, marked by the particularly shakily formed characters and idiosyncratic and phonetic spelling – even by the standards of the time – suggesting reading and writing acquired not through a grammar school education but through practical work experience. The bearward behind this so-called diary suggests a different occupational engagement with writing and accounting than the professional classes who relied on writing for a living, such as scriveners, but emphasises the relatedness of bear journeys with writing journeys. As a working document evolving over time, the memorandum book preserves both a financial and a literary reflection of the material spaces that punctuated early modern ursine travel. It would have been written in the inns, playing spaces, stables, and other affordable rural and metropolitan accommodation for bears and humans noted within its pages. Here, we get as close as possible, perhaps, to being 'on the road' with bears in seventeenth-century England – with all the practicalities of doing the books and exploiting, feeding, and tending to the animals alongside.

4. The practicalities of bear journeys: zooarchaeology and visual culture

The archives give small glimpses into how both bearwards and their bears experienced cross-country travel. Yet there is precious little detail about the precise means of travel. A key point about the legal records and bearward's diary is the number of bears that are referenced. Bearwards certainly travelled with single bears (such as Hugh Palmer prosecuted for the 'leadinge of his beare abroad' in Somerset in 1620), but in other cases we see references to multiple animals presumably travelling together, such as Baronet Houghton's bearward, who took three bears to York in 1612.[55] However, we know very little about how the bears travelled and who took them. Mark Brayshay has speculated that 'the creatures would have to be transported well-tethered or inside a cage loaded onto a wagon drawn by carthorses or mules', but it is difficult to say with certainty whether this were the case.[56] None of the archives we have examined so far has referenced carts, cages or any other form of transport equipment for the bears, nor is there any visual or archaeological evidence for such transportation.

Instead, it seems likeliest from our survey of available evidence that bears and their wards typically walked around the country. References to animal waste on the highways (as above) and purchases of new shoes for the bearward and for one of his companions in the bearward's diary indicate walked journeys on pathways and roads. The petition discussed above from Westhaughton, Lancashire, against bears using the pathways rather than the highways also demonstrates bears walked on foot rather than by any cart (the

[54]Dulwich College Archives, MSS 002, 010; Fudge, *Quick Cattle*, has shown the complex relationships between human and animals working closely together; Lewis, 'Posthuman Bears'.
[55]Stokes, 'Bull and bear-baiting in Somerset'; Johnston, *Records*, 539.
[56]Brayshay, 'Waits, musicians, bearwards and players', 433.

latter, by necessity, would need to go via a highway rather than the narrower footpath, which would be highly impractical if travelling with any wagon). Indeed, the 1608 journey's average travel of <15 miles/day is in line with expected (human) walking distances, and expenses detail food provided for both humans and bears, but not food or other costs associated with horses, cattle, or oxen. The costs for the former, as indicated by Brayshay, would likely be prohibitively expensive given the relatively low income generated by itinerant bearwards.[57] Indeed, the only expense indicating travel other than by foot in the 1608 diary is a single instance of a ferry crossing: 6d to cross the Thames.

Nevertheless, there are instances where the reconstructed route indicates that walking would be difficult. The longest daily journey, 29 miles from Hungerford to Salisbury on 28th August, is an unlikely distance to be covered on foot in a day – particularly as the expenses and income on this date indicate a break *en route* for dinner and baiting (as above). Although no mention is made in the diary of any change in mode perhaps wagon travel was occasionally utilised by the group in cases such as this. Another factor to be considered when interpreting seemingly improbable journeys, however, is that as a working document this text was never intended to receive such scrutiny; it is possible that there are omissions or inaccuracies, whether in places visited or expenses paid.

Comparison to a less detailed record of bear travels, dated to 1607 or later, is helpful here. This record, kept in Edward Alleyn's papers alongside the bearward memorandum book, notes a list of expenses at different stops through Kent, in an order that suggests a logical route: Dartford – Gravesend – Rochester – Maidstone – Sittingbourne – Faversham – Canterbury – Dover – Folkestone – Ashford – Rye.[58] These stages range from 7.2 to 16.5 miles apart and the mean length of each leg is just 10.5 miles; distances which again seem to be indicative of foot-travel. Such details also correspond with images of muzzled bears with ropes or chains (see Figures 4 and 5, below). Even if bears were occasionally transported by cart or ferry, current evidence indicates that they were most often walked from parish to parish and would have been a very familiar sight to people in towns and villages all over England.

To think through the practicalities of such forms of travel with bears, we can turn to zooarchaeological evidence. Bear remains are relatively few compared to dogs and horses, reflecting the fact that multiple dogs were used in a single baiting, but only one bear. While it can be difficult to assess the size and maturity of bears from the Southbank assemblage that forms our core sample, there is no evidence of young bears (less than four years old) dying on Bankside and more than 90% of individuals are older than six years of age.[59] We may assume that bears were imported into Britain as cubs, however there is a lack of immature bears in the archaeological record. One possibility is that cubs were being exhibited for money or used for bear-dancing until they were older, when they were then used for baiting. The counter to this argument is that we have very few records of bear dancing as opposed to bear baiting. An archive from Devon (at Plymouth in 1528/9) lists a payment to a man for 'his dancing bear and his dancing wife', but such accounts are very rare.[60] Bear-dancing is also referenced in songs or prologues, such as 'The Bear's Dance' at the start of Ben Jonson's 'The Masque of

[57]Brayshay, 'Waits, musicians, bearwards and players', 439.
[58]Dulwich College Archives MSS 002, 008 v.
[59]Wright, E. et al., 'What does a bear-baiting assemblage look like?'
[60]Wasson, *Records*, 223.

Figure 4. Tin-glazed tile made in the Dutch city of Delft. It shows a muzzled bear standing on its hind-legs and probably represents a dancing bear. c. AD 1660.

Augurs', performed at the opening of the Banqueting House in Whitehall in 1622.[61] In one image accompanying the 1650 excerpting of this song in a compilation called *Recreation for ingenious head-peeces*, three bears restrained by muzzles and ropes can be seen standing upright. The bears are illustrated as being of different sizes, but all appear to be juveniles.

Both travel and baiting must have taken a significant toll on bears' bodies, despite the fact that they may have been cared for in order to prolong their fighting lives. A number of skeletal elements from the Southbank excavation show evidence of pathology in the form of exostosis on the shaft of long bones. This is extra bone growth, which can be linked to various pathological conditions. Bear skins also appear to have been kept; whether they were from baited bears, or imported separately is unclear. For example, Stokes records three men prosecuted for playing Christmas games in a bearskin in 1603, the 1598 inventory of items in the Rose playhouse in London also included a skin, and a Cheshire inventory that includes a bear called Chester also notes possession of part of a bear hide.[62] The 'journeys' of bears continued, it seems, even after their death, circulating as materials with significant cultural connotations and remaining as spectacular objects for human consumption. In our return to the assemblages that contain archaeological evidence of bears, we follow these animals on a kind of cross-century travel from which we can, as we have begun to here, work backwards with a range of evidence forms to restore them to the centre of their historical itineraries.

[61] *Recreation*, Z3r.
[62] Stokes, 'Bull and bear-baiting in Somerset', 76; Foakes, *Henslowe's Diary*, 319; Davies, 'The Place of Bearwards'.

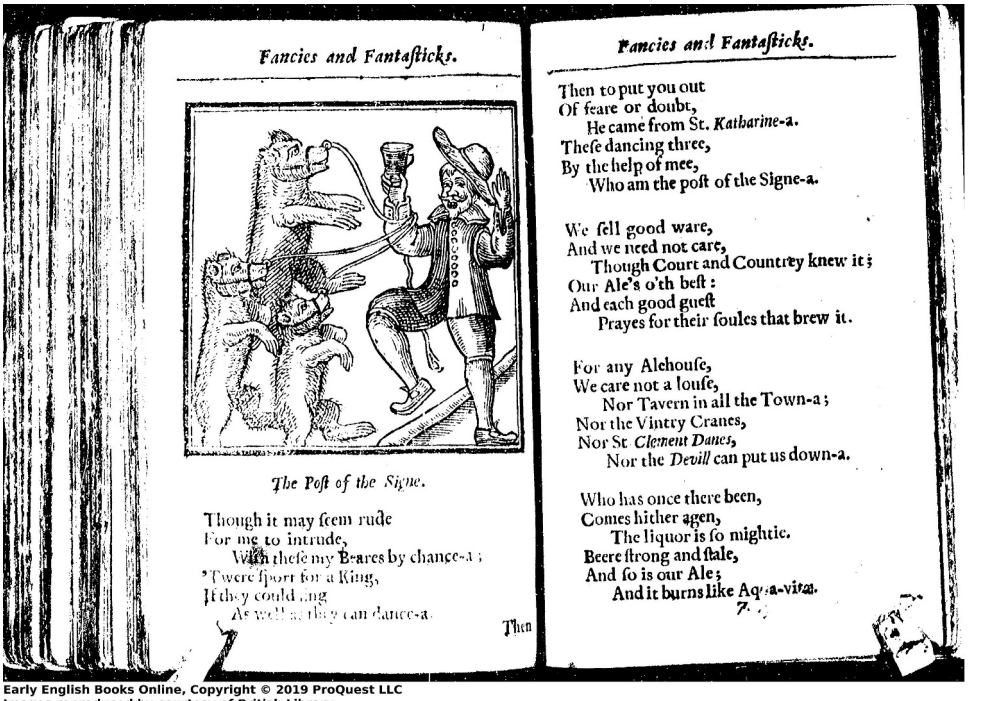

Figure 5. *Recreation for ingenious head-peeces*, London, 1650. From the British Library collection: wing M1713, Z3v. Image published with permission of ProQuest. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission. Image produced by ProQuest as part of *early modern Books*. www.proquest.com.

Conclusion: legacies of bear journeys

> Congleton Bear, Congleton Bear
>
> They sold the church Bible to buy a new bear.
>
> (Refrain from John Tams' 'The Congleton Bear')

Bear baiting in early modern England left a significant cultural legacy, from image to metaphor, from local history and topography to song. This legacy remains widespread in England, as in local folksongs such as 'The Congleton Bear', in which the local residents of Congleton are said to have sold their town Bible in order to purchase a new bear for baiting (based on legends that have some substantial historical support for the town's fondness for animal sports). These legacies also extend further afield. When the Hope (a popular playhouse-cum-baiting arena in London) was finally closed on the orders of Colonel Pride in 1656, the cockerels were killed and all but one of the bears were shot.[63] However,

[63]The MS from which these remarks are taken is now thought to be largely a forgery. The editors of the English Professional Theatre volume, which include it as a valid detail, note that the passage about end of the Hope could be right. They explain that previous theatre historians have accepted its legitimacy and speculate that the details themselves might 'be mostly right', Wickham, Berry, and Ingram, *English Professional Drama*, 605). In a lengthy discussion of this manuscript and its issues, Herbert Berry concludes that 'only the writer's remarks about the end of the Hope could well be right in detail'; moreover, 'the shooting of the bears did take place in February 1656 and was celebrated in much witty prose and mock-heroic verse', (Berry, 'Folger MS v.b.275', 281, 286). Indeed, Leslie Hotson corroborates these key details via other contemporary sources, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, 69.

according to one report, the dogs present at the site were not killed, but instead shipped overseas: 'It is said all the mastifs are for to be shipt for Jamaica'.[64] European settlers are known to have imported large dogs to guard property and to terrify indigenous American populations and the enslaved.[65] This record from the Hope may be a direct documentary example of the impact of England's baiting culture, with the attendant extension of national journeys to international journeys. Historians have also suggested that bear-baiting was introduced to Pakistan and India by the British.[66] Whether thinking locally or globally, in order to understand baiting and bears, we need to construct a larger picture of their lives through different types of analyses, from analysing the physical remains of bears to tracing their journeys in the archives, as we have done here.

This article has accordingly established defined local and national circuits for bears and bearwards via archival, archaeological, and GIS analysis. In turn, we have emphasised the significance of baiting events as prompts to look beyond historical cartography in understanding how entertainment shaped the social, spatial, and economic worlds of early modern England. At the same time, we have established a new method for recognising entertainment providers' movement by combining key historical travel or mapping accounts (as in William Smith and John Ogilby) with GIS analysis to offer the most plausible series of by-foot movements available to historians looking to reconstruct early modern English travel. Such a finding has substantial bearing on wider commercial movement during a period of major urbanisation that saw travel become key to the connections between different communities.[67] Our case study of a memorandum book (or diary) kept by a bearward in 1608 over two months of travel offers the most substantive and detailed discussion to date of the pace and method by which bears and their bearwards moved throughout England and even links recorded 'stops' with specific lodging establishments. In our analysis, bears walked from stop to stop on their circuit, conforming to human pacing. By looking at the archival and zooarchaeological details within this document and other related materials from the archive and from assemblages drawn from a series of excavations on Bankside, we have also tried to look past these human-orientated movements to the bears themselves – to the experience of travel, trauma, and life-cycles that defined their existence in this period. Our combination of zooarchaeology with human archives looks, at least in part, to start to address Fudge's concern for animals who are 'there but not speaking'. While we likewise find only 'records of use, edibility, training, exploitation',[68] we have also sought to combine textual traces with archaeological analysis to find new ways to bring the worlds, bodies, and movements of early modern bears into view.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

[64]Venter, 'The ransome of Pride's fury', 3.
[65]Welker and Dunham, 'Exploring the introduction of European dogs'.
[66]Kavesh, 'From the Passions of Kings'.
[67]Withington, 'Urbanisation'.
[68]Fudge, *Perceiving*, 2.

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