

**WELLINGTON, HIS PAPERS AND THE
NINETEENTH-CENTURY REVOLUTION IN
COMMUNICATION**

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The inaugural lecture was given as part of the celebrations to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the allocation of the Wellington Papers to the University of Southampton under the national heritage legislation.

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Wellington, His Papers and the Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Communication

Jacques-Louis David painted this elegant man, the Netherlander Jacobus Blauw, in Paris in 1795 (Plate 1). Blauw had just become the minister plenipotentiary of the United Provinces. In the year of the portrait, he concluded a peace treaty with the French and played an important role in the establishment of the Batavian Republic. The negotiations came at the end of the first campaign in which the young Wellington saw active service, in the Low Countries in 1794–5. Blauw breaks off from writing a diplomatic document, possibly intended to be the treaty: he has written his name and the style of his new office. The portrait makes the point that statesmen did the business of government themselves, literally by their own hands. Wellington's papers, which today still number some 100,000 items — about 50% of their original size — are testimony to the same process.¹ It is this connection with writing, largely correspondence, both in government and more generally, and how communication changed in the nineteenth century, that are the themes of this lecture.

Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington, was born in 1769. His whole career was shaped by the wars first with revolutionary France and then with Napoleon. Wellington's active military career is well known to us, in India, 1797–1805, in the Iberian Peninsula and southern France, 1808–1814, culminating in the Waterloo campaign of 1815. Waterloo turned Wellington into a national hero. From this point onwards, the Duke's life was never without some political engagement: he held many of the high offices of state, including the premiership, as well as leading the peers of the Tory party in the House of Lords both in and out of government. He retired from Cabinet at the close of Peel's ministry in 1846, but retained a vigorous interest in politics, continuing to



Plate 1 Jacobus Blauw, painted by Jacques-Louis David, 1795. The words on the paper read: 'J.BLAUW ministre plénipotentiaire [aux?] États Généraux des provinces unies'. © The National Gallery, London (NG 6495)

hold a range of offices, including that of Commander-in-Chief of the army, until his death in September 1852.

As well as a lifetime of public service, Wellington's career spans a revolution in communication. The documentary record of mid-Victorian Britain is very different from that of the first years of George III. Collections of correspondence become much larger, the range of correspondents wider. We can see this in Wellington's papers. Everyone who had a cause to promote or an opinion which they thought of interest wrote to the Duke. One of the reasons why they did so was because they could. Increased levels of literacy and postal reform had a profound effect on correspondence in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The mid- to late eighteenth century produced an archive of the elite. Correspondence was expensive: beyond special urban posts and those in official positions who had the benefit of free postage, the burden of postal charges fell upon the recipient, and its effects were felt disproportionately by the poorer sections of society. Letters were a significant cost, not just a few pence. In 1839, the government was persuaded to put in place a new, uniform system of charge.² The effect was quite sudden and dramatic. That year, 82.5 million letters were delivered in the United Kingdom; the following year, with the introduction of the new postage, the number doubled; and it had grown almost five-fold by Wellington's death.³ What is remarkable about this is the coincidence of a new, low-cost service with latent demand, and with the capacity for the postal system to cope with this level of expansion. The form of communication changed little in outward aspects, but the volume did. It was exactly at this point that railways supplemented traditional mail coaches and made possible the carriage of large quantities of post.

If the scale of Wellington's archive is in part accounted for by this change and by his popular standing, his role in the conduct of public business is also responsible. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the papers of a Secretary of State were considered his own property.⁴ That perception extended to the papers of many other officials, from soldiers to diplomats. Today's expectation is very

different: the records of government business belong to the Crown. They are accessible under freedom of information legislation and other avenues, and a selection is ultimately placed in the National Archives. This perspective is closely linked to a transformation in the way government was conducted in the twentieth century, from official business carried out in a private, or semi-private and informal way, to methods of working which guaranteed the secrecy of official papers on the one hand, and which have come to emphasise public accountability and scrutiny on the other.⁵

That this position is comparatively novel has important consequences for the archival record. Substantial amounts of documentation for what we would see as public business are in private possession, or have been placed in archive repositories other than the National Archives. From the point of view of the archival heritage, it has been crucial to facilitate the passage of these materials into the public domain. Compared with many other countries, there is little UK legislation that affects archives: the Official Secrets Act; the Public Records Acts, for material in unbroken official custody; there is legislation relating to tithes and some forms of landed property, to the records of the Church of England and to a few other categories.⁶ While we may have laws which protect data or promote freedom of information, they do not guarantee the preservation of most archives as cultural artefacts. Archives are overwhelmingly private property, and can be bought, sold or otherwise disposed of with little restriction. The trade in cultural property is an important element in the economy: in 2006-7, there were nearly 50,000 applications to export items of cultural interest — fortunately comparatively few were for manuscripts. More than half the total was licensed, with a value of £9.8 billion.⁷

The case for acquiring archives for the nation may turn on their public character as much as their intrinsic historical interest or aesthetics. Since 1973, the scheme of taxation remission known as ‘acceptance in lieu’ has been available for the transfer of important private collections of archives into state ownership.⁸ The Wellington Papers were only the fourth collection of manuscripts to be accepted in this way.⁹ Between 1996 and 2007, a seventh of all tax settled under

the scheme, £22,148,722 out of £146,175,583, was for collections of manuscripts, a measure of the impact of the process.¹⁰ There are important caveats, however. Acceptance in lieu is only available for pre-eminent material and for certain categories of taxation related to inheritance. That a collection cannot be set against tax one day because the owner is alive, yet can the following, as he has died, is a great illogicality. An extension of the scheme to other forms of taxation, for archives identified as pre-eminent in the nation's past or closely associated with its public business, is highly desirable. Although the country has not 'lost' a major archive in more than two decades, arrangements for acquisition are fragile and vulnerable to pressures on a small group of funding bodies.¹¹

Acceptance in lieu is one part of the process. Institutions are then invited to apply for the collection and the Secretary of State makes an allocation. This is what happened with the Wellington Papers in 1983. Why Southampton and Wellington? For a university looking to develop a collection on the humanities side, it was a timely opportunity. Southampton's case was based on more than the potential the collection would create. There were links between the Dukes of the Wellington and the University. The fourth Duke was at the forefront of the campaign for a university for Wessex in the 1920s, and the seventh Duke was the first Chancellor of the new University of Southampton. There were links to printed materials associated with Wellington already held in the University Library, including a substantial collection of pamphlets. But the University had no manuscript collections of significance, and the allocation was a leap of faith. To the archival establishment, this was not an obvious solution.¹² Applying for the post of archivist here, I was gently reminded that I would be counted among the black sheep — but equally that even black sheep produce wool.

What are the Wellington Papers? At first glance this vast archive contains the categories one would expect: drafts and copies of out-going letters, along with large quantities of in-coming material. Closer scrutiny shows it to be much more complex and that the Wellington Papers contain both more and less than the original archive. In 1814, the ship bringing Wellington's papers back from the Peninsula

was wrecked in the Tagus. There are now gaps in the correspondence as a result, despite the British minister in Lisbon offering a reward for any papers that might be found.¹³ Also excluded is private, personal correspondence, of which in later life Wellington wrote a considerable amount. The first Duke did not keep copies, and he considered it a bad habit for recipients to preserve it.¹⁴

On the other hand, the archive contains much additional material. Wellington was among the first British statesmen to publish his papers — a bold decision, and one that required judicious oversight. As he noted to Colonel Gurwood, the editor of his *Dispatches*, ‘I am afraid that the examination of these papers will leave many statues without pedestals.’¹⁵ That notwithstanding, between 1834 and 1839, 12 volumes and an index appeared,¹⁶ and the editorial process was responsible for shaping the archive through the nineteenth century. Wellington’s papers were supplemented to fill in the gaps, especially for the Peninsular War, by letters from other archives and the records of the headquarters departments of the army. Many of these documents have remained in the collection.¹⁷

Wellington also acquired papers from others as part of his work, ranging from materials relating to South and Central America,¹⁸ to the rights of Roman Catholics.¹⁹ Subsequent Dukes received bequests of Wellington’s correspondence.²⁰ The first Duke had further archives in his custody, including the papers of George III and George IV, as executor of the latter; and those of Joseph Bonaparte, the intruded King of Spain, which Wellington captured in 1813. The first two archives are now at Windsor, and Joseph’s papers are in Paris, although fragments of these collections remain among the papers at Southampton.²¹

Wellington held public office for some 60 years and his official papers are substantial. This is partly because of the way he chose to conduct business and partly because the opening decades of the nineteenth century mark the beginning of the great age of government by correspondence. The years around 1800 are one of several points in the past where one can see a step change in volumes and systems of documentation. In England, one might point to the reign of King John and the systematisation of the records of Chancery;²² in the early

modern period, to the state papers;²³ or to the records of government during the First World War.²⁴ In the nineteenth century, the responsibilities and business of government were changing: war and empire brought new patterns, remoulding government by mid-century. In Wellington's day, the Civil Service was small and the great officers of state did most of the business of government themselves. One consequence of the increased volume of paperwork is that Wellington's administration of 1828–30 is almost certainly the last government for which it is possible for a researcher to read everything that was written by ministers and their departments. The growth in business in the period after the Napoleonic Wars can be seen in the Foreign Office records. In 1815, it received some 4,000 despatches; that number had risen to 7,309 by 1829; and in 1853, the year after Wellington's death, the Foreign Office received 35,104 despatches. How did a nineteenth-century government cope with the changing volume of communication ?

Managing public business required systematisation, especially registering and indexing letters, and a laborious process of copying information in order to circulate it. Summarising correspondence was one way to comprehend it. In the Foreign Office, despite the volume of despatches, the clerical investment in this was modest and personal to the Secretary of State. From 1793 to 1852 there was a *précis* writer, and sometimes an assistant, usually a relation or friend of the Foreign Secretary, whose job it was to prepare summaries, which were then circulated.²⁵ The personal connection can be seen in the survival of *précis* books among the Foreign Secretary's private property: for example, there are 145 volumes in the papers of Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary 1791–1801, which left office with him.²⁶ Wellington was Foreign Secretary only briefly, in 1834–5, and his archive contains but a single *précis* book.²⁷

The growth in the business of government can be seen in other departments, but systematisation was patchy: the correspondence of the Home Office was not registered, that is, listed and indexed, until 1841.²⁸ Numbers of personnel in Whitehall were small. In 1829, during Wellington's first government, the Foreign Office had 47 staff,

the Home Office 30; the Colonial Office 33; the Treasury and Exchequer 189. These offices were linked to extensive networks of local officials: the Customs and Excise had the greatest number, between them more than 17,000, most outside London. The Foreign Office had 28 overseas missions, as well as 112 consuls in 26 countries. The Home Office worked with the sheriffs and lords lieutenant of the counties, and so on.²⁹ What connected all these individuals was correspondence, and in many cases it was private correspondence — but why should this be so ?

By 1800, in Western Europe letters were the most common form of archival record. Their ubiquity presents a special challenge: as so much official business was carried out by correspondence, much of it by private letter, it is important to understand nuances in purpose and structure. The most important of these, in terms of government business, was the development of parallel systems of communication for different types, or qualities, of information. To take an example: Wellington's appointment to command the army in the Peninsula came with requirements for political and military communication, especially formal reporting to his political master, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, as well as to others. On the one hand, his despatches, that is, his official letters, were to provide a continuous narrative, a formal record of the actions of the army under his command. This record might be called for by Parliament and the statements had to be justifiable. These despatches constitute a system of record, running through Wellington's correspondence. They are characterised by their formality: they are usually in a numbered sequence; they all start 'My Lord' (Plate 2), immediately distinguishing them from other communications, especially those of a private character but still touching on official business, which begin 'My Dear Lord' (Plate 4); and they abide by rules, largely unwritten, about content. Official business was to be confined in correspondence to those officials responsible for it; it was not to be included in communications with others.³⁰ The sequence of official correspondence continued even if there was little or nothing to report.³¹

A parallel might be drawn with diplomatic correspondence. The Foreign Secretary would usually give instructions to a diplomat about

how often he should write — once a week, or once a fortnight, for example. The diplomat might include in his despatch only items that had been officially communicated to him by the foreign government; he could not include hearsay, or newspaper reports; he had to have authority for his statements.³² At the same time, there was a further set of communications, a private correspondence, which would escape public view and could contain a wide range of information and opinion.

To General the Lord William Bentinck
Draught July 1st 1813

My Lord I have had the honor
of receiving your Lordships
despatches No. 283 of the 19th
& 20th of June; the latter having
a postscript dated 18th June
1813. but, I am unable
to find any command
by this Despatch was totally defeated

Plate 2 Wellington's draft official letter to Lord William Bentinck, starting 'My Lord', 1 July 1813. [University of Southampton Library, MS 61 Wellington Papers (hereafter WP) 1/373]

These twin correspondences defined almost every official relationship in British government from the eighteenth century onwards, and they applied equally to the relationship between Wellington and his commanders. To answer my question: private correspondence offered more flexibility and wider scope than official correspondence; it was a way of conveying information which was important but which might be inconvenient at least in official form.

The rules about what official letters were to contain were rarely exposed; occasionally, usually when things had gone wrong, they became explicit. Just as Wellington sent formal reports, others

made formal reports to him by correspondence. These reports were not always framed as the Duke wanted. We may take the famous example of General Beresford, who commanded the Portuguese forces during the Peninsular War. On 23 May 1811, Wellington wrote to the Secretary of State in the aftermath of his efforts to recast Beresford's despatch on the battle of Albuera.

I feel very strongly what you say about Beresford's dispatches, but it is very difficult to apply a remedy to this evil; in fact he writes his official dispatches as he would private letters, or as he would talk, without much consideration, or reflecting that they are likely to go before the public, who will try every word.³³

There was no doubt in the Duke's mind that Albuera had been an allied victory and had to be presented as such. Writing to his brother William, he described Beresford's despatch as 'a whining report ... which would have driven the people in England mad'.³⁴ In June 1813 Wellington had letters from Lieutenant General Sir John Murray about the disastrous events at Tarragona. To the Duke's mind they were insufficient and in his formal letter to Murray of 1 July he helpfully pointed out what the despatch should have contained: '... you have omitted to give me a narrative of your proceedings from the time of your making the coast of Catalonia, and the time of your quitting it ...' There then followed no fewer than eleven sets of questions for Murray to address.³⁵ By contrast to this official letter, there was a private letter of the same date, covering the same ground, but in ways which were encouraging and more sympathetic.³⁶

The composition of public letters on official business was a delicate art that needed careful cultivation. Lord Hatherton recorded in his diary that, quizzed at dinner in 1820,

The Duke of Wellington declared he had never seen the truth printed about public matters in the course of his participation in public affairs. All men seemed to be liars. Someone asked him if he did not except his own dispatches, upon which he observed: 'I never told a falsehood in them, but I never told the whole truth, nor anything like it. Either one or the other would have been contradicted by 5,000 officers in my army in their letters to their mothers, wives, brothers or sisters and cousins, all of whom imagined they as well understood what they saw as I did.'³⁷

How did Wellington prepare his correspondence ? We must make a distinction between original composition and the documentation

it produced, and the process of copying, reproducing information, and how that was managed. We can sketch out the main characteristics of a letter from Wellington. In terms of public business, it was his practice to draft out long, formal communications. He did this principally using foolscap sheets of paper (approximately 315 mm high x 198 mm wide — there is some slight variation in the size to which sheets were cut), folded in half vertically, writing down the outer half, leaving the inner as space to make corrections, amendments, or for the comments of others (Plate 3).³⁸ It was a well established way of preparing documents in official circles: it can be traced back in British administration through the eighteenth century, and in continental

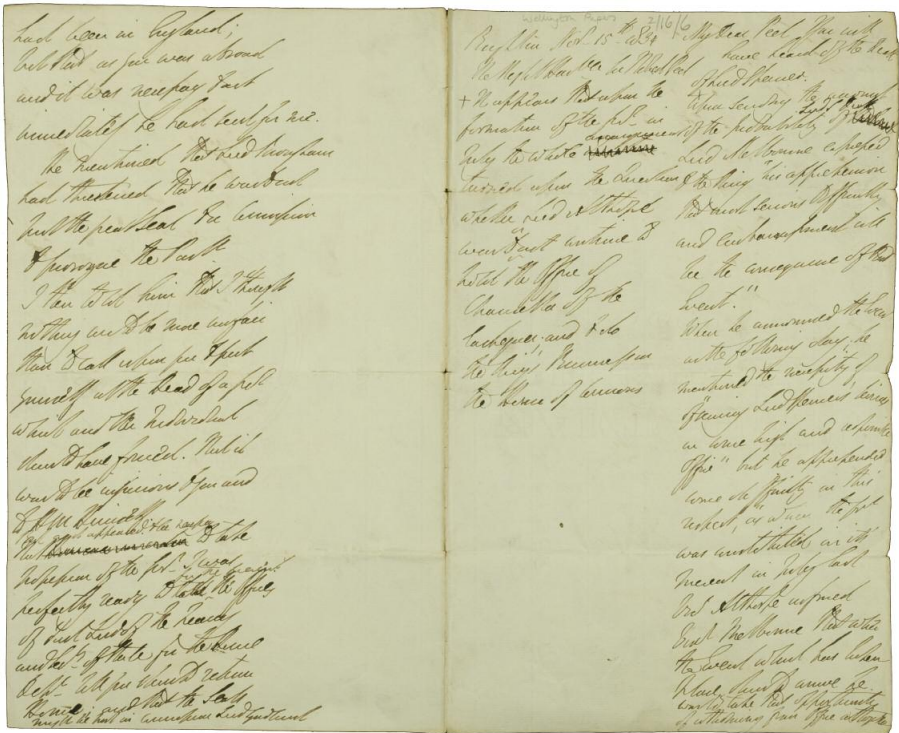


Plate 3 Wellington's drafts of official letters and his more important correspondence and memoranda, both in and out of office, are on foolscap sheets, folded in half, employing the outer half for the main text, and the inner part for additions and amendments. Draft of a letter from the Duke to Peel, 15 November 1834. [WP 2/16/6]

chanceries through the seventeenth century — and possibly as far back as the late medieval period, when paper first became sufficiently widely available that it might be used for drafting letters.³⁹ Once the draft was complete, it would then be copied by a secretary or aide-de-camp. Wellington would sign the out-going letter, keeping his own draft for reference.

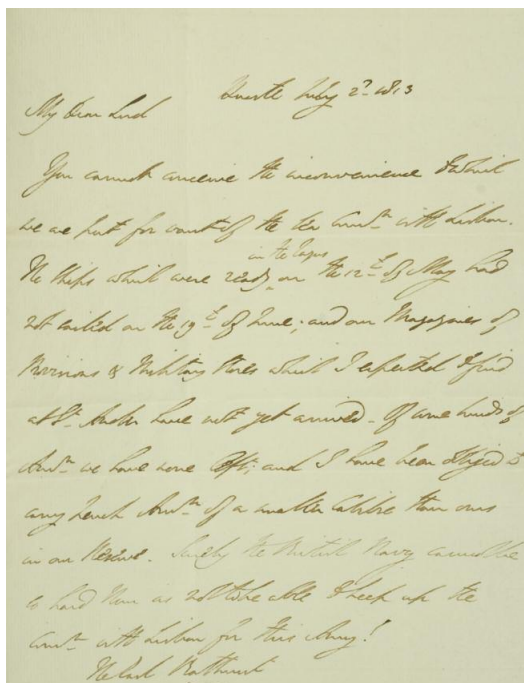
Foolscap sheets were used for official correspondence, but rarely for private letters. For these last the Duke employed two smaller sizes of letter paper, both commonly available commercial sizes — the larger 232 mm high x 183 mm wide (a little bigger than A5), the smaller almost exactly half the size, 182 mm high x 118 mm wide, again with some slight variation (Plate 4). It was his practice to write these usually without a draft, and his secretary took a copy before it was sent out. One can readily imagine this at headquarters in the Peninsula. It was a practice that endured a lifetime as the exasperating Lady Shelley was to discover in January 1848, when the Duke's prowess turned to defending himself 'from the consequences of the meddling gossip of the ladies of modern times'.

... as I am made the principal topick of discussion in every subject, and am made responsible for every word that falls from me whether verbally or in writing, which is commented upon, the meaning tortured, misrepresented, I am anxious to know exactly what it is I write at least ! And accordingly I take care to have a copy of everything ! And I send all these letters to my secretary. He may be out of town ! Or may have more to do than he can easily perform, and he may have been under the necessity of postponing to copy your letter so much to account for the delay of your reception of it.⁴⁰

A third category, private, personal correspondence (Plate 4), the Duke wrote without a secretary taking a copy.⁴¹

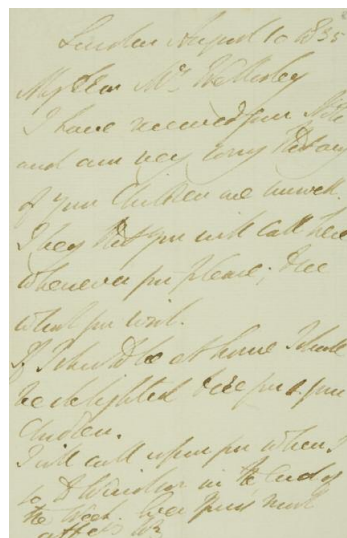
Paper was an imperfect medium on which to write. In the West, it did not necessarily have a smooth surface, or one into which ink would not soak rapidly. A great deal of effort had to go into preparing it to mitigate these problems. Earlier papers were pounced, that is, rubbed with a powdered resin, to keep the ink on the surface. This was less necessary by the start of the nineteenth century, although the result was that the ink lay wet on the surface of the paper. Blotting paper was developed late in the eighteenth century, and by the time Wellington was writing, volumes of stationery were on the market with writing

paper interleaved with blotter to counteract this problem.⁴² Nothing distinguished the papers the Duke used from those that were commonly available for elite use, or purchased for government service. By the 1820s, the market for paper had changed; machine production altered



My Dear Lord Huarte July 22^d 1813

You cannot conceive the inconvenience I find
 to be put for writing to the Court with a quill.
 The paper which was used ^{in the paper} on the 1st of May had
 2^d folded on the 1st of June, and our Magazines of
 Novins & Political Works which I expected I find
 at St. Asaph have not yet arrived. I have heard of
 about 100 have some left, and I have been obliged to
 buy some about of a smaller volume than ours
 in our library. I wish to purchase many more to be
 bound them in red leather cloth I wish to see
 Court with a quill for this thing!
 Richard Bathurst



London August 10th 1835

My Dear Mrs Wellesley

I have received your letter
 and am very sorry to hear
 of your illness and am much
 I hope that you will last here
 whenever you please. I am
 at the present time.
 I should like to see you. I should
 be delighted to see you and your
 children.
 I will write you when
 I am in the land of
 the living. I am your most
 affectionate son

Plate 4 Private letters from Wellington, on two different size sheets of notepaper: (a) To Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Huarte, 2 July 1813, beginning 'My Dear Lord' [WP 1/373] (b) To Mrs Richard Wellesley, the widow of his brother Richard's eldest son Richard, 10 August 1835 [University of Southampton Library MS 63/45/8]

its characteristics and capacity. There was an elite market for special notepapers, with, for example, embossed decoration.⁴³ Although headed notepapers were available in the 1830s and 1840s, on the whole the Duke did not use them. From the 1830s, others used stationery headed with steel-engraved scenes, another mark of both technological progress and new demand.⁴⁴ In 1846, the Wellington Arch, with the controversial

equestrian statue of the Duke on top, opposite Apsley House, headed the letters of Wellington's friend, John Wilson Croker (Plate 5).⁴⁵ From the 1840s, papers with a polished or 'satin' finish appeared. The sudden and very great increase in the demand for paper, occasioned by postal reform and new printing techniques, led to a much poorer quality product, bequeathing us the conservation problems of acidic, brittle paper.⁴⁶

Wellington's correspondence was written in ink and he also drafted in ink, using a quill pen. The exception was the period 1809 to the early 1830s, when he worked extensively — and unusually — in pencil (Plate 6). Although he made use of portable writing desks, there



Plate 5 An engraving of the Wellington Arch, heading the letter paper of J.W.Croker, 24 November 1846. [WP 2/150/61]

was doubtless much inconvenience in writing in ink, especially on campaign, and the habit of using pencil persisted.⁴⁷ Steel-nibbed pens were available before the 1820s, but they were not very satisfactory. By the late 1840s and early 1850s, factories produced millions of

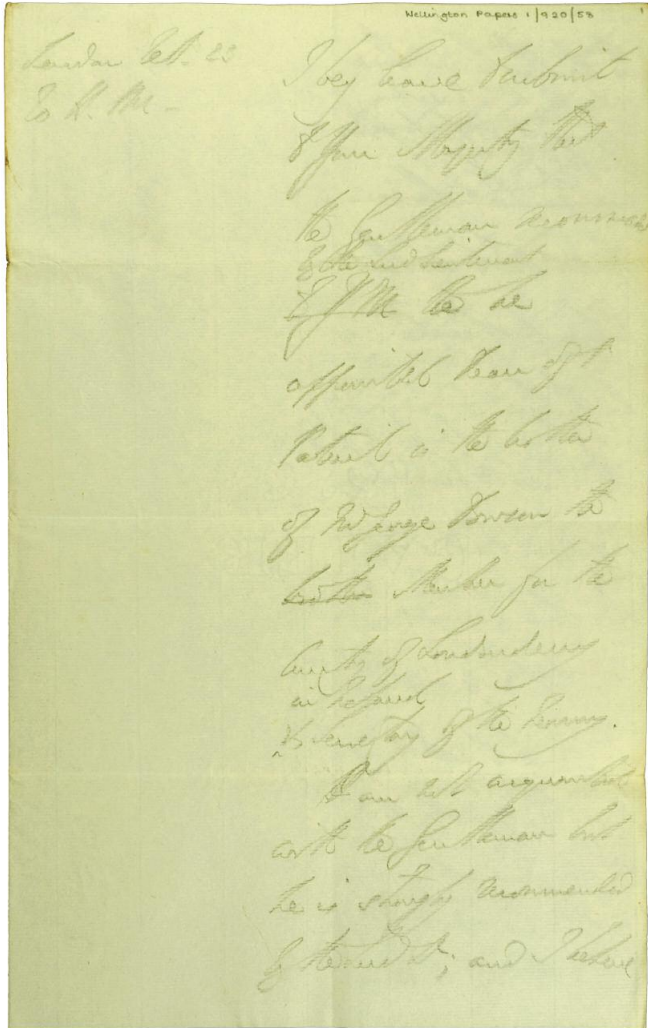


Plate 6 Wellington working in pencil: draft of a letter to George IV, about Catholic emancipation and the position of the government, 23 February 1828. [WP 1/920/58]

improved nibs each year — in itself an indication of the impact of the changes in the dynamics of communication (Plate 7).⁴⁸ It was around this point that the Duke switched from using a quill to a steel-nibbed pen, producing a hand with much less difference between the up- and down-strokes.⁴⁹ It is difficult to pinpoint this change exactly: the quill and inkpot appear as artists' props on at least two portraits of the Duke, the later of them from 1837, as well as on the engraving of him writing the Waterloo despatch, which appeared in a commemorative issue of the



Plate 7 The slitting room for steel-nibbed pens in the factory of Messrs Hinks, Wells and Co., Birmingham, in 1851. The price of pen nibs was 6d. a gross in that year; in 1830 it had been 8s. Women were employed for their dexterity, and they have arrived well-dressed for work, with the pot plants on the window sill adding a homely touch. [*Illustrated London News*, 1851 (part 1, p. 149)]

Illustrated London News shortly after his death, but based on a drawing of 1839 (Plate 8).⁵⁰ In this we see him seated at a table in his headquarters at Waterloo, quill in hand, with several other quills on the table, a travelling inkpot (with a lid that clips over to fasten it shut), as

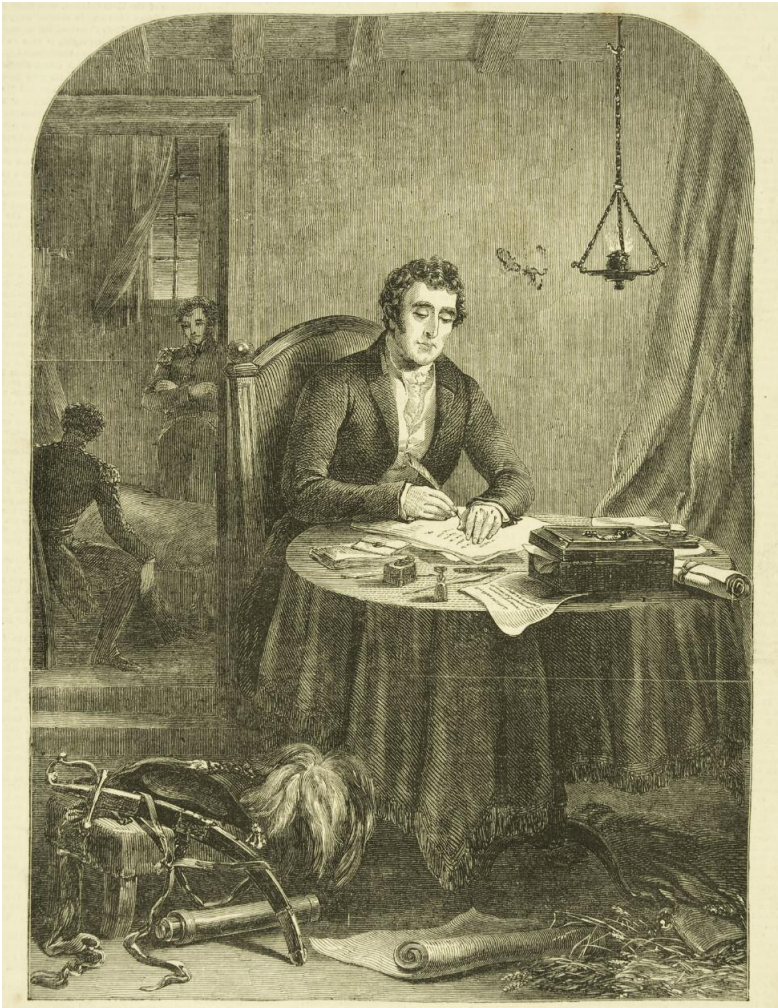


Plate 8 Wellington writing the Waterloo despatch, engraved for the *Illustrated London News* in 1852, after the drawing by the Countess of Westmorland of September 1839. [*Illustrated London News*, 1852 (part 2, p. 436)]

well as other props, the despatch box and rolled map. In fact, the Waterloo despatch was written in draft by the Duke in the same manner as his other draft despatches, with pages folded in half for drafting. In addition, it was marked by Wellington with a set of small verbal



Plate 9 Wellington's letter wrappers and envelopes: (a) Cover of a letter to Richard Wellesley, Brighton, redirected to London, franked 20 July 1828 — a wrapper made from a folded sheet of paper [University of Southampton Library MS 63/45/107]; (b) A manufactured envelope, with a letter for Mrs Wellesley at Eton, 10 August 1835 [MS 63/45/62]

changes in pencil, so that a version, incorporating these changes, could be sent to the King of the Netherlands. There may be a pencil on the table, and there is another object which may be a quill-cutter.⁵¹

Once the letter was written, it was sealed closed by the Duke with his signet, and addressed on the outside.⁵² Until the 1830s the Duke used a sheet of paper folded to enclose the letter, or less usually wrote the address on the outside of the letter paper: the wrapping sheet made it more easy, and secure, to send enclosures. Most people outside government and the elite did not use wrapping sheets. Before 1840 postage in the UK was charged in part by the number of sheets that were sent: to use a wrapper or envelope in addition to a sheet of writing paper doubled the cost of postage. This encouraged people to write to the limits of the page and, having filled it, to write across the letter at right-angles to the first text, a practice known as ‘crossing’. Wellington used envelopes from at least as early as 1835, but he had not employed them in the late 1820s (Plate 9).⁵³ In the later 1830s, references to machines for manufacturing envelopes imply they were novel.⁵⁴ The transition to the general use of envelopes took some years. In 1844, there were complaints in Parliament that the Post Office had opened the correspondence of Joseph Mazzini, the Italian nationalist. It transpired that this had taken place under warrant from the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, on the suspicion that Mazzini was plotting insurrection in Italy. The *Punch* cartoons of the period show folded letters, without envelopes (Plate 10).⁵⁵

Anyone who has worked with Wellington’s correspondence cannot fail to remark on his handwriting. A free hand was a mark of distinction: it set one apart from those who made their living as clerks, writing neat hands or the office hands of government departments.⁵⁶ The special connection between handwriting and the individuality of the person, self-evident to us, was only widely accepted from the eighteenth century. The use of writing for personal expression, for letters or for keeping journals, was itself comparatively new.⁵⁷ And this connection between individuality and handwriting grew, paradoxically, from the impersonality of the printed word — some types of material, such as belles-lettres, circulated in manuscript rather than print to



PAUL PRY AT THE POST OFFICE.

Plate 10 'Paul Pry at the Post Office', a *Punch* cartoon from the period of the Mazzini affair. The letter is a folded sheet of paper and has no envelope. [*Punch* 7 (Jul - Dec 1844) p. 7]

maintain this personal connection. Invitations continued to be handwritten, or, if printed, to be set in typefaces similar to script or used methods of reproducing handwriting, such as lithography (Plate 11).⁵⁸

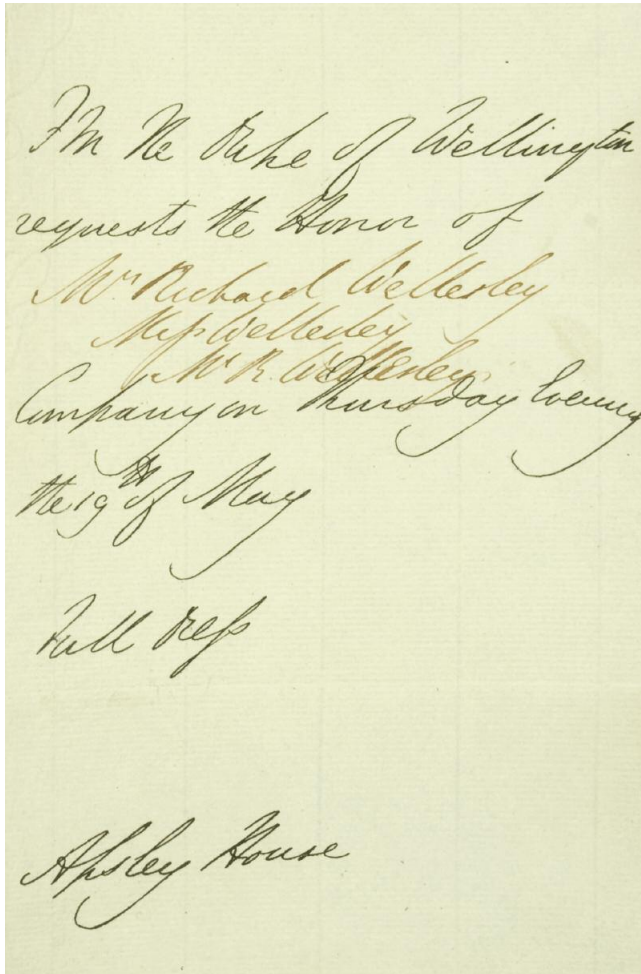


Plate 11 A lithographed invitation on letter paper, to an evening event at Apsley House, on Thursday evening, 19 May (no year, but for 1831, 1836 or 1842). The lithograph may have been written by Wellington himself, or possibly by his secretary, Algernon Greville, and the names of the guests — Mrs Richard Wellesley, Miss Wellesley, and Mr R. Wellesley — were added subsequently (the printed part is in the darker ink, with the invitees' names added in the lighter). [University of Southampton Library MS 63/45/89]

Derived in the early nineteenth century from works on physiognomy, the belief that there was something inherently important in handwriting led to a cult of collecting autographs and autograph letters. Script was a means of delineating character. This development merged with an antiquarian interest in individuals, especially those of historical or literary significance. The construction of autograph albums, with individual letters or collections of signatures of celebrities, became a hobby of the middle classes. To this Wellington was particularly exposed: his signature featured in many nineteenth-century albums — a signature that was readily available from his franks on envelopes, as well as from official letters.⁵⁹ Notoriety as much as celebrity might be detected by handwriting. The Cato Street conspirators, who had planned to assassinate the Cabinet, including Wellington, in February 1820, had their writing reproduced by their defence counsel as he thought it interesting to preserve it. Wellington keenly observed differences in hand from a practical perspective. As Prime Minister, in 1830, he received many anonymous and threatening letters, some of which were kept for reference in an attempt to identify the disaffected.⁶⁰

Besides drafts of letters in Wellington's hand, his papers include many copies of out-going letters, essential for systematic management of business. Many were written by hand, and some used a new technology. In 1780, James Watt devised a press for taking copies of letters, making a direct transfer of ink — typically a slow-drying ink — onto a dampened paper. The ink transferred onto the back of the copy sheet, a very thin sheet of unsized paper, with the intention that it should be legible through the paper the correct way round. This process accounts for many examples with a strong reversed impression of the ink on the back of the page, and the faint appearance of the text on the front. Although popular with business and immediately adopted at a high level in the United States government, it made little impact on government administration in Britain.⁶¹ It was used by a few individuals in their private offices or when they held official positions but had little administrative support. Wellington used press copies on unbound sheets in India in the early 1800s.⁶² In 1806, however, he used an early

example of a copy book (Plate 12),⁶³ which was more convenient than loose sheets. Loose sheets were sometimes pasted into ledgers, like scrapbooks.⁶⁴ Among government papers, these initiatives in copying were mainly confined to the private elements of correspondence of ministers. While some government offices used press copies, the

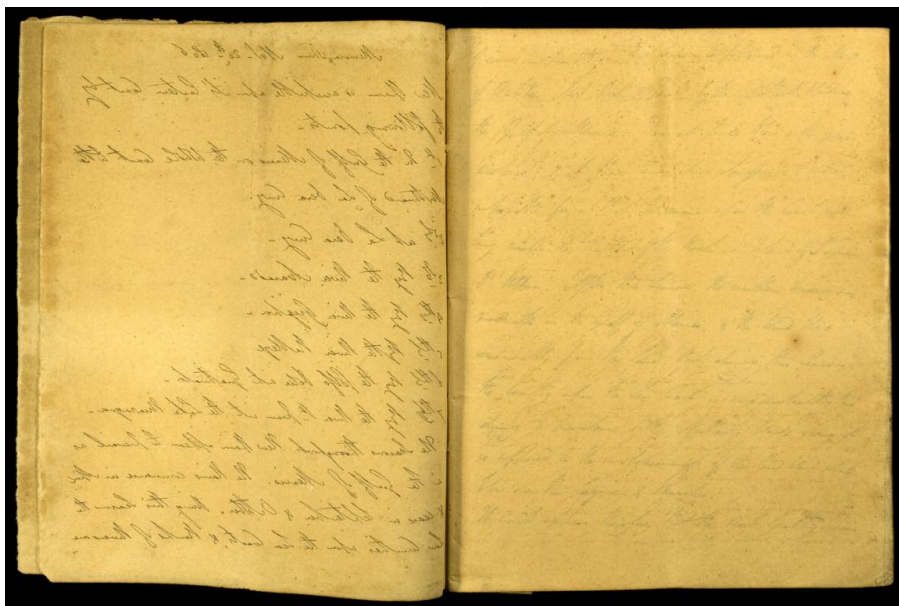


Plate 12 Wellington's copy book of 1806. [WP 1/165]

Education Office of the Privy Council in the 1840s and the Board of Trade in the 1850s, the major change in the Civil Service to press copies and stencil duplicating did not take place until the late 1870s and 1880s.⁶⁵

The use of carbon paper, with the appearance of the 'manifold writer' in 1806, in combination with a glass or metal stylus, found less favour — carbon paper was prepared with a mixture of printing ink and butter which left a foetid smell.⁶⁶ Unlike later practice, the carbon copy was the part that was sent, and it was on ordinary paper — the flimsy top sheet was retained. There are a few examples in the Wellington

Papers of in-coming letters written with this equipment especially in the field, or on board ship (Plate 13);⁶⁷ but there is no evidence that Wellington himself made use of it. Although fascinated by technology

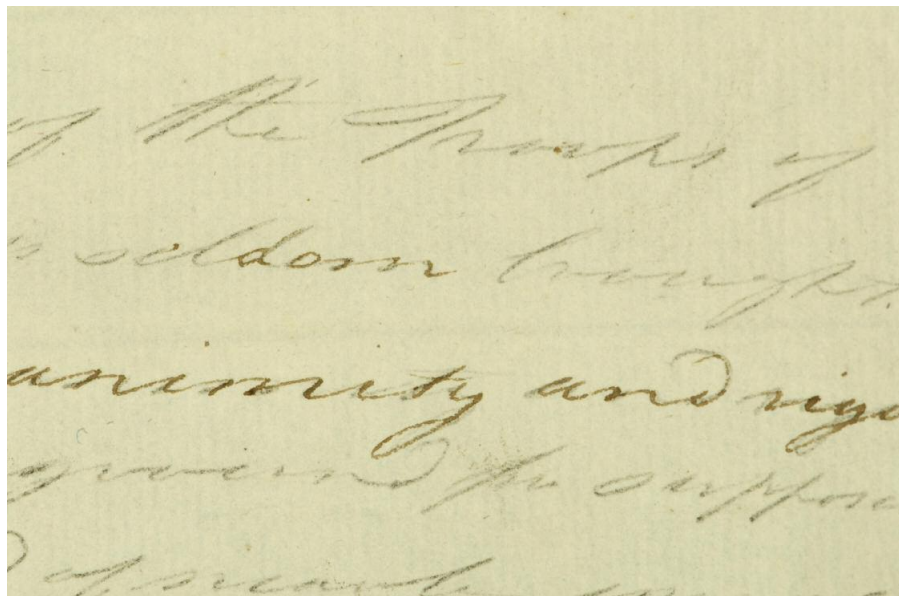


Plate 13 A carbon copy: parts have been inked over as the copying has not been completely effective. From a memorandum by Lieutenant Colonel George Murray for Wellington, 13 March 1808, on an expedition to Sweden. [WP 1/193/53]

and innovative in many ways, the Duke was less swift in adopting these practices than, for example, Thomas Jefferson.⁶⁸

The Duke, however, did take full advantage of printing. Much has been written about the different print mediums, the burgeoning of local newspapers and ‘print culture’, the rise of the provincial press and local printing presses — all important elements in the communication revolution. The first printing press in Southampton appeared in the mid-1770s and, like many local presses, was initially used for election addresses, posters and poll books.⁶⁹ A traditional letterpress was attached to Wellington’s headquarters during the Peninsular War and in Paris, from 1815.⁷⁰ It produced copies of material in high demand,

also often of an ephemeral nature. Wellington, writing in August 1814, after he had been appointed British ambassador to France, in response to an enquiry about arrangements for presenting ladies at the French court, instructed a pro-forma to be printed: 'Le duc de Wellington a l'honneur de faire scavoir à [blank] que [blank] désire être présentée à [blank]' (Plate 14).⁷¹ Before 1840, it was unusual to print government documents for administrative use within departments, although they were printed for Parliament; after 1840 printing was used even for short runs of material like cabinet papers, usually in letterpress.⁷²

Lithography added a further dimension. The process was good for reproducing drawings. The Quartermaster General's Office in

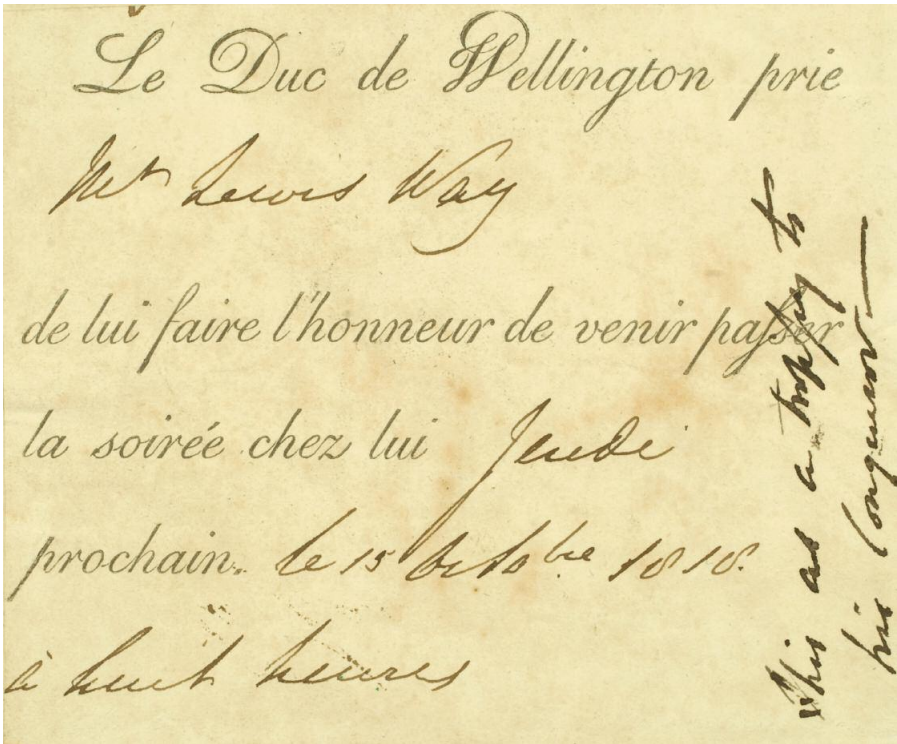


Plate 14 A letterpress printed pro-forma invitation from Wellington. This example dates from the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, October 1818. [University of Southampton Library, MS 85/29/4/1]

Whitehall had a lithographic press from around 1808.⁷³ After the development of ‘transfer lithography’, when text might be written using lithographic ink onto a specially prepared sheet of paper, rather than writing directly onto the printing surface, its use expanded.⁷⁴ Wellington made use of the process for administrative material, invitations (Plate 11) and other domestic documentation after he returned to England at the end of the Napoleonic Wars.⁷⁵ He also used it at the Congress of Verona, in 1822, where he was one of the British plenipotentiaries: the Duke’s memorandum on the slave trade was printed in this way, as was the reply of the French ministers plenipotentiary.⁷⁶

From the first half of the nineteenth century and well beyond, even into the 1890s, despite technological innovation, the emphasis in British government circles was on copying documents by hand. Labour was comparatively cheap: the skills of correspondence at a routine level — composition, penmanship, orthography — were keys to middle-class success. The Civil Service at the end of Wellington’s life was primarily clerical, rather than a body with a significant influence on the development of policy.⁷⁷

The Duke required trusted secretaries, men who had confidential habits of business and expertise to translate his handwritten drafts or instructions for letters into full texts.⁷⁸ As well as copying letters, the secretaries docketed the letter, that is, summarised it briefly on the outside, and filed it, maintaining registers of correspondence and other books of reference. Those who worked for him frequently had a military background and, importantly, connection.⁷⁹ The group involved might expand: Wellington’s friend, Mrs Arbuthnot, was shown confidential material and even noted in her journal that she had copied out letters and memoranda for the Duke in 1826 and 1828–9.⁸⁰ After 1818, with the Duke’s return to England, one can imagine Wellington, at his writing desk in Apsley House, drafting replies across letters, ready for his private secretary to write up into their full form. The private secretary’s room, lined with mahogany cupboards in part to hold the correspondence, was on the ground floor there adjacent to the Duke’s library. When Wellington became Prime Minister in 1828, the First Lord of the Treasury had just two

secretaries: one usually came from the Treasury establishment, the other from outside the office. Under the Duke, the former was Edward Drummond, who worked for subsequent First Lords, until his assassination in mistake for Sir Robert Peel in 1843. The other secretary was Algernon Greville, brother of Charles, the diarist. He entered the Duke's service in 1827 and served for the remainder of the Duke's life in a private capacity.⁸¹ Some items of exceptional sensitivity were copied by Wellington himself.⁸²

If the administrative machinery of government was modest, its responsibilities were very much more circumscribed than they are today. The offices were equally modest. The great buildings of the Treasury and Foreign Office were not erected until 1863. Wellington resided in 10 Downing Street in 1828, while Apsley House was undergoing works; and the other houses in the street were largely in the hands of government. The Treasury had 10–12 Downing Street; number 13 was occupied by the Judge Advocate General; War and the Colonies were at 14; the Foreign Office was at number 16, to which number 15 was added in 1825, as well as two further houses, in which a new cabinet room was constructed in the mid-1820s. The Home Office had been located in the Old Tennis Court, and the Privy Council Office in the Cockpit, both close at hand in the old Tudor palace of Whitehall.⁸³

There was no secretariat for Cabinet and no official system for recording cabinet discussions. Wellington wrote the papers himself and placed them on the table in the cabinet room in the Foreign Office for his colleagues to read. *The Times* reported the dates and times of cabinet meetings, noting who had attended and sometimes the topics of discussion.⁸⁴ The bulk of the business of government was conducted by the First Lord himself, by correspondence and memoranda, and in a similar fashion, by the Secretaries of State and the other heads of department.

The task of governing, depending largely on the ability of a small group of individuals to write copious amounts of correspondence, might quickly become unmanageable. As First Lord, Wellington attempted to limit correspondence, using a terse style

which was to become legendary. Another method he employed was to write on small rectangles of paper (Plate 15).⁸⁵ Wellington's secretaries, especially Algernon Greville, made very close imitations

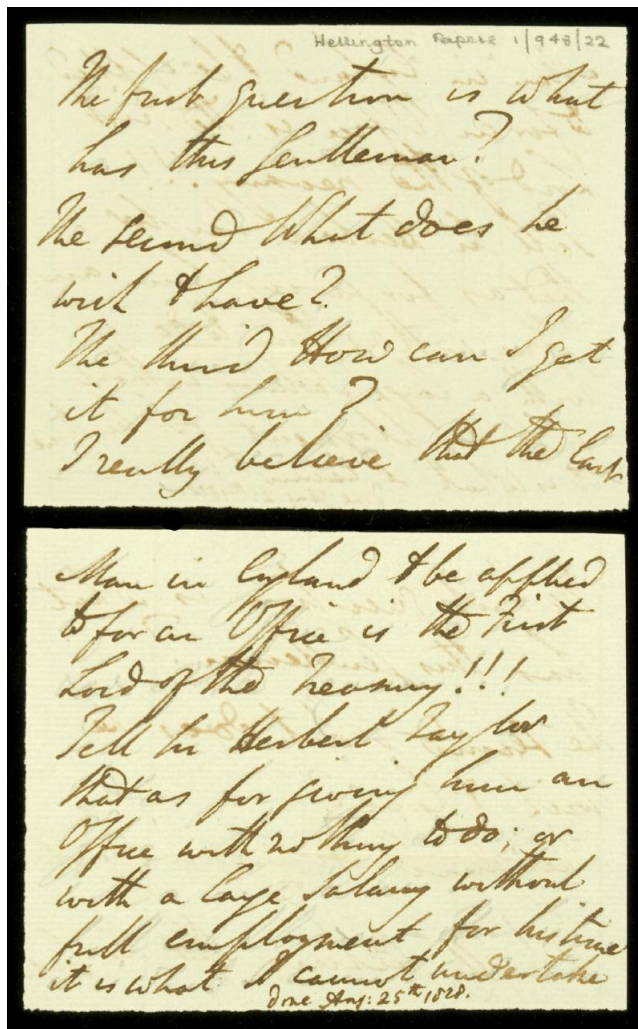


Plate 15 Wellington's reply to Sir Herbert Taylor, about the case of Mr Crokat and his claim to patronage, c.21 August 1828. The Duke has written his reply in pencil, inked over by Edward Drummond, the secretary concluding with a note that the reply had been sent. The paper measures 81 mm high x 102 mm wide. [WP 1/948/22]

of the Duke's hand, an expertise doubtless gained while inking over Wellington's pencil drafts, and which may have relieved some of the burden of replying. The volumes of correspondence tried the Duke severely: 'There is not a subject of public interest upon which I do not receive hundreds of letters, numerous almost in proportion to the difficulty and importance attached to each ...'⁸⁶ As Wellington was to assure the Duke of Buckingham in 1839, 'it is my habit to answer every letter that I receive' — we must note too that this is a habit which encourages correspondence.⁸⁷

The years of active military service are one of the peaks of Wellington's correspondence. In the Peninsula, Wellington's clerks registered between 2,500 and 3,000 in-coming letters per annum. These were letters addressed directly to the Duke: they excluded the correspondence of the departments at headquarters, the Military Secretary, Adjutant General and Quartermaster General, for example.⁸⁸ In the later part of his life, the system of recording the correspondence was a little different — and the figures are more approximate than their precision suggests. They demonstrate, however, that the peaks correlate not with the general changes in trends of correspondence in the UK, but with periods when Wellington held office. In 1834 there were 2,716 letters, and the following year 2,958. 1842 and 1843 — when the Duke was in Peel's Cabinet — were the only other years at this point in Wellington's life when his public correspondence exceeded 2,000 letters per annum.⁸⁹

If these practices of dealing with government and official business account for the scale of the archive, we must return to developments in correspondence and communication generally. Volume was not the only change: communication was also increasingly rapid. It was possible to post a letter and receive a reply to it the same day: this was a normal expectation, not just that of government or those using private messengers. Railways had a major impact on postal distribution. With this also came a social change, an acceptance of a 'postal culture'. Much as the last twenty years have brought us to a culture of near instantaneous electronic communication, people were able to communicate regularly, and swiftly, with those at a distance, to maintain and develop

contacts in all sorts of ways. Correspondence could be an intimate, private communication, a 'personal letter', much more than a medium for news or a business transaction, one for conducting relationships of a wholly different kind — there was much concern about the morality of women receiving and writing letters. With this came a sense of privacy, a sentiment that still attaches to our correspondence and voice communications.⁹⁰ This was one of the reasons why the opening of the Mazzini correspondence was so shocking. Individuals thought they had a right to send and receive private communications through the post, a viewpoint neatly encapsulated by the development of valentines. In the week of 21 February 1841, an extra half million letters were delivered, one eighth of all the mail, because of the traffic in valentines.⁹¹

Postal reform did not create a new medium of communication, but opened up an existing one. One should not assume that letters were simply exchanges between two individuals: they could have quite a different character. Many of the letters from Wellington's army would have been read aloud or circulated. This practice was common among many groups: corresponding societies, some religious denominations, for example, the Methodists with their letter-days, and also among migrants.⁹² Letter-writing had been much more an urban practice than a rural one. Uniform penny postage and, later in the nineteenth century, the establishment of rural deliveries, along with the development of standardised addresses, allowed the pattern to change.⁹³ Newspapers had formed a significant component of the post for many years, but had been sent usually on the basis of subscription. Changes in printing technology, along with improved distribution by railway, allowed a market to develop for periodicals covering a wide range of interests beyond the daily and weekly press.⁹⁴ Uniform penny postage opened the way to a flood of unsolicited circulars, for goods, begging letters, letters promoting causes, and so forth: in short, 'junk mail' quickly formed a significant component in postal traffic. The ease with which strangers could be addressed marked a dramatic change.⁹⁵ The post had become a part of daily life, much as we see in the last painting of Wellington done from life — by Robert Thorburn — with his grandchildren in the library at Stratfield Saye, playing with the covers

from the day's delivery of mail.

I am not the first to talk of a 'revolution in communication' at this period: contemporaries saw it in this light.⁹⁶ It brought a social change which paralleled in the popular mind the changes of the Reform Acts.⁹⁷ One of the most important changes was in *who* was communicating. There was a vast growth in middle- and lower-class correspondence. Learning to write was now a part of general education: people were no longer reliant on the work of writing masters. At the same time there was a major growth in numbers of women who could write, a prelude to the transformation of clerical work in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from a male occupation to one with an increasing female component.⁹⁸

A glance at Wellington's postbag provides some confirmation of this, albeit at the start of the period of change. In the collection at Southampton, between 1833 and his death in 1852 there were 182 correspondents who each wrote to the Duke on more than 10 occasions. Only four were women.⁹⁹ From other collections, we know that Wellington wrote substantially more to a handful of female correspondents, what he would have classed as personal correspondence: there now survive 1,488 letters to Mrs Arbuthnot, 599 to Lady Wilton, and 842 to Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, besides 166 to Princess Lieven that are a little different in nature, as her husband was the Russian ambassador in London for some of the period.¹⁰⁰ But this correspondence aside, if we look at the total number of correspondents, rather than the number of letters, just under 15% of those who wrote to the Duke were women. Most sent no more than a single letter. Male correspondents wrote on average three letters.¹⁰¹ 15% is a modest proportion, but it was a new development and it marks this part of the archive as different from the Peninsular War section.

Today's information revolution has antecedents stretching back through three centuries, with new ideas about systematising information, in dictionaries, encyclopaedias and the classification of the natural world; about the representation and ordering of information, from maps and indexes to statistics and graphs; and in the use of photography and the development of new reprographic techniques.¹⁰²

These changes had important social and intellectual consequences. Not all were as immediately successful or had the same impact on the archival record as the change in communications which came with postal reform. To take an example, the telegraph. Manual telegraphs — like semaphore stations, or naval signalling — were used by governments in the eighteenth century. A version was used by Wellington in the Peninsula.¹⁰³ An electric telegraph was patented in Britain in 1837, with lines which followed the railways, transmitting information about trains. When the telegraph became open for public use, it was expensive and was restricted to commercial transactions or matters of great urgency: its capacity was limited by the scale of the infrastructure.¹⁰⁴ But government was well aware of its benefits and there were special additions for its own use.¹⁰⁵ This development transformed the speed of a limited volume of high-level official communications. If one turns to the papers of the fifteenth Earl of Derby, from his Foreign Secretaryship of 1874–8, his business with the Crown was conducted largely through the Queen's private secretary, using the telegraph, and the circulation of telegrams from other ministers.¹⁰⁶

The telegraph had comparatively little effect on the form of correspondence, other than condensing it for transmission — it could never be a means of mass communication without substantial investment. On the other hand, the telephone, in use from the 1870s, achieved rapid acceptance and a remarkable number of users within comparatively few years. The intimacy of voice communication captured the imagination, bringing investment to develop the infrastructure. It consequently had a major impact on the scale and market share of other forms of communication, especially correspondence.¹⁰⁷

The nineteenth-century changes we have been reviewing show how communication is shaped by forms of documentation as much as by technical possibilities and by economics; and that those forms may change rapidly. The informality of today's e-mail messages, for example, is very different from those we sent twenty years ago. We have come a long way from Jacobus Blauw and Wellington, although

many of the problems they faced in managing communication are still with us — the scale of twenty-first-century communication is still to be controlled from an archival perspective.

As a coda, it is worth reflecting on the archival legacy of the nineteenth century. Political papers of this period are one of the more difficult parts of the written heritage to manage, because of their size and diversity of content. Traditional programmes of cataloguing and publication have been overwhelmed by the scale of the papers of nineteenth-century Prime Ministers.¹⁰⁸ It is only the advances of information technology, expanding possibilities for description and retrieval,¹⁰⁹ that can make these materials accessible in ways which match twenty-first-century expectations. They offer as well the potential for combining access to manuscripts with other digital collections, for example, of printed official and parliamentary documentation.

Presenting material in new formats does not necessarily speed the conclusion of research work: there is no sign that the process of assimilating knowledge is accelerated. To understand the significance of data — what is important about a communication — remains one of the challenges of the information revolution. But the ready availability of this information and the ability to collate it rapidly change the possibilities in terms of the questions that can be asked and answered. In all of this, it is necessary to understand the context and associations of archival material, the way the documents themselves work, and what they can tell us from process and form as much as from content. This is a particular challenge as context is frequently obscured in today's information retrieval systems, especially unstructured ones.

The last 25 years has seen an impressive flow of scholarly works and activity based on Wellington and his papers, demonstrating the importance of these connections.¹¹⁰ Prospects for managing in new ways the vast legacy of information from the nineteenth century open up further the potential for research in these collections and our understanding of the past. The way in which that potential grows is going to be one of the more interesting themes of the next decade.

References

¹ 50% is an approximation based on the contemporary registers of the correspondence from 1833 to 1850: University of Southampton Library, MS 61 Wellington Papers [hereafter WP] 6/3/6–23. The registers record the reply with the in-coming letter as a single item, and these indicate there were 30,650 items. 32,500 items, in-coming and out-going counted separately, now survive for this period. Some groups were reduced in the 1850s, for example, by discarding letters sending proxies for votes in the House of Lords. The scale of the losses from the period before Wellington returned to England at the end of 1818 is greater than for the later period.

² R.Hill *Post Office reform; its importance and practicability* (London, 1837) pp. 61–5, 83; *Parliamentary Debates* 3rd series xlix, cols. 623–41, 22 Jul 1839.

³ House of Commons papers 1854, LX (13) *Return of the number of chargeable letters delivered in the United Kingdom in each year from 1839 to 1853 inclusive*: 169 million in 1841; 379.5 million in 1852; and 411 million in 1853.

⁴ As early as 1699, John Evelyn had complained about the alienation of official papers by ministers and ambassadors, retained by their heirs ‘as honourable marks of their ancestor’s employment’. Evelyn’s remark, however, does not take into account the way in which official business was conducted by private means. *Letters on various subjects, literary, political and ecclesiastical to and from William Nicolson* ed. J.Nichols (2 vols., London, 1809) i, p. 143; C.Brant *Eighteenth-century letters and British culture* (Basingstoke, 2006) pp. 253–4.

⁵ We may track the change briefly in the twentieth century in the records of the Cabinet. Before 1917 there were few cabinet papers. From 1919 the Cabinet took the view these papers were protected in private possession by the convention that none might use them without permission of the King — a belief which unsurprisingly broke down. In 1934, Edgar Lansbury was prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act for using cabinet papers in a biography of his father. From this point on, ministers were instructed to return cabinet papers or hand them to their successors, although they were allowed access to papers after they had left office. In 1945 Winston Churchill modified arrangements to permit ministers who wished — himself included — to retain papers they had written themselves: The National Archives CAB 21/2393, minute of Edward Bridges for the Prime Minister, 30 Dec 1946. From the early 1960s, ‘Questions of procedure for ministers’ covered the regular return of cabinet documents, now explicitly stated to be the property of the Crown: CAB 21/5199, 31 Jul 1963. By 1970, each new minister received a briefing by the Security Service, along with an invitation to sign a declaration that he had read the relevant parts of the Official Secrets Act: CAB 171/4, 23 Jun 1970. By analogy, material beyond cabinet papers in the office of a minister would be considered government property. I am grateful to Tessa Stirling for drawing my attention to these references.

⁶ A.A.H.Knightbridge *Archive legislation in the United Kingdom* (Winchester, 1985); *Government policy on archives* (Cm 4516, 1999) pp. 20–1, listing legislation; also <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/policy/default.htm>

⁷ Export controls for manuscripts over 50 years old may postpone the issue of a licence while a UK institution raises funds to match the sale price, but the practice is

invoked only for material 'so closely connected with our history and national life that its departure would be a misfortune'. *Export of objects of cultural interest 2006–07: fifty-third report of the reviewing committee on the export of works of art and objects of cultural interest 1 May 2006 – 30 April 2007* (London, 2007) pp. 19–26, 28. In 2006/7, 838 of the export licence applications were for archives and manuscripts, although the figure may be larger given the use of open licences for regular exporters. Only 28 cases from the 50,000 applications were considered by the reviewing committee as likely to fall within their criteria of pre-eminence.

⁸ Finance Act 1973, section 46.

⁹ For a brief history of the acceptance in lieu scheme, Resource, the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries *Acceptance in lieu: report 2000/02* (London, 2002) pp. 5–6. From 1980, an annual allocation of £2 million was made available, but with possibilities of drawing on the Reserve up to £10 million from July 1985, a cap which has since been lifted.

¹⁰ Totals derived from the annual reports of the acceptance in lieu scheme: 2006/7: £2,388,240 out of £13,782,110 (*AIL Report 2006/7*, p. 97); 2005/6: £2,283,931 out of £13,159,134 (*AIL Report 2005/6*, p. 107); 2004/5: £1,205,058 out of £8,945,259 (*AIL Report 2004/5*, p. 65); 2003/4: £1,475,907 out of £14,963,646 (*AIL Report 2003/4*, p. 61); 2002/3: £885,955 out of £15,803,128 (*AIL Report 2002/3*, p. 47); 2001/2: £2,019,832 out of £26,595,266 (*AIL Report 2000/2*, p. 49); 2000/1: £1,698,050 out of £16,017,143 (*AIL Report 2000/2*, p. 48); 1999/2000: £290,500 out of £2,550,430 (*AIL Report 2000/2*, p. 47, including £7,500,000 for the Sherborne Missal in a conjunction of a work of artistic pre-eminence with one of historical significance); 1997/8: £485,520 out of £6,892,500 (*AIL Report 2000/2*, p. 46); 1996/7: £9,450 out of £1,474,863 (*AIL Report 2000/2*, p. 45). Archives and manuscripts accepted for the nation in lieu of tax in 1973–81 are listed in *The twenty-sixth report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1968–81* (London, 1983) pp. 32–3; in 1982–90, in *The twenty-seventh report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1982–90* (London, 1992) pp. 45–6; and in 1991–9, in *Archives at the millennium: the twenty-eighth report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1991–1999* (London, 1999) pp. 72–3.

¹¹ *Government policy on archives*, p. 9, section 6.5, re-iterating support for fiscal incentives to private owners for the transfer of manuscripts into state ownership and the protection of nationally pre-eminent archives. One can only reflect with disappointment on the reception of the Goodison review (Nicholas Goodison *Goodison review. Securing the best for our museums: private giving and government support* (London, 2004)); appeals for owners to do their patriotic duty (e.g. Tristram Hunt in the *Guardian*, 13 Feb 2008) are unlikely to succeed in the face of the market and the rights of individuals to dispose of their own property. Either there should be a market and sufficient public funding to acquire materials for the nation's good, or at least those materials that are essentially about public business should not be commercially tradeable. See *Goodison review*, pp. 11–12, on the use of direct Exchequer grants, or grants from the Scottish Executive, for funding purchases.

The Treasury has increased the grant to the National Heritage Memorial Fund — the fund of last resort — from £5 million p.a. to £10 million with effect from 2008–9; Goodison sought £20 million. In England, the other main funder in recent years has been the Heritage Lottery Fund: although its objectives have never been to fund major acquisitions alone, without substantial contributions to its other purposes, it has in practice acted as a major financier for acquisitions. Acquisitions funding for national galleries and museums is a regular cause for concern: the offer of the Duke of Sutherland's Titians to the National Gallery in London and the National Galleries of Scotland epitomises the problem: *The Times*, 28 Aug 2008, pp. 1–2, 18–19. The commercial market for major collections of manuscripts is an expanding one, and faced with other pressures on the system, such as the reduction of the budget of the Heritage Lottery Fund because of Lottery contributions to the 2012 Olympics, there are now considerable vulnerabilities.

¹² *Twenty-sixth report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1968–81*, pp. 18–19, records the Commission's advice on the Marlborough and Wellington Papers. For the case for Southampton, *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 Jun 1979, cols. 868–78.

¹³ The main elements of the archive are described in C.M. Woolgar *A summary catalogue of the Wellington Papers* (University of Southampton Library, occasional paper 8; 1984). For the shipwreck and reward, WP 1/448/52, George Canning to the Duke of Wellington (hereafter AW), 22 Jan 1815.

¹⁴ *A selection from the private correspondence of the first Duke of Wellington* ed. G. Wellesley, seventh Duke of Wellington (Roxburghe Club, 1952) p. xi, in a letter to Princess Lieven of Feb 1827: 'C'est une mauvaise habitude que celle de garder les lettres particulières. Pour moi je n'ai pas une ligne de l'écriture, de qui que ce soit qui n'est pas officielle.' Some collections of private correspondence, kept by recipients, came into the possession of later Dukes of Wellington: *Wellington and his friends: letters of the first Duke of Wellington to the Rt. Hon. Charles and Mrs Arbuthnot, the Earl and Countess of Wilton, Princess Lieven, and Miss Burdett-Coutts* ed. G. Wellesley, seventh Duke of Wellington (London, 1965) pp. vii, 116. For other sequences in private possession, *The letters of the Duke of Wellington to Miss J. 1834–1851* ed. C. Terhune Herrick (2nd edition, London, 1924); *My dear Mrs Jones: the letters of the first Duke of Wellington to Mrs Jones of Pantglas* (London, 1954).

¹⁵ WP 2/36/119, AW to Gurwood, 9 Dec 1835.

¹⁶ *The dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, KG, during his various campaigns ... from 1799 to 1818* ed. J. Gurwood (13 vols., new edition, London, 1837–9) [hereafter *WD*]; for the process, R.J. Olney, 'The Wellington Papers 1790–1978' *Archives* 16 (1983–4) pp. 3–11; and C.M. Woolgar, 'Wellington's Dispatches and their editor, Colonel Gurwood' in *Wellington Studies I* ed. C.M. Woolgar (Southampton, 1996) pp. 189–210.

¹⁷ Gurwood and Wellington gathered in originals of the Duke's letters, for example, to Charles Villiers and Charles Stuart, successively the British ministers at Lisbon, to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, 1812–27, as well as those

to others. The records of the headquarters departments of his army, for example, those of the Adjutant General, and the Military Secretary, are now in WP 9. After Gurwood's suicide in 1846, the Duke also acquired his correspondence with him: it is now mainly dispersed through WP 2, but with items from 1829 onwards in other sequences, e.g. WP 1/1014/32, and WP 8. The process continued with the work of Robert Montgomery Martin on the editions produced by the second Duke of Wellington, including copies of material from the papers of Prince Metternich: *Supplementary despatches and memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington*, KG ed. A.R. Wellesley, second Duke of Wellington (15 vols., London, 1858–72) [hereafter *SD*]; *Despatches, correspondence and memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, KG ... from 1818 to 1832* ed. A.R. Wellesley, second Duke of Wellington (8 vols., London, 1867–80) [hereafter *DCM*]. Metternich items: e.g. WP 1/815/9, WP 1/861/12, WP 1/1148/28, WP 1/1232/17. For Martin, F.H.H. King *Survey of our Empire ! Robert Montgomery Martin (1801?–1868), late treasurer to the Queen at Hong Kong, and member of Her Majesty's Legislative Council in China: a bio-bibliography* (Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, Bibliographies and Research Guides, 16, Hong Kong, 1979). In the 1850s, some letters were discarded and the University Library has been able to acquire from other sources a few of these items: for example, in a collection of papers of Christopher Collins, one of the Duke's servants, are letters that were disposed of at this point (University of Southampton Library MS 69).

¹⁸ While advising the government on prospective expeditions there in 1806–8, WP 1/165.

¹⁹ Including papers of Sir John Coxe Hippisley, 1794–1819, WP 1/1069/1–16; related to National Library of Scotland MS 3112, ff. 54–137.

²⁰ For example, AW's correspondence with the second Baron Fitzgerald and Vesey: Olney, 'The Wellington Papers', p. 8.

²¹ R. Mackworth-Young, 'The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle' *Archives* 13 (1977–8) pp. 115–30, at p. 117; Olney, 'The Wellington Papers', pp. 4–5; C. de Tourtier-Bonazzi *Archives Nationales: Archives de Joseph Bonaparte, roi de Naples, puis d'Espagne (381 AP)* (Paris, 1982), including on pp. 107–9 four groups of papers that really form a part of Wellington's own archive rather than Joseph's, 381 AP 34–7. A very few of George IV's papers survive in the Wellington archive, extracted by the Duke and placed among his own papers, e.g. WP 1/1001/13 and 17.

²² M.T. Clanchy *From memory to written record* (2nd edition, Oxford, 1993) pp. 44–80; for the growth in private documentation some 60 to 70 years later, *Manorial records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, circa 1200–1359* ed. P.D.A. Harvey (Historical Manuscripts Commission, Joint Publications series 23; 1976) pp. 12–83; *Household accounts from medieval England* ed. C.M. Woolgar (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, new series, 17–18; 1992–3) i, pp. 10–54.

²³ For the state papers, *Guide to the contents of the Public Record Office* (3 vols., London, 1963–8) ii, pp. 1–14.

²⁴ For the growth in government records after 1914, *Guide to the contents of the Public Record Office*, ii–iii, *passim*.

²⁵ J.M.Collinge *Foreign Office officials 1782–1870* (Institute of Historical Research, London: Office-Holders in Modern Britain series, 8; 1979) pp. 6–8, giving the numbers of despatches as well. The précis writer was usually appointed at about the same time as the Foreign Secretary took office and left when he resigned.

²⁶ R.A.H.Smith, 'The Dropmore papers (Add. MSS 58855–59494)' *British Library Journal* 7 (1981) pp. 75–87, at pp. 77–8, referring to BL Add. MSS 59084–228.

²⁷ WP 5/1/5/2, for correspondence from Madrid. WP 5/1/5/1 is another book from this period, a letter book with full copies of Wellington's correspondence with Lord Granville, the ambassador in Paris.

²⁸ See, for example, P.Jupp *The governing of Britain, 1688–1848* (London, 2006) pp. 139, 277–8.

²⁹ P.Jupp *British politics on the eve of Reform: the Duke of Wellington's administration, 1828–30* (Basingstoke, 1998) pp. 108–14; Jupp, *Governing of Britain*, pp. 136–8.

³⁰ In April 1828, Wellington confirmed this principle to Sir Frederick Lamb, the British ambassador in Lisbon: 'I have been too long in the public service of this country and know my duty in office too well to think of writing to anybody upon public affairs, excepting the official person charged with the conduct of the particular affairs under discussion. My practice, indeed, has been more strict upon this subject than that of others. I commanded abroad for many years, and had two brothers at different times, and many friends always, in the Cabinet. I never wrote a line to anybody excepting to the Secretary of State with whom I was directed to correspond and to him very little excepting officially': WP 1/930/20, printed in *DCM*, iv, pp. 372–3. This is a statement of Wellington's aspirations, rather than exact practice, for he did correspond with his brothers privately on matters of business. For an important sequence, C.Webster, 'Some letters of the Duke of Wellington to his brother William Wellesley-Pole' *Camden Miscellany XVIII* (Camden, 3rd series, 79; 1948) pp. i–vii, 1–38. Other officers at his headquarters wrote home with information that would have been considered sensitive, probably with the Duke's knowledge. Alexander Gordon, one of Wellington's aides-de-camp, writing to his brother, the future Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, from Headquarters at Alverca, on 18 July 1810, enclosed a return of the French forces in Spain which had been intercepted — the enclosure was a copy of one that had been sent by Wellington to Lord Liverpool: 'I need not remind you of discretion with respect to the information I send you.' He went on to detail the French regiments and strengths, and repeated the weekly state of the British forces, with just over 25,000 effectives. This was very important information, contained in private correspondence, and in England presumably circulating, albeit in restricted fashion, among the governing classes: *At Wellington's right hand: the letters of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Alexander Gordon 1808–1815* ed. R.Muir (Army Records Society, 21; 2003) p. 97.

³¹ WP 1/401, 6 Feb 1814, AW to Bathurst, no. 22: 'My Lord, nothing of any importance has occurred in the last week. The weather has been more than usually warm; and neither party has moved. I have received no reports from Catalonia.'

³² C.M.Woolgar, 'Writing the despatch: Wellington and official communication' in *Wellington Studies II* ed. C.M.Woolgar (Southampton, 1999) pp. 1–25. Thus when

Wellington was appointed ambassador to France in August 1814, his instructions required that he would ‘constantly correspond with His Majesty’s several ministers employed in foreign courts during your residence in France for your mutual information and assistance; but you are on no account to communicate with your private friends on public affairs, or permit any person connected with your mission so to do’; and that ‘At your return we shall expect from you a narrative in writing of whatever may have happened at Paris worthy of our notice, together with such observations on the situation and views of France as your knowledge of them shall enable you to make.’ WP 1/424, formal letters appointing AW ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to France, with instructions under the sign manual, 9 Aug 1814, enclosed in Castlereagh’s letter to AW of 6 Aug 1814.

³³ WP 1/332, AW to Liverpool, 23 May 1811: passage omitted from the printed version in *WD*, vii, pp. 598–600. For the Albuera despatch, Woolgar, ‘Writing the despatch’, pp. 1–25; for Albuera, G.Dempsey *Albuera 1811: the bloodiest battle of the Peninsular War* (Barnsley, 2008).

³⁴ *SD*, vii, pp. 175–7.

³⁵ WP 1/373.

³⁶ WP 1/373.

³⁷ A.Aspinall, ‘Extracts from Lord Hatherton’s diary’ *Parliamentary Affairs* 17 (1963–4) pp. 15–22, 131–41, 254–68, 373–88, at p. 19: Hatherton’s diary for 19 May 1820. He had dined at the Duke of Wellington’s, where he met Lord Wellesley and Lord Sidmouth. See also WP 1/399, Bathurst to AW, private, 14 Feb 1814, enclosing the answer he gave to Sir R.Hill’s friends, also 14 Feb 1814, on why despatches from subordinate commanders were not printed in the *London Gazette* unless they had been acting independently.

³⁸ Wellington was working in this way by the end of the 1790s: WP 3/1/2. In the 1790s he also used foolscap paper for his out-going private letters, e.g. in WP 1/8, and drafts and rough notes of all sorts, such as his draft recruiting accounts for the Thirty-Third Regiment, of 1793–4, WP 1/2.

³⁹ For eighteenth-century British practice, Woolgar, ‘Writing the despatch’, p. 8 and n. 26. For continental examples, where this pattern of laying out a document was known as *halbbrüchig*, or ‘half-broken’, J.Duindam *Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe’s dynastic rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge, 2003) pp. 195–6, on memoranda and other documents prepared for the Emperor of Austria, written so that he could add his comments (Duindam refers here to mid-seventeenth-century documents relating to ceremonial); for an example in the political correspondence of Leibniz, G.W.Leibniz *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe. Erste Reihe: Allgemeiner politischer und historischer Briefwechsel* ed. Leibniz-Archiv der Niedersächsischen Landesbibliothek Hannover (in progress, Berlin, 1970–) xvi, p. 559, number 341. The practice may be very much older: e.g. A.Jaeger, ‘Regesten und urkundliche Daten über das Verhältniss des Cardinals Nicolaus von Cusa, als Bischof von Brixen, zum Herzoge Sigmund von Oesterreich und zu dem Benedictiner-Nonnen-Münster Sonnenburg im Pusterthale von 1018–1485’ *Archiv für Kunde österreichische Geschichts-Quellen* 7 (1851) pp. 147–72, at p. 159, a document of 1455.

⁴⁰ WP 2/157/31, AW to Lady Shelley, 28 Jan 1848.

⁴¹ The Duke also wrote large quantities of ephemeral documentation, including lists of guests, and lists allocating rooms, e.g. University of Southampton Library MS 69/2/101, list of those invited to dine on Saturday 12 August, in an unspecified year, either 1843 or 1848, to meet the King of Hanover.

⁴² M.Finlay *Western writing implements in the age of the quill pen* (Wetheral, 1990) p. 34; WP 3/1/2, letter book, interleaved with blotter, in use in 1798; J.I.Whalley *Writing implements and accessories: from the Roman stylus to the typewriter* (Newton Abbot, 1975) pp. 91–2.

⁴³ e.g. WP 1/718/7, Emily Anne, Marchioness of Londonderry, to AW, about her husband's health, 9 Aug 1822. Embossed papers had been available since the start of the nineteenth century: Finlay, *Western writing implements*, pp. 30, 132, for an example of 1801. A patent for embossing paper had been granted in 1796: D.Hunter *Papermaking: the history and technique of an ancient craft* (2nd edition, New York, 1947, reprinted by Dover Publications, 1978) p. 519.

⁴⁴ There are some examples of headed stationery from the office of the Commander-in-Chief, used by Wellington after 1842. For engraved scenes, Finlay, *Western writing implements*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ WP 2/150/61, Croker to AW, 24 Nov 1846. Engraved stationery was also common in the US from the 1840s and 1850s: D.M.Henkin *The postal age: the emergence of modern communications in nineteenth-century America* (Chicago, 2006) pp. 38, 128.

⁴⁶ 'Satin' or 'polished' finishes to paper are very common in the 1840s, e.g. WP 2/138/4, the result of machine production using calender rolls (*OED* calender, *sb*¹, 2).

⁴⁷ I have not encountered such extensive use of pencil in the papers of other statesmen. Examples in correspondence otherwise point to exceptional circumstances, e.g. Brant, *Eighteenth-century letters*, p. 132 and n. 36. Pencil was convenient for the Duke, enabling him to write without the preparations necessary for pen and ink. See generally, Whalley, *Writing implements and accessories*, pp. 116–21; H.Petroski *The pencil: a history of design and circumstance* (London, 1990), especially pp. 58–71; and C.Ainsworth Mitchell, 'Graphites and other pencil pigments' *Analyst* 47 (1922) pp. 379–87.

⁴⁸ Whalley, *Writing implements and accessories*, pp. 41–52; S.A.Bedini *Thomas Jefferson and his copying machines* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Monticello monograph series, 1984) pp. 6–8.

⁴⁹ For an example of his pens from later life, see Sotheby's sale of 9 October 2002 at Olympia, London (Sale W02930), Wellington material in lots 434–5 and 437, from the contents of Fulbeck Hall, Lincs.

⁵⁰ G.Wellesley, seventh Duke of Wellington, and J.Steegman *The iconography of the first Duke of Wellington* (London, 1935) pp. 3–4 and plate 32, by Henry Perronet Briggs, 1837, and copies; p. 58 and plate 9, engraved from a drawing by Captain Raria, 1811. The Duke writing the Waterloo despatch: *Illustrated London News*, September 1852, part 2, p. 436, based on the Countess of Westmorland's drawing — in fact a painting — which was done in October 1839: Philip Henry, Earl Stanhope

Notes of conversations with the Duke of Wellington 1831–1851 ed. Elizabeth Longford (London, 1998) pp. 127–8.

⁵¹ The draft of the Waterloo despatch is now BL Add. MS 69850.

⁵² The Duke also used ‘flying seals’, that is, a letter that has a seal but one that does not close it, so that it can be read by a third party and forwarded to its intended recipient. For the practice of flying seals, WP 1/393, Henry Wellesley, Madrid, to AW, 20 Jan 1814: ‘By the same courier I shall send my dispatches under a flying seal to you ...’ See also *OED* flying *ppl. a.*: 3.c., citing *WD*, 1811.

⁵³ University of Southampton Library MS 63/45/107, cover of a letter to Richard Wellesley, Brighton, redirected to London, franked free 18 and 21 Jul 1828 — a folded sheet of paper; MS 63/45/62 and 123, manufactured envelopes, with letters for Mrs Wellesley at Eton, 10 Aug 1835 and 25 Mar 1839. R.Lowe *The British postage stamp* (London, 1968) p. 36, n.1.

⁵⁴ H.Robinson *The British Post Office: a history* (Princeton, 1948) pp. 299–300; R.L.Hills *Papermaking in Britain 1488–1988: a short history* (London, 1988) p. 123.

⁵⁵ e.g. *Punch* 7 (1844) pp. 7, 118. *Punch* also advertised ‘Anti-Graham wafers’, a sheet of ‘emblematical devices, with mottoes ... which, from the peculiar appropriateness of their sarcasm, backed by the extraordinary adhesiveness of their gum, are adapted to *stick* to the Home Secretary for life’: *Punch* 7 (1844) p. 15. As well as official intervention, there were ways of forging seals, witness the scam of R.S.Surtees’ Mr Facey Romford, written in 1863–4: ‘And the letters being written on good paper — best cream-laid — and sealed with the right Romford crest — a turbot sitting upon its tail on a cap of dignity — the huntsmen had no hesitation in complying with the orders ... The seal, we may mention, was a bread one, made by Facey from an impression on a letter, or rather on an envelope from the other Mr Romford, enclosing a dunning shoemaker’s bill to friend Facey, that somehow or other, after boxing the compass, had found its way to Abbeyfield Park, in the extraordinary way the lost hounds and letters do cast up’: R.S.Surtees *Mr Facey Romford’s hounds* (Oxford, 1984) p. 55.

⁵⁶ T.Plakins Thornton *Handwriting in America: a cultural history* (New Haven and London, 1996) pp. 13–14, 38–9. Lord Wellesley’s expostulation at his brother’s hand may refer to literary style as much as to legibility: Aspinall, ‘Extracts from Lord Hatherton’s diary’, p. 22: 7 Feb 1829. I am grateful to Dr Rory Muir for this reference.

⁵⁷ From the seventeenth century, we first get exceptional and impressive series of diaries: e.g. *The diary of Ralph Josselin 1616–1683* ed. A.Macfarlane (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, new series, 3; 1976); *The diary of Samuel Pepys* ed. R.C.Latham and W.Matthews (11 vols., London, 1971). By the nineteenth century, we have very considerable numbers, far too many for publication to have made much impression on some of the most significant, e.g. the Hatherton diary in the Staffordshire Record Office, partly published; or the diary of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, unpublished, University of Southampton Library MS 62 SHA/PD/1–14; Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, pp. 5–6. From the eighteenth century onwards letter- and journal-writing became a practice of elite

women as much as men, an important element in their lives, as well as an important literary genre for both sexes. See J.S.Batts *British manuscript diaries of the nineteenth century: an annotated checklist* (Fontwell, 1976) and C.A.Huff *British women's diaries: a descriptive bibliography of selected nineteenth-century women's diaries* (New York, 1985). For letters as a literary genre, J.G.Altman *Epistolarity: approaches to a form* (Columbus, 1982).

⁵⁸ Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, pp. xii–xiii, 29–31. For Wellington's use of lithography, see below.

⁵⁹ A.N.L.Munby *The cult of the autograph letter in England* (London, 1962) pp. 5–7, 9–11; also Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, p. 87, on Wellington; Henkin, *Postal age*, pp. 55–6. For the middle-class interest, with occasional aristocratic exceptions, or professional interests, such as John Wilson Croker, who had been secretary to the Admiralty for many years and who bought Nelson correspondence and memorabilia, Munby, *Cult of the autograph letter*, pp. 76, 83–4. This interest in collecting created a market in correspondence and archival materials: in particular, executors had to make decisions about what to do with the papers of interest, notably of individuals who had public careers. We find sales of manuscripts of this sort more common from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, with all the attendant consequences of selling contemporary correspondence, for example, correspondents who did not want their letters and intimacies sold: Munby, *Cult of the autograph letter*, p. 81. The Duke was acutely aware of these concerns: on the death of Colonel Gurwood, the editor of his *Dispatches*, his agents descended on Mrs Gurwood and her daughter, Adèle, provoked by the suggestion that the Colonel had kept records of conversations with the Duke. These, it seems, had been destroyed; but the Duke recovered his correspondence with Gurwood: Woolgar, 'Wellington's *Dispatches* and their editor', p. 206; C.M.Woolgar, 'Conversations with the Duke' in *Wellington Studies IV* ed. C.M.Woolgar (Southampton, 2008) pp. 338–58, at pp. 341–2.

⁶⁰ Handwriting of the Cato Street conspirators, reproduced in 1820: WP 1/660/1. WP 1/1108/15, Lord Fitzroy Somerset to AW, 16 Apr 1830, on handwriting in an anonymous letter; WP 1/1159/9, an anonymous letter, post Jul 1830, marked by the Duke, 'Keep for the handwriting', as are WP 1/1159/79, c.30 Oct 1830; WP 1/1159/87, c.1 Nov 1830; and WP 1/1159/91, c.3 Nov 1830. The British state had an early awareness of the value of handwriting in detecting crime. For developments in professional handwriting analysis in the mid to late nineteenth century, Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, p. 101.

⁶¹ B.Rhodes and W.Wells Streeter *Before photocopying: the art and history of mechanical copying 1780–1938* (New Castle, Delaware, 1999) pp. 5, 7–12.

⁶² e.g. in WP 3/3/65.

⁶³ WP 1/165: the cover for the volume has a printed label, which suggests that it was marketed for copying sequences of correspondence: 'Correspondence with [blank] In the year [blank] No. [blank] from page [blank] to [blank]'. This is earlier than the patent for copy books, given in 1815 to William Bell of Edinburgh: Rhodes and Wells Streeter, *Before photocopying*, pp. 59–60.

⁶⁴ Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in 1812–27, used large

ledgers into which have been pasted the flimsy copies of his private letters to Wellington: WP 10/1/1–2, Nov 1813 to Apr 1816. For another early example of press copies, Sylvester Douglas, first Baron Glenbervie, joint paymaster general, c.1802: formerly East Kent Archives Office, U471 C46/1–37 and C47/1–38; and employed by a private individual, correspondence of Frederick North, fifth Earl of Guilford, e.g. writing to Spyridion Trikoupi, 1825–6, U471 C96; now allocated to the British Library among the North papers. In 1827, the cost of copying equipment for Whitehall was only £30: Jupp, *Governing of Britain*, p. 139.

⁶⁵ The use of these practices by individuals is earlier than that identified by B.L.Craig, 'The introduction of copying devices into the British Civil Service, 1877–1889' in *The archival imagination: essays in honour of Hugh A. Taylor* ed. B.L.Craig (Ottawa, 1992) pp. 105–33; comments on the Education Office and the Board of Trade at p. 115. Press copies were also used by the fifteenth Earl of Derby as Secretary of State for India in 1858–9: Liverpool Record Office 920 DER (15) 6/1–2.

⁶⁶ Again, while in regular commercial use by the 1820s, B.L.Craig does not identify it until the 1870s in the Civil Service: Craig, 'Introduction of copying devices', pp. 112–13; Bedini, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 150–62, 195–6.

⁶⁷ WP 1/193/53, memorandum by Lieutenant Colonel George Murray for Wellington, 13 Mar 1808, on the expedition to Sweden; three letters written by Captain Peter Puget, RN, on board HMS *Goliath*, 21 Feb 1808, 1 Mar 1808, 14 Mar 1808: WP 1/191/17, WP 1/193/2, WP 1/193/40.

⁶⁸ Jefferson made extensive use of Watt's press for copies, the manifold writer and the 'polygraph', a cumbersome and delicate invention with two pens linked by a pantograph for making simultaneous copies of his correspondence: Bedini, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 10–150.

⁶⁹ D.Marshall'say, 'A check-list of works printed by Thomas Baker of the High Street, Southampton, 1774–1805' (unpublished typescript bibliography submitted as part of the requirements for the University of London Diploma in Librarianship, May 1955: copy in the Cope collection, University of Southampton Library).

⁷⁰ In October 1813 Sergeant Buchan of the Third Guards was the printer; and he subsequently manned the press at the headquarters of the army of occupation, based in Paris: S.G.P.Ward *Wellington's headquarters: a study of the administrative problems in the Peninsula 1809–1814* (Oxford, 1957) p. 195; volumes 7 to 10, for 1815–18, of Wellington's *General Orders*: volume 7, 'Paris, printed at the military press (by Serjeant Buchan, 3d Guards); volumes 8–10, 'Printed at the Headquarters of the army (by Serjeant Buchan, 3d Foot Guards)'. It operated much as other military administrations used presses, for example, Marshal Beresford's orders for the Portuguese army, four volumes of which were printed by Antonio Nunes dos Santos, at headquarters in Lisbon: *Collecção das ordens do dia do illustrissimo e excellentissimo senhor Guilherme Carr Beresford, commandante em Chefe dos exercitos de S.A.R. o Principe Regente nosso senhor* (5 vols., Lisbon, 1809–14). The volume for 1811 is recorded as published at Lisbon 'no officina de Joaquim Rodrigues d'Andrade'.

⁷¹ Those wishing to be presented had to let him know whether they wished to be

presented to the King of France, alone, or to the French royal family too, and to which members of it: WP 1/424, letter from M. Dargainarath, 30 Aug 1814.

⁷² Selections from Foreign Office papers were among the first to appear as parliamentary publications, particularly under Canning in 1807–9, and then more commonly from the end of the Napoleonic Wars: H.Temperley and L.M.Penson *A century of diplomatic blue books 1814–1914* (Cambridge, 1938) pp. 1–7; and my discussion in ‘Writing the despatch’, pp. 1–25. Printing Foreign Office despatches for limited circulation within government was one solution employed in the second half of the nineteenth century to ensure that material could be circulated promptly. Known as ‘confidential print’, volumes of this kind fill the archives of later Foreign Secretaries: for example, in the papers of the fifteenth Earl of Derby, who was Foreign Secretary twice, in 1866–8 and 1874–8, there are no *précis* books, but runs of volumes of confidential print: Liverpool Record Office 920 DER (15) 28/1/1–13; 30/1/1–56; 30/2/1–4; 30/3/1–9.

⁷³ I.Mumford, ‘Lithography, photography and photozincography in English map production before 1870’ *Cartographic Journal* 9 (1972) pp. 30–6; *A history of the Ordnance Survey* ed. W.A.Seymour (Folkestone, 1980) p. 72; Bernard Quaritch Ltd *Catalogue 1360 Armies & navies: war on land and sea sixteenth to early twentieth centuries* (London, 2008), number 84 (no pagination), an untitled map of Lisbon and its environs, 5 November 1810.

⁷⁴ Rhodes and Wells Streeter, *Before photocopying*, pp. 21–2.

⁷⁵ e.g. MS 69/2/42, lithographed pass, on letter paper, to allow visitors to see the Duke of Wellington’s table on Waterloo Day, 1848, made out by Lord Fitzroy Somerset for Mr Dyson and four others, addressed to Christopher Collins; MS 63/45/58, lithographed card, inviting Mrs and Miss Wellesley to an evening at Apsley House, with the Queen, on the 14th: no month or year, but post 1837; MS 63/45/104, lithographed card, inviting Mr R.Wellesley to Apsley House, on the celebration of the Queen’s birthday, 6 July, possible years: 1837, but more probably 1843 or 1848.

⁷⁶ WP 1/739/5/2–3.

⁷⁷ P.Jupp, ‘Continuity and change: British government and politics, 1770–1850’ in *Wellington Studies IV* ed. C.M.Woolgar (Southampton 2008) pp. 1–21, at p. 6; also Jupp, *Governing of Britain*.

⁷⁸ This was a common need for men in government, but was met differently in different countries: Thomas Jefferson, for example, only employed secretaries for routine letters for a short period of time; and when he did have a secretary, he was more of an aide-de-camp than a copyist, for that work he did himself, either manually or by machine: Bedini, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 4–6.

⁷⁹ In India, from 1797 to 1805, Wellington’s secretarial arrangements were supported by aides-de-camp. After his return to England in 1805, the Duke had no secretary until 1807, when he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. His first private secretary was Benjamin Dean Wyatt, who was later to work for him as an architect, remodelling Apsley House. Wellington wrote notes for his replies on the dorse or turn-up of in-coming letters; the private secretary then composed a full letter based on these instructions: WP 1/169/25, AW to Lord Mountjoy, 21 May 1807 — although

this letter is marked 'copy', in practice this is one of Wyatt's early attempts at a letter, which has then been reworked by Wellington — with corrections and insertions in his hand. Wyatt was succeeded briefly in February 1809 by John Forbes, and at that point we have a glimpse of the somewhat chaotic arrangements of the Chief Secretary's office in Dublin Castle. Writing to Sir Charles Saxton, the Under Secretary for the Civil Department in Ireland, on the 15th, Wellington noted that neither of the two items he wanted was likely to be found 'as we can never find anything in the office and Mr Wyatt is sick, and I have appointed Mr Forbes to be my secretary and he is not yet able to find the papers which I want': WP 1/239/31. A month later we find Wellington writing to Saxton asking for copies of all items sent from Ireland to the Home Secretary's office (the Home Secretary was responsible for Irish matters): 'As soon as they arrive there they are invariably sent into circulation and do not return to the office sometimes for a fortnight' and Wellington had to answer public and private queries about them in that time. When he was in London, Wellington also saw the abstracts of the correspondence of the Chief Secretary's office in Ireland: WP 1/251/2, AW to Saxton, 18 Mar 1809. We have a few other glimpses of administrative arrangements within the office. In February 1808, for example, Wellington wrote to Saxton's predecessor, James Trail: 'I beg you to look into the drawers of my table for the petition from the seceders from the Ulster Synod and send it to me by express': WP 1/192/74, AW to Trail, 19 Feb 1808.

Wellington's aides-de-camp carried out much secretarial work on campaign at his headquarters in the Peninsula, and in France and the Low Countries, 1815–18. At the start of 1819, when he became Master General of the Ordnance, the Duke told Lord Mulgrave of the importance of keeping around him officers who had served him confidentially for many years rather than Mulgrave's appointments: WP 1/619/1, Feb 1819, printed in *DCM*, i, pp. 20–1. 'I have as you will have heard taken possession of my office at the Ordnance, and I have certainly every reason to be satisfied with everything that I have found there and I should wish to leave everything as it is. But when you will recollect that I have been employed in the publick service in different ways for above ten years, that I have officers about me who have been with me, some of them for the whole, others for the greatest part of that time, who I have necessarily been obliged to employ confidentially, you will see that I cannot take upon such an office as that of Master General of the Ordnance and I will not remain in it if I cannot have about me some of those officers who have served me till now.' So we find among the Duke's secretaries Lieutenant Colonel John Fremantle, who had served on Wellington's staff in the Peninsula and later (WP 1/615/5); Lieutenant Colonel Sir Felton B. Hervey, Bart. (WP 1/620/20); and Lord Fitzroy Somerset, later first Baron Raglan, the youngest son of the Duke of Beaufort. Somerset had been Wellington's military secretary in the Peninsula and had married one of his nieces in 1814; after a short caesura, he wrote his first copy of a letter for Wellington on 21 October 1819 (WP 1/629/19). He continued to copy letters or to work on drafts as late as August 1828, after he had become Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief of the army and after Wellington had resigned that post (e.g. WP 1/950/1), especially for confidential material such as letters to the King (e.g. WP 1/920/58). Also working for

Wellington in 1819 was Lieutenant Colonel Henry Percy, who had brought the Waterloo despatch back to England and was one of the Duke's aides-de-camp in the army of occupation in France: R.Colby *The Waterloo despatch: the story of the Duke of Wellington's official despatch on the battle of Waterloo and its journey to London* (London: Wellington Museum monograph 24; 1965); WP 1/621/7, WP 1/622/20, WP 1/625/3. There are also some letters copied by Sir Ulysees Burgh (later second Baron Downes), who was to become surveyor general of the Ordnance in 1820 (and secretary to the Master General in 1828) and whose role was probably different to those who were effectively the Duke's aides-de-camp: e.g. WP 1/618/8; WP 1/618/14 and WP 1/619/4.

Somerset went on diplomatic missions as aide-de-camp to the Duke and was himself sent to Madrid in 1823. Similarly John Gurwood, the editor of the Duke's *Dispatches*, who also did some work for the Duke as a secretary, was sent in April 1835 — when the Duke was briefly Foreign Secretary — with Lord Eliot on a mission to northern Spain to negotiate a convention in the civil war there: R.Bullen, 'Party politics and foreign policy: Whigs, Tories and Iberian affairs, 1830–36' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 51 (1978) pp. 37–59; WP 2/176/59–69; also HMC *The Prime Ministers' Papers: Palmerston I. Private correspondence with Sir George Villiers (afterwards fourth Earl of Clarendon) as minister to Spain 1833–1837* ed. R.Bullen and F.Strong (London, 1985) pp. 20, 245 n. 3, 257. As well as having connection, these individuals were 'confidential persons': see, for example, a note by Wellington at the top of a letter from Capodistrias, 'This must be copied by some confidential person': WP 1/632/25.

⁸⁰ *The journal of Mrs Arbuthnot 1820–32* ed. F.Bamford and G.Wellesley, seventh Duke of Wellington (2 vols., London, 1950) ii, pp. 53–4, 216, 305.

⁸¹ Olney, 'The Wellington Papers', p. 5 (Algernon Greville became the Duke's private secretary in 1827, rather than 1819: Woolgar, *Summary catalogue of the Wellington Papers*, pp. 142–3). J.C.Sainty *Treasury officials 1660–1870* (Institute of Historical Research, London, Office-Holders in Modern Britain series, 1; 1972) pp. 74–5. We catch occasional glimpses of the attempts to control a great deal of correspondence, for example, a note of c.28 May 1833: 'I perfectly recollect this man's papers being referred to Mr Maule, but our reference book having been lost when the papers were moved from Downing Street I am not aware at what time. I have looked amongst the papers for 1828 and 1830, but there is nothing concerning him': WP 2/4/30. Greville was sometimes assisted by Lord Charles Wellesley, the Duke's second son: Aspinnall, 'Extracts from Lord Hatherton's diary', p. 141, 17 Jun 1832. For Lord Charles Wellesley acting as secretary: WP 4/6/2/38, 11 Jul 1834.

⁸² e.g. WP 1/1065/18, AW to Aberdeen, 8 Dec 1829, although he had his secretaries with him at Stowe, WP 1/1065/19.

⁸³ *The history of the King's works* ed. H.M.Colvin (6 vols., London, 1963–73) vi, pp. 549–67; also fig. 23 on p. 538; for the Tennis Court site and the Cockpit, see the 1747 engraving of the palace, based on a survey of 1670, reproduced in S.Thurley *Whitehall Palace: an architectural history of the royal apartments, 1240–1698* (London, 1999) pp. 122–3.

⁸⁴ Jupp, *British politics on the eve of Reform*, pp. 87, 104 n. 36. For the link between the Duke's memoranda and meetings of Cabinet, pp. 91, 105 n. 46.

⁸⁵ From January 1828 through to the summer of that year, he used ordinary sizes of paper: e.g. WP 1/925/3, 3 Mar 1828. Then in August 1828 he started using torn rectangles of paper: e.g. WP 1/946/15, 20. He wrote these sometimes in ink, sometimes in pencil — to be inked over by one of his private secretaries: e.g. WP 1/947/27, in ink; WP 1/948/7, in pencil; WP 1/948/4, in pencil, subsequently inked over by Greville. For the comments on the Duke's workload, 3 Sep 1829: *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii, p. 305.

⁸⁶ WP 1/964/29, AW to Sir Charles Forbes, MP for Malmesbury, 29 Oct 1828. Some of the correspondence verged on the preposterous, but it is interesting that Wellington nonetheless responded to it himself. To J.E. Devereux, who sought to claim a reward from the government for suggesting the nomination of a French prince to the Greek throne, he wrote on 19 January 1830 — that is, the day after Devereux's letter was written to him — 'If a gentleman is entitled to a reward only because he writes to the Duke his opinions upon publick affairs the Duke assures Mr Devereux that there are thousands with the same claim as himself; not a day, scarcely an hour, passes that the Duke does not receive a suggestion from some gentleman, and he does not scruple to say that the public Treasury would be unequal to reward such claims': WP 1/1086/6.

⁸⁷ WP 4/10/25, AW to 2nd Duke of Buckingham, 20 Jun 1839.

⁸⁸ In 1810, Wellington's clerks registered 2,624 in-coming letters; the high point was in July with 291 letters and 58 correspondents. The numbers are similar in succeeding years: for example, in 1811 there were 2,687 in-coming letters registered in Wellington's system; and in 1812, the total was 2,999. Based on WP 6/1/8, 10, 12, registers of letters to Wellington, 1810, 1811 and 1812.

⁸⁹ Numbers of letters as follows, based on the index volumes referenced in brackets: 1832: 1,710 (WP 6/3/5); 1833: 1,339 (WP 6/3/6); 1834: 2,716 (WP 6/3/7); 1835: 2,958 (WP 6/3/8); 1836: 1,465 (WP 6/3/9); 1837: 1,523 (WP 6/3/10); 1838: 1,514 (WP 6/3/11); 1839: 1,456 (WP 6/3/12); 1840: 1,209 (WP 6/3/13); 1841: 1,938 (WP 6/3/14); 1842: 2,067 (WP 6/3/15); 1843: 2,188 (WP 6/3/16); 1844: 1,884 (WP 6/3/17); 1845: 1,465 (WP 6/3/18); 1846: 1,222 (WP 6/3/19); 1847: 900 (WP 6/3/20); 1848: 785 (WP 6/3/21); 1849: 503 (WP 6/3/22); 1850: 518 (WP 6/3/23). A share of the Duke's correspondence was also accounted for by a group of offices he held: Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Governor of the Tower and Lord Lieutenant of Tower Hamlets, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a Governor of the Charterhouse and Master of Trinity House. At their most onerous, in 1837, there were 518 letters on this business, or 34% of the year's total; in every year up to and including 1844 there were more than 300 letters in this category, and the proportion between 1832 and 1850 was never less than 15% of the annual total.

⁹⁰ The creation of a postal culture happens in other countries as well, but slightly later. In the USA, the major change was between 1845 and 1851, at which period an American would have received an average of just over five items of mail a year: Henkin, *Postal age*, pp. x–xi, 2, 93–5.

⁹¹ R.Hill *Results of the new postage arrangements* (London, 1841) p. 16; see also Henkin, *Postal age*, pp. 11, 148. At this point, Christmas had a negligible impact on the volume of post in the UK.

⁹² *At Wellington's right hand*, pp. xvi–xvii; Henkin, *Postal age*, p. 103; Brant, *Eighteenth-century letters*, pp. 9, n. 43 (on p. 339); 23; *Letters across borders: the epistolary practices of international migrants* ed. B.S.Elliott, D.A.Gerber and S.M.Sinke (Basingstoke, 2006), *passim*.

⁹³ Robinson, *British Post Office*, pp. 353–8. For parallel developments in the US, Henkin, *Postal age*, pp. 32–3, 83–5.

⁹⁴ N.Gash *Robert Surtees and early Victorian society* (Oxford, 1993) p. 366.

⁹⁵ For the US, see Henkin, *Postal age*, pp. 153–4.

⁹⁶ e.g. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who wrote to an American friend: 'Why will you not as a nation embrace our penny post scheme, and hold our envelopes in all acceptance ... I recommend you our penny postage as the most successful revolution since the "glorious three days" of Paris.' She had the Revolution of 1830 in mind: *The letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* ed. F.G.Kenyon (2 vols., London, 1897) i, p. 135.

⁹⁷ Robinson, *British Post Office*, pp. vii, 300–2; Henkin, *Postal age*, *passim*.

⁹⁸ Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America*, pp. 43–70, 177.

⁹⁹ Lady Bruce (17 letters, 1836–52), the Countess of Westmorland (Wellington's niece, Priscilla Fane: 18 letters, 1834–43), the Countess of Wilton (14 letters, 1836–43); and Queen Victoria (17 letters, 1842–8).

¹⁰⁰ *Wellington and his friends*, pp. 3, 115, 215, 235.

¹⁰¹ From a sample of 349 correspondents, 46 women wrote 58 letters: 1.26 per correspondent; and 300 men wrote 991 letters, 3.27 per correspondent; a total of 1,049 letters in all, or 3 per correspondent (the balance is made up of anonymous letters).

¹⁰² D.R.Headrick *When information came of age: technologies of knowledge in the age of reason and revolution* (Oxford, 2000). See also C.Kitching, 'Authentic images or manipulations? Printed facsimiles of archival documents in England to 1885', forthcoming. I am grateful to Dr Kitching for letting me see a draft of this paper.

¹⁰³ Ward, *Wellington's headquarters*, pp. 125–8.

¹⁰⁴ Gash, *Robert Surtees*, pp. 368–9. At the start of *Barchester Towers*, first published in 1857, Dr Grantly (through the carefully chosen intermediary of Septimus Harding) sent by electric telegraph to the Prime Minister the information that the Bishop of Barchester had died. 'Within thirty minutes of its leaving Barchester it reached the Earl of — in his inner library': A.Trollope *Barchester Towers* (Signet edition, New York, 1963) pp. 16–17.

¹⁰⁵ Windsor and Osborne were also connected to the network of telegraph lines.

¹⁰⁶ Liverpool Record Office, papers of the fifteenth Earl of Derby, five volumes of correspondence from Queen Victoria, formerly in a tin box in the Upper Muniment Room at Knowsley, e.g. General Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, to Derby, 8 Jan 1877: 'The Queen is mystified by the telegrams received today, and asks what is Prince Bismarck about ...'

¹⁰⁷ Henkin, *Postal age*, p. 175, and C.S.Fischer *America calling: a social history of*

the telephone to 1940 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992) pp. 1–59, cited there.

¹⁰⁸ The Historical Manuscripts Commission's Prime Ministers' Papers series was overtaken by want of resources, not by lack of material or desirability: HMC *Annual review 2000–2001* (London, 2001) p. 14. The series did publish two volumes of Wellington correspondence, an important addition to the nineteenth-century volumes of the Duke's papers: HMC *The Prime Ministers' Papers: Wellington. Political correspondence I: 1833–November 1834* ed. J. Brooke and J. Gandy (London, 1975); *The Prime Ministers' Papers: Wellington. Political correspondence II: November 1834–April 1835* ed. R. J. Olney and J. Melvin (London, 1986). A volume covering 1 Jan 1833 to 23 Nov 1834 had been started under the second Duke of Wellington, but did not get beyond galley proofs: WP 7/10/1–3.

¹⁰⁹ C. M. Woolgar, 'The Wellington Papers Database: an interim report' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 9 (1988) pp. 1–20.

¹¹⁰ Although it may seem invidious to select titles, it has been one of the pleasures of an archivist to see this research come to fruition. I have especially enjoyed R. W. Davis *A political history of the House of Lords, 1811–1846: from the Regency to Corn Law repeal* (Stanford, 2008); C. J. Esdaile *The Duke of Wellington and the command of the Spanish army 1812–14* (Basingstoke, 1990); R. Foster *The politics of county power: Wellington and the Hampshire gentlemen 1820–52* (London, 1990); Jupp, *British politics on the eve of Reform*; and R. Muir *Britain and the defeat of Napoleon 1807–1815* (New Haven and London, 1996).