



Microhistories

FACTIONALISM AND DISSENT IN AN ENGLISH CITY

CHICHESTER, 1678–1685

Danae Tankard



Factionalism and Dissent in an English City

This book is about the political and religious controversies that beset the small English city of Chichester between 1678 and 1685, which intersected with wider political turbulence at the heart of government and in the nation at large. This period of seventeenth-century English history has been overshadowed by the more dramatic events of the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution, but these years were marked by repeated political crises, assassination plots, religious persecution, and fears of a new civil war. Telling this story through the lives of the inhabitants of one city offers an intimate view of how these events played out in a particular locality.

As much a work of social history as it is of political history, this book has the lives of individual men and women at its core. The story that unfolds includes a strong cast of characters and has multiple points of high drama: it is the individuals and the events they were caught up in that propel the narrative forwards.

Factionalism and Dissent in an English City makes a significant contribution to the historiography of late Restoration England. Its plot- and character-driven narrative structure also makes the book accessible to a non-specialist reader who wants to find out what it might have been like to live through these challenging years.

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Microhistories

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Abbreviations and conventions

Alum. Cant.	J. Venn and J. A. Venn, eds., <i>Alumni Cantabrigienses</i> , part I, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922–7)
Alum. Oxon.	J. Foster, ed., <i>Alumni Oxonienses</i> , 1500–1714, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1891–2)
Athen. Oxon.	A. Wood, <i>Athenae Oxonienses</i> , ed. P Bliss, 4 vols. (London: F. C. and J Rivington, 1813–20)
Besse	J. Besse, <i>A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers</i> , vol. 1 (London, 1753)
BL	British Library
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
CSVP	<i>Calendar of State Papers Venetian</i>
CTB	<i>Calendar of Treasury Books</i>
CTP	<i>Calendar of Treasury Papers</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ESBHRO	East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office
Evelyn	W. Bray, ed., <i>Memoirs of John Evelyn</i> (London: Frederick Warne & Co, c. 1870)
HOP: HC	<i>History of Parliament: The House of Commons</i>
HOP: HL	<i>History of Parliament: The House of Lords</i>
Jeake	M. Hunter and A. Gregory, eds., <i>An Astrological Diary of the Seventeenth Century: Samuel Jeake of Rye 1652–1699</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)
JHC	<i>Journal of the House of Commons</i>
JHL	<i>Journal of the House of Lords</i>
KHLC	Kent History and Library Centre
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
Luttrell	Narcissus Luttrell, <i>A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714</i> , 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1857)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PA	Parliamentary Archives
PRS: BSP	A. J. Willis et al, eds., <i>Portsmouth Record Series Borough Sessions Papers 1653–1688</i> (Chichester: Phillimore, 1971)

PRT	Parish register transcripts
RM: Entiring book	M. Goldie <i>et al</i> , eds., <i>The Entiring Book of Roger Morrice 1677–1691</i> (6 vols, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007)
SAC	<i>Sussex Archaeological Collections</i>
SR	<i>Statutes of the Realm</i>
TNA	The National Archives
VCH Sussex	L. F. Salzman, ed., <i>A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 3</i> , (London: Oxford University Press, 1935)
WSRO	West Sussex Record Office

In this book all quotes from original sources have been modernised for consistency and ease of reading. All dates have been adjusted for a new year beginning on 1 January. Estimates of the modern equivalent of monetary sums have been made using the National Archives Historical Currency Converter (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>).



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Introduction

A pretty story and a very true one



Figure 1 Map of Sussex and adjoining counties (Andy Gammon).

In July 1683, the cantankerous Bishop of Chichester, Dr Guy Carleton, wrote to the Secretary of State, Sir Leoline Jenkins, updating him on Chichester affairs in the wake of the recent discovery of a plot to assassinate Charles II and his brother. Carleton was a prolific letter writer and as with all his letters this one is full of scurrilous and gossipy accounts of those he believed to have wronged him or who he viewed as enemies of the church and state. Much of the letter is taken up with a description of a recent exchange between the city's recorder, Sir Richard May, and an unidentified 'loyal person' after the arrest of one of Chichester's Whig leaders, John Braman, suspected of involvement in the plot. This exchange had been reported to him by his nephew and secretary, Samuel Carleton, who may himself have had the conversation reported to him either by the 'loyal person' or by someone else who was present. In other words, what Carleton was presenting to Jenkins as fact intended to prove May's

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sympathy with the ‘great rogue’, Braman, was actually hearsay. Carleton did not name May directly, but began his account with the words:

I could (under the rose) whisper a pretty story and a very true one in your ear of the same person (I am sure you know whom I mean) ...¹

Carleton’s description of whispering a ‘pretty’ – here meaning guileful or deceitful – story ‘under the rose’ (in secret or in confidence) into the Secretary of State’s ear conveys to us his sense of himself as a man at the centre of the nation’s political affairs who, despite his provincial milieu, had (apparently) the ear of one of the most powerful men in the country. Although we need to acknowledge our disadvantage in picking up the complex nuances in Carleton’s letter some 340 years after it was written, his style is often cryptic and even a contemporary reader must at times have struggled to pull out his true meaning, assuming he could read Carleton’s terrible handwriting in the first place. However, we are left to wonder whether Jenkins, who on top of his day-to-day business was currently managing a national crisis, might not have preferred a more straightforward rendition of these events which did not leave him trying to guess who Carleton was writing about.

Carleton’s letter is a useful starting point for a book which uses a microhistory practice to piece together a complex story of political and religious turbulence that beset the small city of Chichester between 1678 and 1685. Although its focus is intentionally small scale and intimate, like most microhistories it intersects with wider history, in this case the political history of late Restoration England.² The events that took place in Chichester were shaped by those occurring at the heart of government as the King and parliament (when it was allowed to sit) became locked in increasingly fractious and intractable disputes about the legitimacy of a Catholic succession (with no legitimate male heir of his own, Charles’s successor was his Catholic brother, James, Duke of York) and the relationship between the crown and parliament. Underpinning these controversies, and as important, was religion. The Anglican Church restored in 1660 left no place for other forms of Protestantism and groups as disparate as Presbyterians and Quakers, who had little in common in terms of organisation or theology, found themselves labelled ‘nonconformists’ or ‘dissenters’ and were frequently the victims of heavy-handed persecution. The politics of these years were also dominated by what John Miller has described as a ‘violent and often hysterical anti-Catholicism’.³ However, whilst a shared fear of Catholicism should have united Anglicans and nonconformists to stand together against a common enemy, it divided them further and was complicated by Anglican loyalty to the principle of hereditary, divine-right, monarchy which meant that Anglicans refused to oppose the succession of the Duke of York. The city of Chichester, like everywhere else in the country, was caught up in these national events in a myriad of ways. It was not, however, passive. Political activism in the city contributed to the unfolding of political crises and shaped government response to these, and the increasingly vicious political factionalism in the city

was at all times driven by the actions of the crown and its allies. One such ally was Guy Carleton whose prelacy as Bishop of Chichester began in January 1679 and ended with his death in July 1685.

Although the main focus of this book is Chichester, it also draws on evidence of political and religious dissent across Sussex and elsewhere. Nationally, these years saw what has been termed the ‘Rise of Party’ with the emergence of organised ‘court’ and ‘country’ factions in parliament, which by 1680 had become identified as ‘Tory’ and ‘Whig’. The ‘Exclusion Crisis’ of 1679–1681 saw a Whig-led House of Commons try to divert the succession away from the Duke of York, the emergence of Charles’s oldest illegitimate son, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, as pretender, and the start of the King’s period of personal rule after his dissolution of the Oxford parliament in March 1681. This was followed by what historians describe as the ‘Tory reaction’, a sustained campaign to destroy the Whig opposition and to crush religious dissent, which became more virulent after the discovery of the Rye House Plot in June 1683. By the time Charles II died in February 1685, the Tories were in the ascendant and, despite his Catholicism, James came to the throne in a strong position. The short-lived Monmouth Rebellion of that summer was easily put down and those who had participated in it were brutally punished.⁴ The impact of these events can be traced on the lives of ordinary men and women living in Chichester. We will encounter them speaking sedition in taverns and the city’s single coffee house; having their worship interrupted by the violent actions of soldiers, paid informers and rabbles of ‘rude boys’; shouting and ‘halloing’ in the streets to welcome the Duke of Monmouth; lighting bonfires and throwing stones at the windows of the bishop’s palace; having their homes searched for concealed weapons; plotting and scheming; fleeing the city to avoid the arrest; whilst all the while trying to get on with their ordinary, private lives.

The Civil War and Interregnum cast a long shadow over Restoration England. Many of the key constitutional questions that had brought Charles I and his parliament into conflict remained unresolved; the country’s religious composition had fundamentally altered; and the experience of living through these years had stimulated popular politicisation and entrenched partisan divisions.⁵ Many critics of Charles II claimed that he had pretensions to absolutism, viewing himself as a supreme ruler, answerable only to God, rather than sharing his sovereignty with parliament. An absolute monarch was *ab legibus solutus* (above the law), but he was still expected to rule according to the law; if he ignored the law he became an arbitrary ruler – little better than a tyrant – and could, legitimately, be resisted or even overthrown. Although Whigs were presented by their critics as the direct heirs of the regicides of 1649, that did not necessarily make them republicans. Whilst we need to acknowledge that their views were not all the same, what broadly united them was the belief that the king shared his sovereignty with parliament and the ‘people’, and their desire to see limits on his powers, such as his right to call, prorogue or dismiss parliament at will, to veto parliamentary legislation and to appoint officers of state.⁶ In contrast, Tories rejected the idea of a ‘mixed’ or ‘limited’ monarchy,

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asserting the divine-right nature of monarchy and advocating passive obedience and non-resistance. Deeply embedded within these viewpoints was religion. Whigs were advocates of greater religious freedom and respect for different forms of Protestantism; many were nonconformists themselves (predominantly Presbyterians and Independents) and they drew their support from the wider nonconformist community; Tories were usually Anglicans, and they included amongst their number most of the senior clergy, including bishops like Guy Carleton. Both sides accused each other of encouraging ‘popery’ and arbitrary government.⁷ Several of the men at the heart of Chichester’s factionalism were veterans of the Civil War, most importantly Guy Carleton who had fought for the King, and John Braman who had fought for parliament. Thomas Hurst, described by Carleton as that ‘old traitor’, had also fought for parliament and had (allegedly) flung Charles I’s dog overboard whilst taking the King to Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight in 1647.⁸ Others, like the brothers John and Richard Farrington, had come to adulthood during the years of revolution. The Civil War, or the ‘late Rebellion’ as it was usually referred to, was a constant point of reference in the polemic of the late 1670s and 1680s, with Whigs maligned as would-be king-killers and republicans. Alongside this rhetoric were real fears that the country was about to descend again into war: as one correspondent observed in September 1679, ‘never was a civil war feared more than now’.⁹

Factionalism was reflected in the language used to describe the opposition: Tories referred to Whigs as the ‘dissembling’, ‘disaffected’, ‘ill affected’, ‘fanatical’ or ‘fanatic’ party, whilst referring to themselves as the ‘loyal’ or ‘honest’ party. A flavour of the language of insult can be found in a two-page anti-Whig pamphlet published in 1681, which defined the Whig as

a certain insect bred in the corruption of the late Rebellion, and is (for the most part) a traitor *Ex traduce* [i.e. his treachery was inherited from his parents, meaning that he was the natural heir of the Presbyterians who murdered Charles I].

The Whig had, the anonymous author insisted, ‘been hatching Rebellion, and working underground the subversion of the church and state for these many years past’. He was ‘the very spawn of Antichrist’, ‘the shame of the Reformation’ and ‘the scandal of Christianity’.¹⁰ The increasingly vicious factionalism in the country meant that the voices of those in the political middle, advocating moderation and compromise (contemptuously referred to as ‘Trimmers’), were drowned out by all the shouting.

We will see that Chichester’s factionalism was also being driven by personal animosities, in particular that between brothers, John and Richard Farrington, the former a Tory Anglican, the latter a Whig Presbyterian, and by professional rivalries. Personalities also played a part. This is especially clear with the hot-headed and unforgiving Guy Carleton who was convinced that his enemies (who, unfortunately for him, were legion) were out to destroy him. He viewed

his life as a constant and largely solitary battle against the forces of evil but he knew he had God on his side: as he told the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1681, God 'is the helper of the helpless'.¹¹ The city's factionalism was shaped too by the influence of the young and fabulously rich Ford Grey, 3rd Lord Grey of Warke, who, when not in London, spent much of his time at his country estate of Uppark, about twelve miles north of Chichester. Grey was a committed Whig and a close friend and confidante to the Duke of Monmouth; their friendship was sufficiently strong to survive Monmouth's affair with Grey's wife which had become public knowledge by 1680. Between 1680 and 1683 Monmouth combined his trips to hunt at Uppark with highly orchestrated ceremonial 'entries' into Chichester where his supporters would turn out in their hundreds to greet him, much to the Bishop's fury.¹² Through these years there were also conflicts particular to Chichester, such as the Bishop's bitter dispute with his chancellor, Dr Thomas Briggs, in 1680 and the politically motivated prosecution of Richard Farrington for the murder of the professional informer Richard Habin in 1682 which played out against the backdrop of the Tory reaction. There were of course other tensions within the city during these years which were not rooted in factionalism but which inevitably re-orientated themselves around factional divisions. The most notable of these were the long-standing disputes between the city (represented by its governing body, or corporation) and the cathedral over their respective rights, privileges and jurisdictions.

The view that 'the rabble', 'the *mobile*' or 'the multitude' lacked the 'wit and capacity' to understand affairs of state and were being manipulated by Whig leaders was frequently expressed by Tory polemicists; leading Whig peer, the Earl of Shaftesbury, was depicted as a grand puppet master who 'cringes and creeps, and speaks to the meanest and basest of people', hoping to become 'the little head of the Great Rabble'.¹³ But whilst condemning 'pert tradesmen', 'tinkers and broom men' for having the temerity to express political opinions, these authors were also tacitly acknowledging that they had them.¹⁴ Tim Harris's work has done much to illuminate the breadth of political participation during this period and to challenge the view of some historians that the 'lower orders' were essentially apolitical and were incapable of independent political action. He has also shown that the political elite and those participating in what he terms 'crowd politics' often shared the same political views and might be looking for the same political solutions.¹⁵ However, determining personal motivation for participation in political protest can be extremely difficult, not least because the identity of the majority of individuals making up the 'crowd' is unknown. The advantage of a small-scale study such as this one is that it is easier to identify and track individual players and to place them more firmly within their social milieu. In this, this book shares another characteristic of microhistories in that it explores individuals' 'agency', something Thomas Cohen describes as 'the capacity to make a difference against constraints'.¹⁶ Close focus on political conflict within a relatively small urban centre also provides an opportunity to examine the importance of provincial participation in

the development of what Peter Lake and Steve Pincus have described as the ‘post-Revolutionary public sphere’, which saw ‘an increasingly wide array of people ... brought within the nexus of political communication’.¹⁷

Information about the political controversies of the day was readily available during these years via an unregulated and highly polemical press. The lapse of the Licensing Act in 1679 led to a complete breakdown of censorship controls and the amount of print material being produced increased significantly.¹⁸ Mark Knights has estimated that between five and ten million pamphlets were printed between 1679 and 1681 which, based on the most recent estimates of England’s population, is between one and two pamphlets for every man, woman and child.¹⁹ We can add to that number newspapers, topical ballads and libels, all of which came flooding out of London’s printing presses. Most newspapers were published bi-weekly, some tri-weekly. To give an idea of the number of issues per newspaper, we can look at some of the leading titles in 1682. That year there were 102 issues of the government’s bi-weekly official newspaper, the *London Gazette*; 136 issues of Nathaniel Thompson’s tri-weekly Tory newspaper, *The Loyal Protestant and True Domestic Intelligence* (ceased printing on 16 November 1682); 80 issues of Langley Curtiss’ bi-weekly Whig newspaper, *The True Protestant Mercury, or Occurrences Foreign and Domestic* (ceased printing on 21 October 1682); and 182 issues of Roger L’Estrange’s bi- or sometimes tri-weekly Tory periodical, the *Observer*.²⁰ As we shall see, Chichester news was intermittently reported in London newspapers and became a regular fixture in London’s partisan press during the especially turbulent year of 1682.

The ubiquity of cheap print and its ability to stir up political dissent was widely commented on at the time:

What pamphlets these late times hath swarmed with, the studious shop-keeper knows, who spends no small time at the bulk [shop front or stall] in reading and censuring modern controversies or news; and will be readier to tell you what the times lack, than to ask you what you lack.²¹

For this author, the main casualty of this ‘distemper of the press’ was the truth: ‘many of these pamphlets may be better termed the weekly bills of truth’s mortality than faithful intelligences of affairs’.²² Rival truth claims were contested through print requiring readers to make their own judgements about what was true and what was not but, as Knights has said, ‘truth’ had become ‘relative to partisan conviction’.²³ Knights’s point is reflected in the comment of one contemporary author who insisted that people bought pamphlets because they were cheap and read them because they were bored but ‘what they thought before, they will still think, let the pamphlet say what it can; what I think is true is true is the rule’.²⁴ Print was not the only medium for the dissemination of political information. Throughout this period, manuscript material continued to circulate. As Rachel Scarborough King has shown, manuscript newsletters remained an important medium for the transmission of news until the

mid-eighteenth century, operating in tandem with printed newspapers.²⁵ Thousands of libellous verses on political affairs were also disseminated in manuscript. These might be pinned to walls and doors, scattered in the street or left in taverns and coffee houses. Many were collected by interested parties and bound or transcribed into manuscript anthologies, such as that containing the satirical poem, 'A character of the church of Chichester', now in the collection of Yale University.²⁶

News, then, was not hard to come by and, if a contemporary critic was to be believed, 'the 'itch of hearing and telling public news has ... infected all sorts of men amongst us'.²⁷ Literacy levels during this period were relatively high. It is estimated that by 1700 around 30 per cent of women and nearly 50 per cent of men could read but literacy levels were considerably higher amongst more affluent social groups and were also higher amongst those living in towns and cities.²⁸ All of the principal players in this story were highly literate: some had been to university, others had studied law at one of London's Inns of Court and even those who had done neither, like Richard Farrington and John Braman, must have had some formal schooling as children. However, poor literacy skills or illiteracy were not barriers to participation in news culture: news was disseminated by word-of-mouth which meant that even those who could not read were able to access up-to-date political information.²⁹ A willingness to receive orally disseminated information was not just the preserve of the semi-literate or illiterate: as we have seen, Guy Carleton, who had a doctorate in divinity, drew on word-of-mouth accounts when writing his letters.

Letter writing was also an important means of disseminating news and opinion: much of the evidence on which this study is based derives from letters sent to and from Chichester. By the 1660s the state-controlled postal system was well-established, with its headquarters in London at the Inland Post Office. Chichester had its own post office and a daily post came down from London overnight, returning the following morning.³⁰ As well as letters, it is likely that some print material arrived in Chichester this way, either sent directly to individuals or to booksellers.³¹ Chichester also served as a 'hub' post office, for delivery of letters across Sussex and parts of Surrey and Hampshire. Mail might be transported by common carriers, private couriers, friends, family and servants, or by anyone deemed trustworthy who was travelling in the right direction. Private services offered more flexibility, since they avoided the requirement for letters to go via London and reduced the risk of letters being opened, read and possibly transcribed by government-appointed postmasters although, as we shall see, privately sent letters could still be intercepted.³²

Adam Fox has pointed out that print or manuscript news was no more reliable than orally disseminated news, and that the written and the spoken word depended heavily on each other.³³ There is of course a difference between information that is deliberately distorted or falsified for partisan purposes and that which contains unintentional factual and interpretative errors, and we will encounter multiple examples of both in this study. Carleton's letters, for example, are full of factual inaccuracies, sometimes as a result of his dependence on

oral reports and hearsay, sometimes because, in his hurry to get his letters written, he simply got things wrong.

Of course, men and women also acquired knowledge of, and formed opinions about, contemporary events by the simple fact of living through them. During this period Chichester's reputation as an especially 'factious' place meant that it was constantly under surveillance; there was at least one spy operating in the city and reports about Whig activists were regularly being sent to London. In 1681 it was suspected that Whigs, led by Richard Farrington, were planning an armed rebellion, with his house being used to store weapons.³⁴ Attempts to suppress political dissent manifested themselves in the use of the 1661 Sedition Act for anyone overheard expressing anti-government sentiment. This included careless words spoken by three high-spirited, and possibly drunk, young men (the 'silly boys'), whilst drinking in one of the city's many taverns in December 1682, which led to them being arrested on charges of treason.³⁵ Large numbers of people participated in the city's street politics, whether coming out to meet the Duke of Monmouth when he visited the city, or attending the rowdy church court sessions in 1680 when Guy Carleton and his chancellor, Thomas Briggs, traded insults and nearly came to blows.³⁶ Overwhelmingly those who appear in this study either as central figures or minor players are male, reflecting the reality that during this period men were more likely to participate in street politics and to express political opinions than women. However, we need to remember that for most of Charles II's reign alternative modes of worship were seen as inherently seditious and dangerous to both government and the established Anglican church. Religion and politics were thus inextricably linked and we can, therefore, look to dissenting congregations like the Quakers for evidence of women's *active* participation. We will meet Margery Wilkinson *alias* Combes, one of the leaders of Chichester's embattled Quaker community, whose refusal to conform and determination to take a stand against her persecutors led to a prolonged period of incarceration in the county gaol.

In common with many microhistories, this one seeks to create a strong sense of place through a detailed description of the city of Chichester.³⁷ The spatial organisation and built environment of the city are integral to the exploration of the political and religious factionalism that polarised its inhabitants. As Fiona Williamson has said 'cities were not homogenous or passive entities but multifaceted palimpsests created by the processes of people's lived experiences'.³⁸ They also shaped people's lived experiences. We will encounter Chichester's 'public' places and spaces that historians associate with the public sphere – its taverns, inns and alehouses, single coffee 'house', its streets and market square.³⁹ The open nature of these collective spaces meant that political conversations and events that took place in them could be witnessed and reported to the authorities, generating documents that can be used to reconstruct the city's political culture.⁴⁰ But it should be borne in mind that Chichester, like other towns and cities, also had 'political' or 'politicised' spaces that were closed to outsiders, such as Richard Farrington's house, or the

Presbyterian meeting house on the outskirts of the city suspected of being used by Whig activists. The political conversations that took place here are – unfortunately – undocumented.

Thomas Cohen has described microhistory as a historical ‘method’ or a ‘practice’ characterised by ‘obsessive attention to detail’. Although it has traditionally been associated with social and cultural history, microhistory ‘lacks a fixed subject’ and as a practice it can be applied to any field or period of history.⁴¹ This book is as much a work of social history as it is of political history, since the lives of individual men and (some) women are at its core. Like many microhistories this one uses a plot- and character-driven narrative mode to explore the events that took place in Chichester during these years.⁴² Chapter 1 surveys the impact of the Civil War and the early years of the Restoration, ending with the arrival of Dr Guy Carleton in February 1679. It also introduces the city’s most important political agitators, John Braman and Richard Farrington, and their wider social networks. The succeeding chapters have much shorter chronologies: Chapter 2 covers 1678 and 1679 and introduces the reader to the city of Chichester; Chapter 3 covers 1680; Chapter 4 1681; Chapter 5 1682; Chapter 6 the first half of 1683; Chapter 7 the second half of 1683; Chapter 8 1684 and the first half of 1685. Chapter 9 takes Chichester’s story from 1685 up to the death of Richard Farrington in 1719, surveying the most important political events of these years as they impacted on the city, and tracing the later lives of some of the men we have encountered in the previous chapters. The Conclusion considers the merits of a microhistory of Chichester to the exploration of the political crises of late seventeenth-century England and reflects on the interaction of the political, the religious and the personal in the way the city’s factionalism played out.

A recent overview of Chichester in *The Guardian*’s ‘Let’s move to ...’ series observed, ‘this place has no dark side, unless it’s hidden deep, deep in its repressed past’.⁴³ Of course all places have their dark side and Chichester’s has only been hidden by a lack of sustained historical investigation. It is ironic that a place now known as a bastion of Conservatism was during the period investigated here a centre of radicalism and political factionalism.⁴⁴ The account of what happened in Chichester during these years, told in the following chapters, emerged in a fragmentary way from multiple sources, both print and manuscript, including letters and diaries, legal records, newspapers and pamphlets. There was – sadly – no ‘perfect ... narrative structure’ waiting to be discovered in the archives, and there were also some significant gaps in the historical record, such as the almost complete loss of the city’s parish records and the poor survival of the records of Chichester’s own government or corporation.⁴⁵ Whilst this is frustrating, it has been possible to recover many of the events and controversies that are likely to have been included in these records from other sources. Of course, the nature of the surviving evidence means that we only hear the voices of a minority, those who wrote letters, or whose actions and opinions are recorded in these letters, or in legal and other records. Whilst it is clear that Chichester was faction-riven and that there was a high level of participation in politics ‘out-of-doors’, we cannot assume from this that every

man and woman in the city was politically engaged; many no doubt preferred to mind their own business and to get on with their day-to-day lives. Piecing together complex and sometimes contradictory print and manuscript material, usually partisan and often written by hostile witnesses, has required me to assess carefully what might be ‘false news’ or ‘false optics’ and to consider what might have been redacted, distorted or left unspoken.⁴⁶ To adapt the words used by Guy Carleton in his letter to Sir Leoline Jenkins, in investigating this ‘pretty story’ I have tried to hear conversations that were whispered ‘under the rose’ alongside those that were more clearly spoken (or in some cases, shouted) and determine for myself what was true and what was not.

Notes

- 1 TNA SP 29/429, f.82.
- 2 For an overview of the history and uses of microhistory see S. G. Magnússon and I. M. Szi­jártó, *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). For other useful overviews see T. V. Cohen, ‘The Macrohistory of Microhistory’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (2017), 47:1, pp. 53–73 and T. V. Cohen, *Roman Tales: A Reader’s Guide to the Art of Microhistory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).
- 3 J. Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660–1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 1.
- 4 For a comprehensive overview of these events see T. Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and his Kingdoms* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).
- 5 G. Southcombe and G. Tapsell, *Restoration Politics, Religion and Culture: Britain and Ireland, 1660–1714* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), pp. 6–19.
- 6 For a discussion of Whig difficulties in defining who the ‘people’ were and what their political role should be see R. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 298–322.
- 7 Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 50–67.
- 8 TNA SP 29/427, f. 10; Bodleian Tanner MS 148, f. 47.
- 9 Cary Gardiner to Sir Ralph Verney, 15 September 1679, quoted in M. Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–1681* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 4.
- 10 Anon. *The Character of a Modern Whig, or an Alamode True Loyal Protestant* (London, 1681).
- 11 Bodleian Tanner MS 148, f. 54.
- 12 See below pp. 59, 63–5, 77–9, 96–7, 121, 124–6.
- 13 B. Calamy, *A Sermon Preached before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of London at Bow church, 29 May 1682* (London, 1682), p. 18; Anon. *The Character of a Disbanded Courtier* (London, 1682), p. 3. See also ‘Stephen College’s Ghost to the Fanatical Cabal’, Huntington Library, HEH 135851.
- 14 Calamy, *Sermon Preached before the Lord Mayor*, p. 18; *Observer*, 31 July 1682 (no. 182).
- 15 T. Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). In this work Harris defines ‘crowd politics’ as ‘political activity which took a non-institutional form, or what might loosely be termed “street politics”’ (p. 5); T. Harris, ‘Understanding Popular Politics in Restoration Britain’ in A. Houston and S. Pincus, eds., *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 125–153; T. Harris, “‘Venerating the

- Honesty of a Tinker”: The King’s Friends and the Battle for the Allegiance of the Common People in Restoration England’ in T. Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500–1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 195–232.
- 16 Cohen, ‘Macrohistory of Microhistory’, p. 59.
 - 17 P. Lake and S. Pincus, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England’, *Journal of British Studies* 45:3 (2006), pp. 270–292 (quote from p. 290). The authors argue that ‘it was only after the Revolution of 1688–1689 ... that what we refer to as the fully fledged post-Revolutionary public sphere became a permanent feature of English public life’ (p. 284).
 - 18 Harris, “‘Venerating the Honesty of a Tinker’”, pp. 204–205, citing W. G. Mason, ‘The Annual Output of Wing-listed Titles, 1649–1684’, *The Library*, 5th series, 29 (1974), pp. 219–220.
 - 19 Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, p. 168. The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure have estimated England’s population between 1680–1700 at approximately 3.7 million (<https://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/transport/data/population1680.html>, accessed 24 July 2023).
 - 20 These figures have been calculated using the newspapers’ own issue numbers. The newspapers have been accessed via the online *Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Burney Newspaper Collection*.
 - 21 Anon. *The Tears of the Press, with Reflections on the Present state of England* (London, 1681), p. 3.
 - 22 Anon. *Tears of the press*, p. 5.
 - 23 M. Knights, ‘How Rational was the Later Stuart Public sphere?’ in P. Lake and S. Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 261–262; M. Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 6.
 - 24 Anon. *Reflections upon the Controversy about the Oath of Allegiance, Occasioned by a Letter in Answer to English Loyalty* (London, 1682), preface.
 - 25 R. Scarborough King, ‘The Manuscript Newsletter and the Rise of the Newspaper, 1665–1715’, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 79:3 (2016), pp. 411–437.
 - 26 A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 392; ‘A Collection of Wit and Learning’ (1666–1681), Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Osborn b54 (see below, p. 21).
 - 27 Calamy, *Sermon Preached before the Lord Mayor*, p. 18.
 - 28 Southcombe and Tapsell, *Restoration Politics, Religion and Culture*, p. 143.
 - 29 The most extensive account of the interaction of oral and literate culture in the early modern period is Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*.
 - 30 *London Gazette*, 19–23 November 1674 (no. 940).
 - 31 A periodical, *A Weekly Advertisement of Books* (no. 1, 7 October 1680, published as an annex to *The City Mercury*) stated that it would ‘dispose of some hundreds [of its issues] by the Post, to the principal if not to all booksellers in England’ (see Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, p. 173).
 - 32 M. Brayshaw, ‘Conveying Correspondence: Early Modern Letter Bearers, Carriers, and Posts’ in J. Daybell and A. Gordon, eds., *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 48–65.
 - 33 Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, p. 380.
 - 34 TNA SP 29/416, f. 166. See below, Chapter 4.
 - 35 TNA SP 29/422, f. 67. See below, Chapter 6.
 - 36 See below, Chapter 3.
 - 37 The creation (or recreation) of ‘place’ is evident in many of the books published in Routledge’s *Microhistories* series, for example T. Krogh, *The Great Nightmen Conspiracy. A Tale of the 18th Century’s Dishonourable Underworld* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

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- 38 F. Williamson, *Social Relations and Urban Space: Norwich, 1600–1700* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), p. ix.
- 39 There is an extensive literature on the early modern public sphere. Useful starting points for understanding the debates about what it was, where and when it emerged and how it functioned are S. Pincus, “‘Coffee Politicians does Create’: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture”, *Journal of Modern History* 67:4 (1995), pp. 807–834; P. Lake and S. Pincus, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England’; Lake and Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere*; E. Vallance, *Loyalty, Memory and Public Opinion in England, 1658–1727* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 12–15 [eBook]. For a recent collection of essays that asserts the importance of the street as a ‘site of contestation between public and private interests’ see D. van den Heuvel, ed., *Early Modern Streets: A European Perspective* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023).
- 40 For a collection of essays which uses ‘space’ as an analytical category for political history see B. Kümin, ed., *Political Space in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Farnham: Routledge, 2009).
- 41 Cohen, ‘Macrohistory of Microhistory’, p. 4.
- 42 Magnússon and Szijártó, *What is Microhistory?*, pp. 24–25, 147; R. Bell, ‘Peepholes, Eels, and Pickett’s Charge: Doing Microhistory Then and Now’, *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 12:3 (2022), pp. 368–371.
- 43 *The Guardian*, Friday 9 August 2019.
- 44 Chichester’s 100-year record of electing Tory MPs was broken in 2024 when a Liberal Democrat was elected.
- 45 In her preface to *The Return of Martin Guerre* Natalie Zemon Davis observed of her sources, ‘rarely does a historian find so perfect a narrative structure in the events of the past or one with such dramatic popular appeal’ (N. Z. Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. vii).
- 46 For the use of the term ‘false news’ see TNA SP 31/1, f. 24 (and below p. 165). For the use of the term ‘false optics’ see Anon. *An Elegy on the Right Honourable Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury, who died on 21st January 1683* (London, 1683).

1 Weep together, and lament

In 1664 looking back on the dark days of Civil War the Bishop of Chichester, Henry King, described how a 'maiden troop' led by 'one who took upon her the office and title of captain' had 'with drums beating and colours flying, marched daily through the streets' of Chichester. This 'band of women' had worked alongside men to reinforce the city's ramparts 'to keep out their king'. They were, in the Bishop's view, not only traitors to their King but also to their sex: 'the virtuous woman whom Solomon ... describes deals in wool and flax, not iron, and lays her hand to the distaff, not the spade'. Such a reprehensible inversion of the natural order symbolised for King the horrors of the Civil War years which had culminated in the martyrdom of Charles I on the scaffold on 30 January 1649. King urged these transgressive women to 'weep together, and lament the several scandals, by either of them brought, by the one upon their sex, by the other upon their function'.¹ The restoration of Charles II in May 1660, welcomed by many, could not easily heal the scars of the recent past. The legacy of the Civil War and Interregnum was a collective trauma to the nation's body and soul. Forgetting was not easy: some 165,000 lives had been lost, bodies had been maimed, livelihoods ruined, entire districts of towns and cities had been destroyed and a king had been executed.²

The small city of Chichester had been battered by conflict in the opening stages of the war with the city besieged by parliamentary forces under the command of Sir William Waller over an eight-day period from 20 to 28 December 1642. In terms of allegiance, the city was divided broadly between the higher clergy and gentry who supported the King and the merchant oligarchy who supported parliament. One of the leaders of the parliamentary faction was William Cawley who later achieved notoriety as one of 59 signatories to Charles I's death warrant on 29 January 1649.³ Loss of life during Chichester's siege was relatively minimal – about 20 men on both sides but no civilians – but considerable damage had been done to the city's suburbs and the parish churches of St Pancras and St Bartholomew were both destroyed.⁴ A petition submitted to the House of Commons in January 1648 by the 'inhabitants of the city of Chichester and the suburbs' seeking compensation for their losses laid the blame for this destruction firmly at the Royalists' doors but Waller's forces were also responsible for some of the destruction, both during the siege

and after capturing the city.⁵ Under the terms of the surrender, parliamentary forces were given a month's pay and ordered not to plunder the city but they ransacked the cathedral, destroying sacred art and funeral monuments, smashing the communion table and rail, seats and stalls and the cathedral's organs, and stealing liturgical equipment. They also vandalised the parish 'church' of St Peter the Great, located within the cathedral's north transept.⁶

It was probably in the immediate aftermath of the siege that some of the properties within the cathedral close were damaged. A survey of Dean and Chapter properties undertaken by the Interregnum government in 1649–1650 records that the hall of the Dean's house or deanery had had all its glass and paving bricks carried away and that the rest of the building was 'much dilapidated'.⁷ The initial damage to buildings was compounded by the occupation of the city by a parliamentary garrison between December 1642 and March 1647.⁸ However, in comparison with other cities, Chichester escaped quite lightly. The city of Winchester in the neighbouring county of Hampshire was repeatedly captured and re-captured by armies from both sides between 1642 and 1646, causing widespread damage to its buildings. The disruption of trade as a consequence of ongoing conflict and associated pillaging in Winchester and its hinterland was so severe that food prices rose putting them beyond the means of its poorer inhabitants; the city's government struggled to function and many of its wealthier inhabitants fled.⁹ Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the siege and the ongoing conflict impoverished many of Chichester's inhabitants.¹⁰ If the city was left battle-scarred, so too were the bodies of some of its inhabitants, men who had fought for King or parliament, who returned to the city with shattered bones, eking out precarious livings with the support of small pensions from the county's common fund for 'maimed soldiers'.¹¹

The Bishop of Chichester, Henry King, had every right to feel bitter about the events of the 1640s and 1650s. He had been consecrated Bishop on 6 February 1642, a day after parliament passed a bill excluding bishops from sitting in the House of Lords in an attempt to curb their temporal powers, and he was forced to flee from the bishop's palace during the siege of Chichester. In April 1643, his personal possessions, including his library of some 2000 books, and all his lands were seized by future regicides, William Cawley and Colonel John Downes, because of his alleged support for the King. For the next 17 years, King led an itinerant life, staying with friends and relatives and travelling the country with another *quondam* bishop, Brian Duppa (the English episcopate had been formally abolished in October 1646), ordaining clergymen according to the proscribed *Book of Common Prayer* which had been officially replaced by the Presbyterian *Directory of Worship* in June 1646.¹² The removal of King from office and the sequestration of his estates and those of the cathedral's Dean and Chapter provided an opportunity for the city's leading Presbyterian inhabitants to establish a new 'godly' church, stripped of the superfluous ceremonies and clerical hierarchies associated with the church reforms of William Laud. On 6 February 1645, the city's mayor, common council and citizens petitioned parliament seeking financial support for 'three