

Intercepting the Burley Letters¹



Frontispiece

Sir William Parkhurst, compiler of the Burley Manuscript, 1644. Medal, cast and chased at the Oxford Mint, silver, 2.9 in. diameter, engraved by Thomas Rawlins. Inscription translation: William Parkhurst, Knight, Warden of the Exchange and Mint of all England, 1623. (*Photograph courtesy of the British Museum, Coins and Medals Department*).

¹ An early version of the first part of this paper was published as 'Correspondence in the Burley Manuscript: A Conjecture', *John Donne Journal* 23 (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University, 2004), 249-256. Much of the material will appear in my forthcoming doctoral thesis.

The Burley Manuscript (Leicestershire Record Office, DG 7 Lit 2) is a large miscellany of the early seventeenth century. Its size – 317 folios, mostly written on both sides – is unusual, but not unique. What is very rare indeed for so large a collection is its variety, containing as it does material in five languages, comprising verse, essays, ambassadorial correspondence, translations, ‘collectibles’ of the kind one finds in commonplace books, and copies of private letters. Much of the material is associated with Sir Henry Wotton (at various times a diplomat, agent, adventurer and spy), and it contains also some material closely connected with John Donne. The collection was almost certainly compiled, between 1597 and 1641, by William Parkhurst, who was secretary to Wotton between 1604 and 1612. A sketch of his life appears later in this paper.

There are in the manuscript forty or so private letters in English, that is to say, letters apparently from one individual to another, written without the expectation of their publication to any wider audience. I make this distinction to separate them from other ‘private’ letters that, usually by design, although perhaps sometimes unintentionally, received wide currency in the period: the ‘Alençon letter’ of Sir Philip Sidney, for instance, Raleigh’s letter to Carr begging him to restore his estate so that his family should not starve, or the ‘Gunpowder Plot’ letter of Sir Francis Tresham. My forty are letters with no such intentions, no other copies are known to survive, and it is on them that I wish to focus here.

Although in the manuscript almost none of these copies has any note of its author, addressee or date, some of them have been identified by Simpson,² by Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth,³ and most recently by Dennis Flynn,⁴ as belonging to an exchange between Henry Wotton and John Donne. None names its writer or its addressee, so the attribution is not absolutely certain, but contextual and stylistic considerations promote the view that there are fourteen of these, ten from Donne to Wotton and four in the other direction.⁵ The tally of forty includes also those between Wotton or Donne and someone else, and as well those few that are at present anonymous as to both author and recipient.

Some of these letters I have been unable to date; of those for which a date can be presumed with some confidence, many come from before 1604, when Wotton was first made ambassador to the Venetian Republic. Most of the Wotton-Donne correspondence, on which I wish to focus attention in this section, seems to come from 1598-1601, when both were employed as secretaries, Wotton to the earl of Essex and Donne to Sir Thomas Egerton,

² Evelyn M Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

³ Claude J. Summers & Ted-Larry Pebworth, ‘Donne’s correspondence with Wotton’, *John Donne Journal* 10 (1991), 1-36.

⁴ Dennis Flynn, ‘On the Friendship and Correspondence of John Donne and Henry Wotton’, (article as yet unpublished). I am grateful to the author for sight of a draft of this article.

⁵ Flynn’s view is that there are seven of each, but both the styles and the copyists’ hands seem to support my figures.

lord keeper. It seems to me curious that none of the letters is in the hand of the originator: all Donne's letters, and one of Wotton's, are in that of a scribe known as D1, and the rest of Wotton's in William Parkhurst's. Examples of their hands appear in the Appendix.

It does not seem likely that, at this period of their careers, either Wotton or Donne had or could afford a secretary of his own. Nor can one think of a reason for either to keep copies of brief communications on what seem to be quotidian matters, even if there are – as Flynn argues – political and emotional currents flowing beneath their inoffensive surfaces. Both were men of ambition, but neither at this time had any reason to suppose that posterity would be interested in Wotton's being delayed in Anglesey for want of wind or in Donne's complaint that there is no news to send his friend (see [Appendix](#)). Moreover, if either had wanted copies, it would have been natural for him to make such copies in his own hand; indeed either may have done so, but that is not what has survived. What we have are copies by Parkhurst and D1 and, given the implausibility of Donne or Wotton asking for them to be made, we must suppose that the scribes made them for their own purposes, or at another's behest.

A further difficulty arises from our inability to date, not the letters, but the copies themselves. Parkhurst's association with the manuscript collection certainly continued until 1641, as we have seen, but we do not know when it began. Similarly, D1's connection continued until at least 1604, for a copy in his hand of 'To Sir *H.W.* at his going Ambassador to *Venice*' appears at fol. 285v, but again the commencement of his involvement is undatable.

It is possible, therefore, that the scribal copies are much later than the originals but, in that case (and supposing that the originals survived long enough for that to happen), one would need to find a reason why someone – the scribes or their employer(s) – should be so interested in having copies. More plausible, surely, is that the copies were taken at some point between their writing and their receipt, and that this was done as a consequence of some policy or instruction that correspondence originating from, or destined for, those appearing on some list of names, was to be intercepted and copied.

If we admit this conjecture, we now have an explanation that accounts for the several peculiarities of the letters' inclusion in the Burley manuscript: their existence at all, their being in the hands of other people than their originators, the lack of any established connection between Parkhurst and Wotton at the time of the letters, and the archiving of them, apparently by Parkhurst. D1 and Parkhurst were engaged in the systematic interception of correspondence, presumably on behalf of the authorities who – then as now – were interested in discovering all they could of the traffic between sources of potential disaffection. Wotton and Donne fit this description, the one an adherent of the volatile and dangerous earl of Essex and the other a known catholic sympathiser, who had also served

with Essex on the Cadiz and Azores expeditions. Parkhurst seems to have served with Wotton in Ireland (where he was also in a position to intercept letters from Henry Goodere, of which Burley contains a copy of one in his hand), before becoming his secretary in Venice. D1 was, conjecturally, a fellow-employee of Donne's in York House, for most of the Donne letters in his hand, not just those to Wotton, are from that period of the poet's career (see p. 6 below). Parkhurst, perhaps the senior of the two agents, retained the copies, presumably sending off regular summaries to his political master.

Judging from what appears in the Burley manuscript, however, the conspirators seem to have gained little of use or interest from the operation. This was often the case: Logan Pearsall Smith records that, a few years later, Wotton himself had a large number of agents in different European cities intercepting and copying letters of the Jesuits but that, among the great volume of such letters archived in the Venetian papers of the Record Office, 'it cannot be said that the information contained in them is of much importance; but there was always a chance that [Wotton] might come on the traces of some plot that was being hatched'.⁶ And indeed, as John Michael Archer observes, the very presence of a surveillance system, whether or not it actually detected plots, was thought to be a deterrent to treasonable conspiracy.⁷

There was a risk, too, that the interceptors might misinterpret even innocent correspondence as treasonable. Donne himself was aware of this hazard, as he showed in the preface to *Pseudo-Martyr*:

So that I hope either mine Innocence, or their own fellowes guiltinesse, shall defend me, from the curious malice of those men, who in this sickly decay, and declining of their cause, can spy out falsifyings in every citation: as in a jealous, and obnoxious state, a Decipherer can pick out Plots, and Treason, in any familiar letter which is intercepted.⁸

One can see this process at work in Burley. In one of the earliest of Donne's letters, he wishes he could send Wotton some great news, instead of writing about trifles:

Sir I would some great princes or men were dead so I might chuse them or some states or Countryes overthrown so I were not in them that I might have some news to ease this itch of writing.

⁶ Logan Pearsall Smith, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907, repr. 1966), vol. 1, 65.

⁷ John Michael Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 126.

⁸ John Donne, *Pseudo-Martyr* (London, 1610), 'An Advertisement to the Reader', sig. ¶ 2.

In the margin, pointing at this sentence, D1 has drawn carefully a manicule, as if to say ‘Princes dead? Countries overthrown? Donne’s plotting something’.

Donne, indeed, had noted this danger earlier. One of the letters in his correspondence with Henry Wotton is the verse-letter ‘H: W: in Hiber: belligeranti’, transcribed by D1 at Burley fol. 279, containing the lines:

I aske not labored letters which should weare
 Long papers out: nor letters which should feare
 dishonest cariage: or a seers Art⁹
 (17-19)

He was not the only one to be suspicious of ‘dishonest cariage’ between England and Ireland: Sir John Harington, after returning with Essex and Wotton, wrote to his friend Sir Anthony Standen, who had remained in Ireland:

It is not a lake of Lethe, that makes us forget our friends, but it is the lack of good messengers; for who will write, when his letters shall be opened by the way, and construed at pleasure, or rather displeasure? – Some used this in Ireland, that perhaps have repented it since in England.¹⁰

Neither in Harington’s case, nor that of the Donne-Wotton correspondence, are there any clues to the identity of the man behind the surveillance, but an obvious candidate is the secretary of state, Sir Robert Cecil (described by a recent biographer as ‘reviving the intelligence work pursued by Walsingham’),¹¹ who was certainly suspicious of Essex and catholic plotters alike.

Among the Burley letters is one from Donne to Sir Henry Goodere, datable to before 1601, beginning ‘Sir. Only in obedience’, enclosing a copy of his Paradoxes (fol. 308v, printed by Simpson (No. 11)). The copies, both of the letter and of the Paradoxes, are all in D1’s hand. The letter asks Goodere for an assurance ‘on the religion of your friendship that no copy shall be taken’ – and yet there is a copy in Burley. It has been assumed hitherto that the addressee was forsworn but, if the interception theory is correct, the copy was made without his knowledge or consent, something consorting better with the honesty that Donne so prized in a friend. How highly he valued this quality is declared expressively in his letter ‘In this sickly dotage of the world’:

⁹ ‘Seer’, here a disyllable, has what *OED* describes as the ‘rare’ meaning of ‘one who sees’; combined with ‘Art’ (that of intercepting, unsealing, copying and resealing), it explains ‘dishonest carriage’.

¹⁰ Letter of 20 February 1600, quoted from Norman Egbert McClure (ed.) The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), 79.

¹¹ Pauline Croft, ‘Cecil, Robert, first earl of Salisbury’, ODNB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, online edn. October 2008).

[...]methinks I have taken a ritch prize & made a rare discoverie when I have found an honest man: & therefore whatsoever you have more then honesty is the wast & unthriftnes of nature: I know it a fault to commend a thing so much out of fashion as honesty yet since I desire infinitely to contract a frendship with you (bycause I know how far you overstripp me in all other virtues) I stand most upon honesty with which I have had most aquayntance & society. I am best able to keepe wing with you in it though you sore high.

The notion that the Donne letters, in particular, are in Burley as a result of covert surveillance, may help to solve another mystery. In her essay on Donne's love letters to Ann More, Ilona Bell argues persuasively that three of the Burley letters may be so described.¹² On this basis, she demonstrates that a crisis in the affair occurred between the writing of the first two of these:

Between the first and the second letters Donne learns – probably from Ann herself at their reunion – that her father has been told something incriminating. As the second and third letters reveal, that has an irreparable effect on their glorious intimacy. (p. 36)

Bell's conclusions have been broadly accepted by other scholars who have studied these letters.¹³ Her speculations about the probable source of this betrayal involve Christopher Brooke, John Davies, Arthur Maynwarring and Lord Latimer. If any of these can be shown to be, or to have connections with, D1, we are a step closer to solving the problem of how Sir George More got to know of his daughter's clandestine romance.

The nature of his interceptions makes it seem likely that D1 was, like Donne, employed in the lord keeper's office. Arthur Maynwaring was a steward in the Egerton household, but the letters are not in his handwriting, nor in that of Morgan Coleman, another household officer. Also, we know the names of two fellow-secretaries of John Donne: George Carew and Gregory Downall, who later took to spelling his surname Donhault. Carew we can eliminate from our enquiries: there survive several specimens of his hand and – although of the same style as D1's – it is not his. An example of Downall's hand would greatly help this research, but I have been unable to find one.

The strength of the theory that the Burley correspondence results from surreptitious interception is that it accounts for features in the collection that are otherwise puzzling. Its weakness, I have to concede, is that we lack anything in the way of corroboration: D1 is a

¹² Ilona Bell, "Under Ye Rage of a Hott Sonn & Yr Eyes": John Donne's Love Letters to Ann More', in Claude J. Summers & Ted-Larry Pebworth (eds), *The Eagle and the Dove: Reassessing John Donne* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 25-52.

¹³ See, for instance, M. Thomas Hester, Robert Parker Sorlien & Dennis Flynn (eds), *John Donne's Marriage Letters in The Folger Shakespeare Library* (Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 2005), notes 20, 23, 24, 27 and 30, although note 24 expresses a doubt about Bell's dating of one letter.

wholly unknown quantity, and although other elements in the life above recounted seem to implicate Parkhurst in spying, we have not actually caught him opening letters. There the conjecture rests, for the moment, although further research may imbue it with more substance. Even if no more facts emerge, it may give us insights not only into the Donne-Wotton correspondence, but also into the other letters of their circle, and even of those whose authors or addressees cannot be traced.

William Parkhurst

William Parkhurst, who seems to have been the compiler of Burley, and was certainly the scribe of more than half of it, rates no mention in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, and indeed the only record of his life to have appeared in print hitherto is the brief account, relating almost entirely to the period 1604-1614, of Pearsall Smith.¹⁴ What follows, accordingly, is largely new material, based on my own researches.

Parkhurst was baptised at East Lenham, Kent, on 17 December 1581, the son of James Parkhurst.¹⁵ Of his early life and education nothing is known, although his elder brother John (born c.1573) is recorded in Alumni Cantabrigienses as having matriculated at Queens' College, Cambridge, at Easter, 1587, is noted there as 's[on]. and h[eir]. of James, of East Leanham, Kent', and as admitted to Grays Inn in 1600. This is just the background one would suppose William to have had, in view of his later career, but no similar record has been found for him. It is, however, not unusual in this period for the university and inns of court records to be deficient.

The earliest connection we have of Parkhurst with the Burley manuscript, with Henry Wotton, or with the covert surveillance of correspondence, is a copy in his hand of a letter from Wotton to John Donne (Burley, fol. 302v) of early 1598. This seems to identify him as working already for Sir Robert Cecil in keeping an eye on potential sources of trouble, in this case Robert Devereux, earl of Essex and Wotton, his secretary. The letter was written from Essex's country seat at Wanstead, and Parkhurst may have had some post in Essex's entourage there. Most (though not all) of the covert copies seem to have been made at the source, rather than the destination, of the letter, for almost all of the Donne letters, to whomsoever addressed, are in D1's hand, and virtually all the Wotton material in Parkhurst's. It is again the Burley correspondence that suggests that Parkhurst went to Ireland with Essex's expedition in 1599: there are copies in his hand of two letters from Wotton, and one from Henry Goodere, both of whom were on that unhappy campaign.

¹⁴ Pearsall Smith, Wotton, II, 476.

¹⁵ Centre for Kentish Studies (hereafter CKS), Maidstone, Kent, Lenham Parish Records.

The next indication we have of Parkhurst's career is a mysterious one: on fol. 40 of the manuscript a careful italic hand, (almost certainly his own, judging from the three sure, but brief, examples of his use of this style) has inscribed the following:

MDCI
Germani
Peregrinatores
Qui vostrum proximus inviserit Westphalos
Dicat queso vinco meo superstiti fratri
Franciscum ABurg XXVI Jan Venetis extinctum
Postridie hic fuisse humo redditum
Verse sunt vices rerum
Ille me expectat in Patria, ego illum in Cælo.
Haec P. Magni Juicenis Memo
ram Guglielmus Parkhurstus Anglus
confluentibus e longinque la=
crimis ad decorandum eius funus.
[1601
Fellow
Travellers¹⁶
Whoever of you who next visits Westphalia
Let him say, please, to my neighbour, his surviving brother¹⁷
that Francis ABurg died in Venice on the 26 Jan
and the next day was laid to rest
Thus do fortunes change
He looks for me at home while I look for him in Heaven.
This to Publius Magnus Juicenus
I, William Parkhurst, Englishman, write
with flowing and lasting tears,
in honour of his death.]

This may be no more than an elegant epitaph, but something about the names makes one wonder: 'Franciscum ABurg' is somewhat odd, although it may be a latinisation of some

¹⁶ Philip Shaw has suggested to me that it is more likely that Parkhurst intended 'Germania Peregrinatores', in which case the phrase would translate as 'Travellers to Germany' rather than 'Brother Travellers', which I have rendered as 'Fellow Travellers'.

¹⁷ The translation of this line, and the suggestion that 'vinco' should be understood as 'vicino', 'neighbour', are also due to Philip Shaw.

such name as 'Francis Borough',¹⁸ but I have so far identified no such person. 'Publius Magnus Juicenus' looks even odder, and again I have no identification to offer. Perhaps both are pseudonyms, and perhaps therefore the whole message has some covert meaning. It perhaps places the author in Venice in 1601, and implies connections with Westphalia, but there is no evidence of what he is or has been doing in either place. It may be relevant that Henry Wotton, his future employer, was in Italy at this time, but no encounter with Parkhurst is recorded, nor did Wotton on this journey visit Venice.¹⁹

In 1604, Parkhurst's life becomes a good deal more visible. He became one of the secretaries to Sir Henry Wotton on the latter's appointment as ambassador to the Venetian Republic. Although I have always supposed him to have been selected by Wotton, who liked to surround himself with men of Kent,²⁰ for the Venice embassy (1604-1610), it now seems possible that he was planted by whoever organised the surveillance of the letters, probably Sir Robert Cecil, secretary of state. Cecil, although he knew of it in advance, had no evident hand in the ambassador's appointment, which seems to have been a gift from the king as a reward for Wotton's bringing him warning of an assassination plot in 1601,²¹ and it would have been characteristic of the secretary of state to plant an adherent in the entourage of this new embassy. Parkhurst remained for the whole of Wotton's first embassy, save that in April 1608 he was entrusted to travel back to England with letters for Cecil (now earl of Salisbury) and the king, the latter a lengthy and extraordinary one, written without being enciphered, describing an offer from an Italian to assassinate the earl of Tyrone.²² He was back in Venice by September, after delays due to 'indisposition and other mischances which befell him in France'.²³

On return to England, Wotton reduced his staff, and in November 1611, John Chamberlain wrote to Wotton's successor Sir Dudley Carleton that 'Mr. Parkhurst [is retired] into Kent'.²⁴ He was mobilised again, however, in 1612, for Wotton's embassy to the duke of Savoy in Turin, and remained behind after it as an informal English agent, where he undertook several tasks on behalf of the duke (he may, during this posting, have been a double agent). Between his being sent by the duke to the States (of Holland) in 1615, and

¹⁸ The A is not itself unusual: Richard Eden, in the preface to his translation of Martin Cortés's *The Arte of Navigation* (London: 1584), refers to the explorer Stephen Borough as 'Steven a Burrough' (Sig. Ciiii r.).

¹⁹ Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, 32-38.

²⁰ A 'man of Kent' is one born east of the River Medway; one born west of it is a 'Kentish man'. Wotton was proud of being a man of Kent, and described himself on his official arms-plate as '*Anglo-Cantianus*' (Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, 193).

²¹ Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, 45.

²² Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, 420.

²³ Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, 435, n.

²⁴ Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, 118, n.

his being dubbed knight at Theobalds on 19 July 1619,²⁵ his career is a blank, except that, around 1616, there is a further indication that he was engaged in something covert. His name appears at the head of a list connected with an official cipher, suggesting perhaps that he was its originator, since he is by no means the most important member: others named include secretary of state Sir Ralph Winwood, the 'Arche Bishop' (presumably George Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury) and Dr Donne.²⁶

It is not clear what office, if any, Parkhurst held at this time, but he certainly continued in government service, for in July 1621 Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton (who had been arrested a month earlier and placed under the charge of the lord keeper, John Williams) was released but confined to his own seat of Titchfield, where Parkhurst had custody of him. Southampton was released six months later.²⁷ In 1622, Parkhurst was appointed by the crown as bailiff (chief magistrate) of Jersey, Jean Herval having been suspended for misconduct. Such an appointment was usually for life, but was not so in Parkhurst's case, Herval being reinstated in 1624. There is no evidence of Parkhurst having gone to the Channel Islands, and the appointment seems to have been made to assert the crown's prerogative rather than to administer the island, while Herval's affairs were investigated.²⁸ In any case, while still bailiff, Parkhurst became joint warden of the Mint with Sir Edward Villiers, an office under the crown with a salary of £100. Such grants were for life, and after Villiers's death in 1626, Parkhurst's tenure was renewed in conjunction with Sir Anthony St. Leger.²⁹

Some time during this period, Parkhurst must have been wed, for his daughter Mary was born at East Lenham in 1625. In 1647, then twenty-two, she married Henry Butler of Handley, Dorset.³⁰

The wardenship inaugurated a period of stability and modest prosperity for Parkhurst. Other appointments came to him: he became a justice of the peace, and was appointed with Sir George More (Donne's father-in-law) as a collector of a royal loan in Surrey in 1625.³¹ He owned some property: Dorothy Kempe in 1626 left in her will a house in Finsbury,

²⁵ J. Philipot, A Perfect Collection or Catalogue of All Knights Batchelaurs made by King James since his comming to the Crown of England (London: for Humphrey Moseley, 1660), 77.

²⁶ The cipher, SP 106/4, fol. 44, is transcribed in R. C. Bald, John Donne: a Life (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 569-70. It is typical of diplomatic ciphers of the period, in which numbers are assigned to letters of the alphabet, to the names of notable persons, and to words such as 'treaty' or 'marriage' that might give away the subject of a communication. SP 106/4 is a collection of such ciphers.

²⁷ Park Honan, 'Wriothesley, Henry, third earl of Southampton (1573-1624)', ODNB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, online edn. October 2008).

²⁸ Philip Falle and Edward Durell, An Account of Jersey (Jersey, CI: R. Giffard, 1837), 410.

²⁹ Institute for Historical Research, 'Wardens of the Mint 1572-1869',

<http://www.history.ac.uk/publications/office/mint-wardens>.

³⁰ Wiltshire & Swindon Archives, 1641/7, 1647.

³¹ Surrey History Centre 'Correspondence of the More family of Loseley Park', 6729/10/130.

Middlesex, leased from him.³² In 1634, he sat on a commission for the reform of 'divers disordered alehouses' in the same county,³³ and in 1637 on another that licensed suitable people as maltsters.³⁴

In 1640, his elder brother John died, and the manor of East Lenham reverted to William Parkhurst by the entail set up by their grandfather. Parkhurst cut off the entail in the following year, which may indicate that he had no sons and that his wife had died or was considered past child-bearing; cutting off the entail would enable him to bequeath the property by will, or to sell it.³⁵ In the same year, Parkhurst gave evidence to the Lords at the trial of the earl of Strafford, who was accused (among many other counts) of having caused 'one hundred and thirty thousand pounds, which was then in the Mint, and belonging to divers Merchants, strangers and others, to be seized on and stayed to his Majesties use'.³⁶ Although his evidence is recorded in the House of Lords Journal as 'concerning the Money and bullion in the Mint',³⁷ no transcript survives, and the summary in Cobbett's State Trials attributes to Parkhurst only corroboration of some rather feeble evidence by a Mr Palmer that Strafford 'spake something about the king of France; but whether with relation to England or not, he did not remember'.³⁸ The last item in the Burley manuscript, and chronologically the latest to be datable, is a funeral ode on Strafford, of which no other copy has been found. Parkhurst's compilation of the manuscript collection seems to have ended at about this time, no doubt because of ensuing events.

The civil war began in 1642. Parliament had immediate control of London, and Parkhurst, loyal to Charles I, lost his job at the Mint. He rallied to the king at Oxford, and was appointed joint warden, with Thomas Bushell, of the newly-inaugurated Oxford Mint.³⁹ Bushell had been warden of the Aberystwyth Mint, which was briefly transferred to Shrewsbury before forming the basis of the Oxford Mint. He brought with him the dies from Aberystwyth, as well as a quantity of silver from his own Welsh mines, and he seems to have been the technical expert, although Parkhurst, as a knight bachelor, was his social superior, and so perhaps perceived as senior. Their main duty was to collect and convert to coin the plate requisitioned from the colleges, but the wardens were also instructed to provide 'certain Badges of silver, containing our Royal image, and that of our dearest son, Prince Charles'

³² 'Kempe family info', 2, <http://www.angelfire.com>.

³³ 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1634', Middlesex County Records, Vol. 3:1625-67, (1888), 55-57.

³⁴ SP Dom, SP 17/D.

³⁵ CKS, Knatchbull MS, CKS U951/4/80/35 and footnote.

³⁶ Depositions and articles against Thomas Earle of Strafford, Febr. 16. 1640 (1640), Article XXVI. (Note: dates are O.S.).

³⁷ House of Lords Journal, Vol. 4, 8 Jan 1641 and 7 Apr 1641, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=178>.

³⁸ Cobbett's State Trials, III (London: 1809), col. 1451.

³⁹ IHR, 'Officers of the Mint'.

for soldiers who had done faithful service in the Forlorn-hope (advance guard).⁴⁰ It is one of these badges that Parkhurst is depicted holding in 1644, in the frontispiece illustration.

The war was lost, and with it Parkhurst's source of income, but he still had outgoings, including taxation: he was assessed to pay £300 in 1648.⁴¹ In 1650, he sold East Lenham manor to a Mr Wood,⁴² almost certainly Edward Wood of Middlesex, described in the London Municipal Archives' summary of his family papers as one who 'made his fortune during the Interregnum but did not suffer from the Restoration, when he set himself up as a wealthy landowner in Middlesex.'⁴³ In 1655, Parkhurst was living at No. 3, Little Piazza, in Covent Garden.⁴⁴ He survived the Interregnum, and at the Restoration of 1660, when he was recorded as living in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, he borrowed ten pounds from Edward Wood, perhaps to make an appearance at Court.⁴⁵ Soon after, Parkhurst and St. Leger were reinstated as wardens of the Mint.⁴⁶

William Parkhurst died in early 1667. The entry for March 9, 1666/7, in Richard Smyth's 'Obituary' (not an obituary in the modern sense, but a listing of the deaths of everyone known to Smyth between 1627 and 1675) reads: 'Old Sir Wm. Parkhurst, Kt., Master of the Mint, buried at St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower'.⁴⁷

From the secret service to the public service, from espionage to respectability, William Parkhurst in his eighty-five years served four monarchs (and a foreign duke), and saw adventure, advancement and adversity. As well as copying other people's letters, he collected verse, played literary games, and translated classical Latin texts. Somehow his manuscripts survived him, and have given me – apart from much literary pleasure – all the fun of tracking down his spying and surveillance activities.

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⁴⁰ 'Medals as War Decorations', *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1911), http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Medals_As_War_Decorations.

⁴¹ Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, II, 478.

⁴² CKS, U951/4/80/5, n.

⁴³ London Municipal Archives, 'Wood family of Littleton (Stowe)', ACC/0262.

⁴⁴ IHR, British History Online: 'The Piazza – Notable private residents in the Piazza', <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46104>.

⁴⁵ LMA, ACC/0262/043/112.

⁴⁶ IHR, 'Officers of the Mint'.

⁴⁷ Sir Henry Ellis (ed.), *The Obituary of Richard Smyth* (Camden Society 1st series 44, 1849).