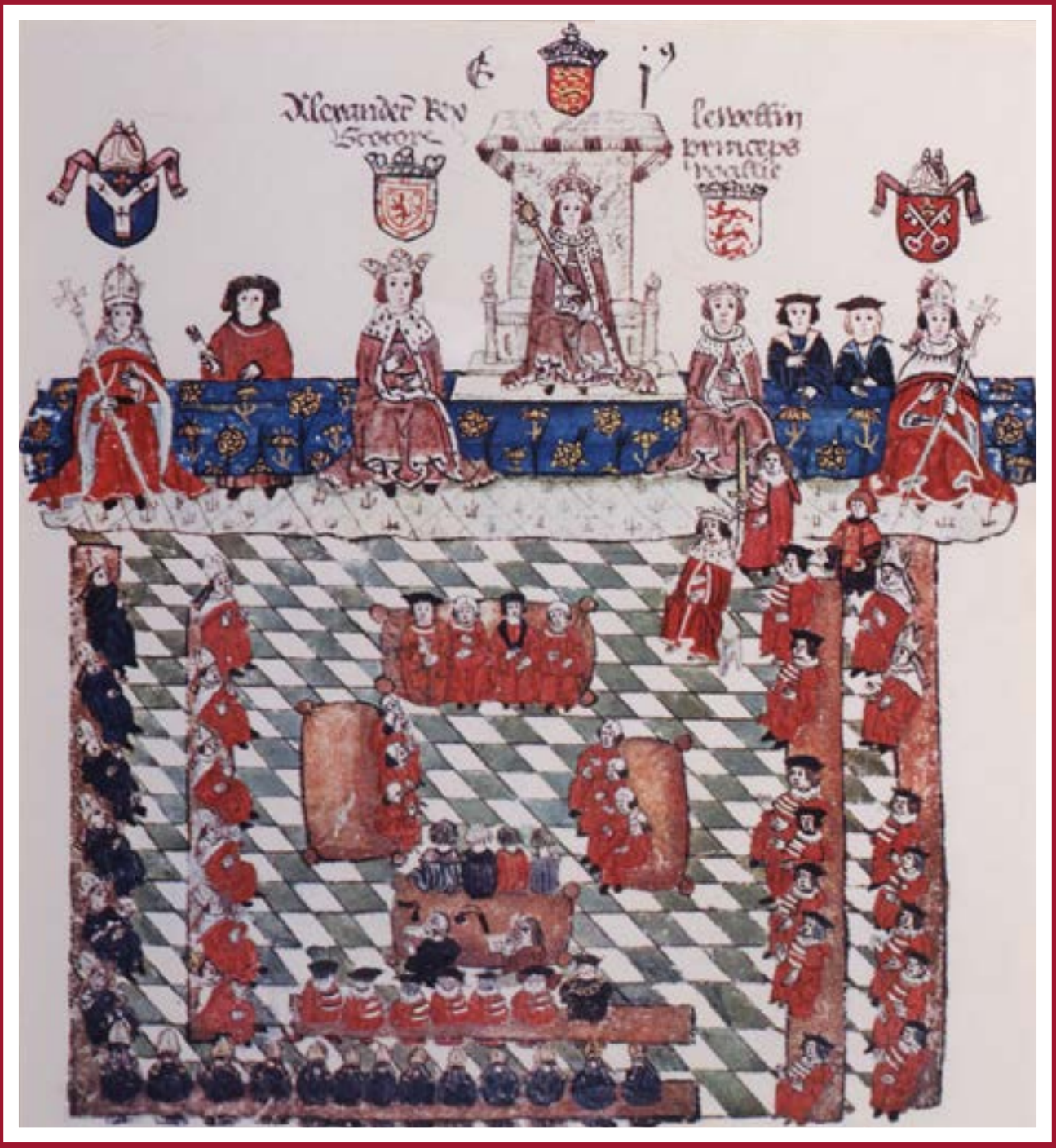
HOUSE OF LORDS



The History of Hansard

John Vice and Stephen Farrell

Front cover: "Edward I in Parliament". This 16th-century illustration shows an imaginary meeting between King Edward I, on the throne (top centre), King Alexander III of Scotland (on the King's right) and Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffydd of Wales (on the King's left). Lords spiritual are in black robes (lower left and bottom), lords temporal are in red robes and judges sit facing the King. Two clerks, or scribes—predecessors of Hansard reporters—sit at the table in the centre taking notes of proceedings using quill pens.

"Thomas Curson Hansard 1776–1833". Thomas Curson Hansard, whose name still appears on the Official Report today. In 1810, TC Hansard bought William Cobbett's parliamentary reporting business and founded *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*. This engraving was first published in Hansard's book on printing, *Typographia*, 1825.

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Just as the most obscure and modest Member of Parliament may feel a legitimate satisfaction in linking himself with the great men who, centuries ago, were doing the same public service, in exactly the same spot, and to some extent under similar conditions, so the Parliamentary reporter of these days may be pardoned for taking a keen interest in the habits and methods of members of his craft, working on the same ground as himself, in the days when that work involved the risk of fine and imprisonment.

George Walpole,
Some Old Parliamentary Reporters, 1899, p 4

Hansard **is history's ear, already listening.**

Lord Samuel,
13 December 1949[1]

1 According to *The Times*, 14 December 1949, Herbert Samuel, Viscount Samuel (1870–1963), said at a ceremony the previous day that the "politics of to-day were the history of to-morrow, and *Hansard* was history's ear, already listening".

Foreword

Rt Hon Lord Fowler

Lord Speaker

This history reminds us that Hansard has been producing an official report of proceedings in the House of Lords and the House of Commons since 1909, but an unofficial version dates back to 1803, and the history of parliamentary reporting stretches back to the English civil war. Indeed, the history of reporting political events goes back much further, through ancient Greece to Egypt of the Pharaohs.

Politicians have not always wanted a full report of what they said in Parliament to be published. For many centuries, it was illegal to report speeches and Parliament punished offenders severely, with fines and imprisonment. So Hansard's history is tied up with the growth of freedom of speech for the press, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries. As a former journalist myself, I am delighted that Parliament agreed—reluctantly—to tolerate the fourth estate in its proceedings.

Today, with more than 3,000 volumes published, Hansard remains a key part of our political process. The way Hansard captures and publishes our words has changed—steam printers and pen shorthand have given way to digital recordings and online publication—but the need for a full report remains. Along with broadcasting, it is the way people keep up to date with what is happening in Parliament and, within three hours of a Member giving a speech in the Chamber, Hansard publishes their words online. Hansard is a central part of parliamentary transparency and helps voters to hold politicians accountable for their words and actions; we need it today as much as we ever have.

Lord Speaker

Foreword

Rt Hon John Bercow MP

Speaker of the House of Commons

I am delighted to welcome this account of the history of Hansard, which covers the reporting of parliamentary debates in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Now more than ever, *Hansard* fulfils the vital role of providing for the public, and for Members of Parliament, a full and authoritative account of everything that is said in the Commons and the Lords every day. If members of the public visit the recently launched Hansard Online webpage on the parliamentary website—hansard.parliament.uk—they can read the latest proceedings in each House, within three hours of those discussions having taken place, and they can access contributions made by their constituency MP or find out more about discussions on any particular subject of concern to them. Indeed, the huge interest in Westminster Hall debates on e-petitions is just one of the ways in which Parliament is meeting the challenge of ensuring greater engagement with the public at large, and *Hansard* continues to play an important part in making that happen.

The great skill of the reporters—in the past, as now—is to remain faithful to the Members' words, accurately conveying the nuance of their argument and preserving their speaking style, while also, with the slightest of editorial touches, producing a fluent and readable report that will serve as a working document, a legal record and a historical resource. The authors of this history are both serving Hansard staff, and they bring their professional experience as well as their historical knowledge to bear in their writing. It is a pleasure to observe that this work, like Hansard Online, is the result of joint working between the Commons and the Lords, and the House of Lords Library is to be commended on publishing a beautifully illustrated history of one of our most valued parliamentary institutions.

The Speaker

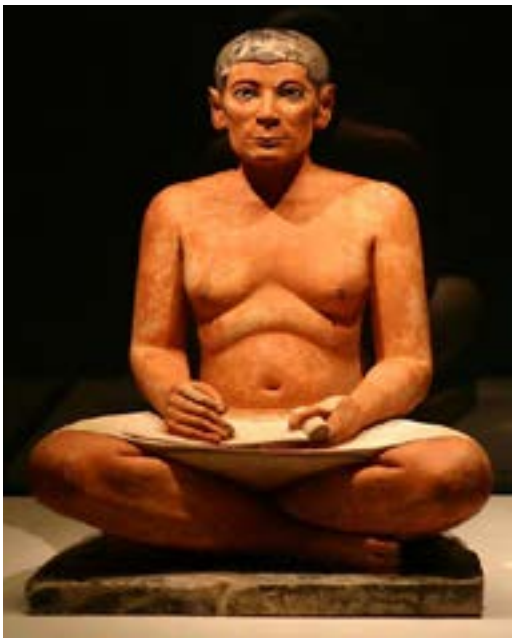
Contents

"The House of Lords (tempus Queen Elizabeth)". The print shows Queen Elizabeth I seated on the throne in the House of Lords on 22 November 1584, with the Commons attending, at the presentation of Speaker Puckering. Four kneeling scribes record the ceremony.

I

The Ancient Art of Reporting

The history of *Hansard* is part of the history of the relationship between political power and the act of writing or recording; that relationship, between politics and the word, has been long, intense and complicated. At times, there has been a healthy, and sometimes symbiotic, relationship between the two, but at other times those with political power have banned parliamentary reporting, and even persecuted and banished reporters, sometimes because politicians' freedom of action was curtailed by the risk of being known to hold particular views, and sometimes because reports of speeches involved an accountability that they did not want. The role of reporting in Parliament was nicely captured by Sir Barnett Cocks (1907–89), Clerk of the House of Commons, who told a Press Gallery inquiry in 1964, "The press, constitutionally and historically, is here on sufferance."[2]



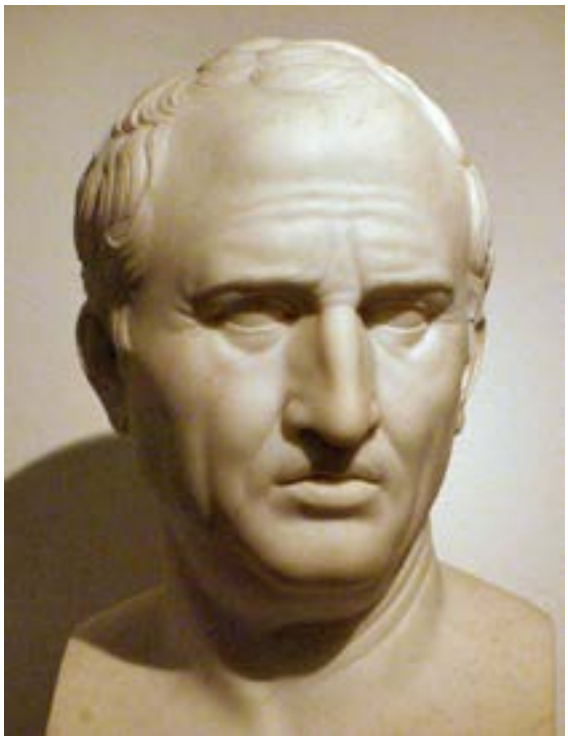
A seated scribe, dated to the 4th Dynasty, 2620–2500 BCE. It was discovered at Saqqara in 1850 and is now in the Louvre Museum, Paris.

This relationship between politicians and those capturing their words and decisions goes back at least to the ancient Egyptians. The first primitive writing emerged in about 3400 BCE in Uruk in Mesopotamia, and the record keeping and bureaucratic control it enabled also aided the growth of the first city and the first civilisation. This Mesopotamian society, and later, that of the ancient Egyptians, was based on extensive social and political coercion of the mass of the population by a small elite, for whom writing was an invaluable tool. With such value went social esteem—this is where the roots of parliamentary reporting lie at their deepest—for scribes were respected people in ancient Egypt. As members of the royal court, they did not have to pay tax, were exempt from military service and did not have to perform manual labour, but in exchange they were trusted to create a permanent record of political decisions, which meant they became powerful.[3] One reason for the strength of this symbiotic relationship is that spoken words are ephemeral, but when they are written down they can live for ever. If you can write quickly enough, you can capture not just what happened but what was said. As hieroglyphs evolved into words, we see the growth of shorthand, and with it an evolution in the nature of what scribes could write: with shorthand they were able to record political events and report speeches.

The first shorthand may have been Chinese, but it was also used extensively in ancient Rome. One fine exponent was Tiro (died in 4 BCE), a slave of Cicero (107–44 BCE), who noted his master's speeches using a shorthand of about 5,000 symbols. It was a highly effective system that evolved until the middle ages and is still with us today. For his diligent efforts, Tiro was granted his freedom by Cicero. But words that could live for ever were dangerous: they implied a form of accountability for those whose words were

2 www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentwork/communicating/overview/hereonsufferance/, accessed 24 April 2015.

3 See Clive Ponting, *A New Green History of the World*, 2007, ch 4.



Marcus Tullius Cicero is one of the Roman Empire's greatest orators, and many of his speeches were recorded in shorthand by his slave, Tiro. Cicero was murdered on Mark Antony's orders, and Fulvia, Antony's wife, is said to have jabbed the dead Cicero's tongue repeatedly with her hairpin in revenge for the power Cicero exercised through his spoken words.

reported, so the profession of the shorthand writer was a dangerous one. The Roman empire decreed shortly after Tiro's death that shorthand writers who took notes of heretical doctrines should have their hands cut off, and Emperor Severus (145–211), who himself trained in shorthand, ordered that shorthand writers who made a mistake should have the tendons in their wrists cut and be banished from the empire for life.[4]

Some believe that St Luke used shorthand to record the Sermon on the Mount, and that St Paul dictated his epistles to the Colossians to a scribe called Tertius, who appears strikingly in Romans 16:22: "I Tertius, who wrote this letter, salute you in the Lord." Frédéric Louis Godet (1812–1900) remarked upon Paul's exquisite courtesy in leaving Tertius to salute in his own name. It is a remarkable passage, and there are similar ones in the Bible.[5] But eternal words were a threat, and the Emperor Justinian (483–565) in the 6th century decreed that no records should be kept in shorthand, which he defined as "catches and short-cut riddles of signs", while Frederick II (1194–1250) banned it as "necromantic and diabolical".[6] An even more worrying development for reporters than Severus's treatment was the growth in Imperial China, and then in Byzantium, of the use of eunuch scribes, but the practice never developed in England, although English scribes had their own challenges. As one commented in the 10th century: "Because one who does not know how to write thinks it no labour, I will describe it for you, if you want to know how great is the burden of writing: it mists the eyes, it curves the back, it breaks the belly and the ribs, it fills the kidneys with pain, and the body with all kinds of suffering… For as the last port is sweet to the sailor, so the last line to the scribe."[7]

4 See *The Rotarian*, September 1948; *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.

5 See Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on Romans*, 1982 edn. Other examples of a scribe appearing in the Bible include: "See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!" (Galatians 6:11); "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you." (Colossians 4:18); "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write." (Thessalonians 3:17); "I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self." (Philemon 1:19).

6 See JN Larned, *The New Larned History: For Ready Reference, Reading and Research*, 1922; TA Reed, *The Shorthand Writer: A Complete Guide to the Commercial, Professional, and other Uses of Shorthand*, 1892.

7 http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2014/06/the-burden-of-writing-scribes-in-medieval-manuscripts.html, accessed 24 April 2015.

2

The Origins of Parliamentary Reporting

The history of parliamentary reporting in Britain and Ireland involves similar themes, with political power attracting scribes, the elevation of the status of such writers, a reaction against the power of the word and a ban on writing. Magna Carta, the Oxford Councils and de Montfort's Parliament marked huge shifts in the relationship between the monarch and other focuses of power, but the essential relationship between power and the scribe stayed the same, and parliamentary reporting was beneficial but dangerous and finally banned, until, by the end of the 18th century, it was accepted on sufferance.

The word 'parliament' was first used in English in a royal document in 1236, under Henry III (1207–72), but this was four centuries before the appearance of the first reports of parliamentary speeches.[8] Some of our knowledge during this early period is from chroniclers, one of whom praises Sir Peter de la Mare (died in 1387), the first known Speaker, for his "amazing eloquence", but we know nothing of the words he spoke.[9] Our knowledge of what happened in the early Parliaments is based on rolls, petitions and statutes; for instance, we know from a Chancery Roll that in 1376 the Commons met separately from the peers. An early record, dating from 1425, states:

Being come to the Palace, he [the infant king, Henry VI (1421–71)] was from thence conducted to the House of Lords, and sat on his mother's knee on the Throne. 'It was a strange sight,' said one, 'and the first time it was ever seen in England, an infant sitting in his mother's lap, and even before it could tell what English meant, to exercise the place of sovereign direction in open Parliament'.[10]

Words were powerful and therefore dangerous, and Parliament regulated them carefully, partly because what was said in Parliament was felt to be unfit for public consumption, and partly to protect Members from the wrath of the monarch for using seditious language. The first record in the *Commons Journals* of action being taken against unauthorised disclosure was in 1626, when "one Turnor, dwelling without Westminster Hall door", was alleged to have sold a copy of Charles I's remonstrance before the king had delivered it. He was sent for by the Serjeant at Arms, but "answer brought he was not within".[11] Another offender was caught some years later, in 1640, when Overton, a stationer, was summoned to kneel at the bar for printing an order, and given a "sharp reprehension" from the Speaker.[12] Harsher treatment was given to Lord Digby the following year, when he printed his speech on the Bill of Attainder, and the Commons decreed that it should be "burnt publickly by the hands of the common hangman".[13] Diaries were also kept by Members, among them Symonds D'Ewes (1602–50), who knew shorthand and provided a key source for our knowledge of 17th-century parliamentary history.

8 Peter Ackroyd, *History of England* vol. 1, 2011, p 199.

9 See, e.g., http://www.globalethicsnetwork.org/profiles/blogs/the-parliament-of-england, accessed 24 April 2015.

10 Horace Maybray King (ed), *Before Hansard*, 1968, p 3.

11 *Commons Journals*, vol 1, pp 843–4, quoted in MacDonagh, *The Reporters' Gallery*, 1913, p 82.

12 *Commons Journals*, vol 2, p 65, quoted in MacDonagh, *Reporters' Gallery*, p 83.

13 *Commons Journals*, vol 2, p 208, quoted in MacDonagh, *Reporters' Gallery*, p 83.

MPs wrote private accounts at this and later periods, but it should be noted that they did so for their own reasons, and not necessarily to distribute parliamentary news.

Two developments made the prevention of unauthorised disclosure increasingly difficult; the first was the invention of the printing press—sheer numbers of copies made their distribution so much harder to regulate—and the second was the growth of newspapers, or news-books, in the early 17th century, when Parliament was establishing and consolidating its position. The demand for news was intense, as Parliament and the monarch battled through the civil war, and it was possible to make a living from reporting Parliament. For instance, the so-called Long Parliament, which first met in November 1640 and sat intermittently until its final dissolution in 1660, wanted to use the propaganda power of accounts of its proceedings, and, as Simon Schama says, reports of speeches started appearing from the 1640s onwards.[14]

An early parliamentary report in the House of Lords Library is entitled *Mr Speaker's Speech, Before the King, in the Lords House of Parliament, 3rd July 1641*. William Lenthall (1591–1662) was Speaker of the House of Commons during the Long Parliament. From the start of the Long Parliament, the Commons mounted a series of challenges to Charles I's autocratic rule, asserting parliamentary control over taxation and passing a Bill providing for new parliaments to be elected every three years. On the occasion of this short speech, Speaker Lenthall, on behalf of the Commons, presented to the King three Bills for Royal Assent. One of the Bills provided for the abolition of the widely hated Court of Star Chamber, which had become notorious for making judgments favourable to the King's interests and for persecuting religious and political dissenters. Although the tone of Lenthall's speech was conciliatory, relations between the King and Parliament continued to deteriorate. On 4 January 1642, the King walked into the Commons Chamber determined to arrest

"Speaker Lenthall Asserting the Privileges of the Commons Against Charles I when the Attempt was made to Seize the Five Members". Charles I is standing on the steps of the Speaker's Chair and Speaker Lenthall is kneeling before him. A clerk at the table writes down the exchange. The Commons Journal entry for 4 January 1642 records that the king said, "Gentlemen, I am sorry to have this occasion to come to you."

14 Simon Schama, *A History of Britain*, 2001, vol 2, p 77, where he points out, "Reports of speeches would not be printed until the Long Parliament in 1642", although parliamentary news began circulating in 'sixpenny separates' in the 1620s.


THE
Diurnall Occurrences,
OR
Dayly Proceedings
PARLIAMENT,
WITH

The Diurnall Occurrences was first published in 1641 and is the first official report of debates in Parliament. Later renamed *A Perfect Diurnall,* the journals provide reports of Parliament throughout the 1640s.

"George II in Parliament 1741–2. A View of the House of Peers." George II is seated on the throne in the old House of Lords in 1742, with Speaker Onslow and the House of Commons in attendance.

the five MPs who were leading the opposition to him, only to find that they had fled. When Charles questioned Lenthall as to their whereabouts, the Speaker is reported to have said:

> **May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as this house is pleased to direct me whose servant I am here; and humbly beg your Majesty's pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this is to what your Majesty is pleased to demand of me.**

The King withdrew, humiliated, and civil war broke out the following August.

The Court of Star Chamber had another influence on the history of parliamentary reporting, through its decision in the early 1640s to publish its judicial proceedings. This was first done in a news-book called "The Diurnall of Occurrences or Dayly Proceedings of Both Houses, in this Great and Happy Parliament, from 3 November 1640 to 3 November 1641", and later renamed *A Perfect Diurnall.* The *Diurnalls* were published weekly from July 1643 until November 1649, and were edited by Samuel Pecke, a scrivener who had a stall in Westminster Hall. A typical entry from the weekly edition for 14 to 21 March 1641 reads:

> **There were diverse Letters read in the House of Commons… That the Proclamation which came from the King, requiring the Rebells immediately to lay down their Arms, or that they otherwise should bee prosecuted with fire and sword, as Traitors to the Crowne, takes no effect with them; But they have lately taken a new oath of Confederacy against the King and his liege people. That the Lords Justices are resolved very suddenly to send a strong Army into the *Pale*, to burn, spoile and destroy the Rebells there and to beat them off from before Drogheda, for that the Rebellion had its first root from the *Pale*.**

They were published by authority, making them the first official report published by Parliament; the next *Official Report* was not established until 1909. Parliament had sought to keep its deliberations secret from the monarch during the revolution, but following Charles' execution, Parliament still wanted to protect its right to debate in private, now in order to keep reports of debates from the population.

The passage of the Bill of Rights in 1689 might have made reporting parliamentary speeches commonplace—one of its provisions stated: "That the ffreedome of Speech and Debates

or Proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament"—but Parliament did not want to make its proceedings public. Just five years after the enactment of the Bill of Rights, Parliament passed this resolution: "That no news-letter writers do in their letters, or other papers that they disperse, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of the House".[15] Parliament was not ready to embrace the accountability that publishing its debates represented.

The growing print industry fought to overcome Parliament's ban on publishing—there was money to be made—and turned from news-books to newsletters, which were exempt from prosecution because they were produced privately and circulated only among subscribers. Parliament fought back. One newsletter writer, John Dyer (1653/4–1713), was the first in a long line of editors, publishers, printers and reporters to be brought to the Bar of the House. In 1694, the *Journal* records that the charge against Dyer was that he "presumed in his news-letter to take notice of the proceedings of the House", and he was "upon his knees reprimanded by the Speaker for his great presumption". Dyer was a repeat offender in the following years, but this outright ban drew the battle lines between Parliament and the press.

Publishers sought to avoid Parliament's control by changing format, and monthly magazines became the new way to publish parliamentary reports. Abel Boyer led the way, setting up *The Political State of Great Britain* in 1711, subtitling the work *An Impartial Account of the most material Occurrences, Ecclesiastical, Civil, and Military, in a Monthly Letter to a Friend in Holland*. It included reports of proceedings in Parliament, with speakers sometimes disguised as "Lord H—x" or "Sir J—n P—y", identified sometimes by their initials and sometimes directly. He was jailed for six days and fined by Parliament, but he carried on his reports, and Parliament turned a blind eye. As his work was useful, politicians supplied him with copies of their speeches, and he was sometimes able to obtain 'ear-witness' of the debates.

The *Political State* ended shortly after Boyer's death in 1729, but there were commercial opportunities to exploit, and Edward Cave (1691–1754) was one of several who moved in to exploit them. In 1731, he founded *The Gentleman's Magazine*, another new format, and a year later he began reporting parliamentary speeches in it, despite having spent a fortnight in jail in the late 1720s for the same activity. In his *Dictionary*, Samuel Johnson (1709–84) says this of the word "magazine": "Of late, this word has signified a miscellaneous pamphlet, from a periodical miscellany named the Gentleman's Magazine by Edward Cave".[16] Johnson looked on Cave with kind eyes because Cave employed Johnson when he first arrived in London, hoping to make his name as a dramatist, and put Johnson to work as a parliamentary reporter, using the new ruse of publishing proceedings during the recesses. Parliament was furious with Cave's publications.


The Gentleman's Magazine :

ST JOHN'S GATE

For JANUARY, 1742.

CONTAINING,

The front page of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, with the St John's Gate design. Dr Samuel Johnson wrote reports of parliamentary speeches for the magazine 1738–42.

15 *Commons Journals*, vol 11, pp 192–3.

16 He defined a politician in this way: "1. One versed in the arts of government; one skilled in politicks. 2. A man of artifice; one of deep contrivance."

Sir Robert Walpole (1676–1745), the Prime Minister, led Parliament's response, and in 1738 the Commons passed this resolution:

> **That it is a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of, this House for any news-writer in letters or other papers…to give therein any account of the doings or other proceedings of this House, or any Committee thereof, as well during the recess as the sitting of Parliament, and this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offenders.**

During the debate, Walpole had complained:

> **that he had been made to speak the very reverse of what he meant. He had read debates wherein all the wit, the learning, and the argument had been thrown to one side, and on the other nothing, but what was low, mean, and ridiculous.**[17]

The following month, the *London Magazine*, a competitor of Cave's magazine, came up with a way of subverting Parliament's latest resolution: to publish debates as if they were discussions in a Roman political club. In June 1739, Cave and Johnson followed suit. In a reference to *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), they reported speeches as the "Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia", with the Commons as the House of Clinabs, the Lords Hurgoes, and lightly disguised names: for example, Walpole was 'Waleup' and Sir John Barnard became the Hurgolen 'Branard'. For three years, Johnson wrote all the parliamentary speeches published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

He said he had "never been in Parliament but once", and James Boswell (1740–95) says he worked from "scanty notes" that Cave took from "some concealed station". Johnson proudly—and provocatively—claimed that he was careful to ensure that "the Whig dogs should not have the best of it". The speeches are beautifully written, passionate, engaging and elegant; Voltaire is said to have exclaimed, when he read them, that the "eloquence of Greece and Rome was revived in the British senate". Some critics, including Boswell, argue that the individual voices of speakers are missing, and that the speeches feel more like essays than the words of politicians debating an issue. One contemporary said of them: "It must be acknowledged that Johnson did not give so much what the speakers respectively said, as what they ought to have said."[18] Johnson allegedly recanted on his deathbed, all his parliamentary reporting writings, and there are significant doubts about the accuracy of his reporting. At a dinner party years later, the actor Samuel Foote (1721–77) said that a speech by William Pitt the elder (1708–78) was better than anything delivered by Demosthenes, but Johnson punctured the eulogy with the pithy retort, "That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter-street". Whether or not he recanted, Johnson's beautiful work forms a milestone in the history of parliamentary reporting. Johnson's association with the *Gentleman's Magazine* brought Cave the rewards he sought—according to an early biographer of Johnson, circulation increased 50 percent and Cave "manifested his good fortune by buying an old coach and a pair of older horses", while instead of his coat of arms on the door, Cave proudly displayed St John's Gate, the illustration at the top of each edition of his magazine.

17 *The Parliamentary History of England, From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, vol 10, col 809.

18 Charles J Gratton, *The Gallery: A Sketch of the History of Parliamentary Reporting and Reporters*, 1860, p 25.

"John Wilkes MP". John Wilkes was first expelled from Parliament and outlawed in 1764, and continuing clashes with George III and the Commons saw him elected to Parliament and expelled four more times. Public appetite for news of his campaigns helped the newspaper industry grow. Whitely writes, "Wilkes was fairly free from vanity. He was notoriously one of the ugliest men in London", and this portrait was said to be flattering.

3

The Expansion of Parliamentary Reporting

The so-called unreported Parliament of 1768 to 1774 witnessed a revolution in parliamentary reporting. The popular campaigns of the radical MP John Wilkes (1725–97) in the 1760s increased the public appetite for parliamentary news, and some London newspapers began to provide short summaries of debates in both Houses. One way parliamentarians stopped such publications appearing was to insist that the House be cleared of 'strangers' to prevent anyone, including the reporters, from attending. A successful attempt was made in the Lords on 10 December 1770, when MPs and other visitors were violently turned out.[19] Having returned to the Commons, the MP Issac Barré, who had been in the Upper Chamber at the time, recalled:

> **It seemed as if a very extraordinary mob had broke in: and they certainly acted in a very extraordinary way. One of the heads of the mob—for there were two—was a Scotchman [the Earl of Marchmont (1708–94)]. I heard him call out several times 'Clear the Hoose! Clear the Hoose!' The face of the other [the Earl of Denbigh (1719–1800)] was hardly human; for he had contrived to put on a nose of an enormous size, that disfigured him completely, and his eyes started out of his head in so frightful a way, that he seemed to be undergoing the operation of being strangled.[20]**

In retaliation, the Commons closed its doors to peers and other people who wished to listen to its debates.

Another means of intimidating the press was for the parliamentary authorities to enforce its order against the publication of debates. In February 1771, the Commons summoned two newspaper printers to the bar and, when they failed to appear, ordered their arrest. However, the printers—protected by Wilkes and his supporters—sought refuge in the City of London, where the magistrates insisted that only City officials could make arrests within its jurisdiction. For refusing its orders to hand over the printers, the Commons then imprisoned two of the City magistrates, the Lord Mayor Brass Crosby (1725–93) and Alderman Richard Oliver (1735–84), who were both MPs, in the Tower of London. However, public opinion was on the side of the newspapers and political stalemate was reached. When Crosby and Oliver's confinement lapsed at the end of the parliamentary session that summer, the Commons tacitly conceded defeat, finding itself effectively powerless to control the publication of its debates.[21] Wilkes was apparently ready to provoke a similar confrontation with the Lords a few years later, but the challenge proved unnecessary.[22] The ban on strangers meant that there were few further newspaper reports of either House during the rest of that Parliament.

Once the next Parliament met in 1774, parliamentary reporting in the newspapers expanded very rapidly. Newspaper coverage of the Irish Parliament began at the same time and expanded just as quickly as in Britain.[23]

19 *Parliamentary History of England*, vol 16, cols 1317–19.

20 J Wright (ed), *Sir Henry Cavendish's Debates of the House of Commons, during the Thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain, Commonly called the Unreported Parliament*, 1841, vol 2, p 162.

21 PDG Thomas, 'The Beginning of Parliamentary Reporting in Newspapers, 1768–1774', *English Historical Review*, 1959, vol 74, pp 628–30.

22 WC Lowe, 'Peers and Printers: The Beginnings of Sustained Press Coverage in the House of Lords in the 1770s', *Parliamentary History*, 1988, vol 7, p 248.

23 Stephen Farrell, 'Peers and the Press in Late-18th-Century Ireland', *Parliamentary History*, 2013, vol 32, p 378.

Even as early as 1781, Lord Mornington (1760–1840)—better known as Marquess Wellesley, the elder brother of the Duke of Wellington (1769–1852)—could declare in the Irish House of Lords: "The printers, both here and in England, have, from immemorial usage, acquired a kind of right to publish the debates of parliament".[24] The de facto lifting of reporting restrictions coincided with and was related to a massive expansion in the number of newspaper titles and in the size of their readership. The London press tended to dominate, although many provincial papers also provided extensive parliamentary coverage. Newspapers also competed on the thoroughness of their parliamentary reporting. In its first issue on 1 January 1785, *The Daily Universal Register*—soon renamed *The Times*—boasted that it would be published at 6 am daily, and would "have this advantage over the *Daily Advertiser*, that, though published as early, it will contain a substantial account of the proceedings in Parliament the preceding night". Like other papers, *The Times* prided itself on giving its readers earlier, fuller and more accurate reports. The *Morning Chronicle, u*nder its editor James Perry (1756–1821), was a pioneer in introducing a team of reporters working in a rota, rather than relying on a single reporter for both Houses, which improved efficiency; his connection with the doorkeepers helped to secure access to the gallery for his reporters.[25] Newspapers tended to have a strong political bias, but their parliamentary coverage was generally non-partisan, although a distinct class bias has been detected during the troubled 1790s.[26] *The Times* gave some of the fullest accounts of debates—much fuller than *Hansard* in the 1820s, for example—and in the late 19th century had the biggest team of reporters.[27] Its then pre-eminence as the source of parliamentary debates, at a time when *Hansard* was not published overnight, owed much to its ability to publish full accounts the following day.

Press accounts of parliamentary debates set out as a 'script' over several columns—the source material for *Hansard* for many decades—were a major feature of most newspapers until the last quarter of the 20th century. Parliamentary journalism also developed two other specialisms that were distinct from, but intimately bound up with, the history of parliamentary reporting during the late 19th century. One was the practice of providing, often as an addition to the main report, a detailed summary of the previous day's parliamentary debates. In the able hands of the *Punch* sketch writer Henry Lucy (1843–1924), for instance, that form of journalism mutated into the humorous parliamentary sketches that are still written to this day. The other was the rise of the lobby correspondents—reporters allowed to enter the Members Lobby—as political journalists based at Westminster. They established themselves as the official Press Gallery in 1881, and their members now work not only for print publications, but for broadcast, web and social media.[28]

24 James Kelly (ed), *Proceedings of the Irish House of Lords, 1771–1800*, 2008, vol 1, p 163.

25 Andrew Sparrow, *Obscure Scribblers: A History of Parliamentary Journalism*, 2003, pp 27, 44.

26 Dror Wahrman, 'Virtual Representation: Parliamentary Reporting and the Languages of Class in the 1790s', *Past and Present*, 1992, no 163, p 83.

27 Sparrow, *Obscure Scribblers*, pp 45, 52.

28 ibid pp 48, 53–63.

"House of Lords as the Court of Requests". State opening in the House of Lords (sitting in the old Court of Requests); the monarch is thought to be William IV.

Another form of parliamentary reporting was developed by the Gurney family of shorthand writers. Joseph Gurney (1744–1815), whose father had developed Gurney's shorthand as a court reporter, undertook work for Parliament from about 1783. His son William Brodie Gurney (1777–1855), who followed in the family tradition, was appointed as the official shorthand writer to both Houses in 1813, with responsibility for providing transcripts of evidence from witnesses examined at the bar or in Committee.[29] Such select committee evidence was then usually printed by order of the relevant House. The family firm of WB Gurney and Sons—usually known as Gurney's—continued to fulfil this official function until 2010 in one of the longest lasting contracts in English legal history.

29 William Law, *Our Hansard or The True Mirror of Parliament*, 1950, pp 13–14.

"William 'Memory' Woodfall". William Woodfall is often known as the father of modern parliamentary reporting. He was the printer and editor of the *Morning Chronicle* and later produced his own newspaper, *The Diary*. His ability to stand silently by the Bar of the House for hours on end and later the same night report the speeches earned him the nickname 'Memory'.

4

Reporters and Reporting in the Early 19th Century

The early parliamentary reporters had to contend not only with restrictions on their right to compile accounts of debates, but with physical limitations on their ability to do so. In the Lords, there was no gallery for the reporters, who had to stand below the Bar and were not allowed to take notes. The Scot John Campbell (1779–1861), who worked as a reporter as a young man and eventually became Lord Chancellor, remarked: "Very extraordinary rules then prevailed on this subject in that noble house, and they were rigidly enforced." Campbell recalled how the celebrated William 'Memory' Woodfall (1745–1803) operated as almost the sole newspaper reporter in the Lords:

> **Immediately after prayers he took his post at the bar, leaning over it, and there he remained till the House adjourned. He then went home and wrote his report, which he sent to the printing-office. The Lords were punished for their absurd regulations by a very vapid and pointless account of their speeches.[30]**

In fact, Woodfall's reputation for accuracy relied not only on his extraordinary resilience and powers of recall, but on securing Members' own notes, cross-checking with other published reports and verifying facts and quotations.[31] It is not clear at what point note-taking was allowed, but one anecdote shows that it was tolerated by the 1820s: when the imposing figure of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon (1751–1838), accidentally knocked a reporter's notebook out of his hand near the Bar of the House, he made no move to remonstrate with the reporter, but bent down to pick up the notebook for him. This was taken as a sign, particularly by the doorkeepers who would otherwise have enforced the ban, that the reporter and his colleagues would not be hindered in their work.[32]

The reporting problems in the Commons were similar to those in the Lords, although by the last two decades of the 18th century the Commons reporters were at least permitted to take longhand notes from which to write up their reports. According to another reporter William Jerdan (1782–1869), afterwards editor of the *Literary Gazette*:

> **in the olden system, nearly the whole staff of every paper, on great occasions, had to wait with the crowd till the doors were opened at noon, force their way with great struggle into the gallery, and secure as well as they could the back seat, not only as the best for hearing but as having no neighbours behind them to help the motion of their pencils with their knees and elbows.[33]**

The back of the gallery, which was opposite the Speaker's Chair, was not the best place for identifying Members who spoke from seats beneath the gallery, and reporters could not always get to their places, particularly for major debates. When it was feared that they would be excluded from the House during an

30 Mrs Hardcastle (ed), *Life of John, Lord Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain: Consisting of a Selection from his Autobiography, Diary, and Letters*, 1881, vol 1, p 108.

31 Arthur Aspinall, 'The Reporting and Publishing of the House of Commons Debates, 1771–1834', in Richard Pares and A. J. P. Taylor (eds), *Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier*, 1956, pp 237–8, 241–2.

32 SC Hall, *Retrospect of a Long Life: From 1815 to 1883*, 1883, 66; MacDonagh, *Reporters' Gallery*, pp 355–6.

33 [William Jerdan], *The Autobiography of William Jerdan*, 1852–3, vol 1, pp 84–5.

important speech by William Pitt the younger (1759–1806), Speaker Abbot (1757–1829) arranged, as he recorded in his diary on 24 May 1803:

> **that the gallery door should be opened every day, if required, at twelve; and the Serjeant [at Arms] would let the housekeeper understand that the 'newswriters' might be let in their usual places (the back row of the gallery).[34]**

The ban on parliamentary reporters was lifted not by a standing order in each House but by the Speaker's diary entry and the Lord Chancellor's picking up a notebook; such was the slender beginning of official reporting of Parliament.

Of his time as a reporter, when he often transcribed whole speeches, John Campbell wrote that "I knew nothing, and did not desire to know anything, of *short-hand*." He thought that shorthand writers simply recorded the words without understanding the meaning and context. For him, parliamentary reporting was a higher calling that demanded greater powers, including literary talent. He advised that the reporter:

> **should take down notes in abbreviated longhand as rapidly as he can for aids to his memory. He must then retire to his room, and, looking at these, recollect the speech as it was delivered, and give it with all fidelity, point and spirit, as the speaker would write it out as if preparing it for the press.[35]**

As another reporter, James Stephen (1758–1832), who worked in the gallery while training to become a lawyer, wrote:

> **in the effort to report from recollection, the Reporter will be naturally led, if not even irresistibly drawn, to give preference and prominency to those speeches or passages which produced the best effect.[36]**

Even as late as the 1870s, James Grant (1802–79) maintained that Commons reporters who took only longhand notes were often the best reporters. He gave the example of a fine writer, John Tyas of *The Times*, who

"House of Lords 1859". The Houses of Parliament were rebuilt after the fire of 1834. Parliamentary reporters worked from the public gallery (not shown), where acoustics were notoriously bad.

34 Charles, Lord Colchester (ed), *The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1802–1817*, 1861, vol 1, p 421.

35 *Life of John, Lord Campbell*, vol 1, pp 105–7.

36 Merle M Bevington (ed), *The Memoirs of James Stephen: Written by Himself for the Use of his Children*, 1954, p 292.

never wrote shorthand:

> **yet was admitted on all hands to be the best reporter in the Gallery; and as a proof of that there was a sort of rivalry among speakers as to who should have him when addressing the House.**[37]

At the turn of the 19th century, the reporters gallery briefly included Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) and William Hazlitt (1778–1830), who, like Dr Johnson before them and Charles Dickens (1812–70) afterwards, should be seen as masters of the reporting art, not just great writers in the making.[38] The gallery could be a boisterous place. For seating himself in the front row of the gallery and telling the messenger who ordered him to stop writing to "Go to Hell", Peter Finnerty (*c.*1766–1822) of *The Times*, who had served a prison term for libel, was reprimanded by the Speaker on 15 June 1819.[39] On the same day, another reporter, John Payne Collier (1789–1883), whose literary forgeries later ruined his career, had to apologise for a serious misreport in a previous debate. Among his excuses were that he could not follow the MP's argument because of "the number of persons passing and re-passing the seat which I occupied", being misinformed about what had happened by a stranger seated in front of him and the inconvenience arising from one reporter "going on [replacing another] in the middle of a speech". He also pleaded that the usual practice was to write notes "on small slips of paper, which, the moment they are finished, are put into the hands of the printer", meaning "that there was no time left for deliberation".[40] He escaped with a severe reprimand the following day.[41]

In 1810, the MP William Windham (1750–1810) was dismissive of the reporters, among whom he said were "to be found men of all descriptions: bankrupts, lottery-office keepers, footmen or decayed tradesmen", but in another debate, the Irish playwright and MP Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), the celebrated defender of the fourth estate, insisted that most reporters were graduates of the great universities and men of literary distinction.[42] Shorthand increasingly became a requirement for performing their role, and one of the masters of the art was Charles Dickens, who wrote about the months of practice needed to learn shorthand by his eponymous hero in chapter 38 of *David Copperfield*. Late in life, Dickens, who was a parliamentary reporter in the 1830s for *The Mirror of Parliament*, a short-lived rival to *Hansard*, and the *Morning Chronicle*, recalled:

> **I have worn my knees by writing on them in the old back row of the old gallery of the old House of Commons, and I have worn my feet by standing in a preposterous pen in the House of Lords, where we used to huddle together like so many sheep—kept in waiting, say, till the Woolsack might want re-stuffing.**[43]

The reporters were allotted seats in the new gallery in the Lords Chamber in late 1831. Following the fire of 1834, which destroyed most of the old Palace of Westminster, a gallery was installed for reporters in the temporary Commons Chamber, and both the Chambers in the rebuilt Palace of Westminster had dedicated seats for the reporters.[44]

37 James Grant, *The Newspaper Press: Its Origin, Progress and Present Position*, 1871–2, vol 2, p 197.

38 Nikki Hessell, *Literary Authors, Parliamentary Writers: Johnson, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Dickens*, 2012.

39 *Hansard*, 15 June 1819, cols 1182–8.

40 ibid 15 June 1819, cols 1163–5.

41 ibid 16 June 1819, cols 1195–9.

42 ibid 6 February 1810, col 330; 23 March 1810, col 30**.

43 Hessell, *Literary Authors, Parliamentary Writers*, p 131.

44 Sparrow, *Obscure Scribblers*, pp 39–41.

Parliamentary reporters for the newspapers needed to be proficient in shorthand and had to have extensive knowledge of politics and a strong grasp of the English language. In a petition presented to the Lords on 18 May 1849, the newspaper reporters captured the many different skills involved. They noted:

> That the Qualifications of an efficient Reporter in the Houses of Parliament are of a peculiar and varied Character, comprising, amongst others, the following:
>
> 1. The Power of taking down words as uttered by the Speaker with Accuracy, so as to have on Paper the Materials from which to draw up a faithful Transcript;
> 2. Experience in the Forms of Parliamentary Proceedings;
> 3. A general Acquaintance with the leading public Questions which come under Discussion from Time to Time;
> 4. And, closely connected with the preceding, a competent Acquaintance with general History, Politics and Literature, and with the Institutions, Commerce, Trade and Manufactures of the United Kingdom and its Dependencies, together with a general Knowledge of Foreign Politics;
> 5. Facility and Accuracy in Composition;
> 6. The Power, arising in a great degree from the Possession of the foregoing Qualifications, of apprehending quickly the Meaning of a Speaker, of detecting accidental Mistakes and Inadvertencies, and of following a Chain of Reasoning, so as to be able to prepare a Report for Publication, without deviating from strict Fidelity.[45]

When Thomas Wemyss Reid (1842–1905) joined the Commons gallery in 1867, he found the reporters rather 'clannish' and unwelcoming, and that most of the work of 'writing out' their shorthand notes had to be done in "two wretched little cabins, ill-lit and ill-ventilated, immediately behind the Gallery".[46] At some point, the authorities made Committee Room 18 available for reporters to use in the evening, meaning that they had more space and no longer needed to return to their newspaper's offices to complete their work.[47] Reid also wrote of the then chief of the reporting staff for the *Morning Star*:

> **His mind was stored with reminiscences of the Gallery in the day when the status of a Parliamentary reporter was hardly recognised even in the House of Commons itself. Like so many of the Gallery men of this time, his mind seemed to be limited to the little society of which he was a conspicuous member.[48]**

According to James Grant, by that time the reporters had "a higher tone and style" than at the start of the century, and in any case "were worked too hard to have any leisure". He remarked that parliamentary reporting "was mere pastime, even so lately as fifty years ago; now it is one of the most laborious and responsible professions in which any one could engage".[49]

45 *Lords Journals*, vol 81, p 227.

46 Stuart J Reid (ed), *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid, 1842–1885*, 1905, pp 122–3.

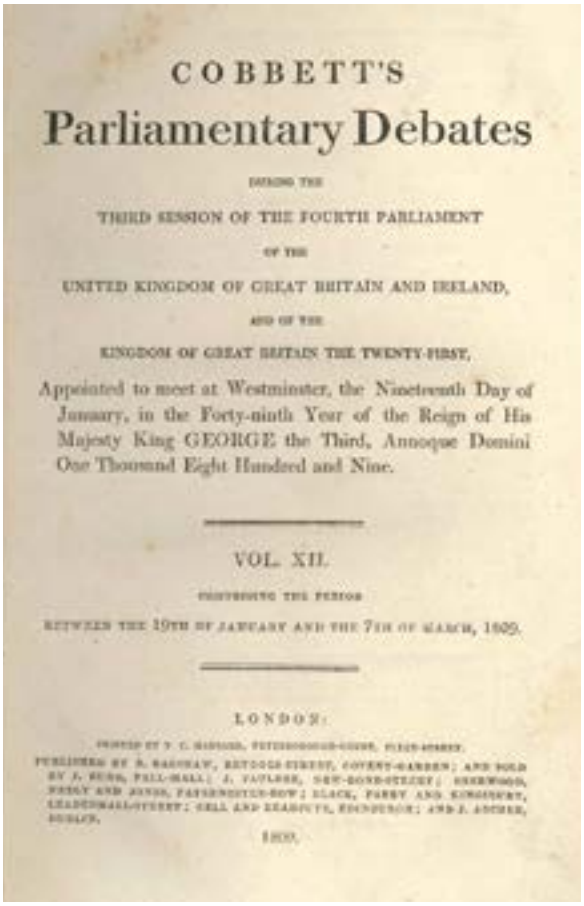
47 Sparrow, *Obscure Scribblers*, pp 44–5.

48 *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid*, pp 121–2.

49 Grant, *Newspaper Press*, vol 2, p 243.

5

The Creation of *Hansard*



COBBETT'S

Parliamentary Debates

THIRD SESSION OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,

KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN THE TWENTY-FIRST,

Appointed to meet at Westminster, the Nineteenth Day of January, in the Forty-ninth Year of the Reign of His Majesty King GEORGE the Third, Annoque Domini One Thousand Eight Hundred and Nine.

VOL. XII.

LONDON:

1809.

The title page of *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, 1809. William Cobbett published parliamentary debates 1803–12, when bankruptcy forced him to sell the work to his publisher, Thomas Curson Hansard, who later reprinted the 22 Cobbett volumes under the Hansard name.

The commercial expansion of parliamentary publishing in the late 18th century quickly led to serial compilations of debates. Ireland was ahead of Great Britain in that a series of 17 volumes of the Irish *Parliamentary Register* appeared in Dublin between 1782 and 1801, covering the debates of the Irish House of Commons (and occasionally the Lords) from 1781 to 1797. In London, a similar venture was begun in 1766 by John Almon (1737–1805), a London printer and bookseller. He published accounts of parliamentary debates in the *London Evening Post* in 1768, but he also produced the *Debates and Proceedings of the British House of Commons*, which covered the period 1743 to 1774 in 11 volumes, and he brought out 17 volumes of a British version of the *Parliamentary Register* to cover the Commons and the Lords between 1774 and 1780. That series was continued in another 63 volumes for the period from 1780 to 1802 by John Debrett, a publisher who gave his name to the *Peerage* and other publications. Other long-running publications included William Woodfall's *An Impartial Report of the Debates that occur in the Two Houses of Parliament* (1794–1803) and *The Senator; or Clarendon's Parliamentary Chronicle* (1790–1802).

That was the context in which William Cobbett (1763–1835) first created what was to become *Hansard*. Cobbett proudly called his autobiography *From The Progress of a Plough-boy to a Seat in Parliament*, and in the course of that journey he is said to have published 14 million words in his name. He was a fervent believer in providing his readers with every possible piece

of information that they needed to form their political opinions. His weekly *Political Register*, first published in 1802, included accounts of proceedings in Parliament, but he reserved "the Debates, corrected and at full length" to a supplement, issued every six months as part of *Cobbett's Annual Political Register*. With much detailed information, including lists of Members and other parliamentary materials, such as select committee reports, the aim was to provide "a Parliamentary Register…much more complete, as well as interesting, than any other that has been published".[50] By 1804, Cobbett had decided that the supplement of parliamentary debates should appear as a separate publication.

The first volume of *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates* was published in 1804 to cover the start—22 November 1803 to 29 March 1804—of the second session of the second Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, printed by Cox and Baylis of Great Queen Street. Curiously, the first 384 columns were numbered 1521 to 1904, because they had already been printed as such in volume 4 of *Cobbett's Annual Political Register*, and the next 192 columns were numbered 993 to 1184, because they had already been set up, but were not in fact used for, its volume 5. Evidently, his publication plans had recently changed, but that did not prevent Cobbett from boasting in an 'Advertisement':

> **The Debates, in this work, are given at much greater length, and with much greater precision, than it was ever before attempted to give Parliamentary Debates. Neither care, labour, nor expense has been spared. Aid of every kind has been resorted to; and, in most instances, with perfect success.**

With an eye to posterity, Cobbett added:

> **As the work has, in the short space of half a session, attained to such an extent of circulation, and such a degree of pre-eminence, as fully to warrant the supposition, that it is the *only* compilation at all likely to be regarded as an authentic Record of the Legislative Proceedings of the present time, so the Editor confidently assures the Public, that success, however conspicuous and flattering, will produce no relaxation in his labour or his care; but that it will, on the contrary, operate as a stimulus to the attainment of still greater perfection.**[51]

His words were prophetic, but they were to be associated not with his name, but that of his successor: they could be said to encapsulate the aspiration that the reporters still bring to their role today.

Thomas Curson Hansard (1776–1833) of Peterborough Court, Fleet Street, first appeared as the printer of *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates* on the title page of volume 10 (1808), a few years after Hansard had left his father's business to strike out on his own. From 1811, TC Hansard is listed on the title page as one of the publishers of *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*. Luke Hansard (1752–1828) strongly disapproved of his son's association with Cobbett, not least after Cobbett's outspoken criticism of the Government on the flogging of militiamen led to the imprisonment of Cobbett and TC Hansard.[52] Such convictions were an occupational hazard for any printer who provoked the Government into applying its extensive legal powers against radical publications .[53] As the printer of the *Political Register*, Hansard was sentenced to three months in prison, "to the astonishment of all England", as he recalled. He viewed his imprisonment philosophically:

> **On this subject I speak *feelingly*… One pleasing reflection emanating from this affair has continued, ever since, to radiate on my mind; and I trust it ever will to the last hour of my memory. Though, after all, I can only claim the honour of having been the mechanical agent in this publication, and of having suffered**

50 *Cobbett's Annual Political Register* (1803), vol 2, pp iii, v.

51 *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, vol 1, pp iii, iv.

52 JC Trewin and EM King, *Printer to the House: The Story of Hansard*, 1952, pp 94–101.

53 Ben Wilson, *The Laughter of Triumph: William Hone and the Fight for the Free Press*, 2005, pp 76–8.

"The Home Rule Debate in House of Lords 1893 Lord Chancellor about to Put the Question". The parliamentary reporter sits at the desk in the centre of the Lords Chamber, behind the three clerks, writing with a feather quill pen. The Lords voted against Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill by 419 votes to 41.

> *three months* **durance on account of it, yet I rejoice that it…has done so much towards saving our warriors from the disgraceful laceration inflicted, often for the most venial offences, by the lash of the cat-o'-nine-tails.**[54]

Cobbett was forced into bankruptcy by the imprisonment and fines, and Hansard bought him out. In volume 22, the last to be called *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, it was announced that Cobbett had disposed of his interest in the work to a new editor, who would continue it on the same basis.[55] The next volume was entitled simply *Parliamentary Debates*, and the following one made it clear that the work was "Published under the Superintendence of T. C. Hansard".[56] To underline the point, in 1812 Hansard reprinted the first 22 volumes under the uniform title, *Parliamentary Debates* (and he took the opportunity to renumber the columns of the first volume, although what should appear as columns 3 and 4 were in fact still numbered 1523 and 1524).

At the same time, Hansard took over two other serial publications. One of them was the *State Trials*, edited by Thomas Bayly Howell (1767–1815) and his son Thomas Jones Howell (1793–1858), but the series was never closely associated with *Hansard*, although they shared very similar layouts. The other became an integral part of the sequence of *Hansard* volumes. Cobbett had decided to compile all known printed and some manuscript accounts of parliamentary debates from 1066, which was as far back as they could find records, and it ran up to 1803, when *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates* would take over. In 1806, he published the first volume of *The Parliamentary History of England, From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*. By the time Hansard took over from Cobbett, the project had reached the mid-18th century, and the 36 volumes eventually produced by 1820 thereafter formed the beginning—'series 0' as it were—of *Hansard*.[57]

54 TC Hansard, *Typographia: An Historical Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Art of Printing*, 1825, p 319.

55 *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, vol 22, p ii.

56 *Parliamentary Debates*, vol 24, p iii.

57 *The Parliamentary History of England*, 36 vols, 1806–20.

6

The *Parliamentary Debates* in the 19th Century

The first 41 volumes of what was subsequently called the first series of *Hansard* ran until the accession in 1820 of King George IV (1762–1830). The second series—called the 'new series'—covered the ten years of his reign in 25 volumes. Perhaps to counteract the effect of a significant rival publication of *The Mirror of Parliament*, which began in 1828, the title was changed to *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* from volume 21 of this second series (1829). The beginning of the third series marked the start of the reign of King William IV in 1830, but the connection between reigns and series was subsequently broken. The third series was allowed to run on after the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, and did not end until volume 356 in 1891.

The appearance of *Hansard* has changed very little from Cobbett's original model. The volumes were published at generous length with elegant leather bindings.[58] The text was set in two columns of tightly spaced lines, with the columns, not the pages, being numbered within each volume. As is still the case, the volumes—or at least those at the start of a Parliament or a session—included lists of peers and MPs, as well as of members of the Government. There were extensive tables of contents, and person and subject indices, while composite index volumes were sometimes published, such as the one covering the period up to the end of the second series in 1830.[59] Apart from the special heading applied to the first report in each volume, which is still used for the Commons and in a simplified form for the Lords, there was little or no ornamentation in the body of the text, and very few headings, though maps and illustrations were printed in *Hansard* during the trial of Queen Caroline

"The Lobby of the House of Commons, 1886". This *Vanity Fair* cartoon shows William Gladstone (centre) talking to Joseph Chamberlain (monocle) and Charles Stewart Parnell (bearded); Lord Randolph Churchill is behind Gladstone in a top hat, and Henry Hansard is at the far right, with a stick. Henry Hansard ran the parliamentary printing branch of the Hansard family concern from 1847.

58 Two bindings were offered in the early 19th century: the cheaper version in boards for 31s 6d, and half boards with Russia backs and corners for 35s.

59 Sir John Philippart (ed), *General Index to the First and Second Series of Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 1834.

in 1820. The reports were presented chronologically; on each day, the one for the Lords was given first, followed directly by that for the Commons.

Under the TC Hansards, father and son, whose offices moved to Paternoster Row in 1823, the work was primarily one of compilation. They had no regular staff to speak of, except for the services of Cobbett's former assistant John Wright (1770/1–1844), who at times did much of the hard editorial work. With painstaking care and attention to detail, they devoted themselves to providing the fullest and most accurate versions of newspaper reports, supplemented by other information, including notes and corrections sent in by Members. When examined by a Commons select committee, TC Hansard junior said: "I profess to give the best reports of the Debates I can procure; as correct as possible".[60] He also gave the committee "some very curious information" from a book, which he handed in, containing "a complete list of all the speeches that have been sent out to Members, and whether or not they have returned them corrected".[61] About three-quarters of all speeches were returned by Members, which Hansard argued attested to its high degree of accuracy. He did not represent his publication as verbatim, telling the committee: "I hold myself bound for the *bona fides* of the reports, not for their literal accuracy."[62] When asked whether "it might happen that you put into a Member's mouth what he ought to have said, rather than what he said?" he replied, "That would not be a very great evil". He described the production process he used: "By far the larger part of my reports of the debates in the House of Lords are made as accurate as may be by collation with all the different newspaper reports … It is the effect of very diligent collation and intelligence, and searching public documents, Bills, Notices, and other materials by which it is made more accurate".[63]

Hansard was a 'full' rather than an exhaustive report of debates, but it is surprising to find that it gave itself the freedom to interpolate asides and even stage directions. For example, the Lords debate on the state of Ireland on 15 February 1844, witnessed several 'sedentaries'—such as "[The Duke of *Wellington*. That is not correct, but go on.]"—and, during the speech of the Marquess of Normanby (1797–1863), it degenerated into an unseemly squabble about whether the Lord Chancellor was allowed to speak:

> **[***Here the Lord Chancellor re-entered the House, and took his seat on the Woolsack amidst a little confusion, which rendered the noble Marquess inaudible. After a short pause the noble Marquess continued with much emphasis***],—I certainly should not have risen but for an intimation which had been conveyed to me by a noble Baron, that the Lord Chancellor did not intend to address the House... I must observe,—that it is not competent to the noble Lord to address you after me, and that he must know that he has no means of speaking to the House upon this question hereafter. [***Cries of "No, no!" "Yes, yes!" from both sides of the House.***] I waited patiently until I found that no one else rose to speak, and the noble Duke opposite will bear me witness that I have evinced no desire to intrude upon your Lordships. Yet now, when I rise under these circumstances to reply, I hear, "How can I get in a word now?" Why, I tell the noble Lord that he cannot—I say he cannot speak after me. [***Cries of "Yes, yes!" and some confusion.***]**[64]

The fact that *Hansard* continued for so long while its various rivals proved to be short lived demonstrates that it had established itself as the authoritative source for what was said in Parliament. As the famous Commons Clerk Thomas Erskine May (1815–86) said, *Hansard* was "a very valuable record of all the

60 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Proceedings, HC 373 of session 1862, p 39.

61 ibid p 41.

62 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Proceedings, HC 373 of session 1862, p 39.

63 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting, HC 327 of session 1878, p 12.

64 *Hansard*, 15 February 1844, cols 890, 908–9.

proceedings of the house".[65] It had already become something of a parliamentary institution, and was not above being satirised by the Members. On 11 April 1845, Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81) had this to say in reply to William Gladstone (1809–98):

> **I hope I shall not be answered by *Hansard*. I am not surprised the right hon. Gentleman should be so fond of recurring to that great authority; he has great advantages; he can look over a record of thirty, and more than thirty years of an eminent career. But that is not the lot of every one; and I may say, as a general rule, I am rather surprised that your experienced statesmen should be so fond of recurring to that eminent publication. What, after all, do they see on looking over a quarter of a century or more even of their speeches in *Hansard*? What dreary pages of interminable talk, what predictions falsified, what pledges broken, what calculations that have gone wrong, what budgets that have blown up! And all this, too, not relieved by a single original thought, a single generous impulse, or a single happy expression! Why, *Hansard*, instead of being the Delphi of Downing-street, is but the Dunciad of politics.[66]**

The verb 'to Hansardize', meaning to confront a Member of Parliament with their utterances in *Hansard*, soon came into fashion.[67] It was apparently popularised by the Earl of Derby (1799–1869) in the Lords.[68] Presumably in relation to Derby, Lord Granville (1815–91), the Leader of the House, said in the Lords in April 1869:

> **I will venture now—to use an admirable word invented by a noble Lord opposite—to Hansardize. I will quote certain expressions used by noble Lords opposite last year, in order that I may show what your Lordships' opinions were then.[69]**

The practice, if not the term itself, is used as frequently as ever.

"Passing of the Parliament Bill in the House of Lords, 1911". In Samuel Begg's depiction the Hansard reporter sits behind the Clerks in the middle of the Chamber.

65 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Proceedings, HC 373 of session 1862, p 9.

66 *Hansard*, 11 April 1845, col 566.

67 ibid 19 February 1850, col 1081 (possibly its first use in *Hansard*).

68 *Oxford English Dictionary*; Trewin and King, *Printer to the House*, p 241.

69 *Hansard*, 14 April 1869, col 1656.

7

The Establishment of the *Official Report*

Hansard remained a private organisation but, from 1855, when its cover price was reduced to 5 guineas per session, it was financially supported by the Treasury, which agreed to place a central order of 100 copies for Government departments and officials. The number was increased to 120 in 1858 and had risen to 124 by 1878.[70] In December 1877, *Hansard* received a subsidy of £3,000 a year to make it "as full and accurate a publication as possible". From the start of the 1878 session, it for the first time employed a small staff of reporters, usually newspaper reporters hired for additional duties, to enable it to cover four types of business normally omitted from newspaper reports of debates—proceedings on Private Bills by order, discussions in the Committee of Supply and in Committees on Public Bills, and debates that continued in the Chamber after midnight.[71] The grant in aid was raised to £4,000 a year in 1880, and from 1882 it amounted to £500 per volume, but it was criticised in the Commons in 1886.[72] The following year Hansard was given notice that the grant would be ended, although the arrangement was extended, for another year, to the end of the 1888 session.[73]

Hansard was far from a complete record of what was said because it omitted much parliamentary business of less public interest and not all speakers were fully reported even for debates on important issues, but the reports were generally accepted to be reasonably accurate. As parliamentary reporting became much more extensive in the late 19th century, the convention emerged that the speeches of Ministers and other recognised leading figures were given in the first person and as fully as possible, while almost all other speeches, which were usually in the third person, were summarised. That naturally led to complaints of unfair treatment, with some parliamentarians' speeches being shortened or even suppressed, and concerns remained about how accurately the reports reflected the words actually spoken in debate. To address such matters, as well as accommodation, management and financing, inquiries were undertaken by a series of select committees in both Houses. The Commons conducted a long inquiry in 1878, but apart from recommending an increase in the number of places for reporters in the gallery (which was carried out when the galleries were altered in the mid-1880s), its report in 1879 did little more than to endorse TC Hansard junior's arrangements, although it asked him to publish more promptly.[74] At that time, Hansard had seat no. 19 in the Commons gallery, four to the right (when looking from the gallery) of *The Times* summary writer at no. 15, which was the central seat above the Speaker's Chair.[75]

The focus of reform then shifted to the House of Lords, where one of the main problems was the acoustics in the ornate Chamber, with its very high ceiling, in the new Palace of Westminster. Of a debate in 1869, Thomas Wemyss Reid recounted that during

70 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Proceedings, HC 373 of session 1862, pp 37, 40–3; Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting, HC 327 of session 1878, p 16.

71 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting, HC 327 of session 1878, pp 8–9.

72 Report from the Joint Select Committee on the Cost and Method of the Publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, HC 284 of session 1888, pp 144–6; *Hansard*, 10 September 1886, cols 135–49.

73 Parliamentary Archives, HAN/5/7/9, 15.

74 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting, HC 327 of session 1878; Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting, HC 203 of session 1878–9, pp iii–iv.

75 Parliamentary Archives, HC/SA/SJ/3/16, map of reporters gallery, 3 January 1881.

A very amusing, a very bitter, and an almost wholly inaudible speech by one Lord: "The older peers, with their hands behind their ears, clustered round him to catch his witticisms, some even kneeling on the floor in order to be near enough to hear him. They chuckled and laughed consumedly, but we unfortunate reporters in the Gallery had but the faintest idea of what it was they were laughing at."[76]

Giving evidence to the Lords select committee in 1880, George Callaghan of the *Morning Post* said that the chief difficulty of accurate reporting was the difficulty of hearing, which meant that speeches had to be tinkered, albeit not tampered with, to be made coherent.[77] The Committee considered several possibilities, including that of reversing the orientation of the Chamber—moving the Woolsack to beneath the gallery, so that the reporters would be able to hear those who spoke facing the Lord Chancellor—which peers showed a marked reluctance to accept, and of extending provision for seating at the front of gallery and to the sides of the House, which were approved.[78] The report also recommended that the *Hansard* reporters should have a seat for a shorthand writer within the body of the House, but such a position behind the Clerks at the Table was not adopted until 1 August 1889.[79]

The increasing concerns about the cost and purpose of *Hansard* were examined at great length by a Joint Committee of both Houses during the 1888 session. It was clear in its judgment:

It appears to be admitted that the present system under which the Debates and Proceedings of Parliament are reported is inconvenient and unsatisfactory. The reports at present furnished are inadequate, their cost is unnecessarily large, and their publication is unduly delayed. It may be added that Mr. Hansard appears to have made less complete provision for reporting the proceedings in the House of Lords than for reporting proceedings in the House of Commons.[80]

In his evidence, Thomas Curson Hansard junior said that he no longer favoured the idea of an official report, arguing that it had to be seen to be independent of Members, but he wanted the adoption of an authorised report, with "a sufficient staff of competent reporters under responsible management" to ensure the requisite qualities of "fullness, accuracy, and speed".[81] The Joint Committee came down against an official verbatim report, and instead recommended placing the *Parliamentary Debates* on a contractual basis, as it believed that such "an improved and amplified 'Hansard' would meet the requirements of the public service". The contractor would be allowed to choose its sources, but would have to keep at least one reporter in each House at all times, to produce a corrected daily edition in no more than a week and to report all speeches at not less than one-third of their length.[82] The provision of reports under contract was supported by another Commons inquiry in 1893–4.[83]

76 *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid*, p 155.

77 Report from the House of Lords Select Committee on Reporting, HL Paper 66 of session 2, 1880, p 44.

78 ibid p vi; *Hansard*, 29 June 1880, cols 1086–105.

79 Report from the House of Lords Select Committee on Reporting, HL Paper 66 of session 2, 1880, p viii; Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates, HC 239 of session 1907, p 163.

80 Report from the Joint Select Committee on the Cost and Method of the Publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, HC 284 of session 1888, p iii.

81 ibid pp 4–6, 148.

82 ibid p iv; H Donaldson Jordan, 'The Reports of Parliamentary Debates, 1803–1908', *Economica*, 1931, vol 11, pp 440–1.

83 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates, HC 213 of session 1893–4, pp iii–v.

Following the 1888 session, the Hansard family's connection with *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* came to an end. For the following two decades, the contract to report parliamentary debates was put out to tender, but a series of private companies largely failed to provide an improved service. Volume 333 of the third series, which covered the start of the 1889 session, was undertaken by the Hansard Publishing Union, as the young Horatio Bottomley (1860–1933), later an MP and a convicted fraudster, named the commercial operation that had bought out TC Hansard junior's *Parliamentary Debates* and his first cousin's son Henry Luke Tite Hansard's parliamentary printing business.[84] It survived only until the 356th volume at the end of the 1891 session. The following year, volume 1 of the fourth series of *The Parliamentary Debates*—thereafter published with the subtitle, *Authorised Edition*—was produced by the Reuter's Telegram Company. The new publishers dropped the name *Hansard* because it "did not wish their undertaking to be confused with the ill-starred Hansard Publishing Union", and "to emphasise the official authenticity of the new series as contrasted with Hansard which had been unofficial although in its latter days subsidised."[85] Reuter's was in turn succeeded, for volumes 8 to 29 (covering the 1893–4 and 1894 sessions) by Eyre and Spottiswoode, and then, for the following 23 volumes (1895 to 1897) by Waterlow and Sons Limited. Frederick Moir Bussy (1857/8–1922) published the volumes for the 1898 session through his Economic Printing and Publishing Company, but his Parliamentary Debates Printing Works went bust during the preparation of volume 70 (1899), which the administrator had to bring out to fulfil the terms of the government contract. A measure of stability was re-established when the contract, initially under George Walpole (1857–1928), who had been editor under Bottomley, was taken over that year by Wyman and Sons Limited. It oversaw the publication, which appeared in brown covers, from volume 72 of the fourth series (1899) to volume 199 (1908).

The House of Commons returned to the issue during the 1907 session, when the Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates found that few of the proposals of the previous Committees had been followed up, and that the Members were greatly dissatisfied with the existing arrangements. It therefore recommended that the Commons should end the system of contracts and set up its own reporting staff, while noting that the already satisfactory arrangements in the Lords should be put on the same footing. The report also suggested that Members should not be able to revise their speeches, except in relation to rulings from the Chair and the correction of very minor and obvious factual errors, and that reports should be available by 4 pm the following day.[86] It emphasised that the speeches of all Members should be given in the first person and treated in the same way, and it adopted the wording of the 1893–4 report to define a 'full' transcription as one:

> **which, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of a speech or illustrates the argument.[87]**

Those are the terms of reference, as stated in Erskine May's treatise on parliamentary procedure, under which Hansard still operates in both Houses.[88] As the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Charles Hobhouse (1862–1941), explained in the Commons the following session, the Government accepted the Committee's recommendations, and the current arrangements with Wyman and Sons Limited were terminated at the end of the 1908 session.[89]

84 Trewin and King, *Printer to the House*, pp 253–9.

85 Parliamentary Archives, HC/CL/CH/2/2/280–4.

86 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates, HC 239 of session 1907, pp iii–vii.

87 ibid p iii; Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates, HC 213 of session 1893–4, pp iii.

88 Sir Malcolm Jack (ed), *Erskine May's Treatise on The Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 24th edn, 2011, p 130.

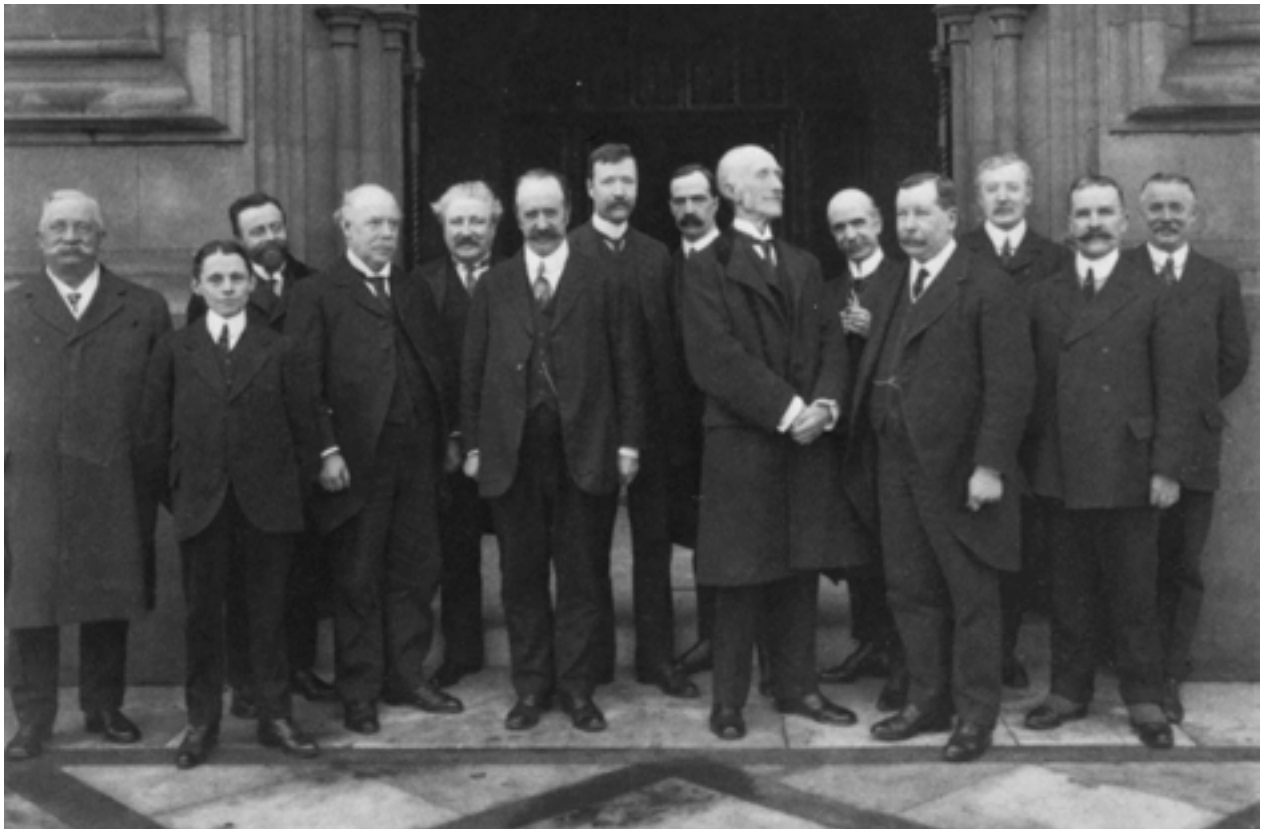
89 *Hansard*, 14 May 1908, cols 1396–406.

8

The *Official Report* in the 20th Century

The House of Lords administration was at first hesitant about following the lead of the Commons in setting up an *Official Report*, but it soon appointed Arthur Walter as the first Editor of Debates. He built up a team by recruiting court reporters employed on a sessional basis, and that remained the primary source of Lords Hansard staff throughout the 20th century; for many years, the Commons preferred to recruit journalists. In Commons Hansard, an experienced press association lobbyist, Sir James Dods Shaw, was appointed as editor, with a team of ten reporters, though two more were soon recruited. It stayed at that size till the end of the second world war, when the team rose to 18, on the appointment of the first two sub-editors. It grew to 22 in 1950 and by 1977, with the increase in committee transcription work, had expanded to more than 50. Lords Hansard has always been a smaller department, with a few permanent staff and sessional staff making up the numbers, and today remains about one third the size of Commons Hansard. Commons Hansard now has a team of 84 and Lords Hansard a team of 35, and they report debates in each Chamber, as well as in Westminster Hall, and grand, legislation and select committees. In 2010, Hansard took over from Gurney's the contract for transcribing select committee evidence sessions in both Houses.

In 1909, Dods Shaw at first had no accommodation for his small team, but by 1915 he had acquired a third-floor office, where two typists worked in sound-proof cubicles so that reporters could dictate their shorthand notes. The typists were leased to Hansard from a civil service pool and were moved on after a short period on the job, "when their places are taken by new girls… This arrangement is unstable and gives rise to much internal friction", it was noted in 1950.[90] At the time, their number had risen to six, and they worked in the north tank room, above the Upper Committee Corridor. Dods Shaw ensured that



Commons Hansard reporting team, 1911. The first Editor of Debates for the House of Commons, Sir J Dods Shaw, is sixth from the right, in wing collar and morning coat; he was succeeded in 1916 by William Turner Perkins, fourth from the right.

90 Law, *Our Hansard*, p 4.

Commons Hansard reporting team, 1947. The first female reporter, Jean Winder, is standing in the middle, behind the then Editor of Debates, Percy F. Cole, whose wife, beside him, holds a bunch of flowers.

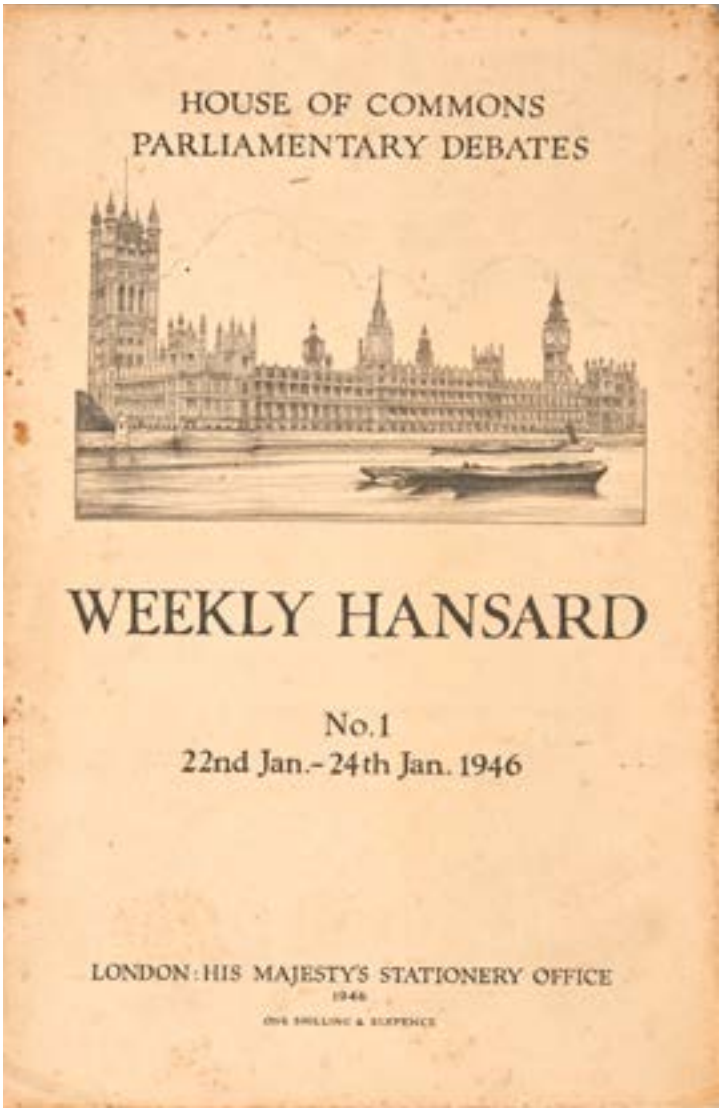
the *Official Report* was available much more quickly than pre-1909 *Hansards*, which could take up to a month to be printed. Dods Shaw committed to publishing the *Official Report* by 4 pm the following day, to meet the terms of the 1907 select committee report, and from 1917, with his additional staff, he made it available the following morning.[91] The Lords adopted the same publication timetable. The early publication was appreciated by Members. As Winston Churchill (1874–1965) said: "I should like to say we all have great confidence in HANSARD. Its early publication is an immense convenience to Members".[92]

When the *Official Report* was first published in 1909, it appeared in two formats—as a daily part and as a bound volume. The blue covers for daily parts were used until 19 May 1942, when they were replaced with plain paper covers in order to save 6.5 tons of paper a year for the war effort. The plain white paper cover is still used today. The Speaker agreed to the wartime saving with the proviso that "the blue cover is to be restored as soon as possible after the war", though it never was.[93] In addition to the daily part, a weekly edition was introduced in January 1946 as a way of bringing Parliament to more people more cheaply, and to capitalise on the obvious politicisation of much of British society following the end of the second world war and the Labour victory in the 1945 general election. Buying five daily parts at sixpence each would cost 2/6 or half a crown, and this was deemed too expensive. Glenvil Hall (1887–1962), the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, considered alternatives, including producing a summary of the debates—as the French Parliament still does—but this was rejected as too political. Lowering the cost of the daily part was rejected because it would bring immediate losses, and the Debates Committee rejected Hall's suggestion of publishing adverts on the inside

91 Michael Rush and Malcolm Shaw, *The House of Commons: Services and Facilities*, 1974, p 117.

92 HC *Hansard*, 17 February 1949, col 1350.

93 Parliamentary Archives, HC/CL/CH/2/2/280–4.



The first weekly edition of *Hansard*, published by the Commons in January 1946. The Lords weekly edition started in 1947.

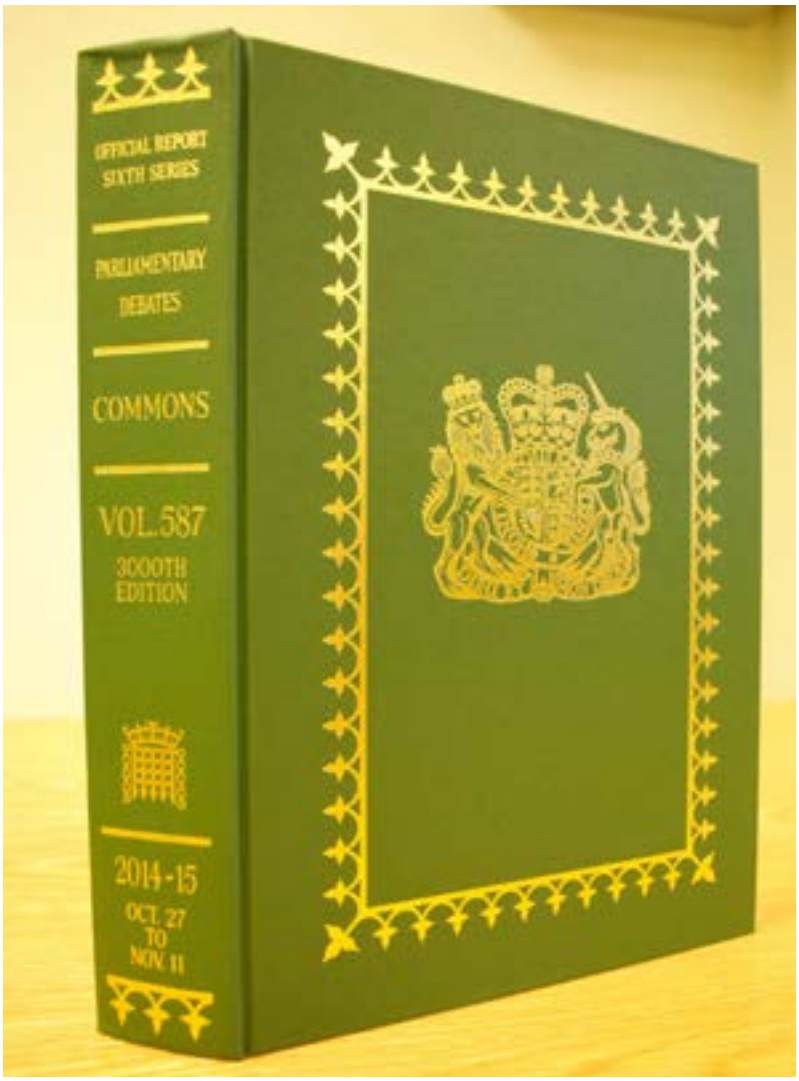
covers of *Hansard*. Hall also suggested publishing all five daily parts in one weekly edition, in time for weekend reading, at a price of 1/6. Mr Speaker and the Debates Committee agreed and Sir Francis Meynell (1891–1975), who founded the Nonesuch Press and Pelican books, was brought in to produce the publication. The House of Lords followed suit in October 1947, but sold its weekly edition at the even greater bargain price of one shilling.[94] The last weekly edition for the Lords was published in 2011 and that for the Commons in 2012, as a way of reducing printing costs.

The finished size of the first Cobbett and Hansard volumes was royal octavo (253 mm x 158 mm). The font is hard to identify with certainty, but expert advice suggests that it is a Caslon III or IV Modern. In his book *Typographia*, Thomas Curson Hansard senior said of Caslon that, "The ancient stock can never be equalled—the modern never excelled."[95] He regretted the sale of the Caslon types and punches by Caslon IV to unknown type-founders in Sheffield, the new Blake, Garnett & Co.[96] The size of the printed *Hansard* changed in 1981 to A4 (297 mm x 210 mm),

94 Law, *Our Hansard*, pp 21–2.

95 Hansard, *Typographia*, p 353.

96 ibid p 355: "Mr Caslon relinquished his profession to enter into a gas-light concern on the north side of the metropolis, transferring to the Sheffield founders such a specimen of type and flowers as will ever cause us printers to regret the loss of such a competitor for fame in this difficult business."



Publication of the 3,000th *Hansard* Bound Volume in November 2014 was marked with this special commemorative edition. The total includes all Lords and Commons *Hansards*, and the historical series pre-1803.

when Her Majesty's Stationery Office moved to metric printing machines.[97] Library shelves had to be adjusted to accommodate the larger volumes. The font was Times Goudy for most of the 20th century, but is now Times New Roman 10 pt on 10.75 pt body.

As well as the 36 volumes of the *Parliamentary History* to 1803 (published between 1806 and 1820), there were 41 volumes in the first series of the *Parliamentary Debates* (1803–20), 25 in the new or second series (1820–30), 356 in the third series (1830–91) and 199 in the fourth series (1892–1908). Following the establishment of the *Official Report*, separate series were published for each House: there were 1,000 volumes in the fifth series for the Commons (1909–81), and there have so far been 594 in its sixth series (to the end of the 2010–15 Parliament), while the Lords has published 760 volumes in its fifth series (1909 to the end of the 2010–15 Parliament). Counting in all volumes in all series for both Houses, the 3,000th volume overall was reached when the Commons published volume 587 of its sixth series, covering 27 October to 11 November 2014. A commemorative volume was published, with a decorated cover, along the lines of the commemorative volume issued for the 1,000th volume of the Commons' fifth series.

97 The *Official Report* was privately published until February 1920, when the Stationery Office, previously HMSO, took over the contract: Law, *Our Hansard*, p 21. Since 2016, *Hansard* for both Houses has been printed in-house.

"Viscount Morley addressing the House of Lords". The Lords Chamber in 1921, debating the Irish Home Rule Bill, with the Hansard reporter sitting behind the two wigged clerks, centre.

9

Modern Parliamentary Reporting

When Cobbett and Hansard started producing reports of debates in 1803, their volumes were not official parliamentary publications. The *Parliamentary Debates* became the *Official Report* in 1909, but this status is not the same as that of a report of a select committee ordered to be printed by one of the Houses. Members are protected by Article 9 of the Bill of Rights 1689 from being "impeached or questioned" outside Parliament, and so legal proceedings—for defamation, for instance—cannot be taken against Members for what they say in the course of parliamentary proceedings.[98] It is for each House to decide which of its proceedings are published. In the event of criminal or civil proceedings being brought in relation to publication, a certificate can be issued to confirm that the material in question is authorised by the House for publication, and any proceedings against the publisher must be ended. Prosecutions can be criminal or involve libel or contempt of court. Under the Parliamentary Papers Act 1840, publishers of copies of publications authorised by either House enjoy immunity from legal proceedings, and those publishing an "extract of or abstract from" approved publications enjoy qualified privilege if they can show that they published in good faith and without malice.

Hansard has changed in many other ways. The *Women's Penny Paper* had asked in 1890, "Is there any reason why women should be prevented from reporting the proceedings of Parliament to their fellow-women?" Charles Bradlaugh (1833–91) picked up the issue that year, and raised it with the then Speaker, Arthur Peel (1829–1912), who replied that allowing women to work in the Press Gallery "would lead to consequences which at present it is difficult to conceive."[99] In 1915, James Dods Shaw said of the first Official Report team:

> **The reporters in the House of Commons go on duty for 10 or 15 minutes at a time. Lady typists transcribe the notes… It is very quick and accurate work. I have a staff…of the most skilled and accurate shorthand writers to be found anywhere in London. They are extremely well acquainted with the procedure of Parliament… They know the name of every man in the House. They are gentlemen of education and culture, some of them with University degrees.[100]**

Dods Shaw may have boasted to his audience of employing female staff, but he told a Commons select committee in 1913, "I was anxious to avoid the employment of girls altogether"; however, male typists were not up to the task and he felt "driven to the expedient of employing girls".[101] The first female reporter, Jean Winder, was recruited by Commons Hansard 30 years later, in 1944, when four Hansard men were serving in the armed forces, but she was employed on a lower salary than her male colleagues (a starting salary of £450 rather than £560). The then editor, Percy F Cole, conceded that she was "as good as the men", and that commendations on her work from MPs "exceeded those obtained for any other member of staff. She is most willing and astute".[102] Her lower rate of pay was discussed on the Floor of the House as part of the equal pay debate in 1951,

98 Recent examples in this area include Lord Campbell-Savours naming a woman who, as he put it, had "a history of making false accusations" (HL *Hansard*, 19 October 2006, col 868), and the Trafigura super-injunction case in 2009.

99 MacDonagh, *Reporters' Gallery*, p 12.

100 *The Woman Journalist*, November 1915, quoted in Sylvia Kent, *The Woman Writer: The History of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists*, 2013, ch 2.

101 Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Publications and Debates, HC 224 of session 1913, pp 15, 17. See Mari Takayanagi PhD thesis, 'Parliament and Women c.1900–1945', King's College, London, pp 236–8: https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/30807371/2012_Takayanagi_Mari_1069335_ethesis.pdf, accessed 24 April 2015.

102 Quoted in talk by Mari Takayanagi, "Women in Parliament in World War One & World War Two", http://www.parliament.uk/about/art-in-parliament/news/2014/april/women-in-parliament-in-ww1--ww2-by-dr-mari-takayanagi/, accessed 24 April 2015.

"The House of Commons, 1986". Mrs Thatcher is addressing the House of Commons in 1986. In the upper left-hand gallery, in the rays of sunshine, stand (from left) Bevan, Cromwell, Attlee, Chamberlain, Lloyd George, Fox, Pitt the Younger, Gladstone, Macmillan, Churchill, Wilkes, Pym and Disraeli. The Hansard reporters in the press gallery above the Speaker, immediately above the clock, are Henrietta Hales and Steve Hutchinson, both of whom went on to set up the Official Report in the Scottish Parliament. Robin Day sits alone at the top of the press gallery.

when Irene Ward MP said:

> **The House of Commons is run on the basis of equal pay… but there is one woman on the HANSARD staff in the Gallery, Mrs. Winder, who has not got equal pay, in spite of the fact that Mr. Speaker has made a strong recommendation to the Treasury that she should receive equal pay. He has made that recommendation twice, and on both occasions the Chancellor has turned it down. It has been put to me as nicely as possible that it might be very distasteful to Mrs. Winder if I were to raise her case in the House of Commons. But fortunately we still have women and men in the country who can stand up for principle, and I have got Mrs. Winder's permission to draw the attention of the House to what I consider is an intolerable constitutional position, in which we have servants of the House who have no protection whatever refused a salary which has been specifically recommended by Mr. Speaker."**[103]

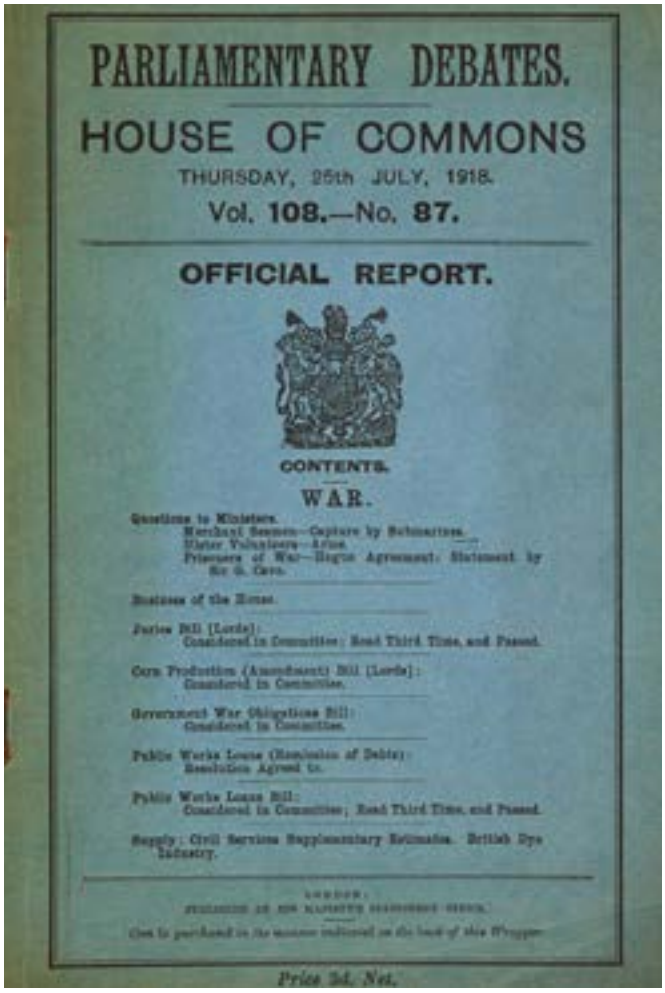
The first female Editor of Debates, Mary Villiers, was appointed in Lords Hansard in 1984, just under 100 years since the *Women's Penny Paper* had raised the issue of female reporters, and she was succeeded by Carole Boden and Jackie Bradshaw. The first female editor in the Commons, Lorraine Sutherland, was appointed in 2005.

Shorthand dominated the 19th-century gallery, but it gave way to competition, first from stenographic reporters who used stenograph machines to take phonetic shorthand records of what was said, and then to reel-to-reel recording, which was introduced in the Lords in the 1960s. For two decades, shorthand writers worked alongside those using recordings of the debates, but audio recording meant that the reporter no longer needed to write down every word that was uttered in the Chamber. Hansard no longer requires shorthand

103 HC *Hansard*, 2 August 1951, col 1710.

when recruiting and now works from digital audio recordings, which are accessed online. Reporters take general notes in the Chamber and listen to the recordings to type up their report, while some reporters use voice-recognition software to dictate their work. The growth of the media in Parliament continues to influence the way that Hansard works. *Hansard* was first published on the internet in 1997, and is now published overnight in xml, html and pdf formats. Recent figures for online access show that *Commons Hansard* has about 100,000 unique hits per month, and *Lords Hansard* 25,000. A draft version, rolling *Hansard*, is available three hours after a speech has been delivered in either Chamber, and this now receives more than 25,000 unique hits monthly.[104]

In recent years, Parliament has attempted to inform the public about its role, and the parliamentary website is an important means of delivering such information. With the growth of the internet, it has never been quicker to find out what happens in the Palace of Westminster, and the popularity of the Hansard pages on the website demonstrates the continuing demand for a written record of what parliamentarians say during their debates. *Hansard* is of course a working document, which MPs and peers use from day to day while arguing over political issues and holding the Government to account, and it is also a vital historical and legal record of what was said in the past. Its primary significance is still to be found—just as it was in the 18th century, when the reporters first tried to break down the barriers to printing accounts of debates—in giving people a full, accurate and authoritative report of everything that is said and done in Parliament.


PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

THURSDAY, 25th JULY, 1918.

Vol. 108.—No. 87.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

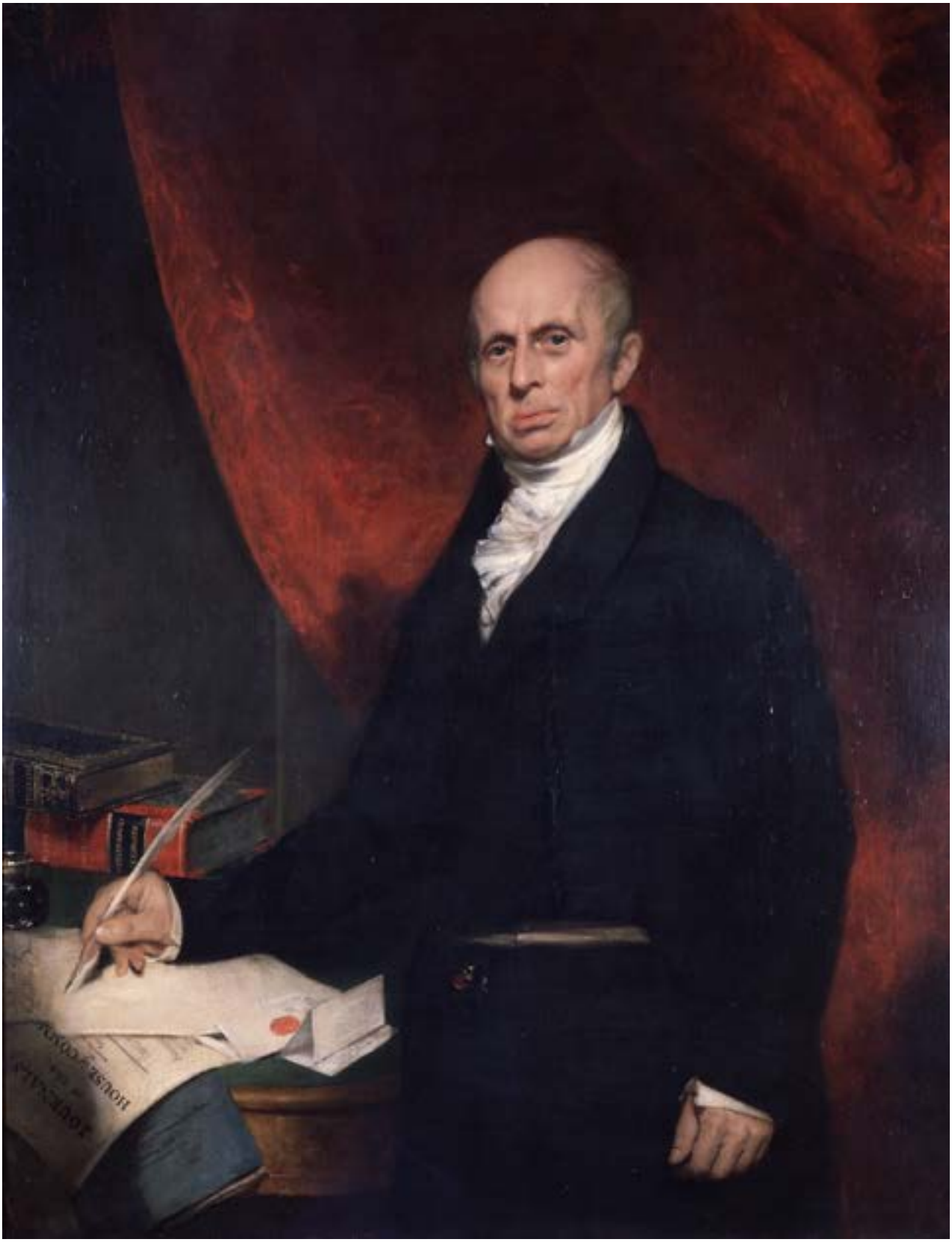
CONTENTS.

WAR.

Price 2d. Net.

The daily version of the *Official Report* was printed with this blue cover from 1909 to 1942, when it was replaced with a plain paper cover as part of the war effort. The name "Hansard" did not appear on the cover of the Daily Part until 1943.

104 Daily Hansard can be accessed here: https://hansard.parliament.uk/. See the Bibliography for other links to the parliamentary website.

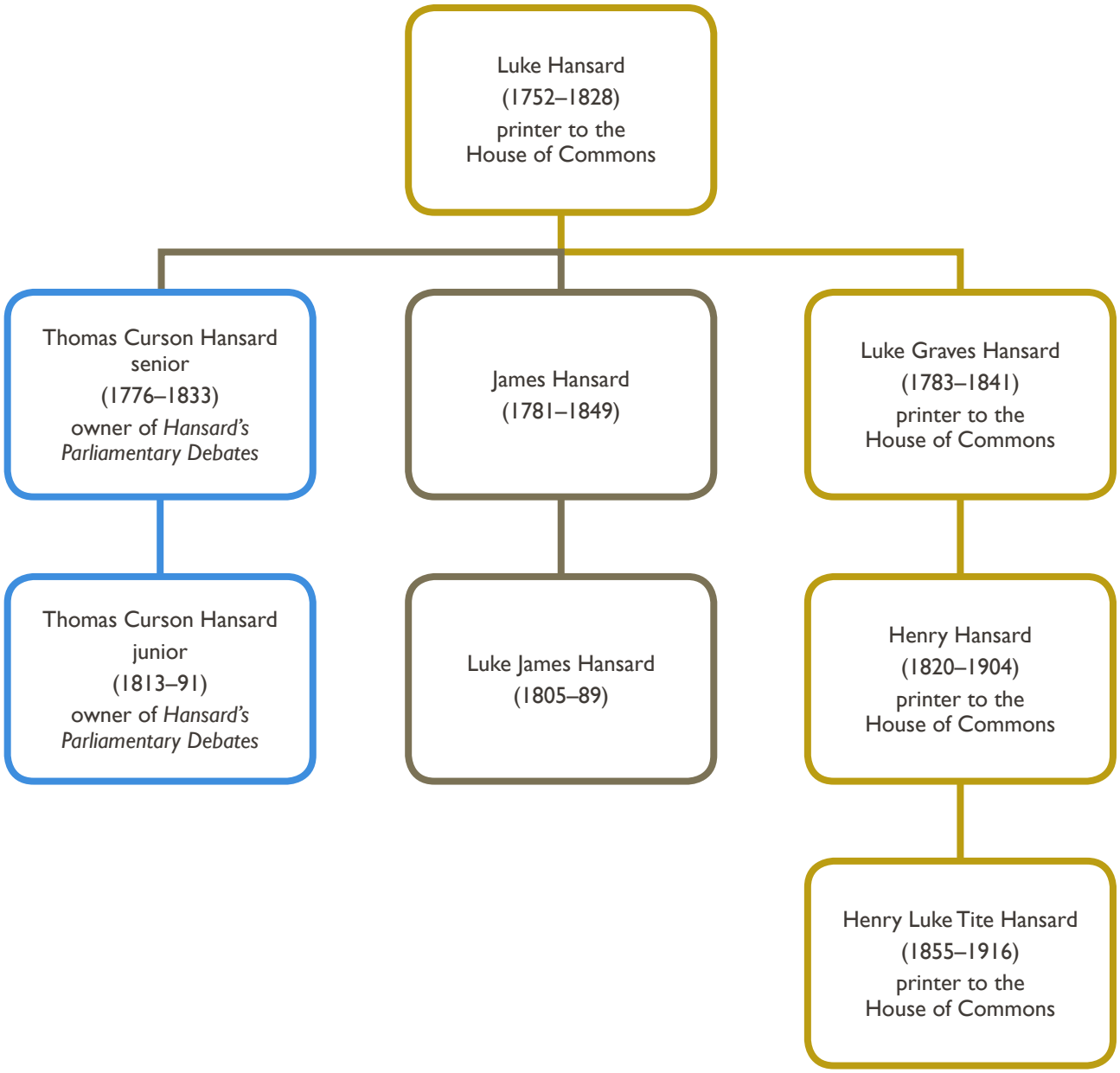


"Luke Hansard". This portrait of Luke Hansard is a variation on the one exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1828 and appears to have been in the possession of the Hansard family until its presentation to the House of Commons in 1942.

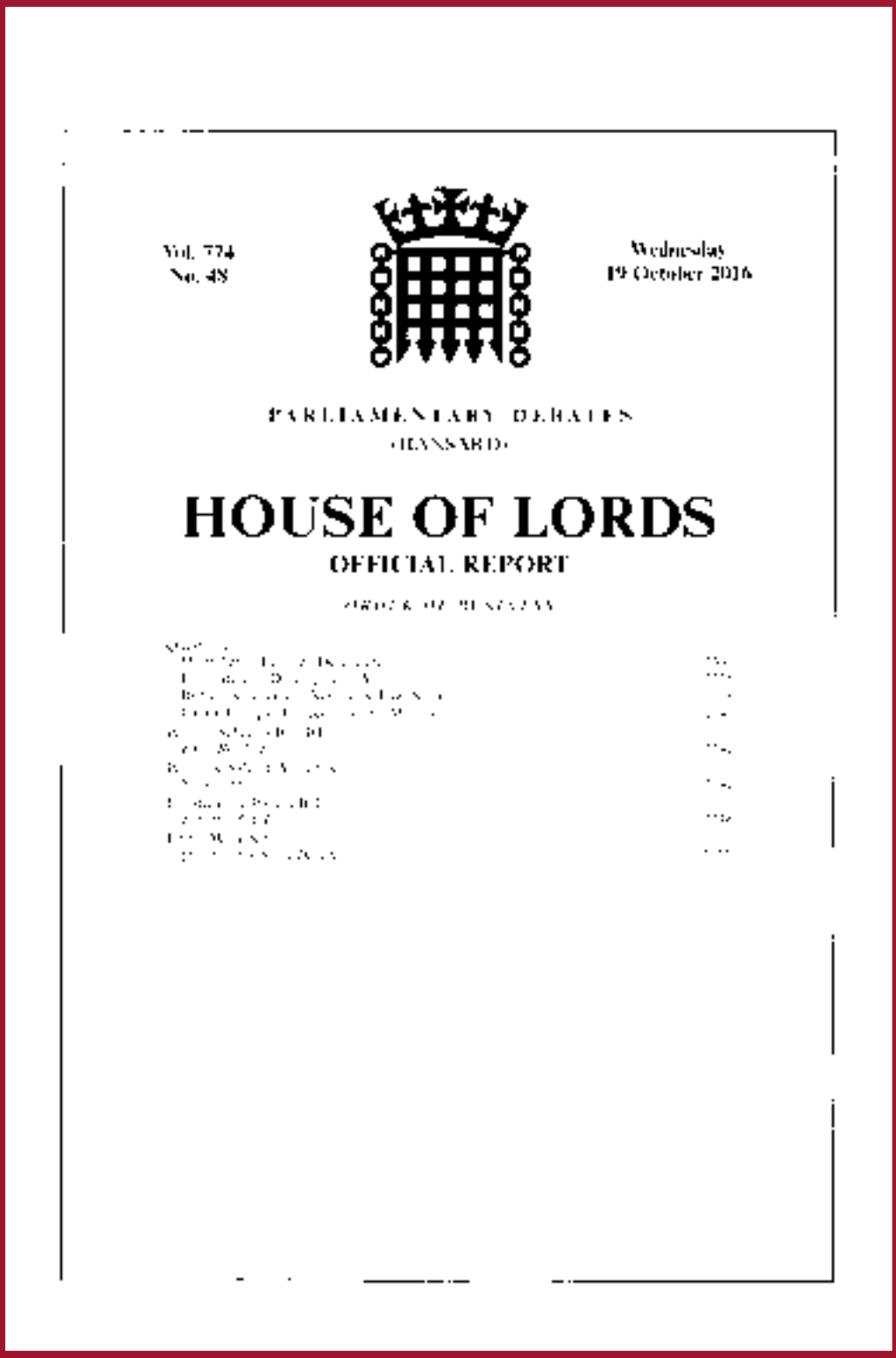
10

Hansard and the Hansards

Hansard Family Tree[105]



105 The family tree shows the leading members in the two family businesses, and other family members mentioned in the text. It is based on John Henry Hansard, *The Hansards: Printers and Publishers*, 1970, pp 6–7.



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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

Lords *Hansard* is now printed in-house, and is also available online.

Luke Hansard (1752–1828)

Luke Hansard of Great Turnstile, Lincoln's Inn Fields, rose—as a partner with Henry Hughs (1741–1810) and later as sole proprietor—to become the official printer to the House of Commons. He was a respected figure in Parliament, where he was responsible not only for the publication of the *Commons Journals*, but for editing and archiving parliamentary papers, including transcripts of select committee reports and evidence sessions. Although not directly involved in the history of parliamentary reporting, it is to him that *Hansard* owes its main hallmarks of accuracy, speed, expertise, reliability and, when required, confidentiality. His autobiography, in which he adopted the non-conformist practice of writing the singular personal pronoun as 'i' as a sign of humility, attests to his devotion to his parliamentary duties.[106]

Luke Graves Hansard (1783–1841)

Luke Hansard's third son, Luke Graves Hansard, succeeded him as head of the family business in 1828. With his brother James Hansard (1781–1849), he produced the *Catalogue of Parliamentary Reports, and a Breviate of their Contents* (1834), one of the most useful of the early Hansard indices. His diary is a record of his long struggle to maintain his firm's viability, including in competition with his rivals, the official printers to the House of Lords. He was supported by the Commons authorities when sued for libel in relation to what a witness had said in evidence to a select committee—*Stockdale* v *Hansard*—but his anxieties were not relieved until such publications were given qualified parliamentary immunity under the Parliamentary Papers Act 1840.[107]

Henry Hansard (1820–1904)

Henry Hansard, the son of Luke Graves Hansard—he, too, left a diary—ran the parliamentary printing branch of the family concern from 1847, when he edged out his unreliable cousin Luke James Hansard (1805–89), until he passed it on to his own son, Henry Luke Tite Hansard (1855–1916). HLT Hansard failed in his bid to take over the *Parliamentary Debates* from his father's first cousin Thomas Curson Hansard junior, and subsequently sold his business in 1889.[108]

Thomas Curson Hansard senior (1776–1833)

Thomas Curson Hansard senior trained as a printer, but left his father Luke Hansard's business to set up on his own. He is mainly remembered as the publisher of the *Parliamentary Debates*, to which he gave his name. However, he was also an accomplished printer and wrote a vast work on the subject, *Typographia: An Historical Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Art of Printing* (1825).

Thomas Curson Hansard junior (1813–91)

Thomas Curson Hansard junior succeeded to the management of the *Parliamentary Debates* on his father's death in 1833. Another accomplished printer, he wrote the articles on printing and type-founding in the seventh edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1830–42). He ran the business for 55 years, but sold out in 1888.

106 Robin Myers (ed), *The Auto-biography of Luke Hansard, written in 1817*, 1991.

107 P and G Ford (eds), *Luke Graves Hansard, his Diary, 1814–1841: A Case Study in the Reform of Patronage*, 1962.

108 Trewin and King, *Printer to the House*, pp 224–35, 254–7.

Appendix: Editors of the *Official Report* since 1909

House of Lords

Arthur Walter 1909–21

AA Reid 1921–47

SC Ireland 1947–68

WM Stuart 1968–74

GWH Blogg 1974–77

Charles Stanton 1977–82

DM Dumbreck 1982–84

Mary Villiers 1984–2001

Carole Boden 2001–03

Jackie Bradshaw 2003–05

Simon Nicholls 2005–12

John Vice 2012–

House of Commons

Sir James Dods Shaw 1909–16

William Turner Perkins 1916–27

Thomas Parr 1927–39

Percival Cornelius 1939–43

Percy F Cole 1943–47

Thomas O'Donoghue 1947–51

Vincent Hamson 1951–54

LW Bear 1954–72

Richard Dring 1972–78

Kenneth Morgan 1979–89

Ian Church 1989–2002

William Garland 2002–05

Lorraine Sutherland 2005–15

Alex Newton 2015–

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Note: most of the records of Hansard and the Press Gallery in general were lost in the bomb damage on the night of 10 May 1941, but the Parliamentary Archives has some useful materials, including in the Hansard papers (HAN) and the Press Gallery records (PRG).

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