## **How To Stage A Triumph**

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In recent years there has been a growing interest in the economics of early modern theatricality, posing questions such as: who owned the playing companies and venues, who provided the performance essentials such as costumes and props, how profitable - or otherwise - were London's playhouses? Theatre historians rightly venerate Henslowe's 'Diary' as a primary extant repository of such information, but are a lot less likely to consider the civic archive a productive source for aspects of staging. costuming, expenses, and so on.

This is a shame: taken collectively, livery companies' minutes, accounts and inventories, as I intend to show, reveal a performance culture in lavish detail. My main focus here is the arrangements for the mayoral inauguration of Thomas Lowe, Haberdasher, in 1604. (Such arrangements were of course replicated on numerous other occasions, and by other livery companies.) Civic entertainments - including King James's coronation royal entry - had an enforced hiatus in 1603 due to a very severe outbreak of plague.

The arrangements for Lowe's inauguration are captured in the Accounts and Court minutes of the Haberdashers' Company, primarily in their 'Triumphs' Accounts'. The Company's Court Minutes are much more terse than the latter document: some three weeks before the inauguration it was ordered 'that there shalbe a faire Pageant Chariat and a Lion twoe Gallies fireworkes banners streamers and all other thinges provided in a readines against that daie for the honor of this Cittie, and the worship of this Companie according as it hath ben don in former yeres'.¹ Thereafter, the arrangements were delegated to a group of company officers.

Extracts from the Triumphs' Accounts were published in edited form in the Malone Society's *Collections III* volume in 1954 and more recently in the online *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*. They have received little attention despite the wealth of information they contain.

No pageant book for Lowe's inauguration survives although the Haberdashers evidently did pay £1 10s for a number of copies to be printed. The absence of a book, which would undoubtedly have contained the text of any speeches and probably some description of the pageant devices, is unfortunate but it offers the opportunity to rebuild the event from the documentary record. Indeed, in a more positive sense the lack of any copies of the pageant book puts the extensive records for the 1604 mayoralty centre-stage. In many ways, the execution of the actual show was merely the tip of a larger iceberg of planning. As I will go on to explore, extraordinary levels of detail enable one to create a comprehensive and colourful sense of the event.

The Haberdashers' accounts preserve the names of the creative team as well as suppliers, some well-known to theatre history - notably, Ben Jonson, Anthony Munday, and Thomas Kendall. As these names indicate, the records also reveal important connections between civic and 'professional' theatre. Jonson is certainly the most eye-catching: with his extensive involvement

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Haberdashers' Company Court Minutes, MS15842/001, f 142r.

in the Royal Entry in March 1604, he had a busy and lucrative year in civic entertainments. The Haberdashers paid him £12 'for his device, and speech for the Children'. The individual who received the largest sum was, however, the artificer: 'Item paid to John Grinkin for the Pageant, lion, mermaides, Chariott & other thinges - £46'.² The artificer was the absolute lynchpin of civic pageantry, responsible for assembling a team of artists and craftsmen, and he would have worked closely with the pageant poet. In 1604 Grinkin appears to have been towards the beginning of his career as a City artificer: with his usual collaborator, Anthony Munday, he was to appear in the livery companies' records in this regard almost annually from then on until 1619, when Thomas Middleton and Garret Christmas began their period of dominance. It is possible that his partnership with Munday also had its genesis in Lowe's inauguration: Munday himself received £2 'for his paines', an unhelpfully vague description of his contribution.

A highly regarded member of the Painter-Stainers' Company who was paid £54 by the Haberdashers 'for the silke workes' for the 1620 show, Grinkin had no affiliation to any of the Great Twelve livery companies, unlike Thomas Kendall. Munday's association with Kendall went even further back, for the pair submitted a seemingly unsuccessful pitch to the Skinners' Company in 1597. The Skinners' court minutes record that 'Theire Worships ordered that Mr Sturman shall paye unto Mr Kendall and Mr Mondaye in benevolence x s. but that it shalbe noe president hereafter'.<sup>3</sup>

Kendall was an active member of the Haberdashers' Company alongside being, from 1604, a patentee of the Children of the Queen's Revels. He performed a significant role for his own company on this occasion, providing costumes and 'other thinges needfull' for the child actors as well as materials for the coach horses and the company barge. As a member of the Haberdashers, Kendall was himself assessed to contribute financially to the cost of the triumph. He appears on the list of batchelors who would have processed with their gowns trimmed in 'foins' (fur), higher status attire than gowns trimmed in budge (sheepskin): it seems that he was let off most of the expense, which was probably offset against his fee.<sup>4</sup>



Thomas KENDALL's Contribution

As one might expect, Haberdashers were in demand; indeed, this company seem more likely than most to employ their own. Another important figure mentioned in these accounts is Francis Tipsley, a Haberdasher who in 1604 painted two new banners and then worked for his company on a larger scale in 1620, when he collaborated with John Squire as artificer. In fact Francis Tipsley had been apprenticed to Thomas Kendall, Haberdasher and became a Freeman in 1603. Another Haberdasher, Thomas Spencer, supplied 86 yards of 'tinsell' for the ornamental horse harnesses.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Haberdashers' Company 'Triumphs' Accounts', MS15869, f 9v. All other references are to this ms unless otherwise stated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Skinners' Company Court Minutes, MS30708/002, f 278v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Haberdashers' Company Court of Assistants Minutes, MS15842/001, f 141v.



Francis TIPSLEY Freedom 1603 his Apprentice Master Thomas KENDALL

As these instances show, the Haberdashers' accounts are replete with the names of people and places, and they also reveal multiple agents and facets of performance, from the essentially pragmatic - such as raising paving slabs to make a safer surface for horses - to the more aesthetic choices, such as writing speeches. All were clearly necessary and remunerated accordingly.

Human and animal participants were involved, in large numbers, from coach horses to a veritable army of porters. Given their importance to the culture of early modern London, musicians' names - John Ogle, George Bell, Alexander Lecester, amongst others - are especially valuable. Only the best performers were called upon: as well as the City Waits, the sergeant trumpeter, a court officer, often provided musicians for civic pageantry; similarly, fencers were provided in 1620 by John Bradshaw, the Master of Defence. Over 40 individuals are named in connection with the 1604 show - including one woman, 'Widow Lanyg', from whom the Haberdashers purchased fringe for their banners - encompassing nearly 30 discrete trades and professions. Civic pageantry offered employment for carpenters, upholsterers, painters, armourers, tailors, cooks, washerwomen, printers, and many more.

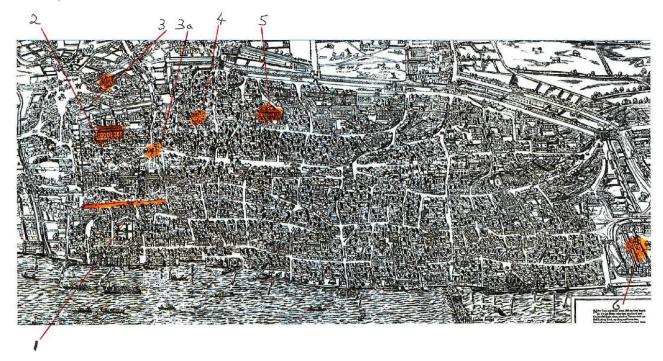
These can be categorised into various strands of activity. On the creative side, we find those involved in designing devices, painting banners and similar items for display, and writing text and speeches; the practicalities of the day were covered by, *inter alia*, those employed as whifflers and greenmen, paviors, porters, and messengers; entertainers included musicians, swordsmen, child actors and singers; and there were also the 'backroom staff' busy preparing the Hall, catering, cleaning, washing the linen and so on, as well as, behind the scenes, coordinating as well as keeping records, the Company clerk. Indeed, the final entry in this long series of payments, which runs over 5 large folio pages, reads 'Item paid for this booke to write theis [sic] accomptes of my Lord Maiors businesses' (f 11v).

The incidental details can be very beguiling. Sir Anias Preston from the Tower was given a sugar loaf worth 11s for his assistance with the javelins (one of which was lost on the day); the Lord Mayor's officer, a man named Dod, helped 'ffermer the sergeant' deal with those Haberdashers who refused to pay their way (the 'three Warrantes' mentioned were surely arrest warrants, to take the miscreants to the City counters). If it was not for the Haberdashers' account book, we would not know that a stilt walker was involved in civic pageantry (as yet the only such instance I have seen). Collectively, these records reveal a complex picture with overlapping roles, such as the stilt walker and the greenmen wielding fireworks, whose function was as much part of the entertainment as it was to act as crowd control.

Creating and then staging a triumph was a City-wide effort. The City's Guildhall and the livery company halls acted as crucial sites of theatrical productivity, as of course did the locations used as performance venues, such as Cheapside Conduit, the river Thames, and St Paul's churchyard. Activity was also dispersed beyond the traditional inauguration route and its pageant stations,

and these other locations had significant parts to play: the large interior of Christchurch Newgate was used to manufacture pageant devices, the children were fed at Blackwell Hall, near the main Guildhall gate, and devices were parked and/or stored on Carter Lane, between the river and the southern side of Paul's churchyard (the accounts simply state 'a place' on Carter Lane - my best guess would be the Bell inn, with its large yard, which had been used for the same purpose in 1602). Lord Mayor's Day was therefore all about movement within, and to and from, the City. Before the celebrations had even got underway, goods and services were being purchased from a range of locations.

The Tower armoury supplied 100 javelins at a cost of almost £2; Henry Miles and John ffynney provided 180 cannons to fire across the river from Bankside; and a carpenter was employed to 'remove the stoopes at Powles gate'. This probably refers to the northern gate of Paul's, near St Michael le Querne and the Little Conduit, one of the pageant stations, suggesting a temporary viewing area.



Map key: 1 Carter Lane; 2 Christchurch; 3 St Bart's; 3A St Michael le Querne/Little Conduit; 4 Haberdashers' Hall; 5 Guildhall & Blackwell Hall; 6 the Tower

The long day began very early. In 1632, for Nicholas Rainton's inauguration, 'the Wardens Assistantes and Liverie and all the Batchelors' (probably some 200 people) set off from Haberdashers' Hall at 6am. From there they processed to the Lord Mayor's house from whence, accompanied by 32 trumpeters and in strict order of seniority, they went to Guildhall to start the journey down to Three Cranes to meet the barges. It would seem that Rainton lived on or close to Leadenhall Street on the eastern side of the City; in 1604, the party probably went west to St Bart's to collect Lowe since the accounts show a payment 'for opening St Bartholmewes churchdore when the Batchelors went to my Lord Maiors to dynner' (f 11r). The festivities started before dawn and concluded after sunset; hence the need to purchase 42 torches as well as the concern to ensure that the children (as well as the 'poore men' who joined the procession) were fed regularly.

Using the Haberdashers' triumphs accounts, one can flesh out the other aspects of Lord Mayor's Day which contributed to the overall effect. By some considerable distance, the largest outlay was on fabric (no skimping on second-hand items for mayoral pageantry). The 100 or so men who processed had new blue coats and/or gowns for the occasion, with crimson mockado sleeves and red caps.

The jerkins and hose for those who carried the banners and streamers were trimmed with lace; expensive taffeta sarcenett was purchased for these banners, which were painted by top-rated Painter-Stainers like Francis Tipsley and Henry Wilde (Wilde, another craftsman regularly called upon to work on civic events, also painted 57 'targettes', small shields); the watermen had new taffeta scarves and coats, as did the numerous musicians. Even the coach horses bore decorated, tinselled caparisons and feathers. Those who rode on the horses wore armour.

On the river, as well as numerous barges and smaller craft, there were two galleys, one of which was the 'foist', which carried cannons and gunners; both ships bore new ensigns. Grinkin was commissioned to provide 'mermaides': these were probably carved figures for the water show, as for other triumphs. Music was ubiquitous: the City Waits were employed, alongside 34 trumpeters and ten drum and fife players who performed on the streets as well as on the water. Noise was not confined to music.

Gilbert Rogers and ten others displayed their skills with two-handed swords, Mr Fawcett oversaw the firing of 180 cannon (one of which, sadly, injured 'a pore man'), and fireworks - probably hand-held squibs - were used by the greenmen to keep the crowds at bay.

As is often the case in this period, the Company records are comparatively scant when it comes to the pageant devices. All we are told is that Grinkin was to arrange 'a faire Pageant', but not what this pageant actually displayed.

The Company would, however, have expected him to refer to their iconography, and it's possible that St Katharine, the Haberdashers' patron saint, may have featured as she does routinely for this Company. We do know that the children delivered speeches; the nature of 'the device' that Jonson was paid for, however, remains a mystery.

Interestingly, from 1605 onwards it became the norm to have more than one 'pageant': 1604 was therefore likely to have been the last year with the single pageant and artificial animals format which had hitherto been the usual arrangement. There was clearly a chariot, drawn by four horses ridden by armoured horsemen but again it isn't stated who or what, if anything, was carried on the chariot.

Equally, the function of the lion is unspecified: the Haberdashers' coat of arms includes a lion, which may have been sufficient cause: a lion was created for the preceding Haberdashers' show, in 1601 (Merchant Taylors' shows featured camels for the same reason).

The Company court did stipulate from the outset that the pageantry should be undertaken 'as it hath ben don in former yeres'. Based on other mayoral shows, the lion may have been a carved animal and the fact that it was singled out as part of Grinkin's commission implies that it performed an important role. In 1605 costumed children performed from atop a lion, as perhaps they did in 1604.

As well as being the sites of innumerable planning meetings, London's livery company halls also served as storehouses for pageant paraphernalia in a way akin to a theatre's tiring house. Many of the companies held stocks of expensive items like silk banners and streamers. When required, as in 1604, these were freshly painted with, for example, a new Lord Mayor's - or less frequently, a new sovereign's - coat of arms.

Inventories are therefore another important source of evidence for performance practices, although no Haberdashers' inventories from this period are extant to supplement the accounts and minutes I have drawn on here. Plenty of others survive, though, from both the minor livery companies and the Great Twelve. In the late 1590s, for instance, the Leathersellers' Company owned a fairly typical collection of:

iiij garlandes of clothe of golde with Sylver and gylte buckes one them & iiij Broches also Rames & buckes heades of sylver & gylt ...xiiij targettes ... A Drome ... xviij small banners iiij new stremers vj small Banners iij standerdes ij old streamers...<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Leathersellers' Company Accounts and Inventories, f 82v.

The 'garlandes' were items of decorated headwear that performed a ceremonial role on the election of a livery company's new Master and Wardens, which was usually accompanied by music; the banners, streamers, targets and standards would have been brought out for Lord Mayor's Day and other civic festivals, as would the drum. Most companies also kept 'standings', railed platforms for their livery to use during processions.

Indeed, the minor companies may have not been responsible for the large-scale activity outlined elsewhere in this paper, but all participated in civic pageantry to varying degrees. The Pewterers, for example, routinely hired a barge with drum and fife on Lord Mayor's Day, and they ordered new painted and fringed streamers and banners for the Clothworker John Spencer's inauguration in 1594 at a cost of over £10.6

An important reason for keeping such items was that all of the livery companies were on occasion instructed by precepts from the City authorities to participate in, and contribute financially to, non-mayoral pageantry such as the Royal Entry and state visits from, for example, King James's brother-in-law Christian IV in 1606 or Queen Elizabeth's opening of the Royal Exchange in 1571. These assessments could be hefty: the Grocers' court minutes show that they protested at the charge of almost £300 levied on their members for the Royal Entry in 1603:

Uppon speache had this daye towchinge the som*m*e of 72 li 16 s 8 d heretofore assessed on this Companye (over & above 218 li 10 s formerlie paide) towch towardes the Chardge of the Pageantes, and nowe demaunded by the right ho*norable* the L. Maior, to be paide forthwith by this Companye. Yt is by this Courte ordered and agreyd that Mr Wardens shall hearein [sic] make suche aunsweare to the Lord Maior as in theire good discrecions shall seeme meete in the protraccion of the paiement of the foresaide some, with whiche aunsweare yf the L. Maior shall not be pleased, Then it is agreyd that Mr Wardens shall make paiement therof out of the stocke of Corne, And this order untill the some shalbe fullie collected of brothers of this Companye. <sup>7</sup>

I could go on, but space is against me. I will conclude by offering up some possibilities to my readers. What else can you see worth commenting on in the accounts illustrated below? What further parallels between civic performance and the professional stage do these records suggest? Do they tell any stories not discussed here?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Pewterers' Company Audit Book, MS07086/003, f 196r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Grocers' Company Orders of the Court of Assistants, MS11588/002, p. 309.

## **Appendix**

Extracts from the Haberdashers' Company Triumphs' Accounts, 1604: MS15869 f  $9\mathrm{v}$ 

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