

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Newsletters

Part 1: Newsletters, c.1564-1667, and related papers c.1607-1794, from the Public Record Office

This joint project from Adam Matthew Publications and the Public Record Office brings together a strong body of newsletters from the State Papers Foreign and Chancery collections at the PRO. The papers provide an English perspective of events in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The majority of the material consists of letters belonging to the first Viscount Scudamore, Charles I's ambassador in Paris from 1635 to 1639.

Scudamore was an avid collector of newsletters and the papers that survive are a valuable source of information about the political issues being discussed in England and Europe at the time. **Some of the best professional newswriters of the day reported back to Scudamore, including John Pory and Edmund Rossingham**, both of whose correspondence appears in this collection. Other prominent diplomatic and political personnel featured in the letters include the Viscount's brothers, Barnaby and James, Roger and James Palmer (cupbearer and groom of the bedchamber to Charles I) and Viscount Basil Fielding (English ambassador extraordinary to the princes and states of North Italy, 1634-9).

Part 1 draws on three different PRO classes SP 78, SP 101 and C 115: The folders from the Secretaries of State files (SP 78 and SP 101) provide coverage of events in France and include the years 1635 to 1639, the time when Viscount Scudamore was ambassador to Paris. The majority of the letters originate from Paris or Versailles but the series also includes reports from agents at Marseilles, Bordeaux and Lille. Letters addressed to Viscount Scudamore discuss a variety of political and diplomatic issues in France including:

- Resolution of the Sorbonne on the marriage of Princes of the blood
- Cardinal Richelieu's gift of a ship to the English
- Treaty made with Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar at St' Germain
- Correspondence between Louis XIII and Charles I



The Chancery files (C 115) consist largely of the papers and writings of the Scudamore family, which were inherited by the childless Frances Scudamore in 1815 and transferred to the Public Record Office on her death in 1820. The folders include newsletters from the following diplomats:

- Oliver Flemming in Zurich to Viscount Scudamore, giving full coverage of Swiss and neighbouring news
- Basil, Lord Fielding, to Viscount Scudamore, written at Venice and, from April 1638, Turin
- Sir Arthur Hopton from Madrid about military intentions there and his regret that Scudamore is quitting his Paris post

These files also include additional material from the Scudamore estate such as wills, deeds and financial accounts. Whilst this microfilm project is primarily dedicated to newsletters, it was felt that to remove these items from the Chancery files would be counter-productive. Therefore, the Chancery files have been filmed in their entirety and scholars will find this additional material provides valuable background knowledge to the Scudamore family and estate.

The newsletters contain material on the Thirty Years War, Renaissance cities, Court intrigues, and details of significant meetings, conversations and treaties. There is also much to be gleaned from these files on preferment and how news could be used for an individual's political and social advancement. Other subjects covered in the newsletters include patronage, conduct, deportment and social behaviour.

Covering a range of political topics, the letters highlight the situations that were being given diplomatic attention at the time. They provide a view of events in Europe from a visitor's perspective as well as highlighting domestic political concerns both on the continent and in England. The frequency and regularity of the letters shows the importance of the task of sending updated news to England and the high profile of envoys working abroad. The newsletters are an excellent resource for historians wishing to study the nature of political and news reporting in the seventeenth century.

- A rich collection of newsletters from the 16th and 17th centuries
- Prominent diplomatic and political names include Viscount Scudamore, Viscount Basil Fielding and Oliver Flemming
- Key figures include Sir Walter Raleigh and Julius Caesar



SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NEWSLETTERS

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