Ticketing the British Eighteenth Century: “A thing . . . never heard of before”

Abstract

During the long eighteenth century, an apparently minor and ephemeral object proliferated in Britain: the ticket. A significant and increasing proportion of the population encountered tickets of admission, lottery tickets, and pay tickets. Novel types emerged, including pawn tickets and Tyburn tickets; philanthropists discovered their potential for investigating and relieving poverty. Historians have not brought different instances together, but new applications of the term “ticket,” and, more importantly, processes of elaboration and consolidation, suggest a variety of uses that bridged different registers and social settings. This extended early-modern capacities to express contractual obligation, affection, or allegiance through material objects and gave new form to techniques of identification. Crucial was the ticket’s potential to flow, to encapsulate and then release information, access, possession, or chance.

Study of charitable activities, plebeian experiences, and Methodist practices suggests how people learned to recognize and use tickets. Lower-class women and men were proficient agents as tickets intensified and shaped social interactions. These histories cast fresh light on eighteenth-century modes of social existence and the broader historical narratives constructed around them.

During the 1780s Matthew Martin, member of the Bath Philosophical Society, specialized in insects, dedicating a study of marine creatures to that great systematizer, Sir Joseph Banks. “I have for some years,” Martin explained, “pursued a practice of entering notes on various subjects of natural History, which have fallen within the verge of my observation.” Although “a rage for system” characterized the age, his own organization left something to be desired. Distracted by the demands of keeping his specimens alive, by other interests and by his family, he sometimes forgot to add “correspondent numbers” to papers and drawings, losing the connections between them and relying instead on his memory to supply the “deficiencies of my Notes” on the color, habitat, and propagation of these animals. Ten years later, Martin had discovered a new way of ordering his investigations: the ticket. He was now living in London where he acted as unpaid secretary to the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor (SBCP). The Society called for science, for practical
investigations “upon a system,” of everything that concerned the poor. Martin’s attention turned from lepidoptera to beggars. This time he rather more successfully engaged a rage for system, using the name of the SBCP to secure £1000 of government money to survey metropolitan mendicity. Through the mechanism of numbered tickets distributed to beggars, he could exchange charitable relief for a life story and keep track of his information; with an office and assistants he captured data on 2000 cases. Whatever took Matthew Martin from sea and heath to a metropolitan landscape, it was the ticket, that apparently incidental particular, that permitted the rigor, scale, and detail of his later research.

Martin’s was but one of many contexts that bring the ticket within the verge of historians’ observation. For any eighteenth-century reader, in London or the provinces, knew something about them: lottery tickets; tickets for ceremonies, plays, concerts, dinners, and assemblies; Tyburn tickets; turnpike tickets; and ticket porters. Tickets were advertised, owned, stolen, lost, managed, and described in print. Some were held close to the body or remained within reach; others went far afield. Tickets pinned to bales of cloth, issued as receipts or circulated with information were part of everyday experience. Letter-writers and diarists throughout the century recorded lottery tickets and noted the acquisition of tickets of admission through purchase, gift or considerable social exertion. And this was not something exclusive to the literate or elite: seamen’s tickets, pawn tickets, beggars’ tickets, tickets exchanged for drink at election time, and secret tickets permeated plebeian and pauper life. Tickets figured in Britain’s trans-oceanic world, in the North American colonies and most visibly as the penal “Ticket of Leave” in New South Wales. They had their counterparts on the European continent too, and in the form of lottery tickets spilled across into London newspapers and pocket books.

This article makes three simple points: first, tickets mattered. Second, during the long eighteenth century, tickets multiplied. Third, expansive dealings with tickets cast the oblique light of the particular and ephemeral on broader historical narratives. A significant and increasing proportion of the population was exposed to them: urban economies of makeshift turned on sailors’ pay tickets, the sheer number of which increased throughout Britain’s imperial wars; by Anne Murphy’s estimate, 3.5 million lottery tickets were sold between 1693 and 1699 alone. Even the downtrodden agricultural laborer or maid-of-all-work might encounter tickets in religious and charitable contexts during the second half of the century, while the radical shoemaker might carry a membership ticket in the 1790s. Historians have not brought different instances together, but new applications of the word “ticket,” and, more importantly, processes of elaboration and consolidation, suggest a distinctive phenomenon. This extended early-modern capacities to express contractual obligation, affection, or allegiance through material objects; it gave new form to techniques of identification—to the papers, parchments, seals, certificates, and badges—evident from the medieval period. Tickets are ephemeral flotsam that marks the ebb and flow of historical tides; they also had a more substantial presence. Fashioned from paper, metal, or bone, they gave shape to events and actions; they stood in for people and things; they materialized knowledge and experience; they patterned behavior and convention. They had effects that could not happen without them: losing, counterfeiting or overlooking them had physical and spatial consequences.
I. Definitions and Types

The long history of the ticket is very much bound up with technologies of writing and printing. The word’s origins in the French “étiquet” and “estiquet” ground it etymologically as a label or note affixed to something or displayed. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the oldest and general sense of a “short written notice” emerged first in Scotch in 1528; English instances surfaced only around 1600, when the term also described a “pay warrant.” This consolidated associations with entitlement or authorization and linked to one of the ticket’s synonyms, the “billet.” As an early seventeenth-century I.O.U., the ticket recorded debt and generated the colloquialism, “on the tick.” The ticket porters, who had changed their name from street porters in 1641, claimed the right to carry certain goods through London; they were distinguished by a tin badge, manifesting another understanding of the ticket as a sign of membership. Although the first English lottery was launched in 1567, it was only in the later seventeenth century that the term “ticket” replaced the original “lot”; the non-winning entry or “blank” pre-dated the ticket. In the sense of “a slip, usually of paper or cardboard, bearing the evidence of the holder’s title to some service or privilege, to which it admits him” the OED dates it to 1673.

In 1756 Dr. Johnson defined the ticket as “a token of any right or debt upon the delivery of which admission is granted or a claim acknowledged”; he illustrated this with lotteries and the military, making no reference to the older, more general “short written notice.” During the seventeenth century, seamen’s wages, lotteries, and special events had generated tickets of the sort Dr. Johnson had in mind. Decorated paper invitations served as tickets to funerals, concerts, and feasts: generic details, such as signatures, seals, and the stewards’ names in two columns bracketed together, were already apparent; particular features, including a capacity to separate from the issuer and circulate, distinguished them from a non-specific tally or certificate. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries London theatres used metal and bone admission discs; printed tickets emerged in the early 1700s. Attendance at occasions of state was by pass or “ticket,” although it was for George III’s coronation in 1761 that they were issued on a scale that overshadowed previous distributions by office holders and peers. Political dramas, including the impeachment of Henry Sacheverell in 1710, were ticketed too. When Warren Hastings was tried in Westminster Hall in 1788, spectators had to obtain a ticket with the right day printed on it and rumors of a black market circulated in the press as profit seemed to supplant customary patronage. By the early 1700s the forms and capacities of tickets were already familiar enough to carry the weight of political and moral critique in satire and spoof.

Entrepreneurs recognized marketing potential. Charles Holman, supplier of London Ink Powder, advertised printed tickets to his May feast in 1712, promising his trade customers barges and music. In the earliest phase of turnpiking, trusts issued paper tickets giving travelers access through successive gates. Proprietors, such as Jonathan Tyers of Vauxhall Spring Gardens, introduced admission tickets—paper and metal—to a range of resorts from the 1730s. Around the same time, schools, hospitals, and workhouses had adapted military practice and were using written or printed “tickets of leave” in an attempt to control inmates, visitors, staff and liquor, indoors and outside the building.
Where badges, licenses, and certificates had long tracked the poor, tickets now followed: “every Pensioner may be made so well known to several others by a Ticket, which cannot be counterfeited, and some other peculiar descriptions of him, that no one of them can be personated by any other.”

Vestries issued pew tickets to order parishioners and ensure that no servants or lodgers could intrude into their places. On a larger scale, but with less anxiety about property rights, bishops introduced tickets to regulate large numbers of confirmation candidates. After 1741, Methodists carried tickets. Mid-century, the London Hospital printed thousands of “Thanksgiving Tickets” which patients had to take to their places of worship once discharged. Some charities started to call a letter of recommendation a “ticket.” References to the “Tyburn ticket” gather pace from the 1740s. From 1699 this pre-prepared certificate, often hand-written, exempted from parish and ward duties those who apprehended criminals convicted of shop-lifting or other specific offences. It could be sold and used once; around five hundred circulated in London in 1816. Designating it a ticket highlighted its exchange value, suggesting that it was a growing knowledge of tickets that had brought it into focus in these terms some decades after its introduction (unlike the settlement certificate, for example, which was held by the parish, had no re-sale value and never seems to have acquired the status of a ticket). From 1757, pawnbrokers’ customers, the majority of them women, could pay upwards of a halfpenny to get a duplicate entry from the register and use it to redeem goods. Popular speech quickly dubbed this a “ticket” picking up on the association with an I.O.U. The British Museum, the contents of which had been purchased with the proceeds of a public lottery in 1753, admitted visitors by ticket from 1759: a labyrinthine applications process (itself the subject of a pamphlet literature) opened yet vetted access, requiring what Anne Goldgar has described as “considerable cultural capital” to negotiate. Military doctors expanded the practice of attaching tickets to hospital beds with the patient’s name and the physician “to whom they belong,” to institute a form of disease notification. In the 1780s statistics were compiled from tickets sent ashore with the sick. By the early nineteenth century, interest in distributing benefits to paupers via tickets had developed from parish tokens and occasional ventures into major initiatives, while festivals, entertainments, and funerals (notably Nelson’s in 1804) multiplied tickets to manage levels of access.

The relatively recent etymological arrival of the ticket, plus its rapid expansion, both as a printed object and as an item represented in and traded through the medium of print, are significant. So are eighteenth-century elaborations in which the ticket infiltrated and crossed between political, convivial, military and spiritual contexts. It was during this century that the general notice or label acquired additional purposes and capacities: to visibility was added mobility. Proliferation of uses suggests a close, but not exclusive association with new forms of sociability, commerce and urban amenities: “Why a ticket is only a visiting card, with a name upon it; but we all call them tickets now.” Underpinning this activity were presses and printers who turned out millions of lottery tickets, thousands of items for promoters or as blank stock and smaller runs in the tens and hundreds for particular commissions. Where generic wood-blocks provided decorative borders at the lower end of the trade, an elite of fashionable engravers operated at the upper end. From a sheet of turnpike tickets to
the prestigious Mansion House festivities, tickets emerged on different grades and sizes of paper, from backrooms and large commercial premises.

II. Approaches

They may look flat, but tickets are three-dimensional. This leads us to anthropologists and ethnographers since it was Arjun Appadurai’s influential 1986 discussion of “the social life of things” that set objects “in motion.” Far from being passive ciphers, they now expressed identities, reinforced political contexts or constituted new ones; knowledge, habits, and beliefs gave objects biographies and a form of agency. A theoretical conceit about the changing meanings and uses of things thus highlighted the materiality of human and historical circumstances. By 2000, Appadurai had re-focused his ideas to emphasize “flow,” the rhythms, repetitions and “patina” through which human and social contexts become visible. While this later work is explicitly concerned with the distinctive character of twenty-first century globalization, it speaks to the eighteenth-century world of tickets: not because they were global or modern (neither should be assumed) but because they were in circulation; they constituted a “flow.” As a conceptual approach, it draws attention to the different speeds and contexts in which specific tickets or groups of tickets were acquired and used, to the legal and economic infrastructures required to sustain them, and to the material politics of the places where they were found, the coffee houses, parlors, archives, printing presses, ledgers, pocket books, and letters. Tickets are not interesting simply because they represented something else, but because they had a physical presence, however fugitive. Valuable here are those studies of everyday life that probe times and spaces filled with ordinary, yet invisible routines, shared understandings and skills. Although ethnographic research is often framed by models of western modernity, the experiences that emerge are profoundly material and sensory: they are present in and through objects; they reach into the affective and expressive dimensions of material life, including the infra-ordinary, “that which seems to have ceased for ever to astonish us.” At present much of the literature on the quotidian eighteenth century deals with specific forms of consumption and fashion, particularly domestic objects and spaces, a tendency arising from preoccupations with modernity (again), gendered identities and concepts of public and private. But tickets were also made and experienced through the eye, touch, imagination, and memory. Circulation, form and use gave tickets “social lives,” so that their specific histories disclose the processes that created substance, feeling and value.

Of all eighteenth-century tickets, those generated by lotteries, state events and elite entertainments have attracted the most scholarly attention: fashionable sociability with its complex patronage and commercial networks; the lotteries that underpinned state finances while generating a market in ticket shares, insurance, annuities, and prizes which were particularly attractive to female investors. But the range of tickets was much more significant, albeit unwieldy. It included standardized and unique examples; items with a price, which dealt with access or did something quite different. Some tickets, such as those issued by John Wesley, had novel properties and uses; others—feast tickets, for instance—resembled older practices under a new name. The category is not even a coherent one when throughout the period the term “ticket” was also
applied to dockets, which certified quantities and prices, and in some contexts was a synonym for administrative receipts and accounts. Indeed, can the draper's ticket, protruding from under the shoplifter's cloak, be dealt with alongside a dinner ticket for 7/6d or a pawnbroker's duplicate? Most tickets were paper, but this was not always the case. Although neither practicalities nor meanings readily unify objects which could be exchanged or sold, for instance, with those which could not, two factors justify studying them together rather than apart. First, the readiness with which the term “ticket” was applied during the eighteenth century suggests a body of knowledge and shared expectations that enabled people to accommodate them in these terms. Second, whatever tickets encapsulated—whether information, access, possession, chance—it assumed a material shape that for a period at least could be released, displayed, circulated or traded. The ticket underwrote it. These physical properties distinguished the ticket from the general notice, although in a form that was more indeterminate, fragile even, than that taken by money or proto-monetary or bureaucratic instruments. One consequence of this was that tickets brought those who created, held or acquired them into contact with other people and institutions. Expertise, ownership, and authenticity (and their reverse, ignorance, lack, and forgery) thus made the management of tickets political too.

As elements in urban print culture, tickets sit within Margaret Hunt's discussion of “commercial ephemera:” items including contracts, bonds, calendars, lists, memorandum books, lottery tickets, and advertising. Their ubiquity, according to Hunt, shaped the practices and sensibilities of the literate middling sort, impressing the importance of commerce on their minds. Printed by-products of commercial activities taught new ways of doing business, standardized processes, facilitated wider distribution networks, enabled a firmer control of resources and promoted goods and services. As we shall see, tickets without a direct commercial function shared many of these characteristics, highlighting their role in transacting and receipting services. But what differentiates the ticket from other examples of commercial ephemera, such as trade cards, is the variety of uses to which it was put and its capacity to bridge registers and social settings so that it belonged primarily neither to commerce nor to the middling sort. A similar point can be made when legal documents shared generic features with some sorts of tickets. In many ways, the history of the eighteenth-century ticket exemplifies Adrian Johns' point that “the very identity of print itself has had to be made.” For Johns, the form of the book, conventions of authorship and the authority of the printed word were not intrinsic or self-evident; they developed instead through experiments in reading, techniques of interpretation and social consensus. Viewed from this perspective, the forms and uses of tickets were likewise made and learned, adopted or rejected: however obvious they became, there was nothing inevitable about them then. In the sense of a label, therefore, the bookbinder's or shopkeeper's ticket is “only distantly related to the ticket as commonly understood” today, but for a substantial period occupied this capacious linguistic territory. The history of tickets, like that of books, is concerned with authenticity, uniformity, and transparency; for tickets this was especially important because of what was expected of them and because of their relevance beyond the confines of literary or scientific circles. Tickets offered the prospect of regulating activities and things, but if this was to work people had to know what they were and trust that they were what they
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appeared to be. Both uncertainty and reliability were the outcome of social engagements, which, as historians of credit and money have observed, were far more tangled than those represented in classical economic models of contract, market, and individuals. Habit created the conventions that now obscure the complexity of early-modern usage, while the published book, by consolidating its own form during the period, marginalized that of the ephemeral ticket.

Until recently it has proved difficult to research these objects. Twentieth-century collectors followed their own, not necessarily historical conventions. Eighteenth-century categories were not always explicit: what appear to be metal tokens were understood as tickets, while the word "ticket" might only occur in reference to the object and was not inscribed on the item itself. The challenge of systematically trawling the eighteenth-century press has also obscured the scale and dimensions of their expanding presence in metropolitan and provincial Britain. Only with large-scale digitization projects have tickets become more visible, but even then technical issues make promises of completeness illusory. In addition, ephemera are under-represented in resources such as Eighteenth-century Collections Online, which are shaped by assumptions about print and its historical or literary significance: magazines, but not their supplements; books in preference to bits of paper. In the politics of survival, neglect once preserved ephemera, but digitization risks losing them altogether. Indeed the category of ephemera is an odd, paradoxical one, covering as it does both those things that have endured and those that have not. In the case of objects whose material presence or tangibility was significant—to establish authenticity, create access, hold a trace of memory—once the ticket is gone, those elements are irretrievably lost.

As collectors' items, extant tickets have more commonly been taken as evidence of the engraver's art than of the social and economic relationships that produced them (what matters is the object rather than the object in all its contexts). Women and men of the eighteenth-century were, however, profoundly conscious of the ticket. The antiquarian, Richard Gough, saved them; Sarah Sophia Banks collected them. Gillian Russell has observed that Banks's collection of ephemera paralleled her brother's collection of the flora and fauna of the Antipodes. John Wilkes captured the practical, aesthetic and political registers of which contemporaries were so aware when he sent a ticket from the 1775 Mansion House ball to a correspondent: "Permit me then to send you a Ticket... for the Easter festival of my Mayoralty. I saved it from the wreck of those despoiled by door keepers. In my opinion, it does honour to the two great artists, Cipriani and Bartolozzi, and to a country which distinguishes their merit." Fashionable engravers were prized; but tickets, once used, were simply crumpled onto the floor. Dealings with tickets apparently pitted elite sensibilities, including patriotism, against mundane (that is, lower-class) concerns. What also separated the door-keepers' torn ticket from the connoisseur's treasured object was time: for one it was gone in an evening; for the other it survived indefinitely and its value changed with context. Through his ticket, Wilkes claimed acts of commemoration as a class privilege, sending different hands and papers into oblivion. But people from a wide social range discovered what a ticket could do. The next section begins a descent down the social scale by drawing out practices and meanings around one source of eighteenth-century tickets, those produced by London charities.
III. Charities

Eighteenth-century London charities deployed urban spectacle, fashion, and entertainment in fund-raising and made frequent recourse to print, especially newspapers, to communicate with supporters, so it is worth considering what their officials were doing when they issued tickets. From at least the 1680s, the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy (established in 1655 to care for Anglican clergymen's widows and children) advertised its annual feast. In 1684 tickets were available from two taverns and a draper's shop; in 1721 from a haberdasher's, a goldsmith's and twelve different coffee-houses. From 1716, advertisements pointed out that feast tickets also admitted supporters to the choir at St Paul's Cathedral during the annual service; as the charity developed the musical side of its festivities, it issued another set of tickets for the rehearsal of that music two days earlier. While the dinners had much in common with the school and county feasts alongside which they were advertised and where tickets brought together for an evening those who shared memories of an institution or place, rehearsal tickets were more closely aligned to concert-going.

By the mid eighteenth century, innovative subscription institutions were making extensive use of tickets—and printed notices about them—in courting publicity, adapting commercial forms and tapping cultural trends. There were tickets to dinners, breakfasts, church services, theatrical performances, concerts, assemblies, inspections, and ceremonies. The material distinction between a ticket and an invitation was not always clear cut, however; even in the 1790s, form and process were fluid, leaving the historian puzzling over folds in the paper to discover whether a large dinner invitation/ticket had been wrapped around a smaller church ticket and then enclosed by a printed covering note. Some tickets were invitations until signed, sealed, and numbered: such well-established practices gave the document new value and uses. It is possible that invitations survive in greater numbers because they were not converted into tickets and then surrendered at the door. Surviving church tickets are, for the same reasons, probably those that were never used.

Charities developed this system to raise money and promote a sense of allegiance and obligation: "Tickets will be timely distributed . . . and it is to be hoped that no Person will be desirous of being admitted without first contributing to this charity." Notices about tickets were an opportunity to remind newspaper readers about an institution, cementing its claims on them. By ticketing an event, a charity could project ideas about its audience and galvanise potential supporters. In 1753, the Sons of the Clergy advertised that the "Number of Rehearsal Tickets is greatly lessen'd this Year, the better to accommodate Persons of Distinction:" under the guise of reassuring elite supporters, it lured others. The Foundling Hospital (opened in 1741) was at the forefront of publicity techniques. It reassured its fashionable supporters in 1762 that "to prevent the Chapel being Crouded, no more Tickets will be deliver'd than it can conveniently hold," a notice that simultaneously urged its audience to purchase their tickets quickly. The Magdalen Hospital (launched in 1758 to accommodate penitent prostitutes) introduced tickets to regulate an unseemly press of visitors jostling to see the veiled women in the chapel gallery. In each
case, tickets created fresh opportunities to engage with supporters and intensify their interest by restricting access to the institution. Charities' advertising techniques were not noticeably different from those of entrepreneurs marketing sociable entertainments. Their arrangements literally sat alongside other experiments in assiduous self-publicity which marketed elite sociability through instructions that included the supply, appearance, and color of tickets. The tickets that circulated as a result, however, had specific effects in shoring up an institution's financial and emotional resources. Tickets were a mechanism for officials to use; in the process they gave a material form to intangible qualities only partially represented on a balance sheet.

Charities issued tickets for their annual festivities (the "anniversary") by the thousands, investing in printing plates and newspaper advertisements. These tickets had clear generic features and a number of distinct uses, enabling an institution to keep track of expenses, regulate audiences, and attract attention. Tickets taken at the door were proof of numbers when negotiating with cooks; wine tickets limited the amount each benevolent diner might drink. Decorations on the paper surface presented its claims in visual terms, including to those who received the invitation, did not attend, but might send a donation anyway. In a process that went beyond strictly functional purposes, the ticket gave physical form to ideas and feelings that stirred the organizers. In 1753, the London Hospital displayed an engraving of its "intended" building; the Magdalen Hospital, consummate practitioner of sentimental rhetoric displayed a kneeling (and unveiled) penitent in 1780. From the 1740s, the Sons of the Clergy simply presented its coat of arms topped with a bishop's mitre as a sign of its impeccable social connections.

Depending on the type of event, charities sold or gave away tickets. Those for theatrical benefits, for example, were invariably priced in line with commercial entertainments. Other occasions, such as anniversaries with church services and dinners, drew on traditions of hospitality, largesse, and patronage in which case a plentiful and well-disposed attendance was essential. Officials calculated the most effective means of persuading supporters to open their purses: in anticipation or well-lubricated by food and wine. Whichever method was used, it was possession of a ticket that determined participation; at the same time, this apparent openness was channeled by custom and distribution methods. By issuing separate tickets for ladies and gentlemen, officials regulated and reinforced gender differences. So in 1753 the Public Infirmary in James Street advertised that "Each Dinner Ticket will admit a Gentleman to the Church; and every Gentleman taking a Ticket for the Dinner will be entitled to a Ticket for the Church, to admit one Lady or Gentleman"; the "printed Tickets for the Ladies" also included details of the music "which will be particularly mentioned in future Advertisements." The Middlesex Hospital (established 1745) and the Magdalen Hospital made a different calculation in giving two "ladies" tickets for the church with every dinner ticket. "Ladies Tickets" for the London Hospital anniversary in 1752 were "to be had of the Stewards or their Deputies." In the absence of a standard pattern, benevolent Londoners constantly negotiated ticket capacities and access.

Theatrical benefits were marketed through box offices and impresarios, but anniversaries and events on an institution's own premises required more direct management. Stewards, secretaries, and clerks supplied tickets. Feast tickets
were at the core of charitable conviviality and, as the Sons of the Clergy’s advertisements from 1684 and 1721 suggest, coffee houses emerged as a key outlet. Although historians have not commented on this aspect of coffee-house life (or its implications for discussions of the public sphere), did the experience of acquiring a ticket in these circumstances—the sensory dimensions of paper and coffee—connect charity with print and news in distinctive, above all, tangible ways? In London, many organizations attempted to cover different areas of the metropolis, signaling their interest in attracting distinctive social groups: a cluster of establishments in the City, another set near Parliament, a third in legal districts, and a fourth in the fashionable west end. Certain coffee houses seem to have specialized in ticket distribution: Batson’s in Cornhill, for example, served the Sons of the Clergy, Foundling Hospital, the Middlesex Hospital, and the Lying-in Hospital for Married Women, as well as other groups. This geography intersected with another ticket distribution network, that of the lottery, which was also carefully noted by purchasers throughout the century. Freemasons used the lodge network, which threaded through coffee houses and taverns. Provincial hospitals and charities followed similar practices although tickets were cheaper and the points of distribution simpler. In all these cases, however, it was the possession of a ticket that brought opportunities to display benevolence and claim symbolic oversight of an institution. Thus the Foundling Hospital governors resolved to dine annually at their own expense and “any Gentlemen inclined to dine with them, may have Tickets of the Steward of the said Hospital.” And for this, all that was often requisite was a newspaper, some shillings, and a sense of purpose. For those who might be anxious about social and financial demands, whose resources only stretched to the 5/- feast ticket, the words “there will be no collection” were explicitly intended to be reassuring.

Integrated into the worlds of print, tavern and coffee house, where they were openly available over the bar, tickets illustrated the contractual elements of Dr. Johnson’s definition. But, as the association with coffee houses also implies, these transactions required social interaction. Throughout the network of distribution, charities exploited existing relationships and created transient ones: “in such cases as these, a person has a right to press not only a friend, but even a stranger to take a ticket.” Officials kept note of those who could be relied upon to mobilize their contacts, up, down, and across the social scale, so that shifting tickets became a sign of a person’s status and influence. Advertisements urged readers, potential strangers, to write to named individuals for tickets: “Gentlemen and Ladies may have Tickets for the Church of the Stewards, or of Mr. Robert Reynolds, Sec. at his Chambers No. 3, in Middle Temple-Lane, by a Message in Writing sent to him.” Even the technical requirement for a signature and seal to validate a ticket aligned contractual elements with personal obligations through a blob of wax. In the interval between the printing of a ticket and its surrender at the door, therefore, folds, ink and wax registered a series of additional negotiations and delicate personal and impersonal relations. However insignificant its size, a ticket lent material weight to a snub when “returned unaccepted.”

Given the potential complexities of ticket acquisition and use, as well as some significant variations of detail, charities—like the managers of commercial venues—turned to the press. The City of London Lying-in Hospital explained that in 1775 “Church Tickets will admit any Number of persons
contribute to the Charity and such as shall come without a Ticket, so doing, will be admitted; the Church Tickets, and this Advertisement being meant as an Invitation to their coming."\textsuperscript{87} The Middlesex Hospital urged "those Gentlemen who cannot favour the Charity with their Presence ... to return their Tickets to the Hospital as soon as possible, that proper Provision may be made."\textsuperscript{88} Newspapers provided a channel of communication and also a place of conversation. Tickets to the chapel of the Asylum were sent only to the "guardians" (substantial subscribers) of that institution.\textsuperscript{89} When the London Hospital changed the day of its Anniversary, it "hoped that all Gentlemen possess'd of Tickets of that Date will take Notice."\textsuperscript{90} Competing instructions, exhortations, notices, and reminders reached out to newspaper readers, shaping their expectations, feeding a broader swell of information on where tickets were available, how theatre managers divided the money on a benefit night and whether tickets were transferable or not. When pleasure-seeking visitors to Bath in the 1780s had to negotiate at least five different ticket arrangements, from the non-transferable, to the multiple entry and the refundable, it is not surprising that charities gave careful attention to such matters.\textsuperscript{91}

Creating an audience could cause problems. Tickets were not always compatible with claims to social distinction.\textsuperscript{92} The Magdalen Hospital, ever on the alert for inappropriate behavior and ever keen to press its special allure, reserved the right to exclude all who were judged "improper," whether or not they had tickets—a tacit acknowledgement of the ticket's contractual element—and if they had, the tickets were retained so that the Committee could see which governor had endorsed them. The Hospital then discontinued tickets when the requirement seemed to obstruct fund-raising.\textsuperscript{93} Garnering support and fostering a sense of intimacy were sometimes incompatible too. In the 1790s, Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals clamped down on the "Inconvenience" of "Strangers" coming to their feast: "the Stewards ... particularly request of the Gentleman to whom this Ticket is addressed to bring such Ticket with him, it not being transferable."\textsuperscript{94} Urban economies and quotidian social experiences created a micro-politics around the form, possession, and distribution of tickets. Circulating within eighteenth-century print culture, tickets for charity events, as for elite assemblies, state occasions or admission to exhibitions, gave identity, status, and human relationships a material shape. It therefore seems significant that charities used tickets on an extensive scale to regulate and encourage donors decades earlier than they deployed them on a similar scale with beneficiaries.

IV. Plebeian Experiences

In the closing decades of the century, experiments with tickets became increasingly visible as an instrument to direct benefits to the poor and to assess or endorse an individual's worth. These transactions were not necessarily more impersonal or contractual than previous forms of assistance, but they did mark a shift in philanthropic fashion away from institutional provision to self-help and domiciliary care. Tickets answered organizations' claims to remain accountable and keep track of a dispersed group of beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{95} Their properties also expanded the scale of operations. According to Patrick Colquhoun, a London
charity distributed over five months 181,276 tickets for half-price leg of beef soup and a further 24,889 for potatoes, also at half price.Matthew Martin ordered 6000 3d tickets to investigate London mendicity. From 1796 his supporters bought these to hand out to beggars who could then redeem them at Martin's enquiry office:

Thus a small fund was raised, of which the paupers had the benefit in return for their accounts of themselves; and the tickets being lettered and numbered and registered when disposed of, served as clues in particular cases where required, to assist the donors in tracing the history of the parties on whom they were bestowed.

Martin's survey is valuable for its information on London poverty, but what it also reveals is the creative potential of the ticket as an administrative device, as a technique for tracing the unknowable: it had become the material "clue." For the philanthropic, the ticket was a means to control resources, store up rewards, and instill a sense of economic responsibility; Martin interpreted recipients' responses to the ticket as a sign of their merit. But what did those recipients—the great majority of them women—make of Martin's numbered slips of paper? What did the specific form of the ticket (in contrast with the badge or certificate) contribute to pauper identity and that much-discussed sense of entitlement? By the early nineteenth century, a provincial printer such as William Davison in Alnwick regularly worked for the overseers and justices of the peace. So in addition to blank indentures, warrants, licenses, orders, and certificates, and amongst bespoke advertising, trade cards, tickets for entertainments and dinners, and auction notices, Davison printed Rothbury House of Industry "spinning tickets" (to keep track of inmates' labor), soup tickets and, in 1822, 400 non-transferable Alnwick parish "pay" tickets, a term likely to have enraged all those who debated the dangers of pauperism and the evils of the allowance system. As the paper ticket infiltrated Georgian poor relief, it created behavior and expectations centered on shared knowledge of its material attributes.

Although Matthew Martin was uninterested in plebeian experience of the ticket, it was already well-established. In the context of her work on women and the fiscal imperial state, Margaret Hunt has fathomed the "seaman's ticket: a numbered paper instrument issued by the Navy Office guaranteeing payment at a future time which could be made over to others through a power of attorney. The system enabled the navy to defer payment and by the 1680s pay tickets were already at the centre of a complex economy of makeshifts in maritime communities; agents, money lenders, and discounters, often women, developed considerable expertise in attempting to extract money from government bureaucracies or via the courts. Tickets also doubled as a form of investment when women acquired shares in a number of men's wages as a means of spreading risk. Their actions intersected with or paralleled the practice of buying shares in lottery tickets (and even the poorest were potentially within the range of "penny" lotteries). "Transactions involving pay tickets," Hunt observes, "were often overlain with much emotional complexity." Pay tickets encapsulated the burdens of war; they occasioned female exploitation, autonomy, and agency; they were the means by which women came to know the state and their place in it. What this also means is that plebeian women were among the earliest
users of tickets, aware not only of their entitlement in the fiscal–imperial state, but of the material and emotional possibilities that this object held, of the actions and interventions it required. (It may also explain the readiness with which pawnbrokers’ duplicates were dubbed “tickets” in the 1750s.) Viewed as part of a system, these particular tickets brought an imperial dimension to the identities, subjectivities, knowledge, and makeshifts embodied in the form. There are obvious analogies too with other structures of authority and meaning: currency, and particularly the bank note. Seamen’s, lottery and coronation tickets differed in their uses and circulation, but all deployed similar anti-forgery devices. A mesh of flourishes, along the top or on a counterfoil and cut by scissors, spanned decades, environments, and geographies.

Soldiers’ pay operated differently: here the ticket was a means of accounting rather than a transferable paper. During the French wars of the 1790s, however, regimental balloting made the ticket—or lot—the instrument for determining which wives would go with the men and which would be left behind. Its vagaries summed up the unsettledness, the role of chance that was evident in other aspects of plebeian life: children admitted to the Foundling Hospital were selected by ballot (in this case drawn with balls rather than slips of paper) and the mothers who left them saw in their own histories the workings of fate.

The ticket—the hazards and difficulties it represented; the risks of loss it literally embodied; the rituals of drawing the paper—were understood by those whose lives and agency seemed peculiarly attuned to it. When Joanna Southcott signed, folded, and sealed a piece of paper, her supporters, predominantly female, could touch the comfort of salvation; Southcott was adapting ticket conventions to produce a talisman. In the same period, radical societies and trades unions adopted urban practices of association by distributing to their members “Tickets and Certificates ... as an introduction to Similar Societies in other places.” Cut in half, the act of reuniting the pieces made the introduction; it was a practice that recalls both the broken shilling as a plebeian pledge of faith and the paper counterfoil. Spies and official warrants, however, made the ticket into incriminating evidence: in 1794 the Mayor of Leeds sent to London a copy of the Leeds Constitutional Society “Club Book” and a sketch of the “Engraved Tickett” seized with it. But why use a ticket when hand signals or oaths provided another means of recognition? The danger lay in its very power or system. When members paid for numbered tickets and showed them to enter meetings, societies managed both security and finance. An engraved paper suggests an amenable printer: in radicalism, tickets mobilized elements of print culture and oral tradition. Patterns of circulation—locally, diverted to the Home Office or finally destroyed—mapped complex politics of disaffection quite precisely. The ticket became a material trace in the lives of those who carried it. Thus in 1792, a shoemaker “who said that he belonged to a Society to destroy this Government” told his friends that he had ticket number 300. An ability to recognize and use tickets had become an essential form of literacy.

V. Methodists

One of the contexts in which ticket literacy developed was Methodism: from 1741, tickets consolidated its band and class structures. Originating as a disciplinary and administrative tool, they condensed collective identity and an
intense sense of belonging into a record of attendance, certificate of good behavior, and permission to attend meetings. Possession of a ticket gave access to that key Methodist experience, the love feast, and to the comforts of membership. For David Hempton, who sees Methodism as a hybrid of Enlightenment and enthusiasm, the ticket exemplifies the movement's character as a voluntary association. In a religious context, ticketing seems to have been John Wesley's idea and it developed from his decision to examine personally the Bristol "Bretheren" during a period of disorder:

To each of those of whose seriousness and good conversation I found no reason to doubt I gave a testimony under my own hand, by writing their name on a ticket prepared for that purpose; every ticket implying as strong a recommendation of the person to whom it was given as if I had wrote at length, "I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness."

Several elements are worth noting here. Wesley's consciousness of the ticket's capacity to heighten and concentrate meaning (a name on a ticket is worth as much as writing "at length"), conveys the ticket's symbolic weight, a ritualized potential embedded in its material form: physical existence and ownership constitute its power. Wesley's own hand on these examples, like the signatures and seals on other sorts of ticket, transforms them from an inert to an active piece of paper. It also makes them very different from the thousands of standardized items that circulated once this system became widely established; the inky trace of Wesley himself would change the significance of those early tickets too over subsequent decades. From the beginning Wesley also saw how tickets, issued quarterly and shown upon coming into a meeting, became a "quiet and inoffensive method" of excluding the disorderly: "He has no new ticket, ... and hereby it is immediately known that he is no longer of this community." At regular intervals tickets were used to enforce Wesley's latest injunctions against ruffles, enormous bonnets or contraband.

Essential to experiences of connection and salvation, Wesley invested tickets with the authority of Apostles and the Ancients by casting them as direct descendants of "commendatory letters" or "tesserae" (tokens, tallies and figuratively, signs, and passwords). Critics were certainly alert to this. Thomas Church considered that Wesley's tickets proved that the Society was no part of the Anglican Church: "you have delivered and given out Tickets to those, whom you thought proper to continue as Members." And while Wesley rejected the term "assurance and salvation tickets" as "a mixture of nonsense and blasphemy," it reached towards something else only weakly captured by a concept of "membership." Followers needed neither Latin nor theology to understand this emotional and spiritual force field. While those stripped of their tickets were deserted by their friends—"she was a dead thing out of mind!"—the disaffected created a theatre of rejection possible only because they too recognized the material power of the ticket as a bond of allegiance that stretched beyond the grave. The stakes were very high. In front of Wesley in London in 1763, "Mrs C[oventry], cried out, 'We will not be browbeaten any longer; we will throw off the mask.' Accordingly a few days after, she came and, before an hundred persons brought me hers and her husband's tickets and said, 'Sir, we will have no more to do with you...." As conflict spread "more and more
persons threw up their tickets," a gesture far more effective than simply letting them lapse. Methodism incorporated Wesley's followers with all their singularities into one system of conversion and discipline. It was this that intensified the value of the ticket or, when incompatibility broke through, made it a focus of struggle.

Methodism was open to all; its membership structures created a new religious phenomenon in which tickets constituted the society, combining spiritual improvement, sociability, and practical supervision. In doing this they captured deeply embedded characteristics of the movement and tendencies within Wesley himself. In a sense they were a visible form of that network or "connexion" which now galvanized earlier models of religious societies. Only Wesley's chosen assistants who oversaw the bands and classes had the power to deliver tickets "where we cannot do it ourselves," but tickets also created a bureaucracy with examiners to check for current marks in an increasingly elaborate system of letters and dates; money contributed as a thank-offering became known as "ticket money." Those first Bristol tickets were probably handwritten, but as numbers and geographical range increased, printed tickets kept pace with Methodist structures and its global reach. Historians have discussed the interplay of text and oral tradition within Methodism: here Wesley's view of the ticket as a concentrated style equivalent to "writing at length" is instructive. The earliest examples were emblematic. Color and design—baskets of fruit, vases, angels, doves—were their distinguishing features, locally determined and probably using printers' stock ornaments. There's a glimpse from 1744 of Richard Viney, a Moravian staymaker who considered joining Wesley, getting the "Society Tickets ready" in Newcastle: possibly cutting them from a sheet or making annotations. After 1750, the form was increasingly text-based with lines of scripture and capital letters marking the quarter; in a shift to centralization and standardization in the mid 1760s, the pattern was sent "from London directly." If writing shaped Methodist identity and feeling, tickets were implicated in the process but distinctively so. The number and visibility of women in eighteenth-century Methodism again suggests their physical, psychological and conceptual familiarity with the ticket and the specific forms of literacy—pictorial, tactile and textual—that it required. And because the ticket was bound up with Methodist class and band structures, where women participated actively, it circulated through and beyond household settings: Mrs. Coventry also threw back her daughters' and her servants' tickets. Administrative and disciplinary functions associated with Wesley and his itinerant preachers had intimate and personal connotations that complicate any simple demarcation between public and private affairs, whether in Methodism at large or in the operations of its tickets.

Fifty years after Wesley's first experiments with tickets—and they were experiments, "a thing . . . never heard of before"—James Lackington, bookseller and autobiographer, described "a very small slip of paper, with a text of scripture on it, which is exchanged every quarter for some other text." Poor people paid a shilling; the rich more. Tickets were, he said, simply a means of raising money, at least in country places: "the members in the community being so well known to each other, that they scarce ever shewed their tickets in order to gain admittance." Both money and the practice of showing tickets were regular topics in Wesley's annual conferences from the 1740s, but as a critic
of Methodism, Lackington downplayed the emotions of connection and salvation that infused them. He put conversion in a monetary context, when holding a ticket literally brought life. Spiritual significance permeated local meanings, including the habit of preserving tickets as an autobiographical record: among the earliest extant are those of Margaret Somerell of Bristol. The substance of the Methodist ticket, the places it occupied and the broader cultural traction of the form gave material shape to Methodist experience. The ticket, which represented belonging, friendship, and sociability, countered a thread of loneliness running through Methodist conversion narratives. Its cycles of renewal or "flow" mapped larger Methodist patterns of itinerancy and movement. Ticket-saving brings female religious practice into the verge of observation. Far from being incidental or merely illustrative, these objects acted on those who used them.

VI. Material Form and Authenticity

As we have seen, tickets had close links with print. In the case of lotteries, whether initiated by the state or private ventures, extensive advertising educated readers, elaborated arrangements, and invited strangers to share in tickets, and by extension, in the emotion, the anticipation, and spectacle of the draw. What lotteries also reveal is how the material form of the ticket constituted its authenticity. Lottery numbers were frequently cited in what might be described as a mnemonics of the ticket that captured the substance of its uniqueness and located it in a specific time and place of acquisition. It was perhaps a similar urge that led the radical shoemaker to tell his friends the number of his membership ticket. The paper object mattered. Brokers promised the security of seeing at any time the complete lottery ticket from which an individual share came. John Fielding advised prospective purchasers to demand sight of the "original Ticket . . . and to set down the Hour of the Day in which they make the said Purchase"; he also recommended that "all Persons who pledge Goods of any Kind" should get a pawnbroker's duplicate. As early as 1662, the ticket materialized trust: "no trust but for ticket and money," asserted a broadsheet on loans and pledges. Insecurities generated by financial speculation, trickery or fraud drew attention to the material form of the lottery ticket, like the banknote, just as other sorts of tickets required seals, numbers, and signatures to validate and track them. And while the printing press standardized items, it was the human hand cutting the ticket from a larger sheet that introduced enough variation to confirm the exact place from which it had come.

As Valentin Groebner has remarked of identity papers, the very processes that authenticated identity made counterfeiting it possible. Similarly, putting something into the form of a ticket created opportunities to interfere with it. Those unique lottery numbers were altered and prize certificates tampered with. The ticket itself could be imitated so well that it was "scarcely discernible which were the True, and which the Counterfeit ones." Forgery and fraud cases involving seamen's tickets ebbed and flowed with the tides of war. One person at least used a forged communion ticket, while others attempted to extend the life of Tyburn tickets through fraudulent transfer. The Magdalen Hospital refused to accept undated or obliterated tickets. At Vauxhall, forgery forced Tyers in 1736 to abandon paper tickets for cash at the entrance, although
in other places tickets were introduced to prevent a crush, and presumably pecu-
luation, at the door. And putting door-keepers in charge opened opportunities
for re-cycling: “This Ticket not to be delivered to any Doorkeeper.” To inter-
fere with the ticket was not only to defraud the true owner; it tarnished the repu-
tation of the ticket as a transparent broker, disrupting the whole basis on
which it could “flow.” And that, as Council for the Crown pointed out at the
Old Bailey in 1746, had implications for government paper securities and the
whole edifice of property.

As that last example suggests, state lottery tickets, which were all interest-
bearing bonds until 1769, had much in common with money. But possession
of a ticket underwrote other things too, both tangible and abstract. Whether
bought, lost or stolen, the turnpike ticket which gave passage on toll roads, or
the copper ticket for the “king’s private road,” controlled distance and space.
As a material presence in pockets or hanging from a watch chain, the ticket
could locate a person in a particular place and time. Space, access, privilege,
and chance became solid—and often marketable—once in ticket form.

VII. Interpretations

One approach, pioneered in Gillian Russell’s recent work on fashionable
sociability, is to view tickets as a vehicle for the commercialization of elite
society, and by extension, for the reconfiguration of power and the public
sphere. Tickets for masquerades and assemblies negotiated gender, class, and
sexual relations, marked rituals of exchange, access, exclusion, and status, and
became an emblem of broad cultural anxieties and economic transitions. From
this perspective, charity events borrowed and extended sociable forms. But fash-
ionable engravers can put demotic contexts in the shade. Religious experiences
added their own dynamics to the symbolic and ritual potential of tickets to
capture a sense of belonging and give it material form. Maurice Rickard’s defini-
tive statement that printed ephemera are the “minor transient documents of
everyday life” may therefore over-determine tickets’ ordinariness or triviality to
those who first possessed them and since; it may also focus attention too nar-
rowly on text, a tendency reinforced by many versions of the eighteenth-century
public sphere. Annotations and marks could make standard items into some-
thing personal, local, and unique. Tickets were three-dimensional objects that
bridged material, spatial, and textual worlds; words inscribed on them mattered
but so did their individual color, shape, durability, and condition. When the
doorkeeper was corrupt, the torn and crumpled ticket became the honest
marker.

It is tempting to slot the ticket into larger narratives of modernity, commo-
dification, and classification. It did, after all, rely heavily on print and urban dis-
tribution mechanisms; as an object that circulated and embodied some form of
goods or service, it appeared to exist in a market where it was available for pur-
chase by anyone with means to do so. In some contexts it shared visual and
practical characteristics with tokens or paper bills; in others, it resembles a
fragment of a bureaucratic system. As a category of things, its very heterogeneity
suggests that a historical re-ordering of knowledge in discourse and institutional
practice was underway: Matthew Martin’s “rage for system” finds Foucauldian
resonance. However the marketing and acquisition of tickets, patterns of
gifting and advertising, are closer to revisionist accounts that emphasize the importance of social obligations, including the dynamics of gender and class, in economic decision-making and innovation. Money was not necessarily sufficient to acquire a ticket with a face value and not all tickets were available for cash; rules on the transfer of tickets stopped up both re-sale and patronage. In some circumstances, tickets were sticky, leaving those who circulated them accountable for the holder's behavior once they had changed hands. If the ticket was a contract, even in the narrowest dictionary sense of a right of admission, it was not an untrammeled exchange free of class and gender conventions. Correspondence around lottery tickets, the most monetized of all, put them in social circulation as writers puzzled over their operations, shared purchases, and pooled information, building up layers of commitment and loyalty. In this sense therefore, tickets not only exemplify those patterns of personal connection and sociability that Margot Finn identifies in economic relations, but provide one of the contexts in which credit, understood as both character and indebtedness, were sustained (and Dr. Johnson's definition, which glossed the ticket as an acknowledgement of a "debt," points to the obligations that the ticket could create as well as complete). Similarly, tickets resonate with Deborah Valenze's observation that money displayed both archaic and highly modern elements, as important in valuing people as in buying and selling things. And while tickets were a "modern" feature of Methodism, personal investments in them are only poorly captured by either commercial value (the "ticket money") or liberal models of subjectivity. Experiments in organizing social, religious or political life through the medium of tickets meant that they circulated across the boundaries of household, public institution, and market, between local and national, government and private or privatized structures. In their own mixed sense, therefore, tickets complicate definitions of print culture, enlightened thinking, consumer culture, an urban renaissance, and the making of a modern society.

VIII. Conclusions

It is significant that tickets proliferated in mobile social contexts. A capacity to flow was central to eighteenth-century developments, with the seaman's ticket an early example of how circulation could reinforce a sense of movement and transience. In mobilizing entitlement, access, and identity, and promising to anchor them, the ticket points to broader patterns of social fragmentation and fluidity echoed by that "rage for system." But because they invited additional interactions (validation, theft, request, transfer) or relied on knowledge and experience of an uncertain form, tickets were not quite stable themselves. While flux and uncertainty characterize many historical periods, the ticket contributed new modes of social existence and survival distinctive to the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, tickets fell into regular grooves, weighted down by travel on railways and trams. Events, sociability, and entertainment consolidated their historical connections with the ticket. It became clear that an invitation was a different entity; the visiting "ticket" became a card, dropping any explicit associations with quasi-contractual tickets. Parliament abolished Tyburn tickets in 1827: exchange and flow were now incompatible with criminal justice. Membership tickets became standard in
clubs and societies; Methodists continued with theirs. Charities expanded their dealings with the poor and tickets. Diversity around uses and definitions of the ticket was not therefore permanent. The press, legal and economic structures helped to define the form around exchange and identity, but so did an accumulation of human experience.

Tickets lived in, through and beyond print. They were discussed, sought, cast aside, tucked into pocket books, preserved in albums, torn, reused, folded and forged; some were large, handsome, and unwieldy, others poorly printed or handwritten on tiny slips. Through drifts of paper and a myriad of social transactions, tickets infiltrated eighteenth-century material life, acquiring settled characteristics; through dealing with specific types of them, women and men developed expectations about what tickets allowed them to do, both legitimately and illegally, how paper should look or feel. Familiarity and those accretions of convenience which condensed through the ticket expanded human engagement with technologies of printing and urban infrastructure, with presses, coffee houses, enquiry offices, meeting rooms and entrances, while other people's requirements, record keeping and institutional power pulled in similar directions. In short, it is more accurate to see tickets not as the mere instrument or object of such networks, but intensifying and shaping that activity.

Women and men had therefore to work out how to acquire and deploy tickets. For door-keepers, reading a ticket involved taking it into the hand, making literacy a tactile as well as a visual experience, dependent too on the size of the item: the examiner at the Methodist love-feast should have detected an interloper when he took full hold of the ticket, but through divine intervention the candle gutted twice at the crucial moment. Over the course of the century, therefore, people learned to use tickets as if by instinct: advertisements consolidated experience by telling readers how to behave towards different manifestations of them; tickets explained themselves to the unwitting: "Keep this TICKET till all be over." Tickets resonated across eighteenth-century social and cultural settings, transferring and developing associations from one context to another. As reference points, they brought other things into focus: the ticket's direct and exclusive claim, for instance, clarified legal ideas about authorial copyright. For plebeians, lotteries and pawn broking were deeply entrenched—and sometimes, linked—activities. If exposure to tickets is any guide, plebeian knowledge and skill contributed significantly to the form: seamen's tickets triggered a series of negotiations between individual men and women, with agents, pawnbrokers, thieves, and courts, that reverberated at personal, neighborhood, and national levels. Although tickets were not a female domain—that was as clear from the charitable diners as from radical societies—women across social classes demonstrated expertise and agency in dealing with them. Technologies of paper, authorization and circulation, printing presses and scissors, extended far beyond the commercial middling sort and the Habermasian public sphere.

Tickets were preserved because they evoked aesthetic, sensory, emotional responses, or held a memory or a sense of self, in addition to any monetary or practical value they had. They were discarded only when all such elements were exhausted. Tickets gave life to social practice. None of the scenes described in this article were possible without their having a physical existence; their specific substance generated actions and connections. It was for this reason that
officials burnt seamen's tickets after payment to prevent their fraudulent re-use: failure to survive in this case is a sign of material power not irrelevance.\(^{175}\) Pawnbrokers' customers and the law gradually re-located trust from the word or face into something portable. The high political effects of ticket possession and its potential to renegotiate or dissolve social patterns were played out in 1821 at George IV's coronation. Queen Caroline, who was not invited but desperate to attend, attempted to enter Westminster Abbey:

The door-keeper said, that his instructions were to admit no person without a Peer's ticket.

Lord Hood.—"Did you ever hear of a Queen being asked for a ticket before?"

Refusing to accept another's ticket, Caroline was turned away.\(^{176}\) It was an episode that manifested the power of the ticket's material presence and the agency it gave to others, notably the door-keeper, whom Hood disparaged for his servile dependence. From the bundle of tickets left by one charitable gentleman at the residences of his reluctant colleagues when they were away from home,\(^ {177}\) to the pawnbroker's ticket stowed in a maidservant's box or the vouchers used to direct relief to the most deserving beneficiaries, tickets generated social relationships, and attempts to regulate, subvert, or simply redeploy them. Tracking eighteenth-century tickets as they multiplied and circulated, brings them from the verge of observation to cast light on broader historical narratives.

**Endnotes**

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112. TNA, HO 42/22/576-7; See also: Wells, *Insurrection*, 228–29, 233–34.


121. Ibid., IX, 192; Thomas Church, *Some Further Remarks on the Rev. Mr John Wesley’s Last Journal* (London, 1746), 12.
123. Ibid., XXIII, 293.
124. Ibid., XXI, 410.
126. See for example, Jean and John L. Comaroff, "Colonizing Currencies: Beasts, Banknotes and the Colour of Money in South Africa" in Commodification, 145–73.
132. BL: Add Mss 44935, "Diary of Richard Viney, 1744," 68R.
133. Verney, "Early Wesleyan Class Tickets," 4; Works of John Wesley, X, 310; Crowther, Portraiture, 281.
135. Works of John Wesley, XXI, 403.
137. Works of John Wesley, XXI, 181.
139. Works of John Wesley, X, 179 (1746); 207 (1747); 234 (1749); 517 (1781).
142. E.g. Astrological Diary, 235, 238–39.
143. Public Advertiser, October 3, 1775; Fielding, Extracts, 50–51, 147.
144. Reasons for the Passing of the Bill Concerning the Settlement of Banks of Loan upon Pawn to Prevent the Great Extortion of Brokers (n.p, 1662).

145. OBPO, April 1720, trial of Thomas Day (t17200427-64).

146. Groebner, Who are You?, 219.

147. OBPO, April 1720, trial of Thomas Day (t17200427-64), February 1746, trial of John Peter Mayaffree (t17460226-36); October 1724, trial of Abraham Deval (t17241014-42).

148. OBPO, March 1709, trial of Thomas Trott (t17090302-14).

149. E.g. OBPO, February 1751, trial of George Bartey (t17510227-43).

150. Warne, Church and Society, 34; Radzinowicz, History of English Criminal Law, II, 160.

151. Wroth, "Tickets," Hereford Journal, 19 May 1774 (Hereford Races Ball).

152. BL: Banks collection L.R. 301.h7, 19, Ticket to Nelson's funeral, January 9, 1806.

153. OBPO, February 1746, trial of John Peter Mayaffree (t17460226-36).


155. OBPO, September 1739, trial of Priscilia Trullcourt (t17390906-23).

156. OBPO, May 1800, trial of John Knight (t18000528-4).


159. Daily Universal Register, 10 June 1786, 3 (Grand Musical Festival, Westminster Abbey).

160. Valenze, Social Life of Money, 49.


162. BL: Add. MS 75630, Caroline Howe to Lady Spencer, January 13, 1787.

163. Finn, Character of Credit.

164. Valenze, Social Life of Money, 10.


166. Finn, Character of Credit, 38; Lemire, "Petty Pawns."


168. Tuer, Bartolozzi, 110.


171. BL, Coronation Ticket, 1761.


174. A similar point is made by Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 183.

175. TNA, ADM 106 for a rare example: I am grateful to Margaret Hunt for drawing this to my attention.

