

## CHAPTER 5

*Noisy*

James Gibbs, architect of the church of St Mary-le-Strand, realised that 'being situated in a very public place' the church would be surrounded by the tumultuous traffic of London's eighteenth-century streets. To mitigate this he designed the ground floor without windows 'to keep out the Noises from the Street'.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, London was not the only city blighted by traffic noise. The Sessions House in Chelmsford was located in the marketplace and as a consequence it was common for the assize judges to be forced to halt proceedings because the words of witnesses and counsel could not be discerned above the noises of carts and carriages.<sup>2</sup> The noise of the

traffic was a common topic of conversation among citizens and visitors, especially the sounds made by coaches and cartwheels. An Act of the Common Council had set down regulations for London's transport in 1586. Fines were fixed for any coach or cart heard to creak or 'pype' for want of oil.<sup>3</sup> As the volume of traffic increased in the cities, the irritating and debilitating effects of traffic noise were widely felt.

The street hawkers of London who advertised their wares and services with sounds also appear frequently in descriptions of daytime noise. In order to be heard above the din of rattling coaches and the clamour of their business rivals, the criers would have needed to keep the volume high.<sup>4</sup> William King, in his *Art of Cookery* (1708), described the cries of London as a 'hideous din'.<sup>5</sup> As shouts were varied to attract attention, words degenerated into sounds, and many consumers would have had difficulty distinguishing one slurred yell from another.<sup>6</sup> Milk, explained Joseph Addison, was sold in shrill sounds and one milk-seller became infamous for her inarticulate scream.<sup>7</sup> According to Addison a lack of clarity often led to confusion: 'I have sometimes seen a Country Boy run out to buy Apples of a Bellows-mender, and Ginger-bread from a Grinder of Knives and Scissars. Nay, so strangely infatuated are some very eminent Artists of this particular Grace in a Cry, that none but their Acquaintance are able to guess at their Profession'.<sup>8</sup>

The pigs that thronged the city streets were not just inconvenient and dirty, but they were noisy too. The proverb 'he that loves noise must buy a pig' is testament to the fact that these animals are particularly raucous.<sup>9</sup> Pigs were not the only noisy animals to inhabit the streets. Hunting, spit-turning and pet dogs scampered on London's streets, playing and fighting with each other, and with numerous strays – 'one barking Dog sets all the Street a barking'.<sup>10</sup> On 15 January 1660 Samuel Pepys was disturbed by the barking of a neighbour's dog and recorded the consequences in his diary: 'I could not sleep for an hour or two, I slept late; and then in the morning took physic, and so stayed within all day'.<sup>11</sup> Even dying dogs taxed the ears. Two men were presented to the wardmote inquest of St Dunstan-in-the-West in 1622 for 'anoyinge of divers Inhabitants in Fleet street and the white Fryers' by killing dogs to feed to hawks. Mention was made of their practice of keeping the dogs prior to their slaughter 'longe alyve, howlinge and crying'.<sup>12</sup>

Noises made at night were more likely to disturb. Curfew rules and conventions meant that the streets should, theoretically, have been devoid of noisy people at night, but they were generally neither observed nor enforced. The night-time economy boomed in the cities. Diners and drinkers could visit taverns, inns or other eateries. In 1619 the landlord of an ordinary (a venue for a set price meal) at the Marigold in Fleet Street disturbed the 'quiet of John Clark and his family being neighbours late in the nightes from tyme to tyme by ill disorder'.<sup>13</sup> One source of persistent nocturnal nuisance was a noisy



36 John Maurer, 'A Perspective View of St Mary's Church in the Strand near the Royal Palace of Somerset, London' (1753). Note the windows on the ground floor. These are not pierced – they are false windows.

alehouse, and one proverb warned 'chuse not an house neer an inn (viz. for noise)'.<sup>14</sup> Neighbours of alehouses were disturbed by the noises of the patrons coming and going at night.<sup>15</sup> In *Amusements Serious and Comical* (1700), London hack Tom Brown described his city as 'prodigious, and noisy', a place 'where repose and silence dare scarce shew their heads in the darkest night'.<sup>16</sup> The author of *Low-Life* (c.1755) described the London streets of the mid-eighteenth century, detailing how urban sounds changed throughout the day and the night. Between midnight and one o'clock in the morning on a Sunday in June alehouse keepers are portrayed encouraging their patrons ('noisy Fools and Drunkards') to leave the premises for fear of prosecution. According to this account, traders were still active at this hour, as were prostitutes and itinerant musicians. During the following hour the streets gradually quietened, 'as the Whores, Bullies and Thieves have retir'd to their Apartments; noisy drunken Mechanicks are got to their Lodgings, Coachmen, Watermen and Soldiers are mostly asleep'. The noise of the morning swelled after five o'clock, when the dog-skinner, with strays in tow, searched for more, and bells tolled for morning services. Sounds intensified and then plateaued over the following hours, until night-time, when the crowded streets thinned and the sounds of customers leaving alehouses were joined by 'Great hallowing and whooping in the Fields, by such Persons who have spent the Day Abroad, and are now returning Home half drunk'.<sup>17</sup> When a newly erected playhouse in Hampstead became a magnet for undesirables in 1709 the vicar and churchwardens condemned it as a location of 'great scandals, annoyances and disorders'.<sup>18</sup> The inhabitants of St James's Clerkenwell petitioned the Middlesex jurors, hoping to prevent disorders in their neighbourhood caused when several venues (including Sadlers Wells, Lord Cobham's and Sir John Oldcastle's) closed, disgorging hundreds of noisy patrons. The petitioners hoped that existing laws against disorderly behaviour and ale selling would be enforced to prevent these disturbances.<sup>19</sup>

Curfews were not intended specifically to limit noise, but this would have been an inevitable consequence – marking off periods of noise from periods of relative quiet. While limiting the amount of noise, the curfew would have also created a symbolic boundary, with sounds heard during curfew arousing heightened suspicion. The constable or members of the watch were empowered to take anybody acting suspiciously, or 'nightwalking', to a house of correction if they could not provide a reasonable excuse for their whereabouts during curfew hours.<sup>20</sup> In the recognizances for each of the eleven men seized by the guard of Hackney in 1662 it was stated that he 'is a p[er]son suspicious for that he cannot give any good Accompt of his being here, at that unseasonable tyme'.<sup>21</sup> Watchmen were supposed to keep a check on the streets during the curfew, but many failed in their duty. Citizens frequently complained that the watch was comprised of men too old, drunk or weak to

pay attention or stay awake. In 1604 it was reported that the watchmen of Southampton were 'verie olde poore weake and unhable p[er]sons' who provided an insufficient watch on the city streets, leading to disorders at night.<sup>22</sup> Ned Ward characterised watchmen as a 'bearded Rout' of 'Old, frowzy, croaking sots' who were 'too infirm and lame to walk without their staves'.<sup>23</sup> Some watchmen were even blamed for causing much of the noise nuisances at night themselves. Matt Bramble complained, 'I start every hour from my sleep, at the horrid noise of the watchmen bawling the hour through every street, and thundering at every door; a set of useless fellows, who serve no other purpose but that of disturbing the repose of the inhabitants'.<sup>24</sup> The wife of Ned Ward's 'old, prodigal, new-sworn Constable' complains that her husband even disturbed her when he was not on duty, with his habit of croaking the hours with farts. 'I always sleep the best', she admits, 'when you're abroad disturbing others rest'.<sup>25</sup>

'You shall ask your neighbours if you shall live in peace'<sup>26</sup>

In his play, *Epicoene or the Silent Woman* (1609), Ben Jonson introduces the character of Morose, a man newly betrothed to the eponymous bride, who during the course of the play finds her to be neither silent nor a woman. Morose, 'a gentleman that loves no noise', is duped into marrying Epicoene, 'a yong Gent. suppos'd [to be a] silent woman'. Preferring life as a quiet bachelor to the state of marriage (which he supposed would be noisy), Morose puts the word around that he is in the market for 'a dumbe woman'. Silent until the wedding ceremony, the 'bride', Epicoene, suddenly becomes loquacious. When the wedding guests wreak auditory havoc in Morose's house his suffering becomes extreme and he demands a divorce. Morose pays Dauphine to help him secure release. He obliges by throwing off Epicoene's disguise and revealing the young man. Morose's obsession with noise is portrayed as anti-social, self-important and tyrannical. Resenting knocks on his door, Morose bids Mute (his servant) to remove the 'ring' from the door and to fasten a thick quilt or feather bed to the outside of it, 'that if they knocke with their Daggers, or with Brick-bats, they can make no noyse'. When the sounding of a postman's horn permeates the padded door, he launches into a tirade. The church bells tolling at the funerals of plague victims drove Morose to distraction. Morose's pathological aversion to noise is manifested in his taking umbrage at the sounds of creaking shoes and hair-trimming. When the parson, whom Morose has paid to perform his wedding ceremony, coughs, Morose demands to be reimbursed. A sonic theme persists until the dramatic crescendo of the post-nuptial celebrations. The 'noise' of the musicians overwhelms Morose, who exclaims, 'Tis worse than the noise of a saw.' Thronged with spitting, coughing, laughing,

'neezing' and farting guests, Morose's once quiet haven becomes a roaring hell.<sup>27</sup>

Morose was crafted to show the inflexible, unreasonable and anti-social aspect of community living. He is a caricature. Yet many of the sounds at which Morose takes umbrage did annoy and irritate the citizens of the seventeenth century. What Jonson's study does not indicate, however, was the importance of good neighbourliness to guarantee aural ease.<sup>28</sup> Francis Bacon advised that on choosing a location for a dwelling one should avoid 'ill Neighbours'.<sup>29</sup> Good neighbours would have ensured that those in their vicinity were not unduly disturbed by sounds made by their animals, their children, their pastimes or produced by their 'living unquietly' together. When Samuel Pepys recorded that he had upset his neighbours by forcing his wife to beat a servant, his shame did not stem from the possibility of his acquiring a reputation for cruelty, but from the noise nuisance generated by the thrashing.<sup>30</sup> A proverb started warmly, 'love your neighbour', but continued with a note of caution, 'yet pull not downe your hedge'.<sup>31</sup> Some thought that wealthy neighbours were the worst, as they proved to be argumentative 'and they will often let loose their *servants* to defy, provoke, insult, and do mischief to those they love not'.<sup>32</sup> Some people preferred not to have trading neighbours, some shunned pauper neighbours.

#### 'The apothecary's mortar spoils to Luter's music'<sup>33</sup>

Some neighbours were noisy because of their occupation. The homes of urban craftsmen often doubled as workshops, especially when the trade involved the production of small items, requiring only one workman and his apprentice. Michael Power notes that the soap-makers, gunpowder-makers, tailors and smiths, among other craftsmen of seventeenth-century London, worked predominantly at home.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, dedicated workshops were often interspersed with residential buildings. In 1611, Abraham Shakemaple, a yeoman of Finsbury, was bound over to appear at the next Middlesex sessions of the peace to answer to the charge that he had caused a nuisance by erecting and using a forge. In the meantime he was ordered to 'pull downe his Smythes forge which he hath lately erected in Grubstreet, being a great Annoyance to the neighbours by the filthie smoake and the hameringe &c'.<sup>35</sup>

Particular locales were more menaced by work noise than others. The London pewter industry, for example, was concentrated around the Billingsgate and Bishopsgate wards.<sup>36</sup> John Stow described the practice of the founders of Lothbury, who 'cast candlesticks, chafing dishes, spice mortars, and such like copper or latten works', in his description of London in 1598.<sup>37</sup> In his unimplemented plans for the reconstruction of London following the fire of 1666, John Evelyn segregated shopkeepers from artificers. The shopkeepers

would occupy the sweetest quarters and the artificers would occupy 'the more ordinary houses, intermedial and narrower passages . . . that the noise and tintamarre of their instruments may be the less importunate'.<sup>38</sup>

Sir Thomas Blount described 'those several Tradesman whose Noise displeases us so, and who dwell in Mills and Forges'.<sup>39</sup> The noise of mills was so loud that millers could be deafened by their work. 'Millers need no noise,' tells one adage, 'yet cannot grind without it'.<sup>40</sup> Coopers (barrel-makers) and other craftsmen producing hollow goods had a special reputation as noise-makers. In November 1639 the Norwich Court of Mayoralty investigated a case of 'extraordinary noise' from a cooper's shop, and the compiler of *A View of the Penal Laws Concerning Trade and Traffick* (1697) described the cooper as 'a man that makes a great Noise in the World'.<sup>41</sup> In *Epicoene*, pewterers, armourers and braziers are singled out as particularly noisy craftsmen.<sup>42</sup> Although large-scale industrialisation was more a characteristic of the nineteenth century, the sounds of new machinery were appearing across the country in the two preceding centuries. Both Ned Ward and Charles Coffey identified the sounds of paper mills as apt metaphors for incessant noise.<sup>43</sup>

The focus of much early modern concern was the noise of coppersmithery, especially during the eighteenth century. Swift's poem 'On Wood the Ironmonger' (1725) likens the sounds of the coppersmith to thunder.<sup>44</sup> Campbell, in his 'compendious view of all the trades', noted that the journeymen of the coppersmith trade 'ought to live by themselves, for they are very noisy Neighbours'.<sup>45</sup> A complaint recorded in the repertories of the Court of London Aldermen concerned Andrew Niblett, a noisy coppersmith who in September 1722 had 'lately taken a messuage in Birchin Alley'. Neighbours petitioned the court saying they had been led to believe that Niblett only intended to use his premises to warehouse goods for the plantation trade. Yet 'the said Niblett contrary to his agreement and the Intentions of his Landlord has used his sledges and other large Hammers in his Trade to the apparent Interruption and annoyance of the Neighbourhood which is inconceivable and hardly to be Expressed they being almost incapable of Negotiating their Affairs through the intolerable and continial Annoyance of the said Niblett.' The petitioners were unsure to whom they should take their problem and it was noted that they 'presume a Power is vested in this Court to prevent such Nusances, wherefore they pray such reliefe as the Court should think fit'. The aldermen did not seem to know whether they had the jurisdiction to deal with it, and if they did, how they should proceed. It was ordered that the town clerk should search through the records to discover how the court had dealt with any similar complaint in the past, and to report his findings to the next meeting. No reference to any previous similar incident is recorded at this meeting.<sup>46</sup>

Coppersmiths would have been singled out for particular attention because of the nature of their materials, tools and methods and the historical

development of their trade. Copper was generally beaten when cold and it offered greater resistance than the other metals that were also beaten cold (gold, silver and tin); therefore it needed to be hammered more vigorously and for protracted periods.<sup>47</sup> Struck with iron hammers the solid copper produced high-pitched notes, and the hollow copper vessels would have amplified the hammer blows.<sup>48</sup> Highlighting the incessant noise of their trade, the Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini noted that coppersmiths

are engaged all day in hammering copper to make it ductile so that they may manufacture vessels of various kinds. From this quarter [a district of Venice] there rises such a terrible din that only these workers have homes and shops there; all others flee from that highly disagreeable locality . . . they beat the newly minted copper, first with wooden then with iron hammers till it is as ductile as required. To begin with, the ears are injured by that perpetual din . . . that workers of this class become hard of hearing, and, if they grow old at this work, completely deaf.<sup>49</sup>

Although the craft of the coppersmith was not a new one to England, the numbers of workers in this field did swell during the early modern period, especially after the late sixteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Rapid increases in the home production of copper goods soon reduced imports to 'negligible dimensions' and during the eighteenth century the home demand for copper increased greatly.<sup>51</sup> Craftsmen new to the trade established themselves in areas unfamiliar with the sounds of coppersmithery. Lacking the need for safety in numbers, coppersmiths did not group together in the way that goldsmiths did. Wide dispersal would have exacerbated their unpopularity by increasing the numbers of people irritated by them.

#### 'Beat not your wife after the hour of nine at night'

The prime culprits of city noise in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were traffic, traders, animals, craftsmen and drunken revellers. However, there is more to the study of noise than simply identifying likely noise sources.<sup>52</sup> The word 'noise' connoted a variety of imprecise and often contradictory meanings. 'Noise' was used to describe sounds that were musical or unmusical, pleasant or unpleasant, and could also be applied to quarrelling, strife or the spreading of rumours.<sup>53</sup> Randle Holme declared that 'a Sound, is any noise' and used both words interchangeably throughout his tome of 1688.<sup>54</sup> Contemporaries understood the concept of 'noisiness' in a more narrowly defined sense. When he defined 'noisy', Samuel Johnson was more precise than when he defined 'noise', describing the former as 'Sounding Loud' and 'Clamorous; turbulent'.<sup>55</sup> Noisy sounds irritated the hearer because they were irregular, intrusive,

disturbing, distracting, inexplicable or shocking.<sup>56</sup> In *Of Building* (1698), Roger North explained that some sounds, such as the 'clapping of a door', annoyed the hearer because, in contrast to musical sounds that have 'equall time pulses', they have 'unequall movements' and 'uncertain periods'. The reason for the disturbing quality of these 'unequall movements' is that 'every stroke is various, and depends not on the past, nor the future on that; and nothing of the measure is understood'.<sup>57</sup> Robert Hooke remarked that 'noise is displeasing because the ear cannot keep up with the constant change of tuning required'.<sup>58</sup> Noise theorists have noted that the pitch of some sounds makes them more likely to be regarded as noise, but that 'in the final analysis it is the social (and in turn political) context which deems them acceptable'.<sup>59</sup> A sound acceptable in one setting could be inappropriate in another and deemed to be noise. Echoing anthropologist Mary Douglas, who judged dirt to be 'matter out of place', Peter Bailey had defined noise as 'sound out of place'.<sup>60</sup> Sounds are out of place when issued in an inappropriate place, or at inappropriate times. People are more sensitive to sounds at certain times of the day, and a sound produced in the day might have been regarded as a noise if it had been made at night. Sounds are especially irritating when they prevent sleep or concentration. On his arrival in Northampton in 1669, Cos[i]mo the Grand Duke of Tuscany was delighted by the parish bells rung in his honour, 'being well tuned, the sound of them was very agreeable'. However, when the ringing continued for a great part of the night he found them to be 'a great interruption to sleep'.<sup>61</sup>

Noises were particularly annoying to the sick. The chimney expert Robert Clavering asserted that 'in high winds nothing can be more irksome and disagreeable to a delicate and sickly person, than the horrible noise the wind makes in whistling round' the chimney pots.<sup>62</sup> Ailing citizens were especially discomfited by the clangour of church bells. The bells that signalled the death of a parishioner were often silenced during plague epidemics, partly to preserve the bells and save the sexton's time, but also to avoid lowering morale. Anthony Wood described Oxford in November 1683 (during a period of sweating sickness): 'some bells were orderd not to toll for persons, because many dying frighted people away and caused trading to decay'.<sup>63</sup> The bells of New College Chapel, Oxford, were silenced while the proctor lay ill in bed with smallpox in 1762, following reports that the noise disturbed him.<sup>64</sup> John Wood noted that the ringing of the Abbey bells to welcome strangers to Bath was considered by some to be the 'greatest Inconvenience' to the invalids.<sup>65</sup> Living near Hammersmith church in the 1720s, Lady Arabella Howard, who was 'of a sickly and weak Constitution', was disturbed by the sound of the five o'clock bell each morning. She and her husband first considered moving to another parish, but it was suggested that she might like to 'purchase her Quiet'. Her husband, Dr Martin, struck a deal with the churchwardens, exchanging a

cupola, a clock and a bell for a promise 'to stay the ringing of the five o'clock Bell'. However, when Nutkin, a new and officious churchwarden, resumed the morning ringing after a lapse of two years, Martin brought an action against him, the other churchwardens, the parson, the overseers and several inhabitants of Hammersmith. He secured an injunction from the Court of Chancery. In the hearing it was ruled that the bells should not ring at five during the lifetimes of both Martin and his wife, as such ringing was of 'very ill Consequence to the Plaintiff the Lady Howard'.<sup>66</sup> This is a rare instance of an individual using the law to silence a sound. However, the fact that it was brought before Chancery, a court which heard matters of equity, suggests that the ruling was motivated not by a desire to protect the plaintiff's health, but to ensure that the deal was honoured. The case is interesting nonetheless, because to a woman unable to attend morning service through disability the signal that called people to church was 'undesired' – it was noise.

The legal historian J. H. Baker has detected growing contemporary speculation about the scope of action on nuisance, 'particularly with respect to nuisances affecting the senses. Already by Tudor times the law recognised that nuisances could be occasioned by noise, heat and smell.' However, he notes, not every inconvenience could be the subject of legal redress, and the need to weigh up the rights and freedom of all parties was recognised.<sup>67</sup> This is the nub of the problem. Common noises associated with urban living, such as crying babies, barking dogs and traffic, were not easily preventable, so there would have been little point in taking issue with them. As extraordinary sounds were, by definition, occasional and unpredictable, their prevention was also unfeasible. All the authorities could realistically try to deal with were those continual sources of noise such as rowdy alehouses, quarrelling spouses and inappropriately located workshops. Whether other complaints about noise were heard or recorded would have been influenced by the prospect of remedial action.

Morose dramatises the fact that personal boundaries of tolerability to noise were not uniform; he was an unusually sensitive character. However, to create laws to deal with noise as a nuisance, a consensus on thresholds of tolerability is required. The subjectivity of the sound/noise distinction creates a legal dilemma: who determines what is noise? Specific noise legislation would have been difficult to draft in an age before the decibel meter. Lord Selborne, presiding over a case brought to trial in 1872 involving the noise and vibrations of a steam engine in a mill, stressed that the court should be careful to avoid being unfairly swayed into making too harsh a judgement by a hypersensitive plaintiff. He warned that 'a nervous, or anxious, or prepossessed listener hears sounds which would otherwise have passed unnoticed, and magnifies and exaggerates into some new significance, originating within himself, sounds which at other times would have been passively heard and not regarded'.<sup>68</sup> Although the case post-dates the period under consideration here, Lord

Selborne's caveat is an important one to bear in mind when trying to assess differing susceptibilities to noise, and when considering definitions of acceptable noise. In order for a case to be actionable as a private nuisance, a plaintiff would have needed to argue that damage had occurred to himself or to his property. Whether or not 'damage' would be occasioned by noise was a moot point. In *Jeffrey's Case* (c.1560), John Jeffrey had let out a room of his London house to a schoolmaster, but found that the sounds distracted him in his study, which was immediately above the schoolroom. When it was judged to be lawful to keep a school anywhere, he moved his study to another room in his house.<sup>69</sup>

The problems inherent in drafting laws to deal with noise were never coherently addressed in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, but people afflicted by noise could theoretically seek redress from a variety of bodies with overlapping and conflicting jurisdictions, depending on the type and location of the noise. In London the wardmote inquests, the London Court of Common Council, and the London Viewers could all be presented with evidence of noise nuisances, as could provincial civic authorities and manorial courts.

The London Viewers of the early modern period absorbed responsibilities previously held by the medieval Nuisance Assize. A viewer (the title hints at a visual bias) would visit a property to resolve a neighbourly dispute, often involving building encroachments and unwelcome chimney smoke. The medieval Nuisance Assize had occasionally dealt with work practices, and back in 1378 had examined the case of a noisy armourer.<sup>70</sup> On the evidence of the surviving certificates, the London Viewers rarely followed up complaints about work practices, even though crafts and trades created smells, noise and waste. Priority was given to residential structural problems such as inconsiderate guttering and building that blocked sunlight.<sup>71</sup> For a complaint to be upheld the complainant would have to prove potential or actual damage to his property. (For the 1378 case the neighbours detailed both the fire risk posed by the forge and the hammer-falls that shook the party walls and damaged alcohol stored in the cellars.) The Oxford Viewers also focused on building construction rather than usage.

Civic authorities crafted specific bylaws to deal with particular nuisances. If expectations of good neighbourliness were not sufficiently persuasive to restrict noise, rule 30 of *The Lawes of the Market* (1595) required Londoners to observe that 'No man shall after the houre of nine at the Night, keepe any rule whereby any such suddaine out-cry be made in the still of the Night, as making any affray, or beating hys Wife, or servant, or singing, or revyling in his house, to the Disturbance of his neighbours'.<sup>72</sup> Craftsmen who used hammers in their work were restricted by rule 25 of *The Lawes*, which ordered that 'No hammar man, [such] as a Smith a Pewterer, a Founder, and all Artificers making great



sound, shall not worke after the houre of nyne in the night, nor afore the houre of four in the Morning.<sup>73</sup>

Some leases included noise-limiting clauses to reduce the likelihood of tenants annoying those nearby. These often stipulated times when certain activities could be carried out. When a second-floor room known as Oxford's Dancing School was leased to a musician in 1610, the agreement prevented dancing between two and five each afternoon.<sup>74</sup> Two decades later the council renewed musician John Bosseley's lease only on condition that he did not 'daunce nor suffer any dancing after tenne of the Clocke in the night nor before fyve of the Clocke in the morning'.<sup>75</sup> The master of a dancing school in Three Coney Walk, Lambeth (later Lambeth Walk), was refused a licence in 1755 on account of the nuisance caused by his dancers.<sup>76</sup> In 1636 one of the Oxford bailiffs was granted permission to open up a door from his backyard to Guildhall Court, providing that the schoolboys taught by his brother did not use the passage. The opening was walled up in 1664 after schoolboys took liberties.<sup>77</sup> Among the conditions for the lease of a plot to the west of Prince Street, Bristol, held by a merchant in the 1720s, was the following: 'No part of the ground to the rear to be used for yards, for timber etc., or for stabling, but to be used solely for warehousing.' Tenants could not use the property as smiths' workshops, tallow chandlers' warehouses, or any other shops for traders likely to 'annoy the neighbouring Inhabitants'.<sup>78</sup>

Although not commonly the subject of specific regulations and laws, noise could be limited coincidentally by other laws, such as the control of alehouses. Alehouse keepers were required by an Act of 1552 to gain a licence from a justice of the peace in order to guarantee the prevention of 'hurts and troubles . . . abuses and disorders'.<sup>79</sup> Keepers who regularly failed to prevent drunken disorder might have found themselves before the justices, with their licence in jeopardy.<sup>80</sup> Adherence to prescribed hours of trading limited nocturnal noise for those in the neighbourhood, yet licensed keepers frequently flouted these laws and regulations, and unlicensed alehouses proliferated. Six alehouse keepers were presented to the Worcester Sessions of the Peace between 1634 and 1638 for disturbing neighbours at night. In 1634 it was claimed that John Browne, selling ale at 'undue times' of the night, kept 'odious and sinful drunkenness in his house at all times so that his neighbours cannot rest in their houses for the odious noise of drunkenness and the voices of drunken men in the night time'.<sup>81</sup> Ecclesiastical courts could be presented with noises made in the church or churchyard during divine service. One woman was presented in Nottingham in 1620 for bringing a 'most unquiet child to the church to the greate offence of the whole congregacion'. It was reported that the vicar could not be heard 'for the offensive noyce'.<sup>82</sup>

Communities afflicted by protracted noise could petition the authorities and claim the noise was a public nuisance. Public nuisances that might have

involved the production of noise included illicit alehouses, the use of a speaking trumpet, the keeping of a disorderly house (which drew together noisy crowds), and playhouses (because coaches and people gathered nearby to the inconvenience of the 'Places adjacent').<sup>83</sup> In 1743, James Newbold, a porter from the London parish of St Bride's, was indicted for keeping a disorderly house. Witnesses at his Old Bailey trial listed a catalogue of disorders, including supplying gin and entertaining drunken whores who were unfit for the streets. He beat these 'poor ragged dismal Toads' until they cried out. One witness claimed, 'I have heard Noises all Night long; I have heard too much cursing and swearing, and everything that is obscene; I have it at my Door every Evening, as soon as it is dark; - the House is like a Hogsty'.<sup>84</sup>

Noise was afforded a lower priority than inconsiderate building practices, such as blocking out a neighbour's windows or rerouting guttering to drain into their property, as it was not considered to cause actual damage or a deprivation of rights.<sup>85</sup> Noise was not controlled as rigorously as street dirt. Although wardmote inquest minutes are littered with references to dumping carcasses in ditches, failure to clear dunghills and throwing 'soyles' on the pavement, noise is rarely mentioned. Piles of filth and decaying animals created a more lingering and permanent problem than noise. Noisome offences were considered to pose an immediate danger to public health; noise was not. In contrast to smells, noises rarely featured as causes of private or public nuisance in court records.

When cases involving noise nuisance were presented by petitioning neighbours, the key issue was frequently not noise; it was only one of several causes of complaint. When neighbours complained to the wardmote inquest of St Dunstan-in-the-West in 1622 that two men in the hawking trade created a nuisance in Fleet Street and Whitefriars when they killed dogs for meat it was not the noise of the dogs or the slaughter they stressed (although this was noted), but that the blood from their corpses grew noisome and posed a threat of infection.<sup>86</sup> In 1744 parishioners from St James's, Clerkenwell, called for action to be taken against the keepers of disorderly houses in that parish, namely Old Sadlers Wells, New Wells, Lord Cobham's and Sir John Oldcastle's. The petitioners claimed that each establishment held up to five hundred customers, and pointed out that they sometimes remained open until four o'clock in the morning. When they left patrons 'frequently assembled in bodies, hallowing and knocking on doors, ringing bells and singing obscene songs'. This, it was claimed, led to the disquiet and danger of the petitioners in particular and the public in general. Their petition stressed not the noise but, rather, the lewd and corrupting nature of the clientele, possibly because this would be more persuasive with authorities wishing to tighten moral standards.<sup>87</sup> Canny petitioners would have known which social threats to stress in order to secure redress.

**'There is but a thin Deal-Partition betwixt his Room and ours'**

Ben Jonson wrote *Epicoene* after a plague epidemic. The incessantly tolling church bells that bid farewell to victims caused Morose much consternation. The lengths to which he goes to avoid their clangour are detailed, 'now by reason of the sicknesse, the perpetuities of ringing has made him devise a room with double walles, and treble seelings; the windores close shut, and calk'd: and there he lives by Candle-light.'<sup>88</sup> Morose adapts his property in order to reduce the noises permeating in from outside. In a much less dramatic fashion, citizens across England were carrying out modifications to limit noise intrusion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As if Londoners had not suffered enough with the plague, on a windy September day in 1666 a conflagration succeeded the disease. Sweeping through the city, flames destroyed countless homes and businesses. People listened in horror as timbers cracked and exploded, slates spat and splintered, thatch fizzled and hissed, and church bells melted. An alarm was raised – one account recalled 'a great noise of drums' – and as John Evelyn's fellow citizens ran about 'like distracted creatures', crying and lamenting, he heard 'the noise & crackling & thunder of the impetuous flames'.<sup>89</sup> Once the fire was extinguished, a thick blanket of ash muffled the sounds of those rummaging among the ruins.

Although the rebuildings that followed the fire may not have put into reality the grand schemes of designers and thinkers such as John Evelyn, they did intensify the pace of building improvement already apparent in the capital and would have changed the citizens' aural perspectives.<sup>90</sup> Measures to avoid a repetition of the disaster led to the abandonment of timber for the construction of buildings.<sup>91</sup> The Act for the Rebuilding of the City of London (1667) brought about standardisation in metropolitan house building by dictating both materials and wall thickness. That London was rebuilt in brick, tile and glass had implications for the levels of noise disturbance experienced by the citizens. The use of brick increased the ease with which private spaces could be created and also reduced the noise porosity of the walls. The rebuilding jolted the citizens into a new way of perceiving their city spaces. A proclamation of 13 September called not only for a rebuilding in brick, but also for a widening of alleys and secondary lanes.<sup>92</sup> Noise disturbance would have been further reduced as a result of the distancing of neighbours and neighbourhoods. Sound would also have travelled in a different way through the streets, lined with solid new buildings.

The general outline of the changes in building construction, layout and use between 1600 and 1770 reveals that the richer members of society, especially affluent urbanites, would have had increasing access to noise-reducing building innovations – such as glazing, panelling and ceilings – as the period progressed. Some wealthier householders would have hung sound-absorbing tapestries

and oak panelling on their walls. Panelled chambers and plaster ceilings were typical characteristics of the houses built for gentlemen in Gloucester during the late seventeenth century. These measures were ostensibly designed to serve other purposes: panelling and tapestries insulated and covered up damp and glazing admitted light, but they did also deaden noises. Not all of these measures would have appeared in the same building, especially in the early part of the period. However, as the eighteenth century progressed, these features would have been available to increasing numbers of households as ideas percolated downwards.<sup>93</sup>

It was long known that the debilitating impact of sounds could be alleviated with thoughtful building design and construction. Homes became more complex and compartmentalised as the period progressed. A heightened desire for privacy, segregation and symmetry in house layout led to a transformation in architectural style. As domestic buildings of almost all ranks of society were 'transformed almost out of recognition', there would have been implications for the movement of noise and therefore exposure to noise.<sup>94</sup> Spaces used for noisy activities were separated from those intended for quiet repose. The period saw the gradual obsolescence of the single-storey house and the rise of more complex structures, with second floors, outbuildings and corridors. The development of the parlour, the use of rooms above the parlour for sleeping, and the insistence on a separate kitchen were characteristic elements of seventeenth-century urban houses.<sup>95</sup>

The ability to escape external noises and to limit the spread of noise through a property depended on ownership of space. The richer the householder, the greater the space that could be afforded and the more solid the materials used. The dwellings inhabited by the poorest city residents would have offered little resistance to noise intrusion, especially in subdivided houses of multiple occupation. Partitions between dwellings could be flimsy; some were merely wainscot partitions.<sup>96</sup> Deposition statements reveal the ease with which people listened through thin dividing walls to the conversations and activities going on in neighbouring properties. Mary Jeffry, a witness in a murder case, lived next to a man accused of murdering his wife in 1725. She asserted that 'there's only a thin Partition betwixt their Stair-Case and mine. I was going to Bed between 11 and 12 o'Clock, when I heard a Disturbance in her Room, and a Noise of two or three People running down Stairs.'<sup>97</sup> In another murder case a witness stated that 'I live next Door to the Prisoner, there is but a thin Deal-Partition betwixt his Room and ours, so that one may hear in one Room what passes in the other, very plainly.'<sup>98</sup> Houses that were two rooms deep offered some insulation against street noises to the back rooms, especially on the upper floors. Many citizens, however, inhabited dwellings that were only one room deep, and for these people the chances of reducing their exposure to exterior noises were reduced.

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Architects considered the best use of rooms in order to prevent noises moving through buildings. Roger North compared sprawling houses with those where the storeys are 'lay'd on an heap like a wasps-nest' (a 'pile'), and listed the relative advantages and disadvantages of each type of structure. At the head of his list of five 'inconveniences' of a pile, North places 'all the noises of an house are heard everywhere'.<sup>99</sup> Piles were most commonly built in the cities, where ground space was in short supply, and building plots were narrow, so the way that buildings were used needed to be carefully considered in order to limit noise intrusion. Servants needed to be accommodated within their master's house – to sleep, to work and socialise – preferably without causing undue disruption to the rest of the household. Setting out rules for *The Conduct of Servants in Great Families* (1720) Thomas Seaton instructed servants to resist quarrelling among themselves, 'for otherwise, surely it is not fit to alarm a whole House, and make an Uproar to the Molestation of every Member in it; because every great House wou'd be at this Rate a Scene of Confusion, a Place of Tumult and Noise; to avoid which, a Man wou'd chuse the meanest and most despicable Cottage, where he might be quiet and still, and removed from Clamour'.<sup>100</sup> To deal with servants who lacked this restraint, North made suggestions to reduce the impact of their noise. He argued that servants should not live in attics and garrets, 'for all offensive things fall, rather than rise, and their noise by stirring is troublesome', so instead they should be situated 'underneath'.<sup>101</sup>

Sir Roger Pratt, Charles II's commissioner for the rebuilding of London after the Fire, suggested that when servants were located in the garrets, they should not be placed directly over the guest rooms, or they might disturb the sleepers below at night and in the morning. Rooms that were above these apartments for 'strangers' might be used for functions such as drying clothes that do not need to be accessed at anti-social times. Pratt also advised that the kitchen, the buttery and all the rooms connected to these should be located in the basement, 'with their backcourts, convenient to them; in that no dirty servants may be seen passing to and fro by those who are above, no noises heard, nor ill scents smelt'. The kitchen should be located near to the 'little parlour', sufficiently far from entertaining rooms to avoid disruption, but near enough for servants to hear 'the least ringing or call'. He recommended an ingenious design for a window like a service hatch, through which the master and mistress could supervise and summon servants without having their senses of smell and hearing assaulted.<sup>102</sup> The compiler of 'Draughts of a House proposed for a Merchant' (1724) detailed how his design would allow the young men who would staff the office to slip quietly to their own chambers at night, through the use of backstairs without 'disturbing or dirtying the best part of the House'.<sup>103</sup> Considering the domestic sphere, Mark Girouard remarked that the use of back stairs meant that the householder 'walking up the stairs no longer met their last night's faeces

coming down them'.<sup>104</sup> Quite how many London houses could have incorporated features such as backstairs and serving hatches into their often cramped footprints is a matter for debate, but some of the larger West End developments would have enjoyed them.<sup>105</sup>

### 'The cry of the poor is displeasing to the rich'<sup>106</sup>

By the early seventeenth century London was a wealthy, bustling and expanding city. Infrastructure development could not keep pace with the ever growing population, making the capital crowded, shabby and noisy.<sup>107</sup> However, many commentators enjoyed this mêlée and, when describing the sounds of St Paul's Walk in 1627, John Earle revelled in the atmosphere, noting the 'humming or buzze, mixt of walking, tongues and feet . . . a still roare or loud whisper'. On comparing London to Paris in the mid-seventeenth century, John Evelyn noted that what London lacked in houses and palaces it made up for in shops and taverns 'which render it so open by day, and cheerfull in the night', and remarked that 'as *mad* and lowd a *Town*, is no where to be found in the whole world'.<sup>108</sup>

By contrast, impending catastrophes would jolt Londoners into a permanently altered perception of their city. There was a subtle shift in attitudes towards the end of the seventeenth century. Before, visitors had made most of the comments about London's noise, but after that time even Londoners found that noises attracted their attention. They started to grumble about their noisy city; the bustle did not seem to please people as it had pleased Evelyn and Earle. An attractive feature of Mrs Packer's lodgings in Crooked Lane, according to her advertisement in a late seventeenth-century trade paper, was the 'freedom from Noise' one would enjoy there.<sup>109</sup>

From the mid-seventeenth century, London's citizens muttered darkly about the noise of the city in their diaries, turning their attention to the sounds of servants, workmen, the poor, hawkers, drinkers and men who fought each other with cudgels. At the same time, artists and literati portrayed London as distractingly noisy. It is perhaps significant that *Epicoene* enjoyed a period of popularity after the theatres were reopened at the Restoration. Between them, Elizabeth and Samuel Pepys attended at least six performances of it (or extracts from it) during the 1660s.<sup>110</sup> In 1668 John Dryden took a sympathetic line towards Morose, writing, 'We may consider him first to be naturally of a delicate hearing, as many are, to whom all sharp sounds are unpleasant; and secondly, we may attribute much of it to the peevishness of his age, or the wayward authority of an old man in his own house.' Dryden asserted that although risible, Morose was an entirely believable character.<sup>111</sup> Morose, an eccentric figure at the start of the century, had found a home among like minds at the close of the century.

The change of mood apparent in the last half of the seventeenth century was cemented in the eighteenth century.<sup>112</sup> In *Amusements Serious and Comical* (1700), the London hack Tom Brown described his city as 'prodigious, and noisy', a place 'where repose and silence dare scarce shew their heads in the darkest night'.<sup>113</sup> The dissatisfaction with urban noise (and especially London's noise) is also evident in John Gay's *Rural Sports* (first published in 1713):

I Have long been in the noisie Town immur'd  
Respir'd its Smoak, and all it's Toils endur'd.<sup>114</sup>

This heightened sensitivity might simply be attributable to the swelling population and the knock-on effect of increased trade and traffic. Indeed, the sounds of London's streets multiplied throughout the early modern period. When pedestrians trod the wet and muddy pavements, some chinking with their pattens (iron devices to keep the feet off the ground), others bawling their wares, they could not have failed to hear the sounds of coaches and carts rattling and trundling along the cobbles.

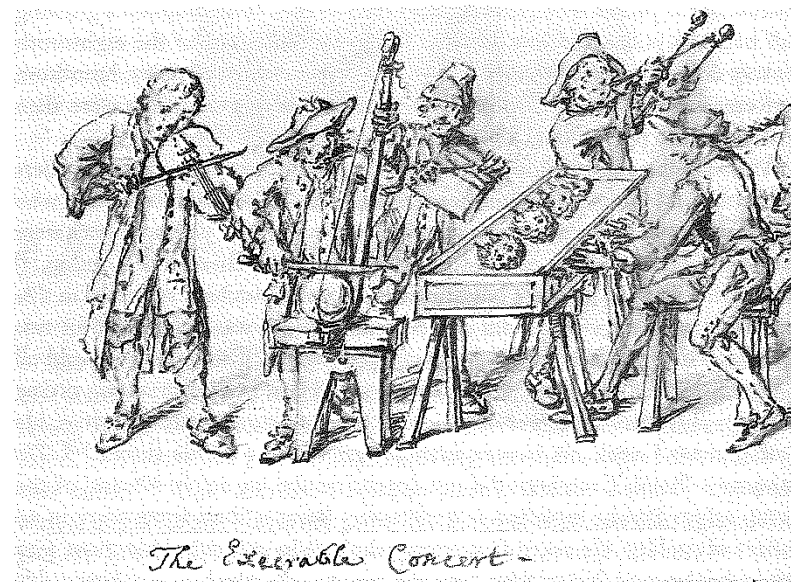
By the mid-eighteenth century, some other cities were also becoming blighted with noises. Tobias Smollett wrote *Humphry Clinker* when Bath was experiencing an unfavourable press. Matt Bramble complains that 'this place, which Nature and Providence seem to have intended as a resource from distemper and disquiet, is become the very center of racket and dissipation. Indeed, of that peace, tranquility and ease, so necessary to those who labour under bad health, weak nerves, and irregular spirits; here we have nothing but noise, tumult and hurry'.<sup>115</sup>

However, an apparent dissatisfaction with urban noise did not manifest itself in a noticeable rise in official complaints about noise, or even in calls to strengthen laws on noise nuisance. Citizens may not have considered it to be economically desirable to reduce some city noises – especially those created during manufacture. The types of noise that attracted most complaint among the literate and vociferous citizens were those sounds made by the poorest citizens – especially the sounds made by popular entertainers and low-profit traders.

Street musicians featured in descriptions of urban din. Instruments most closely associated with cacophony were fiddles and pipes, especially ones that were damaged, ill-tuned or homemade. Common fiddlers were plentiful in towns. Described as 'poor and silly Fellows' who 'get a livelihood . . . playing on their unpleasing and tuneless Musick', their efforts were described as 'scratching', 'scraping', 'grating' and 'twanging'. In his character of 'A Fidler', Samuel Butler exclaimed that he commits 'a rape upon the ear . . . He is an earwig, that creeps into a mans ear and torments him, until he is got out again.' Considering it a greater act of charity to listen to a 'poore Fidler' than to pay

him, John Earle remarked that he 'sells nothing dearer than to be gone', thus echoing the proverb 'Give the piper a penny to play and two pence to leave off'. Players of 'tooting' or 'farting' wind instruments were similarly berated.<sup>116</sup> Many harpers, fiddlers and pipers were blind. Unable to perform some skilled labours, they gravitated (or were pushed) towards music to make their living.<sup>117</sup> In Oxford a one-eyed local character called 'blinking Hyatt' sawed at his 'vile Crowd' to make a 'wretched Tune'.<sup>118</sup>

In Marcellus Laroon's *Execrable Concert* (1770) ugly and scruffy musicians play a range of decrepit and discordant devices (figure 37, below). It is implied that the resulting output was more cacophony than music. A fiddler in ragged clothes gives his all to the left, next to a man playing a one-stringed viol. Behind him a character seems to be rubbing or banging a box or a washboard,



37 Marcellus Laroon (III), *The Execrable Concert* (1770).

while another crashes fire irons together. To complete the scene, the 'musician' (far right) pulls the tails of three cats imprisoned in a piano-like contraption similar to one described by Athanasius Kircher in 1650. Cats were positioned according to the pitch of their cries, issued when a spike was driven through their tails. This device was reportedly invented to cheer up a stressed Italian prince.<sup>119</sup> Although Laroon's image is a caricature, written accounts of impromptu street concerts describe a similar level of amateurism. It was

traditional for the city musicians to welcome elite visitors to Bath. However, some felt that this was insensitive and shocked those retreating to Bath to soothe their nerves. One poet felt that the fiddlers' 'squeaking catgut' was 'worse than the gout'.<sup>120</sup>

Many studies have shown how the class structure became more complex, and central to this was the burgeoning growth of a professional urban class, into whose 'polite' lifestyles the noise of tinkers, waits, common fiddlers and alehouses did not fit.<sup>121</sup> Participants in football games and other sports and pastimes vocalised their enjoyment, but disapproving witnesses heard only noise and rowdiness.<sup>122</sup> A clash of urban lifestyles and the increasing concern among the professional classes to control the sound environment saw attempts to take music off the streets and to place it indoors.<sup>123</sup> This antagonism had increased steadily during the early modern period, and was connected to distrust of the people who crowded the urban streets. It highlighted a growing gulf between polite and low society. The polite urbanites of the eighteenth century desired separation; they wanted the street cleared of noisy, humdrum performers and hawkers. Concern was expressed about sounds that were alien or irrelevant to professional lifestyles.

Although the ditties of asparagus sellers were welcomed, the noises of sellers of bucolic and cheap vegetables were thought to be unbearable. Criers who touted infrequently because they purveyed seasonal goods, or whose cries were harmonious, enjoyed the greatest popularity with the citizens of London.<sup>124</sup> Comparing it to the 'Song of Nightingales', 'Ralph Crotchett' regretted in *The Spectator* that the cry of the dill and cucumber sellers was only heard for two months. Most criers did not enjoy such approbation. Cabbages were sold all the year round and Jonathan Swift moaned, 'Here is a restless dog crying cabbages and Savoys, plagues me mightily every morning about this time. He is at it now. I wish his largest cabbage was sticking in his throat.'<sup>125</sup> *The Spectator's* 'Ralph Crotchett' did not appreciate the 'excessive Alarms' of the turnip sellers that he regarded as unnecessary because their wares were in no danger of cooling. He asked that criers 'take care in particular that those may not make the most Noise, who have the least to sell, which is very observable in the Vendors of Card-matches to whom I cannot but apply that old Proverb of Much Cry but little Wool'.<sup>126</sup> Those who cried loudest were perhaps those most desperate to sell – usually the service providers and traders peddling very small items at low profit.<sup>127</sup> The poet Samuel Butler claimed that sellers who 'have but a little wit are commonly like those that cry things in the streets, who if they have but a Groatworth of Rotten or sticking stuff, every body that comes nigh shalbe sure to heare of it, while those that drive a rich noble Trade, make no Noyse of it'.<sup>128</sup> Generally, it seemed that the poorer you were, the more noise you were perceived to generate, and the deeper your alienation and stigmatisation became.



38 Marcellus Laroon (II), 'Knives or Cisers to Grinde', from *The Cries of the City of London*.

In February 1685 Richard Hookam was fined one shilling for wandering 'the places and lanes' of Middlesex carrying a wooden cart and a rotary wheel, crying 'Have you any knives to grind?', an action which the Middlesex sessions jurors interpreted as a ploy to disguise his vagrancy and escape punishment for that crime.<sup>129</sup> Knife-grinders feature in both Marcellus Laroon's engraving, above, and William Hogarth's print *The Enraged Musician* (see figure 40 on p. 128). It is implausible that someone would push such a cumbersome wheel for no other purpose than to disguise his vagrancy. Hookam had upset the inhabitants for another reason – perhaps it was his noise.<sup>130</sup> Francis Bacon described knife-sharpening as a 'skreeching noise', which makes 'a shivering or horror in the body' and sets the teeth on edge.<sup>131</sup> Henry Fielding's *Intriguing Chambermaid* (1734) included the sounds of knife-grinding and 'the whetting of saws' in her brief list of 'wild' noises.<sup>132</sup> The knife-sharpener's cry and the piercing shriek of his wheel marked him as one of the county's most reviled vendors.

A tinker, Anthony Sanders, late of St Giles-Without-Cripplegate, was taken to be an 'idle and vagrant person' a month after Hookam. This was despite the account that he was discovered crying in a loud voice, 'Have you



39 Marcellus Laroon (II), 'A Brass Pot or Iron Pott to mend', from *The Cryes of the City of London*.

any worke for a tinker?<sup>133</sup> Often regarded as beggars, tinkers were the poorest of all hawkers and they were thought to 'make more noise than work'.<sup>134</sup> A letter in *The Spectator* bemoaned the tinker menace, arguing that these men had 'the Privilege of disturbing a whole street for an Hour together, with the Twancking of a brass Kettle or Frying pan'.<sup>135</sup> The polite, with money enough for shiny new buckets and servants to see that knives were sharpened, would not have called on the services of the impolite tinkers and grinders.

Before licensing was introduced in 1697, there were no laws governing vocal criers, and without direct recourse to law, the authorities may have manipulated vagrancy laws to silence them.<sup>136</sup> A vagrant was one who lacked land or master and who worked at no recognised trade, yet Sanders was clearly working as a tinker, and Hookham was, by all accounts, a knife-grinder.<sup>137</sup> The indictments of this pair do not seem to have resulted from beggarly conduct. Hookham and Sanders shared the same offence: their trades were both noisy and in little demand from the elite members of urban society.

Early in the seventeenth century, Nicholas Breton had noticed that 'the cry of the poore is unpleasing to the rich'.<sup>138</sup> Dramatising this division at the turn of the eighteenth century, William Burnaby's *Lady Dainty* whines about the

vulgar plebeians, distinguished by their 'common Discourse . . . some Degrees above the Noise of a Drum'. She proposes a 'Government order' restricting the waking hours of the noisy common folk to 'defend' the ears of the betters 'against offensive sounds' by prohibiting 'all that had the little Breeding to rise before Eleven a Clock'.<sup>139</sup>

'Enter Sir Peaceable Studios with a book in his hand'<sup>140</sup>

The bylaws ensuring that noisy work ended at nine in the evening would have been established to ensure the citizens got enough sleep to work effectively, and perhaps to reduce the risks associated with candle illumination. The church regulations that called on congregations to be quiet were established so the word of the minister could be heard. The need for quiet to sleep and to worship had long driven the fairly meagre noise-reducing regulations in force in the cities. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a new desire became apparent among the richer citizens – to have some peace in which to read and study. This desire was not entirely novel: the scholars and dons had long locked themselves into their quiet, cloistered colleges, and the lawyers had enjoyed the relative peace of their inns. The wish to retain tranquillity had played a part in the lawyers' attempts to scupper building projects near their inns. The Society of Lincoln's Inn unsuccessfully petitioned against house building nearby, arguing that it would disquiet them in their legal studies.<sup>141</sup> The lawyers of St Clement Danes Inn secured a royal writ of nuisance in 1632 against a tenant who enclosed part of a nearby field in the hope of erecting a bowling alley. It was feared that the noise of the patrons would disturb the lawyers in their studies.<sup>142</sup> The eponymous young lawyer of Fielding's *The Temple Beau* explains that he moved from chambers that were 'so noisy, they discompos'd me in my Study'.<sup>143</sup> However, the desire to concentrate was extending more widely into the cities, fuelled no doubt by the rise in literacy and the increasing availability of books. A letter in *The Spectator* suggested that in order to secure enough quiet to be able to study in the eighteenth century a Londoner would have needed to take lodgings 'in a very narrow Street', in order to avoid the noise of coaches and chairmen.<sup>144</sup> Visiting London in 1770, German traveller Georg Lichtenberg was overcome by London's bustle and noise, complaining in a letter that 'I am living here in a house where I have neither time nor peace to collect my thoughts'.<sup>145</sup>

As urban professionals sought quiet spaces in their homes to concentrate on their books, a desire to further segregate living and working areas grew. Wealthy amateur musicians were among those keen to ensure they had the optimum conditions in which to work. In the mid-seventeenth century a tutor suggested that the lute should be played in 'a Wainscote Roome where there is noe furniture if you can let not the Company exceed the number three or fower

for the noise of a Mouse is a hinderance to that Musicke'.<sup>146</sup> Upon moving to a house in Manchester's Deansgate in 1661, Reverend Henry Newcome was distracted by noise when preparing a sermon, writing in his diary: 'I was ill put to it amongst the noise & clatter in the house at such a time.'<sup>147</sup> The citizens wanted studies, libraries, music rooms and parlours: rooms sheltered from noise.<sup>148</sup> Whereas studies in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were often located with an exterior wall in order to maximise light, by the eighteenth century these were sometimes tucked inside the property.<sup>149</sup>

For many, and especially the rising middle classes and professionals, the home was becoming a haven, a space in which sounds could be controlled to some degree. Describing a much later period, Jenni Calder argues that, given the noise, dirt, filth and degradation encountered on the streets, a priority of many Victorians was to establish 'an interior environment that enables such things to be forgotten'.<sup>150</sup> There is evidence of the beginnings of this drive from the mid-seventeenth century. That homes were becoming quieter may have led to a heightened sensitivity towards noise; where noise was encountered it would have been less familiar and more noticeable.

The clamour of mid-eighteenth-century London was illustrated by William



40 Engraving, William Hogarth, *The Enraged Musician* (1741).

Hogarth in *The Enraged Musician* (1741).<sup>151</sup> This image rings with urban disorder and disharmony. The violinist (no common fiddler he) cannot work. Distracted by noise he covers his ears. Jenny Uglow, in her biography of Hogarth, described the scene as 'rapid noise'.<sup>152</sup> A parrot caws beside a bill-poster for Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Beneath the parrot a female ballad-seller, with crying babe-in-arms, sings *Lady's Fall*, a cheerless ballad.<sup>153</sup> A girl, rattle in hand, watches the young boy as he urinates into a hole. Close by, the piper plays his instrument and a boy demonically beats his drum, while a dog yelps at the sound of the grindstone. The knife-sharpener is not the only street worker depicted, for a dustman ringing his bell and a sow gelder, astride his horse and blowing his horn, also feature. The 'small coals' seller bawls off to the right and a pavior bashes the pavement.<sup>154</sup> Henry Fielding exclaimed that this engraving was 'enough to make a man deaf to look at'.<sup>155</sup> Besides illustrating the noises of the moment, Hogarth also skilfully shows the latent potential for noise. The urinating boy, when he is spent, will make another sound as the object attached by rope to his waist is dragged along the ground. The flag on the church shows that the bells will ring that day. The sign on the wall to the right reads 'John Long, Pewterer', a notoriously noisy metal-hammering trade. Uglow describes this print as 'curiously ambivalent', because whereas Hogarth appears to sympathise with the musician's plight, he is also criticising his arrogance. Why are his sounds more valuable than those around him? The professional musician cannot create harmony in the midst of the disharmonious plebeians.<sup>156</sup> He tries to make order by quietening them, and by covering his ears, but this provides no solace. The poised milkmaid, the central figure, is also depicted with an open mouth, but her beauty and grace form a contrast with the other sound-makers. The milkmaid's implied sweet sounds highlight both the artificiality of the musician's music and the noise of her companions.

The sources of noise in urban England were manifold. They included traffic, animals, revellers, inconsiderate neighbours, artisans and street musicians. The increase in traffic during the period was, in large part, necessitated by an increase in trade and industry. People engaged in certain trades generated noises that affected people living or working nearby. The contexts in which the noises were made, and the sensitivity of the listeners, determined how irritating noises were. Noises that prevented the citizens from sleeping, worshipping or concentrating were the most grating. There seems to have been a rise in the perceived levels of noise nuisance during the period, especially in London. By the end of the century, mutterings about the ambient noise of the capital seemed to get louder; citizens chuntered in their diaries, letters and journals about the jarring, exhausting sounds of their city. This heightened sensitivity might simply be attributable to the swelling population, and the



knock-on effect of increased trade and traffic. In London, the psychological effects of the plague and the fire could also have played a role. The process of disillusionment might have been already underway before the crises of the 1660s, and it is difficult to divorce the architectural developments from other social changes of the period. Yet the timing of the shift seems to provide evidence for an acceleration of disquiet caused by the need to acclimatise to a newly formed city.<sup>157</sup> When the city's streets were repopulated after the double disaster of pestilence and fire, the bustle and commotion would have gained emphasis through juxtaposition with a previously (albeit temporarily) quiet state. Indeed, in an expanding London which serviced greater numbers of inhabitants and became more busy, the opportunities for this noise increased: there were more people, more trade and more traffic, and, for a few years, a massive amount of rebuilding. Safely installed in new, solid brick buildings, more Londoners were shielded from noise than ever before. Once people were able to escape noise by retreating indoors they would have become more attuned to it outdoors, and therefore more likely to moan about it.

The built fabric was not the only thing to change during this period. The citizens were dividing into groups: the elites, the professionals, the middling sorts, the industrious poor and the low-life types. The sounds of people with a radically different lifestyle, or with different priorities, could annoy others. The rich were especially quick to complain about the noise of poorer citizens. However, when their noises were associated with industry, specific noise legislation would have been economically unwise. The satirist Bernard Mandeville pointed out that it was not possible to remove the nuisances associated with a booming economy.<sup>158</sup> To corrupt the old saying, 'where there was noise, there was brass'; efforts to secure urban quiet would have been unpopular if they hampered domestic trade. All the authorities could realistically deal with were continual sources of noise such as the rowdy alehouses and the inappropriately located workshops. Denied any hope of ridding the sound environment of most undesirable sounds, wealthy Londoners had two choices: make their houses less permeable to sound, or decamp to the relative quiet of the more salubrious suburbs.

## CHAPTER 6

### *Grotty*

Many medieval oak-framed buildings had twisted into terminal dilapidation, leaving early modern urban dwellers a legacy of poorly maintained buildings. Before the Great Fire of 1666, some London houses were little more than ramshackle wooden sheds with earth floors, lacking chimneys and glazing. Post-fire legislation restricted the use of timber in construction. However, even before then the use of brick had been gathering momentum across the country; Alderman Metcalf of Leeds had his Red Hall built of brick in 1628.<sup>1</sup> A description of Bristol in the mid-eighteenth century dwelt on the contrast between the 'broad and handsome' streets lined with new buildings and the narrow irregular streets with houses 'like those of London, before the fire in 1666 . . . built with upper floors projecting beyond the lower; they are crowded close together, and many are five or six stories high'.<sup>2</sup> A visitor to Nottingham in 1725 was surprised to find a city 'constructed almost entirely with brick'.<sup>3</sup> However, some brick-built houses were badly constructed from poor-quality materials, and minimal attention was paid to the ground conditions before construction. Concern about the vulnerability of properties to damage by water and fire was mounting during the period. At the same time, speculative building – an increasingly popular way of making money – drove down the quality of construction, and leasing arrangements did not always ensure that householders cared for their properties. The result of these combined factors was that much of the nation's building stock was insufficiently robust to withstand the depredations of time and climate.

#### 'Fools build houses . . .'<sup>4</sup>

One important factor in ensuring the longevity of a structure is to select quality materials and use them wisely. There is evidence that many of the building supplies were substandard, and that the labourers who used them were insufficiently skilled. Structural collapse was often due to defective materials. Bricks were in such great demand during peaks of construction that several

## 5. Noisy

- 1 James Gibbs, *Book of Architecture, containing designs of buildings and ornaments*, 2nd edn (London, 1739), p. vi, plates XVI–XXI.
- 2 D. H. Allen (ed.), *Essex Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1652–1661*, Essex County Council Record Office Publications, 65 (Chelmsford, 1974), p. xvi; 'Essex Shire Hall and Gaol. Petitions on the state of the very old buildings and the suitability of the present situation', abstract on [www.bopcris.ac.uk/bop1700/ref14681.html](http://www.bopcris.ac.uk/bop1700/ref14681.html) (accessed 7 Dec. 2004).
- 3 E. Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen of London* (London, 1982), p. 26.
- 4 *The Tatler*, no. 9, Apr. 1709 [Steele]; *The Spectator*, no. 376, 12 May 1712 [Steele]; Swift, *Miscellanies*, p. 405.
- 5 William King, *The Art of Cookery; in imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry* (London, 1708), pp. 100–1.
- 6 Shesgreen, *Criers and Hawkers of London*, pp. 36–8.
- 7 *The Spectator*, no. 251, 18 Dec. 1711 [Addison]; Grose, *The Olio*, pp. 210–11.
- 8 *The Spectator*, no. 251.
- 9 John Captain Stevens, *A new Spanish and English dictionary* (London, 1706), s.v. 'ruydo'.
- 10 Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 159.
- 11 Pepys, *Diary*, I, pp. 17–18.
- 12 GL, MS 3018/1, fol. 106r.
- 13 *Ibid.*, fols 15v, 101v. For similar incidents see fols 61v, 90r, 244r, and LMA, MJ/SR/541, recognizance no. 22.
- 14 Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 330, no. 286.
- 15 GL, MS 3018/1, fol. 27v.
- 16 Brown, *Amusements*, p. 20.
- 17 [Thomas Legg], *Low-Life; or one half of the world knows not how the Other Half Live . . . in the Twenty-four Hours, between Saturday-Night and Monday-Morning. In a true Description of a Sunday, as it is usually spent within the Bills of Mortality*, 3rd edn (London, 1764), pp. 3, 22, 95.
- 18 Hardy, *Middlesex County Records 1689–1709*, p. 346.
- 19 LMA, typed calendars of Middlesex Book and Orders of Court 1732–47 – Calendar for 1008–1016 ('Orders of the Court vol. V', MJ/SBB/1008–1016, book 1014, fol. 38r–38v).
- 20 *Oxford Council Acts 1626–1665*, p. 171.
- 21 LMA, MJ/SR/1252, recognizances 129–31, 135, 137–8, 140–4; see also CLRO, Misc. MSS –58/35.
- 22 *Court Leet Records* (Southampton), p. 414.
- 23 Ward, *Nuptial Dialogues and Debates* (1723), I, p. 259; see also Hardy, *Middlesex County Records 1689–1709*, p. 119, 'watchmen being often overtaken in drink'.
- 24 Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, II, pp. 5–6.
- 25 Ward, *Nuptial Dialogues and Debates* (1723), I, p. 259.
- 26 Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 263.
- 27 Jonson, *Epicoene*, esp. sigs A4v, B3v, B4v, C4r, G2r–v, H2v–H3r.
- 28 According to Keith Wrightson, neighbourliness in the early modern period involved 'a degree of normative consensus as to the nature of proper behaviour between neighbours'. Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 51–3.
- 29 Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels*, sig. 2L1v.
- 30 Pepys, *Diary*, VI, p. 39.
- 31 Herbert, *Outlandish Proverbs*, sig. A6v.
- 32 Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison*, VI, p. 119.
- 33 Herbert, *Outlandish Proverbs*, sig. D8r.
- 34 Power, 'The East London working community', p. 113.
- 35 LMA, MJ/SBR/1, fol. 420.
- 36 Hatcher and Cardwell Barker, *History of British Pewter*, p. 119.
- 37 Stow, *Survey of London*, p. 220 (some mispagination occurs at this point: two consecutive pages are numbered 220 – this is the second p. 220).
- 38 John Evelyn, *London Reviv'd* (1666), cited by Wall, *Literary and Cultural Spaces*, p. 44.
- 39 Blount, *Blount's Essays*, p. 111.
- 40 Ramazzini, *De Morbis Artificum*, pp. 231–3; Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 146.
- 41 Sachse, *Minutes of the Norwich Court of Mayoralty*, p. 48; *A View of the Penal Laws Concerning Trade and Traffick, Alphabetically disposed under proper Heads* (London, 1697), p. 52.
- 42 Jonson, *Epicoene*, sig. B3r.
- 43 Ward, *The London-Spy* (1709), I, p. 3; Charles Coffey, *The Devil to Pay; or, the Wives Metamorphos'd. An opera* (London, 1731), p. 23.
- 44 Jonathan Swift, *The Works of Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin* (8 vols, Edinburgh, 1761), VI, pp. 297–8.
- 45 Campbell, *London Tradesman*, p. 264.
- 46 CLRO, Rep. 126, fols 473–4, 494. There are no references to Niblett's noise in the wardmote inquest minutes for Cornhill Ward, GL MS 4069/2. In 1724 Niblett was fined for having too many apprentices and he was elected as an assistant of the company at the same meeting. Four years later Niblett was given a week to pay a fine of three pounds for non-attendance at meetings. He was elected Master in 1732. GL, MS 12,071/5, fols 59, 92v.
- 47 Francis Bacon identified the discovery of whether hot or cold brass sounds loudest when struck with a hammer as a future line of enquiry in 'The history and first inquisition of sound and hearing', in Basil Montagu (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England* (16 vols, London, 1825–36), XV, p. 233.
- 48 W. C. Roberts-Austen, *An Introduction to the Study of Metallurgy*, 5th edn (London, 1902), p. 18.
- 49 Ramazzini, *De Morbis Artificum*, p. 437.
- 50 Hatcher and Cardwell Barker estimate that in the seventeenth century there were about a dozen free coppersmiths in the Pewterers' Company (*History of British Pewter*, p. 272); nine master coppersmiths signed a petition of 14 Feb. 1615 – GL, MS 7090/4; C. Welch, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London* (2 vols, London, 1902), II, p. 117.
- 51 Henry Hamilton, *English Brass and Copper Industries to 1800*, 2nd edn (London, 1967), pp. 279, 290; Daniel Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce. Being a compleat prospect of the trade of this nation, as well the home trade as the foreign* (London, 1728), pp. 290–1.
- 52 Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago and London, 1999), pp. 49–71.
- 53 See, for example, *An Essay upon Harmony* (London, 1729), p. 19; Holme, *Academy of Armory*, II, p. 388; Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, s.v. 'noise'; John Kersey, *A New English Dictionary* (London, 1702), s.v. 'noise'; Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721), s.v. 'noise'; Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'noise'; *The Tatler*, no. 1, 12 Apr. 1709 [Steele].
- 54 Holme, *Academy of Armory*, II, pp. 134, 388.
- 55 Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'noisy' and 'noisiness'; see also Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, s.v. 'noisy'.
- 56 I am adopting a tighter definition than Peter Bailey used for 'Breaking the sound barrier', p. 50. In the dictionaries, the word 'clamorous' reveals this meaning more obviously than the word 'noise'. See, for example, John Kersey, *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: or, a general English Dictionary* (London, 1708), s.v. 'clamour'; Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabeticall* (London, 1604), s.v. 'clamarus'.
- 57 Colvin and Newman, *Of Building*, pp. 10–11. See also Augustus Jessopp (ed.), *The Autobiography of Hon. Roger North* (London, 1887), pp. 40–1, 106–7.

- 58 Robert Hooke, 'A curious dissertation', transcr. in Penelope M. Gouk, 'The role of acoustics and music theory in the scientific work of Robert Hooke', *Annals of Science*, 37 (1980), pp. 573-605 at p. 605.
- 59 Dylan M. Jones and Anthony J. Chapman (eds), *Noise and Society* (Chichester, 1984), p. 3.
- 60 Bailey, 'Breaking the sound barrier', p. 50.
- 61 Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo*, p. 245. See also Ralph Thoresby's reaction to celebrations which went on too long in 1702: Joseph Hunter (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS, Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677-1724)* (2 vols, London, 1830), I, p. 390.
- 62 Clavering, *Essay on Chimneys*, pp. 97-8.
- 63 Clark, *Life and Times of Anthony à Wood*, III, p. 81; see also p. 451.
- 64 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Woodforde at Oxford*, p. 96.
- 65 Wood, *Essay*, II, p. 417.
- 66 *Martin v. Nutkin et al.* (1724): see William Peere Williams, *Reports of Cases argued and determined in the High Court of Chancery* (3 vols, London, 1740-9), II, pp. 266-7.
- 67 J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2nd edn (London, 1979), pp. 357-60.
- 68 *Gaunt v. Fynney* (1872), see R. A. Buckley, *The Law of Nuisance*, 2nd edn (London, 1996), p. 72.
- 69 *Jeffrey's Case* (c.1560), see Baker and Milsom, *Sources of English Legal History*, p. 592.
- 70 Helena M. Chew and William Kellaway, *The London Assize of Nuisance, 1301-1431*, Publications of the London Record Society, 10 (London, 1973), pp. 160-1. The Assize of Nuisance investigated a London armourer whose neighbours were disturbed by his hammering. The landlords of the armourer argued that men of any craft 'viz. goldsmiths, smiths, pewterers, goldbeaters, grocers, pelters, marshals and armourers' are all at liberty to trade anywhere in London and to adapt their premises to suit their purposes. They maintained that ancient custom stipulates that any man may lease property to craftsmen using great hammers, and that the neighbours have no right to complain because their messuage was built in a fashion which exaggerated any nuisance. The result of this case is unrecorded. Patricia Basing, *Trades and Crafts in Medieval Manuscripts* (London, 1990), p. 63.
- 71 CLRO, COL/SJ/27/465; J. S. Loengard, *London Viewers and their Certificates*, Publications of the London Record Society, 26 (London, 1989), p. xlii.
- 72 Corporation of London, *Lawes of the Market*, sig. A7r-v.
- 73 *Ibid.*, sig. A6v.
- 74 Salter, *Oxford City Properties*, p. 240.
- 75 Salter, *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 119.
- 76 Ryder, *Diary*, p. 57 and n3.
- 77 *Oxford Council Acts 1626-1665*, pp. 81, 320.
- 78 Bold, 'The design of a house, 1724', p. 76.
- 79 J. A. Sharpe, 'Crime and delinquency in an Essex parish, 1600-1640', in J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1977), p. 102; Keith E. Wrightson, 'Alehouses, order and reformation', in Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo (eds), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914* (Brighton, 1980); Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 167.
- 80 Dalton, *The Countrey Justice* (1618), p. 25.
- 81 Willis Bund, *Worcester Quarter Sessions Rolls*, pp. 567, 648, 657.
- 82 R. F. B. Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Extracts from the Act Books of the Archdeacons of Nottingham', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 30 (1926), pp. 11-57, at p. 55.
- 83 *Rex v. Smith* (1725): see Strange, *Reports*, I, p. 704; Hawkins, *Pleas of the Crown*, I, p. 198.
- 84 *OBSP*, 12 Oct. 1743, pp. 288-9.
- 85 It is typical that there is no mention of noise in a work by a 'Gent. of the Temple' entitled *Public nuisance considered*. Other works, such as Monson's *A Briefe Declaration* display a similar lack of interest. The nuisances discussed in these works include light deprivation caused by overshadowing, dunghill creation, blocked and diverted watercourses and excess smoke. See also Blackstone, *Commentaries*, III, p. 122.
- 86 GL, MS 3018/1, fol. 106r; likewise, other citizens who complained in the same year to the Court of Aldermen about poultry stored in 'Storyes yard' at the east end of Christchurch detailed not only the noise of the fowl, but also the stench of their ordure and offal: Jones, *The Company of Poulterers*, pp. 83-4.
- 87 LMA, MJ/OC/V, fols 38r-v. See also LMA, MJ/OC/V, fols 85v-86r.
- 88 Jonson, *Epicoene*, B4r-v.
- 89 Porter, *The Great Fire of London*, pp. 22-45; Evelyn, *Diary*, III, p. 453.
- 90 See Wall, *Literary and Cultural Spaces*, pp. 5-6, 189.
- 91 C. F. Innocent, *The Development of English Building Construction* (Cambridge, 1916), p. 150.
- 92 Although this act was not the first to be concerned with wall thickness, it was the most far-reaching. C. C. Knowles and P. H. Pitt, *The History of Building Regulation in London, 1189-1972* (London, 1972), pp. 20-33.
- 93 Platt, *The Great Rebuildings*, pp. 151-2; Wood, *An Essay*, II, A2r-A3r.
- 94 Michael Reed, *Age of Exuberance 1550-1700* (London, 1986), pp. 339-40.
- 95 Matthew Johnson, *Housing Culture: Traditional Architecture in an English Landscape* (London, 1993), pp. 106, 128; Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, pp. 23, 151.
- 96 Walter Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath from 1700 to 1830* (Bath, 1980), p. 100.
- 97 *OBSP*, 7-10 Apr. 1725, pp. 1-2; see also *OBSP*, 17-23 Dec. 1766, pp. 4-8; *OBSP*, 4-6 Apr. 1722, pp. 3-4.
- 98 *OBSP*, 14-19 Jan. 1732, pp. 34-41, esp. p. 35; *OBSP*, 6-11 Sept. 1738, pp. 138-40.
- 99 Colvin and Newman, *Of Building*, p. 69.
- 100 Seaton, *Conduct of Servants*, pp. 171, 177.
- 101 Colvin and Newman, *Of Building*, pp. 89-90.
- 102 Gunther, *Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt*, pp. 27, 63-4.
- 103 Bold, 'The design of a house, 1724', p. 79.
- 104 Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (Harmondsworth, 1980), p. 138.
- 105 Important research on privacy conducted by Tim Meldrum has forced historians to take more care when describing room use, and not rely solely on the architectural evidence. Meldrum, whose work focuses on privacy, argues that although an architect might have intended the space to be used in a particular way, future occupants were at liberty to utilise their space as they wished. Thus, more research needs to be carried out, using a variety of sources, before one can assert with authority how developments in room use might have reduced or enhanced noise movement through buildings. Meldrum, 'Domestic service'.
- 106 Breton, *Fantasticks*, sig. C4v.
- 107 Power, 'East London working community', p. 103.
- 108 Earle, *Micro-cosmographie* (1628), sig. I11r-K1r; Evelyn, *Diary*, III, p. 638.
- 109 John Houghton, *A Collection For Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, IV, no. 95, 25 May 1694. My thanks to Natasha Glaisyer for this reference.
- 110 Pepys, *Diary*, I, p. 309; II, pp. 7, 106; V, p. 165; VIII, p. 169; IX, p. 310.
- 111 John Dryden, 'Of Dramatick Poesie, and Essay' (1668), in W. P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden* (2 vols, Oxford, 1900), I, p. 84.
- 112 H. George Hahn, 'Country myth and the politics of the early Georgian novel', in Hahn (ed.), *The Country Myth: Motifs in the British Novel from Defoe to Smollett* (Frankfurt, 1990), pp. 16-17.
- 113 Brown, *Amusements*, p. 20.
- 114 John Gay, *Rural Sports: a Poem* (London, 1713), p. 1.
- 115 Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, I, pp. 64-5.
- 116 E. Arber (ed.), *John Earle Micro-cosmographie (first edition 1628, plus Characters from the*



- fifth edition 1629 and sixth edition 1633), facs edn, English Reprints (London, 1869), p. 88; Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 63.
- 117 Cockayne, 'Cacophony', p. 40.
- 118 John Grubb, *The British Heroes* (London, 1707), p. 6.
- 119 Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis* (1650), cited in Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton, NJ and Chichester, 1995), p. 73.
- 120 Wood, *Essay*, II, p. 417; Christopher Anstey, *The New Bath Guide: or, memoirs of the B-r-d family*, 4th edn (London, 1767), p. 45.
- 121 Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society 1680–1730* (London, 1982), pp. 3–18; Rosemary O'Day, *Professions in Early Modern England, 1450–1800: Servants of the Commonwealth* (London, 2000). Anna Bryson notes that a key development of the early modern period was the growth of London as the centre of gentlemanly conduct: *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 281.
- 122 Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 139–47.
- 123 Cockayne, 'Cacophony', pp. 35–47.
- 124 Shesgreen, *Criers and Hawkers of London*, pp. 128–9.
- 125 *The Spectator*, no. 251; Swift, *Journal to Stella*, I, p. 581.
- 126 *The Spectator*, no. 251.
- 127 For example, tinkers, knife-sharpeners, sow gelders, card match sellers, hobby horse sellers and small coals men.
- 128 Hugh De Quehen (ed.), *Samuel Butler: Prose Observations* (Oxford, 1979), p. 127.
- 129 LMA, MJ/SR/1663, indictment no. 19; also MJ/SBB/424, Sessions of the Peace Book, 1684–5, fol. 51r; Jeaffreson, *Middlesex County Records*, IV, pp. 283–4.
- 130 Sean Shesgreen raised this idea in *Criers and Hawkers*, p. 168.
- 131 Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627), in James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Denon (eds), *The Works of Francis Bacon* (14 vols, London, 1857–74), II, p. 561.
- 132 Fielding, *The Intriguing Chambermaid*, p. 28.
- 133 Jeaffreson, *Middlesex County Records*, IV, p. 285.
- 134 A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560–1640* (London, 1985), pp. 90–1. Thomas Overbury remarked that 'if he scape Tiburne and Banbury, he dies a beggar', *Overburie His Wife*, sig. F8r; *A New Tale of an Old Tub: or, the Way to Fame. An odd sort of a story* (London, 1752), p. 14. See also E. B. [Edward Bysshe?], *A Trip to North Wales: being a description of that country and people* (London, 1701), p. 11.
- 135 *The Spectator*, no. 251, 18 Dec. 1711 [Addison].
- 136 See Westerfield, *Middlemen in English Business*, p. 316; Danby Pickering, *The Statutes at Large* (42 vols, Cambridge, 1762–99), X, p. 168, 'An act for licensing hawkers and pedlars' (1697).
- 137 R. B. Manning, *Village Revolts, Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509–1640* (Oxford, 1988), p. 159.
- 138 Breton, *Fantasticks*, sig. C4v.
- 139 Burnaby, *The Reform'd Wife*, p. 26.
- 140 Margaret Cavendish, 'Loves adventures', in *Plays written by the Thrice Noble Illustrious and Excellent Princess The Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London, 1662), stage direction, p. 13.
- 141 Gomme and Norman, *Lincoln's Inn Fields*, p. 9; see also chapter 9, 'Gloomy', below.
- 142 Public Record Office, PRO 30/26/74/5 fol. 26r; 74/11 fol. 36r – Estates . . . at [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=8404&strquery=noise](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=8404&strquery=noise) (accessed 19 May 2005).
- 143 Fielding, *The Temple Beau*, p. 37.
- 144 *The Spectator*, no. 175, 20 Sept. 1711 [Budgell]. In Jonson's *Epicoene*, Clerimont

- informs the audience that Morose has chosen to live in a narrow street which will not accommodate 'coaches nor carts nor any of these common noises', sig. B3r.
- 145 Mare and Quarrell, *Lichtenberg's Visits*, p. 42.
- 146 *The Burwell Lute Tutor. Facsimile edition with an introductory study by Robert Spencer* (Leeds, 1974), fol. 40v. My thanks to Stewart McCoy for this reference.
- 147 Chetham's Library, Mun. A.2.140, p. 2 (fol. 1v).
- 148 For a discussion of a later quest for quiet see John M. Picker, 'The soundproof study: Victorian professionals, work space, and urban noise', *Victorian Studies*, 42:3 (2000), pp. 427–53, esp pp. 434–5.
- 149 Schofield, *Surveys of Ralph Treswell*, p. 21.
- 150 Jenni Calder, *The Victorian Home* (London, 1977), p. 15.
- 151 Sean Shesgreen has written an evocative account of the aural aspects of this image, in *Images of the Outcast*, pp. 110–13.
- 152 Uglow, *Hogarth*, pp. 300–2.
- 153 L. Jenkins, 'Child's play', *Early Music Today*, 5 (1997), pp. 5–6 at p. 6.
- 154 Uglow, *Hogarth*, p. 300.
- 155 Henry Fielding, *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, by the Late Henry Fielding, Esq.* (London, 1755), p. 49–50.
- 156 Paulson, *Hogarth*, II, p. 114.
- 157 Cynthia Wall argues that disasters such as conflagration disturb and dislocate patterns and structures of life: *Literary and Cultural Spaces*, pp. 5–6, 189.
- 158 Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees* (1714).

## 6. Grotty

- 1 Beresford, 'East End, West End', p. 32. Early brick houses still had wooden frames.
- 2 *A Description of England and Wales. Containing a Particular Account of each County* (10 vols, London, 1769–70), VIII, p. 125.
- 3 BCL, MS B914–238, p. 80.
- 4 Ray, *Compleat Proverbs*, p. 108.
- 5 George, *London Life*, p. 74.
- 6 Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, p. 104; Guillery, *Small House*, p. 70.
- 7 Neve, *The City and Countrey Purchaser*, p. 42.
- 8 Pierre Jean Grosley, *A Tour to London; Or, New Observations on England, and its inhabitants*, trans. by Thomas Nugent (2 vols, London, 1772), I, p. 77.
- 9 *Court Leet Records* (Southampton), p. 589.
- 10 Tryon, *Tryon's Letters*, pp. 51–2.
- 11 Reddaway, *Rebuilding of London*, p. 285.
- 12 Guillery, *Small House*, p. 49: 'Legislation did not *ipso facto* alter behaviour, and London's house builders had for decades been accustomed to ignoring building regulations . . . There was much poor workmanship.'
- 13 Cited in Downes, *Hawksmoor*, pp. 241–2.
- 14 John Evelyn, preface to Roland Freart, *A Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the modern, in a collection of Ten Principal Authors who have written upon the Five Orders*, 2nd edn (London, 1707), p. 5, 'Back matter, to the reader'.
- 15 Neale, *Bath 1680–1850*, p. 135.
- 16 Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises: or, the doctrine of handy-works, applied to the Art of Bricklayers-works* (London, 1700), pp. 21–2.
- 17 John Woodforde, *Georgian Houses for All* (London, 1978), p. 44.
- 18 Cruickshank, *Georgian Town Houses*, p. 181.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 20 Guillery, *Small House*, p. 69.
- 21 Neve, *The City and Countrey Purchaser*, p. 71.