



# The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649

By Joad Raymond

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## The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649 By Joad Raymond

The first weekly English newsbooks appeared in November 1641, on the eve of the civil war. Though they provoked animosity and fanned the flames of civil war, they have survived almost without interruption to the present day, transformed into the modern newspaper. *The Invention of the Newspaper* is the first detailed account of the origins and early development of the English newspaper, using a wealth of new evidence to show the causes of the first newsbooks, and their many and complex roles in the turbulent society in which they participated.

Newsbooks were widely read and exerted considerable influence not only over immediate perceptions of news, but also over subsequent histories of the seventeenth-century, extending even to the present day. Using and synthesizing approaches from literary criticism, history, and the "sociology of texts," *The Invention of the Newspaper* shows how newsbooks transformed print culture, fed the public hunger for news, and in turn created a market for news periodical. Charting the newsbook's development as a form and a commercial enterprise, its literary qualities, and its relationship to other means of communication, *The Invention of the Newspaper* shows the newsbook's gradual and irresistible dominance of the market for information.

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## **The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649** By Joad Raymond Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4919829 in Books
- Published on: 2005-09-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.40" h x .90" w x 8.40" l, 1.11 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Raymond has performed a public service by examining the transformation of the newsbook from 'a plain and non-controversial narrative of parliamentary proceedings into a bitter and aggressive instrument of literary and political faction.' We should, he urges, pay less attention to what contemporaries said about newsbooks and more to what they did with them.... All seventeenth-century historians will benefit by reading this book."--Christopher Hill, *Literature and History*

"Richly researched and documented."--*Studies in English Literature, 1500--1900*

#### From the Back Cover

The first weekly newspapers, or 'newsbooks', appeared in 1641. The reasons for their appearance have never been fully understood. *The Invention of the Newspaper* is the first interdisciplinary account of the origins and early development of the English newspaper, using both manuscript and printed evidence to account for the precise moment of the newsbook's appearance - a few months before the outbreak of civil war. Raymond explores the newsbook's unique place in the flourishing political print culture of the 1640s, showing how it drew from and then reformed elements of literary culture, being both produced by a public hunger for news and, in turn, creating a market for news. *The Invention of the Newspaper* explores evidence for the distribution and readership of seventeenth-century news publications, which suggests that the early newsbooks were widely read and highly influential, and that - even today - they influence the way in which seventeenth-century history is perceived. Charting the newsbook's development as a genre, its narrative forms, literary merits and influences, and its relationship to other vehicles of communication, printed and spoken, such as sermons, almanacs, and play-pamphlets, Raymond presents a detailed exploration of the newsbook's gradual dominance of the market for information.

#### About the Author

Born in Cardiff, Joad Raymond took his B.A. in English and History at U.E.A., then proceeded to the University of Oxford to do a D.Phil. Between 1993 and 1995 he held a research fellowship at Magdalen College before moving to a lectureship at the University of Aberdeen. He has been Senior Lecturer in English Literature, at U.E.A. since 2000.

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