

## *Introduction*

moved house to the Clerk's official lodgings in the Navy Office building in Seething Lane in the City.

With this appointment Pepys's apprentice days were over. He was now one of the Principal Officers of the Navy, with two clerks at his beck and call, a handsome salary of £350 and the prospect of making even handsomer 'profits'. The Navy Board, under the direction of the Lord High Admiral of the Kingdom (from 1660–73 the Duke of York) dealt with the civil administration of the navy in much the same way as it continued to do until its abolition in 1832. It was responsible for designing, building and repairing the ships, managing the dockyards, victualling the fleets and providing most of their stores and equipment (apart from guns and ammunition, which were provided by the Ordnance Board). Reconstituted in 1660 after the Interregnum, when it had been replaced by committee rule, the Board now consisted, apart from Pepys, of: the Treasurer (Sir George Carteret, head of the office); the Comptroller (Col. Robert Slingsby in 1660, Sir John Mennes from 1661); the Surveyor (Sir William Batten); two Commissioners with general duties (Sir William Penn and Lord Berkeley of Stratton), and a resident Commissioner at Chatham, the largest of the dockyards, Peter Pett, the shipbuilder. Except for Berkeley, a soldier and courtier, all had seen service at sea or in naval administration. Pepys was not only young, but in naval affairs a tyro with only a few weeks of pen-pushing to his credit. But he had what was to prove of greater worth than either the rank or the experience of his colleagues – the mental powers, the physical vitality and the love of order which go to the making of a great administrator.

The diary tells the story of his developing skill and reputation. Within a few days of beginning his new work, he had resigned his Exchequer clerkship and, characteristically, was making an inventory of the Navy Board's papers; within a few months, he had familiarised himself with much of its routine and had asserted his rights as Clerk against the claims of his colleagues. By his capacity for hard work – starting at 4 a.m. in summer when necessary – he was setting a pace which no rival on the Board could match. Not that he was ever in danger of becoming a drudge: he was much too lively. His life was often a round of conviviality, music, theatre-going and philandering.