

**SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2002 WHITBREAD
BIOGRAPHY AWARD**

**SAMUEL PEPYS
THE UNEQUALLED SELF
BY
CLAIRE TOMALIN**

PUBLISHED ON 3RD OCTOBER 2002 IN HARDBACK AT £20.00

PRAISE FOR SAMUEL PEPYS ON PUBLICATION:

'Immaculately well done. Tomalin has managed to unearth a wealth of material about the uncharted life of Samuel Pepys' Craig Brown, *Mail on Sunday*

'Fabulously entertaining' Sunday Times

'Sex, drink, plague, fire, music, marital conflict, the fall of kings, corruption and courage in public life, wars, navies, public execution, incarceration in the Tower: Samuel Pepys's life is full of irresistible material, and Claire Tomalin seizes it with both hands. Fast, vivid, accessible' Hermione Lee, *Guardian*

Samuel Pepys achieved fame as a naval administrator, a friend and colleague of the powerful and learned, a figure of substance. But for nearly ten years he kept a private diary in which he recorded, with unparalleled openness and sensitivity to the turbulent world around him, exactly what it was like to be a young man in Restoration London. This diary lies at the heart of Claire Tomalin's scholarly and revelatory new biography.

In *Samuel Pepys, The Unequalled Self*, Claire Tomalin has taken a new approach to Pepys and his diaries. For the first time Tomalin reveals the personal side of Pepys – the married man, the private man, the man who sought out pleasure and meditated in print on his own reactions, the man who cherished secret ambitions, both financial and political. Through this portrait Claire Tomalin has brought to life the 17th Century, one of the most exciting periods in English history in which society was turned upside down not once but twice, the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established church got rid of and then brought back.

Claire Tomalin also looks at both Pepys's early and later years. Few biographies have focused on the importance of the first twenty-seven years of his life living as a poor London tailor's son, before being given his chance as a scholarship boy making his way under Cromwell and the Commonwealth, helped out by cousins who were supporters of Cromwell. Additionally, she reveals fascinating information about the end of his life - his long-term relationship with his mistress, Mary Skinner, and his struggle to change his will to include her.

Tomalin examines Pepys as a writer and argues that his diaries are one of the great texts of the English language. It is the first to be written in demotic speech and come close to Shakespeare in its range of characters. Claire Tomalin also tells the story of the diary itself – how Pepys preserved it and how it had ‘sleeping beauty’ years before it was discovered and then slowly emerged.

Claire Tomalin has worked in publishing and journalism all her life, becoming literary editor first of the New Statesman and then of the Sunday Times. She has written five highly acclaimed biographies most recently JANE AUSTEN: A LIFE. Her books have won the Whitbread First Book Prize, the Hawthornden Prize, the NCR Book Award and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Biography. Claire Tomalin lives in London.

‘A rich, thoughtful and deeply satisfying account. It takes us behind and beyond the diary – which means that, on finishing it, we can reread the diary with greater pleasure and understanding than ever before’

Noel Malcolm, *Evening Standard*

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