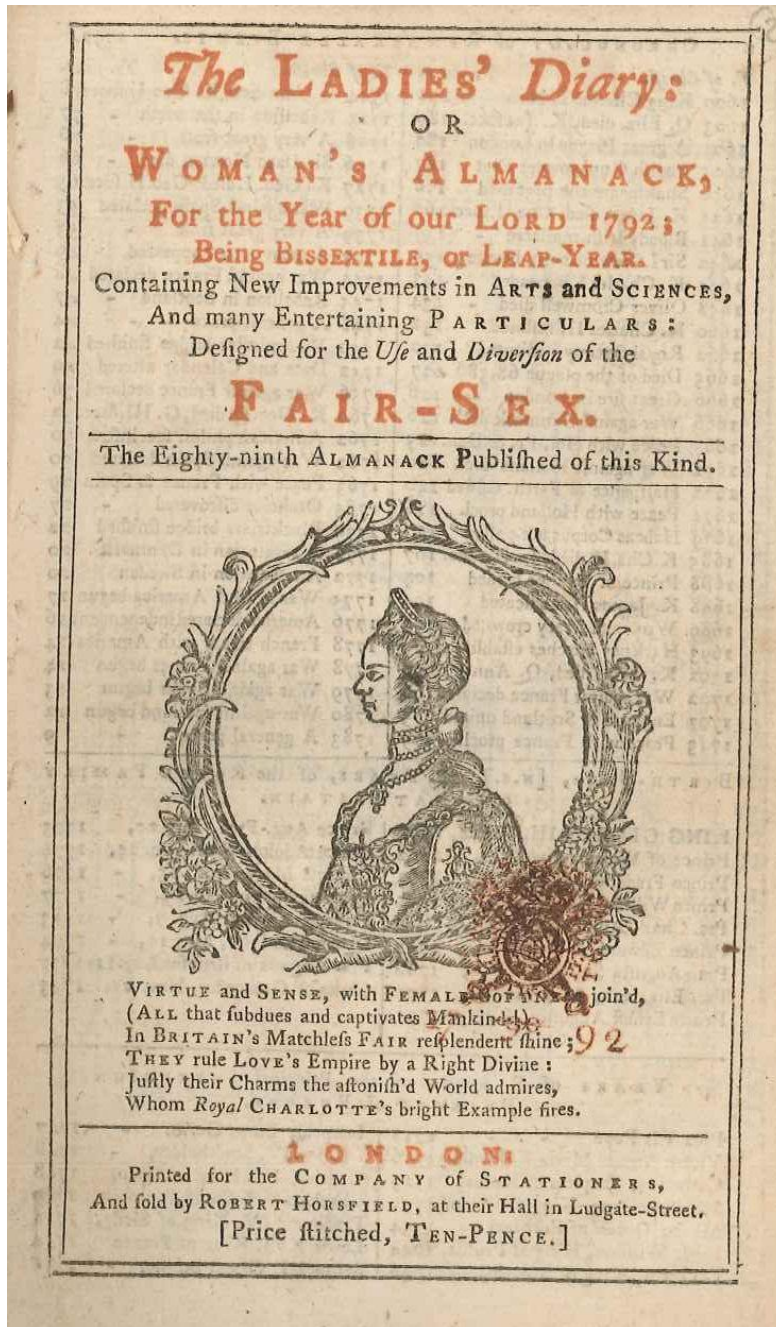




Leap Year almanacs



1792 Almanac

Ref. No: SPEC Y79.2.61 (2)

Almanacs originated as tables of astronomical and astrological events of the year ahead, existing from antiquity, and evolved, in England, into the most popular literary form of the 17th century. They became a part of the political, social, and religious controversies of the later 17th century and their wide-ranging contents may be seen in the Library's bound collection of **12 almanacs for 1699: SPEC Y69.3.60**

A later volume of **15 almanacs for 1763: SPEC G53.5** has the 1789 signature of John Wynne, a glover of Denbigh, suggesting that almanacs were quickly collected as curiosities, as well as being sources of practical information.

Almanacs from Leap Years include the 1776, 1780, and 1792 *Gentleman's and Ladies' Diaries*. This new series by Reuben Burrow ('late Assistant Astronomer at the Royal Observatory, and Teacher of the Mathematics') was published by the forthright printer and bookseller Thomas Carnan, whose 'calendars' and 'diaries' had challenged the profitable monopoly on almanacs held by the Stationers' Company, despite the

Company's 1772 legal warning of prosecution. Carnan's justification appears in the preface to the **1776 Lady's and Gentleman's Diary (SPEC Y77.2.93(2))**:

'Almanacks are become necessary to people in every station of life, and consequently have a more extensive sale than almost any other publication' but 'The only Almanack that has hitherto appeared on any thing like a rational plan, is the Ladies Diary'.

By 1777, Carnan was proclaiming victory on the title page of his ‘Ladies and Gentlemens Diary, or Royal Almanack’:



Amongst the most well known American almanacs was *Poor Richard*, started by Benjamin Franklin, the printer, writer and American revolutionary politician in 1732, and for which he wrote until 1758. The title comes from Franklin's pseudonym – Richard Saunders – which he adopted from the author of the English almanac *Apollo Anglicanus* (1699 copy in SPEC Y69.3.60.9). *Poor Richard* was noted for its sayings and aphorisms, which were later published separately as *The Way to Wealth* (1758).

Later publications using the same title – with a portrait of Franklin on the title page – include the **1844 volume (SPEC Y84.3.1017)** which inserts pithy sayings in blank lines of the calendar: February 29 (a Thursday) ‘Sow money and reap money’.

Punning jokes head each opening, for example

“That’s an impression”	As the Printer said when he kissed his sweetheart
“My heart is thine”	As the cabbage said to the cook
“I feel deeply affected by your tail”	As the Lady said to the Wasp