





communities affected by persecution did not collude in its escalation.

The spiritual status of the early modern child was often confused and uncertain, and yet in the wake of the English Reformation became an issue of urgent interest. This book explores questions surrounding early modern childhood, focusing especially on some of the extreme religious experiences in which children are documented: those of demonic possession and godly prophecy. Dr French argues that despite the fact that these occurrences were not typical childhood experiences, they provide us with a window through which to glimpse the world of early modern children. The work introduces its readers to the dualistic nature of early modern perceptions of their young - they were seen to be both close to devilish temptations and to God's divine finger, as illustrated by published accounts of possession and prophecy. These cases reveal to us moments in which children could be granted authority or in which writers and publishers framed children in positions of spiritual agency. This can tell us much about how early modern society perceived, imagined and depicted their young, and helps us to revise the notion that early modern children's lives, which were often fleeting, may have gone unregarded. Both contributing to, and informed by, some of the most recent historiographical directions taken by early modern history, this book engages with three key areas: the history of extreme spiritual experience such as demonic possession, the 'lived experience' of early modern religion and the history of childhood. In this way, it offers the first scholarly exploration of the dialogue between these three areas of current and widespread historical interest which have, perhaps surprisingly, not yet been considered together.

Guy Fawkes is amongst the most celebrated figures in English history and Bonfire Night is a remarkably long lived and very English tradition. But why is it that in a modern, multicultural society people still turn out every November to commemorate a planned act of treason and terrorism which was defeated four hundred years ago? Had the Gunpowder Plot succeeded and the Catholics managed to blow up the king, the royal family and Parliament, English history would have been shaped by a terrorist act of unprecedented proportions, shattering in terms of both the damage inflicted and its propaganda value. James Sharpe examines the fateful night of 5 November 1605 and the tangled web of religion and politics which gave rise to the plot. He uncovers how celebration of the event, and of Guy Fawkes, the one gunpowder plotter everyone remembers, has changed over the centuries. Today, although most of the religious connotations have long been ignored, the bonfires remain. The festival created in 1605 by the state and church to commemorate a failed act of Catholic terrorism, now provides an annual *raison d'être* for the firework industry and an annual source of concern for Britain's cat owners. Every year the crowds gather, the bonfires are lit and the firework displays dazzle again. Interestingly however, the tradition is fast changing and reverting to the pre-Gunpowder Plot festival (now much Americanised) of Halloween.

In 1645, Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne exploited the anxiety and lawlessness of the time and initiated a brutal campaign to drive out the presumed evil in their midst. Gaskill recounts the most savage witch-hunt in English history. By the fall of 1647 at least 250 people had been captured, interrogated, and tried, with more than 100 hanged.

Almost everything people know about Dick Turpin and highwaymen is myth. The historical truth is much nastier, more brutal and bloody. As Dick Turpin went to the scaffold in York in 1739 he was determined to look his best. The previous day he had had a new frock coat and pumps delivered to him in the condemned man's cell in York Castle Prison. And he paid £3 and 10 shillings for five men to act as mourners. Who was this notorious highwayman and why did he become so famous? What did he do to become the subject of such extraordinary myths? Most of all, why are highwaymen romantic figures? We have highwayman now: we call them muggers and car-jackers and we don't sing ballads about them or eulogise them for their brave exploits. This is a masterly biography of one of Britain's best-known criminals - but it is also an examination of the cult of the highwayman, of crime in the 18th century and the treatment of criminals. In the absence of any police force how were crimes solved? Who did the detective work? And did the criminals get a fair trial - an important question if you were going to hang from the neck for a relatively minor misdemeanour. Was there a criminal underclass and did people really live in terror of going on the roads at night? Looking at the underbelly of society and the nastier aspects of life that many historians ignore, James Sharpe creates a vivid picture of life on the edges in 18th century Britain.

A study of England's biggest and best-known witch trial, which took place in 1612 when ten witches from the forest of Pendle were hanged at Lancaster. A little-known second trial occurred in 1633-4, when up to nineteen witches were sentenced to death.

Introduces readers to the current state of debate and to future directions for investigation. Covers such fundamental topics as: witchcraft as an intellectual and theological problem; neighbourly tensions related to witchcraft accusations; the issue of witchcraft and gender; the problem of the decline of witchcraft persecution. This book is characterized throughout by a straightforward approach which guides the reader through the sometimes difficult details of this fascinating but much-misunderstood subject. The interpretive text is accompanied by a selection of documentary extracts, some of them never previously published, which allows the reader to get to grips with witchcraft as it was experienced in the past, and to understand how historians have constructed their interpretations of early modern witchcraft.

"Shapiro shows how the tumultuous events in England in 1606 affected Shakespeare and influenced three of his greatest tragedies written that year: King Lear, Macbeth, and Antony and Cleopatra"--

Witchcraft, Witch-hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England constitutes a wide-ranging and original overview of the place of witchcraft and witch-hunting in the broader culture of early modern England. Based on a mass of new evidence extracted from a range of archives, both local and national, it seeks to relate the rise and decline of belief in witchcraft, alongside the legal prosecution of witches, to the wider political culture of the period. Building on the seminal work of scholars such as Stuart Clark, Ian Bostridge, and Jonathan Barry, Peter Elmer demonstrates how learned discussion of witchcraft, as well as the trials of those suspected of the crime, were shaped by religious and political imperatives in the period from the passage of the witchcraft statute of 1563 to the repeal of the various laws on witchcraft. In the process, Elmer sheds new light upon various

