

PENGUIN BOOKS

002800

THE PELICAN HISTORY  
OF ENGLAND

---

6

England in the  
Seventeenth  
Century  
(1603-1714)

---

MAURICE ASHLEY

---



PENGUIN BOOKS

85c

## THE PELICAN HISTORY OF ENGLAND

While each volume is complete in itself, the whole series has been planned to provide an intelligent and consecutive guide to the development of English society in all its aspects. The eight volumes are:

1. ROMAN BRITAIN *by Professor Ian Richmond*, King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne
2. THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH SOCIETY (from the Anglo-Saxon Invasion) *by Dorothy Whitelock*, Fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford
3. ENGLISH SOCIETY IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES *by Doris Mary Stenton*, Lecturer at Reading University
4. ENGLAND IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES *by A. R. Myers*, Lecturer at Liverpool University
5. TUDOR ENGLAND *by S. T. Bindoff*, Professor of History at Queen Mary College, London
6. ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY *by Maurice Ashley*
7. ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY *by J. H. Plumb*, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge
8. ENGLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY *by David Thomson*, Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

'As a portent in the broadening of popular culture the influence of this wonderful series has yet to receive full recognition and precise assessment. No venture could be more enterprising or show more confidence in the public's willingness to purchase thoughtful books. . . .' *The Listener*.

KJ61.33

E602

6

外文书库 1561.0

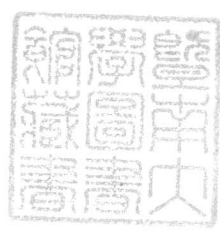
AM

ENGLAND IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURY

BY

MAURICE ASHLEY

038



PENGUIN BOOKS

Penguin Books, Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex

U.S.A.: Penguin Books, Inc., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Md  
*[Educational Representative:*

*D. C. Heath & Co, 285 Columbus Avenue, Boston 16, Mass]*

CANADA: Penguin Books (Canada) Ltd, 178 Norseman Street,  
Toronto 18, Ontario

AUSTRALIA: Penguin Books Pty Ltd, 762 Whitehorse Road,  
Mitcham, Victoria

---

First published 1952

Second edition 1954

Reprinted 1956

Made and printed in Great Britain  
by Wyman & Sons Ltd  
London, Reading, and Fakenham

## EDITORIAL NOTE

*England in the Seventeenth Century* is the sixth volume of a series planned to form an intelligent and consecutive guide to the development of English Society in all its aspects from the Roman invasion to the outbreak of the First World War.

Each volume has been written by a specialist, and each author has been left to decide what he himself considers significant and interesting, in the period with which he deals, and to make his own balance between the claims of the subdivisions of his general thesis, politics, economics, culture, religion, social life, colonial expansion, foreign relations. All have sought to emphasize the sense of period, and while some parallels are inevitable, the business of discovering comparison and conclusion, and of adapting the lessons of history to our own times, is left, for the most part, to the reader.

The complete work consists of eight volumes, as follows:

1. ROMAN BRITAIN. *By Professor Ian Richmond*, King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne.
2. THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH SOCIETY (FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON INVASION). *By Dorothy Whitelock*, Fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford.
3. ENGLISH SOCIETY IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES. *By Doris Mary Stenton*, Lecturer at Reading University.
4. ENGLAND IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES. *By A. R. Myers*, Lecturer at Liverpool University.
5. TUDOR ENGLAND. *By S. T. Bindoff*, Professor of History at Queen Mary College, London.
6. ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. *By Maurice Ashley*, formerly Scholar of New College, Oxford.
7. ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. *By Dr J. H. Plumb*, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge.
8. ENGLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1815-1914). *By David Thomson*, Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.

J. E. MORPURGO

### *Dedication*

When I was a student at Oxford, our knowledge of British history in the seventeenth century was being enhanced and transformed by three distinguished scholars, Sir George N. Clark, Mr Keith Feiling, and Mr David Ogg, at whose feet I sat. Those familiar with the subject will recognize how much this book owes to their teaching. To them it is respectfully dedicated.

## CONTENTS

I	PROLOGUE: THE ROAD TO ENGLAND	9
II	THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES	12
III	CLIMATES OF OPINION	24
IV	THE REIGN OF KING JAMES I, 1603-25	40
V	KING CHARLES I AND THE 'ELEVEN YEARS' TYRANNY', 1625-40	54
VI	THE GREAT CIVIL WAR, 1640-49	71
VII	OLIVER CROMWELL AND THE INTERREG- NUM, 1649-60	89
VIII	A FERMENT OF IDEAS, 1640-60	106
IX	KING CHARLES II AND THE WARS AGAINST THE DUTCH, 1660-74	119
X	THE BEGINNINGS OF POLITICAL PARTIES, 1674-85	135
XI	THE AGE OF EXPERIMENT, 1660-89	152
XII	KING JAMES II AND THE GLORIOUS RÉVO- LUTION, 1685-89	165
XIII	KING WILLIAM III AND QUEEN MARY II, 1689-1702	179
XIV	QUEEN ANNE AND THE WAR AGAINST FRANCE, 1702-13	193
XV	THE PEACE OF UTRECHT AND THE GROWTH OF THE FIRST BRITISH EMPIRE	211
XVI	ENGLAND UNDER QUEEN ANNE; THE AU- GUSTAN AGE	230
XVII	EPILOGUE: THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE	246
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	251
	INDEX	254





005862

PELICAN BOOKS

A 268

ENGLAND IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

MAURICE ASHLEY



爱 护 图 书

人 人 有 责

广东省图书馆设备用品服务部监制

## CHAPTER I

### *Prologue : The Road to England*

KING JAMES VI of Scotland, whom one of his Presbyterian subjects had addressed as 'God's Silly Vassal' and a contemporary but anonymous savant was to call 'the wisest fool in Christendom', left Edinburgh on 5 April 1603 for Westminster, to be crowned King of England in succession to Queen Elizabeth I. He had long been eager for this fine heritage – so eager that when his mother, the beautiful but foolish Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, exiled in a foreign land, had been faced with execution at the prayer of the English parliament, he had contented himself with formal protests. After all he had owed nothing to his mother but his existence. She had connived at, or at any rate condoned, the murder of his father, Lord Darnley, and a few months after the crime, when James was just over a year old, abdicated her throne and later fled the country. Since that year, 1568, he had writhed under the tutelage of a turbulent nobility and militant Scottish clergy. At last, however, his course was set fair. He had in the end been acknowledged by Queen Elizabeth as her heir; 'Who should that be,' she had murmured on her death-bed, 'but our cousin of Scotland?' The English peers and Privy Council had approved his claim to the throne, though it did not accord with the testament of Queen Elizabeth's father, King Henry VIII, who had been empowered by parliament to bestow the succession as he thought fit. Moreover the mass of James's new English subjects were satisfied that an authentic Protestant, descended directly from the elder daughter of the first Tudor ruler, should start a line of Stuart kings. 'If ever there was an act in which the nation was unanimous,' wrote a great historian, 'it was the welcome with which the accession of the new sovereign was greeted.'

And King James himself was more than delighted that he had finally realized all his dreams. Now that he and his retinue had crossed the border, he need no longer fear the grip of the tough Scottish chieftains and elders who had long humiliated him even to the extent of kidnapping him as a boy and keeping him in captivity. In England a man might be king indeed. Was he perhaps not Lord Darnley's son? Might his title be questioned? Had he been treated in Scotland as a figurehead, a monarch who had to fight for the realities of power with all the cunning of an Italian prince-ling? All that did not seem to matter now. For he was the proclaimed – and would soon be the anointed – heir of the Tudor rulers who had defied Popes and Emperors and singed the beard of the King of Spain. By way of compensating himself for any uncertainty there might be about his right to succeed, he would draw attention to the absolute power of monarchs that flows from 'divine right' – even though he knew enough about men and affairs not to press absurd claims too far. When he reached London, fortified by the experience gained in the less congenial Lowlands, he could begin afresh as a ruler and a statesman.

The crowds of noblemen, gentlemen, and common people who flocked the roads to greet his progress south put him in good heart. He bestowed favours on all who entertained him, conferred numerous knighthoods, as later he was to create many peers, and once gave expression to the fires that burned within him when he commanded a thief to be hanged forthwith without trial. After he had moved down through the poorer and less populous northern counties, still not a placid nor wholly civilized portion of his new realm, his journey became lit with richer and warmer hues. Just before he came within reach of his goal, he spent two nights at the splendid mansion of Hinchinbrooke in Huntingdon, then owned by a gentleman named Sir Oliver Cromwell, whose four-year-old nephew and namesake was later to figure in the Stuart story. Loaded with Cromwell's gifts and with addresses from the University of Cambridge, King James now took the road to London. That the streets of the

## PROLOGUE

English capital were paved with gold, as James appears to have expected, might be doubtful – though assuredly it was already one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the world; what was certain then was that it was lined with plague. In the first of three terrible visitations of the bubonic plague that darkened the history of London in the seventeenth century, one in every ten perished. That spring the nights were disturbed by the groans of dying men, while bodies were smuggled out of houses to be buried in nameless graves. The new King was therefore advised to avoid the City on his way to Whitehall. But it would have taken more than the bubonic plague to put a damper on his spirits. He was rich, he was powerful, nay he was absolute. How could he foresee that he would be the last English ruler to command the authority attained by King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I? He might conceivably have recognized that the House of Commons, now filled with vigorous and ambitious country gentry, growing conscious of their political strength, would not tolerate from him the scoldings they had reluctantly taken from the old Queen, and would assert many new rights. But he could scarcely imagine that his son would follow his mother to the scaffold or that a little boy, who had perhaps caught a glimpse of him hunting around Hinchinbrooke, would become the hammer of the Stuarts. King James looked upon the promised land and found it good.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Classes and the Masses*

THE population of England and Wales at the beginning of the seventeenth century was over four million; by the end of the century it had risen to some five and a half million. London, a term usually taken to embrace the City proper and a number of suburbs lying outside the City walls as well as Westminster, had a population of more than 200,000 at the outset of the century; by the end of the century it increased to at least 500,000 – thus growing in numbers more than in proportion to the increase in population as a whole. Furthermore, it has been estimated that towards the end of the century a million people, or nearly one-fifth of the entire population, dwelt in the Thames Valley or the immediate neighbourhood; Middlesex and Surrey were among the richest English counties, while the poorest were to be found in the north of England, where robbers and highwaymen abounded and travellers needed guides. Many contemporaries were perturbed at the growth of London and compared the country to a man suffering from the rickets with his head too big for his body. Certainly it was the supreme English town and one of the most impressive cities in Europe, especially after it had been rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren at the end of the century and King Louis XIV had diminished the prestige of Paris by removing his Court and Government to Versailles. The rising importance of parliament enhanced the capital's popularity and it was the home of busy tradesmen and merchants, of poets and painters, of beautiful women and witty and intelligent men. It was by far the largest port in the country and provided much employment; at the same time it contained poverty and disease and there were numerous slums. Though it was a gay city, above all when decorated by the full pageantry of the Court, it was also in-

credibly dirty and smelly. Hackney and Stepney were overcrowded and insanitary, while our modern suburbs such as Kensington and Hampstead were still country villages, though King William III was to build a palace at Kensington and the proximity of Hampstead to London filled it at the end of the century with sharpers and loose women. When the plague or other causes compelled the government and parliament to leave London, they usually met at Oxford, always a rallying point for Church and King, whereas Cambridge became the haunt of Puritans, Broad Churchmen and Cromwellians.

When the century opened, Bristol, the second largest port, York, Norwich, and Newcastle upon Tyne were the most populous towns after London. Manchester and Birmingham were obscure villages. Thomas Wilson, writing on 'The State of England' in 1600, asserted that there were twenty-five cities and 641 'great towns' in England and Wales. But 'the great towns' were in modern terms nothing more than fair-sized villages: they might have contained 5,000 inhabitants. Big towns are the product of concentrated industries and -- with a few exceptions -- industry was still organized largely on a loose domestic basis, work being commissioned by middle men, who bought the raw materials and disposed of the finished goods, and was carried out in private households. Many industrial workers would have a cottage and a bit of land, perhaps as much as six acres: the spinning wheels and looms on which, for example, Yorkshire kerseys, Lancashire fustians, and Norfolk worsteds were manufactured would be found in the operatives' own homes, while yeomen with small holdings would also engage in industry as a part-time occupation. Though small factories were beginning to spring up, industry lay scattered and towns were still chiefly the sites of markets, ports, or cathedrals.

The manufacture of woollen cloth, which had begun in the Middle Ages, remained the principal English industry throughout the seventeenth century and the most valuable source of exports. Centred in Yorkshire, where Leeds was already a prosperous town famous for its strong ale, in East

Anglia, where Norwich was the most thriving city, and in the West Country, celebrated for its broadcloths, the industry's finished products were usually dispatched for sale through agents at Blackwell Hall in Basinghall Street where the big London buyers gathered. But during the century the cloth trade was subject to severe fluctuations. First came the disastrous attempt by Sir William Cockayne's company to dye and finish all cloth for export, buttressed by a royal proclamation of 1614 forbidding the export of unfinished cloth. Secondly, the industry was disorganized by the civil wars, especially in Yorkshire. Thirdly, at the end of the century it was meeting effective competition abroad, notably in Holland. Between the accession of James I and that of Charles II, pestilence, civil war, and international politics all damaged the industry and even after the Restoration progress was irregular, the industry recovering but slowly from the troubles it had encountered in the previous thirty years. Nor had the Lancashire cotton industry yet developed sufficiently to reinforce our textile trade, although cotton was mixed with wool to produce fustians, which provided clothing for the poor, and with linen for bed-clothes and bolsters. Calico printing only started at the end of the century.

The industry to record the most spectacular advance in the seventeenth century was coal mining. Until the sixteenth century 'coal was hardly ever burned either in the family hearth or in the kitchen at distances more than a mile or two from the outcrops' and then 'only by the poor who could not afford to buy wood.' (Nef.) But by the beginning of the seventeenth century it had become a national asset. Seven times as much coal was imported into London (chiefly by sea from Newcastle upon Tyne) in 1605 as in 1580, and the estimated annual production increased fourteen-fold between the middle of the sixteenth and the end of the seventeenth century. The coal industry was one of the earliest fields of modern capitalist enterprise, since the production of coal could not be organized on a commission basis and the expense of sinking mining shafts and moving coal from the pits to the markets was so considerable that it could not



be met except by means of large-scale investment. Miners had to be employed together in large groups. They led hard, rough lives, for theirs was a badly-paid occupation and governed by harsh regulations. Apart from the coal industry foreign trade, now being financed by a joint stock method, and iron mining were the only important capitalist businesses; and it is no coincidence that merchants and ironmasters were among the biggest investors in the rising coal trade.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth of the coal industry in the seventeenth century was the critical scarcity of timber. Although there were still thick forests in various parts of the country, such as the New Forest and Sherwood, so that England could still be called a 'shaggy land', the problem of moving timber was a severe and often an insuperable problem. In the reign of James I 'from every county came the same lament of deforestation.' This was owing to an increased demand for wood and its high price. In London people had begun to burn coal instead of wood and by 1618 two hundred sweeps earned their livings in the capital. Other expanding industries included the manufacture of salt – the output of which had more than doubled since the previous century – and of glass, which was carried on particularly in London, Stourbridge, and Newcastle. Shipbuilding was another industry which thrived during the century. Owing to the coal export trade, to shipbuilding and glass manufacture by the end of the century Newcastle, 'a noble town tho' in a bottom' as a lady traveller remarked, almost rivalled Bristol as the second most important English town.

Although we have dwelt on the growth of industries, which was certainly one of the most novel aspects of English history in the seventeenth century, so much so that it has been called 'a minor industrial revolution', agriculture, including sheep farming (mixed farming, as we know it today, did not exist), was still easily the most usual occupation of Englishmen. Four-fifths of the population engaged in it and many who worked in industry, such as spinners, weavers, and even miners, often found time to till the soil as well. About half of England was under cultivation and the call