

CRIPPLE

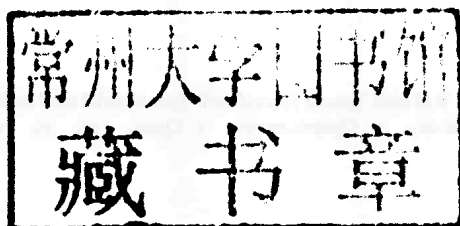
A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse

CAMP

A JACOBEOAN COMPANY AND ITS PLAYHOUSE

The Queen's Servants at the Red Bull Theatre
(c. 1605–1619)

EVA GRIFFITH



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107041882

© Eva Griffith 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by CPI Group Ltd, Croydon CRO 4YY

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Griffith, Eva.

A Jacobean company and its playhouse : the Queen's Servants at The Red Bull Theatre, c. 1605–1619 / Eva Griffith.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-04188-2 (hardback)

1. Red Bull Theatre (London, England)—History. 2. Theaters—England—London—History—17th century. 3. Queen's servants (Theater company) 4. Theatrical companies—England—London—History—17th century. I. Title.

PN2596.L7R25 2013

725'.82209421—dc23

2013012186

ISBN 978-1-107-04188-2 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

A JACOBEOAN COMPANY AND ITS PLAYHOUSE

Eva Griffith's book fills a major gap concerning the world of Shakespearean drama. It tells the previously untold story of the Servants of Queen Anna of Denmark – a group of players parallel to Shakespeare's King's Men – and their playhouse, the Red Bull. Built in vibrant Clerkenwell, the Red Bull lay within the northern suburbs of Jacobean London, with prostitution to the west and the Revels Office to the east. Griffith sets the playhouse in the historical context of the Seckford and Bedingfeld families and their connections to the site. Utilising a wealth of primary evidence including maps, plans and archival texts, she analyses the court patronage of figures such as Sir Robert Sidney, Queen Anna's Chamberlain, alongside the company's members, function and repertoire. Plays performed included those by Webster, Dekker and Heywood – entertainments characterised by spectacle, battle sequences and court-room drama, alongside London humour and song.

EVA GRIFFITH is a theatre historian working on early seventeenth-century entertainment, spectacle and drama. She began acting at the age of seven, performing in many film, television and theatre productions. Owing her entire existence to the performance of Shakespeare (her parents met during an Old Vic touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), she was encouraged in an interest in literature and history through united family concerns. As an academic she has researched internationally with the help of fellowships, for example, at the Huntington Library and the Harry Ransom Center in America, gaining funding, prizes and bursaries from the British Academy, the Malone Society and the Society for Theatre Research. She has published on Red Bull-related topics in *Huntington Library Quarterly* and in Richard Dutton's award-winning *Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*. She is currently working on a book concerning the poet, playwright and masque-writer, James Shirley, having written about him for *The Times Literary Supplement* and Four Courts Press. She acted as Research Associate on *The Complete Works of James Shirley* at Durham University and is editing a play for this large-scale edition – *Changes or Love in a Maze*.

For my mother, Doria Marguerite Jamieson Griffith

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows ...
There sleeps Titania ...

Oberon, in William Shakespeare,
A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act II, scene I

Acknowledgements

This book represents work going back to my MA and PhD at King's College London, when Gordon McMullan sent me to Shakespeare's Globe to visit Andrew Gurr with my research. First thanks should go to Professor Gurr, who put me on the road towards theatre history and its historians.

Further thanks should go to the following: Gordon McMullan, Ann Thompson and Richard Proudfoot at King's; Caroline Barron, Vanessa Harding and Julia Merritt of the Medieval and Tudor London Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research; Olwen Myhill and Matthew Davies, also of the Institute. Other invaluable historian friends include Andrew Ashbee, Helen Payne, Paul Griffiths, John Clark, Barbara Todd, Duncan Harrington and Jessica Freeman. My gratitude towards fellow literature scholars goes to Lucy Munro, John Lavagnino, Rebecca Bailey, Richard Rowland and Sue Wiseman, along with Barbara Ravelhofer, Eugene Giddens and Teresa Grant of the Shirley Project. Warm thoughts also go out to the friends I made while researching James Shirley and teaching at Durham University.

The British Academy funded all my postgraduate higher education and provided some post-doctoral funding to further the book research. The University of London helped me make my first trip to the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. At this institution I was able to follow up my researches studying C. W. Wallace's notes, housed there. Speaking of the Americas, thanks should also go to the following people for their conversation at four Shakespeare Association of America conferences and other places: Richard Dutton, Dave Kathman, Bill Lloyd, Alan Nelson, Sally-Beth MacLean (of Records of Early English Drama) and John Astington, as well as the extraordinary William Ingram. Texts from Sir Robert Sidney's papers appear by kind permission of Viscount de L'Isle from his private collection. For Sarah Stanton of Cambridge University Press, who has been unconscionably patient, I also give thanks.

Archivists who have helped me in particular include Louise Kennedy of Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich as well as Paul Evans of Gloucestershire Archives and Wendy Hawke and Jeremy Smith of the London Metropolitan Archives. Very special gratitude is due to Tim Wales, a historian, researcher and friend, as well as to the equally kind Sir Henry and Lady Bedingfeld and their family of Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk. I am also grateful to my friends among the performing fraternity who supported me during my researches: Sonia Ritter, Tamsin Lewis, Duncan Law, Rosalind Cressy and all the actors of the Lions part company, as well as all others who supported my efforts. The end of the book's preparation was supported by a Carlyle membership at the London Library.

As the mantra goes, the thanks go to these people; *all the mistakes are mine*. Most of what was achieved was managed as a single-parent student, so another kind of thanks goes to my mother, Doria Griffith, and my son, John O'Riordan. To my husband, Paul Klein, I am always grateful for the laughter he invokes to keep me on the right side of sane.

Note on transliteration

For transcriptions from original texts, italics are used to expand contracted words; carets (^) appear in order to show where inserted words and phrases begin and end; and for deletions, 'strike-through' is employed for deleted parts. Primary source transcriptions have been given for documentary evidence, yet secondary sources are also referred to for those who wish to consult these works. For early modern printed texts, with a lack of modern editions of Red Bull plays, original quartos have mainly been used and transcriptions from these have been conservatively biased. Signature numbers or 'sigs' (appearing as 'A2v' or 'E4') have been employed as the only page references available in these books.

Abbreviations

TNA	The National Archives, Kew
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich
ES	E. K. Chambers, <i>The Elizabethan Stage</i> , 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923)
JCS	Gerald Eades Bentley, <i>The Jacobean and Caroline Stage</i> , 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941–68)
EPT	Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram, eds., <i>English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
MCR	John Cordy Jeaffreson, <i>Middlesex County Records</i> (Old Series), 4 vols. (Greater London Council, 1972 [1886–92])
MSR	William le Hardy, ed., <i>Middlesex Sessions Records</i> (New Series), 4 vols. (London: Guildhall, 1935–41)
MSC	Malone Society Collections
St JPR	Robert Hovenden, ed., <i>A True Register of All the Christenings, Mariages, and Burialles in the Parishe of St James, Clerkenwell, from the Yeare of Our Lorde God 1551</i> , 6 vols. (London: Harleian Society, 1884–94)
Int.	Interrogatory (a question put to witnesses in a court case)
sig.	signature (page reference in early modern books)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Note on transliteration</i>	xii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiii
Introduction: The Red Bull playhouse, St John Street	
1 Elizabethan contexts for a Jacobean playhouse: Clerkenwell, East Anglia, the Strand and the Liberty of the Clink (1586–1603)	29
2 The earl of Worcester, the Essex circle, the Queen's Servants and their playhouses (1589–1607)	58
3 Who were the Queen's Servants? What was the Red Bull like?	71
4 The court and its women: Queen Anna, her circle and some women-centred plays	108
5 Entities and splinter groups: the Queen's Servants companies at the courts, in England and in Europe	146
6 The company: 1605–1612	191
7 The company: 1612–1619	224
Conclusion: St John's Day at night	258
Select bibliography	265
<i>The National Archives, Kew</i>	265
<i>London Metropolitan Archives</i>	266
<i>Other manuscript sources</i>	268
<i>Published works</i>	271
Index	277

Illustrations

The author and publishers acknowledge the following sources of copyright material and are grateful for the permissions granted. While every effort has been made, it has not always been possible to identify the sources of all material used, or to trace all copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include the appropriate acknowledgements on reprinting.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1 Map of Clerkenwell including Smithfield to the south.
William Morgan, <i>London &c. Actually Survey'd</i> (detail),
1682. London Metropolitan Archives. | page 2 |
| 2 Title-page of Thomas Heywood, <i>The Foure Prentises of
London with the Conquest of Jerusalem</i> (2nd edition, 1632
(the same as first edition, 1615)). Huntington Library, San
Marino, California. | 18 |
| 3 Thomas Seckford, by Isaac Johnson of Woodbridge,
1792. Seckford Foundation, Woodbridge. (www.seckford-
foundation.org.uk) | 33 |
| 4 Small sketch of Seckford Estate, Clerkenwell, with owners
of parts, as in Thomas Seckford's will. Parish of St Mary's,
Woodbridge. (SROI FC25/L3/3/11) | 39 |
| 5 Anne Bedingfeild of Darsham. Sketch taken from the
burial brass in Suckling's <i>History and Antiquities of the
County of Suffolk</i> (London, 1848). | 41 |
| 6 Portrait of Sir Henry Bedingfeld 'The Gaoler', Oxburgh
Hall, Norfolk. By kind permission of Sir Henry Bedingfeld,
Bt. Image © NTPL/John Hammond. | 53 |
| 7 Title-page of Io: Cooke, <i>Greene's Tu Quoque; or, The Cittie
Gallant</i> (London, 1614). Huntington Library, San Marino,
California. | 87 |

- 8 Interior and exterior of Hayward's Place, London EC1.
Images © the author. 92
- 9 'Plott or Survey' attached to indenture of lease of 1679/80,
showing the site of the Red Bull yard to the north-east. 95
- 10 Sketch of the exterior of the 'Red Bull play house'
(detail from larger drawing of St John Street property,
1660s). Gloucestershire Archives, D1799/P12. (www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives) 97
- 11 Sketch of the estate showing two halves, with 'New
buildings' to the east and the 'Duke of Newcastle's wall' to
the west of the estate c. 1650s[?]. With kind permission of
the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich. (SROI HD21/480) 101
- 12 *Anne of Denmark*, by John de Critz the Elder. © National
Portrait Gallery, London. 109
- 13 Title-page of anon, *Swetnam the Woman-Hater, Arraigned
by Women* (London, 1620). Huntington Library, San Marino,
California. 141

Introduction: The Red Bull playhouse, St John Street

In William Pinks' voluminous work, *The History of Clerkenwell*, the nineteenth-century historian wrote of St John Street that it was at first 'a packhorse road' that 'very soon became an important highway'.¹ It certainly was a busy place. In the early seventeenth century, the playhouse that concerns us here was built just off this street: the Red Bull.

Today as then, St John Street is a wide road, beginning close to the thoroughfare of 'the Angel', where you can still find transport to and from the north. Instead of going west today – in order to get into central London – the early modern traveller might have journeyed down St John Street to get into the *City* of London. At that time the City was the central area for work and domestic life (see figure 1) rather than what it represents now – London's financial district.

When the Red Bull was built, St John Street was the direct route to the place where many would want to go and, in truth, where many would not want to go at all. It was St John Street that led into Smithfield Market and then beyond, if necessary, into London. It was a busy, messy thoroughfare that for unwary animals – in some numbers – meant the road to the slaughterhouse. For aberrant humans it would mean the Middlesex Sessions House and then – if found guilty – a journey onwards to Newgate gaol. Other streets, like Aldersgate and Bishopsgate to the east of St John Street, undoubtedly acted as main arteries into the City; however, it would have been this road that was most associated with the traffic of animals, in particular. Smithfield was the district where you could most easily pick up a horse for sale, for example, as well as meat-reared livestock. After a herd or flock of animals travelled down this road to Smithfield, then

¹ William J. Pinks, *The History of Clerkenwell*, ed. Edward J. Wood, 2nd edn (London: Charles Herbert, 1881), p. 294. See Eva Griffith, 'Inside and Outside: Animal Activity and the Red Bull Playhouse, St John Street', in *The Cultural History of Animals*, ed. Linda Kalof and Brigitte Resl, 6 vols. (Oxford: Berg, 2007), Vol. IV: *A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Matthew Senior, pp. 102–19.

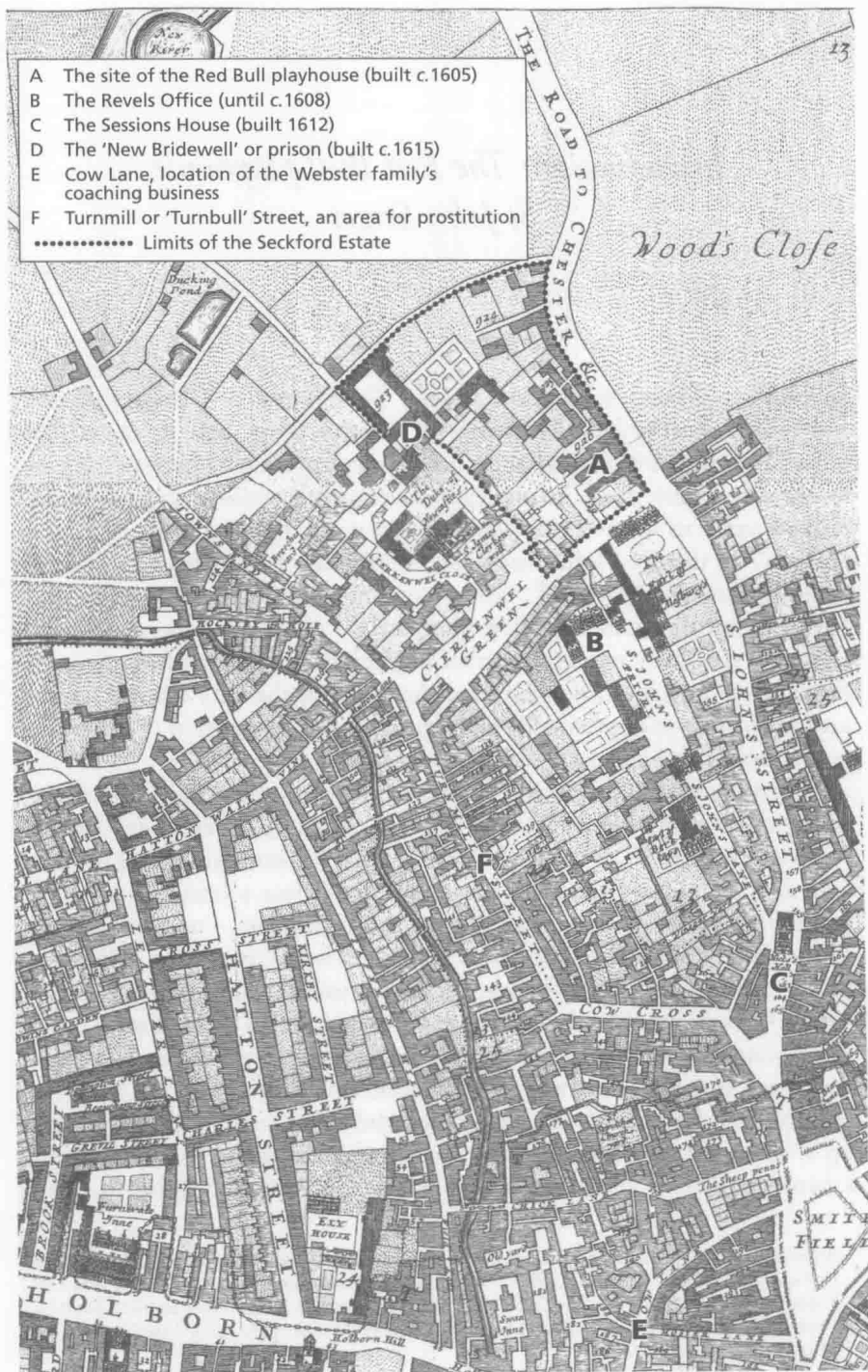


Figure 1 Map of Clerkenwell including Smithfield to the south.
 William Morgan, *London &c. Actually Survey'd* (detail), 1682.

London's livestock market (presently its meat market), the produce would be penned and assessed before sale. The purchased cattle and sheep would then be led into London via the gate of Newgate where they would be slaughtered at traditional places like St Nicholas Shambles and then eventually sold on as meat.²

When it comes to a study of the earliest days of the Red Bull playhouse, animals are not to be taken lightly. For what this book represents is a serious study of this seventeenth-century theatre, situated in the Clerkenwell area of St John Street – a study that, in human terms, focuses on the first company that performed there, the Servants of Queen Anna of Denmark. Animals are emblematically important to our concerns here for all kinds of reasons – contextual, historical, cultural. Coming down from Islington, a seventeenth-century traveller might know that he was approaching streets known as *Turnbull* (aka Turnmill) Street, *Cowcross* Street and *Cock Lane*. Surrounded by a veritable cacophony of animal sounds, this traveller, making his way down this thoroughfare, would not have been surprised at all, for example, by the presence on his right-hand side, of an inn called 'The Red Bull'. He may have been intrigued by the playhouse entrance, however, and, above this, a turret or tower, and, perhaps, attached to this, the flag of the theatre, no doubt depicting a red bull, fluttering in the breeze.³ From the size of the entrance of the playhouse, a visitor might guess that it had once been a yard where animals like horses were stalled, while their owners, perhaps drovers and farmers, stayed at the adjacent inn. Passing by, the traveller might have jumped at the roar of all-too-human sounds coming from within the venue – a noise made in response to a stage effect, a character's actions, a song or a joke. Yet, ironically, the sounds he would have heard coming from within would be just as animal in nature as those of the passing animal life moving along with him.

A study of the Queen's Servants at the Red Bull needs to address detailed matters like the animal life of St John Street because contextual detail is one factor that has been missing from any account of this company and playhouse heretofore. It could be argued that unless we perceive the fullest contexts available for somewhere like the Red Bull – contexts such as the social and cultural one of animals – we will never properly perceive either this playhouse or, indeed, the complete picture for early modern drama in Shakespeare's day. That a better understanding of the Red Bull during the first period of its existence might aid a growing understanding of early

² Smithfield has been London's 'dead meat' market since 1868. Before this, until 1855, when it was moved to Copenhagen Fields, it was a livestock and horse market. See *ibid.*, p. 105 n10.

³ See Chapter 3 for further observations on the location, size and layout of the playhouse.

modern drama is one desired effect of this book. With any evidence of interest in the Red Bull so far, what happened outside it has never been seen as an important factor of its existence. Critics have looked down on the Clerkenwell venue for housing only riotous apprentice/citizen audiences and have had little time for it as a place of serious entertainment, a perspective I would query.

Apart from attitudes, there is also a lack of account when it comes to both the history of the company of players we know as the Jacobean Queen's Servants and the playhouse where they performed. Where available there has certainly not been much that shows any detailed knowledge prompting balanced and objective responses. What do I mean by this and why should this be? Surely by their very name, as under the patronage of the King's wife and, therefore, on the face of it, on a parallel plane with the King's Men – Shakespeare's company – they should have been worth some attention, even if only for the sake of comparative analysis? The lack of an in-depth account is certainly a situation to which this book plans to respond. This can be so in the new era when much to do with 'Shakespeare Studies' has found courage to look afresh at many neglected, misperceived or previously fixed areas for study.

As I write this, English Literature scholars might experience a little sense of irony when contemplating my planned efforts, in that – apart from the scale of the project – challenges have been mounted that would question the very notion of a successful 'narrative' account of anything. In the last decade there have also been calls for some kind of regulation, or an addressing of a situation, when it comes to the field of 'Theatre History' – the very 'discipline' employed for this book. 'Theatre History', emanating out of English Literature departments, would appear to represent a methodologically amorphous area that, it seems, has not borne comparison with history methodology from 'straight' history departments. One of theatre history's great mentors, William Ingram, has spent much time questioning what our internal rules could or should be.⁴ Moreover, a whole book series has appeared claiming, with its many different perspectives, to interrogate this matter.⁵ From the outset of this study, I will be challenging theatre history approaches of the past to this particular playhouse and company,

⁴ William Ingram, 'Narrative Concerns: Prologue', in *The Business of Playing: The Beginnings of the Adult Professional Theater in Elizabethan London* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 1–11. See also 'Introduction: Early Modern Theater History: Where We Are Now, How We Got Here, Where We Go Next', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. Richard Dutton (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1–15.

⁵ Peter Holland, W. B. Worthen and Stephen Orgel (eds.), *Redefining British Theatre History*, 3 vols. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003–6).

while also, as occasion arises, interrogating a perceptibly less than flexible approach when it comes to theatre history in general.

The truth of the matter when it comes to a concern about theatre history amounts to two main areas with one overarching problem. The two areas of concern are the lack of evidence when wanted (and the easy misinterpretation of it when found) alongside the fact that human beings need stories. They need them simply in order to structure their comprehension of people, places and events. Because of this need for stories, some kind of consecutive narrative will always be the best form of communication for the twentieth- or twenty-first-century reader, particularly when it comes to a new or neglected story, however sparsely or oddly aligned the evidence appears to be.⁶ It is the mode of presentation or interpretation that is the overarching problem. Interpretation of what we have – setting aside the all-too-probable event of completely misreading what we see – will always be multiple in possibility. Therefore, within a responsible field of early modern scholarship, the ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’ and ‘maybes’ are intrinsic to the narrative enterprise. With the subject of this study, not only an offering of a story, but the strange *perceptions* affecting the story need to be addressed, and that, too, will be broached here, in this Introduction, paving the way for an unapologetic previously non-existent narrative.

The rest of this Introduction will do several things. Firstly, it will describe the most basic history of the Queen’s Servants at the Red Bull playhouse. It will then outline something of how the Queen’s Servants at the Red Bull have been perceived in the past, lending context to largely pejorative perceptions with reference to the recontextualising effort current within general Shakespeare studies. As it continues, it will describe more Queen’s Servants/Red Bull history as we have it, indicating the ways in which this book will provide a first detailed account using as yet unpublished research. The Introduction will then give one historical example – one that shows the importance of animals in St John Street – to demonstrate how we can readdress old attitudes concerning the Queen’s Servants at the Red Bull. What I am about to do now involves outlining something of the previous outlook on the subject, illustrating this with a selection of the work of past historians and critics.

The basics that we have received so far are these. The Queen’s Servants were a company of players who, before James Stuart came to the throne in 1603 as King James I, worked under the patronage of Edward Somerset,

⁶ For further observations on theatre history, biography and evidence see Eva Griffith, ‘Christopher Beeston, his property and properties’, in Dutton, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, pp. 607–22, esp. pp. 621–2.