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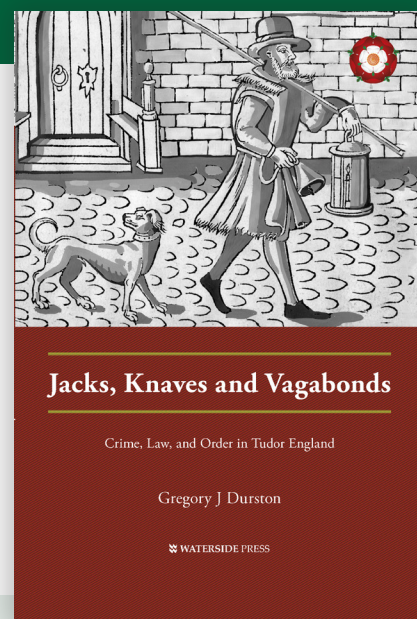
Distributed By Gardners Books Ltd., 1 Whittle Drive, Eastbourne, BN23 6QH. Tel: (01323) 521555

Publisher address Sherfield Gables, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 0JG, United Kingdom.

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Advance Information

Title Jacks, Knaves and Vagabonds
Subtitle Crime, Law, and Order in Tudor England
Author Gregory J Durston
Publisher Waterside Press Ltd
Format Paperback 234x156mm, 720 pages
ISBN 978-1-909976-76-4
Price £39.95 **Rights** Worldwide
Publication 2 September 2020 **Edition** 1st
Category legal history,
Subjects LAZ=Legal history; HBJD1=British and Irish history
Who will buy it? Historians, lawyers, colleges, teachers, libraries, students, general readers.



In this welcome addition to the author's Crime History Series, Gregory Durston points to the lack of design and short-term expediency that typified much of what passed for law and order in Tudor times. He also detects signs of an emergent criminal justice system amongst the royal patronage and influence of wealthy magnates standing in the way of fairness, equality and rights of the poor, rootless or marginalised. He describes the fictions, devices, artifice and discretion used to neutralise black-letter law and draconian punishments or create evidence when none existed. Every legal student may know of benefit of clergy (whereby an ability to recite the 'neck verse' might avoid the all-pervading death penalty), but what of other devices and stratagems such as down-valuing stolen goods, cruentation, 'conscience', chance medley, pious perjury, jury activism or John at Death (one of various non-existent culprits blamed with the connivance of the courts)?

Notable features of the era included political intrigue, widespread corruption, the death-for-felony-rule, forfeiture of land and chattels, the rise of the highwayman (with pistols), witchcraft and infanticide crazes, religious persecution and switching allegiances as Crown, judges, magistrates, church, parish officers and others wrestled over fluctuating jurisdiction, 'ungodly' customs and developing legal rules, definitions and demands. Never perhaps were facts, law or excuses so moulded to support sometimes curious outcomes.

Key Selling Points

- **Part of Durston's Crime History Series**
- **Covers the entire Tudor era**
- **Based on first-hand historical research**
- **Fully referenced to hundreds of sources**

Extract

'Whether carefully planned and radical reform to the English criminal justice system would have produced a better result ... very occasionally things went further, and drastic proposals for reform, whether in the form of public prosecutors or abolition of the death-for-felony rule, were briefly considered by the Crown and Parliament, before petering-out in the face of vested interests.'

Author

Gregory J Durston is a barrister-at-law who has taught in Law Schools in England and Japan. He was for many years Reader in Law at Kingston University, Surrey and is currently an adjunct professor at Southern Cross University School of Law and Justice, New South Wales. His Crime History Series includes *Whores and Highwaymen: Crime and Justice in the Eighteenth century Metropolis* (2012); *Fields, Fens and Felonies: Crime and Justice in Eighteenth century East Anglia* (2016); and *Crimen Exceptum: The English Witch Prosecution in Context* (2019)(all Waterside Press).



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Putting justice into words