

## Cromwells Buffoon The Life And Career Of The Regicide Thomas Pride Century Of The Soldier

Philip Skippon was the third-most senior general in parliament's New Model Army during the British Civil Wars. A veteran of European Protestant armies during the period of the Thirty Years' War and long-serving commander of the London Trained Bands, no other high-ranking parliamentarian enjoyed such a long military career as Skippon. He was an author of religious books, an MP and a senior political figure in the republican and Cromwellian regimes. This is the first book to examine Skippon's career, which is used to shed new light on historical debates surrounding the Civil Wars and understand how military events of this period impacted upon broader political, social and cultural themes.

The English reformers of the 1530s, with Thomas Cromwell at their head, continued to have a strong belief in kingly rule and authority, in contrast to their radical approach to the power of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Resisting the king was tantamount to resisting God in their eyes, and even on a matter of conscience the will of the king should prevail. Yet just over 100 years later, Charles I was called the 'man of blood', and Oliver Cromwell famously declared that 'we will cut off his head with the crown on it'. But how did we get from the one to the other? How did the deferential Reformation become a regicidal revolution? Following on from his biography of Thomas Cromwell, John Schofield examines how the English character and the way it perceived royal rule changed between the time of Thomas Cromwell and that of his great-great-grandnephew Oliver.

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Although he styled himself 'His Highness', adopted the court ritual of his royal predecessors, and lived in the former royal palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court, Oliver Cromwell was not a king - in spite of the best efforts of his supporters to crown him. Yet, as David Horspool shows in this illuminating new portrait of England's Lord Protector, Cromwell, the Puritan son of Cambridgeshire gentry, wielded such influence that it would be a pretence to say that power really lay with the collective. The years of Cromwell's rise to power, shaped by a decade-long civil war, saw a sustained attempt at the collective government of England; the first attempts at a real Union of Britain; the beginnings of empire; a radically new solution to the idea of a national religion; atrocities in Ireland; and the readmission to England of the Jews, a people officially banned for over three and a half centuries. At the end of it, Oliver Cromwell had emerged as the country's sole ruler: to his enemies, and probably to most of his countrymen, his legacy looked as likely to last as that of the Stuart dynasty he had replaced.

'Could challenge CJ Sansom for dominion' Sunday Times London, 1656: Captain Seeker is back in the city, on the trail of an assassin preparing to strike at the heart of Oliver Cromwell's Republic The Commonwealth is balanced on a knife edge. Royalists and disillusioned former Parliamentarians have united against Oliver Cromwell, now a king in all but name. Three conspirators, representing these factions, plan to assassinate the Lord Protector, paving the way back to the throne for Charles Stuart once and for all. Captain Damian Seeker, meanwhile, is preoccupied by the horrifying discovery in an illegal gambling den of the body of a man ravaged by what is unmistakably a bear. Yet the bears used for baiting were all shot when the sport was

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banned by Cromwell. So where did this fearsome creature come from, and why would someone use it for murder? With Royalist-turned-Commonwealth-spy Thomas Faithly tracking the bear, Seeker investigates its victim. The trail leads from Kent's coffee house on Cornhill, to a German clockmaker in Clerkenwell, to the stews of Southwark, to the desolate Lambeth Marshes where no one should venture at night. When the two threads of the investigation begin to join, Seeker realises just what - and who - he is up against. The Royalists in exile have sent to London their finest mind and greatest fighter, a man who will stop at nothing to ensure the Restoration. Has Seeker finally met his match?

On an icy winter's day in January 1649, a unique event in English history took place on a scaffold outside of Whitehall: Charles I, King of England, was executed. The king had been held to account and the Divine Right of Kings disregarded. Regicide, a once-unfathomable act, formed the basis of the Commonwealth's new dawn. The killers of the king were soldiers, lawyers, Puritans, Republicans and some simply opportunists, all brought together under one infamous banner. While the events surrounding Charles I and Cromwell are well-trodden, the lives of the other fifty-eight men – their backgrounds, ideals and motives – has been sorely neglected. Their stories are a powerful tale of revenge and a clash of beliefs; their fates determined by that one decision. When Charles II was restored he enacted a deadly wave of retribution against the men who had secured his father's fate. Some of the regicides pleaded for mercy,

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many went into hiding or fled abroad; others stoically awaited their sentence. This is their shocking story: the ideals that united them, and the decision that unmade them. Providing a close examination of Milton's wide-ranging prose and poetry at each stage of his life, Barbara Lewalski reveals a rather different Milton from that in earlier accounts. Provides a close analysis of each of Milton's prose and poetry works. Reveals how Milton was the first writer to self consciously construct himself as an 'author'. Focuses on the development of Milton's ideas and his art.

Kevin Myers was a young, wide-eyed, and naive outsider thrust into the thick of the conflict in Northern Ireland as it teetered on the brink of civil war. Quickly absorbed into the local community and privy to the secrets of both the Protestant and Catholic paramilitaries, Myers gained a unique perspective into both sides of the sectarian violence. Devoid of any political agenda, Myers describes the streets of Belfast at its bloodiest with searing clarity, capturing every inch of the city's disturbing violence. Flirting with death at every turn, Myers comes of age as the world around him falls apart, fueled by the psychotic rage, senseless murder, and unrelenting terror that surround Northern Ireland's loyalist gangs, paratroopers, police force, and, of course, average citizen. Part unofficial history, part personal memoir, *Watching the Door* is raw, provocative, and darkly funny, offering an unbridled account of sex, death, and violence in Northern Ireland by one of its most dynamic witnesses.

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### Soldier

Colonel Thomas Pride was central to one of the English Civil War's key events: the arrest and exclusion of 140 Members of Parliament at Westminster in December 1648. Those that remained in the House of Commons - the Rump - voted to bring King Charles I to trial, resulting in the first and only public execution of a British Monarch. But while this monumental episode of early modern history - "Pride's Purge" - is renowned, the life of the army officer behind it remains shrouded in obscurity. Cromwell's Buffoon is a detailed and engaging account of the life of soldier and regicide, Colonel Thomas Pride, a Somerset farmer's son who fought his way through the Civil Wars to become one of the English Commonwealth's most forceful personalities. Robert Hodgkinson's lively and authoritative study charts Thomas Pride's rise from businessman and brewer, through his association with London Puritanism, the experiences of the seventeenth century battlefield, obtaining military command through army mutiny, to finally brushing aside accusations of hypocrisy self-gain to claim ownership of a former Royal estate and a seat in Oliver Cromwell's House of Lords. Cromwell's Buffoon is a groundbreaking examination of why and how a former apprentice boy rose in status to challenge the ruling elite and affect the death of a monarch. The first full-length biography of its subject, it is a fascinating story of a man who, until now, had all but vanished from history.

Buffún is wracked by the living nightmare of Irish history. His torments are surreal

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but no less frightening than the awful truth. When Oliver Cromwell turns up, the hapless buffoon can't cope. This Cromwell is a cocky tyrant who wants to run a football team, or start a taxi business. Enter the Belly, the IRA, an Irish giant, and Billy of the Boyne: 'William of Orange is polishing pianos / In convents and other delicate territories, / His nose purple from sipping turpentine.' Kennelly's Cromwell delighted and scandalised readers in Ireland when it was first published by a small Dublin press in 1983. This extraordinary, extravagantly Irish act of revenge has retained its power to shock.

'All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn; for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds,' said Virginia Woolf. Yet that tomb, in Westminster Abbey, records one of the few uncontested facts about this Restoration playwright, poet, novelist and spy: the date of her death, 16 April 1689. For the rest secrecy and duplicity are almost the key to her life. She loved codes, making and breaking them; writing her life becomes a decoding of a passionate but playful woman. Janet Todd draws on documents she has rediscovered in the Dutch archives, and on Behn's own writings, to tell a story of court, diplomatic and sexual intrigue, and of the rise from humble origins of the first woman to earn her living as a professional writer. Aphra Behn's first notable employment was as a Royal spy in Holland; she had probably also spied in

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Surinam. It was not until she was in her thirties that she published the first of the 19 plays and other works which established her fame (though not riches) among her 'good, sweet, honey-candied readers'. Many of her works were openly erotic, indeed as frank as anything by her friends Wycherley and Rochester. Some also offered an inside view of court and political intrigues, and Todd reveals the historical scandals and legal cases behind some of Behn's most famous 'fictions'.

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