THE PENGUIN HISTORY OF BRITAIN

General Editor: David Cannadine

The seventeenth century, writes Mark Kishlansky, was 'a wheel of transformation in perpetual motion', a period of political and religious upheaval that defined the nation for decades to come and remains critical for understanding the nation today.

Beginning with the accession of James I and concluding with the death of Queen Anne, this compelling account describes the tempestuous events that took place during the Stuart dynasty and provides lively pen portraits of the many fascinating personalities involved. Conspiracies, rebellions and revolutions jostle side by side with court intrigues, political infighting and the rise of parties. In 1603 Britain was an isolated archipelago; by 1714 it had emerged as among the intellectual, commercial and military centres of the world.

'Kishlansky's century saw one king executed, another exiled, the House of Lords abolished, and the Church of England reconstructed along Presbyterian lines … A masterly narrative, shot through with the shrewdness that comes from profound scholarship' – Jonathan Clark in the *Spectator*

'A historian with a real love for the period, a real understanding of many different aspects of it, and an exhilarating style' – Ronald Hutton in *The Times Literary Supplement*

'This sweeping, dramatic chronicle of a century of Stuart rule will rivet even the general reader with no particular interest in British history' – *Publishers Weekly*

The cover shows *William III on Horseback* by Sir Godfrey Kneller. The Royal Collection.
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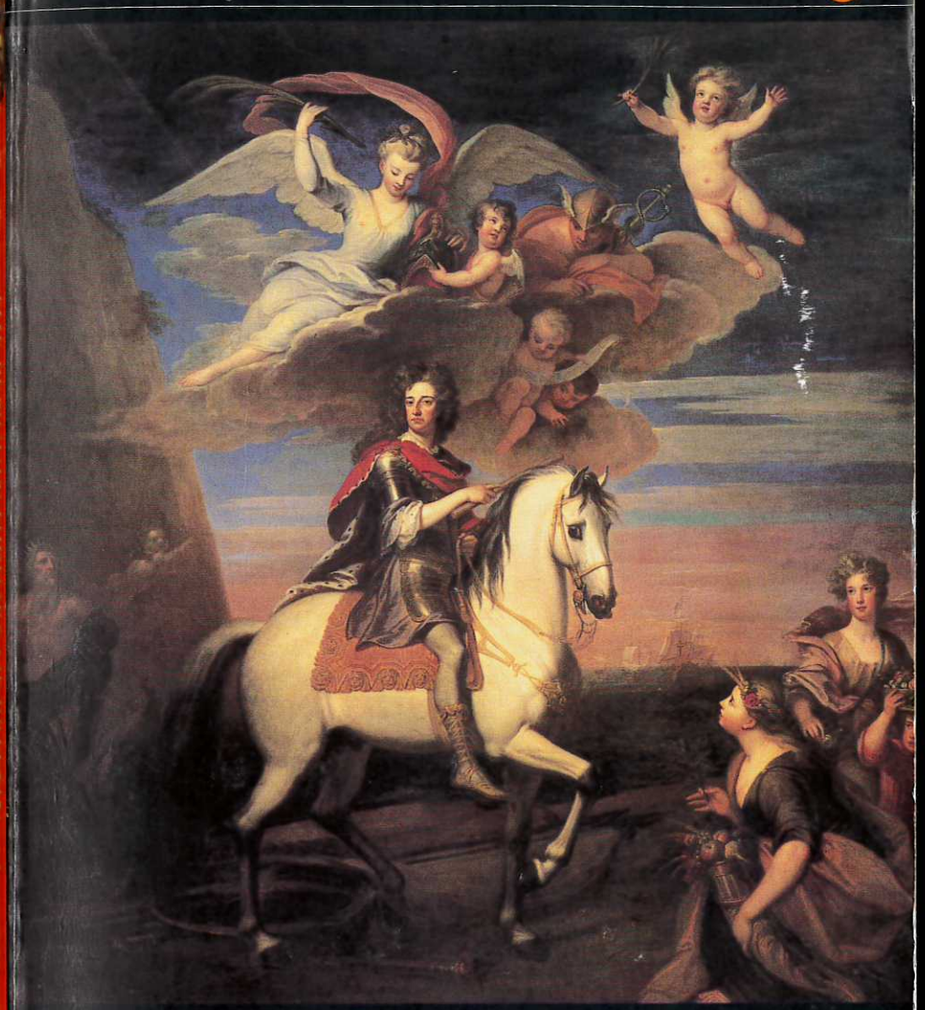
A MONARCHY TRANSFORMED: BRITAIN 1603-1714

MARK KISHLANSKY



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'Kishlansky has provided the animated, lucid and up-to-date narrative that we need' – Blair Worden in the *Sunday Telegraph*

PENGUIN BOOKS

A MONARCHY TRANSFORMED

Mark Kishlansky is Professor of English and European History at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Rise of the New Model Army*, *Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern England*, *Civilization in the West* and *Societies and Cultures in World History*, and the editor of *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England*, as well as numerous other works.

Further acclaim for A Monarchy Transformed*:*

'This sweeping, dramatic chronicle of a century of Stuart rule will rivet even the general reader with no particular interest in British history ... There are magisterial, incisive portraits of Oliver Cromwell ... Catholic zealot James II ... and peacemaker QueenAnne ... Kishlansky freshly delineates an age that opened with the public whipping, branding and mutilation of vagrants and closed with a newly defined interdependence of King, Parliament and the people' – *Publishers Weekly*

'He sets out the social scene clearly and concisely in terms which enable us to comprehend that foreign country, the past ... I see no reason to disagree with the publisher's claim that the Penguin History of Britain series "will furnish the definitive history of Britain for our day and generation"' – Sarah Bradford in *The Times*

'Lucid, spirited and uncompromised, as history should be' – Adam Philips in the *Observer* Books of the Year

Prologue

It is astonishing to reflect on the achievements of Britain's seventeenth century. The period that coincided with the rule of the Stuarts (1603–1714) introduced so much that defined the nation for decades to come, and so much that remains vibrant today. The modern business world was born; science came of age; literature matured as never before or after; feudal forms withered; torture, witchcraft and heresy died away. A Scot, a Dutchman and finally a German sat on the throne of xenophobic England. In 1707 England and Scotland formed the union of Great Britain. The British empire, source of so much wealth in the eighteenth century, pride in the nineteenth, and trouble thereafter, began. For the first time in history Britannia ruled the waves, and for the first time in centuries her army was as feared as her navy. Britons peopled a new continent on the Atlantic Ocean and established a new trading partner on the Indian Ocean. In 1603 Britain was an isolated archipelago; in 1714 it was among the intellectual, commercial and military centres of the world.

In seventeenth-century Britain merchants founded the East India Company to trade in the Spice Islands and the Royal African Company to partake of the lamentable slave trade. Both created unimaginable wealth for participants and investors alike. The Stuarts inaugurated nearly every element of modern commerce and finance. The Bank of England was founded in 1694, the Bank of Scotland in 1695. Cheques, banknotes and milled coins made possible an economy based on money. The creation of the Stock Exchange and the national debt made possible an economy based on credit. The excise and the land tax revolutionized government finance. Insurance companies were born – the Sun and Lloyd's were the first – to protect against the devastation of fire, and then to spread risk in business ventures. British merchants plied their trade around the globe as Virginia, Massachusetts Bay,

Barbados and Nova Scotia were settled and Calcutta was established. Newspapers came into existence and were so astoundingly popular that weeklies were succeeded by dailies and dailies by morning and evening editions. They advertised an amazing assortment of new products, such as tobacco, sugar, rum, gin, port, champagne, peppermint and Cheddar cheese. Tea, coffee and chocolate produced a revolution not only in habits of consumption but also in diet as these caffeine-laced beverages were gradually substituted for soporific beer. The consumption of coffee became such a craze among the well-to-do that the first coffee-houses opened and were soon in competition with the more exclusive gentlemen's clubs, which began at the same time. Urban dwellers, especially, experienced a transformation of their daily lives.

In seventeenth-century Britain the prototype of a steam engine was created, and coke was produced and then used to manufacture iron – one of the miracle products of the age. The cooking hob and the pressure cooker were invented – to the consternation of those who had turned spits or boiled beef for hours. There was a veritable revolution in personal hygiene as the water closet appeared in fashionable homes and the commode became an indispensable piece of furniture. Among the smart set at the end of the reign of the Stuarts, men carried umbrellas to keep waistcoated suits dry, women to protect their hoop skirts, neither of which costumes had ever been seen before. Britain became smaller as coach services provided springed carriages for travel along the early turnpike roads, which charged tolls based on statute miles first calculated by John Ogilby. The beginning of the postal service and the introduction of the penny post in London transformed communication.

Not even the Renaissance could boast so prodigious an outburst of intellectual creativity as was found in Stuart Britain. Francis Bacon laid the foundations for scientific experimentation and the inductive method. The modern disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics all trace their origins to the breakthrough findings of seventeenth-century Britons: William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of blood; Robert Boyle, who posited the existence of the chemical elements; and Isaac Newton, who propounded the theory of gravity. And these were but the shooting stars in a firmament so vast that the Royal Society was created to survey it. The botanist John Ray originated the basic principles of plant classification; the mathematician William Napier invented logarithms; and the astronomer Edmund Halley predicted the

return of the comet that bears his name. William Oughtred devised the multiplication sign in mathematics, John Newton the binomial theorem in algebra, and Isaac Newton the differential calculus. Among the technological wonders of the age, Robert Hooke invented the microscope, the quadrant, the marine barometer and the spring balance for watches; Boyle perfected the air pump and created the first vacuum; and Newton constructed a reflecting telescope. In medicine – a profession that was still organized in guilds – the College of Physicians issued the first *Pharmacopoeia* to describe the properties of drugs; Peter Chamberlen invented the forceps; diabetes was first diagnosed; kidney stones were operated upon; the pulse was first counted; and a successful blood transfusion was made. Astonishingly, plague disappeared from the British Isles.

New recreations appeared which gave pleasure for ever after. Enthusiasts organized cricket matches which became so popular that the first cricket club was then founded. James I introduced golf into England and established the Royal Blackheath Golf Club in 1608. Izaak Walton codified knowledge about fishing in *The Compleat Angler*. Cribbage was invented. Charles II brought the sport of yachting back from his exile, and Queen Anne inaugurated sweepstakes in horse racing and then established the most famous of all competitions, the Ascot Races.

In seventeenth-century Britain dazzling prodigy houses were built by architects such as Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor and Sir John Vanbrugh. Each one was more astounding than the last: Hatfield, Audley End, Wilton, Castle Howard, Chatsworth and Blenheim. At Oxford, visitors marvelled at the construction of the Bodleian Library, the Sheldonian Theatre and the Ashmolean Museum; at Cambridge, Sir Christopher Wren constructed the imposing Trinity College Library. In the wilderness in another Cambridge, John Harvard founded a college. In London, Inigo Jones laid out Covent Garden, which quickly came to house a vegetable market, and Charles II welcomed the public into St James's Park. In 1666, fire destroyed 80 per cent of the old City; and architects and planners then created modern London, with fifty-one new churches and Wren's domed St Paul's Cathedral as the crowning achievement. In the suburbs, Holland House, Kensington Palace, and Chelsea and Greenwich Hospitals were all imposing additions to a spreading capital.

Some forms of entertainment were meant to astonish. Inigo Jones

and Ben Jonson created masques for the early-seventeenth-century court, with singing, dancing and fireworks. More developed entertainment followed. Opera began, imported first from Italy and then transformed by Henry Purcell, who orchestrated *Dido and Aeneas*, and Handel, who composed his *Rinaldo*. Sadler's Wells Theatre opened for musical entertainment and a violinist gave the world's first public concert. Thomas Ravenscroft introduced the round as a method of teaching children to harmonize with rhyming ditties like 'Three Blind Mice'. John Bull produced the earliest version of 'God Save the King'.

Nothing was more astonishing in seventeenth-century Britain than the production of literature. Though little more than 5 million people in the entire world spoke English, the language was immortalized by the poets, playwrights and pamphleteers of the seventeenth century. Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne and Herbert dominated the beginning; Defoe, Addison, Swift and Pope the end. In between, Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan *Pilgrim's Progress*. The most widely read work in the English language is the King James Bible, the next are the plays of Shakespeare; they were printed within a decade of each other. In a five-year period beginning in 1603, theatre-goers could attend an incredible run of opening nights that included *Measure for Measure*, *Sejanus*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Volpone*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Pericles*. Sixty years later the flow of masterpieces still continued. In a five-year period beginning in 1667 Milton published *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, Dryden wrote *The Conquest of Granada*, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* was performed, and Samuel Pepys completed his diary. If tragedy reached its height under James I, comedy reigned supreme after the Restoration, when drawing-room farces and comedies of manners such as *Marriage à la Mode*, *The Country Wife* and *The Way of the World* were all performed and actresses first graced the stage.

In seventeenth-century Britain the writing of political theory reached heights unattained since the Golden Age of Athens. Filmer wrote *Patriarcha*, Hobbes *Leviathan*, Harrington *Oceana* and Locke *Two Treatises of Government*, each a masterpiece. King James republished *The True Law of Free Monarchies*; Henry Parker articulated the first theory of parliamentary sovereignty; the Levellers created the *Agreement of the People*; and Henry Ireton wrote the *Heads of the Proposals*. The *Instrument of Government* became the first and only written constitution ever adopted in England. John Lilburne, Henry

Neville, Marchmont Nedham, John Milton and Algernon Sidney all contributed to the development of republican theory.

New ideas, new forms of entertainment, new theories of government abounded. The religious beliefs of seventeenth-century Britons were shaken to the core. The episcopal church, which came to be called Anglican by the second half of the century, was buffeted by high-church Arminians in the 1630s and by low-church latitudinarians in the 1690s. In the early decades it navigated away from the rocks of Puritanism, in the late decades from the shoals of Catholicism. Outside the Anglican church, all was ferment. The Baptists were established; George Fox founded the Quakers; and Jews were readmitted to England. A Presbyterian church was created for a time. In 1650 the Commonwealth made adultery a capital offence; in 1672 Parliament debarred Catholics and dissenters from civil office. As early as 1624, Lord Herbert of Cherbury wrote the first work of deism, *De Veritate*, though it was decades before a limited religious freedom was established.

No history can account for such dazzling achievements. It is perhaps as well to gaze upon so bright a firmament rather than try to measure the gaseous compounds of each star. And among all these constellations none burned hotter nor were more instantly recognized in seventeenth-century Britain than the revolutions in government that led to the trial and execution of one Stuart monarch and the deposition and exile of another. In the mid-century, the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the episcopal church were all abolished and a government in the name of the people was established. England enforced its will upon Scotland and Ireland through conquest and occupation. In 1688 the leaders of the English political nation deserted a native Catholic monarch and rallied to a foreign Protestant one, again dividing the Stuart kingdoms and resulting in the long-term suppression of Irish Catholicism. It was these events which most affected the lives of those who lived through them, which had such momentous consequences for the archipelago and the continent, and which have lived in memory ever since as the defining moments in the political history of Britain.