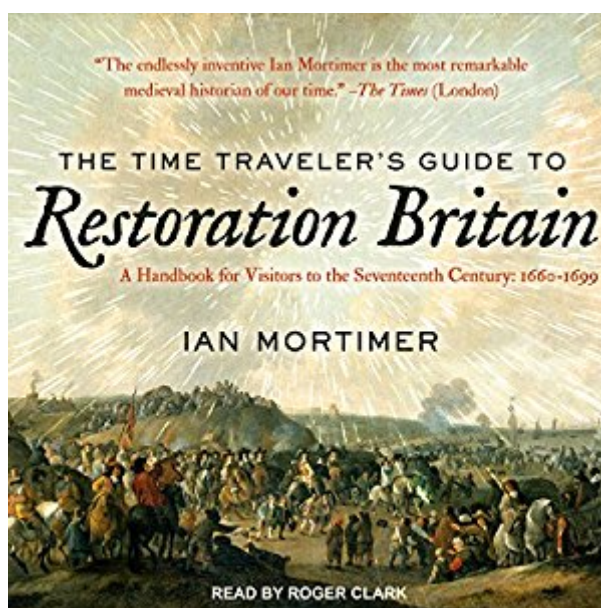


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The Time Traveler's Guide To Restoration Britain: A Handbook For Visitors To The Seventeenth Century: 1660-1699



Synopsis

Imagine you could see the smiles of the people mentioned in Samuel Pepys' diary, hear the shouts of market traders, and touch their wares. How would you find your way around? Where would you stay? What would you wear? Where might you be suspected of witchcraft? Where would you be welcome? This is an up-close-and-personal look at Britain between the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660 and the end of the century. The last witch is sentenced to death just two years before Isaac Newton's Principia Mathematica, the bedrock of modern science, is published. Religion still has a severe grip on society and yet some - including the king - flout every moral convention they can find. There are great fires in London and Edinburgh; the plague disappears; a global trading empire develops. Over these four dynamic decades, the last vestiges of medievalism are swept away and replaced by a tremendous cultural flowering. Why are half the people you meet under the age of 21? What is considered rude? And why is dueling so popular? Ian Mortimer delves into the nuances of daily life to paint a vibrant and detailed picture of society at the dawn of the modern world as only he can.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 20 hours 16 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: August 15, 2017

Language: English

ASIN: B074CNQCVQ

Best Sellers Rank: #88 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Europe #235 in Books > History > Europe > Great Britain #636 in Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources

Customer Reviews

Love his thorough research..even more his personal comments!Please write more of the same...I love the time travelers series so much!

Mr. Mortimer's time travel books are my go to relaxation reads. This one is no exception. During the semester I focus on assigned readings and projects, during the summer it is books such as these

that fill my mind with wonder. Historian approved. I find he has indeed done his research, his paragraphs are pleasant to read, not ponderous at all.

Very informative

An enjoyable read.

If you are interested in Restoration England, you need to read this book (Restoration refers to Charles II assuming power in 1660, after the Cromwell era collapsed, lasting until 1700). The focus is mostly on England, Scotland being independent until the 1707 union. There's only a little about Ireland or the American colonies. Mortimer supplies a huge amount of information: what people eat, what they wear and how they wear it, how they travel, what they do for amusement, and more. Furniture, clothes, architecture, writers, artists. Violence, crime and punishment. Currency, food, weights and measures. And of course religion. The book also brings in several contemporary people and they will seem almost alive by the end of the book, like Samuel Pepys (of the famed diary). There are two sections of excellent illustrations. Rather than try to describe the book in detail, I think I can give the book's overall flavor by describing some of the information I found interesting. The book has the best explanation of enclosure I have ever read. The era is during the Little Ice Age, so keeping warm was a problem. A town is defined as having a market, and a city as having a cathedral, so a town might have more people than a city. In Scotland, 75% of caloric intake was from oats. People usually ate two meals a day, a dinner in the late morning and a supper in the late afternoon, but breakfast is beginning to be common. Invited out, people would bring their own knives and napkins, the napkin to wipe the knife on. Forks were only beginning to be in use. England uses the Julian calendar, with the year starting on Lady Day (March 25); Scotland uses the same calendar but the year starts January 1. Most of Europe uses the Gregorian calendar, so years can be complicated. There's a bewildering array of measurements, but 54 gallons equals a hogshead, 2 hogsheads equal a butt and two butts equal a tun--simple, but gallons vary on size. The guinea--20 shillings--got its name because it was made from gold from Guinea, on the African coast. Restoration men averaged 5'7" and women, 5'1" (so a modern time traveler to then would literally stand out). Travel on the Sabbath in theory had a 10s fine (s = shilling). The British postal service was surprisingly good, cheap and fast. People ate things we don't, such as calf's head, snail porridge, cow's udder. Punch might be served in a large bowl that had a slice of toast floating on the top--hence, offering a toast. Disease was common and the great leveler, killing rich and poor alike.

Criminal justice was harsh, and there was no presumption of innocence until guilt proven. As well, justice was biased, in favor of wealth over poverty and men over women and master over servant. Punishments could be harsh--a woman killing her husband might be burned at the stake (a husband killing his wife would be hanged). Justice was fast, if not just, with a trial lasting say fifteen minutes. There was no right to remain silent. In England, a surprisingly large number of books were published--17,116 in the 1690s alone. Mortimer's writing as always (I've read several of his books), is excellent. He somehow manages to enliven what are often rather dull subjects. He doesn't romanticize or condemn the era, his point being that they were people like us. And that's an achievement.

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