



Olde Cotswold Punishments

Nell Darby

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Look beyond the pretty cottages and gentle landscapes of the Cotswolds, and you will find a dark history of crime and punishment. From child thieves, poachers, conmen, prostitutes and would-be suicides to bigamists, highwaymen and murderers, the Cotswolds has had its fair share of criminals - treated in what appears to us today to be an arbitrary and often unduly harsh manner by judges and juries. What crimes were committed in this rural society in the past, and how were they punished? This book looks at the variety of punishments bestowed to miscreants - from being hanged from a portable gallows at the scene of a crime to transportation or hard labour - and why some were punished more than others. Evidence is taken from contemporary sources: prison records, newspaper accounts and broadsides that celebrated the lives and deaths of local characters. It is a fascinating and shocking read.

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