

Welcome everyone! And a big thank you to Phil for his amazing talk, on location! And thank you to Phil for joining us here.

PhilD23:59

Yes am I dreaming or are you from Redditch Claire

Doc Clark23:59

On location from Havington? Very cool

Clare Shepherd23:59

Good evening everyone, it's so nice to be here again. Sincere thanks to Phil for a wonderful talk.

Claire Ridgway23:59

Phil, I'm from Studley so Coughton Court was just 2 miles from me.

Claire Ridgway0:00

I want a hidey hole under my stairs now!

PhilD0:00

Excellent then you must visit when you are next in the UK! I would love to say I am at the Hall now but I am at home in my pjs

Doc Clark0:00

lol

Claire Ridgway0:01

Not in a priest hole??!!

Claire Ridgway0:01

Phil, how many priest hides did Nicholas Owen build, do we know?

Andrea Edwards0:01

Phil thank you so very much for your wonderful video....I was completely immersed. The risks taken by people so staunch in their faith and the lengths they were prepared to go to never ceases to amaze me. I

PhilD0:01

No I have spent enough time in priest holes haha

Clare Shepherd0:02

24 hours must be

Clare Shepherd0:02

Like a marathon.

PhilD0:02

That is a good question Claire, the answer is no because he wouldn't put his name to them and nor did he draw his plans! If he did and was caught he would be a dead man

Doc Clark0:03

yes, the video was wonderful

Doc Clark0:03

and It made me very thankful for modern plumbing

Claire Ridgway0:03

Thanks, Phil, I don't blame him for not keeping records.

Claire Ridgway0:04

And, Phil, yes, when I next visit the Midlands, I'll be there in a flash!

PhilD0:04

We can only go off records of the time, Fr John Gerard recorded being in an owen hide. If I remember rightly there are 3 we know he 100% built

Clare Shepherd0:04

It's very easy to forget how important religion was to the Tudors, until you see a video like Phil's.

Clare Shepherd0:05

Do we know what happened to Fr. Gerard after he escaped the Tower.

Claire Ridgway0:05

I can't imagine the fear and panic that would be felt by the household when the priest hunters arrived. It doesn't bear thinking about

Andrea Edwards0:07

Phil how was it that the authorities would be alerted to those hiding priests? I guess it would have taken just person with loose lips to make a suggestion, something overheard perhaps?

PhilD0:07

Yes the Tudor era was like a yoyo in religion! Gerard continued working until he left England after the gunpowder plot! He had to hide for 9 days in a hiding place after the plot

Clare Shepherd0:08

What an amazing piece of history. He must have been a very brave priest.

PhilD0:09

Andrea- Yes the authorities were often tipped off but they knew the Catholics in the area and knew who was housing priests. As I said in my talk they often came at certain times like Easter etc

RealTudorLady0:09

Hello everyone. Hello Phil nice to meet you.

Bill Wolff0:09

Hi Real.

PhilD0:10

Reading Gerard's autobiography makes you realise the devotion they had and were not fearful of death. Gerard certainly wasn't!

Claire Ridgway0:10

I think the Kit Harington Gunpowder series was very good at showing what led to the Gunpowder Plot, what Catholics had suffered. I know it wasn't accurate, but it did bring that home to viewers.

PhilD0:10

Hello RealTudorLady nice to meet you too!

Roland Hui0:11

Phil - what was the penalty for people hiding priests? Was it as bad as shown in the tv movie 'Gunpowder' (with Kit Harington) where that Catholic gentlewoman g is executed?

Clare Shepherd0:11

I'll have to look for Gerard's autobiography.

PhilD0:11

Yes Gunpowder was great to show the other side of the story even though was a little all over the place historically.

RealTudorLady0:13

I have not seen the video but have been to Havington Hall and Coughton in 2019 to see the hides.

PhilD0:14

Ronald - punishments were prison, confiscated lands, fined or executed! Yes it was a bad as shown in the series. The lady executed was based on Margaret Cltherow. During Elizabeth's reign around 190 Catholics were executed, 130 of those were priests.

Bill Wolff0:15

Phil, I thought E1 was so tolerant.

Clare Shepherd0:15

Rather tarnishes the tolerant "good Queen Bess" image.

PhilD0:16

RealTudorLady I love Coughton Court! Coughton actually has our Great Staircase, tapestries, brass door handles and some paneling

Claire Ridgway0:16

I'm always moved by the courage and dignity of those being martyred. It must have been terrifying and painful, but I guess they focused on their faith and their rewards in the afterlife. Their immortal soul was more important. I'm in awe of them.

RealTudorLady0:16

Phil are your priest holes made by Nicholas Owen, because I read nobody was found in his as they were so good?

PhilD0:17

Bill- Yes a bit of a myth about beloved Queen Bess

Andrea Edwards0:17

Phil I know this is perhaps not the most appealing of questions, but you mentioned how those in the priest holes couldn't poo because because the smell would be a giveaway, so imagine how uncomfortable they must have been!! Would thought have been given in terms of their food to reflect the situation, ie. less roughage given, less food in general, especially for longer confinements? Trust me to think of such things....I'm from a medical background.

PhilD0:17

Me too Claire! I am not religious but I take my hat off to them

Claire Ridgway0:18

Andrea, that's exactly what was going through my head too!

Claire Ridgway0:18

Phil, I do have a faith, but I take my hat off to them too!

Clare Shepherd0:19

I suppose we ought to mention Mary I'm reign saw 300, I think, Protestants executed.

RealTudorLady0:19

That's interesting. Coughton and all those Warwickshire and Midlands Houses are beautiful

Doc Clark0:20

I was wondering about pursuivants. Of course, pursuivants are officers of the college of arms - but it was a also a term for priest hunters. Is there a connection?

PhilD0:20

RealTudorLady we believe Owen built a number of ours as we know he was working in the area and found at Hindlip 10 miles from the Hall. The owner of hindlip was a godson to the queen and a 'dear friend of Humphrey' of Harvington

PhilD0:21

Clare- Yes Mary certainly killed many more over 3 years. At Harvington we just remind people there was another side that history has conveniently forgotten.

RealTudorLady0:22

The panelling could hide a thousand secrets. Didn't they measure the outside of the house in case the panels hid some priest holes and it was a way to tell alterations had been made.

PhilD0:23

Doc Clark- great question but if I am honest I don't know much about the term pursuivant other than that is what they were known as

Roland Hui0:24

Phil - do we know if any priest hunters ever came knocking on the door at Harvington looking for Catholic clergy in hiding?

RealTudorLady0:24

Thanks Phil. That's embarrassing for the authorities.

Clare Shepherd0:24

It always sticks me as odd that fervent achristians had so little toleration of each other but I grew up in a family of Baptists, Jehivakh's Witnesses and Jews, so I have seen a few horrors of religion intolerance.

PhilD0:25

RealTudorLady - Yes the house would be measured both in and out to see if the measurements matched. If they didn't that is when they start pulling things apart.

Clare Shepherd0:26

My imagination ran away with me when you said that sometimes the hunters turned up with 100 men, Phil.

PhilD0:27

Ronald- No records survive to suggest they ever searched. I have many theories of why they didn't, but lets just say the owner was a very well connected man. He also very cleverly signed the house into his friends name who was a protestant. He then 'rented' Harvington back off him!

Tim0:27

Are there still people looking for priest holes in Tudor buildings? Is there a specialist on the subject?

Claire Ridgway0:28

Phil, oh clever man!

Roland Hui0:28

Isn't there a priests' hiding place at Hever Castle too?

PhilD0:28

ADMIN Tim - I am privileged to know the world leading expert on priest hides (he is my hero) If I am honest I would be amazed if they find anymore.

Clare Shepherd0:29

So who is he, Phil?

ADMIN Tim0:29

We have a friend who lives in a very private Elizabethan mansion... I'm pretty certain you can see where it would be, if it were there, as the outside of the building isn't quite symmetrical. We should get in touch to discuss.

PhilD0:30

Ronald- After speaking with Owen Emerson at Hever it seems there may have been one or certainly an escape route to one. However as I said in my talk if the floor or entrance no longer exists it can't be proved

Roland Hui0:31

Were there any hiding places made for Protestant clergy during the reign of Queen Mary?

RealTudorLady0:31

Hi Clare, I think today we have to respect and honour the fact that both Catholics and Reformers had it bad at the hands of each other. It was a terrible time and if you didn't believe the same as the person in charge you were automatically thought to support Spain or France or some foreign powers. It's a dreadful thing to look back on because we grew up with tolerance, well sort of. If you lived in parts of the North of Liverpool in the 1960s or Glasgow you would have thought it was still the sixteenth century.

PhilD0:31

A man named Michael Hodgetts. He is the oracle of Harvington Hall. He has been at the Hall since 1955 but has done the most extensive research on hiding places.

PhilD0:32

Ah Ronald great one, Yes there was one known hide during Mary's reign

PhilD0:33

Yes Tim definitely

PhilD0:34

Clare- Yes at the 12 day search of Hindlip it was said up to 100 men turned up

Doc Clark0:34

I remember a story of a priest hide found in the 1940s with a skeleton in it. Is that real or was it an apocryphal tale?

Clare Shepherd0:35

My dad was a Scot from Leith, he said when he was growing up, Edinburgh was equally divided as Glasgow, and was often violent too. As you say, we are lucky that there is more toleration today, but it didn't feel like it in our house in the 50s. You read Elizabethan poetry and you see how both sides were often sincere.

PhilD0:36

Doc Clark- yes a few stories like this have been circulating but there is no real evidence of this being true. No priest died whilst hiding

Clare Shepherd0:37

It must have been frightening to have 100 men tramping around your house and gardens. Chilling for any priest to have

Doc Clark0:37

how were priest hunters rewarded? I can't imagine people doing that task for free?

Clare Shepherd0:37

heard boot heels on the floorboards above.

RealTudorLady0:38

There are two exposed hides at Speke Hall here in Liverpool, although four are believed to have existed. There's something like 15 or more at Havington yes?

PhilD0:40

Most of the time the priest hunters turned a blind eye to what was going on. Many of the priest hunters were led by the justice of the peace and other locals. Many were embarrassed to search their neighbours house.

Roland Hui0:40

I read that Havington has often been used as a set location for movies and tv - any productions that we might be familiar with?

PhilD0:41

RealTudorLady- No Harvington has 7 which is more than any other. Hindlip had 11 hiding places but Harvington may of had more as half of the Hall was demolished C1700

PhilD0:43

Ronald- Nothing has really been filmed at the Hall surprisingly. A documentary was filmed there a few years ago called 'The spy who brought down Mary Queen of Scots'

Clare Shepherd0:43

Has Michael Hodgetts published anything on priest holes?

RealTudorLady0:44

Doc are you thinking of the tale of Francis Lovell, the friend of Richard iii, who escaped Stoke Field but was never seen again? It was said that in the eighteenth century at his mother's house Minster Lovell that a room was found with a skeleton in it sitting at a writing desk which was a secret room. It may be a myth but it stuck.

PhilD0:46

Yes Clare a book named 'Secret Hiding Places' a difficult book to get hold of now but it is like a bible to me. He followed on from a man named Granville Squires who died back in the 50s.

Michael is an expert on Catholic Elizabethan history. He studied at Oxford and the Gregorian uni in Rome

Doc Clark0:46

No I was thinking about a newspaper story I saw about a supposed dead body in a priest hide, in Wiltshire, if I remember correctly.

RealTudorLady0:46

Thanks Phil

Clare Shepherd0:46

I shall seek his book out, thank you Phil

Doc Clark0:46

this was years ago, back when I visiting friends in Bath

PhilD0:46

Doc Clark- Yes no truth in it although makes a great story.

RealTudorLady0:49

I went to many houses on those two holidays I think they all merged in my imagination. We had a map of the Gunpowder Plot and followed it, even if the house wasn't there any more. It was great fun.

PhilD0:49

I haven't mentioned that the priest hunters used to try and flush out priests with certain tactics.

Sometimes they would leave the house then come charging back in, or all leave and send one back in whispering 'the heretics have gone thanks be to God' hoping that the priest would think it was a servant! very sneaky indeed

PhilD0:50

Or ring a bell and put their ears to the wall to hear if there was a hollow space between walls etc

PhilD0:50

Priest hunters also destroyed priest hides if they found them

RealTudorLady0:52

I love the hide under the stairs and behind the fake bookcase.

Doc Clark0:53

I can't fathom being on in the one over the bread oven on a summer day

Bill Wolff0:53

RTL, the obvious is the best quite often.

RealTudorLady0:54

I heard of a search that lasted nine days. How is that possible without any food or drink and two priests who had only jelly to keep them going.

PhilD0:55

If you watched my talk you would have heard me talk about Fr John Gerard hiding under a fire place and the priest hunters lit the fire. Well something only a handful of people know is that when Granville Squires was studying hides back in the early 1900s he climbed into that very hide and found ash on the floor that he believed was from when Gerard was hiding. He never documented it but told Michael Hodgetts and now it is in a drawer somewhere in a tin.

Doc Clark0:56

The old EMT adage in the US is no survival three minutes without air, three days without water and three weeks without food

PhilD0:56

RealTudorLady- some hiding places had feeding tubes where the family would push food through.

PhilD0:57

DocClark- yes the bread oven would be very warm indeed. The extra layer of earth would have prevented being burnt alive

Clare Shepherd0:57

What an ingenious trick.

PhilD0:58

RealTudorLady- yes they are my favourite hides. I will soon be spending 36 hours in the hide behind the swinging beam! Wish me luck!

RealTudorLady0:58

Wow, that's fascinating. Thanks. Yes, that makes sense.

Clare Shepherd0:59

Are you being sponsored?

Doc Clark0:59

LUCK! Good luck, even!

Claire Ridgway0:59

Well, that hour zoomed by. Thank you so much, Phil, it really is a fascinating topic. You'll have to let us know when you're going into the priest hide again. Thank you, everyone, for the wonderful questions. Enjoy the rest of your weekend!

RealTudorLady0:59

Doc, there's a smaller House now a pub in Wales were you can see the priest hole behind the fireplace.

Andrea Edwards0:59

Thanks everyone and Phil of course. Massively interesting. Bye for now Claire.

Bill Wolff0:59

Thanks Phil, a fun hour. Take care everyone!

Colleen Pribble0:59

Hello and Good night everyone. Really loved the talk Phil, I learned so much, such great questions tonight. Good luck Phil! I came late decided to be a fly. Thank you

Doc Clark1:00

Thank you Phil! Catch y'all soon.

Claire Ridgway1:00

Take care everyone, keep safe and well! And a huge thank you to you, Phil.

RealTudorLady1:00

Very good luck, Phil

Clare Shepherd1:00

Another wonderful cht, thanks Phil, Claire Tim and everybody. Good night and thanks.

RealTudorLady1:00

Is it for charity we can sponsor.

PhilD1:01

clare- Yes that is the plan. Harvington has had no income for 18 months so we are desperate for money! Hopefully I will get lots of donations. Lucy Worlsey donated £50 when I spent 24hrs in one 4 years ago! Wow I just realised It was 4 years ago yesterday!

PhilD1:01

Thank you everyone! where did the time go! Thank you so much for having me

Clare Shepherd1:01

Have you a link so we could support you?

Doc Clark1:01

Set up a fund-me page somewhere and get Claire to post it to one of her sites, Phil

Claire Ridgway1:01

Phil, do keep us updated and I can share about it here and on social media.