

ASSIZES

Crime punishment has changed markedly over the past few hundred years. We have a fascinating database of court records from 1654 to 1675 of sentences handed to Marden defendants (accused) in what were known as assizes. These were high courts that dealt with the most serious civil and criminal cases referred to them by local county courts and met four times a year. Ranging from assault, burglary and horse theft to a woman's cold-blooded murder of a new-born baby and her sentence to hang after she tried to blame her adulterous sister after an affair, they make insightful reading. Anyone researching the economic, social, administration and policing issues of this period will find it invaluable as transcriptions of primary material.

Court records for this period were compiled from cases tried in Rochester, Maidstone, Canterbury, Sevenoaks and Dartford, and transcribed in two books: Calendar of Assize Records – Kent Indictments, Elizabeth I; and its sequel - Kent Indictments, Charles II, both edited by J. S. Cockburn (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London) in the late 20th century. Our database is taken from a transcription of data from photographs of relevant pages of both books' hard copies, which are kept in the archives of the Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone.

The records you can view on our website for a small fee as a web member give each case's essential details with a summary of the sentences. Records are easily searchable by criteria such as the judge, place, known defendant or any desired term. For instance, entering "judge [whoever]" in the Search Bar will show a list of all the records where that judge is mentioned anywhere in the Journals' database, with links to view them. There are also options for entering numerous terms. A full description of a record is given in the Journals database [here](#).

Click [here](#) for details of how to join to enjoy this and so much more about Marden.

You may also view them on our computer at the Centre at your leisure. Our opening times are [here](#).

