

## The Peasants' Year

Read the following account of a year in the life of a peasant and look at the pictures.

Peasant men and women had to work very hard to survive. If they did not grow enough food then they would go hungry or even starve.

**June:** The hay is harvested. A scythe is used to cut it, and the families help by making little piles of hay. These are turned daily so the grass dries and turns into hay.

**July/August:** The fallow field is ploughed. The crops in the other fields are harvested. Barley and wheat are cut with a sickle and have to be dried before storing or the grain will go bad. The carts are loaded high and the crops are brought in from the fields and stored in the lofts and in the lord's grain barn.

**November:** The pigs are turned into the woods to fatten up on acorns. The grain is threshed (beaten to separate the grain from stalks) in the barns.



**December:** Most of the pigs and some of the other animals are butchered. There is a feast where the peasants eat fresh meat. The rest of the meat is salted and smoked so that it will keep edible through the winter months.

**January:** Work is done preparing for the coming year. Hedges and fences are mended. Work is done round the house. Tools are fixed. Ale is brewed.

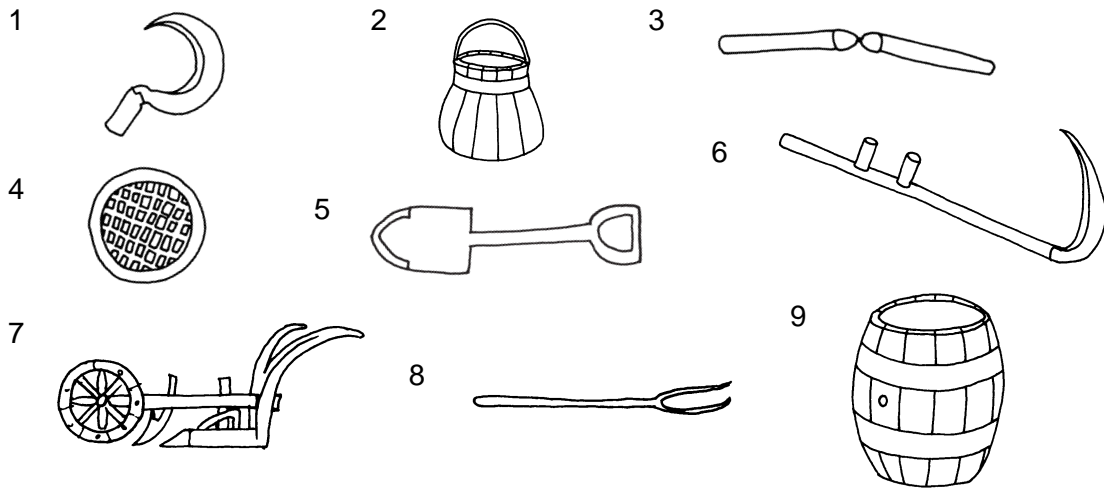
**February:** Ploughing is started. The ground is cold and muddy.

**March:** Ploughing is finished. Weeding is done.

**April/May:** The sheep have their lambs, and are turned out to graze in the fallow field. Weeding continues in the other two fields.



The pictures below show some of the tools that a peasant would use:



**Homework task**

1 Using the calendar on page 5, copy and complete the following sentences:

- a I think that the month with the hardest work would be ..... because .....
- b I think that the month with the easiest work would be ..... because .....
- c The month when the peasants would be well fed would be ..... because .....
- d The month when the peasants would probably be hungry would be ..... because .....
- e I think the best month for a peasant would be ..... because .....
- f I think the worst month for a peasant would be ..... because .....

2 Look at the tools above. Match the numbers of the pictures with the descriptions below:

- A A riddle for sifting grain from chaff (stalks, etc)
- B A scythe for cutting long grass
- C Wooden spade with an iron cutting rim
- D Wooden bucket for carrying seeds
- E Wooden plough with iron blade
- F Wooden pitchfork
- G Flail for threshing corn
- H Wooden barrel for salting meat
- I Sickle for cutting corn



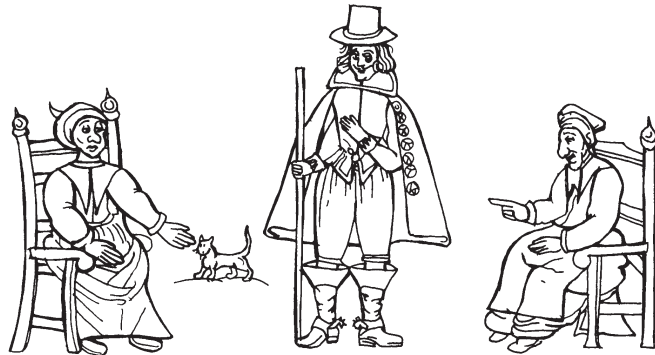
## Witches



In Stuart times, witches were taken so seriously that King James I actually wrote a book about them, called *Daemonologie*. Why were witches a serious issue 400 years ago? Read the following sources:

**Source A:** There were more witches punished in times of poverty. There was much poverty in the 1590s and 1640s. When many people did not have food, money or jobs, it was the old and the women who suffered first. These women would beg. If people gave them money, they would say 'Bless you', but if people did not give them money, they would say 'Curse you'. People then believed in curses, so if something went wrong after a beggar had cursed them, they blamed the beggar, and had her (or him) punished as a witch.

**Source B:** In the 1640s, many people were worried that the world was going to end. They had just suffered a terrible civil war. A man named Matthew Hopkins called himself the Witchfinder General. He travelled from town to town, finding witches. He would get (mainly) women to admit that they had cursed people to death, or that they had pet evil spirits (imps). The more witches Hopkins found, the more money he got. So he 'found' more witches by forcing poor women to confess. Hopkins got £23 in Aldeburgh – a huge sum. In the end, people got suspicious that Hopkins was 'finding' too many witches, so he had to stop doing it.



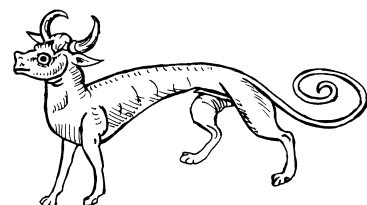
**Source C:** Matthew Hopkins with two convicted 'witches'. Their imps are found round the page.

**Source D:** Some writers have suggested that women were punished as witches because men were getting worried that women were getting more

powerful, and needed to be 'put in their place'. Male doctors were so expensive and so useless that many patients went to get cures from 'wise women' (women were not allowed to be doctors). England, Scotland and France were all ruled over by women in 1568. Shakespeare's plays are full of clever, powerful women who often try to trick or rival men.

### Homework task

- 1 Using Sources A, B and D, explain why:
  - a the punishment of witches happened in Tudor and Stuart times, and
  - b why it was mainly women that were punished.
- 2 Write an essay or draw/write a poster with two headings; 'What is true about witches', and 'What is not true about witches'. You may do some research for extra details.



## 1500 to 1750 – Key Words

**Homework task**

GLORIOUS	REFORMATION	PARLIAMENT
ARMADA	RESTORATION	PURITANS
GOVERNMENT	COUNCIL	MONARCHY
CATHOLICS	LAW	UNION
REPUBLIC	PROTESTANTS	CLASS
COMMONWEALTH	HANOVERIANS	GEORGIAN
STUARTS	TUDORS	

- 1 Use some of the words in the box to fill the blanks in the sentences below:
  - a James II was replaced as King in the ..... Revolution.
  - b A country with a king or queen is a .....
  - c A country without a king or queen is a .....
  - d When the English converted from being..... to being Protestant in the 1530s, it was called the .....
  - e The ..... dynasty ruled England from 1603 to 1714.
  - f When England and Scotland were joined together in 1707, Parliament passed the ..... of .....
  - g ..... were very strict Protestants.

- 2 Circle all the words from the box above that are hidden in the wordsearch on the right:

R	G	H	O	H	A	N	O	V	E	R	I	A	N	S	S
E	V	G	N	P	W	Y	O	Z	E	P	R	S	D	T	A
S	Y	L	O	P	R	L	M	F	U	O	T	V	U	W	C
T	Y	C	Z	V	U	O	O	D	C	A	E	D	H	L	P
O	H	O	G	Y	E	R	T	X	T	S	O	R	A	P	A
R	C	U	Q	K	M	R	I	E	H	R	B	S	C	A	R
A	R	N	D	A	O	E	N	T	S	F	S	H	I	Q	L
T	A	C	T	R	N	K	T	M	A	T	B	T	H	E	I
I	N	I	Z	M	A	W	R	D	E	N	A	V	I	T	A
O	O	L	Q	A	R	B	O	D	K	N	S	N	I	S	M
N	M	N	C	D	C	E	W	H	A	T	T	C	T	H	E
B	T	H	A	A	H	O	P	L	D	W	A	U	W	S	N
V	N	Z	T	B	Y	L	Q	U	J	H	A	G	O	D	T
A	E	I	H	O	U	F	D	R	B	R	B	L	U	T	D
R	G	L	O	R	I	O	U	S	T	L	N	O	N	N	E
A	D	H	L	I	S	H	E	S	L	O	I	M	E	T	A
N	C	D	I	S	T	D	I	D	I	E	O	C	T	U	N
O	M	T	C	O	M	M	O	N	W	E	A	L	T	H	E
E	H	S	I	M	A	K	U	N	A	I	G	R	O	E	G