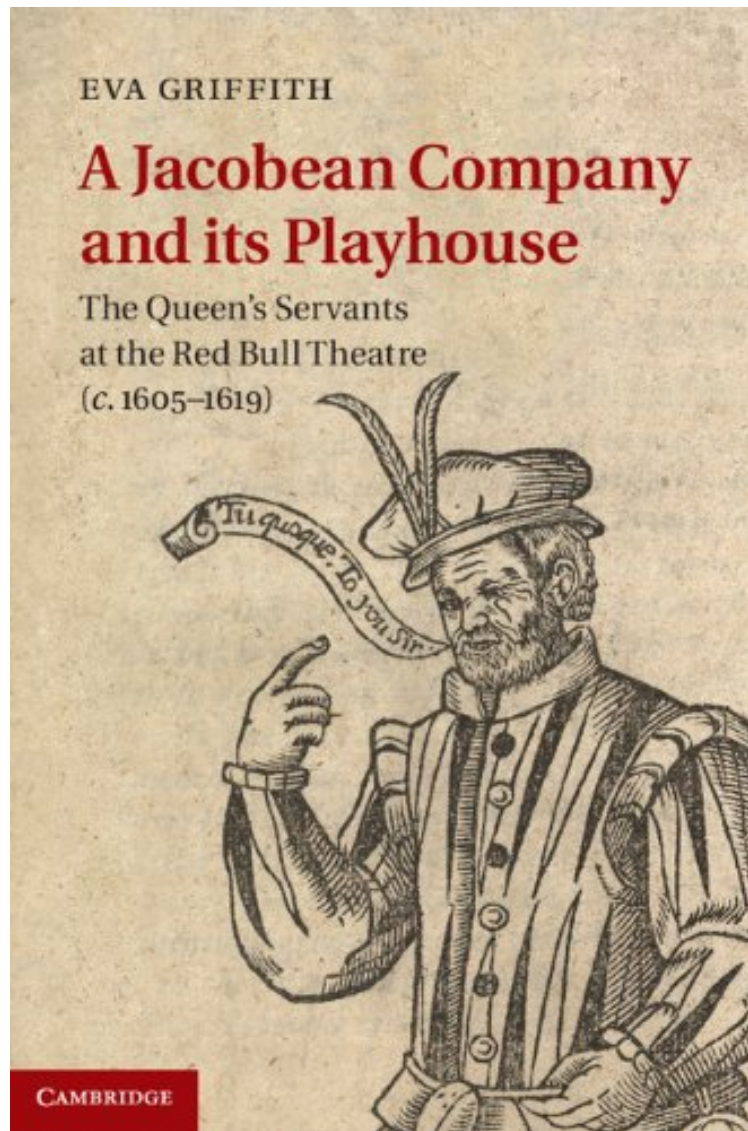


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## A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse

*Eva Griffith*

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**Eva Griffith : A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse:

Eva Griffith's book fills a major gap concerning the world of Shakespearean drama. It tells the previously untold story of the Servants of Queen Anna of Denmark, a group of players parallel to Shakespeare's King's Men, and their London playhouse, The Red Bull. Built in vibrant Clerkenwell, The Red Bull lay within the northern suburbs of Jacobean

London, with prostitution to the west and the Revels Office to the east. Griffith sets the playhouse in the historical context of the Seckford and Bedingfeld families and their connections to the site. Utilising a wealth of primary evidence including maps, plans and archival texts, she analyses the court patronage of figures such as Sir Robert Sidney, Queen Anna's chamberlain, alongside the company's members, function and repertoire. Plays performed included those by Webster, Dekker and Heywood - entertainments characterised by spectacle, battle sequence and courtroom drama, alongside London humour and song.

'The last book about The Red Bull's plays and their staging came out more than eighty years ago. At the time, it offered a wholly fresh approach to Shakespearean playing. Studiously written by George F. Reynolds, and working from a well-documented body of evidence, freshly assessed, it became the first in a long series of studies of specific acting companies and their repertoire of plays, most of them much more recent, and all attempting to identify how the plays were meant to be staged at their original venues. Eva Griffith has written an admirable replacement for Reynolds's great work, adding masses of fresh information about the families and their interests behind the company and their playhouse, as well as clarifying many features of the company's remarkable repertoire. Her book will rightly take its place among the works that have clarified and helped to explain the activities of that uniquely fertile period in English theatre.' Andrew Gurr, University of Reading 'With its wealth of fresh information on repertoire, players, and locale, A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse is a richly documented, timely, and elegant volume which succeeds, admirably, in its bold vision to readdress the whole question of the Queen's Servants at the Red Bull Theatre.' Rebecca A. Bailey, The Seventeenth Century 'It is a pleasure to record that this eagerly awaited volume amply fulfils expectations ... Time and again, Griffith uncovers new evidence that makes us question prevailing orthodoxies in theatre history ... [Her] monograph will become, rightly, the standard work on the Red Bull for many years to come, but it has much to teach anyone interested in this, the most vibrant and sophisticated period in English theatrical history.' Richard Rowland, *Recusant History* 'Griffith's rich account of the Queen's Servants and the Red Bull transforms the company's archival presence into a clear and compelling narrative that adds significantly to an understanding not only of this particular company's history and repertoire, but also of how Jacobean theatrical companies operated more broadly. A Jacobean Company does indeed provide 'much-needed data'; but it also eloquently arranges that data into a story replete with 'the kinds of contexts that all histories of theatres deserve to have'.' Jonathan Koch, *The Shakespeare Newsletter* About the Author Eva Griffith is a theatre historian working on early seventeenth-century entertainment, spectacle and drama. She began acting at the age of seven, performing in many film, television and theatre productions. Owing her entire existence to the performance of Shakespeare (her parents met during an Old Vic touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), she was encouraged in an interest in literature and history through united family concerns. As an academic she has researched internationally with the help of fellowships for example at the Huntington Library and the Harry Ransom Center in America, gaining funding, prizes and bursaries from the British Academy, the Malone Society and the Society for Theatre Research. She has published on Red Bull-related topics in *Huntington Library Quarterly* and in Richard Dutton's award-winning *Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*. She is currently working on a book on the poet, playwright and masque-writer, James Shirley, having written on him for *The Times Literary Supplement* and *Four Courts Press*. She acted as Research Associate on *The Complete Works of James Shirley* at Durham University and is editing a play for this large-scale edition - *Changes; or, Love in a Maze*.