



Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping in England and Wales, 1300-1800

Paul Glennie, Nigel Thrift

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Timekeeping is an essential activity in the modern world and we take it for granted that our lives are shaped by the hours of the day. Yet what seems so ordinary today is actually the extraordinary outcome of centuries of technical innovation and circulation of ideas about time.

Shaping the Day is a pathbreaking study of the practice of timekeeping in England and Wales between 1300 and 1800. Drawing on many unique historical sources, ranging from personal diaries to housekeeping manuals, Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift illustrate how a particular kind of common sense about time came into being, and how it developed during this period.

Many remarkable figures make their appearance, ranging from the well-known, such as Edmund Halley, Samuel Pepys, and John Harrison, who solved the problem of longitude, to less familiar characters, including sailors, gamblers, and burglars.

Overturning many common perceptions of the past—for example, that clock time and the industrial revolution were intimately related—this unique historical study engages all readers interested in how 'telling the time' has come to dominate our way of life.

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