

# The Campden Wonder



CLASS  
ACTIVITY

## Comprehension

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**In 1660 Campden was horrified when a well-known local man did not come home one evening and his blood-stained neckcloth was found next morning near Ebrington. No dead body could be found and then his servant, John Perry, confessed that he, his mother Joan and brother Richard had committed murder.**

**The story was convincing but two years later, after the three had been hanged for the crime, there was certain proof that the alleged murder had never happened. News of the return of the steward, William Harrison rocked London as well as Campden. New information and theories have been incorporated into a retelling of this story – but what really happened?**

William Harrison, Lady Juliana's steward, an elderly and respected man, vanished one night with the rents he had been collecting from local tenants. Only his hat and blood-stained neckcloth were found. His servant was accused and after much investigation confessed to murder and robbery. He also accused his mother and brother. The three relatives were tried twice. At the first trial the murder could not be proven since a dead body had not been found. At the second trial the judge was not so cautious and they were all condemned and hanged.

In 1662 the steward returned to Chipping Campden with a story of robbery, kidnapping and having been shipped out of England bound for America, then captured by Turkish pirates, and sold by them as a slave. Even today the full story is not known but the steward's account was accepted as true by most at the time when the events would have been closely enquired into.



**When you have read the text, answer the following questions as fully as you can.**

**TOP TIPS - look back at the text each time you answer a question, to check details and use the text to make sure you spell names and unfamiliar words correctly.**

# The Campden Wonder



1. When did the alleged murder take place?

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2. What was the steward's name?

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3. Give the name of the person the steward worked for.

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4. What was the steward doing when he disappeared?

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5. What evidence was found and where, that suggested he had been murdered?

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6. Who was accused of murder? Include their names in your answer.

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7. Circle the word that means having *owned up to* something.

Committed      Confessed      Condemned      Convinced

8. Why did the first judge not sentence the people accused of murder?

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9. What was the punishment at the time for the crime of murder?

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10. Underline the word that describes that something has been claimed without proof.

Accused      Condemned      Account      Alleged

11. Why do you think the story is known as 'The Campden Wonder'?

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