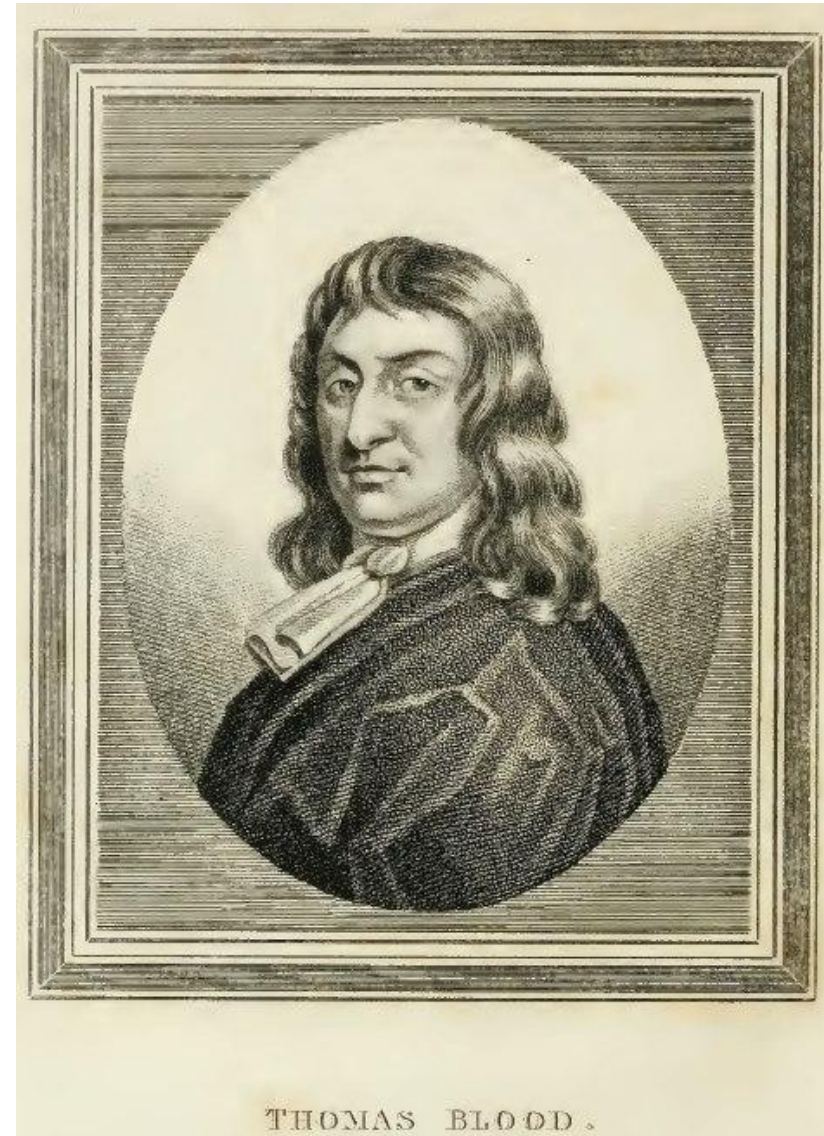# Thomas Blood

One of the most audacious rogues in history was Colonel Blood, known as the 'Man who stole the Crown Jewels'.

Thomas Blood was an Irishman, born in County Meath in 1618, the son of a prosperous blacksmith. He came from a good family, his grandfather who lived in Kilnaboy Castle was a Member of Parliament.

Thomas spent most of his early life in England. In 1648 he married a Miss Holcroft in Lancashire and shortly afterwards he returned to Ireland as an officer in the Cromwellian army. He received grants of land in lieu of payment for army service. These services are thought to have involved espionage during the English Civil War.

THOMAS BLOOD.

On the way to stealing

- Thomas was a mysterious character. He was linked to various dissident groups who were hostile to the Government, though he was also involved in Government Counsels. It is thought that he worked as a Double-Agent, playing both sides against each other.

In 1660 the monarchy was restored , and Thomas lost all his lands . He wanted to take revenge for this he has developed a plan to capture James Butler , the governor of Ireland. Gathering accomplices , he began to plan, but lost . All his accomplices were caught, but Thomas was able to hide in Holland .
In 1667 , Thomas was going to release his old friend - Captain Mason, who was accompanied by government troops . During the battle, killing dozens of soldiers and Thomas was injured , but he was able to save the Captain . The reward for the capture of Colonel increased to 500 pounds .

In 1670 Thomas again tried to kidnap the governor by James , when he was visiting England, but once again lost . Perhaps, he wanted to avenge his gang.

Stealing of the Crown from thw tower of London

- In 1671 came the most famous of Blood's adventures - the stealing of the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London. His plans were elaborately laid. He went to the Tower disguised as a Parson. He gained the confidence of Talbot Edwards, the Keeper, and promised to arrange a marriage between his imaginary nephew and Edwards' daughter.

On May 9th 1671 the daring plan went into action. Blood persuaded Edwards to show the Crown Jewels to his friends. The gang bound and gagged Edwards and made off with the loot. Edwards managed to raise the alarm and the thieves were captured. Blood was imprisoned in the Tower.

On July 18th 1671 Thomas Blood was released from his prison cell. His treasonable act should have led to his death but he found favour with King Charles and had his Irish Estates restored to him.

The mystery remains as to what Colonel Blood had done to gain the King's pardon. At some time in his life Blood must have served the King well as a Secret Agent. This was his reward.

Thomas died in 1680 , August 24 , when he was 62 years old.

The Crown Jewels have never been stolen since that day - as no other thief has tried to match the audacity of Colonel Blood!