

# The Witchcraze in Britain, Europe and North America c1580-c1750

## Revision Notes



# KEY WORDS

## Breadth Study:

**Maleficium** – “evil deed” – by 1580 this was understood as an act of witchcraft designed to harm

**Sacrament** – a ceremony carried out to attain spiritual grace, e.g Holy Communion

**Devil’s mark** – mark on the body of someone who had entered a covenant with the Devil

**Cunning-Folk** – general carried out good deeds – folk-healers etc

**Assize circuit** – courts that travelled in six circuits around the country, hearing serious cases

**Justice of the Peace** – a public official appointed to administer the law at a local level

**Privy Council** – private council of the Monarch

**Vagrant** – beggar or someone who would wander looking for work. By 17<sup>th</sup> Century it was someone who could work but chose not to – could be punished by whipping etc

**Royal Society** – founded in 1660 in order to promote the advancement of science and rational thought

**Dissenter** – a member of the non-established church outside the Church of England

**Melancholia** – depression or sorrowfulness

**Idolater** – someone who worships false idols

**Nonconformist** – a Protestant who does not conform to the established practices of the Church of England

**Calvinist** – follower of John Calvin – Protestant Reformation. Very strict

**Heretic** – someone who disagrees with the teachings of the Church

**Homocentric** – belief that all rotations in the universe are centred on Earth

**Natural Philosophy** – the study of the natural world.

**Empiricism** – the belief that knowledge can only come from experience – seek out evidence to formulate theories

**Polymath** – a person of wide knowledge and learning who specialises in a number of different subjects

**Convention Parliament** – parliament assembled without the authority of the monarch

**Alchemist** – someone who tries to transform common substances and liquids into gold or potions used to cure disease

**Inductive reasoning** – reasoning based on evidence

**Deductive reasoning** – when a conclusion is made based on something already know or assumed.

## Depth Studies

**Kirk** – Scottish church

**Lutheran** – Follower of Protestant reformer Martin Luther – oldest protestant denomination

**Borgmaster** – principal magistrate of a Danish town

**Coven** – an assembly or group of witches – often believed to consist of 13 people

**Boots** – screws for the legs which would gradually be tightened, crushing bones

**Kiss of Shame** – an initiation among witches where they are expected to kiss the Devil’s buttocks

**Divine Right of Kings** – the notion that kings are appointed by God

**Royal favourite** – a close advisor given significant power and influence by a monarch

**Copyholder** – someone who worked on the land of a lord

**Subtenant** – someone who rented land from a copyholder – very poor

**Enclosure** – the process of fencing off common land

**Duchy of Lancaster** – territory controlled by the Duke of Lancaster

**Recusant** – a person who remains loyal to the Catholic faith

**Dependant Chapelry** – a district served by a chapel, rather than a larger parish church

**Lancashire Quarter Sessions** – a local court that met four times a year in order to try serious cases

**Pedlar** – travelling salesman

**Witches' sabbat** – secret meeting of witches

**Baron of the Exchequer** – one of the most senior judges in England

**Holy Roman Empire** – complex central European territories that existed from 962 to 1806 under the overall authority of an emperor

**Counter-Reformation** – a reform movement within the Catholic Church to oppose the Protestant Reformation

**Jesuit** – member of the Catholic religious order the Society of Jesus

**Habsburgs** – German Royal family – split into Austrian and Spanish lines in 1551

**Reserve currency** – strong currency held in reserve by central banks or treasuries as part of their foreign exchange reserves

**Hofrat** – high-ranking advisor to the Holy Roman Emperor (similar to the Privy Council in England)

**Imperial Chamber Court** – highest judicial court in the Holy Roman Empire

**Diet of Regensburg** – a meeting of the senior leaders of the Holy Roman Empire, held between July and November 1630

**New Model Army** – parliamentary army – disciplined and well-trained

**Eastern Association** – a military organisation comprising the seven county militias of Eastern England formed during the English Civil War

**Ergot** – fungal disease that particularly affects rye

**Seed-corn** – good quality corn set aside for planting the following year

**Poor rates** – a local tax levied at parish level in order to finance the support of the poor

**High Church** – a tradition within the Church of England that emphasised ritual, authority of bishops, sacraments and much continuity with the Catholic Church

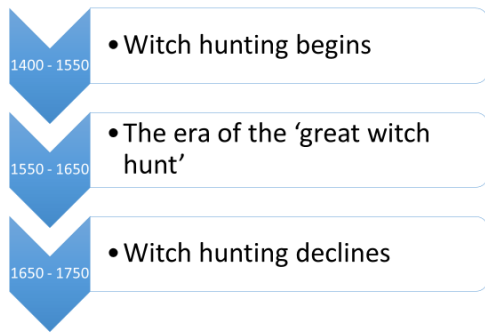
**Star Chamber** – court of law based at the Palace of Westminster

**Popish Plot** – a conspiracy to replace the Protestant authorities with Catholics

**Theocracy** – a system of government in which God is held to be supreme ruler and clergy are involved in the day-to-day running of the state

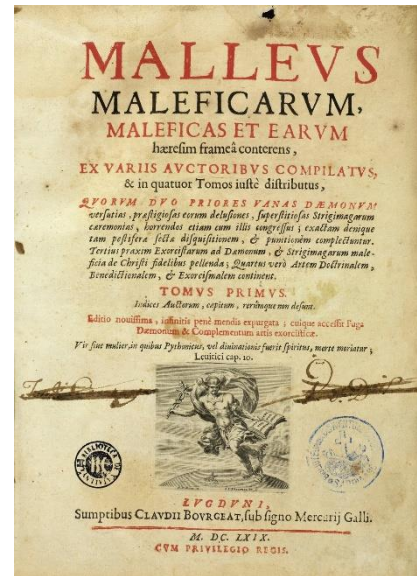
**Voodoo** – a religion of West African origin practised in the Caribbean – multiple gods, ancestor worship and magic

## Timeline



## The Malleus Maleficarum “The Hammer of Witches”

- Written by two German Dominican friars in 1486.
- **Enforced a belief that witches held a covenant with the Devil – this idea became an obsession for witchfinders.**
- It became a guidebook for hunting witches – it outlines the precise steps that were required in order to secure the conviction of a witch.
- The book was indirectly responsible for the deaths of thousands of people accused of witchcraft throughout Europe (and English colonies in America).



## Evidence:

- **The Devil's Mark** – searching a witch's body for a mark where the witch would feed their familiar and suckle blood
- **Being unable to recite the Lord's Prayer**
- Watching the suspect for several days and nights. Sleep deprivation and hunger would result in a **witch's confession.**
- **Mystery illness or misfortune** strikes the local community
- **Physical deformities** or socially awkward
- **The Swimming Test** – potential witches would be tied and thrown in water three times. If they floated, they were a witch as water rejected witchcraft. If they sank, there was a mad rush to get them before they drowned
- Usually an **older woman**, although men are not free from suspicion

## Canon Episcopi

- Written approx. 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- Became part of the canon (Church) law
- Described beliefs and superstitions
- Presents an account of the means by which Satan takes possession of the minds of these women by appearing to them in numerous forms, and how once he holds captive their minds, deludes them.
- **States that the Devil is REAL but that magic/witchcraft is a delusion (created by the Devil)**
- **The authors of the Malleus Malificarum were forced to argue for a reinterpretation of the Canon Episcopi in order to reconcile their beliefs that witchcraft was both real and effective with those expressed in the Canon.**

### Three Acts of parliament made witchcraft an offence:

- **1542** – Henry VIII, made conjuring spirits, witchcraft and sorcery in order to find treasure, cause harm or discover what happened to stolen goods, a crime. **The CRIME is what is important, rather than the use of magic.**
- **1563** – Elizabeth I, more severe – any involvement in **evil spirits** a crime. However death penalty was only for death of an significant animal (e.g. cow) or person
- **1604** – James I, death penalty for lesser crimes to do with witchcraft. **ANY dealings with magic and you can be prosecuted – not as much evidence is needed.**

There is a further Witchcraft Act in 1735 that makes it illegal to claim someone was a witch/had magical powers.

## The Reformation

- Up until 1517, the Catholic Church was the dominant church in Western Europe.
- In 1517, Martin Luther pinned his “95 Theses” to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, which criticised the teachings of the Catholic Church. The rebels are known as “Protestants”.
- Henry VIII breaks away from Catholicism when divorcing Catherine of Aragon and sets up a Protestant Church in England.
- Elizabeth I sets up the Church of England, which settles England in favour of Protestantism.

**Reformation** = Protestant breaking free and becoming more powerful than the Catholic Church

**Counter-Reformation** = Catholics fighting back to get back their power



# Depth Study 1 – North Berwick 1590-97

## Why Scotland?

- Scotland had a **less complex system of government** than England – allowed witch-hunts without inference. RURAL areas which are difficult to govern.
- According to law, torture could only be used with the consent of the privy council but as the **monarchy was weak**, local judges often allowed it
- A majority could find a defendant guilty
- Scotland experienced a **Protestant reformation**, but on stricter, Calvinist lines
- Scotland was poor
- The children of accused witches would suffer the same reputation and were referred to as a “witch’s get” - deeply **patriarchal** society
- **Deeply held belief in faeries and folk magic** used for helpful purposes

## James VI

- James is actively involved in the North Berwick witch trials – he personally interrogates witches
- His childhood was marked by **political crisis** – his mother (Mary Queen of Scots) was forced to abdicate due to conspiracies and was killed by Elizabeth. James was always conscious of plots against him.
- James grew up in a **highly charged religious environment** – his mother was Catholic but his tutors were Calvinist and Scotland was struggling to define its religious identity = he was easily attracted to the idea of a (Catholic) antichrist working in Scotland.
- He is relatively young when the trials happened (24 years old) and was inexperienced as a monarch (some have said weak).



**Key thing to remember: James is PARANOID about treason and threats to kill him.**

**This would not have definitely caused a witch hunt BUT once one started he could maybe make it more widespread**

## Denmark:

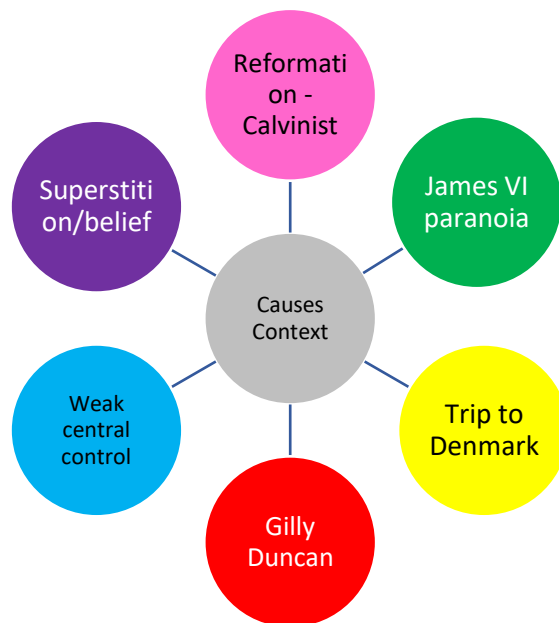
- Anne’s journey is disrupted by storms so James travels to Denmark in the Autumn of 1589 (on the suggestion of Bothwell). On their return journey in the Spring of 1590, more storms occur, sinking at least one ship.
- While in Denmark, James meets with various people who tell him of the threat of witches – including theologian Niels Hemmingsen. There is no evidence that James has an interest in witches until 1590.

- Witch hunting in Denmark had been prevalent and these ideas seem to have transferred to Scotland in 1590
- Anna Koldings confessed to setting the storms and trying to kill the King and new Queen (along with her coven).

## Gilly Duncan and David Seaton

- Her confession started the persecutions
- She was rumoured to have “healing abilities” and often visited the sick and disabled – this led to rumours about witchcraft
- Maidservant for local deputy-bailiff David Seaton – accused her of stealing and disappearing for days She was tortured with thumb-screws (pilliwinks), cords around her head – continued to deny
- They found the witches mark on her neck and she was sent to prison where she started to name witches – ***this is needed for a witch hunt to continue and usually part of the confession process.***
- The local magistrates were **very enthusiastic** to interrogate and convict Gilly

***Some historians have said Seaton may have targeted her due to the stealing, or being absent from work, or that they had previously had an affair***



## Agnes Sampson

Long-standing reputation as a midwife and healer – friends with Gilly Duncan – King James examined her himself. She was accused of:

- Healing the sick
- Discovering information of a personal nature on behalf of others
- Sailing across the sea in a sieve
- Calling on the Devil in the shape of a dog named Elva in order to assist her with healing

James got involved after she was asked if she had been responsible for the storms – she confessed after torture and humiliation.



James didn't believe Sampson to begin with until he took her aside and she repeated the same words that had passed between him and Anne on their first night of marriage.

*(It was traditional at the time for people of the court to witness the consummation of a royal marriage and so Sampson could have heard this through gossip)*

Magistrates believed she was the leader of a coven

#### **"Witches" accused by Sampson:**

- Barbara Napier = friend of the Earl of Bothwell
- Richard Graham = royal courtier who was taken into custody as a magician. Bothwell stated that Graham tried to sell him a ring containing a familiar spirit.
- Effie McCalyan = daughter of Lord Cliftonhall. Accused of transferring her childbirth pains to a dog and a cat and using her servants to deliver materials to other witches.

#### **John Fian**

- Implicated by Gilly Duncan initially
- Schoolmaster who came into contact with a lot of the community. He also seems to have had numerous affairs with married women.
- He was suspected by illiterate locals as he read/taught Latin and Greek
- Under torture (nails under fingers and Boots), Fian further implicated witches in the fate of James' fleet as well as the Earl of Bothwell - although he recanted his accusations and confession at his execution.

#### **His crimes include:**

- Kiss of Shame
- Being the secretary at coven meetings
- Falling into trances where his spirit was transported to the mountains
- Bewitching a man to suffer a spell of lunacy
- Attempting to bewitch a woman to fall in love with him, but accidentally bewitching a cow
- Robbing graves for body parts to use in charms
- Chasing cats (the Devil told him to collect them for charms)
- Dismembering unbaptised babies
- Predicting the future
- Burning down a house
- Flying
- Attaching magic candles to his horse that turned night into day





## Francis Stewart – the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bothwell

- First cousin of James and moved in high circles. His career goes downhill after plots to oust royal favourite, Earl of Arran and openly criticising James.
- Witches (Sampson, potentially Fian etc) implicate Bothwell in a plot to kill the king.
- James disliked Bothwell – **Bothwell suggested James make the journey to collect Anne and he seemed to fear Bothwell.**
- Bothwell enters Holyrood Palace with associates, seeking a pardon – James flees. *“They could kill him, but never take his soul”* – scared of magic.
- Bothwell is arrested and escapes, royal proclamation that he is in league with the Devil.
- Bothwell eventually (after being on the run) pleads with the King in person which seems to work and a trial is held to clear him of witchcraft.
- Bothwell is very confident at the trial and he defended himself as a victim of deliberate attempts to politically undermine him – he is acquitted
- James, again fearful of Bothwell’s growing influence, withdraws his pardon and Bothwell (after attempting one final uprising) flees to Europe.

James’ fear:

- Bothwell was at the centre of a mass coven where two hundred witches would meet on All Hallows Eve, 1590 to hear him speak as Grand Master
- The idea is that Bothwell dressed as the Devil and organised these meetings prior to the exposure of the witches in North Berwick
- Idea seems crazy but really highlights how the hysteria and paranoia took hold – remember, James was fearful of Bothwell having a claim to the throne/political influence that threatened James’ rule (James was not a particularly strong monarch!)

**Key thing to take from Bothwell – witchcraft and treason are now linked!!**

### How you would use Bothwell in an essay

- It highlights James paranoia and fear of witches – the link between witchcraft and treason was cemented for James after Bothwell was implicated as the ringleader = TREASON
- It also highlights how ingrained the belief in magic/witches was – it is intertwined with politics
- It shows that no one is above suspicion – even high status individuals can be accused
- Potentially you could say that it highlights how there could be ulterior motives for accusations

## In total 70 people were implicated between 1590-93

- Gilly Duncan was executed
- John Fian and Agnes Sampson were executed – strangled and then burned
- A number fled but were recaptured by David Seaton - at least one was tracked down and tortured until she confessed more names.
- Barbara Napier had her execution delayed when she claimed she was pregnant
- Effie McCalyan was also strangled and then burned
- Numerous others were subject to torture and suspicion (Maraget Acheson, Meg Bogtoun, Bessie Broune, Michael Clark )

**Two major witch-hunts in Scotland were North Berwick (1590-91) and the witch-hunt in 1597. While many isolated hunts happened, a national hunt began in earnest in 1597.**

### There were a number of reasons for this:

- The “general commission” 1591-97
- Lack of central control
- The role of James VI and “Daemonologie”

Janet Wishart was accused and after interrogation (possibly by James himself) named other witches. Authorities became suspicious of Janet however when she started naming witches who she previously said were innocent

The hunt came at a time of **poor harvest** and widespread **plague and disease** (judicial procedure also contributed)

#### Judicial procedures

- A general commission was established in the closing stages of the North Berwick panic (possibly later)
- The judicial procedures in the years 1591-97 made trials and convictions likely:
  - Five judges were names on a commission with no specified objectives – given permission to torture at will
  - Commissions were given to nobles and magistrates
  - 1596, James proclaimed that all requests for commissions be sent to the privy council
  - Alison Balfour is tortured for two days without warrant (family horribly tortured too) – could be why privy council reduces commissions after 1597

#### Lack of strong central control

- James always had problems maintaining central control
- Tension due to his unwillingness to deal with the Catholics (some would argue that this was the reason Guy Fawkes was potentially framed a few years later!)
- As long as James remained without an heir, Bothwell could make a claim to the Scottish throne.
- Difficult for the government to maintain control from Edinburgh to the highlands and islands

## Daemonologie, 1597

The book is presented as a dialogue between Philomathes (sceptic) and Epistemon (who enlightens him)

**He writes it in response to Reginald Scot's sceptical work and to clarify his stance on witchcraft.**

Key points made by James:

- The Devil is extremely powerful and a danger
- Necromancers and witches have a close association with the Devil
- Describes the practices witches engage in
- Gathering of covens as inverted protestant rituals
- Does admit they only have certain powers – God limited this at the beginning of time

Main Points:

**Witches were real and they must be hunted.** Outlines how to do so:

- Search for the Devil's Marks = very important (led to widespread searching of witches in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century)
- Suggested the swimming test would be an effective way of identifying witches
- He believed in demonic possession
- Discussed the vulnerability of women and that they are more likely to be witches as they are easily led astray – like Eve

It became so influential that it was republished several times and distributed across Europe. It inspired a witch hunting fervour of dangerous proportions, giving sanction to all manner of horrific persecutions.

**James became a respected "expert" on witchcraft and how to stop witches**

How far was James responsible for the persecutions of the 1590s?

- There is no doubt that Daemonologie was conceived, at least in part, as a reaction to the trials of 1590-91.
- It was published at the end of 1597, which has led some historians to believe it is a reaction to the trials of that year.
- Brian Pavlac states that the main contribution James made to Scottish witch hunting is the politicization of it – treason and witchcraft became linked.

Historian Jenny Wormald has questioned James' role in the 1597 hunt – she states he acted as more of a sceptic at that time, having passed on much of the responsibility of witch hunting to the church in 1592. Julian Goodare disagrees, stating that the mechanism for investigating witchcraft still came from the crown.

## James' involvement in 1597 and later scepticism:

- James still wanted to interrogate witches personally in 1597 and he took an active interest in events of that year.

Patrick Heron and his wife are accused by an unnamed witch that James deals with – they were in a property dispute with Sir William Monteith and his son. The Monteith family likely accused the witch and forced her to confess Heron's name.

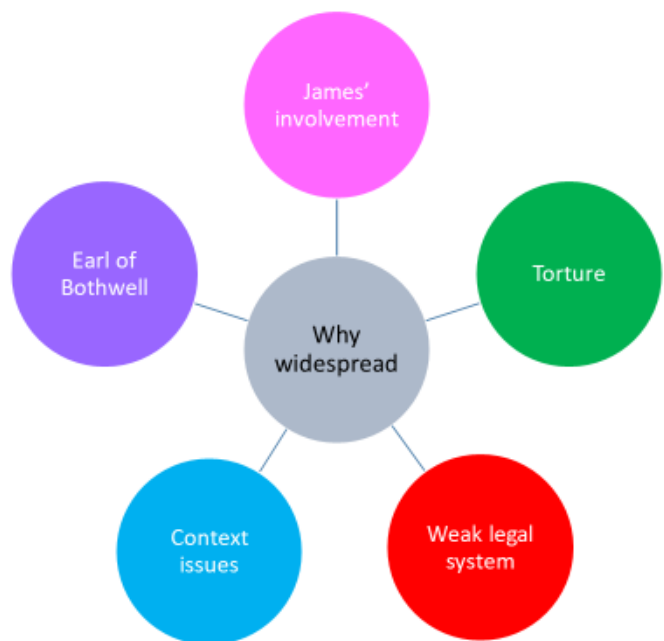
Another miscarriage was Margaret Aitken (who played a similar role to that of Agnes Sampson) and was found to have named innocent people. Her fraud led to some of the commissions being withdrawn.

- The apparent miscarriages of justice in 1597 greatly affected James and he became sceptical of witchcraft by the turn of the next decade.
- He became more concerned with finding false witches and wrote to his son telling him to treat suspected cases of witchcraft with caution.

### Causes



### Why widespread?



## Depth Study 2 – Pendle, Lancashire, 1604-13

The trials came to England with accession of James VI (who becomes James I) and the Pendle Trials occurred just 7 years after the Gunpowder Plot.

What impact might this have on James?

They had the same features as many 17<sup>th</sup> century witch-hunts:

- At the heart there was a feud between rival families and neighbours
- Interrogations and trials were of questionable legitimacy
- Evidence of a pact with the Devil was sought in all cases



Pendle was different in one key way however – the use of child witnesses. Nine year old Jennet Device gave evidence in the 1612 trial and this led to the executions of ten people, including her entire family.

### Political Context:

- Before 1604, English law required members of the local community to make accusations, rather than clergy or professional inquisitors and juries were drawn from the community. **Courts required tangible proof of Maleficium such as death or injury.**
- The accession of James VI led to a change – reforming witchcraft legislation.
- 1604 statute – **conjuring of spirits was now a capital offence**, the most damaging aspect of witchcraft was the pact with the Devil (this was a threat to social order). Transferred the trial of witches from the Church to the **ordinary courts**

**Tangible evidence is no longer needed** = more people are accused and executed

### Economic/Social Context:

- Pendle was a **pastoral economy** (sheep and cattle) and there was limited **arable farming** (crops). *Accusations of livestock being damaged shows how important pastoral farming was to the community*
- There was also a thriving **cloth industry** – 70% of homes had tools for this – they needed it as agriculture could be unpredictable.
- Cattle farms were leased to tenants – new arrangements in 1507, **rent increased 39% and inflation grew**. This, along with **enclosure** meant there was a constant risk of eviction.
- **Population growth** – mortality rates were lower in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, primarily due to the decline in incidences of the plague (however the epidemic in 1665, killed 100,000 in London alone)
- In 1443, there were 24 tenants in Pendle – the population rose to around 1,620 by 1650.

**Duchy of Lancaster -> copyholders paid him rent -> subtenants then rented land off the copyholders.**

- Copyholders were relatively wealthy but appeared to be living difficult lives = subsistence farming (may have been exaggerated to avoid fees)

- 1609 – the copyholders were expected to pay a lump sum of 12 years rent to confirm their rights and privileges
- Facing economic ruin – they were forced to sell or mortgage part of the land.
- Subtenants would have been in an even poorer state
- Subtenants were paying more to the copyholders – on average 25% higher than the rent paid by the copyholders in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Illegal squatting and unrecorded tenancies were commonplace.

**A number of suspected witches were subtenants = poverty is a factor in this hunt**

**Religious Context:**

- Protestant Reformation
- London saw Lancashire as an ignorant corner where **Catholicism and superstition could easily be fostered**. (Lancashire had a reputation for harbouring Recusant Catholics)
- Whalley Abbey was closed down during Henry VIII's *dissolution of the monasteries* and as it had provided charity and education, Pendle lost a valuable resource.
- With the absence of a Catholic Abbey, a group of **Puritan** clergy had more influence.
- Accepted the use of **White Magic** to help healers – lines between religion and magic blurred.

**Alizon Device and the pedlar, John Law – the 'spark' that starts the hunt**

- John Law was travelling with his wares on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1612 when he encountered Alizon who asked him for some pins. He refused. She muttered a curse and he presumably suffered a stroke (becoming paralyzed and unable to speak). He then encountered a black dog - her familiar.
- It would seem that Alizon believed she was a witch and confessed to the familiar and the curse.
- The incident was reported by Law's son, Abraham, to Roger Nowell – JP and magistrate.



**Family Rivalry:**

- 1601 – Old Demdike (Elizabeth Southern) and Old Chattox (Anne Whittle) fall out
- This seems to have been as a result of a theft of some clothing and grain from Alizon Device (granddaughter of Old Demdike). She claimed to have seen Anne Redferne wearing a stolen cap and band.
- The two families start trading insults of theft and slander

- John Device (father of Alizon) promises to pay a yearly tribute of grain which settled the situation **until his death.**
- The rivalry soon leads to accusations and slander on both sides – historian John Swain believes the rivalry stems from competition in a limited market, making a living by healing and begging
- Even before the rivalry, there were accusations, Christopher Nutter insisted he has been bewitched by Old Chattox in 1595 on his deathbed.

### Roger Nowell and his Investigations:

- Experienced JP and local landowner – he has been **High Sheriff** of Lancashire and has strong connections with **high-profile Protestants**. He was 62 in 1612.
- He was familiar with William Perkins “*Discourse of the Damned Art of Witches*” (1608) – pact with the Devil.
- It is unknown whether he was determined from the beginning or whether he was convinced after the many witnesses put before him
- Nowell interrogated Alizon Device and was in a position to charge her but she carried on confessing.

### Alizon Device’s confession:

- After confessing her sins, she implicated her own family, Old Demdike and Old Chattox. She explains the rivalry and that they are both witches.
- She accused Old Chattox of murder through witchcraft along with many other incidents of magic and mischief
- It is possible Nowell convinced her she was an actual witch (she may have already thought this after the encounter with John Law)

As a result:

- Old Demdike and Old Chattox are taken in for questioning, as is Anne Redferne (Chattox’s daughter).

### Further Arrests:

#### **Demdike’s confession:**

- Inability to evoke the name of Jesus
- Familiar called Tibb (and suckling Tibb)
- Making an effigy of a person in order to bewitch them

Nowell may have convinced her she was an actual witch – possibly under torture

#### **Demdike’s accusations:**

- Chattox and Anne making figures out of clay – Tibb told her these were effigies of Christopher Nutter, Robert Nutter and Marie Nutter.



## The Meeting at Malkin Tower – Sabbat

- Nowell investigates the reports of a Sabbat a graveyard in Newchurch. Elizabeth, James and Jennet Device are questioned – Jennet is only nine and becomes the star witness.
- Jennet states that at least 20 witches were present at the meeting at her house and that James had stolen a sheep to be eaten. James then revealed more names who were present at what he called the “**Great Assembly and Feast**”

### **The meeting had THREE objectives:**

- To free the women imprisoned at Lancashire castle by blowing it up and murdering the gaoler
- To perform a ritual to name Alizon Device’s spirit
- To provide protection to Jennet Preston, a woman identified as a witch by the JP Henry Hargreaves.

### Evidence is sketchy and relied heavily on Jennet and James.

- 11 people were now imprisoned: Alice Nutter, John and Jane Bulcock, Katherine Hewitt, Alice Grey and James and Elizabeth Device (along with the original suspects)
- Old Demdike dies shortly after arriving at Lancaster Castle – Old Chattox changes her story and tries to lay more of the blame on her.

## The Judges:

On 16<sup>th</sup> August the judges arrived to hear the case of the 11 people Nowell had arrested along with 7 people from Samlesbury and a woman from Padiham.

They were:

- **Sir James Altham** – Baron of the Exchequer (one of most senior judges in England). Probably had similar views as James I and may have carried a copy of Daemonologie. Orthodox Protestant.
- **Sir Edward Bromely** – also a Baron of the Exchequer - trusted by the King (he was given the role of mediator with the House of Lords during the union of England and Scotland)

### **The Impact of Thomas Potts’ account *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (1613)**

- As Clerk of the Court, Potts had a unique insight into the trial – the two judges ordered him to write the account so that it could be made public.
- It was completed three months after the trial in November 1612.
- The judges took a very close interest in the publication.
- Potts’ was brought up in the house of Thomas Knyvet - Guy Fawkes in 1605

**Both were concerned with getting the King’s favour – Bromley had just been knighted and wanted to be promoted to a circuit near London and both worked as assize judges alongside their other work.**

### **It fulfilled two objectives:**

- Provided an account that **justified trials** – true version of events
- **Protected the reputation of Potts, Bromley and Altham** and allowed them to advance their careers.

Potts edited speeches and fails to include the build up to the trials and the legal processes – it is an overview of what happened.

## Can we trust Thomas Potts' account?

**You cannot say that it is totally unreliable just because Potts potentially had a motive/the judges were involved.**

- He was a well-informed observer, who had sat through all the trials and was a court official
  - The account had been checked by Sir Edward Bromley, a professional judge, and was designed to disseminate the court's findings
  - Large numbers had attended the trials, which were not held in secret
  - It was written in the immediate aftermath of the trials with the express purpose of publicising the threat posed by witches.

### Causes



### Widespread



## Depth Study 3 – Bamberg 1623-32

### Why Germany?

Hunts in Germany were brutal with many more victims,

Across the German-speaking world, the occasional mass hunt took place with hundreds, sometimes thousands of victims.

The image of the witch was similar across Europe – poor old woman who cavorted with the Devil and caused harm.

### In Germany, a number of factors led to more panics spreading:

- **Political and judicial authority was fragmented** - panic could take hold easily
- Context of the **Reformation and Counter-Reformation** – fear of the Devil’s work around them
- Germany had a **limited legal framework to use against witches**. Under Charles V in 1532, a law code called **The Carolina** specified justice should remain a local matter.
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### The Holy Roman Empire:

- The **Bamberg witch trials**, which took place in Bamberg in 1626–1631, were one of a series of mass witch trials in southern Germany, contemporary with the Würzburg witch trials and others.
- They are among the more famous cases in European witchcraft history. Over an extended period these trials resulted in the executions of around 900 people.
- They were some of the greatest witch trials in history, as well as some of the largest-scale executions in the **Thirty Years' War**.
- Germany was not a unified state but was part of the **Holy Roman Empire** – a patchwork of complex central European territories that existed from 962 to 1806 under the overall authority of an emperor.
- Geographical and religious boundaries overlapped with Catholics living with Lutherans.
- Towns and village courts were given remarkable freedom to make their own judgements.

**Significance** - Lots of different territories that are hard to centrally control =

- Catholics and Protestants living very close together
- Local areas are essentially left alone to make judgements on witchcraft – they can get away with a lot!



## Counter-Reformation

- **Extreme anti-Protestant views** of Catholic Prince-Bishops and Jesuits (Protestants also believed that Catholics were in league with the Devil and the Pope was the Antichrist)
- Catholic emperors were keen to promote the Jesuit cause – the elite **Prince-Bishops supported the Habsburgs and allowed them to cement control.**
- Bamberg – the link between Protestantism and witchcraft was evident in Churches

### **Tension between the two denominations heightened with:**

- Fines on Protestant parishes
- Restricted supplies to Protestant parishes
- Catholic troops in Protestant villages
- Dissidents sent into exile
- Lutherans rounded up and arrested.

Protestants could face imprisonment in Bamberg tower

## Johann Gottfried Von Aschhausen

- Invited Jesuits to settle in Bamberg and founded Catholic schools
- He had around **300 witches executed**
- 1610 – new ordinance about witchcraft which stated that anyone practising magic would be severely punished. (It coincided with Protestant rebellions in Bohemia)
- Visiting Bishop stated that blasphemous practices were happening in 1611
- Protestant preachers were being harboured – enhanced the link between them and witchcraft in the eyes of Catholic authorities.
- 1616-19 saw intense witch-hunting (ended with moderates on the local council who focused on war)

## The Thirty Years War

### Thirty Years' War

- The origins of the thirty years' war lay in both the religious divisions found in Northern Europe and the ambitions of the Habsburg monarchy.
- The Habsburg emperors were ambitious and traditionally concerned with enhancing their territory, usually through marriage.
- Although the Holy Roman empire still had influence, this was beginning to decline.
- The behaviour of some of the emperors started to cause resentment, especially by Protestants as a result of the Counter-Reformation policies.

#### Protestants

- 150,000 Swedes to fight religious cause
- 100,000 Danes- religious
- France joined the anti-Habsburg alliance- less due to religion more due to rivalry

#### Catholics

- Catholics in Bamberg-fighting for the Counter-Reformation.

As a result in Prague a **Defenestration** was carried out on representatives of the emperor = this is often seen as the catalyst for the war

Impact of the war:

**Thirty Years' War = ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS impact**

- Presence of large armies devastated Bamberg – **famine and men conscripted**. This combined with **crop failures and inflation** led to an increased fear of witches.

Catholics in Bamberg became more **fanatical** than ever – anyone who deviated from Orthodox Catholic practices were labelled **heretics** and suspicion was laid upon the Devil. **Those who were targeted:**

- Women who were sexually promiscuous
- People whose political views or attitude to the war deviated from those of the catholic authorities
- People with a reputation for healing, fortune-telling etc
- Members of the upper class – Prince-Bishop von Dornheim (1623-32) allowed witches property to be confiscated

**Counter-Reformation and Thirty Years' War = impact on Bamberg**

- Both made Catholics in Bamberg MORE EXTREME
- Very fearful that the Devil was working with the Protestants (Who are now the enemy due to the war)
- Fear that the Devil would send in witches to help the Protestants win the war – they could be anyone = WITCHES

This combined with fragmented control and power-hungry Prince-bishops = witch hunt



**Anti-Protestant theme to the witch trials**

Economic Context:

**Weather and crop failures:**

- Early 17<sup>th</sup> century experienced the “Little Ice Age” – cold weather which led to the crops to fail, particularly the fruit/wine crop.
- Combined with debt from the war = crisis. Debt was up to 800,000 florins by the end and authorities had to levy high taxes. THEREFORE it was in the interest of the prince-bishop to carry out a witch hunt to ensure the frost did not return (and get money).

**Inflation and Economic Crisis:**

- Supply of money was also an issue. Imports of silver from America start to decline around 1610 – copper was then used. The reserve currency – gold florins – had reduced in gold content to 77% by 1626.
- As money lost value and crops failed – the price of goods increased (inflation) – the people in Bamberg had little understanding of economic – jumped to witchcraft as an explanation.
- Margaretha Eissmennin, Kunigudta Rindterin and Margaretha Gussacherin all had trials related to economics.

**What was the IMPACT on Bamberg?**

Political	Economic	Cultural	Religious
Election of Von Dornheim	Witch trials peaked in 1629 when Bamberg suffered frost, destroying the wine crop = “Little Ice Age”	Increased fear of witchcraft	Women's sexual behaviour was targeted by Catholics
Carolina Law 1532	Thirty Years' War	Anyone who had some history of healing or fortune telling were accused of witchcraft- easy scapegoats	Tensions from the Counter-Reformation meant Protestants were linked with witchcraft
	High debt = high taxes		Thirty Years' War = Protestants are the enemy
	High inflation		
	Coin clipping reduced value of coins		

## The Carolina Law Code

- Witchcraft is a “severe” crime (along with murder, manslaughter, arson, robbery, homosexuality)
- Those guilty of witchcraft should be executed with fire
- The aim was to unify the legal system of the disjointed Holy Roman Empire, and thereby put an end to the penal jurisdiction which had until then varied haphazardly between the Empire's states.
- This was translated to enable torture in Bamberg.
- Does not specifically allow torture (only if there is other evidence with it) = allows **justice to be dealt with at a local level** (and Prince Bishop Von Dornheim allows torture)
- Trials should be done in public – this is not done in Bamberg
- Accused are allowed a lawyer – this is denied in Bamberg
- Confessions should be backed up with evidence – this does not happen in Bamberg

**The code sets the framework for the hunt but once it has begun, the hunt breaks a lot of laws laid down by the Holy Roman Empire**

## Numbers and Gender:

- Estimates suggest between 600 and 900 were executed between 1623 and 1632
- Women were significantly more likely to be accused – 72.7% of those brought to trial were women.
- Mass trials took place from 1626
- Initial epicentre was in **Zeil** in 1626 – 59 people charged – at least 30 of these were executed or died in custody. In 1627, 130 suspects from Zeil were brought to trial. Only 45 escaped execution.

## Social Groups:

- Only 7 older women were accused in Zeil – most who were accused across Bamberg were of marriageable age and the number of widows was small. **Average age was 33 ½**
- **Most were middle-aged men**
- There was one nine year old boy who confessed to an elaborate plot with a demon named George (who had goats feet and horns!) – he confessed to destroying crops, stealing wine and causing livestock to be killed in freezing conditions.



## Property Confiscation:

- This encouraged the persecution of the upper classes.
- Accused also had to cover all costs : travel expenses of interrogators and torturers, paying any extra staff or horses required by authorities, at the execution
- Families were charged for every element of the execution including the wood, rope etc and removal of the body.

**The trials paid for themselves.** = development of a **witch-hunting industry.**

People/professions who would have benefitted from the hunt:

- Rope makers
- Inn keepers
- Shop owners
- Lawyers
- Coachmen
- blacksmiths

### Examples of victims

- **Hans Langhans**, the mayor of Zeil kept an accurate diary of the witches and sorcerers put on trial. He confessed after torture in 1638 that he had been baptised by the Devil in 1611 and was responsible for the destruction of a wine crop in 1615-6
- Lange Gasse – main street in Bamberg – 17 households of well respected people became victims
- 10 members of the town council or mayors office in Bamberg and Zeil and at least 20 relatives of town councillors

*Targeted due to property confiscation but also opposition to the trials*

## Hereditary Guilt

- Although women still outnumbered men, they were often not the focus of the trial. A pattern emerges in a number of cases – **a father was initially accused and was executed along with his wife or daughter.**
- The opposite can be also be found – cathedral chancellor, Georg Hann, questioned the trials and was arrested following the execution of his wife and daughter in 1628.
- Hereditary guilt can also be seen in the cases of **Conrad Merklein** and **Conrad Orter** – both held senior positions on the town council of Zeil. Both were executed on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1626 and two months later, Orter's wife and daughter were arrested.
- In April , Merklein's daughter Christina was arrested and executed, both her sons were then arrested. The eldest of her sons was burned just after his fifteenth birthday.
- *This continued until both families had virtually been wiped out by 1629.*



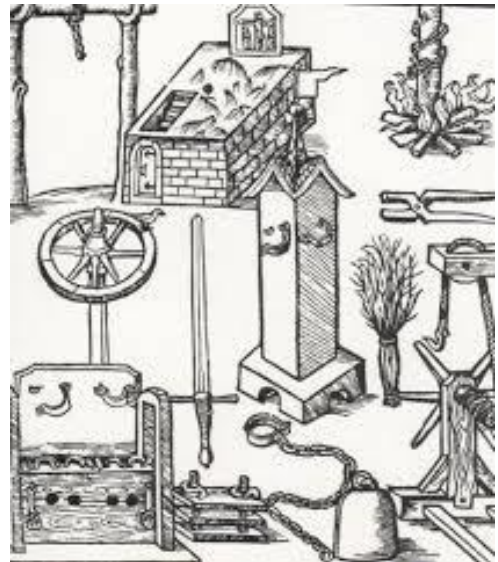


Torture:

The Carolina Law Code of 1532 allowed for an extensive range of torture devices to be used and with the judicial freedom that the prince-bishops enjoyed, many confessions came about through torture.

**Popular devices used at Bamberg:**

- **Thumbscrews (also used on toes)**
- **Strappado – device that suspends the victim by the wrists while heavy weights were attached (dislocation of the wrists)**
- **Burning a woman's hair**
- **Whipping**
- **Kneeling on a plank of wood covered in spikes**
- **Food containing excessive salt and pepper and then deprived of water**
- **A small room covered in spikes to prevent sleep**
- **Applying burning feathers to sensitive parts of the body**
- **Dunking in freezing or boiling water killed 6 people**
- **Applying hot pincers to the groin**



John Junius

One of the most high-profile cases from Bamberg was John Junius and the torture he endured. By the time of his arrest, he had served as mayor for 20 years and shortly before his arrest in 1628, his wife had been executed. He was implicated by this and by Georg Hann.

- He is able to smuggle a letter out to his daughter outlining his torture and confession
- He was tortured with thumbscrews, leg screws, strappado,
- His torturer begs him to confess and after sending his letter, he does. He makes it clear in the letter that it was only due to the torture that he does this.

Torture and Confessions:

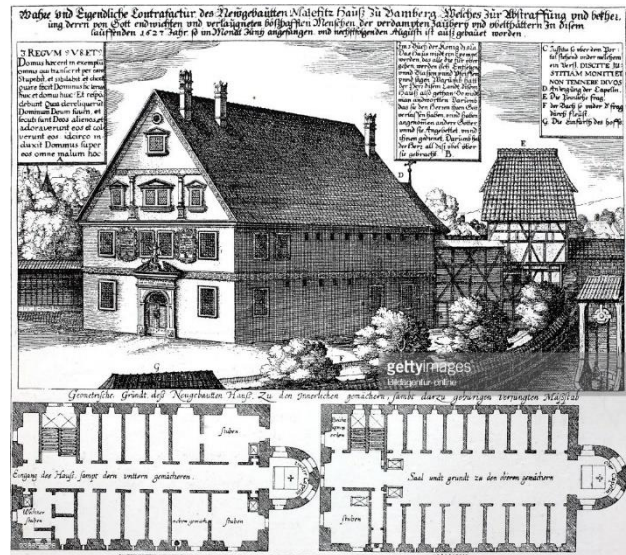
- Schedule of 101 questions established

**Historian Hans Sebald (1990) identified typical elements to the confessions:**

- Recounting how the accused became involved with the Devil
- Described a death threat given to them by their demon or familiar
- An oath of loyalty or mock baptism
- Additional demons or conspirators
- Night flight were common – witches flying to a sabbat
- List of evil deeds (such as crops damage, harming people etc)
- Sacrilege and blasphemy – e.g. stealing water from communion.

## Prince-Bishop Von Dornheim

- Full name is **Prince-Bishop George II Fuchs von Dornheim** (died 1633) - Known as the **Hexenbischof – witch-bishop**
- He was a **champion of the Counter-Reformation** and like his predecessor, Von Aschhausen, believe that tackling witchcraft was vital.
- He hired people to assist him when he took personal responsibility for the investigations. One of these was **Frederick (Freidrich) Forner**, his legal advisor.
- Dr Ernst Vasolt acted as interrogator.
- Property confiscations helped to ensure that the Treasury, and von Dornheim's own wealth, increased dramatically.
- He built a Drudenhaus – **witch-prison** built in 1627 to contain 30-40 suspects at a time. The walls were covered in biblical texts, where the accused would be tortured with his personal consent.
- Other, smaller prisons were built in smaller towns within Von Dornheim's bishopric



## Frederick Forner's arguments for the Counter-Reformation and witch-hunting

- Calvinism (protestants) was detestable because the preachers **were false prophets** who taught lies about catholic clergy and were **no different to magicians** (*his evidence – exorcism where a demon sated that it had no fear of Calvinist ministers as they were allies*)
- He reported that in areas where occult practices were happening, Protestant preachers were harboured.
- Both witches and Protestants undermine entire social/political order by failing to respect sacraments, relics and festivals of catholic church
- **Defeat of one demonic force leads to the rise of another, more lethal force.** E.g. when Lutheran clergy extinguished in the area, witchcraft emerged
- Outbreak of the 30 years war caused cases of witchcraft to increase.

## How did Forner and Von Dornheim justify the hunt?

- Forner provided an intellectual framework for the hunts that von Dornheim could not grasp as easily – why would this make him important for the Prince-Bishop?
- They both believed that **obedience** was central to a well-functioning society and found evidence in the Bible to back this up.
- Forner made the connection between **disobedience and sin** – witchcraft – obedience to God in turn, is the source of faith and order.
- He presented the struggle between God and the Devil as **historical**

- They also believed that the closer one came to defeating the Devil, the more violent he would become. Therefore **if the Devil is violent, the use of violence and torture on suspected witches was justified.**
- Another belief was that Catholic areas would see more witches as the **Protestants already believed the lies of the Devil**

More witches being discovered during the 30 years war was a sign that the Counter-Reformation was a success as the Devil was resorting to more desperate tactics as his Protestant allies were flagging on the battlefield.

## Causes of the hunt

- Thirty Years' War
- Counter-Reformation
- Economic (Little Ice Age, coin clipping etc)
- Aschhausen
- Holy Roman Empire and the Carolina Law Code
- Motivations of Von Dornheim and Forner

## Why widespread?

- Torture
- Property confiscations
- Hereditary guilt
- Prince Bishop Von Dornheim (and Forner)
- Counter-Reformation - fear
- Economic issues - fear

You need to be really careful when it comes to the wording of the question – is it a causation question or widespread?

## End of the Hunt

### **Scepticism before 1630:**

- 1627 there were complaints about innocent people being executed – these were sent to religious and imperial courts. In response Von Dornheim issued a proclamation that anyone giving false testimony would be flogged – a whipping post was erected for this purpose.
- Von Dornheim was evidently protecting his inner circle – Forner had been accused and he has to issue warnings of slander.

### **Ferdinand and Dorothea Flock:**

- Ferdinand II became involved in 1630 when councillor Georg Heinrich Flock was accused. He fled but his pregnant wife Dorothea was arrested.
- Flock and family appealed to Ferdinand and the pope – they both appealed to Von Dornheim to stop. They asked that all documents be sent to the imperial Hofrat for review and threatened the Prince-Bishop with punishment.
- Dornheim rushed the trial through and Dorothea was executed before they could arrive on 17<sup>th</sup> May – she was beheaded and burned in secret at 6am.

- Flock's family protested even more, highlighting how the hunt was breaking the Carolina Law Code = the trial was in secret with no lawyer, witnesses were not checked, confessions through torture should not have been used with no other evidence.

#### **Imperial Chamber Court:**

- Complaints began to reach the Imperial Chamber Court.
- Von Dornheim sent two witch-commissioners to the Diet of Regensburg to try and preserve his reputation – Dr Harsee and Dr Schwartzkonz
- The court was sceptical of the witch hunt and Ferdinand send a strongly worded letter stating that Von Dornheim was breaking imperial codes and was to cease the witch hunt.

#### **Georg Wilhelm Dumlér's letter:**

Former administrator of St Martin's Church in Bamberg – wrote a powerful letter which may have convinced the Emperor once and for all that the trials needed to end

He stated:

- 100s of people had been tortured and there were false accusations
- Never sufficient proof
- His pregnant wife had been accused, tortured and executed. He then was accused = both innocent Catholics
- Carolina Law Code permitted a lawyer – this had been denied in Bamberg
- Cases should be held in civil courts but they were held by commissioners in secret

#### **Impact of the letter:**

- Ferdinand announced he was to punish those responsible
- Appointed a new director of the witch-commission, Dr Anton Winter
- Future trials conducted according to the Carolina Law Code
- **Confiscation of property banned** (highlights importance of this factor!!)
- Von Dornheim continued and accused those who spoke against him of witchcraft – he refused to release prisoners.

#### **The Swedish Army:**

- Very successful in the Thirty Years War – the army swelled to 150,000 by 1632.
- Swedish army invaded and took over administration of Bamberg – Von Dornheim is forced to flee. He looted cathedrals and fled to Austria where he died of a stroke in 1633.
- Despite being occupied by Protestants, Catholics in Bamberg were able to continue with their ordinary way of life.

**With a declining population, decimated farms, constant fighting combined with the flight of the prince-bishop, witch hunting was no longer a priority. Any new hunt also had to abide by the Carolina Law Code and there was no longer a need for the witch prison and torture chambers.**

## Causes/Context



## Why Widespread?



# Depth Study 4 - The East Anglian Witch Craze 1645-57

## The English Civil War

- 1625 – Charles I become King Of England, Scotland and Ireland. He was king due to his brother Henry dying
- Parliament had become more important during the Tudor and Stuart period
- Charles came to blows with parliament in the 1620s – mainly due to money and military failures
- 1629 – Charles dissolves parliament for 11 years
- During the 11 years, Puritan MPs were not happy with Charles' almost Catholic approach to religion
- Ship Tax (or Ship Money) further caused resentment
- Parliament is recalled in 1640 and debates between them and Charles continue until 1642 when he attempts to arrest 5 leading MPs – they flee and Charles raises an army in what he claimed was self-defence.
- August 1642, Charles raised his standard in Nottingham – start of the Civil War
- First battle is Edgehill in October 1642
- 1645 – New Model Army formed by parliament – most soldiers taken from the Eastern Association



## **East Anglia:**

- The counties of East Anglia formed the **Eastern Association** – providing a significant amount of troops for Parliament
- Very Puritan area – extreme Protestantism

## Breakdown of Traditional Authority

- By 1645, East Anglia had been through 3 years of Civil War – Suffolk was parliament's main recruiting ground.
- Little actual fighting took place in the area however as many as 20% of men left to fight.
- Further death (on top of high mortality rates) led to a strained existence.
- Deaths led to a shift in traditional power relationships = worries about women becoming too powerful
- Traditional authority of Church of England was undermined
- Authority of local gentry undermined

**Absence of traditional authority meant that various fears manifested themselves as a witch hunt = fear of enemies/spies everywhere translated as fear of the Devil and witches**

- Margery Sparham from Suffolk = confessed to entertaining the Devil's imps in the shape of a mole and two blackbirds. She was left alone and vulnerable when her husband went to fight. **LINK with Eve and vulnerability of women – the Devil can manipulate them easily.**
- Stories of strange occurrences = Royalist woman from Lancashire gave birth to a headless baby, women beginning to drink and swear like men etc

### **FEAR of witches as “bad women” and “bad mothers”**

#### Economic Impact of the War:

- Inflation is a huge issue – price of livestock increased by 12% and grain 15% = armies need resources
- Horses confiscated by armies and they took food etc as they marched through areas
- Prices increasing but wages did not increase = poverty (and a need for a scapegoat)
- 1643 – new tax – in East Anglia this was 12 times higher than the Ship Tax of the 1630s

#### Summing up Context

- Neighbours/friends/family now enemies
- Lots of FEAR as a result of this – ‘enemies within’
- Men fighting – no one to tend the land = poverty/suffering
- Inflation = poverty
- Lack of neighbourliness (poor rates) – fear of repercussions
- Legal structures disrupted – assizes
- Authority gone, both the Church and the landed gentry – locals can do what they like
- Crop failures and enclosure led to more poverty/starvation

**Poverty is a real cause of this witchhunt – Margaret Moone, one of the first witches in Manningtree was evicted from her cottage after a man offered her landlord ten shillings extra, fell into begging and was then blamed for livestock deaths, crop failures and the murder of a child.**

#### Legal Structures:

- Assize courts unable to function normally and Local magistrates and other locals dished out justice
- No Kingly authority meant laws were difficult to implement
- War heading towards East Anglia = assize circuits disrupted, those with little authority oversaw the ones that did happen (e.g Earl of Warwick had no experience and oversaw the Essex Assizes in 1645)
- Witch hunt able to spread quickly and local fears intensified
- Hopkins and Stearne were able to work – locals thankful for their knowledge and efficiency.

#### Economic Context:

- Crop failures – wet weather and ergot = poverty. Even eating the Seed Corn = desperation
- Price of meat and cheese rose by 20%
- Puritan's interpreted this as punishment from God – a sign that Charles should not be returned to the throne
- Easy to blame misfortunes on witches
- Landlords enclosed land and evicted tenants = more begging and a lack of charity
- Puritans = idleness means sinfulness – some stop paying poor rates
- Better-off continued to fear that old woman beggars would use magic in revenge for a lack of charity



## Gender

- Some historians see the hunts as organised and deliberate violence against women.
- Around 700 people were accused or faced trial - 80% of victims were women
- 20% in Suffolk were men but many were already associated with female witches
- Accusations focused on female tasks and female spaces – the home, kitchen, nursery, feeding etc
- East Anglia – poor women involved in dairy farming so when things went wrong, (cream curdling, cattle dying) they were vulnerable to accusation
- Hopkins was particularly keen to find evidence of sexual activity with the Devil and suckling of imps (idea of the “bad mother” or “bad woman” – Gaskill)
- Murders of husbands and children are regularly referred to in the trials.

## Class

- Information is sporadically recorded in court records – most likely due to the war
- It is apparent that most people involved were of the lower orders and illiterate – gentry/authority is absent due to the war

## Matthew Hopkins

- Son of a Puritan clergyman and from good social standing. Likely born around 1620 – he was probably around 25 when the hunt started.
- He had two older brothers so he would have been aware from an early age that he wouldn't inherit the estate

## John Stearne

- He was older than Hopkins and was in his mid-30s during the hunt
- He grew up in Suffolk and was married to Agnes Cawston – they had a daughter called Anne.
- He was a Puritan and was the first to receive a warrant to search suspected witches from Manningtree magistrates Sir Harbottle Grimston and Sir Thomas Bowes. Hopkins volunteered to help him.

The hunt starts when Hopkins is kept awake at night by a meeting of witches near his house in Manningree in 1644. The first witches were all women and they presented their accusations to magistrate Si Harbottle Grimston. They then began offering their services to towns and parishes for a fee.

## Victims and Geography

- First woman to be accused in Manningtree was Elizabeth Clark, an older lady with one leg – she was long suspected of being a witch. She was search and watched for several nights. According to Hopkins, several familiars appeared – a rabbit named Sack & Sugar, a dog-like creature named Jarmara.
- Rebecca West was the next witch – named by Clark – she also admitted to suckling imps.
- From these, Hopkins and Stearne took the hunt to other parishes in Essex and Suffolk – they spent the next two years apart, investigating witches separately across East Anglia.
- Over 120 were examined in Suffolk including 80-year-old Royalist clergyman, John Lowes – he defended an accused witch. The swimming test was performed on him and after interrogation he confessed to sinking a ship off the port of Harwich (killing 14) and killing cattle.

- Hopkins went to Yarmouth, Aldeburgh, Yoxford, Westleton, Dunwich – in Norfolk 40 people were tried at the assizes of 1645.
- The hunt moved to Huntingdonshire in 1646 then to Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire.
- Towards the end of the hunt, they encountered problems – John Gaule starts writing objections and Hopkins receives a hostile reception in Norfolk in 1647.

There is no geographical pattern to the accusations – they simply follow the money.

Methods:

- Isolation
- Search-women
- Watching and sleep deprivation
- Possible other tortures
- Walking
- Swimming test

### Hopkins' and Stearne's influence and power

#### Why did they have such influence and power?

- Hopkins was likely in the **right place at the right time** – he was a young man, a Puritan with an enthusiasm for tackling evil and he presented himself as a saviour at a time when East Anglia was riddled with political and economic crisis.
- **Stearne was passionate about witch hunting** from the onset and it seems he is the one who first received a warrant to search suspected witches in Manningtree. Hopkins volunteered to help him.
- Gaskill (historian) has suggested that they did not believe themselves to have significant power, and instead **acted as facilitators who simply assisted and gave confidence to pursue suspects.**

**All concerned with finding the following:**

- Relationship with the Devil
- Any marks associated with witchcraft
- Other witches or members of a coven
- 

### Hopkins and Stearne's influence

- Despite a lack of qualifications and experience, they both became very good at their work.
- They were able to make assessments of suspected witches quickly and efficiently before moving on to receive their next invitation.
- They were paid a fee and expenses, consisting of food, lodgings and horses.
- Local magistrates and officials often helped in interrogations and there is evidence that they occasionally testified in court.
- There is not evidence that they were actually present at the executions of the witches – they would only stay long enough to set legal proceedings in motion

## End of the Hunt

- The growing cost
- The re-establishment of traditional authority

Imprisonment was a vast expense, at around 3p per prisoner, per day. The witches at Ipswich cost up to £50 to keep.	When Charles surrendered to the Scots at Newark in May 1646, East Anglia became say enough to receive assize judges again.	The cost of keeping and prosecuting witches became too high to warrant further investigations.
Royalist gentry were able to return to the estates and began to punish tenants and servants if they had been involved in parliamentarian fighting. The Puritan hold, and hunt for witches, was now being disturbed.	Feeding prisoners became an issue as more and more were detained. Spectators of executions now had to pay.	End of the civil war meant an end to the suffering of the population (although poor harvests continued for a few years)
Acquittals became more likely with the end of the Civil War and towns and parishes were not as fearful as they had been. There was no need for scapegoats.	The fees of Hopkins and Stearne became controversial. They had to stay in inns, upkeep of horses, and the paying of search-women and watchers. They were eager to claim that their services were good value for money.	A case in Kings Lynn on 24 <sup>th</sup> September 1646 saw seven out of nine suspects acquitted. Hopkins was given £2 and left town promptly.
The assizes themselves were expensive – the judges, horses, heat and food for officers, administrators and witch-hunters. For example, the judge at the 1645 trial in Bury St Edmunds charged £130	A case in Ely in September 1646, saw all accused acquitted – probably at the insistence of the judge, John Godbold.	Executions carried a huge cost. Burning cost three times as much as hanging. In Suffolk, a new levy for searching witches was introduced to try to cover costs.

## Questioning of Hopkins

At the Norfolk assizes of 1647, which tried several of Hopkins and Stearne's cases, the presiding judges were given a list of questions compiled by leading gentry who had taken issue with aspects of the hunt.

- The questions were influenced by **John Gaule**.

The questions included:

- Was Hopkins himself a witch, because he had great knowledge of sorcery?
- Did Hopkins meet the Devil and receive the Devil's book, which included a list of all the witches in England?
- Where did Hopkins acquire his skills?
- Why are so many condemned with strange marks, when most of these occur naturally?
- If the Devil is a spirit, how can he or his familiars desire to suck blood?
- Both watching and walking are unreasonable and will lead people to say anything
- The swimming test is not allowed by law – why was he using it?
- Believing the Devil had power to kill was blasphemous because God had placed limits of the Devils power.

## John Gaule

- Minister of Great Staughton – parish was between St Neots and Kimbolton (Cambridgeshire)
- He was aware parishioners were blaming witches for their misfortunes and **he believed their own sins were to blame**
- He visited an accused witch from confessions at Huntingdon and he is convinced the witchfinders are **not doing noble work**

He **publishes criticisms** of them, the main points are:

- Affirmed the existence of witches and noted approval of witch-hunting but **criticised methods of Hopkins and Stearne**
- Pleaded **common sense and restraint** in following up accusations – caution
- He even alleged the craze was becoming **idolatrous** – they were praising the witchfinders more than God, Christ and the Bible.

His opinions may not have had much support initially but his work helped convince authorities that the hunt was no longer needed.

## Why was the Hunt widespread?

- Extreme **economic hardship** – poor weather, inflation and effects of the Civil War. Poor harvests and soldiers requiring more food and supplies = scapegoats were sought.
- **Breakdown of traditional authority** that was usually exercised by the Crown, gentry and clergy.
- **Breakdown of traditional legal systems** – assize judges found it hard to keep to schedule so Hopkins etc had more freedom. When this is restored after the war – no need for men like Hopkins and Stearne
- **Hopkins and Stearne** played a significant role in beginning the craze and ensuring it was widespread. John Gaule singles Hopkins out which shows his significance. Also when Hopkins dies – the hunt dies down – this shows how important he is.

## Reasons for the end of the hunt

By the end of 1647, Hopkins was dead (probably TB) and Stearne had gone home – he realised that the brief golden ages of East Anglian hunting was over.

- Cost
- End of the fighting in 1646 with Charles surrendering – no need for scapegoats
- Returning authority of gentry and legal procedures (increasing scepticism for the hunt – not witches)
- John Gaule and his publication

## Depth Study 5 – Salem, Massachusetts 1692-93

- Most famous and most deadly of British colonial witch-hunts
- More than 200 were accused and 20 killed
- Hysteria and panic ensued after one woman, Tituba, confessed following the actions of a group of girls
- Unusual because the accusers apologise in the years after for causing the deaths of innocent people

### Colonial Witch hunts

- The British Empire began its rise at the same time as witch-hunting was flourishing in England
- Of all the colonies, North America was where the greatest fear of witches could be found.
- Two colonies on the East coast – Virginia (first settlers at Jamestown in 1607) and in Massachusetts to the North (first settled in 1620)

Virginia (and later, Maryland 1632)	Massachusetts
Catholic refugees were welcomed and the colonies became a haven for those that followed the High Church (Church of England that followed a lot of Catholic practices)	First settlers arrived on the Mayflower in 1620 were Puritans. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was Puritan and they were mindful of the Devil and witches

### Puritans in Massachusetts

- More militant than those in England
- They refused to tolerate other religious denominations
- Every aspect of life followed strict religious principles and the clergy were highly respected = **Theocracy**
- Preachers spoke out against magic and maleficium was particularly feared
- The first official witch to be executed in the colonies was Alice Young in 1647 (in Connecticut). 27 more were hanged before the Salem trials (many more subject to fines, whipping and exile)

### The Glorious Revolution in Salem

- Colonists revolt against Governor Andros (due to resentment of James and news of the revolution)
- Rebels led by Increase and Cotton Mather
- Andros eventually captured and sent to England to face trial (he later became governor of Virginia)
- Eventually, in 1691, Massachusetts was given a new charter and was now known as the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

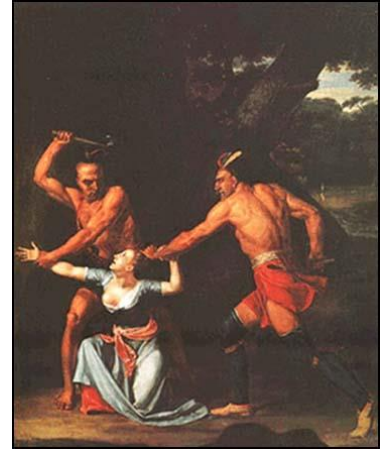
- King William was fearful it could fall into religious rule and so enforced rules. (officials appointed by the Crown, decreased power of Puritan leaders)

People of Salem felt their way of life was under threat from outside forces. There was a lack of legal authority due to less representation from local Puritan leaders.

### When things go wrong, they saw the Devil at work.

#### Indian Threats

- Indian attacks had always been a reality since the earliest days of European settlement.
- The First Indian War took place between 1675-78 and devastated towns across Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine and Rhode Island. **1/10 military-age men were killed**
- After the overthrow of Andros, colonial **defences in Salem were weakened**
- **Attacks were common and colonists were regularly killed.** A number of outsiders who had survived Indian attacks also moved in to Salem
- The trials coincide with King William's War – **the Second Indian War**, and was part of the wider Nine Year's War fought with France (1688-97)
- **Puritan mindset = Indians were Devil-worshippers**



***Indian attacks fostered a deep-seated paranoia concerning God's willingness to allow the Devil's agents (Indians) to punish Puritan settlers***

#### Economic Crisis

- The first Indian War left the economy of Massachusetts virtually ruined, with half of New England's towns attacked and the important settlement of Springfield was entirely burnt to the ground.
- A population growth of 3% per year and the establishment of new towns meant settler's livelihoods were not entirely destroyed.
- Colonists asked for military assistance and this led to a tax increase in the 1680s
- Navigation Acts – 1651, 1660, 1662 and 1673 – goods imported to England and its territories had to be carried on English ships (in order to remove the Dutch monopoly on freight trade). Crews also had to be half English. The later acts stipulated that goods had to travel to England first. The acts effectively reduced the amount of money and resources that flowed into Massachusetts.

#### Religion:

- Salem was a **Theocracy** (system of government where God is held as supreme ruler and the clergy are involved in the day-to-day running of the state)
- The Scientific Revolution was largely ignored by the Puritan authorities
- They interpreted crop failures, illness, hallucinations as the work of the Devil
- Salem Puritans = women were inferior to men – Eve being tempted by the Devil

## Class

- Tensions between **village and town** – the town relied on the village (agriculture) – **if harvest were poor, this could lead to accusations from town.**
- Some in the village wanted their own church and to be fully separate to the town.
- Jealousies occurred when some in the town became merchants etc and did not rely on agriculture.
- One of the most prominent families – the Putnams – were heavily involved in the accusations. They were opposed in their ideas about separation by the Porters. **Putnam’s want the village separate, Porters do not.**

**Some historians have challenged the idea that social tensions were to blame and that accusations actually came from a wider geographical area**

## Cotton Mather

*“Memorable Providences relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions”* (1689)

The publication acted as inspiration and a guide to those who conducted the Salem hunt. It contained two sections:

- An extensive account of the so-called Goodwin Possessions – this influenced Salem
- A sermon delivered by Mather and reprinted that warned about the presence of witches and offering advice on how to detect them.

## The Girls

- During the winter of 1691, Parris’s nine-year old daughter, Elizabeth, and her 11 year old cousin Abigail, began to experiment with **fortune-telling**. They used a **“Venus glass”** – egg white placed in water in which shapes can be seen and interpreted.

### Samuel Parris

- Hunt begins in his household
- He is the Puritan minister of Salem
- Moves to America from England to attend Harvard University. After a career as a plantation owner, he moved to Salem to work as a preacher.
- He immediately has problems with the congregation – outsider.
- Shortly before the hunt, the town refused to pay his wages after he purchased unnecessary items such as gold candlesticks.
- He delivered a sermon about how the Devil was being assisted by wicked men shortly before the hunt
  
- Some historians have said he was self-centred, deceptive and his role and motivation for instigating the hunt has never been fully understood.



- They shared this with other girls in Salem and apparently after a coffin is seen, the supernatural events start.
- January 1692, Elizabeth loses concentration and forgetful of prayers, on hearing certain prayers she would scream loudly and at one point hurled a bible across the room. She began to have fits and her limbs were afflicted.
- When Abigail Williams also exhibits strange behaviour, **the local doctor William Griggs blamed witchcraft.**

Many historians presented the children as selfish frauds, however more recently some have started to suggest that they were **frustrated and bored** of their strict upbringing in Puritan New England.

The following explanations have been put forward:

- Rosenthal – **psychological disorders**
- Upham – **hallucinations, naivety and excitement**
- Karlsen – **response to the girls own insecurities** (e.g. traumatic experiences) and this was a form of escapism
- Norton – role of **Indian attacks**, many of the girls had been directly affected by these, which traumatised them

Tituba

- Along with her husband John Indian, she worked as a servant, possibly a slave, for the Parris family.
- She was asked by Mary Sibley to make a witch's cake for the dog who would then sniff out any witches. It did not work and Samuel Parris became suspicious
- It is known Tituba was purchased in Barbados – tales of her homeland she told were tinged with demonic possessions and Voodoo.
- She quickly confessed to a pact with the Devil and other witches.

Like with most other hunts, most victims were women. 20% were men, but most had connections to accused women.

**The first three accused were:**

- Tituba
- Sarah Good
- Sarah Osborne

**Following victims:**

- Bridget Bishop
- Reverend George Burroughs
- Martha Carrier
- Rebecca Nurse
- Susannah Martin



**Trials and Executions**

- The first three suspects were called to a meeting at the village meeting house, the day after the arrests.
- The girls were called to give evidence – they claimed that the witches forced them to sign the Devil's book, suckled familiars and caused the fits.

The initial meeting and the trials that followed, were defined by the use of **spectral evidence**

- More suspects were soon named and some began to confess – this actually improved their chances as more than 50 of those were ultimately freed.
- Number of accused reached 165 – 30 of whom faced serious charges.



- Governor William Phips established a **Court of Oyer and Terminer** – half-hearted attempts at finding the Devil’s mark were carried out, one judge resigned within a month due to his doubts about the legitimacy of the trials.

## End of the Hunt

### Increase Mather

- He produces a sceptical work “*Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits and Prosecuting Men*” Sept 1692
- Does not reject notion of witchcraft but argues that genuine cases are rare and that much evidence was dubious
- Also gave a number of sermons that were supportive of the trials but deeply critical of spectral evidence

### Godly Puritans began to heed his warnings and the number of accusations declined

Governor Phips

## The General Pardon

- Phips issued a general pardon in 1693, officially excusing eight people whom Stoughton had condemned to die in the latest round of trials
- In January, a new Superior Court of Judicature had been established in Salem, led by **William Stoughton** – Phips ordered him to discount spectral evidence.
- Charges were dismissed and prisoners found not guilty (however three did not escape this so Phips pardoned them)
- **The sudden rush to find people innocent was probably directed by Phips (influenced by Mather)**

**William Stoughton** -- chief justice of the courts and is appointed by Phips to deal with the witches.

Often remembered as a religious zealot



- Phips was particularly critical of Stoughton, and in a letter to King William in February 1693, he criticised him.
- Phips defended himself in the letter and claimed he had only set up the court due to pressure from religious figures in Boston
- 1695 – London **repealed a law** passed by the Massachusetts legislature in 1692 that enabled swift prosecutions for witchcraft.
- 1697 – **Samuel Sewell (judge) officially apologised** to Massachusetts officials and asked for forgiveness
- Many of the **girls slowly began to apologise** as they grew older.
- 1711 – **compensation** was paid to families of the victims

## Why was the hunt widespread?

- Salem was a deeply **Puritan society** – fear of the Devil and witches were a part of everyday life
- **The Indian threat** heightened a sense of fear (many of the girls had personally been affected by attacks)
- The role of Elizabeth Parris, Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam and the other **girls** – lots of witnesses
- **Social divisions** in Salem meant resentment and jealousy grew
- Role of **individuals** – Cotton Mather was very outspoken in the years leading up to the hunt
- William Stoughton's acceptance of **spectral evidence** (once this was questioned, the trials could no longer continue)

## Arguments and evidence that Governor Phips was important in ending the Salem

- Governor Phips dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer on 29 October 1692 which was replaced with a Superior Court of Judicature 25 November 1692
- The superior court did not allow 'spectral evidence' which had been used against most of those previously accused
- Phips believed that the court was making mistakes (in agreement with Mather)
- Phips banned witchcraft books which had an influence both on the nature of accusations and on proceedings at the trial
- The status of those accused increased from Tituba (a slave) the first to be accused, to Phips's own wife being accused of witchcraft, suggesting he had a personal and social motive in bringing the trials to an end.

## Arguments and evidence that suggest other factors were more important

- Many people stopped hunting for witches owing to the extent of the trials and the loss of friends and family
- Doubts grew over quality of evidence given in court, particularly over 'spectral evidence' which was considered to be not practical enough to prove someone was a witch
- Reverend Increase Mather was more significant in bringing about an end to the Salem witch trials than Phips with his sermons demanding caution in making accusations
- Witch hunting was not common in New England and the extent of these witch trials was unusual which meant that there were external pressures which helped bring the trials to an end
- Public confidence in the legality and legitimacy of the trials declined as the numbers of those accused increased.

# Breadth Study

## Fraudulent Cases

### The Boy of Burton 1596-1597

Person	Role
Thomas Darling	14 at the time of the fraud – had fits every time he was near Alice Gooderidge. Fits continued despite the ‘witch’ being dead and Darrell is brought in the exorcise him – it was a success.
William Somers	Stated that he was bewitched by 13 women, headed by Alice Freeman. Admits that it was fraudulent and that he was working with Darrell.
Alice Gooderidge	Woman accused of being a witch by Thomas – died in custody. She had a reputation and Darling knew who she was. Confesses after sleep deprivation and starvation – familiar called Minny, had a choking fit before she could explain how to break the spell.
John Darrell	Exorcist. Darling and Somers both confess to working with him to commit frauds. It appears Darrell was the mastermind and told the boys how to act. Never confesses but can never work as a minister again.
Samuel Harsnett	Publishes “A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrell” in 1599 – blames the Catholic Church for the fraudulent claims.

- In 1599 17 year old Thomas Darling confessed to lying about being bewitched in 1596.
- He began having fits after having a disagreement with an old woman in the woods – Elizabeth Wright or Alice Gooderidge. Alice died in custody.
- John Darrell used his exorcism skills on Thomas with apparent success.
- Darling confessed to lying and that Darrell had told him to fake his symptoms.

Samuel Harsnett issued a pamphlet on the case “A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrell” in 1599

### Impact of the Boy of Burton

Increased scepticism	Decreased scepticism
Highlighted that you CAN fake symptoms	There are many major hunts AFTER this case (Pendle, East Anglia)
Not all witchfinders/exorcists are to be trusted	The witches involved in this were found guilty
Confessions are not always indicators of the truth	The Witchcraft Act of 1604 is AFTER this case – clearly there is not a widespread scepticism if there is new legislation making it easier to convict/kill witches
Potentially real cases of witchcraft are rarer than first thought – you should not always take events at face value.	Rural areas/poorer illiterate people are not necessarily going to be aware of this case - still widespread popular belief.
The finding of witches marks is not a safe way to identify a witch	

## The Pendle Swindle, 1634

- The Pendle Swindle (1634) was connected to the Lancashire Witch Trials (1612).
- Jennet Device, who was accused during the Pendle Swindle, had given evidence against her mother in 1612. Her whole family was executed.
- In 1634, Jennet is the one accused...

### Edmund Robinson:

- Ten-year-old boy who claimed he was approached by two greyhounds who then changed into Frances Dickinson and an unknown boy. The boy then changed into a horse and the woman forced Edmund to ride it to a house called Hoarstones. Here he found a gathering of witches, who were feasting.
- His father took him to the magistrates, John Starkie and Richard Shuttleworth and Edmund identified the witches who were brought to trial. The magistrates followed the law but had doubts about the guilt of the witches – report sent to the privy council.
- Henry Bridgeman investigated and found the fraud.

### The Pendle Swindle, 1634 impact of scepticism

Increase in scepticism	No change
<p>Highlighted how some accusations could be about revenge and not real magic – second prominent case that showed this (after the Boy of Burton)</p> <p>You can't always trust confessions</p> <p>Charles I was sceptical as were some magistrates – figures of authority</p>	<p>Major witch hunt happens during the Civil War in East Anglia <b>AFTER</b> this hunt – this mainly involved local people, even if some authority figures are becoming sceptical, average people are not – <b>there is still a widespread popular belief in magic and witchcraft</b></p> <p>The Witchcraft Act of 1604 is not repealed until 1736 – authorities are still slow to act on scepticism</p>

Which was more significant in growing scepticism?	
The Boy of Burton	The Pendle Swindle
Samuel Harsnett wrote a significant publication about it	Highlights that there can be other motives in accusations, such as revenge
Started a conversation about whether witch hunts were always genuine	Figures of authority are now becoming sceptical – Charles I and magistrates
Proved you can't always trust a confession/Devil's Mark	Increased scepticism about the existence of witches and magic
<b>BUT</b>	<b>BUT</b>
1604 Witchcraft Act was just AFTER = easier to convict/kill people	Major hunt AFTER this – East Anglia which mainly involved locals showing that ordinary people still believed
PENDLE and EAST ANGLIAN hunts happen after	Jury found them guilty so clearly local people still believe
Witches were found guilty	

## The Demon Drummer of Tedworth, 1662

- There are two central characters in the case: John Mompesson, a landowner who lived in Tedworth, and William Drury, an ex-soldier.
- In 1662, Drury travelled collecting alms for the poor and using his drum to attract attention. Due to vagrancy laws, he needed a pass, but Drury's was forged – **what can you remember about the poor laws?**
- Drury was arrested on the orders of Mompesson, and his drum was sent to Mompesson's house in April 1662.
- Supernatural events start occurring...

### Joseph Glanvill

- The case was brought to his attention after it became notorious in the press
- He visited the house in January 1663 – he claims to have heard noises himself.
- All of the witnesses he spoke to said Drury was responsible and using witchcraft to control the events.
- Glanvill wrote that when Drury was sentenced to deportation, the events stopped, but when he escaped (using supernatural powers) and was subsequently acquitted of witchcraft, the disturbances started again.
- Glanvill attempted to persuade the Royal Society that the study of witchcraft can be scientific and many agreed with him.

**Glanvill is significant because he is an educated man who will go on to be a member of the Royal Society and he is advocating that witchcraft and magic is REAL and should be studied with science.**

**His account did spark sceptical responses however – Bekker and Beaumont.**

## Demon Drummer of Tedworth, 1662

Increasing Scepticism	No change
Publications – <b>Webster, Bekker, Beaumont</b> = highlights a significant change in thinking (you will also need to weigh up the significance of the publication themselves)	Glanvill – believed and wanted to prove witchcraft scientifically – some at the Royal Society agreed
Scepticism about the case starts almost immediately and continues for a long time	Still a widespread popular belief in witchcraft (highlighted in the newspaper interest and hunts occurring after)
	Witchcraft Act is not repealed until 1736

## The Case of Jane Wenham, 1712

- Long held reputation as a witch – nickname was the “Wise Woman of Walkern”
- Said to have cursed Matthew Gilson and his employers daughter and livestock.
- Anne Thorne, a 16 year old servant for clergyman Godfrey Gardiner complained that Wenham had bewitched her. Wenham was arrested and searched and apparently confessed.
- The judge at the trial, Sir John Powell was sceptical but despite his objections the jury found her guilty. Powell secured a royal pardon.
- The case came at a time when convictions were very rare (due to the date).

### Jane Wenham, 1712

Why does the case of Jane Wenham increase scepticism?	No change?
Hutchinson writes about the case	They still found her guilty initially
Judge Powell acquires a royal pardon for her – highlighting sceptical opinion of educated people	Hutchinson still suggests that supernatural phenomena could be real but far-fetched accusations are thought up by fools
Case is clearly influenced by recent sceptical opinion – does it increase scepticism? or would you argue that it already exists	

Be careful about stating that Jane Wenham completely encouraged scepticism = really the scepticism of Judge Powell was already there.

Therefore it could be argued that earlier cases are more significant than this one

## Sir John Holt, 1689-1710

- John Holt became a barrister in 1663 and was well liked by James II.
- In 1685, he became Recorder of London (basically the chief judge in London)
- He was integral in the transfer of power from James II to William I during the Glorious Revolution in 1688.
- He was appointed Lord Chief Justice in 1689 by William.
- Lord Justice Sir John Holt was judge at 11 or 12 witch trials from 1689 onwards. He secured the acquittal of every witch on trial during this time.

### Acquittals,

- In 1691, he acquitted two women who were accused in Somerset of bewitching a girl who had fallen ill. Despite the acquittal, the girl miraculously recovered.
- In 1694, Holt reviewed the case of Mother Munnings in Bury St. Edmunds. He refused to accept the evidence of a man returning from an alehouse when he saw a familiar in the form of Munnings. He was also doubtful as the case had occurred 17 years previously.
- Margaret Elnore, who lived in Ipswich in 1694, was from a family of convicted witches. She was accused of receiving familiars from her grandmother. The Devil’s Mark was also found on Elnore. Holt immediately dismissed the entire case.
- In 1695, Holt freed Mary Guy, who was accused of causing a local girl to be possessed by a demon.
- In 1696, Holt received the case of Elizabeth Horner of Exeter. She was accused of possessing three children, one of whom walked up a nine foot wall. She was quickly acquitted by Holt.
- Sarah Murdock in 1701 was Holt’s most famous case. He was met with strong opposition from her neighbours, who had created a mob outside Murdock’s house during the case in the assizes court. A number

of neighbours testified that Murdock had turned Richard Hathaway blind, resulting in him being unable to eat. Holt put Hathaway on trial instead and put him in jail for a year for fakery.

<b>Increase scepticism?</b>	<b>No change?</b>
<p>Holt is in a position of authority and is displaying serious scepticism – he is willing to put the accuser on trial in the Murdoch case</p> <p>He never failed to secure discharge of the accused and his impartial common sense did a lot for scepticism. People respected his views.</p>	<p>Still a widespread popular belief in witchcraft – Salem 1692, Jane Wenham is 1712 and the Act is not repealed until 1736</p> <p>= ordinary people still believed</p> <p>His predecessor, Matthew Hale was willing to accept dubious testimony to secure convictions for witchcraft</p>



# Sceptics

## Reginald Scot's "The Discoverie of Witchcraft" 1584

- Scot was strongly influenced by Dutch physician Johann Weyer, who argued that **witches were suffering from melancholia (depression) and those who were guilty were unable to cause harm as they were tools of the Devil.**
- Scot himself was a member of the **Family of Love**, a radical sect of Protestantism who rejected both Protestant and Catholic beliefs. **They believed that nature controlled events rather than God.**
- As shown by the previous source, they had a high level of **contempt for Catholicism and Scot connected it directly to witchcraft.**

Scot had to self-publish his book as it was so controversial – key points:

- Doubted far-fetched charges against witches
- He claimed that women who genuinely believed they were witches, were deluded or melancholy
- Witches did harm people or animals but did so through natural means

He believed Catholic sacraments heightened fear of witches.

*He was sceptical because:*

- He was devoted to a belief in the 'supernatural unknown' – undiscovered elements of nature could explain unknown phenomenon
- Belief in witchcraft was not compatible with the Canon Episcopi
- He came into a lot of contact with the lower orders and struggled to rationalise their beliefs

SHORT TERM – did more harm than good with James' Daemonologie

## Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584)

Increase in scepticism	No Change
<b>First major sceptical work</b>  Influences later writers – starts a conversation about whether witchcraft should be blamed for natural events	James VI writes Daemonologie in response (1597) which actually led to MORE witch-hunting  1604 Witchcraft Act  There were several major hunts after it was published (North Berwick, Pendle...)  Most people were illiterate and so would be unaware of it

## Samuel Harsnett's "A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel" (1599)

- During the Boy of Burton, Harsnett was chaplain to the Bishop of London.
- He later became Bishop of Chichester (1609), Bishop of Norwich (1619), and Archbishop of York (1629)
- His argument in *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel* blamed Catholicism. He argued that the chief trick of Catholics were rituals and that the casting out of devils can only be achieved by God, not by man. Anyone whom took credit for God's work was a heretic and a fraud.
- Harsnett had been accused of being Catholic in his younger years and had supported Peter Baro, a Cambridge professor who was Arminian (many suspected Arminians of being closet Catholics).
- Darrell himself was a Puritan, hence why Harsnett may have disliked him.
- Yet, Harsnett's writing also suggested strong anti-Catholic beliefs.

### **Main Argument:**

- Harsnett makes it clear that the practice of misleading people through magic is nothing new and can be traced back to ancient times
- Criticised the Catholic Church
- Any casting out of Devils can only be done by God and anyone attempts to take credit for this is a heretic and a fraud

### **The work is divided into 5 sections:**

- Section 1: The character of Darrell
- Section 2: The relationship between Darrell and William Somers
- Section 3: Somers's Confession
- Section 4: Somers's fits
- Section 5: The Boy of Burton, Thomas Darling, and previous exorcisms

### Samuel Harsnett's *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel* (1599)

Increase in scepticism	No Change
Pamphlet war – questions demonic possession and it's cure – starts the debate	Pamphlet war – support of Darrell and witchcraft (Joseph Hall)
Other educated men questioned exorcisms – Deacon and Walker	Major hunts continues after this was published
	1604 Witchcraft Act
	Ordinary people would still believe (illiterate)

### **The Pamphlet War:**

- John Deacon and John Walker, two Puritan ministers, questioned whether exorcism was actually possible in *Dialogicall Discourses of Spirits and Divels* (1601).
- They argued that the Devil was unable to possess people and demanded proof from Darrell.
- Darrell responded in *The Replie of John Darrell to the Answere of John Deacon and John Walker* (1602).
- He claimed that he had witnessed all the possessions.
- Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, wrote that Darrell did perform exorcisms through his godly devotion.

## Thomas Ady's A Candle in the Dark (1656)

- Little is known about Ady, except he lived in Essex and was a Doctor.
- He states in print that he had a familiarity with events in Essex and Suffolk and he witnessed in person witchcraft trials in Bury St Edmunds (most likely Hopkins)
- **He wrote 3 books about witchcraft:**
  1. *A Candle in the Dark* (1656)
  2. *A Perfect Discovery of Witches* (1661)
  3. *The Doctrine of Devils, Proved to be the grand Apostacy of these later times* (1676)

### Significance of A Candle in the Dark

- A Candle in the Dark uses only the Bible as its source – the same source witchfinders used to justify their persecutions
- His main argument is that the actions of witchfinders and suspicions around witches cannot be found in the Bible.
- He states he was compelled to write it because he knew of too many wrongful convictions and that it was ridiculous to suggest that ordinary animals such as cats, mice and frogs can be taken as witches' familiars.
- Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* is mentioned as a direct influence – it is essentially a revision of Scot's original message

He is also strongly anti-Catholic and believes the quote should read:

“the popish (Catholic) rout, the contrivers of charms to *delude the people.*”

### Split into three sections:

1. He defined witches according to the Bible. He argues that they are magicians usually connected to Catholicism.
  2. He argues that the original scriptures have been misinterpreted by Catholics. French Philosopher Jean Bodin was criticised for accepting torture in witch cases. He argues that Catholics were the first to kill for religion too.
  3. He criticises books and pamphlets which promote witchcraft, especially King James I *Daemonologie*. He criticised the lack of scripture in the book.
- Some use it in their defence, especially with Reverend George Burroughs in the Salem Witch Trial.  
**There was also a steep decline in witch trials after its publication.**

### Thomas Ady's A Candle in the Dark (1656)

Increasing scepticism	No Change
Steep decline in hunts after it's publication ( <i>the impact of publications is greater after the Civil War when pamphlets are widely used</i> )	Still the odd hunt – Jane Wenham is still found guilty in 1712. Salem is 1692.
Still believes in witches BUT makes it clear that the Bible's definition is very different to that of the 17 <sup>th</sup> Century therefore undermining the belief	Ordinary people are likely to still believe – widespread popular belief
	Authorities are slow to act – repeal of the Act is not until 1736

**John Webster's *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* and Balthasar Bekker's *The Enchanted World***

- Worked as a doctor but made a name for himself as a preacher. Studied chemistry at Gresham College
- Attitude was similar to Thomas Ady – beliefs that are not founded in the teachings of the Bible should be rejected.
- Written in response to Joseph Glanvill

**Key belief – witches did exist but they could not command supernatural powers – they did carry out evil acts but did this using their own power, no assistance from the Devil.**

- Critical of the Demon Drummer and Rolan Jenks from 1577.

John Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677)

Increasing scepticism	No change
His methodical approach reflected the new scientific era and so this credibility meant more people took notice and set him apart from other sceptics	His work coincided with the power of the Church decreasing – therefore this had more of an impact than Webster
His work was relatively well received	His work does not build upon that of Scot or Ady
Very few hunts after him (but this was likely declining before Webster)	Usual factors – widespread popular belief, short term nothing really changes (Act not repealed until 1736)

**Balthasar Bekker, *The Enchanted World* (1691)**

- He writes at a time when science and reason are increasing and so this would have helped his influence
- Natural causes were being sought more and more – this was happening regardless of Bekker
- However, 4,000 copies are sold in Holland in the first 2 months
- Translated into German, Italian, French and English
- A number of publications were produced to criticise him – some German towns burned the books – they clearly saw him as influential (even if his influence in Britain was limited)

Key beliefs:

- Unless the Devil has a body, it would be impossible for him to possess and influence people on Earth.
- Bible states that the Devil is forever in Hell and cannot operate on Earth

- God limited the Devil's power and so people who believe he does have power are heretics.

Balthasar Bekker, *The Enchanted World* (1691)

Increased Scepticism	No change
He writes at a time when science and reason are increasing and so this would have helped his influence	Natural causes were being sought more and more – this was happening regardless of Bekker
4,000 copies are sold in Holland in the first 2 months	Decline in hunts started before this publication – perhaps Ady was more significant?
Translated into German, Italian, French and English	Still some hunts after this (Jane Wenham) – ordinary people still believed
A number of publications were produced to criticise him – some German towns burned the books – they clearly saw him as influential (even if his influence in Britain was limited)	

## Did sceptics lead to the end of the witchcraze?

- Witchcraft legislation repealed in 1736 meant that sceptics did not need to convince authorities that change was necessary after this point.
- However ordinary people still believed
- 1751 – a mob killed John and Ruth Osbourne
- Occasional cases were recorded into the 19<sup>th</sup> C – 1825 Isaac Stebbings endured the swimming test in Suffolk
- In literature, witches were increasingly referred to in realms of fiction but some still believed – John Wesley wrote in 1768 that to not believe in witches, was to disbelieve the Bible.
- By 1750 most educated individuals accepted the rationalism that came with the coming of science and reason

## Scientists

1. Natural philosophy – study of the natural world
2. Homocentric – earth is at the centre of the universe
3. Heliocentric – the sun is at the centre of the universe
4. Empiricism – knowledge can only come about by experience
5. Elliptical – flattened circle – planets move in elliptical orbits is a discovery that contradicts ancient views

### Two dominant ideas during the Scientific Revolution:

1. Aristotle's approach of empiricism, i.e. learning from **observation and experience**
2. Plato's ideas of theories to **explain the natural world.**

### **Many combined the ideas of theories and observation.**

Two ideas underpinned the Scientific Revolution: the use of **mathematics and experiment** and **observation** to gain a better understanding of the world.

- The understanding of the universe is limited at the start of our time period – c1580
- Religion plays a huge role in these limitations – it was **blasphemy** to suggest something different to the Bible – serious crime
- All of our scientists still believe in Christianity (most in witches)
- Technology also limits discoveries in Copernicus' time

BUT

Copernicus started the Scientific Revolution – natural philosophy – observing and understanding the universe and natural events starts here = **this will slowly undermine magic and witchcraft as dominant beliefs of the elite**

**REMEMBER – illiterate, ordinary people are likely to be unaffected by any discovery – they will still believe in magic (e.g Jane Wenham 1712)**

## Johannes Kepler, 1570-1630

### He is influenced by Tycho Brahe

- Brahe argued that the planets orbited the Sun, but that the Sun orbited the Earth.
- In 1572, he observed a supernova. This created a problem for Aristotelian and Ptolemaic views as it showed that the universe could change.
- He also discovered that planets moved independently through space, not on a solid plane.
- Kepler met Brahe in 1600 and became his assistant.

### What are Kepler's Three Laws of Planetary Motion?

In regards to the third law, Kepler has no understanding of gravity. He knows that it takes longer to orbit depending on the distance of the planet, but cannot explain why!

	Description
First Law	Planets travel in elliptical circles
Second Law	Planets do not travel at a constant speed - varies as they circle the sun
Third Law	Distance from a planet to the Sun, cubed, is proportional to the time it takes for a planet to complete its orbit, squared – the further from the sun, the longer it takes to orbit it

### Significance:

- Used mathematics to solve problems and explain how the physical world worked – rather than simply describing theories, this had an impact on everyday life
- He led the way for a new generation of natural philosophers and mathematicians – boundaries between the two professions blurred
- Importance of observation in order to prove a theory

### Johannes Kepler

Increasing scepticism	No change
He is encouraging people to look for NATURAL causes and OBSERVE events etc that they cannot understand - The shift away from simply jumping to magic and witchcraft as explanations	Witchcraft Act is not repealed until 1736 – elites are slow to act on findings of scientists
His model of the solar system and laws on planetary motion developed understanding of the universe	There was still widespread popular belief in witches – e.g. Salem witch hunt 1692, Jane Wenham 1712
Part of the Scientific Revolution that undermined magic and witchcraft	Members of the Royal Society still believe in witchcraft (Joseph Glanville)
Later scientists (Galileo and Newton) build on his work	



## Galileo Galilei

- Born in Italy in 1564, Galileo's most productive time as an astronomer came after 1610 when he was appointed to the court of the Duke of Tuscany.
- He was deeply indebted to the work of Copernicus. His own theories were based on Aristotle's idea of observation.
- He stands out because of his ability as a communicator.

### **Early Controversy**

- In his *Discourse on the Tides* (1616), Galileo argued that the tides were caused by the Earth speeding up then slowing down on its axis. The Catholic Inquisition investigated Galileo and determined that his theories were contradicting the Bible. They kept a close eye on him for two decades after.
- Galileo rejected Tycho Brahe's theory that the other planets revolved around the Sun, which further revolved around the Earth. This is despite the fact that Galileo's newly invented telescope produced observations that were compatible with some of Brahe's findings.

In his *Siderius Nuncius* (1610), Galileo made a number of observations with his telescope:

- A number of features on the moon were similar to Earth. The moon contained seas and mountains like Earth.
- The moon orbited the Earth
- He used his telescope to discover moons orbiting Jupiter.
- He discovered new stars, which challenged the idea that there was a fixed number of stars.

In *The Assayer* (1623), Galileo argued that the study of the universe should be balanced between mathematics and experiment. Despite the numerous discoveries made by Galileo, he was unable to convince scholars that Copernicus and Brahe should be questioned.

Like Copernicus, Galileo's work was added to the Index Librorum Prohibitorum (banned books) by the Catholic Church. They took issue with his arguments on tides. After the publication of *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, which challenged the Church's accepted ideas, the sale of his books were banned.

**Galileo was found guilty of heresy and made to sign a statement recanting his theories and was placed under house arrest. The ban on printing his work was not lifted until 1718, and his works were removed from the banned list in 1758.**

*Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632)

- Galileo believed with Copernicus that the Sun was the centre of the Solar System.
- The book was structured as a debate between three men: Salviati, who believed in Copernicus, Simplicio, who argued for the Ptolemaic system, and Sagredo, an ordinary man.

Salviati	Simplicio
Essentially the views of Galileo	Advocate of Ptolemaic
Attacks Aristotle's view that the universe is unchanging - new stars as evidence	Argues that if the Earth was rotating, a cannonball fired to the west would travel further than one fired to the east.
Says it is ridiculous to suggest the Earth does not rotate and move like other planets	

- Despite being told by the Inquisition not to write a defence of Copernican theory, he did anyway. **He believed that the Church had no authority over scientific matters.**
- His work was published in Italian and translated into a number of other languages, ensuring his influence became widespread.
- His biggest influence was in ensuring a mathematical approach to natural phenomena. Unlike Kepler, he didn't believe in mysticism and godly explanations for events, Galileo was opposed to superstition.

## Galileo Galilei

Increasing scepticism	No change
His work was published in Italian and translated into a number of other languages, ensuring his influence became widespread.	There was still widespread popular belief in witches – e.g. Salem witch hunt 1692
He begins the idea that science and the church should be separate	His understandings were not supported by elites e.g. church condemns him in 1633
His biggest influence was in ensuring a mathematical approach to natural phenomena	Witchcraft Act is not repealed until 1736 – elites are slow to act on findings of scientists

## Isaac Newton

- Born in Lincolnshire in 1643
- Went to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1661 and became Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in 1669
- He was elected MP for Cambridge in the Convention Parliament (parliament without the formal authority of the monarch) in 1689 and 1701 (he was resisting James II in making universities Catholic institutions)
- Moved to London in 1696 to become warden of the Royal Mint and became Master of the Mint in 1699
- Elected to the Royal Society in 1672 and became president in 1703 – he held this post until his death in 1727

### ***Mathematical Principals of Natural Philosophy***

Newton put forward many ideas in *Principia Mathematica* including:

1. Kepler's laws of planetary motion were proven mathematically.
2. That physics on the Earth worked the same as physics in the rest of the universe.
3. Explained centrifugal force.
4. Developed a theory of acoustics, where sound depended on the density of the medium through which it passed.

*"If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants"*

Three Laws:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Law: Every object will remain in place or in motion unless acted upon by an outside force.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Law: the external force on an object is equal to the mass of the object times its rate of acceleration
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Law: For every force, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

### Isaac Newton

#### **Newton was not totally scientific:**

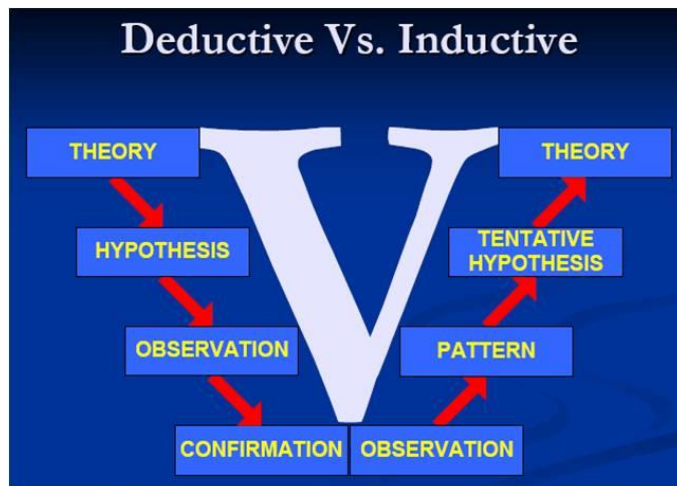
- Despite completing the mathematisation of natural philosophy, Newton still believed in magic.
- He was obsessed with the numerological significance of the number 7 and believed that the 7 colours of light were linked to music.
- He was a practising alchemist, where he attempted to transform metal into gold.
- He was also concerned with biblical prophecies made in the Books of Daniel and Revelation.

Increasing scepticism	No change
Significant part of the Scientific Revolution that undermined a belief in magic	Newton still believed in magic, he was a practising alchemist, he was also concerned with biblical prophecies
Built on Kepler's laws in 1687 – represents the final stage of a long process of theory and discovery	Witchcraft Act is not repealed until 1736 – elites are slow to act on findings of scientists
Principia Mathematica represents an important break from the mind-set of the Middle Ages – he completed the 'mathematisation' of natural philosophy = undermining the belief in magic	There was still widespread popular belief in witches – e.g. Salem witch hunt 1692, Jane Wenham 1712

# Thinkers

## Francis Bacon

- Bacon enrolled at Cambridge at the age of 12.
- Became a barrister in 1582 and an MP in 1584 and eventually became a member of the Privy Council.
- He wrote on a number of issues, including politics, law, philosophy, and religion.



Francis Bacon focused on **“inductive”** rather than “deductive” reasoning

At the time, scientific thinking was heavily influenced by the Church. Bacon’s method has several elements:

1. Scientific discovery is aided by collecting as much data as possible
2. He rejected any pre-conceived theories or conclusions
3. Methodical observation of the facts was the best method of understanding natural phenomena.

Bacon’s first work was *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human* (1605). He argued that empirical knowledge learned from observations was the most superior form of knowledge. Those who began with certainties ended with doubts, according to Bacon.

- Bacon argued that preconceived ideas could mislead philosophers and scientists. He created a “Table of Instances” which recorded data. Once all the data was entered, a theory would then emerge. Bacon was able to use this idea to determine that heat is a form of motion.
- Bacon also intended to produce a six-volume book called *Great Restoration*, but only the second part was released after his death in 1620. Bacon argued that his experimental method was superior. It later became a guidebook for those whom founded the Royal Society. In *The New Atlantis*, Bacon described a utopian state.
- The method proposed by Bacon was influential after 1640, when social attitudes began to change because of the Civil War. Bacon’s influence was seen in the founding of the Royal Society, where meetings often spoke of his “guiding genius”.
- Others adopted Bacon’s approach when attempting to understand religion. Lord Falkland opened his estate to learned thinkers where they used Bacon’s method to attempt to determine an agreed date for the end of the world. Falkland discovered that the Church would benefit from religious toleration as there was many contradictions in the Bible that could be interpreted in different ways. Thus, no single denomination had the right to dictate how people worshipped. This idea became popular during the Civil War.
- Bacon’s method actually encouraged the belief in magic.

### Francis Bacon

By recording all facts, he was dismissing the distinction between magical and rational qualities. His method allowed for unexplained or supernatural phenomena, as long as it was observed as part of the scientific process.

Increasing Scepticism	No Change
The rise of a belief in empiricism was a gradual process and Bacon’s publications in 1605 and 1620 were highly significant	His method actually preserved a belief in magic – it allowed it to exist if observed
The idea of moving away from preconceived theories was important in moving discoveries forward	Witchcraft Act is not repealed until 1736 – elites are slow to act on findings of scientists
Part of the Age of Reason which undermined magic and witchcraft	There was still widespread popular belief in witches – e.g. Salem witch hunt 1692, Jane Wenham 1712

## Gresham College and the Royal Society

### Gresham:

- 1645 – a group of natural philosophers formed what became known as the “invisible college”, a loosely organised collective who had connections to Gresham College, London (which had been founded in 1597).
- Many of the group would go on to form the Royal Society
- Gresham was crucial in the development of knowledge – Sir Thomas Gresham funded professors who gave lectures on their respective faculties; law, divinity, music, physics, geometry and astronomy.
- Opening of Gresham College was the result of a long effort to establish a permanent organisation that would research the mathematical sciences. Astronomy and Geometry were essential for understanding the workings of the Earth.

### The Royal Society:

- After the Restoration in 1660, Charles II’s interest in science contributed to the creation of the Royal Society.
- Christopher Wren proposes the Society in a lecture in November 1660 and it was established in July 1662
- It met once a week and its membership included John Locke, Samuel Pepys, John Dryden and the Earl of Sandwich.
- Most early experiments followed Bacon’s method and it was only after 1684 that it dedicated itself solely to scientific pursuits.
- Isaac Newton was president for 24 years.
- Some historians do not believe the Society had much of an impact as it was simply a channel for scientists to air their discoveries and did not necessarily aid them. But ultimately it did encourage scientists to share their discoveries and this was its greatest strength.
- By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century science was part of the public consciousness and no longer viewed with suspicion – Charles II’s interest helped with this.



### Royal Society and Magic:

- Some historians believe that the Society significantly undermined a belief in magic with its focus on science.
- However, many of its early members were interested in magic, including Isaac Newton and Joseph Glanvill. The Society itself had no time for Glanvill’s suggestion that magic be studied formally.

## Gresham College and the Royal Society

Increasing scepticism	No change
Both are important for human understanding – this would eventually mean a decline in the witchcraze due to no longer blaming natural events on magic	Ordinary people are unlikely to be massively affected by this and therefore would still believe – Salem hunt 1692
The Royal Society enjoyed enormous prestige and attracted the membership of the social and intellectual elite of England including the King	The Act is not repealed until 1736 – elites are slow to act on new knowledge
One of its most important members was Isaac Newton and the Royal Society was responsible for the printing of his <i>Principia Mathematica</i> in 1687	Many older beliefs current in 1580 lived on side by side with the new approach. Newton into the eighteenth century remained fascinated by arcane knowledge and numerology in the Bible.
	A reasonably large section of the Royal Society still believed in magic

## Thomas Hobbes

- Son of a vicar – born in 1588 – he attended Oxford University (was the secretary of Francis Bacon for a while)
- He advocated a strong government led by a single leader – a reaction to the execution of Charles I
- After fleeing to Paris (fearing he would be targeted for his Royalist sympathies), he worked as the tutor for a young Charles II

Hobbes mostly works with **Deductive reasoning** (as opposed to Bacon's inductive)

### Inductive:

- Evidence
- Theories emerge from observed fact
- Collection of facts
- No preconceived theories
- observation

### Deductive:

- Application of existing rules
- Testing of propositions
- Use of preconceived theories
- Facts collected to prove theory

### **Hobbes believed Bacon's method was inadequate because:**

- It is too experimental
- It never provides secure knowledge that is irrefutable
- An element of doubt can always exist when some observed facts cannot be explained

He is said to have concluded deductive was better when he was 40 and he read Euclid's *Elements* (Ancient Greek)

### **He was concerned with defending the notion of a powerful monarchy and so used it to prove his point:**

- All men are born bad
- Nero was a bad (Roman) emperor
- Therefore, Nero was a bad emperor because he was born bad, not because of the system he was placed in charge of.

Hobbes argued that it is not the system (Monarchy) that create corrupt people, but **the people themselves** = all men are born flawed

An important concept of Hobbes work is that of **materialism** – everything is created by matter (physical substance that occupies space) – including those to do with the mind and spirituality are the result of matter acting on matter.

- He was a complete materialist and so there was no room for belief in the supernatural or magic because they were not founded on matter.
- His ideas became fashionable in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, when the final cases of witchcraft were being investigated.

## John Locke

Best known for helping to shape a new era of liberal philosophy which set the political agenda for the next three centuries.

Locke's career:

- Born in 1632, his puritan father fought for parliament during the Civil War
- Entered the service of the Earl of Shaftesbury, a prominent founder of the Whig movement
- Locke fled to Holland and only returned fully to England at the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and it was after this time that the majority of his works were published.

### Essay Concerning Human Understanding

It is divided into a number of books, dealing with different topics:

- Humans are not born with any knowledge
- **Knowledge comes from experience**
- Language
- **Questioning whether knowledge can ever be entirely accurate of truthful**

### Significance for magic and witchcraft

- Because Locke was a **materialist** and a strong believer in **empiricism** – he made no allowances for the supernatural.
- He did NOT say spirits did not exist, instead he had not experienced them and so could not say that they did/did not – **because spirits can be perceived in different ways, they can never be proved.**
- He did have some belief in astrology and claimed that it could be useful – e.g. medicine.
- Locke's denial of innate ideas was interpreted by some contemporaries as heresy

## Hobbes and Locke

Increasing Scepticism	No Change
Important publications by Hobbes in the 1650s and Locke in 1690 did much to shape a new consensus on the basis of knowledge	Witchcraft Act is not repealed until 1736 – elites are slow to act on findings of scientists
Part of the Age of Reason which undermined magic and witchcraft	There was still widespread popular belief in witches – e.g. Salem witch hunt 1692, Jane Wenham 1712
Hobbes and Locke made no allowances for the supernatural – historians have said this materialism is why belief declines after 1660	



## Decline of the Witchcraze – Science and Reason

- It can be no coincidence that accusations of witchcraft decline as the Scientific Revolution took hold.
- Important breakthroughs about understanding the universe (Newton, Kepler)
- Growing acceptance of the experimental method of Bacon and the rational beliefs associations with the growth of science reflected in works of Weyer and Reginald Scot.
- Materialism – Hobbes and Locke – arguments for the supernatural were not deductively valid.

**Decline was not steady** – much faster after 1660. Some still had strong supernatural beliefs (Thomas Ady felt witches had strayed from God's path, rather than being frauds) and Bacon's method actually meant it was easier to put forward supernatural explanations.

### Other Factors for the decline:

- Fraudulent cases and sceptical writers provided doubt and alternative ideas about accusations
- Issue of poverty (*not eradicated*) had improved by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century as a result of increased poor relief = less suspicion
- Growth of the English Empire in late 17<sup>th</sup> Century accompanied more trade and growth of insurance = greater prosperity and no need to blame witches

## Possible Witchcraft essays

How far do you agree that the actions of Lord Chief Justice Holt were more significant than the discovery of fraudulent cases in the development of sceptical opinion towards witchcraft c1580-1750? (20 marks)

How far do you agree that the publication of Thomas Ady's *A Candle in the Dark* (1656) was the most important development in changing attitudes towards witchcraft in the years c1580-c1780? (20 marks)

To what extent did the coming of the age of science and reason result in the end of a belief in magic and witchcraft in the year's c1580-c1750? (20 marks)

'Belief in magic and the supernatural declined steadily as genuine understanding of the natural world increased.' How far do you agree with this statement about changing beliefs and ideas in Britain in the years c1580–c1750?

How far do you agree that the publication of Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) was the key turning point in belief in the power of witchcraft in years c1580-c1750?

How far do you agree that the impact of a series of frauds and doubtful cases steadily undermined the belief in the power of witches in the years 1580–1750? (20 marks)

How far can the trial and release of Jane Wenham in 1712 be seen as the key turning point in belief in the power of witchcraft in England in the years c1580–c1750?

How far do you agree that the Pendle Swindle of 1634 was the most significant development in the growth of scepticism in the years c1580-c1750? (20 marks)

How significant were the writings of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke in the process of undermining the belief in magic and witchcraft in the years c1570-c1750? (20 marks)

How far was the foundation of the Royal Society in 1662, a key turning point in the dominant approach to human understanding and knowledge in Britain in the years 1580–1750? (20 marks)

To what extent was the North Berwick witch-hunt in the years 1590-91 influenced by Gilly Duncan's confession? (20 marks)

How accurate is it to say that it was the interest taken by James VI that accounts for the extent of witchcraft persecution in Scotland in the years 1590-97? (20 marks)

'The lack of strong central government was responsible for the outbreak of the North Berwick witch hunt in 1590 and the spread of witch hunts in Scotland in the years to 1597' How far do you agree? (20 marks)

How far do you agree that the Witchcraft Act of 1604 caused an intense interest in witch-hunting that resulted in the Pendle trials of 1612? (20 marks)

How far do you agree that Roger Nowell's enthusiasm for investigating witchcraft was the primary cause of the Pendle witch trials of 1612? (20 marks)

How accurate is it to say that it was the impact of the Thirty Years War that accounts for the extent of witch-hunting in Bamberg in the years 1623-32? (20 marks)

To what extent do you agree that the extensive use of torture explains why the witch-hunt in Bamberg lasted for so long? (20 marks)

How far do you agree that the persecutions in Bamberg came to an end because of the arrival of the Swedish army? (20 marks)

How accurate is it to say that the English Civil War was the most important cause of the East Anglian witch craze of 1645-47? (20 marks)

How far do you agree that it was the growing cost of witch hunting that brought an end to the East Anglian witch hunts in the years 1645-57? (20 marks)

To what extent was the rising cost the main reason for the decline of the East Anglian witch craze? (20 marks)

"The unique political and economic situation in East Anglia accounts for the extent of the witch persecutions in the years 1645-7" How far do you agree? (20 marks)

"The role of children as witnesses was essential in ensuring the Salem witch craze became widespread" How far do you agree? (20 marks)

