

East Anglia and the Hopkins Trials, 1645-1647: a County Guide

BEDFORDSHIRE

TILBROOK

While travelling along the border between Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire in 1646, Stearne and Hopkins received reports of mass meetings of witches at ‘Trilbrook-bushes’, i.e. Tilbrook. However, no further investigation was carried out.

Tilbrook (today part of Huntingdonshire) may well have provided fertile ground for witch hunting. In September 1645, the rector Edward Savage was removed from the living as an inveterate delinquent. Among other charges, he was said to have inveighed against Parliament ‘with severall fearfull curses’, saying that ‘he hoped to see them hang in Hell and that there are none belonging to them but rogues and Rascalls’. In his will, made in January 1661, he asked to be buried in his old chancel at Tilbrook ‘from which I have beene most wickedly caste oute’.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 53; *Wal.Rev.*, 209; TNA, PROB 11/303, fo.80r [will of Edward Savage, 10 December 1659; proved 8 January 1660/1].

CAMBRIDGESHIRE and THE ISLE OF ELY

CAMBRIDGE

According to John Stearne, one Lendall of Cambridge, a suspected witch, carried herself as if she was outwardly religious, ‘a saint on earth’. Henry More also provided a detailed description of Lendall, her attempted seduction of a young woman of Cambridge, and nocturnal feasts held at her house where many strangers were present and unheard of languages spoken. She may be the same as the woman referred to by the witchcraft sceptic Thomas Ady as ‘formerly reputed an honest woman’, but subsequently executed for witchcraft in 1645 for ‘keeping a tame frog in a box’. Ady’s source was possibly his brother-in-law, John Lowery, who served as MP for the town from 1640 to 1653 and was mayor in 1644-5.

Some time between 1646 and 1647, another witch scare gripped the parish of Great St Mary’s in Cambridge, though it is not known how many were accused or whether

or not Hopkins and Stearne were participants. One of the chief instigators of the witch hunt was one William Cropley, a vestryman of the parish, who was reimbursed for the cost of searching the witches in 1647-8.

Malcolm Gaskill has suggested that **Lendall** may be an error for Kendall owing to the absence of any of the former name from the parish registers of Cambridge. However, one Robert Lendall was a ratepayer in the parish of Great St Mary's between 1622 and 1635.

Cambridge suffered major disruption to its daily life as a result of the outbreak of the civil war. Following the mass purges of royalists and delinquents from the colleges in the early stages of the conflict, it became a garrison town that was often threatened, though never attacked, by the armies of Charles I. In late 1643 and early 1644, it was also subjected to the official iconoclasm of William Dowsing, who found much to occupy his time here. More specifically, the parish of Great St Mary's, situated at the heart of the town, was according to Gaskill a parish 'in crisis' by 1646. In the late 1630s the parish church, which doubled as the official church of the University, was the subject of much contention between the puritan townsmen and Laudian authorities who now dominated the government of the University. Financially stretched by the demands of the war effort and an influx of Irish emigrés, it also experienced the full force of puritan moral reformation. Dowsing twice visited the parish church, and a year later its minister was removed and replaced with an orthodox divine from St John's College.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 39; More, *Antidote Against Atheisme*, 128-30; Ady, *Candle in the Dark*, 135; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 190-7, 316n; Cooper (ed.), *The Journal of William Dowsing*, 155-205, esp.96-203 [no.24]; Foster (ed.), *Churchwardens Accounts of St Mary the Great Cambridge from 1504 to 1635*, 381, 412, 438, 446, 454, 462, 471.

CHATTERIS

According to Stearne, an unnamed witch confessed at Chatteris.

In March 1646, George Otway (d.1659) was sequestered from the vicarage of Chatteris. The town was also a centre of Quaker activity in the early years of the Restoration.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 17; *Wal.Rev.*, 85; Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 92, 93, 94, 96, 98.

ELY

Witches: Peter Burbush, blacksmith, of Ely St Mary's; Anne, the wife of Philip Desborough, labourer; Thomas Pye.

Anne Desborough was indicted on two separate occasions in 1646 and 1647. In the first instance, she was indicted on 28 July 1646 for entertaining, employing and feeding spirits [witnesses: John Caule; William Cooke; Amy, the wife of Edward Sharpe; Lettice Wilson]; true bill. The same witnesses were asked to enter into

recognizances to give evidence against Desborough for 'evil actions and malicious & wicked intentions' towards Francis Caule, 'metalman'. Depositions were subsequently taken before Thomas Castell, JP, on 7 August 1646. Amy Sharpe deposed that in conversation with Francis Caule following his recovery from his first fit he had said that things would never be well with him as a result of a falling out between him and Anne Desborough's daughter whereupon Anne had vowed revenge. William Cooke testified to the ferocious strength of Caule's fits and his desperate attempts to locate the witch in his house while suffering the same. John Caule deposed that Francis had fallen ill on 28 July 1646 and had since suffered violent fits punctuated by periods of serenity, good health and much cheerfulness. Desborough herself was examined by Castell. She described a particularly unpleasant meeting with Caule when she was forced to appear at his bedside and was threatened with violence for her pains. Imprisoned at Ely, she was acquitted at her trial.

On 16 August 1647, Desborough was again arrested and imprisoned by Richard Stanes, JP. In addition to the recovered Francis Caule, new witnesses appeared against Anne detailing new crimes. Walter Mayes of Ely, husbandman, claimed that after falling out with Desborough in 1645, his servant was almost drowned and many of his livestock died. He added that Desborough's mother was 'commonly reputed to be a Witch', and he was convinced that Anne was employing imps or spirits to do her mischief. Thomas, the son of John Wilson, labourer, a servant of Mayes, added that he believed Desborough was responsible for an accident to his master's cart in 1646. Finally, Francis Caule, the victim in 1646, recounted his sufferings at Anne's hands the previous year when he fell into an extraordinary sickness 'beyond any knowne cause in nature'. In his fits, he was visited by Anne's imps or familiars, who tormented him in mind and body. All three witnesses were bound over to give evidence against Desborough.

Thomas Pye was accused of being a witch by the witchfinder John Stearne and Humphrey Davis Snr, of Ely, their depositions being recorded by Richard Stanes, JP, on 24 July 1647. Stearne focused on the evidence of strange marks that he had found on Pye's body. Davis, on the other hand, deposed that he had fallen out with Pye, who threatened him. Shortly after, he fell sick and distracted for three months and was still troubled with the same affliction from time to time. Pye himself was examined the same day, and denied any knowledge of the charges or the workings of familiars. He was nonetheless imprisoned at Ely the same day.

The accusations of witchcraft levelled at Peter Burbush were seemingly opportunistic, as the depositions before Richard Stanes, JP, were taken on the morning of the assizes (23 September 1647). Burbush's accusers were John Abraham, a weaver of St Mary's parish; William Shelley, miller, of the same; and Henry Freeman, miller, of Ely. Abraham claimed that he fell lame after receiving some waste thread or yarn from Burbush three years earlier. He was convinced Burbush was responsible as both he and his mother were commonly reputed as witches. Shelley deposed that Burbush had confided in him as to how one might

become a witch. He was apparently informed by one Henry Thorne of Ely St Mary's, labourer, that one way was by stealing the communion bread and urinating on it against the church wall. Freeman suspected Burbush of witchcraft after his mill fell down for no apparent reason. He had also lost cattle in strange circumstances. Burbush, examined the same day, denied all the charges but was none the less imprisoned. He would have to wait for the next assizes, however, in the spring of 1648 for judgement.

The outcome of Desborough's second trial on 23 September 1647 before chief justice John Godbold is not known. Pye, who died in 1657, was acquitted. Burbush's fate is not recorded.

The small cathedral city of Ely, situated at the centre of a region dubbed by Thomas Edwards 'that Island of Errors and Sectaries', had long held a reputation for radical independence and religious extremism. In the late 1630s, it was further politicised and radicalised by the brief episcopate of bishop Matthew Wren, translated from Norwich in 1638. Wren's commitment to the Laudian cause undoubtedly alienated many in the town. In 1641 it was alleged that while Wren was officiating one Saturday in the cathedral, a woman named Elizabeth Bancroft preached behind him that 'it was fit upon Sunday to Sacrifice the Popes Bird [i.e.Wren] upon his own Altar'. By September 1640, there were rumours circulating in Essex that 'an unruly company' had sworn to kill the bishop, and within a year it was reported in Norfolk and surrounding areas that the region was 'full of warrants for certificates against Bishop Wren'. Impeached and imprisoned by Parliament, Wren continued until at least 1645 to attempt to administer his diocese. In the mean time, his authority in the city rapidly declined. On 30 August 1642 the episcopal palace at Ely was ransacked, and within a few years many of his closest acolytes were removed. By the time of the witch trials, Ely had become a centre for puritanical reform and radical sectarianism as the various factions and supporters of Parliament contended for power. In early 1645, for example, Laurence Clarkson visited Ely in search of two seekers, William Sedgwick and William Erbery, who were said to inhabit the town. Two years later, at the height of the witch scare, Sedgwick declared that Christ would come to judgement within a fortnight after he claimed to have been visited by the messiah in his study at Ely.

Of the three accused, **Peter Burbush** was a relative newcomer to Ely with his wife Agnes. Their two daughters were baptised in the parish of Ely St Mary's in the early 1640s, but there is no early record of the Burbush's marriage or any others of that name in the parish registers. **Thomas Pye**, who married in 1620, was widowed ten years later. Ann Smith (**Anne Desborough**) married Philip Desborough in 1619. There is no evidence linking her to the woman of the same name accused at Bythorn (q.v.) in nearby Huntingdonshire.

Of the examining magistrates, Lieutenant Colonel **Thomas Castell** sat as a committeeman for Cambridgeshire in the Eastern Association. He lived at Haddenham (q.v.) and later had something of a reputation for opposing the Quakers in the Isle of Ely. In 1660, for example, George Whitehead referred to Castell's admiration for the efforts of the Presbyterian minister James Bedford in opposing the Quakers in the Isle. **Richard**

Stane or Stanes (for the city of Ely), like Castell, held numerous offices in the Eastern Association. He was a physician by profession, having graduated MD at Cambridge in 1645. Like his brother William (d.1680), also a doctor, he was a committed puritan and parliamentarian who may have owed his own appointment to the county committee to the influence of his brother. William Stane was personal physician to the earl of Manchester as well as auditor and treasurer of sequestration in the Eastern Association. He also acted as one of the regulators overseeing the parliamentarian purge of the University in 1644. Like his brother, Richard continued to serve the Cromwellian regime in Cambridgeshire throughout the 1650s, both as an active JP and committee member. In all probability, he shared his brother's distaste for Presbyterian intolerance and favoured a moderate church settlement based on congregational lines.

CUL, EDR, E12 1647/6, 12 19, 21, 23, 44; EDR, E12 indictments, 1646; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 265-6, 328n, 329n; Anon., *A Discoverie of Six Women Preachers*, 4; Cressy, *England on Edge*, 154, 189; Schofield (ed.), *The Knyvett Letters*, 98-9; Clarkson, *Lost Sheep Found*, 19; Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 44; Cambridgeshire Archives, P67/1/1; P68/1/1; Kingston, *East Anglia and the Great Civil War*, 384; [George Whitehead], *A Brief Account of the Illegal Proceedings*, 5-6; Venn, iv, 143; Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, iii, 372, 459; Thurloe, *State Papers*, v, 328, 352; Twigg, 'The Parliamentary Visitation of the University of Cambridge', 518; Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, 128.

FEN DRAYTON

John Stearne refers to the confessions made here by a number of unnamed witches some time around 1646.

Thomas Dodson, vicar of the parish, was sequestered in about 1644. The parishioners of Fen Drayton subsequently petitioned the House of Lords for a grant to supplement the income of his godly successor, complaining that the patron of the living, Christ's College, Cambridge, usually provided scandalous and unsound incumbents.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 45-6; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 197-8; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/186, 17 May 1645; *Wal.Rev.*, 79.

HADDENHAM

Witches: Joan, the wife of Robert Briggs; Thomasine Read; Adam Sabie, gent.

Joan Briggs was accused of witchcraft in a deposition given by her son-in-law Jeremy Briggs of Haddenham before Thomas Castell, JP, on 31 May 1647. He claimed that for a period of about seven years, many of his horses and cattle had died in mysterious circumstances, and that four years ago one of his children died after suffering terrible torments and agonising pains. He suspected his mother-in-law because they had frequently fallen out with each other and because of her general reputation as a witch. The following day, Joan herself was examined by Castell. She dismissed the teats discovered on her body as 'nothing but warts', and

denied all charges made against her. She was subsequently committed to prison at Ely on 20 September 1647.

Thomasine Read was indicted for witchcraft on the evidence of five deponents: Edward Mason; Ellen, the wife of Oliver Pope; Robert Miller; Thomas Woodbridge; and Robert Gray. All were questioned by Thomas Castell on 29 May 1647. Mason asserted that Read had told him of how the Devil had lured her into a contract and granted her imps, which she used to bewitch the child of one John Miller of Hillrow. The child was still 'grievously tormented', but Read claimed she was powerless to act on its behalf. Ellen Pope claimed that after Read had been searched and marks found on her body, she confessed to having made a contract with the Devil sixteen years earlier when she lived at Cottenham. She then repeated Read's confession to Mason relating how her imps had bewitched the child of Miller. Her imps were also responsible for the death of sheep belonging to Thomas Woodbridge and Thomas Gray, both of Hillrow (the latter, after he had sacked Read's son, a ploughman). Finally, Robert Miller gave an account of his poisoning or bewitchment at the hands of Read. Read herself was examined the same day and corroborated much of the evidence given by her victims. She claimed that one Hitch of Aldre [i.e. Aldreth] was able to unwitch Miller's child. She was subsequently incarcerated at Ely by Castell on 29 May 1647, there to await her trial.

Adam Sabie was accused of being a witch by the witchfinder John Stearne and John Kirby of Haddenham in depositions made before Thomas Castell, JP, on 1 June 1647. Stearne claimed to have conducted a body search of Sabie at the behest of some of the villagers and to have found near his fundament 'one Teate of the greatest length that ever he sawe upon the body of any man'. Sabie subsequently confessed to him that a spirit in the shape of a young child had first appeared to him twelve years earlier 'when he was in trouble'. Kirby claimed that he had become strangely ill after Sabie had threatened revenge upon him. He also lost several bullocks and one of his children went lame. Examined the same day, Sabie denied the existence of the diabolical teats, but agreed that thirty-five years previously a spirit did appear to him in the likeness of a child and told him to 'ffear not [for] I am thy God'. Later, having moved to Somersham, he appeared again in 'a flame of ffyer' and repeated his claim to be a deity. Immediately, the skies darkened and the spirit told Sabie to repair to the house of a local recusant, Lady Sandys, who would give him £20. The spirit also gave him nourishment and preserved his life. At the end of his examination, Castell had Sabie committed to gaol at Ely the day before these depositions were taken.

Sabie and Briggs would appear to have been found not guilty and released. They were buried in 1648 and 1649 respectively. Nothing is known of the fate of Read.

Haddenham was a notable centre of Quaker activity in the Restoration. By 1670, Friends were meeting regularly at the house of John Adams, who later died in prison.

Adam Sabie, who styled himself a gentleman, had been involved in a slander suit in 1646 when it was alleged that he had called a fellow villager, Francis Coker, ‘a perjurd knave’. Sabie was an aged widower by this date, having lost two wives in 1624 and 1633. **Thomasine Read**, too, was a single person, her husband John having died in 1632. **Lady Sandys**, the wife of Sir John Holland, was a Roman Catholic who fled England at the outbreak of the civil war. All the witnesses against the witches were landowners and ratepayers. For the examining magistrate **Thomas Castell**, who lived at Haddenham, see under Ely (above).

CUL, EDR, E12 1647/10, 11, 17, 23; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 251-3, 255-6, 327n., 328n.; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 37-8; Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 94, 96; Cambridgeshire Archives, P82/1/1.

LITTLEPORT

Witch: Anne Greene, widow.

Greene was indicted on 14 September 1646 for entertaining, employing and feeding evil spirits [witnesses: Robert Wilson; William Day; Matthew Cotes; Lettice Waddelowe or Wodeloth; Ann Alexander]; true bill.

Robert Wilson deposed before Thomas Castell, JP, on the same day that, on the advice of Anthony the farrier of Ely, his sick mare was bewitched. Greene, who was present at the examination, offered to go to one Goody Petche for aqua vita and ‘solit oyle’. The mare subsequently died, as did much other livestock belonging to Wilson. William Day deposed (probably the same day) that he had purchased a milch cow from Daniel Scott, which had been earmarked for Greene. Seeing the cow in his yard, she laid her hands on it, stating that it would not prosper. It died two days later. She was also accused of cursing another cow that damaged her fence. Greene herself was examined by Castell and denied any knowledge of witchcraft. She was nonetheless incarcerated at Ely.

On 19 September, Wodeloth, Coates and Alexander, assisted by Elizabeth Crab, and under the direction of the constable, searched the body of Greene. They discovered three long teats, and deposed this information before Thomas Castell, JP.

Greene was acquitted at her trial before Justice Godbold on 26 September 1646.

Like so many parishes in the Isle of Ely, Littleport had suffered at the hands of the drainers in the 1630s. The sluice was sabotaged in 1642. It was also a centre of radical dissent. As early as 1614, the parish had hosted the preaching of the radical prophet John Traske (c.1585-1636). In the mid 1650s there was a group of General Baptists meeting here which subsequently split as a result of the conversion of a number of its members, including its two leaders (Samuel and Ezekiel Cater) to Quakerism. Thereafter the Quakers were a major presence in the village. Meetings were being held here as early as

1655, and many Quakers from Littleport continued to suffer persecution in the years after the Restoration. The village itself remained a centre for all forms of dissent after 1660.

Anne Greene herself was clearly a troublesome individual who had attracted the unwelcome attention of the authorities on a number of previous occasions. In 1634 she had been prosecuted for ‘chiding and giving evill language’ in a pew dispute in the parish church. Five years later it escalated into an accusation of witchcraft. Despite the fact that all the women who searched Greene signed with a mark, they would appear to have come from the more prosperous families in the village. **Elizabeth Crab or Crabbe**, the wife of Thomas Crabbe, yeoman, fought a civil action in 1646 as executor of her husband’s will. She was probably related to the various Crabbe’s (Clement the elder, Robert and Anne) who were among the first to suffer persecution in the village as a result of their support for the early Quakers.

CUL, EDR, E12 1647/4-6; loose bundles of indictments and recognizances, 1646-7; CUL, EDR B/2/35; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 233-4, 323n-324n; Taylor, *History of the English General Baptists*, i, 141-3; Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 85, 86, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98; CUL, EDR B2/56, fo.17v.

MARCH

According to Stearne, an unnamed witch confessed at March in 1647.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 17.

OVER

According to Stearne, a female witch at Over scratched off her marks so she could go undetected. However, she subsequently admitted to entering into a covenant with the Devil before a JP of that town in 1646.

Over was badly effected by the drainage schemes and resulting loss of common land. It was also, according to Gaskill, a village with many puritans and radical sectaries. It was certainly a major centre of early Quaker evangelism in the Isle of Ely and harboured a group of Muggletonians in the early years of the Restoration.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 45; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 197, 317n; Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 91, 94, 94-5, 96, 98; Hill, Reay and Lamont, *World of the Muggletonians*, 55; Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, 295.

STRETHAM

Witches: Dorothy Ellis; Robert Ellis; Elizabeth Foot; Joan Salter.

Dorothy Ellis was the subject of two depositions by Gillian Salter and Alice, the wife of William Wade, taken by Thomas Castell, JP, on 30 May 1647. Salter claimed that

seven years earlier her daughter, Mary, the wife of Thomas Salter and granddaughter, also Mary, were much tormented and 'evell handled in there bodyes'. The younger Mary was just over a year old and suffered terrible fits before dying. Ellis was held responsible. Alice Wade claimed that while she was in the shop of Mihill Malen, with her child in her arms, Ellis came in to buy some salt. There, she touched and stroked the face of the child and mumbling some words, went out. Shortly after, the baby fell mysteriously ill, the side of her face touched by Ellis being severely swollen. Ellis herself, examined the same day, deposed that about thirty years earlier, being 'much troubled in her minde', she entered into a contract with the Devil in the shape of 'a great Catt'. Thereafter, she was ordered to bewitch the cattle of Thomas Hitch, Mary Salter the younger (above) and the latter's mother. She was also ordered to send her imps to bewitch John Gotobed because he called her 'old Witch' and flung stones at her.

Robert Ellis was accused of being a witch by Thomas Hitch and Rowland Taylor, their depositions being taken by Thomas Castell, JP, on 30 May 1647. Hitch and Taylor were present when John Stearne conducted a strip search of Ellis and both confirmed the witchfinder's evidence that four teats were discovered on his body. They added that Ellis had been suspected for a witch for over twenty years, and that he had been 'the author of much mischief' in Stretham in that time. Ellis, examined the same day, blamed the teats on his great labours in his youth, and refused to confess 'though they pulled hime a peeces'. He had actually been incarcerated at Ely the day before by Castell and fellow JP, John Towers.

Various depositions survive against Elizabeth Foot, dated 30 May 1647, before Thomas Castell, JP. Ellen Barron of Stretham claimed that prior to being searched, Foot lamented she was born of 'such [an] accursed mother'. Elizabeth Norman of the same claimed that three years earlier six of her mares and cows had died within the space of three weeks. She suspected Foot because the two women had recently had 'a great ffallen out'. Mercy or Mary Sammon of Stretham claimed to have searched Foot's body with various neighbours and to have discovered two suspicious teats. Under examination, Foot herself claimed the strange marks on her body had first manifest themselves a year earlier. She denied ever hurting people or livestock or being a witch. She had been committed to Ely prison the day before these depositions were taken.

Joan Salter was accused of being a witch by various witnesses, including her own stepson Robert Salter. In depositions taken by Castell on 30 May 1647, he accused her of allowing wheat to boil over in a pot, despite the absence of heat, and he also claimed that when Goody Apreston was 'in hir distraction', Joan had visited her and was afterwards carried away by a black horse that 'crept betwixt hir leggs & carried her over the Green to her own house'. Others to depose against Salter were: Katherine Coverly (Joan had confessed the truth of the story of the black horse, despite the fact that others had laughed at her) and the searchers Annis Gotobed, Alice Hayward, Jane Hopkins, Ellen Granger and Mary Salmon (Sammon). Salter,

who was examined the same day, dismissed the marks on her body as those originating in childbirth. She was committed to Ely gaol the next day.

The deposition of Dorothy Ellis states that she ‘is lately dead in the Gaole’. The fate of Robert Ellis, Foot and Salter is not known.

A small market town lying north of Cambridge, Stretham was, in the words of Malcolm Gaskill, ‘a place peculiarly unsettled in its spiritual life’. In particular, it seems to have been bitterly divided by the ministry of Nicholas Felton, himself the son of a bishop of Ely, who was sequestered in 1644 for a variety of moral, religious and political offences. Among other things, he was accused of being an adulterer, drunkard and brawler, who refused to read parliamentary declarations and steadfastly followed the injunctions of the Caroline canons. A supporter of Laud and Wren, he eagerly imposed the new liturgical injunctions and subsequently caused some of his parishioners much grief when he forced them to pay £12 to rail in the new communion table and to make new steps up to the altar.

Religious divisions would appear to have intensified, if anything, in the parish following the removal of Felton and the arrival of his successor Matthew Clarke. Traditionalists made his life a nightmare. When Clarke followed the Presbyterian Directory for Public Worship and refused to observe Christmas, a soldier preached instead. Funerals were disrupted, and threats made against the new incumbent. Clarke eventually complained to Parliament. The miscreants were then arrested, dragged before the bar of the House of Commons and the ringleaders imprisoned and forced to pay compensation to their new minister or ‘parliamentary Preist’. These events took place immediately prior to the witch trials of 1647, and not surprisingly some of those involved were also prominent as witnesses against the witches of the village. **Robert Salter**, the stepson of the accused witch Joan Salter, was a royalist who had previously been cited as an ally of Felton. Likewise **Rowland Taylor** was among those who laboured to make life a misery for the new puritan minister of the parish. **Thomas Hitch**, on the other hand, had emerged as a critic of Felton. During the course of the 1650s, many in the village turned to radical religion. By 1656, there was a General Baptist church here established under the pastoral care of John Tabram. Deacon of the church in that year was Thomas Gotobed, who may well have been related to the searcher **Annis Gotobed**. After the Restoration, the village remained a centre of dissent with numerous prosecutions of Baptists in the local church courts.

CUL, EDR E12 1647/7, 15, 18, 20, 23; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 253-5, 328n; *Wal.Rev.*, 79-80; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D 924, fo.177; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/222, 7 January 1647; Taylor, *History of the English General Baptists*, i, 144-5; CUL, EDR B2/56, fos19v-20r.

SUTTON

Witches: Bridget and John Bonham; Margaret, the wife of Robert Moore; William Watson.

Bridget and John Bonham were accused of witchcraft by Charles Lamb, whose deposition was taken by Thomas Castell, JP, on 26 May 1647. He claimed that John Bonham had confessed to him that his wife had a familiar spirit, which sucked her body, and she also knew of those that sucked on him. They were arrested and placed in the custody of Thomas Daye, where Bridget confessed the same in private to Lamb. Examined on the same day by Castell, she rebutted claims of her own witchcraft but willingly implicated her husband.

On the same day, Benjamin Wyne, gent, of Sutton, attested before Castell that John Bonham had freely confessed to entering into a contract with the Devil in the shape of a mole. When questioned by the magistrate, Bonham claimed that the Devil had appeared to him while hedging in Goodman Staines' 'cherrie yard', and confessed to using his imps to kill horses belonging to Robert Peacock, cattle belonging to Goodman Burdwell, baker, and the bullocks of Charles Freeman, thatcher, the latter because his cattle had broken down one of his recently-made fences. Bridget was committed at Ely on 21 May 1647, John five days later.

Margaret Moore's accusers were Benjamin Wyne and Perry Joddrell, both gentlemen of Sutton, who deposed before Thomas Castell, JP, on 26 May 1647. Moore confessed to Wyne that the reason she entered into a covenant with the Devil was in order to save the life of one of her children. She also admitted to sending an imp to kill Thomas Nix of Witchford (q.v.). Moore told Joddrell that she began to hear voices after her first three children died. These, the spirits of her dead children, apparently encouraged her to enter into a covenant with the Devil in order to protect her remaining child. She also confessed to sending an imp to kill Nix of Witchford.

Moore, examined the same day, largely corroborated the testimonies of Wyne and Joddrell. In addition, she admitted responsibility for sending an imp to kill some bullocks belonging to Thomas Mayne of Witchford (qv), as well as for the deaths of Thomas Nix and a cow belonging to John Foster of Witchford. She was committed to Ely gaol by Castell and John Towers, JP, on 26 May 1647.

William Watson was accused of practising witchcraft by Benjamin Wyne, John Lynwood and John Sisson, their depositions being taken by Thomas Castell, JP, on 26 May 1647. All three stated that Watson had confessed to them that the Devil had appeared to him about thirty years previously in the likeness of a great mouse and had demanded his soul. He reluctantly agreed to enter a compact with the Devil in return for his aid in harming other men's cattle. Thereafter, he sent imps to destroy two red heifers belonging to Richard Gunton of Wyndford [i.e. Witchford], as well as livestock belonging to Daniel Block of Sutton and Jeremy Bradshaw. Watson, examined the same day, repeated much of the above, adding that he sent an imp to kill a pig and goose belonging to Martin Bird and some sheep of Stephen Bellingham, both of Sutton. He was imprisoned at Ely by Towers and Castell on 26 May 1647.

Bridget and John Bonham were acquitted. Moore was found guilty, after confessing at trial, and was sentenced to death by Chief Justice John Godbold on 23 September 1647. Nothing is known of the fate of Watson.

Sutton, like so many of the parishes in the Isle of Ely affected by witchcraft in 1646-7, was a community in crisis by the mid-1640s. During the period immediately prior to the outbreak of civil war, the economic wellbeing of the villagers had been radically undermined by the drainage schemes of major speculators and local landowners such as Sir Miles Sandys. Petitioning and legal redress had achieved little and in desperation many in Sutton had turned to rioting and violence. Two of the accused, **William Watson** and **John Bonham**, had been involved in these protests, but it seems likely that hatred of the enclosers was shared across the community. **Benjamin Wyne**, for example, who seems to have performed a central role in prosecuting witches in 1647, was himself named as one of those who was reported to have broken into nearby Somersham Park, home of the earl of Suffolk, in order to poach deer in 1645. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the accusers at Sutton were drawn from the wealthier sections of the community, while those accused were among the poorest. Another factor at Sutton was probably religion and the growth of religious sectarianism. The Presbyterian William Hunt was appointed vicar at Sutton in July 1643, but was ejected in 1662. By that time, the village had become a local centre of Quaker evangelism under the leadership of Henry Foster, a wealthy inhabitant, capable, it was said, in 1659, of holding the office of a JP. He subsequently died in prison in 1663. Nonetheless Quaker meetings continued to be held in Sutton after Foster's death when numerous villagers were punished for their attachment to the Friends.

John Bonham married **Bridget** as his second wife just seven weeks after the death of his first wife in 1620. She would appear to have had little time for her stepson who, it was rumoured, had been murdered by her in 1627. Bones discovered in 1636 pointed to her guilt, but despite a formal trial she was found not guilty. **Margaret Moore** (née Holland, originally from Stretham) had married Robert Moore at Sutton in May 1641. She was held responsible for the death of **Thomas Nix**, husbandman, of Witchford, who died in 1637. **William Watson**, a poor man, was married and had five children, two of whom died in infancy.

CUL, EDR E12 1647/9, 14, 16, 22, 23; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 21-2; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 244-51, 267; Gaskill, 'Witchcraft and Power in Early Modern England', 125-45; Lindley, *Fenland Riots and the English Revolution*, 37-40, 96-102, 142-3; HLRO, HP/PO/JO/10/1/192, 19 September 1645; *Cal.Rev.*, 285; *CSPD, 1658-1659*, 358; Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 92, 94, 96.

UPWELL

Witch: Ellen, the wife of Robert Garrison, 'thaxter' (i.e.thatcher or roofer).

Ellen Garrison was indicted on 1 August 1646 for bewitching two children of Robert Parsons, who subsequently died. She was also indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc.

Extensive depositions in this case were taken by John Hobart, JP. Anne, the wife of Daniel Morris of Upwell claimed she was present when Garrison was twice searched. She observed on both occasions large teats, and added that Ellen as well as her mother had long been suspected as witches. She was also a curser and it was widely reported that much harm and damage had followed alteractions with neighbours. Anne, the wife of Stephen Clarke of Outwell, Norfolk, innholder, was also present when Garrison was searched. As a midwife she testified to the extraordinary nature of the teats on Garrison's body.

Richard Denton of Upwell, blacksmith, stated that in about 1643 the constable of Upwell, together with Denton, Stephen Hasell, John Rowe and William Mann, went to Robert Garrison's house intending to press one of their sons for the army. Ellen, none too happy at the prospect, cursed the men and within a few weeks all had lost a cow. Denton was also present when Matthew Hopkins searched Garrison, seeing a beetle run around her chair. Avis, the wife of Thomas Savery, of Upwell, cordwainer, confirmed Denton's last observation as well as that of Stephen Clarke and Daniel Morris.

Robert Parsons of Upwell, butcher, and his wife Katherine deposed that in early March 1646 they had sold a pig to Robert Garrison on condition that his wife should agree to the purchase. When Garrison and her daughter came to collect the animal, and were refused, Ellen vowed vengeance on the Parsons. Within an hour, Katherine says she was 'tormented all over her body as if some were pulling her into peeces'. Having relented and given her the pig, the family continued to suffer ill fortune, losing two children, aged seven and twenty three weeks, and four bullocks. The Parsons were now convinced of Ellen Garrison's guilt, claiming she had been accounted a witch for over twenty years, as had her mother (examination dated 18 September 1646). Hobart promptly sent Garrison to Ely prison, where she was entered on the gaol calendar for 22 September 1646.

At trial, the bill against Garrison for killing the children of Robert Parsons was thrown out on a technicality, and she was found not guilty of entertaining evil spirits.

The fenland parish of Upwell straddled the Cambridgeshire-Norfolk border. Thomas Savery, the husband of the watcher **Avis Savory**, had been arrested in 1637 for insurrection in disturbing the draining of the local fens, but was released without punishment on the grounds of his poverty. Interestingly, the ringleader of the riots was said to be a local woman with a reputation for witchcraft. The examining magistrate, **John Hobart**, was probably the Norfolk colonel of that name, a loyal Cromwellian who sat on the county bench throughout the 1650s.

CUL, EDR, E12, loose bundles of indictments and recognizances, 1646-7; E12 1647/1-3, 6; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 231-3, 235; Lindley, *Fenland Riots and the English Revolution*, 92.

WIMBLINGTON

According to John Stearne, writing in 1648, there was a witch at Wimblington ‘now lately found, still to be tried’, who made a large confession of her witchcrafts.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 17-18.

WISBECH

Witch: Joan Pigge, widow.

Pigge was accused by two witnesses, John Cutbert or Cuthbert, yeoman, and John Scrymshaw, both of Wisbech, of witchcraft. Their statements were taken by Everard Buckworth, JP, on 18 September 1647. Cuthbert claimed that when one of his horses fell sick, he sent for Pigge, knowing her local reputation as a woman of evil fame, and threatened her. The animal temporarily recovered, but others then fell mysteriously sick. Scrymshaw testified to the previous good health of Cuthbert’s horses.

On examination, Pigge claimed that while working for Thomas Anthony of Walsoken, she was sent for by Mary, the wife of John Cuthbert. On entering the stables, she was set upon by Mary, who scratched her and accused her of bewitching her husband’s mare. Some others present threw her on to the horse and ‘their held her downe’. She denied however using any threatening speeches against the Cuthberts at her departure, ‘nor gave any words at all’. She was committed to Ely gaol by Buckworth on 18 September 1647.

The outcome of her trial on 23 September 1647 is not known.

Wisbech has been described at this time as ‘an anxious and divided town’. Much of the anxiety stemmed from the fact that as a local centre of parliamentarianism it sat uncomfortably close to the Norfolk border and an area renowned for royalism. Prior to the witch trials, its people had been subjected to the preaching of unpopular loyalists. Edward Furnace (d.1671), vicar of Wisbech St Peter’s, was finally sequestrated in the summer of 1645 for observing ceremonies and preaching against Parliament and puritans. He was no doubt assisted by Thomas Lee, town lecturer, who was widely rumoured to have liaised with ‘notorious malignants’ in the town, and to have denounced all things puritanical prior to his ejection in the same year. Despite the removal of men like Lee, who was banished from the Isle of Ely, others in the town were suspected of harbouring dangerous, anti-parliamentarian sentiments and plotting for the royal cause. James Whinnell was accused in 1645 of using scandalous words against Lord Saye and Sele. A year later, Henry Rastell was examined by the town authorities, fearful of the fact that he was a servant of the loyal clergyman, Michael Hudson (1604-1648), and a close confidante of the King.

Despite the influence of men like Furnace and Lee, the town itself had long been a centre of nonconformity and would continue to be so after the Restoration. There was, for example, a settled Baptist church here by the mid 1650s.

The accused witch **Joan Pigge** had suffered various misfortunes in the period immediately before her trial for witchcraft. In 1643 her daughter had been killed in an alehouse brawl, and shortly afterwards her husband Henry, whom she had married in 1624, died. The examining magistrate **Everard Buckworth** (d.1652) was the eldest son and heir of Richard Buckworth of Wisbech. His son, Sir John (d.1687), later became a London alderman.

CUL, EDR, E12 1647/8, 13, 23; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 264-5, 329n; *Wal.Rev.*, 80, 82; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/195, 4 November 1645; CUL, MS Mm.I.45, 351, 409-10; *VCH, Cambridgeshire*, vol.4, 250; Taylor, *History of the English General Baptists*, i, 138-41.

WITCHFORD

A number of the victims of Margaret Moore at Sutton (qv) came from Witchford. They were Thomas Nix (d.1637), Thomas Mayne and John Foster. Richard Gunton of Witchford was also a victim of William Watson of Sutton (qv). For further details, see under Sutton.

Nix may have been related to William Nix, a Quaker, imprisoned in 1669 for non-payment of tithes.

Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 94.

ESSEX

ALRESFORD

Witch: Mary Greenleaf or Greencliffe, widow.

On 25 April 1645, the magistrates investigating witchcraft in the Tendring hundred took the information of Susan Sparrow of Little Bentley. She alleged that, thirty years previously, when she lived at Alresford she suspected Greenleaf of witchery. In particular, she claimed that as the two women slept in the same bed one evening they were woken by the crying and screaming of Greenleaf's daughter. Sparrow advised Greenleaf to wake the girl in order to allay the suspicions of neighbours that she might be suckling imps (her mother, apparently, already had a reputation as a witch). Sparrow also claimed that a leveret that she had tried to exorcise or destroy with the help of Anthony Sharlock and Goodman Merrill, both of whom owned

greyhounds, haunted the house. Greenleaf was searched and interrogated the same day, but denied any knowledge of teats, etc.

Arrested and imprisoned, Greenleaf, aged about 84, died in gaol of the plague, 15 August 1645.

Susan Sparrow lived at Little Bentley, a few miles to the NE of Alresford. The minister in the 1630s and 1640s was the puritan Anthony Whiting, who had been in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities in 1638 for allowing communion to be delivered to some parishioners, including his wife, outside the altar rail. In 1646, along with other puritan colleagues in Essex and Suffolk, he signed the petition calling for an end to religious anarchy and a moderate settlement in church affairs.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 222; Anon., *True and Exact Relation of the Severall Informations, Examinations and Confessions of the Late Witches ... of Essex*, 15-17; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 269; TNA, KB 9/838, m.377; ERO, D/ACA/52, fo.232r; *Humble Petition of the Ministers of the Counties of Suffolke and Essex*, sig.A4r.

COLCHESTER

Witch: Alice Stansby.

Stansby, a poor widow from the parish of St Giles, was examined by the Wivenhoe searchers Helen Mayor and Elizabeth Hunt with four local women present. A weaver's wife from the parish of Holy Trinity (name?) confirmed the discovery of various teats, and a midwife from St Botolph's (name?) verified the extraordinary nature of these 'bigges'. The fate of Stansby (and probably others) is unknown.

There is no certain evidence as to why the witch-hunt failed to take hold in Colchester, a town riven with factional disputes and by religious controversy. Gaskill is probably correct in suggesting a combination of factors: economic (inordinate cost of prosecuting witches); medical (fear of overcrowding in the town's gaol, where the Tendring witches were then being held); and political (resentment and opposition to the mayor, Robert Buxton (d.1655), who had authorised payment of the witch searchers). Buxton, it should be noted, had formerly supported the introduction of the Laudian reformation of the borough's parishes when mayor in 1635-6. A royalist sympathiser (he was later ejected from the corporation in 1648 for supporting the royalist occupation of the town), he may well have used the witch trials as an opportunity to forge links with more moderate elements in the parliamentary party, including the town's MP, **Sir Harbottle Grimston**. There is little doubt that by the time of the witch episode, more radical groups in the town were becoming ever more dissatisfied with the 'moderate' Grimston (grumblings had begun as early as 1642-3), amid growing suspicions that he and others among the county's elite were less than wholehearted in their support for the war effort. The discovery of the witch, Alice Stansby, also coincided with the visit of the antinomian Baptist, Thomas Webbe, who briefly stayed at the house of Mr Sparrow in the town in July 1645.

ERO, D/B5/Sb2/8, ff.1-1v; D/B5/Ab1/17 [1645]; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 75-6; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 58.

GREAT CLACTON

Witches: Anne, the wife of John Cooper, labourer; Joan Cooper, widow; Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Hare or Heare, yeoman; Dorothy, the wife of Robert Waters, labourer; Mary Wiles, widow.

Anne Cooper was indicted on three counts: 1. the murder by witchcraft of James, the son of John Curstissurre or Curstifarre of Great Clacton [witnesses: John Curstifarre and Joseph Long]; true bill; 2. the murder by witchcraft of Mary, the five year-old daughter of John Knights [witnesses: Joseph Long; Roger Hempson; Ellen Mayers/Helen Mayor; Elizabeth Hunt; Anne Martyn]; true bill; 3. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Joseph Long; Anne Martyn, Roger Hempson]; true bill.

Elizabeth Hare or Heare was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc, as witnessed by Roger Hempson and Joseph Knights. True bill.

Dorothy Waters was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc, as witnessed by Joseph Long and Richard Cole. True bill.

Mary Wiles was indicted on three counts: 1. the murder by witchcraft of Anne, the daughter of Michael de Greate, of Great Clacton, yeoman [witnesses: Joseph Long; Richard Cole; Ellen Mayors/Helen Mayor; Elizabeth Hunt]; true bill; 2. the murder by witchcraft of Anthony, the son of Edward Blowers of Great Clacton, yeoman [witnesses: Edward Blowers; Joseph Long; Richard Cole; Ellen Mayers/Helen Mayor; Elizabeth Hunt; Priscilla Brigges]; true bill; 3. the wounding by witchcraft of George Fossitt of Great Clacton, yeoman [witnesses: Richard Cole; Joseph Long; Alexander Bryon; Ellen Mayers/Helen Mayor; Elizabeth Hunt; Anne Martyn]; true bill.

Anne Cooper was executed at Manningtree on 1 August 1645. Joan Cooper (who does not appear to have been officially indicted) died in prison, aged 80, on 27 May 1645. Elizabeth Hare or Heare was subsequently reprieved but died in gaol in February 1646. Dorothy Waters was subsequently pardoned in March 1646, but too late, for she had died in gaol on 24 February 1646. Sentence of death was passed on Mary Wiles.

Joseph Long, the minister of Great Clacton, claimed that Anne Cooper had confessed to him that she was ‘guilty of the sin of witchcraft’. He also stated that she had confessed to bewitching a colt belonging to William Cottingham of Great Clacton and that she had offered the use of her imp to her daughter Sarah. Ten years before, having fallen out with Joan, the wife of Gregory Rous, of Great

Clacton, she sent one of her imps to kill their daughter Mary. Roger Hempson confirmed Long's evidence and also claimed that when the minister told Elizabeth Hare that she had been accused by one Mary Smith [probably an error for Wiles] of giving her two imps, she is alleged to have replied that if she were guilty then God would make an example of her. She had since suffered from debilitating fits and sickness. Joan Cooper confessed to having been a witch for twenty years, and to having sent her imps to kill a child of Thomas Woodward, as well as two belonging to John Cartwright, both men living in the neighbouring parish of Great Holland (qv). Others were dispatched to kill the wife of George Parby of the same parish. One of the accused witches at St Osyth (qv), Rebecca Jones, claimed that she had received her imps from the Devil while working at the house of John Bishop in Great ('Much') Clacton.

One of the chief witnesses at Great Clacton was the vicar **Joseph Long** (d.1662). Long was appointed to the living by the Catholic recusant Lord Rivers of St Osyth (qv), and displayed a marked tendency to support the Arminian innovations of the 1630s. In 1644 he was sequestered from his other living at Fingringhoe, where he was accused, among other things, of being non-resident, a swearer, an alehouse haunter and an 'innovator', who denied the sacrament to those who refused to come up to the rails to receive. He clung on at Great Clacton, however, where he remained until his death in 1662. Gaskill is no doubt right to suggest that his involvement in the witch trials of 1645 was 'a bid to reintegrate himself in the moral life of the community'. By this date, the parish had adopted puritan reform and a number of its parishioners had been involved in the desecration and burning of the detested altar rails at neighbouring Great Holland and St Osyth (qqv).

All the accused witches would appear to have been drawn from the ranks of the parish poor. **Widow Wiles**, for example, regularly received small alms. **Dorothy Waters** may have earlier witnessed against a fellow witch, Bridget Mayers of Great Holland (qv).

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 223, 228-9; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 18-19, 33, 34; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 66-7; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 268; TNA, KB 9/838, m.380; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; *Wal.Rev.*, 158; BL, Add MS 5829, 86; ERO, Q/SR 311/50-51; D/P 179/8/1.

GREAT HOLLAND

Witches: Anne Cade or Maidenhead; Bridget, the wife of George Mayers, seaman; Anne, the wife of Edward Therston, husbandman.

Anne Cade was indicted on two counts: 1. the murder by witchcraft of Susanna, the daughter of John Rawlinson, butcher [witnesses: Edward Darrell; John Alderton; Samuel Ray; John Rawlinson; Christopher Fuller; Frances Throten; widow Freeman; Ellen Mayers/Helen Mayor, widow; Elizabeth Hunt]; true bill; 2. the murder by witchcraft of Grace, the wife of Samuel Ray or Wray, yeoman

[witnesses: John Alderton; Samuel Ray or Wray, Frank Drawton; widow Freeman; George Barney; William Freeman; John Rawlinson]; true bill.

Bridget Mayers was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: John Alderton; Samuel Ray or Wray; John Rawlinson; John Basslitt; Frances Throten; widow Freeman; Ellen Mayers/Helen Mayor; Bridget Hunt; Dorothy Waltas]; true bill.

Anne Therston was indicted on two counts: 1. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Samuel Ray or Wray; John Alderton]; true bill; 2. for bewitching to death a black cow belonging to John Alderton of Great Holland, yeoman [witnesses: John Alderton and Samuel Ray or Wray]; true bill.

In addition to these cases, Joan Cooper of Great Clacton (qv) confessed to having done harm to Thomas Woodward, John Cartwright and George Parby, all from Great Holland. In further confessions contained in a contemporary pamphlet account of the Essex trials, Anne Cade admitted to sending imps to kill several Great Holland inhabitants, including the daughter of John Rawlins, a child of John Tillet, the wife and child of Samuel Ray (see above), and child of George Parby.

Mayers and Therston were both still alive and in prison in 1648 despite having been pardoned by the House of Lords in March 1646. Cade was found guilty and condemned to hang.

Following the appointment of Edward Cherry (d.1678) to the living of Great Holland in 1633 the parish was rarely at peace. In the year of his appointment, one woman in the village told Cherry that ‘she should not fear him if he were ten parsons ... and that she cared not for ever a parson in England’. Cherry, who as a client of the recusant Lord Rivers also held the living of St Osyth, was sequestrated in 1643. Among his many crimes, he was said to have been a fervent supporter of all the Laudian innovations in practice and belief, arguing that all men might be saved and rarely preaching. Morally and politically suspect, he finally fled to join the royalist armies, leaving the cure unsupplied. The writing had appeared on the wall for Cherry and his like in 1640, when the altar rails were ceremoniously desecrated and destroyed at Great Holland and St Osyth. With his removal, the parish entered a period of instability punctuated by puritan evangelism. Some time between 1643 and 1646, for example, Great Holland was briefly subjected to the preaching of the puritan firebrand Anthony Laphorne (1572-1658 or 1659), who had revived the distinctively puritan practice of exorcism in one of his previous Herefordshire livings in 1634. Cherry, however, who never gave up on his claims to the living (see below), was finally restored in 1660 and continued to serve the cure until his death in 1678.

Two of the witnesses against the witches at Great Holland were probably men of a similar spirit to Laphorne. **John Alderton**, for example, later served for the village as a Presbyterian elder in the Tendring classis in 1648. In all probability, his fellow witness **Edward Darrell** was in the fact the newly installed minister, **Edward Dowell**, who later

complained that Cherry was seeking to regain possession of the parsonage and tithes through the threat of violence. **Dorothy Waltas**, who witnessed against Bridget Mayers, was probably the same as the **Dorothy Walters**, who was herself accused of witchcraft at Great Clacton (qv) later the same year. **Anne Cade** was previously tried for witchcraft at the assizes in 1638, when she was accused of murdering Susan Rawlinson, probably the wife of John Rawlinson.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 219, 225-6, 229, 231; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 34-5; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 72-3; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 268, 269; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; ERO, D/ABA/6, fo.57v; *Wal.Rev.*, 147-8; White, *First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests*, 3; ERO, Q/SR 311/50-51; *ODNB*, sub Laphorne, Anthony; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 389.

KIRBY LE SOKEN

Witches: Helen, the wife of Thomas Bretton, husbandman; Mary, the wife of John Coppin, husbandman.

Helen Bretton was indicted for the murder by witchcraft of Henry, the son of William Giles, bricklayer [witnesses: Ellen Mayors/Helen Mayor; Elizabeth Hunt; Jane Gates; Thomas Psalter; Richard Cole; John Hill; William Giles]; true bill.

Mary Coppin was indicted for the murder by witchcraft of Alice, the daughter of William Astin of Kirby, bricklayer [witnesses: Ellen Mayors/Helen Mayor; Elizabeth Hunt; William Astin]; true bill.

Both Bretton and Coppin were sentenced to hang. Though Coppin was reprieved in March 1646, she was still in prison in 1648. Coppin was spared at the intervention of a clergyman, Mr Gray (probably the puritan preacher Enoch Grey of Wickham, Essex).

Kirby, like many of the Tendring parishes affected by witchcraft, had experienced religious upheaval in the years immediately prior to the trials. The minister in the late 1630s, Peter Devereux, son of the puritan minister of that name from Rattlesden (qv) in Suffolk, was removed in 1639 and replaced by a Laudian acolyte, John Kidby (d.1694). In January 1643 the House of Commons ordered Kidby's arrest on a charge of speaking dangerous words against Parliament and he was sequestered shortly thereafter. It is not known who was officiating at Kirby at the time of the witch trials. It would appear, however, that Kirby remained a centre of disaffection. In early 1646, Thomas Darnell, sequestered at neighbouring Thorpe (qv) was living in the parish, when he entered a recognizance to keep the peace toward two fellow parishioners (cause unknown).

In all probability the witness **Thomas Psalter** was the puritan clergyman of that name, more usually referred to as **Thomas Salter** (or in error as Slaughter), who was presented to the living of nearby Great Bromley in 1629 by the witch-hunting magistrate, **Sir Thomas Bowes**. Salter (d.1652) was a member of the Tendring classis. He was also a

signatory to the petition of Essex and Suffolk ministers calling for moral reformation and church settlement in 1646. The Salters would appear to have been related to the family of the Bowes. In the will of Sir Thomas Bowes' son, also Thomas, he refers to one Thomas Salter (almost certainly the son of the clergyman) as his 'very good friend and kinsman'. Salter's home parish of Great Bromley produced no witches, but it had suffered under the new Laudian regime of the 1630s, when it provided many emigrants for New England. The new policy on altar rails was not implemented until 1638, and then with great reluctance. Salter was married by his puritan colleague John Eedes at nearby Lawford (qv) in 1636.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 223, 227; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 67, 304-5; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; *Wal.Rev.*, 157; Davids, *Annals*, 296; ERO, D/ACA/48, fo.153; *Humble Petition*, sig.A4r; ERO, Q/SR 328/55 [recognizance of Thomas Darnell, 17 February 1645/6]; TNA, PROB 11/222, fos 69v-70v [will of Thomas Salter, 12 and 13 January 1651/2; proved 25 May 1652]; PROB 11/366, fos 299r-300r [will of Thomas Bowes, 26 May and 26 June 1671; proved 22 June 1681]; Powell, *Puritan Village*, 70-1; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration from East Anglia to New England, Appendix 1, lxii, cxi; Minchin, 'The Churches of Great and Little Bromley', 292-3; ERO, D/P/347/1/1, sub 29 February 1635/6.

LANGHAM

Witches: Mary Cooke, widow; Mary, the wife of John Sterling, yeoman; Susanna Went, widow.

Mary Sterling was indicted on two counts: 1. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Frances Mills, Isaac Beamis; Grace Norman]; true bill; 2. murder by witchcraft of Robert Potter Jnr, yeoman [witnesses: Widow [Frances] Mills; Grace Norman; John Stearne; Thomas Read; Matthew Hopkins; Henry Talbot; Elisha Cole; Isaac Beamis]; true bill.

Susanna Went was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Widow [Frances] Mills; Grace Norman; Anne Wright; Matthew Hopkins; Nicholas Freeman]; true bill.

Cooke, who was not formally indicted, died in prison, aged 60, 29 May 1645. Pardoned in March 1646, Sterling was still in prison in 1648. Went, also pardoned and aged seventy, died of the plague on 4 April 1646.

The victim **Robert Potter Jnr** (d.1643) was a recently married man with two small children by his wife Lucretia, née Cooke. In his will, written hastily just before his death, he described himself as a clothier. Among those who witnessed against the Langham witches was Potter's brother-in-law **Isaac Beamis**, who buried an infant son in 1641. Of the five Langham men who witnessed against Mary Sterling and Susanna Went, the wealthiest was probably the clothier **Nicholas Freeman** (d.1681), a friend of Potter's father, Robert (d.1650). He later served as a constable of the parish. **Henry Talbot** (d.1660) was a tailor. I have not been able to identify the occupations of **Thomas Read**

(d.1651) and **Elisha Cole** (d.1656). Suspicions surrounding the death of Robert Potter were almost certainly exacerbated by the fact that two of his brothers, Daniel and Nathaniel, rapidly followed him to the grave in the summer of 1643.

The parish of Langham possessed close social, economic and religious ties to the neighbouring town of Dedham, a centre of godly preaching in the Stour Valley. The rector of Langham at the time of the witch trials was a moderate puritan named John Ferrar (d.1649) whose wife Margaret died just a few months before the first accusations were made in the village. He subsequently re-married and died in 1649, leaving a very small estate. It might also be worth noting that during the 1630s Langham was the home of the staunch puritan and parliamentarian propagandist Nathaniel Bacon (d.1660), one of whose sons Francis was born and buried in the village in 1640. Bacon, who was on close terms with Matthew Hopkins' father in the 1620s, was later active in interrogating witches at Glemham (qv) in Suffolk in 1645.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 223, 225, 231; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 74; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 268-9; TNA, KB 9/838, m.381; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; ERO, D/P 154/1/1; ERO, D/ABW 58/54 [will of Robert Potter Jnr, 20 April 1643; proved 4 November 1643]; D/ABW 52/173 [will of Isaac Beamis, yeoman, 9 May 1634; proved 31 July 1634]; TNA, PROB 11/180 [will of Luke Beamis, yeoman, 4 April 1639; proved 17 May 1639]; ERO, D/ABW 71/165 [will of Nicholas Freeman the elder, clothier, 30 January 1680/1; proved 5 February 1684/5]; ERO, Q/SR 378/24; D/ABW 61/58 [will of Henry Tabut, i.e. Talbot, tailor, 13 October 1660; proved 14 January 1660/1]; TNA, PROB 11/208, ff.431v-432r [will of John Farrer, i.e. Ferrar, 17 May 1649; proved 12 July 1649]; *ODNB*, sub Bacon, Nathaniel.

LAWFORD

Witches: Anne West, widow; Rebecca West (daughter of Anne).

Anne West was indicted on two counts: 1. murder by witchcraft of John, the son of John Cutler, yeoman, of Lawford [witnesses: John Cutler; John Everard; Rebecca West]; true bill; 2. for entertaining evil spirits, etc at Manningtree [witnesses: John Cutler; John Everard; John Eedes; Thomas Hart].

Rebecca West was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc at Lawford [witnesses: John Cutler; Thomas Hart]. True bill.

According to a contemporary pamphlet Prudence, the wife of Thomas Hart, deposed that she suffered a painful miscarriage and paralysis at the hands of Rebecca West. West herself implicated her mother, Anne, in the murder of George Francis, the infant son of George Francis of Lawford. She also provided valuable information about the strange 'bible meetings' that took place at the home of Elizabeth Clarke of Manningtree (qv) and which were attended by other witches from the surrounding neighbourhood. Clarke herself later confessed to causing the death of the wife of Robert Oakes of Lawford in March 1645.

Anne West was executed at Manningtree, 1 August 1645. Her daughter Rebecca was acquitted, probably for turning king's evidence against her mother.

Under the spiritual leadership of the puritan minister **John Edes** (d.1658), Lawford would appear to have represented an island of godly piety in an area that was otherwise highly conservative in religion. Edes himself was well connected to some of the leading lights of the pre-civil war puritan movement in Essex, supporting the petition in favour of the charismatic preacher Thomas Hooker (d.1647) in 1629. He would later sign the petition of the Essex clergy in favour of a moderate church settlement in 1646 and serve as a member of the embryonic Presbyterian classis in Tendring in 1648. Some of his godliness clearly rubbed off on his parishioners. Some opted for exile in New England in the 1630s, while others fought their corner, obstinately objecting to the various Laudian innovations. Typical was William Ballitoant, churchwarden, who in 1638 told Laud's commissary Dr Robert Aylett that he, along with the rest of the parish, had no intention of paying for the railing of the altar in Lawford church. The reputation of the village may have attracted puritan dissidents from the area to seek refuge there. The iconoclast William Dowsing, for example, was living in Lawford in 1640. On 10 May 1640 he buried his first wife on the same day that he baptised his daughter Abigail. Further evidence of the village's sympathy for the puritan-parliamentarian cause is suggested by the baptism in Lawford in October 1645, at the height of the witch scare, of a local minister's child with the name of John Nasebyfield Ellis.

George Francis (d.1661), one of the victims of Anne West, was himself an important figure in the local puritan movement, serving alongside Edes as lay elder for the parish in the Presbyterian reorganization of Essex in the late 1640s. He later asked his 'reverend friend' Eedes to preach his funeral sermon. Mistakenly described by Gaskill as living at nearby Rivenhall (qv), he was in fact 'one of the chief inhabitants of that town where the said Anne West dwelt', i.e. Lawford. He also owned various parcels of freehold land in Manningtree (qv).

Anne West was described by John Stearne as one who with other accused witches were esteemed 'very religious people'. Her reputation, however, had not prevented her earlier prosecution for witchcraft in 1641 when it was alleged that she had killed a sow belonging to **Thomas Hart** (d.1655), a local wheelwright. Acquitted on this occasion, shortly after she was the subject of a petition presented to the assize judges in which she was described as 'a very dangerous person amongst her neighbours'. The local magistrate **Sir Thomas Bowes** ensured that she was taken into captivity but again she would appear to have escaped punishment at the spring assizes in 1642. Unusually, Bowes himself would later give evidence in person against Anne West in 1645, based on information received from one **Goffe**, a glover from Manningtree (qv). The Goffes were yeoman farmers in Lawford and may have been related to Francis Goffe (d.1648), of Mistle-cum-Manningtree, whose will was witnessed by the Lawford physician John Rochester. Close connections with **George Francis** are suggested by the fact that he, in turn, witnessed the will of William Goffe of Lawford.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 220, 224-5; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 4-5, 11-13, 35-6; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 16, 38-9; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 37-8, 40, 52-3, 57-61, 123; Davids, *Annals*, 156-7;

Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England*, 46-7; *Humble Petition*, sig.A4r; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 389; ERO, D/P 347/1/1 [parish registers of Lawford, 1558-1753/64]; TNA, PROB 11/308, fos 236v-237v [will of George Francis, gent., 14 January 1656/7; proved 17 June 1662]; Shipps, 'Lay Patronage of Puritan Clerics in Pre-Revolutionary England', Appendix 1, xviii, 1, cxv [where it is erroneously stated that Edes himself immigrated to New England; this is probably his son or grandson, John]; ERO, D/ACA/53, fos 49, 64v; TNA, PROB 11/249, fos 369r-v [will of Thomas Hart, 20 May 1651; proved 26 May 1655]; 11/203, fo.397v [will of Francis Goffe, 7 January 1647/8; proved 27 March 1648]; PROB 11/207, fos 89v-90r [will of William Goffe, 1 June 1648; proved 21 January 1648/9].

LEIGH

Witch: Joan Rowle, widow.

Rowle was indicted on three counts: 1. for 'wounding and consuming' by witchcraft Rachel, the daughter of John North [witnesses: Rachel North (mother?); [...] Dreamer; Anne Chapill; Samuel Read; Martha Barnard; Ellen Emere; Elizabeth Osborne; Mary Lam]; true bill; 2. for murder of above by witchcraft [same witnesses]; true bill; 3. murder of John North [same witnesses as 1 and 2 above]; true bill.

Rowle was acquitted on all three charges.

Leigh was a small centre for fishing and ship building in the seventeenth century. Its maritime connections may have helped to encourage early evangelisation. From 1585 to 1609 it fell under the charismatic ministry of the puritan William Negus (c.1559-1616), and remained a centre of puritan preaching for much of the rest of the seventeenth century. At the time of the witch trials, the rector was John Argor (d.1679). He was presented to the living in 1639 by Robert, earl of Warwick, who presided over the 1645 trials at Chelmsford. Argor removed to Braintree in 1650, where he replaced Samuel Collins. In the late 1640s, many of its inhabitants were active in the new fourth classis established for Presbyterian worship in this part of Essex. It is possible that one of the witnesses against Joan Rowle was either the same as or related to Richard **Dreamer**, who served as elder for neighbouring South Shoebury at the same time.

Leigh had been the site of an earlier witchcraft investigation in 1622, when Alice Soles was questioned by magistrates and the church courts for sorcery.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 226-7; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 128; *Cal.Rev.*, 14-15; *ODNB*, sub Negus, William; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 378, 379; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 295.

LITTLE BENTLEY: see ALRESFORD

LITTLE CLACTON

Witch: Mistress Waite.

In July 1645, various London newspapers reported that one ‘Mistress Waite’, a minister’s wife ‘of a very godly and religious life’ and an Independent, was executed along with other witches in Essex. Her name, however, does not appear on any official lists or judicial documents.

Given the location of the witch hunts, it seems reasonable to assume that she was the wife of Henry Waite or Wayte, presented as rector of Little Clacton on 13 August 1642 by Elizabeth, countess Rivers. He was still there in 1650.

Rebecca Jones of St Osyth (qv) claimed under examination that she had first been inducted as a witch by the Devil while working as a servant at the house of John Bishop in Great Clacton, and that she subsequently used her imps to destroy a sow belonging to Benjamin Howes of Little Clacton.

It may also be reasonable to assume that the Philip Daniel who suffered at the hands of Margaret Moone of Thorpe-le-Soken (his horse broke its neck while carrying a wagon down hill) was the same as the man of that name who acted as lay elder for Little Clacton in the nascent Presbyterian classis established in Tendring in the late 1640s. The absence of Henry Waite’s name as minister may well be explained by the fate of his wife.

Little Clacton experienced immigration to New England in the mid 1630s. At the visitation of 1639, the bishop’s commissary Robert Aylett found neither cloth nor carpet for the communion table in the parish church. Henry Wayte, rector here at the time of the witch trials (above), had formerly held the living of nearby Elmstead (presented by the King in 1630), but was put out of his place when the ownership of the living reverted back to the master and fellows of Jesus College, Cambridge. Wayte has left no record in the parish registers of Little Clacton, which are incomplete for the period from 1641 to 1652. Philip Daniel, lay elder for the village, died in 1653 [see under Thorpe-le-Soken].

Parliament’s Post (23-29 July 1645), 1, 8; *Weekly Account* (23-29 July 1645), 3; *A Diary, or an Exact Journal* (24-31 July 1645), 5-6; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 141, 306; Newcourt, *Repertorium*, ii, 155, 243-4; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 22, 33; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 389; Tyack, ‘Puritan Migration’, 320; Appendix 1, lxii; ERO, D/P 80/1/1.

MANNINGTREE

Witches: Sarah Bright, widow; Elizabeth Clarke; Ellen, the wife of Thomas Clarke, mason; Elizabeth, the wife of Edward Goodwyn, labourer.

Sarah Bright was indicted for the murder by witchcraft of Anne, the daughter of Henry Woolvett of Manningtree, mason [witnesses: widow Winterflood; the wife of Henry Woolvett; widow Applegate; Elizabeth Potter, widow]; true bill.

Elizabeth Clarke was indicted on two counts: 1. murder by witchcraft of John, the son of Richard Edwards, of Manningtree [witnesses: Robert Tayler; Edward Parsley]; true bill; 2. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Matthew Hopkins; John Stearne; Edward Parsley; Mary Phillipps; Frances Mills, widow]; true bill.

Ellen (Helen) Clarke was indicted for the murder by witchcraft of Anne Parsley of Manningtree [witnesses: Matthew Hopkins; Susan Edwards; John Stearne; Grace Norman; Edward Parsley]; true bill. NB: The pamphlet account, probably in error, refers to the victim as Mary Parsley (below).

Elizabeth Goodwyn or Gooding was indicted on two counts: 1. murder by witchcraft of John, the son of Richard Edwards, gent, of Manningtree [witnesses: Susanna Edwards; Rebecca West; Mary Phillips]; true bill; 2. entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Susanna Edwards; Matthew Hopkins; Grace Norman; Jonathan Freelove; John Stearne]; true bill.

The death of John Edwards, the infant son of the Manningtree gentleman Richard Edwards, was attributed to Elizabeth Clarke and Elizabeth Goodwyn of Manningtree, Margaret Moone of Thorpe-le-Soken (qv) and Anne Leach of Mistley (qv). In addition to the surviving trial records, the pamphlet account of 1645 records further information relating to witchcraft at Manningtree. One of the first to inform against Elizabeth Clarke, for example, was the Manningtree tailor, John Rivet. When his wife fell ill, his suspicions were aroused partly because it was well known that Clarke's mother and kinfolk had been executed for witchcraft, and partly because a Suffolk cunning man (one Hovye's wife at Hadleigh in Suffolk) had suggested her as the culprit. According to Hopkins, Clarke had confessed to him that 'Satan would never let her rest or be quiet' until she had killed the hogs of Richard Edwards and a horse belonging to Robert Tayler. Many of those watching Clarke also claimed that she had confessed to killing the wife of one Robert Oakes of Lawford (qv) as well as being responsible for the death of an unnamed clothier's child of Dedham (both in March 1645). She also admitted that 'Beldame' West (i.e. Anne West) caused the death of William Cole of Manningtree. Others, probably from Manningtree, to inform against Clarke included: George Turner (he questioned her over the death of his brother, Thomas, two and a half years earlier; she blamed Anne West); John Bankes (a watcher); Edward Parsley (watcher; he claimed she admitted to having carnal relations with the Devil); Robert Tayler, grocer (refused Goodwyn or Gooding cheese and subsequently fell from his horse; he claimed that she was widely accounted a witch).

Richard Edwards claimed to have suffered also at the hands of Anne Leech of Mistley, losing cattle and a child under mysterious circumstances. He, too, suffered an unexpected fall from his horse when returning one day from East Bergholt in Suffolk, a crime for which Leech admitted responsibility. Under interrogation, Leech also admitted to sending imps to afflict Elizabeth, the daughter of Robert Kirk of Manningtree, who died about 1643. She also knew of the imp that Elizabeth

Goodwyn/Gooding had sent to torment Mary, the wife of John Tayler, of Manningtree, and provided information about the various meetings held at the house of Elizabeth Clarke where Anne West and Goodwyn/Gooding were also present and ‘a book [was] read, wherein she thinks there was no goodness’.

Grace, the wife of Richard Glascock of Manningtree, informed that following a dispute between Mary, the wife of Edward Parsley, and Ellen (Helen, the wife of Thomas Clark, daughter of Anne Leech of Mistley (qv)), she heard Ellen say that Parsley’s daughter Mary ‘should rue for all’. She subsequently died six weeks later. The details were confirmed by Edward Parsley but denied by Ellen Clarke.

The two searchers, Mary Philipps and Frances Mills were evidently inhabitants of Manningtree. The accused witch, Margaret Moone of Thorpe-le-Soken, described them as ‘Manningtree rogues’. Finally, Sir Thomas Bowes took the unusual step of speaking from the bench to confirm the guilt of Anne West of Lawford (qv) on the information of one Goff of Manningtree, a glover and ‘an honest man ... whom he knew would not speake an untruth’.

Sarah Bright, Elizabeth Clarke and Elizabeth Goodwyn were executed at Chelmsford on 18 July 1645. Ellen or Helen Clarke suffered the same fate at Manningtree on 1 August 1645.

The parish church of Manningtree had been allowed to fall into a state of extreme delapidation by the early seventeenth century, when many parishioners were attending service at nearby Mistley (qv). The church was restored and rebuilt in about 1616 and became a small centre of puritan devotion under the auspices of Thomas Witham who was installed as rector in 1610. As a moderate puritan with reservations about various aspects of the Anglican liturgy, Witham tried to exploit the fact that Manningtree, as a chapel of ease, was unconsecrated. In 1632, for example, when he was reported to preach there without a surplice, he retorted, somewhat disingenuously, that he did not feel that it was necessary to wear the surplice as the church was only used for prayers and preaching (the annual rituals of communion, and commemoration of births, marriage and deaths took place at Mistley). Witham was also well connected to the mainstream of Essex puritanism, listing among his friends the celebrated preacher John Rogers. His daughter Anne married the godly clothier, Bezaliel Angier of Dedham, in 1630. Angier was a close associate of the iconoclast William Dowsing, who was living at nearby Lawford some time in the early 1640s (see above).

Some time after 1635, Mary, the widow of James Hopkins and father of the witch hunter Matthew, married Thomas Witham. Five years later, Witham’s daughter Susan married **Richard Edwards**, a wealthy local landowner with a house in Manningtree and property in nearby Lawford and Ramsey (qqv). The couple had four children between 1640 and 1644, but only one survived. John Edwards’s death in 1644 was almost certainly responsible for igniting the interest of the young **Matthew Hopkins** (d.1647) in the activities of local witches and he sought to comfort his stepsister and brother-in-law. The interlocking relations between these three families suggest that religion – in particular

Presbyterianism – was an important factor in the early stages of the witch hunt at Manningtree. Matthew’s father, James, who had held the Suffolk living of Great Wenham (five miles from Manningtree) until his death in January 1635, was on friendly terms with a number of local puritan notables, including John Winthrop the elder (1588-1649), a recent emigrant to New England, and Nathaniel Bacon (1593-1660) of Ipswich. **Richard Edwards** held local office, serving as chief constable of Tendring hundred in 1642.

Other witnesses from Manningtree were equally committed puritans. **Robert Tayler** (d.1648), for example, was to serve as an elder for Manningtree in the Presbyterian reorganization of Tendring in the late 1640s. He was also a business associate of Edwards, holding rights to property in Manningtree, Mistley, Lawford (qqv) and Bradfield. Even those of lower social status often demonstrated remarkable commitment to the puritan cause. Most notable in this respect was the Manningtree bricklayer **Edward Parsley**, who was both a witness to, and victim of, local witches in 1645. Nine years earlier, in 1636, Parsley’s outspoken opposition to bishop Wren of Norwich was partially responsible for causing a riot in nearby Ipswich (qv). While he may not have received a conventional education, his religious sensibilities were clearly well informed and held with deep conviction. Among other things, Parsley, described in contemporary depositions as a very poor man ‘ready to starve’, remonstrated with Wren’s commissioners, claiming they had no authority to oppress the people of Ipswich and that they lacked the required approval of Parliament. In addition, he was alleged to have insinuated that there was a plot to make all the king’s subjects follow the religion of his Catholic wife, and offered to dispute with Dr Goad on the illegitimacy of altars and the sacred nature of the sabbath. Hopkins’ associate **John Stearne**, who would later suffer for his sabbatarian ideals at Lawshall in Suffolk, would appear to have been living in Manningtree immediately prior to the witch hunt. In February 1642, his son George was baptised at Mistley, presumably by Hopkins’ stepfather, and the following year he described himself as ‘gentleman’ of Manningtree in a recognizance for an Ardleigh widow accused of theft.

Two years after the witch trials of 1645, Nicholas Leech of Manningtree, labourer, was indicted for the murder by witchcraft of Anthony, the son of Anthony Snelling, but was found not guilty.

The accused witch **Elizabeth Rowe or Roice (Goodwin)** had married Edward Goodwin at Mistley on 12 April 1621.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 223-4, 224-5, 225, 227-8, 231-2; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 1-10, 25, 35; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 33-8 and *passim*; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 138; Fell Smith, ‘A Note on Manningtree in 1611’, 153-5; Webster, *Godly Clergy*, 198, 200, 248; TNA, SP 16/218/43, fo.110v; LMA, DL/C/319, fo.63; *ODNB*, sub Hopkins, Matthew; Timbers, ‘Witches’ Sect or Prayer Meeting?’, 25-6; TNA, PROB 11/182, fos 56v-57v [will of Richard Edwards, 13 September 1639; proved 31 January 1639/40]; PROB 11/204, fos 242v-243v [will of Robert Taylor, gent., 7 April 1648; proved 5 May 1648]; ASSI 35/83/42; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 389; ESkRO, C2/18/1, 2, 12-16; TNA, SP 24/10, fos 102v-

103r, 159r; SP 24/78; ERO, D/P/343/1/1; ERO, Q/SR 320/59 [recognizance of Mary Debny or Debnam, widow, of Ardleigh, 2 October 1643].

MISTLEY

Witch: Anne Leech, widow.

Leach was indicted for murdering by the use of witchcraft John, the son of Richard Edwards, gentleman, of Manningtree (qv) [witnesses: Matthew Hopkins; John Stearne; Richard Edwards; Susan Edwards]; true bill.

According to a contemporary pamphlet, on examination Leach also confessed to various other crimes, including harming Richard Edwards' cows; thirty years before, killing two horses belonging to Mr Bragge of Mistley, because Mrs Bragge 'suspected her to be a naughty woman'; three years previously sending imps to kill Elizabeth, the daughter of Robert Kirk of Manningtree; sending imps to kill the daughter of widow Rawlyns of Mistley (she was put into a farm formerly occupied by Leach). In addition she claimed that about thirty years ago, she received imps from Anne, the wife of Robert Pearce, her brother, of Stoke in Suffolk. She knew of the imps sent by Elizabeth Gooding to torment Mary, the daughter of John Tayler of Manningtree, and admitted to attending the 'prayer meetings' held at the house of Elizabeth Clarke at Manningtree.

Leach was executed at Chelmsford on 18 July 1645. She was probably related to Nicholas Leech of Manningtree who was unsuccessfully indicted for witchcraft at the assizes in 1647.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 223, 231-2; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 8-9; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 56-60. See also under Manningtree, above.

RAMSEY

Witches: Elizabeth Harvey, widow; Sarah, the wife of William Hatyn, tailor; Mary Hockett, widow.

Elizabeth Harvey was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Bridget Reynolds; Joan Taylor; Mary Phillips; Mary Edwards; John Batteny; John Felgate; Francis Stock; John Battley]; true bill.

Sarah Hatyn was indicted on three counts: 1. for the murder by witchcraft of Lionel Jefferson [witnesses: Robert Hayward; William Joy]; true bill; 2. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Bridget Reynolds; Joan Taylor; Mary Edwards; Mary Phillips; William Joy; Robert Hayward]; true bill; 3. for the murder by witchcraft of Robert Greene [same witnesses as no.2]; no verdict recorded.

Mary Hockett was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Bridget Reynolds; Joan Taylor; Mary Phillips; Mary Edwards; John Batteny; John Felgate; John Stearne]; true bill.

A contemporary pamphlet account refers to the witness Bridget Reynolds as a midwife and the wife of Edward Reynolds. It also contains the information given by Elizabeth, the wife of Edward Durden. Francis Stock, who witnessed against Harvey, claimed to have served as a constable five years earlier when he was responsible for impressing William Hatyn, the husband of the suspected witch, Sarah. After William had threatened him, his house was plagued by a snake and his wife suffered extraordinary fits from which she died within a week. Two daughters also died shortly afterwards, as did one of his manservants after giving ill language to John Hatyn, the son of the accused witch Sarah. John Felgate added that he had spoken with Sarah Barton, the sister of Mary Hockett, who was then imprisoned at Harwich, who confessed that her sister had tried to cut off her teats or ‘biggs’ and cover them with plasters. She also claimed to have received imps from her, but she does not appear to have been formally indicted.

Hockett was executed at Manningtree on 1 August 1645, while Hatyn was dispatched by the hangman at Chelmsford on 18 July 1645. Harvey was pardoned in March 1646, but died of the plague in prison, aged 70, on 30 August 1645.

The parish of Ramsey was situated a few miles outside the large port town and borough of Harwich. At the time of the witch trials, the examining magistrate **Sir Harbottle Grimston** owned large estates here. The manor of Foulton Hall, near Ramsey, was also in the possession of the famous London physician and Presbyterian, Lawrence Wright (1590-1657).

Of the witnesses, the most notable was **Joan Taylor**, the wife of the vicar of Ramsey, Richard Taylor. Taylor had departed Ramsey by 1661 and was minister of Southminster at his death some time between 1670 and 1671. It is possible that Hopkins’ assistant and searcher Mary Phillips may have settled at Ramsey. In February 1650, one of her name married a local man, John Grove. Of the other witnesses, **William Joy** and **John Felgate** had been involved in what might have been a politically motivated altercation with the constable of Great Oakley and his assistants in 1643. **Francis Stock**, himself a former constable, acted as surety for Joy.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 230-1; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 26-29; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 268-9; TNA, KB 9/838, m.382; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; *ODNB*, sub Wright, Lawrence; Davids, *Annals*, 297; ERO, D/P 7/1/1; ERO, D/ABW 67/75 [will of Richard Taylor, clerk, of Southminster, 27 November 1670; proved 25 January 1671]; ERO, Q/SR 320/55-56.

ST OSYTH

Witches: Joyce, the wife of William Boones, yeoman; Susan, the wife of John Cocke, husbandman; Rose Hallybread; Rebecca Jones, widow; Margaret, the wife of William Landish, husbandman.

Joyce Boones was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Rose Handkin; Elizabeth Parker; George Eatoney]; true bill.

Susan Cocke was indicted for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Rose Handkin; Elizabeth Parker; George Eatoney]; true bill.

Rebecca Jones was indicted on two counts: 1. for the murder by witchcraft of Katherine Bumpstead, spinster [witnesses: George Eatoney]; true bill; 2. for the murder by witchcraft of Thomas Bumpstead [witnesses: George Eatoney; Elizabeth Parker; Rose Handkin; Ellen Mayers/Helen Mayor; Priscilla Brigges]; true bill.

Margaret Landish was indicted for bewitching and consuming Thomas Bragge [witnesses: Robert Turner, carpenter; Elizabeth Parker; Rose Handkin]; true bill.

No indictment survives for Rose Hallybread who died of plague in prison, aged about 65. Cocke was reprieved in March 1646, but remained in gaol where she too died on the plague, aged about 50, on 18 October 1646. Boones, Jones and Landish were executed at Chelmsford on 18 July 1645.

According to a contemporary pamphlet, Rose Hallybread, on examination, informed that she had been given her imps about fifteen or sixteen years earlier by one Goodwife Hagtree. She claimed to have given one of the imps to Joyce Boones, who used it to kill the son of Thomas Toakley of St Osyth. Boones herself admitted sending imps to the house of Richard Welch of St Osyth and killing around a dozen of his lambs. She also admitted responsibility for the deaths of livestock belonging to Thomas Clynych. Susan Cocke claimed that her mother Margery Stoakes had given her some imps on her deathbed, which she then used to plague John Spall and kill his sheep. Cock and Mary Landish confessed to sending imps to destroy six or seven hogs belonging to Thomas Mannock of St Osyth. Finally, Rebecca Jones claimed to have met the Devil in person about twenty-four or twenty-five years earlier at the house of John Bishop of Great Clacton (qv), where she was a servant. She was subsequently granted imps, which she used to kill a sow belonging to Benjamin Howes of Little Clacton (qv). She also admitted responsibility for the deaths of Thomas Bumpstead and his wife of St Osyth as well as the afflictions suffered by the child of one Mrs Darcy of the same village.

The religious and political atmosphere of this small and impoverished village was dominated by the local landed family the Rivers, whose adherence to Protestantism was wafer thin. Following the death of Thomas, earl Rivers in 1640, the estates passed to his daughter Elizabeth, countess Rivers (1581-1651). She was the widow of a prominent Essex recusant, Thomas Viscount Savage (d.1635), and served as a lady in waiting to Charles' Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria. The ecclesiastical patronage of the Rivers'

demonstrates marked sympathy with the Arminian reforms of the 1630s. The countess' former husband Sir Thomas Savage, for example, had helped promote the interests of the diehard Arminian Richard Montagu (1575-1641), while her father was responsible for the appointment of ceremonialists such as Edward Cherry at nearby Great Holland (qv), who also served the cure at St Osyth. Not surprisingly, many of Cherry's parishioners were suspicious of the new reforms instituted by Laud and reacted accordingly. In 163?, for example, when Cherry asked his congregation to kneel during a funeral service at St Osyth one Langley's wife shouted: 'what, will you make us kneele to the dead, will you make us praye to the dead?'

By the late 1630s, St Osyth, like many other villages in Essex, was growing increasingly politicised. In September 1639, the Privy Council ordered the arrest of John Webb and Robert Parker, constables of St Osyth, for their failure to collect ship money there. Parker may in fact have been related to **Elizabeth Parker**, a chief witness in the witch trials of 1645. A year later, in 1640, a 'mob' entered the churches of St Osyth and neighbouring Great Holland (qv), removed the hated altar rails and proceeded to burn them. Various individuals from St Osyth were later questioned by two local magistrates (**Sir Harbottle Grimston** and his son of the same name), whose religious sympathies probably led to their acquittal. Finally, in August 1642, economic and religious fears combined to spark major rioting in St Osyth in which the house and gardens of the countess were ransacked and pillaged, and the countess herself was forced to flee across the Suffolk border to her estates at Long Melford (qv). The primary cause of the rioting was undoubtedly due to the fears of a resurgent Catholicism focused on the household of the recusant Rivers family, but the trouble that flared here was almost certainly exacerbated by the recent decision of the earl Rivers to remove 'some poor inhabitants' living next to his lands in order to preserve his well-stocked ponds and woods. Further destruction was done to the Rivers' estates at St Osyth by parliamentarian soldiers in 1643 and faced with a rent strike by her tenants, the countess was forced to leave for France in the same year.

Of the various witnesses against the witches of St Osyth, the lead was clearly taken by the new minister **George Eatoney**. Eatoney was a puritan, probably put in following the removal of Cherry. He subsequently signed the Presbyterian call for an end to religious anarchy and the implementation of an orderly settlement of church affairs in 1646, moving to the parish of Greenstead, near Colchester, in 1648.

The village had become highly radicalised by the time of Restoration. In 1670 and again in 1674, large gatherings of Quakers were reported in the parish, and two parishioners, including one Giles Cocke (possibly a relation of the witch Susan Cocke), were prosecuted at the assizes for holding illegal meetings of Friends.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 222, 224, 229-30; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 29-34; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 267-9; TNA, KB 9/838, m.376; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 69-70; Oldenburg, *Correspondence*, v, 15 [Cave Beck to Oldenburg, 15 August 1668]; *ODNB*, sub Savage, Elizabeth; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 37-9, 41-2, 53, 105, 176, 232-3, 260 and n.; Quintrell, 'Gentry Factions and the Witham Affray, 1628', 121; *CSPD, 1636-1637*, 361, 562; *CSPD, 1639*, 493; *CSPD, 1640*, 486; ERO, D/ABA/8, fo.171v; Q/SR 311/50-51; D/B5/Sb2/7, ff.300-3; *Humble*

Petition of the Ministers of Suffolke and Essex, sig.A4r [where Eatoney's name is mistranscribed as 'Catoney']; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 355; TNA, ASSI 35/111/3/107; 35/112/9/25; 35/115/3/45.

STISTED

In 1645, at the time of the main trials precipitated by events in Tendring, a series of remarkable depositions were made by two women of Stisted, Martha Hurrell and Elizabeth Gallant, relating to magical ceremonies, sexual promiscuity and nocturnal, clandestine meetings held at various gentlemen's houses in Stisted and neighbouring villages including that of the master of the two witnesses, John Alston. Those implicated (below) sent a petition to the magistrates stating that the claims of the two women were utterly false.

Martha Hurrell claimed that these events had taken place between Easter and Michaelmas 1643. They were held at the houses of John Alston, Robert Aylett, William Drake, Sir William Maxey, Sir Martin Lumley and Lady Eden. Among those present were Robert and Thomas Aylett, Mr James Richardson, Sarah Fletcher, Abraham Rich, John Drake, John Dier, all of Stisted, Lambert Smith, and an unnamed conjurer 'that went in black Apparrell, of a browne haire, and a blackish beard, a man of a middle size'. Among those sexually abused by the conjurer and one Henry was John Alston's married daughter, Mistress Elizabeth Drury (one Elizabeth Waite also participated in the seduction of her husband). On other occasions, there was much feasting and music. Sir William Maxey's maid played on the virginals and his conjurer made a circle and performed some form of magical rite.

The confused nature of these depositions makes it difficult to determine a motive for the accusations of witchcraft and related depravity, but it seems highly likely that concerns relating to religious and political developments, both locally and nationally, may have played an important role.

The parish itself was one that had long been served by religious conservatives such as Richard Kitchin (rector, 1561-99) and Samuel Harsnet (1609-19), whose ministries may have encouraged the 'godly' to look elsewhere for spiritual comfort and edification. By the 1630s, however, Stisted had become a notable centre of godly preaching under the fiery zeal of men like Mark Mott (curate here in 1634), Edward Sparrowhawk and one Mr Attwell. The latter was described by Robert Aylett in 1632 as formerly curate at Stisted and famous there for 'conventicles and inconformity' who would have been proceeded against in the Court of High Commission if he had not left the cure. By 1642, however, the gift of the living had passed into the hands of archbishop William Laud, who, despite his arrest and imminent trial, continued to promote Arminians. After much negotiation and debate, he passed over the claims of the earl of Warwick's candidate, John Clark, and appointed Christopher Newstead (d.1662) to the cure. Newstead's residence at Stisted was short-lived. Within a year, fourteen charges were levelled against him by parishioners at Stisted and his previous living at Abingdon in Berkshire, who

accused him of being a 'great promoter of the late Innovacons' as well as a great persecutor of those with 'tender Consciences that durst not observe these Innovacons'. Newstead claimed that he was barred from taking possession of the church at Stisted, but this was rebutted by his opponents who counter-charged that he had refused to take the Covenant and had prevented others from doing the same.

The sequestration of Newstead left a disastrous vacuum at the heart of the parish. By October 1644, a neighbouring minister Ralph Josselin (1617-1683), the celebrated diarist, was appointed in order to adjudicate the relative merits of two candidates for the office of rector. The parish was hopelessly divided between the claims of Mr Archer and Thomas Templer, a fact that was causing Josselin much heartache and not a little difficulty (some were even offering bribes). In the end, the Presbyterian Josselin opted for the like-minded Templer, who demonstrated his conservative credentials in 1646 by signing the petition of Essex ministers condemning sectarianism. Mr Archer was in all probability the man of that name of nearby Halstead whom a correspondent of the heresiarch Thomas Edwards described in March 1646 as a religious extremist who was probably responsible for encouraging the missionary activity of the Baptist preacher Samuel Oates (1614-1683; father of Titus) at Stisted around this time. Among those whom Oates managed to convert to 'anabaptism' was the wife of one Wade of the village.

It is not inconceivable that the accusations of witchcraft levelled at some very prominent families in and around Stisted in 1645 were fabricated by, or leastwise emanated from, a more radical clique in the village that was antipathetic to moderate Presbyterianism and the threat posed by a potential alliance of former royalists and lukewarm parliamentarians. Certainly, those named in the depositions would seem to fit neatly into one of these two camps. **Sir William Maxey** (d.1645) of Bradwell Hall and the **Ayletts** were firmly aligned on the side of Charles I in 1642. Though Sir William was too old to fight, two of his three sons, Henry and William, distinguished themselves fighting for the King. Prior to the outbreak of war, he had faithfully served the electoral interests of the duke of Buckingham in Essex. His pronounced Calvinism may also have assisted a rapprochement with more moderate elements on the parliamentary side. **Robert** (1615-1658) and **Thomas Aylett** (d.1659) were the sons of Robert Aylett of Stisted, and were closely related to both Dr Robert Aylett (d.1655) and Sir John Lambe (d.1646), key figures in the legal machinery of the church that helped suppress puritanism before the civil war. In March 1639 Lambe provided a testimonial on behalf of Edward Aylett, another son of Robert of Stisted in which he attested to his good standing in the community (Edward was applying for the profitable post of deputy salt petreman in London). Dr Robert Aylett, who as commissary to Laud was particularly prominent in the persecution of Essex puritans and was named in the articles of impeachment brought against the archbishop in February 1641, nonetheless made his peace with the parliamentary authorities. He remained as master of the faculties and was working for the House of Lords until 1649. The Aylett brothers were thus well connected and may have been encouraged in any rapprochement with disenchanted parliamentarians through the intercession of their well-placed and eminent uncle.

Others named in the depositions were clearly prominent supporters of mainstream puritanism and early adherents to the cause of Parliament. **Sir Martin Lumley** (d.1651), who sat as MP for Essex in the Long Parliament was a committed Presbyterian who served as lay elder for Great Bardfield in Essex in the late 1640s. His moderation is evident, however, in various contexts. In 1643, for example, he and fellow Essex MP and Presbyterian **Sir Harbottle Grimston** used their parliamentary privilege to condemn the activities of the radical and renegade parliamentarian Colonel Walter Long, who among many indiscretions was said to have allowed his men to loot and ransack the houses of prominent Essex recusants such as Sir Thomas Wiseman of Rivenhall. At roughly the same time, Lumley was approached by his ‘friend’ Sir Hercules Francis Cooke, an unswerving royalist, in the hope that he might intercede with the powers-that-be to secure his release from imprisonment. Divided by political loyalties, the two men probably shared Cooke’s view of the world in 1643 as one in which all was ‘out of joint and many greater fears affright’. Lumley’s moderate sympathies also extended to beleaguered ministers. In November 1644, he interceded on behalf of the minister of Great Bardfield, John Mowe, who was threatened with sequestration. Despite complaints made against him that he had refused to take the covenant and had fled to Ingatestone, Lumley stepped in to provide an affidavit of subscription on his behalf. **Mary Eden** (d.1657) was the widow of Sir Thomas Eden (1572-1616) of Ballingdon Hall, Essex, and was renowned as a godly matriarch and patron of puritanism. The celebrated puritan preacher Timothy Rogers (1589-1655), minister at Great Tey, described her as ‘a munificent encourager of his labours since he came into this part of Essex’. His colleague Adam Harsnett at Cranham was equally effusive. She was also responsible in 1644 for presenting Francis Onge to the rectory of Peldon following the sequestration of the malignant incumbent, John Cornelius. Lady Eden’s eldest son John clearly followed in his mother’s footsteps. A staunch parliamentarian and committeeman for Essex, he served as lay elder for Ballingdon and Brandon in the late 1640s, while his father-in-law Oliver Raymond did the same at nearby Belchamp Walter. Lady Eden herself was probably no stranger to witch-hunting. Her father, Brian Darcy (d.1587) of Tiptree Priory, examined several witches at St Osyth in the early 1580s and later published one of the first in-depth accounts of a witch trial in 1582.

Of the others mentioned in the depositions, **John Alston** may have been the same as the Mr Alstone, who attempted to bribe Ralph Josselin in 1644 (see above). His abused daughter was Elizabeth Drury (d.1684), the wife of Edmund Drury (1607-1668), gent, of Swaffham, Cambridgeshire. **William Drake** may have been the man of the same name who deposed against Christopher Newstead in 1643. Others who did the same, such as Robert Dier and George Hurrell were probably related to **John Dier** and **Martha Hurrell**, accused and accuser respectively.

ERO, Q/SR 324/118-119; Q/Sba 2/56-58; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 275, 306-7; Smith, *Ecclesiastical History of Essex*, 56, 369; TNA, SP 16/218/43, fo.110r; Davids, *Annals*, 479-84; *Wal.Rev.*, 160; BL, Add MS 5829, fos 18-21; Macfarlane (ed.), *Diary of Ralph Josselin*, 24; *Humble Petition of the Suffolke and Essex Ministers*, sig.A3v; Edwards, *Gangraena*, ii, 20-1.

Morant, *History of Essex*, ii, 156-7, 410-11, 522; Curling, 'Holy Trinity Church, Bradwell,' 41-2; Hunt, *Puritan Moment*, 211-2; TNA, SP 16/151, fo.45; Quintrell, 'Gentry Factions', 123-5; ODNB, sub Aylett, Robert; Morant, *History of Essex*, ii, 161, 393; CSPD, 1638-1639, 556, 561; Timbers, 'Liminal language', 174-92.

Morant, *History of Essex*, ii, 369, 519-20; Brunton and Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament*, 121; Holmes, 'The Affair of Colonel Long', 210-15; McIntosh, 'Sir Hercules Francis Cooke', 143; Morant, *History of Essex*, ii, 315; Harsnett, *A Cordiall for the Afflicted*, sigs A5r-A8r; *Wal.Rev.*, 149; Sperling, 'Ballingdon Hall and the Eden Family', 169-71; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 386, 387; TNA, PROB 11/260 [will of John Alston, 30 June 1653; proved 26 November 1656].

THORPE-LE-SOKEN

Witches: Margaret Moone, widow.

Moone was indicted on three counts: 1. for the murder by witchcraft of Joan, the daughter of Henry Cornwell, yeoman [witnesses: Henry Cornwell; Beavis Vincent; Thomas Barles]; true bill; 2. murder by witchcraft of John, the son of Richard Edwards of Manningtree (qv) [witnesses: same as 1]; true bill; 3. bewitching to death a cow belonging to Thomas Cooker [same witnesses as 1]; true bill.

Moone's daughter, Judith, was also examined. Witch marks were discovered on her, but she claimed she had received them after refusing to help her mother. She was not formally indicted. Neither was Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Gibson of Thorpe, farmer, who died in prison, aged about 40, on 1 June 1645.

Margaret Moone collapsed and died on her way to execution on 18 July 1645.

A contemporary account provides further detail with regard to the witchcraft practised by Margaret Moone. Other victims named include: goodwife Rawbood who was sent a plague of lice; Philip Berriman, whose bread was spoiled; Philip Daniel, whose horse broke its neck; and Henry Robinson, who lost a pig and a cow. Other informants against Moone were: Richard Carter; Henry Cornwell; William Dammon; Richard Caley (who claimed that when Henry Dorr was summoned to write down her confession, Moone refused to make further discoveries); Frances Milles and Mary Phillips [searchers]; Elizabeth Harris, widow; Susan Barles or Burles (wife of assize witness Thomas?); and Philip Tumnor or Tunmore. Caley also claimed that his brother William Caley had let a house to Moone about twenty years earlier, but she had been thrown out. When the next tenants, the Rawboods, moved in they failed to thrive. This account also suggests that Moone had previously been indicted at the assizes for witchcraft, though no record survives to confirm this statement.

Thomas Darnell, who was sequestered from the vicarage of Thorpe in 1643, was charged with a variety of spiritual and moral offences including profanation of the sabbath, swearing, drinking and playing games. It was also alleged that he had been convicted of

adultery before the secular magistrate, and that he had preached that those who failed to conform and obey their prince ought to be burned at the stake. A ceremonialist, he refused sacrament to all except those who came up to the rails. Darnell's removal, however, did not appear to lead to instant reform. Heightened religious tension in the parish about the time of the witch trials is evident in the case brought against three Thorpe men in June 1645 for riotously threatening to pull the minister out of the pulpit for reading the first lesson and creed. The ringleader George Nicholson was undoubtedly the Presbyterian of the same name who would later serve as lay elder for the parish in the Tendring classis. One of his associates, George Tunmore, was almost certainly related to Philip Tunmore, a witness against the suspected witch Margaret Moone.

Philip Daniel (d.1653), a victim of Moone, was probably the man of that name who acted as lay elder for Little Clacton (qv) in the Presbyterian classis for Tendring. He described himself as a yeoman in his will of 1653, and owned copyhold land in Thorpe as well as Great Holland. He died on 10 August 1653 and was buried two days later.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 222, 225; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 21-5; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 61-4; *Wal.Rev.*, 149-50; White, *Century*, 29-30; ERO, D/P 80/1/1; ERO, Q/SR 325/106 [8 June 1645]; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 389; TNA, PROB 11/243, fos 170v-171v [will of Phillip Daniell, 22 June 1653; proved 14 September 1654].

WALTON-LE-SOKEN

Witch: Margery, the wife of John Grew, husbandman.

Grew was indicted on two counts: 1. for murder by witchcraft of John, the son of Samuel Munt of Walton, husbandman [witnesses: John Pamant or Panant; Samuel Munt; Helen Mager [i.e. Ellen Mayors]; Elizabeth Hunt]; true bill; 2. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: same as above]; true bill.

Margery Grew was sentenced to hang, and was probably executed at Chelmsford on 18 July 1645.

Little is known of the religious history of the parish in this period. Isaac Starling was presented to the living in March 1641 by Elizabeth, countess Rivers, but had probably been removed by the time of the witch trials. There was another witch trial at Thorpe in 1652, when Elizabeth Hynes was committed by **Sir Thomas Bowes**, charged with entertaining evil spirits.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 223, 238-9; Davids, *Annals*, 299.

WIVENHOE

Witches: Alice Dixon, widow; Mary, the wife of Nicholas Johnson, seaman.

Dixon was indicted for the murder by witchcraft of Thomas, the son of John Mumford of Wivenhoe, husbandman [witnesses: Margaret Mumford]; true bill.

Johnson was indicted on three counts: 1. for entertaining evil spirits, etc [witnesses: Ellen Mayors/Helen Major; Elizabeth Hunt; Anne Durrell [or Durrant]; Priscilla Briggs]; true bill; 2. murder by witchcraft of William, the son of George Durrell [Durrant] of Fingringhoe, seaman [witnesses as in 1]; true bill; 3. murder by witchcraft of Elizabeth, the daughter of Daniel Occlam [Otlye], seaman [witness: Elizabeth Occlam]; true bill.

Mary Johnson was pardoned in March 1646, but was still in prison as late as 1648. Her fate is unknown. Dixon was condemned, but there is no record of her execution or reprieve.

A contemporary published account refers to the death of Occlam's child (but here as Otlye), and the examination of Annabel Durrant (Anne Durrell). She described how she met Johnson on the road from Wivenhoe to Fingringhoe and the subsequent sickness of her son after the witch had caressed him. One Mr Dawber, a local surgeon, was consulted but he failed to find any 'natural cause of its lameness'. The child died eight days later, after which both parents were also assaulted.

Immediately prior to the witch hunts of 1645, the unruly maritime parish of Wivenhoe was subjected to the evangelising zeal of the puritan minister Thomas Cawton (1605-1659), who held the living from 1637 to 1644. Cawton was well connected in local godly circles. He married a daughter of the eminent Suffolk preacher, William Jenkyn (she was also the grandchild of Richard Rogers of Wethersfield), and was on very friendly terms with **Sir Harbottle Grimston**, who engineered Cawton's removal to his London parish (St Bartholomew's near the Exchange) in 1644. According to his son, also Thomas, on first coming to Wivenhoe in 1637 Cawton found the town 'notorious for all manner of vice and wickedness'. Drunkenness and swearing was said to abound among the people, and sabbath-breaking was routine. Slowly, Cawton managed to reform the manners of the people, and he was equally successful in combatting the growing threat posed to order in the town by the emergence of radical sectarianism. It was probably for this reason that he was called to Colchester by his friend Robert Harmer, town lecturer there, where he engaged in conferences and disputes with local Anabaptists. Like his patron Grimston, Cawton would appear to have been a political moderate. In 1649 he was imprisoned for preaching against the regicide, and two years later he was forced to seek exile in Holland following his involvement in Love's Plot.

The proximity of Wivenhoe to the small fishing village of Fingringhoe, one of whose inhabitants was a victim of Mary Johnson, is also suggestive as the intruded vicar here, following the sequestration of **Joseph Long** (for whom, see under Great Clacton), was **Owen Reeve**, a witness in the trials at Ipswich (qv) in 1645.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 226; Anon., *True and Exact Relation*, 17-18, 20-1; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 268; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/202, 10 March 1646; [Thomas Cawton], *The Life and Death of ... Mr Thomas Cawton*, 16-24.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE

BYTHORN

Witch: Anne Desborough, widow.

Desborough was arrested on suspicion of being a witch on 8 April 1646, when she confessed before the minister Joseph Coysh, Thomas Becke, yeoman, and others of Bythorn that some thirty years previously a diabolical spirit in the shape of an animal had appeared to her at her former home at Titchmarsh in Northamptonshire. Allowing the creature to suck her, it then promised to help her destroy her enemies and their livestock, though no evidence was recorded of any actual destruction.

Nothing is known about the fate of Anne Desborough, but she may have been executed with others from the county in May 1646.

Joseph Coysh would appear to have been recently intruded as rector of Brington with Bythorn following the sequestration of the previous incumbent William Knight (d.1660). He was the brother of the pious London Presbyterian Richard Coysh, who was a major benefactor to various pious and godly causes in the capital.

Davenport, *Witches of Huntingdon*, 10-12; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 208-10; *Wal.Rev.*, 207; TNA, PROB 11/220 [will of Richard Coysh, 27 September 1650; proved 23 January 1651/2]; *CSPD*, 1654, 432.

GREAT CATWORTH

Witches: Frances Moore and Elizabeth Weed, widow.

Moore was examined by Nicholas Pedley, a local JP, on 9 April 1646. She confessed that nine years earlier she received a black puppy from Margaret Simson of Great Catworth, who told her it would do her bidding and kill cattle if she cursed them. At roughly the same time, Elizabeth Weed gave her a white cat for the same purpose if she agreed to enter into a covenant. She did so, and then set about revenging herself on old enemies. These included William Foster, who sixteen years previously 'would have hanged two of her children for offering to take a piece of bread'. Ten years on, she cursed Foster and he died in agony eight days later. In addition, she admitted responsibility for killing cows belonging to Edward Hull and Peter Browne in about 1641. She subsequently claimed to have killed both familiars about one year since, but was now haunted by their spirits.

Another magistrate Robert Barnard took the depositions of Peter Slater, shepherd, of Great Catworth and William Searle, yeoman, of Little Catworth on 7 April 1646.

When Slater heard that Moore had been arrested on suspicion of witchcraft, he went to her and asked whether she was responsible for the death of his wife twenty-one years earlier. She confessed, stating that they had fallen out and she subsequently cursed her. Searle informed that he was present when Moore confessed to being a witch. She also admitted to killing his capons and hogs.

Elizabeth Weed was examined by Robert Barnard and Nicholas Pedley, JPs, on 31 March 1646. She confessed that twenty-one years previously three spirits had appeared to her, asking her to renounce God and Christ. She subsequently entered into a covenant with the Devil, sealed with her own blood. As a reward, she was granted three demons, two in the shape of animals that helped her do harm, and one in the shape of a young man with whom she slept. Her imps were responsible, among other things, for the deaths of a child of Mr Henry Bedell of Catworth and livestock belonging to Edward Musgrave, John Musgrave, William Musgrave and Thomas Thorpe, all of Catworth. They were unable to effect any harm, however, against the persons of either Henry Bedell or Edward Musgrave (presumably they were god-fearing men). Finally, she confessed that she had now tired of the contract and did 'duly resort to Church to Sermons, & also to the Ministers house to repetition [i.e.catechism]', seemingly at the behest of the minister Mr Poole, whose preaching she was 'well pleased with'.

John Stearne was also present at these hearings. He was almost certainly alluding to Weed when he said that some had esteemed one of the witches of Great Catworth a 'saint on earth'. She subsequently recanted, and confessed all 'at the gallows before her death, in my hearing'. According to Stearne, the execution of the Huntingdonshire witches occurred in May 1646.

Anthony Acroyde, rector of Great Catworth from 1639 to 1644, was ejected by the earl of Manchester on 13 March 1644. His successor, **Ferdinando Poole** (d.1675 or 1676), whose preaching pleased Elizabeth Weed, was himself a refugee from a living in Nottinghamshire. He subsequently returned there some time in the 1650s, was ejected in 1662, and subsequently was licensed to preach at a Presbyterian meetinghouse at Loughborough in Leicestershire in 1672.

Based on perusal of the parish registers, Gaskill dates the death of the wife of **Peter Slater** to about 1628-1630. He adds that all the victims of, and witnesses against, Weed signed the Protestation Oath, 1641-2. Of these, **Henry Bedell** was probably the best connected. He was the second son of a substantial local landowner William Bedell (d.1612), whose sister Dorothy had married as her second husband Roger Wingate, treasurer of the colony of Virginia from 1639 until his death in 1641. His brother Francis (d.1648), who lived in Great Catworth, requested legal advice from **Robert** in making his will in 1648 (it was also witnessed by **William Musgrave**). **Peter Browne** described himself as a husbandman in his will of 1658, while **Edward Hull** (d.1656) was a yeoman farmer who penned a distinctly pious will. Both lived in the hamlet of Little Catworth. **William Musgrave**, a wealthy yeoman farmer, was the head of a large family with land and estates spread across the Huntingdonshire-Northamptonshire border. He, too, added a

decidedly pious preamble to his will in 1656. Elizabeth, daughter of **William Searle**, was the wife of **Peter Browne**.

Of the examining magistrates, **Robert Barnard** (1601-1666) was a burgess of the borough of Huntingdon, where he has served as a JP, alongside Oliver Cromwell, since 1631. He was elected to represent the borough in the Short Parliament, and subsequently became a member of the county committee established by Parliament in December 1642 to resist the armies of the King. A sergeant at law, he was recorder of Huntingdon at the Restoration (though soon after removed by the earl of Sandwich under the auspices of the Corporation Act) and was made a baronet in 1662. His son, John (1630-1679), married as his first wife Elizabeth, the daughter of Oliver St John and Elizabeth Cromwell, and served as MP for the borough of Huntingdon from 1654 to 1660. In all probability, Barnard was responsible for the publication of the trial records of the Huntingdonshire witches as John Davenport, the author, was his faithful and loyal servant. In his will of 1663, Davenport spoke fondly of his old master, with whom he had lived and served for twenty-two years, bequeathing him ten pounds to buy an engraved memorial plate. He also provided bequests for Barnard's son and his son-in-law **Nicholas Pedley**. Barnard clearly treasured the gift, making it a family heirloom in his own will two years later. Barnard himself weathered the Restoration, but remained at heart a godly puritan who directed his own children to follow the path of industry, piety, righteousness and good conscience. His will also refers to the various subterfuges he was forced to undertake in order to retain possession of his estates and avoid sequestration. Moreover, his sympathy for the plight of dissenters is evident in the bequests that he made to two ejected ministers of Huntingdonshire, Samuel Ainsworth and James Bedford, who had fallen on hard times. Written in the wake of plague and the onset of war, his will was thus suffused with fear for the future of the country and what might happen if something were not done to atone for 'the sinnes of this nation'. His interest in witchcraft also survived the Restoration. In 1662, he was present at Bury St Edmunds, where Sir Matthew Hale presided over the trial and execution of two women from Lowestoft, Suffolk, who were found guilty of bewitching the children of a leading local dissenter.

Nicholas Pedley (1615-1685), a clergyman's son and barrister by training, was the son-in-law of **Robert Barnard**. Like his father-in-law, he served as a local JP as well as on various county committees throughout the 1640s and 1650s. Pedley also sat as MP for the county in 1656 and 1659, and for the borough of Huntingdon after the Restoration. He was knighted in 1672 and became a sergeant-at-law in 1675. One of his daughters married the celebrated Restoration divine Dr Edward Stillingfleet, who acted as joint executor of his will.

Davenport, *Witches of Huntingdon*, 1-2, 5-7; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 39; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 205-6; *Wal.Rev.*, 206; *Cal.Rev.*, 394; TNA, PROB 11/205, fos 155r-v [will of Francis Bedell, 2 August 1648; proved 24 August 1648]; PROB 11/288, fo.197r [will of Peter Browne, 20 March 1657/8; proved 14 February 1658/9]; PROB 11/258, fos 162v-163r [will of Edward Hull, 28 June 1656; proved 30 September 1656]; PROB 11/271, fos 335r-336r [will of William Musgrave, 31 December 1656; proved 2 December 1657]; PROB 11/238, fos 196r-v [will of William Serls, 4 September 1653; proved July 1654]; Firth and Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances*, i, 50; Henning, i, 637-8; iii, 215-6; TNA, PROB 11/313, fos 20v-21r [will of John Davenport, 24 December 1663;

proved 28 January 1663/4]; PROB 11/320, fos 162r-164v [will of Sir Robert Barnard, 5 December 1665; proved 15 May 1666]; [Hale], *Trial of Witches*, 40.

KEYSTON

Witches: Elizabeth Chandler, widow; John Clarke Snr; John Clarke Jnr, labourer, and the former's wife; Jane or Joan Wallis, spinster.

Elizabeth Chandler was examined by Robert Bernard and Nicholas Pedley, JPs, on 7 April 1646. She claimed to have been pestered by imps and spirits, which she denied encouraging, for many years. She also denied striking Katherine, the daughter of one Goodwife Darnell [i.e. Mary Darnwell] of Keyston, or doing any harm to the family, despite the fact that Mary Darnwell was the cause of her being ducked two years previously. Her so called imps, were in fact a log of wood and a stick, which she called Beelzebub and Trullibub respectively. Mary Darnwell, the wife of William the village blacksmith, provided more detailed evidence to the magistrates the same day regarding the bewitchment and sufferings of her daughter Katherine, aged about nine. She also claimed to have overheard one Lewis Carmell say that Chandler had confessed to bewitching a dish of furmenty.

Wallis was examined by Sir Robert Osborne, JP, on 16 April 1646. She claimed to have been pestered by spirits following the visit of a mysterious dark stranger calling himself Mr Blackman. The imps brought her money, but she did not confess to any evil-doing. Two days previously Wallis had confessed the same to Sir Edward Maria Wingfield and John Guylatte. Stearne refers to her as Joan Wallis, 'a very ignorant, sottish woman'.

John Clarke Jnr was examined by John Castell, JP, on 2 May 1646. He affirmed that two weeks earlier, travelling on the sabbath, he had overtaken a man and three women between Stanwick and Raunds (qv) in Northamptonshire, being about three miles from his home in Keyston. He denied, however, that 'he had ever told or said that he had any marks cut off, or that he had any place of meeting with any Witches, or that he had any consultation, or made any compact with the Devill, or ever knew what belonged to any such matter'. Clarke would appear to have been answering accusations levelled against him by one John Browne of Raunds (qv) in Northamptonshire, who was examined the same day by Castell. He reported to the magistrate that while travelling from Higham Ferrers to Raunds, he met a man (John Clarke Jnr) at Stanwick who was coming from Irthlingborough. The two men spoke, and Clarke admitted that he was returning from a visit to his uncle at Irthlingborough. He then admitted to Browne that he was the son of the Clarkes of Keyston, who had recently been accused of being witches. Both he and his parents had been searched for marks, but Clarke Jnr claimed that he had cut his off. When Browne said that he too had been searched, Clarke is alleged to have replied that 'I doe not believe you are a Witch, for I never saw you at our meetings'. Browne retorted that perhaps there were meetings at several places, and the two men falling out, they both departed.

No official records implicating Clarke's parents survive. The fate of the accused is also unrecorded, though Gaskill has speculated that if Joan was in fact Joyce Wallis, then she died a widow in 1657.

At around the time these depositions were being made, the pluralist rector of Keyston, John Walcot, was being sequestered.

Sir Edward Wingfield was lord of the manor of Keyston. Born at Kimbolton, he had been a student at puritan Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, before marrying a woman from Titchmarsh (qv) in Northamptonshire. In 1641, he signed the Protestation Oath and the following year went to Ireland to fight the Catholic rebels. His son and heir died in 1644. The examining magistrate, **John Castell** of Glatton was a county committee member for Huntingdonshire under the Eastern Association. His colleague **Sir Robert Osborne** (d.1652) resided at Godmanchester.

Davenport, *Witches of Huntingdon*, 7-9, 12-15; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 13, 17, 46; Gaskill, 206-8, 211-13; Huntingdon Library and Archives, HP51/1/1/1; *Wal.Rev.*, 209; Kingston, *East Anglia and the Great Civil War*, 386.

KIMBOLTON

In an undated letter of dubious provenance, printed as a preface to John Gaule's work on witchcraft in 1646, Matthew Hopkins refers to his recent visit to the town of Kimbolton in Huntingdonshire in search of suspected witches. No other details of his visit survive.

Gaule, *Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcraft*, sigs A3r-v.

MOLESWORTH

Witches: Ellen, the wife of William Shepherd, labourer; John Winnick, labourer.

Shepherd was examined by Robert Bernard and Nicholas Pedley, JPs, 8 April 1646. A constant swearer and curser, about five years previously a spirit in the shape of a rat had appeared to Shepherd while her children were quarrelling. Since then, they had demanded her constant attention, and suckled from her, but she claimed they had done no ill. She also wished to be rid of them and to 'leave her former course of cursing and swearing'.

Three days later, Winnick was examined by the same magistrates. He admitted that twenty-nine years earlier, while a bachelor and living as a servant with one Bateman, who kept the George Inn at Thrapston (qv) in Northamptonshire, he resorted to using a spirit to discover a purse that he had lost. He subsequently agreed to enter into a covenant with the Devil and was granted imps to do his

mischief. They would appear to have done little, however, Winnick claiming merely that he had sent the bear spirit to provoke the maid servant of Mr Say of Molesworth to steal food for him out of her master's house.

Further details about Winnick are added by Stearne, who claimed that he had confessed to meetings of more than twenty witches in Huntingdonshire prior to his execution in May 1646.

Eleanor Milward (**Ellen Shepherd**) married William Shepherd at Molesworth in 1634. **Mr Say** was either Francis Say or his son, Alexander, the former having become lord of the manor in 1630. The former lord of the manor William Bedell, who was married to Anne, the eldest daughter of James Pickering of Titchmarsh (qv) in Northamptonshire, was probably related to **Henry Bedell** of Great Catworth (qv).

Davenport, *Witches of Huntingdon*, 3-4, 9-10; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 11, 20-1, 42; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 209-11; *VCH, Huntingdonshire*, vol.3, 92-6.

ST NEOTS

Witch (unnamed).

John Stearne refers to a woman of St Neots being searched two or three times, but no marks found. Many of the townsmen remained convinced of her guilt and so she was swum. Though she seems to have floated, for reasons unexplained 'she was not further medled with then'. A little later, Stearne reported that mysterious bite marks were found on her body and rumoured sightings of spectral dogs in the town added to the general suspicion. No formal action, however, would appear to have followed.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 19.

NORFOLK

GREAT YARMOUTH

Witches: Mary Blackburn, widow; Elizabeth Bradwell, spinster; Alice Clipwell, spinster; Elizabeth Dudgeon, spinster; Nazareth Fassett, spinster; Bridget Howard, spinster; Joanna Lacey, widow; Mark Prime or Prince, gardener; Mary Verdy or Vervy, spinster; Barbara Wilkinson, widow.

On 15 August 1645, the corporation of Great Yarmouth voted to invite Matthew Hopkins to the borough in order to assist in the search for witches. He arrived the following month and worked alongside the town's two puritan ministers (John Brinsley and Thomas Whitfield) in examining suspects. Body searches were also

carried out on those accused under the supervision of Hopkins and a local midwife, Elizabeth Howard.

Blackburn, Clipwell, Dudgeon, Fassett, Howard and Wilkinson were all indicted in September 1645 for entertaining evil spirits, etc. At the same time, Bradwell was indicted for practising witchcraft on the body of John, the infant son of Henry Moulton, hosier, and for the same on the bodies of Elizabeth and Susanna Linstead. Prime or Prince was indicted for practising sorcery (using witchcraft to locate lost goods belonging to Ann Cann and John Ringer, mason). In addition, he was indicted for using witchcraft on John Howlett, goldsmith, and his son John (both sick at the time of the trial). In addition to an accusation of entertaining evil spirits, Verdy was also indicted on four separate counts: for bewitching Bridget, the wife of John Wade, hosier; Elizabeth, the wife of John Holmes, sailor; Lucy, the infant daughter of James Lambert, cordwainer; and Augustine, the infant son of Augustine Thrower, merchant. Following their committal for trial in September 1645, Joanna Lacey was arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of entertaining evil spirits, etc. At their subsequent trial in December 1645, Prime or Prince, Fassett, Vervy and Wilkinson were acquitted. The others were found guilty and sentenced to hang. The verdict against Lacey, however, was respited.

In April 1646, five new witches were accused of entertaining evil spirits, etc in Yarmouth: Elizabeth Clarke, widow; Dorothy Dewe, alias Vittery, spinster; Dionis Kirsam, alias Avery, spinster; Anne Parke, widow; John Smyth, labourer. All were found not guilty and acquitted.

Many contemporaries would almost certainly have concurred with the verdict of one of its historians that it was ‘the most factious borough’ in Charles I’s kingdom. A prosperous port with a diverse economy (shipping, fishing, textiles, etc), it was frequently the subject of government oversight and concern in the years immediately prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Central to contemporary fears relating to the governance of the town was religion. Since the late sixteenth century, Yarmouth had become a centre of advanced Protestantism, encouraged no doubt by its proximity to Holland and the continent. By the 1620s the corporation was dominated by a puritan elite that fiercely defended its right to appoint the town’s preacher. In 1624, however, this claim was increasingly contested by the dean and chapter of Norwich and the ensuing row dominated corporate politics for nearly two decades. Following an unsuccessful attempt by religious conformists on the town council to acquire a new charter, the opposition to the puritan leadership in the town fell increasingly on the shoulders of Matthew Brooks (d.1658), a conforming Calvinist, who had little sympathy for what he saw as the subversive nature of civic puritanism.

Under Brooks’ leadership, the ecclesiastical authorities were able to remove two diehard puritan lecturers from the town (George Burdett and John Brinsley) and puritanism in the town was suppressed. Many townsmen and women fled to Holland, while others preferred New England. Those who remained, like the influential and bitter recorder of the town, **Miles Corbet** (d.1662), helped to provide clandestine assistance to exiled puritan ministers and encouraged the import of illicit and seditious publications. The

corporation, too, did all in its power to make life uncomfortable for Brooks and his curate, withholding dues and refusing to supply accommodation customarily reserved for the town preacher at the borough's expense. At the same time, many flagrantly disregarded official church policy on a range of issues and often preferred to attend churches outside the town, especially at Somerleyton across the border in Suffolk, where the puritan minister **John Brinsley** (1600-1665) turned a blind eye to conventicles held in his remote parish.

Relations with Brooks briefly improved in 1638 when the corporation came to an agreement to resign possession of the vestry and accompanying house to Brooks. In all probability, however, the puritan elite that dominated the government of the town were slowly crumbling under pressure from both central government and the diocesan authorities, recently revitalised by the leadership of bishop Wren. From 1639 onwards, opposition to government policy, both in church and state, intensified. The war in Scotland proved highly unpopular among many in the town. A turning point was reached in 1640 with the recall of Parliament. In that year Brooks was questioned before the bar of the House of Commons for allegedly asserting that the Virgin Mary was the mother of God. At about this time, he wrote to his old ally, Matthew Wren (now bishop of Ely), lamenting the factious state of the town and hinting at his imminent departure in the face of continual opposition and physical intimidation. By March 1641, Brooks' old nemesis, John Brinsley, was restored to his lectureship (he had lain under a ban since 1632) while Brooks himself suffered further indignity in later years when he was removed from the living of Sudbourne with Orford in Suffolk, probably as a result of his involvement in an attempted royalist uprising at Lowestoft in March 1643.

There seems little doubt that the endemic religious divisions and ensuing conflict in Yarmouth were a major contributory factor in creating an atmosphere propitious for witch hunting in 1645. It is unlikely, however, that, *pace* Gaskill, those accused in 1645 were little more than 'extreme versions of the Independents and radical sectaries', many women, who so alarmed Presbyterian ministers such as **John Brinsley**. Fear of radical sectarianism and the disintegration of puritan unity, however, may have encouraged Presbyterians like **John Brinsley** and **Thomas Whitfield** to invoke the threat of witchcraft as a potential rallying point for puritans of all persuasions, particularly those who favoured Independency, in the hope of effecting a lasting rapprochement among the godly of Yarmouth. While Brinsley and Whitfield figured prominently in examining suspect witches in 1645, a number of those who suffered at their hands were in fact attached to the breakaway Independent congregation formed by William Bridge (d.1671) in 1643. **Augustine Thrower**, for example, who, with his wife Anne, had been prosecuted in the church courts as early as 1629 for nonconformity, was a member of Bridge's church. Another victim **Elizabeth Linstead** joined officially in June 1647. Equally attached to the cause of congregationalism was the town's recorder, **Miles Corbet**, who played an important role in 1645 in promoting the prosecution of witches. As principal legal officer for the town since 1628 Corbet had been an active participant on the side of the puritan-dominated corporation in its struggle for supremacy with the forces of church and state. By 1645, he was an exceptionally powerful figure, not just locally (he was also recorder of King's Lynn), but also on the stage of national politics.

Elected MP for Yarmouth in the Long Parliament, he rapidly rose to national prominence, chairing numerous powerful parliamentary committees including those concerned with scandalous ministers and drawing up charges against archbishop Laud. Corbet was also a close friend of the congregational minister William Bridge, as was his electoral agent in the town Thomas Bendish, who was frequently asked to exercise his 'gifts' at a weekday lecture held in Bridge's church. It seems highly likely, therefore, that the Independent Corbet and Presbyterian Brinsley acted in concert in late 1645, and that they did so in the hope of effecting a reconciliation of the town's two main puritan groups through a 'therapeutic' purge of Yarmouth's witches.

Further evidence of close collaboration between the town's puritans is suggested by the relationship of the one of the accused witches, **Mark Prime or Prince**, with the conformable curate Thomas Brooks. Corbet and Brinsley had collaborated together as early as 1632 when the former secured the imprisonment of Brooks on a mittimus in retaliation for the latter's attempt to enforce the suspension of Brinsley. Thirteen years later, they renewed their attack on Brooks by indicting his tenant, Prince, for using white witchcraft to discover lost goods and money as well as bewitching the goldsmith, John Howlett, and his son. Corbet's role in pursuing the case against Prince was satirised in 1646 by the royalist propagandist and 'water poet' John Taylor (1578-1653), whose accusations were subsequently repeated by a fellow royalist, Robert Chestlin, two years later. The vendetta against Prince probably dated back to 1638 when he was unsuccessfully prosecuted for a similar offence (on this occasion, using charms to locate the lost goods of one John Sparke). Now, in 1645, another attempt was made to secure Prince's conviction when, according to Taylor, the recorder ordered a search of Prince's lodgings, and a copy of an old almanac was discovered. In Taylor's eyes, Prince was nothing more than a harmless astrologer. Corbet, however, persisted in indicting Prince who was ultimately found not guilty, largely, it is suggested by Taylor, through the intervention of a learned divine, Thomas Cheshire, who pointed out the harmless nature of Prince's 'booke of conjuring'. Cheshire, in fact, had served as Brooks' assistant before resigning under pressure from within the puritan corporation in the 1630s. He or Brooks in all probability were responsible for supplying the details of this case to hired penmen such as Taylor and Chestlin who were only too eager to publicise the absurdities or 'idiotisms' of men like Corbet, who by the late 1640s were assuming leadership of the country.

The other accused witches would appear to have been drawn from the lower reaches of Yarmouth society. **Nazareth Fasset**, for example, was prosecuted in September 1631 for scolding and scandalous conversation. Eight years later, her husband John, a labourer, appeared before the town's magistrates for swearing. **Anne Parke**, accused but acquitted in 1646, was presented for similar offences in 1642. Most of the victims, on the other hand, would appear to have emanated from the upper echelons of the borough's population. **Augustine Thrower**, **William Linstead** and **Henry Moulton** were all prominent members of the corporation. In the wake of the second civil war in July 1648 all three swore an oath committing them to uphold the Solemn League and Covenant and preserve the town against tumults. While **Linstead** resigned from the corporation a year later, **Thrower** continued to serve the commonwealth loyally throughout the 1650s

following his appointment as one of the town's bailiffs in 1650. He was dismissed from his aldermanic post at the Restoration. Unlike Thrower, **Moulton** was a member of the Presbyterian congregation of Brinsley and Whitfield against whom **Elizabeth Bradwell** was said to be powerless on account of his constant attendance at church to hear the two men preach.

It was almost certainly no coincidence that the second series of trials in 1646, which ended in mass acquittals, occurred in the aftermath of the collapse of 'peace talks' between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. In April 1646 – the month of the trials – the leadership of the latter finally declared its unwillingness to continue the policy of refusing membership to those in the town who wished to join Bridge's congregation. Puritan unity in the town was further undermined by the emergence in Yarmouth of more radical religious groups such as the Baptists. The growth of radical sectarianism was almost certainly fostered by the influence of army preachers such as Paul Hobson who served as a captain in the town under Colonel Fleetwood in 1644. Among others, Hobson was responsible for encouraging the preaching there of the future Ranter Lawrence Clarkson. Two years later, on the authority of Brinsley and Whitfield, Thomas Edwards reported the activities of the blasphemer John Boggis, an associate of the Essex Baptist Samuel Oates, and one Lockier, 'a Ringleader of the Anabaptists in this Town'. In the same year, 1646, Whitfield penned a refutation of the Arminianism of another Norfolk Baptist, Thomas Moore. In a later publication of 1649, Whitfield mirrored the concerns expressed by his colleague, Brinsley, in earlier works and sermons when he defended the right of the civil magistrate to punish religious offenders and heretics.

From this date onward, however, Yarmouth remained a divided and unsettled town. The loyalty of many in the town to the new political order was always fragile. In addition to the plotting of suspect royalists, men like **Augustine Thrower** also had to contend with discontented Presbyterians such as **John Brinsley**, who in January 1651 was ordered to leave the town (rescinded a month later). By 1652, the council of state was deeply worried by the recent spate of aldermanic resignations and the failure to find replacements. New men were recruited, but more often than not their authority was undermined by townsmen like Robert Gooch, who claimed that those who obeyed them were no better than 'fooles and knaves'. At the same time as the town descended into religious and political dissension, further attempts were made to rid Yarmouth of witches. In 1647, **Maria Vervy** was again prosecuted for using sorcery and witchcraft, this time on the daughter of Thomas Childres, grocer. Three years later, **Dionis Avery** appeared before the town's magistrates charged with bewitching the daughter of a Yarmouth fisherman, William Liddell. Both women were found not guilty and acquitted. Two men were later tried for using white witchcraft in 1663 and 1679. Successful prosecutions were increasingly unlikely, however, in a borough where religious and political authority was hotly contested for much of the rest of the century.

NkRO, Y/S1/2, fos 195-200, 203-5; Y/C/19/7, fos 71v, 76v; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 53-4; [Hale], *A Collection of Modern Relations*, 46-8; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 168-73, 180-1, 234-5; Gruenfelder, 'Jeffrey Neve, Charles I and Great Yarmouth', 155; Shipps, 'Lay Patronage of East Anglian Puritan Clerics', 216-42; Cust, 'Anti-Puritanism and Urban Politics', 1-26; Tyack, 'The Humbler Puritans of East Anglia', 99n.74; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 88r, 90r, 98r, 283r, 323;

NkRO, DN/VIS/6/1, fo.80r; CUL, MS.Mm.I.45, 40; *Wal.Rev.*, 265; Bodl., Tanner MS 290, fos 106, 110, 112, 118, 120; Manship, *History of Great Yarmouth*, 387-8.

NkRO, FC 31/1; *ODNB*, sub Corbett, Miles; Swinden, *History ... of Great Yarmouth*, 849-50; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.323; Anthony Roily [i.e. John Taylor], *A Briefe Relation*, 7-9; NkRO, Y/S1/2, 93-5; [Chestlin], *Persecutio Undecima*, 24, 33-4; NkRO, Y/S1/2, 5, 132, 157; Swinden, *History ... of Great Yarmouth*, 566, 576; *CSPD, 1651*, 27; Howell James (ed.), *Norfolk Quarter Sessions Order Book 1650-1657*, 46; NkRO, MF 416 [will of Henry Moulton, 9 December 1662]; NkRO, FC 31/1, sub 2 February 1645/6, 16 April 1646; Clarkson, *Lost Sheep Found*, 10; Edwards, *Gangraena*, 161; Whitfield, *Refutation of the Loose Opinions*; Whitfield, *Discourse of Liberty of Conscience*; *CSPD, 1651*, 25, 27, 52, 55, 180, 224; *CSPD, 1651-1652*, 168; NkRO, Y/S1/3, fo.43; *CSPD, 1657-1658*, 295, 312; NkRO, Y/S1/2, 234, 259; NkRO, Y/S1/3, fos 122, 421v, 426v, 427v.

HEMPNALL

Witch: Alice Cooke, spinster.

Cooke was accused of bewitching Mary Whitwedd, the daughter of Robert Whitwedd, to death, indicted 1 July 1645.

True bill. Guilty. To hang.

The vicar of Hempnall, William Barwick, was ejected by the earl of Manchester in 1644. He was accused of being an opponent of Parliament and a devout episcopalian and maintainer of bishop Wren's injunctions.

NkRO, C/S3, box 36 [1644-5]; *Wal.Rev.*, 264.

KING'S LYNN

Witches: Katherine Bankes, widow; Lydia Browne, widow; Thomas Dempster, labourer; Emma Godfrey, widow; Dorothy Griffin; Dorothy Lee; Thomasine Parker; Cecily Taylor, widow; Grace Wright, widow.

All were indicted on 24 September 1646 for consulting and covenanting with evil spirits, etc., and all pleaded not guilty. Of the nine accused, six were found not guilty and acquitted (Bankes, Dempster, Godfrey, Griffin, Parker and Taylor). Browne was declared *non compos mentis*. Lee and Wright were found guilty and sentenced to hang a few days later.

The witchfinder Matthew Hopkins was invited to King's Lynn by the mayor, Edward Robinson, on 11 May 1646, his charges to be borne by the town. He probably visited some time in August 1646, when nine suspects were arrested and committed for trial. Hopkins was paid an initial £15 by the town, and a further £2 at

the end of September following completion of the trials, where he gave evidence against three of the suspects (Browne, Dempster and Taylor).

The thriving port of King's Lynn was no stranger to witchcraft trials. In 1616, for example, the trial of a local woman was the subject of a well-cited treatise on the subject by the town's godly preacher Alexander Roberts. The town itself had long had a reputation as a centre of godly preaching, an island of piety amid a sea of religious conservatism and recusancy. At the outset of the civil war, it became an important parliamentary garrison, which, in 1643, was briefly overthrown in a royalist coup. Fears of witchcraft persisted after 1646. In 1651, the parish registers of St Margaret's, King's Lynn, record the burial of a Dorothy Hellhouse 'executed for a witch'.

King's Lynn Borough Archives, KL/C7/10, fos 187, 193v; KL/C39/102, fo.41; KL/C21/2, fos 47-48v; Mackerell, *History and Antiquities of ... King's Lynn*, 236; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 228-31, 234-5; NkRO, PD39/1.

NEEDHAM

Witch: Anne Ford, widow.

She was accused of bewitching Edward Harrock.

NkRO, C/S3, box 36 [1644-5].

NORWICH

According to a contemporary anonymous pamphlet, twenty witches were hanged at Norwich in 1645. Presumably, among these was the baker called Meggs, who, according to Hopkins, lived within seven miles of Norwich, and was hanged at Norwich assizes after volunteering to be searched. This is probably the same as or a relation of Margaret Mego of [?][see below/above].

Perfect Diurnall [21-28 July 1645], 830; Anon., *Signes and Wonders from Heaven*; Hopkins, *Discovery of Witches*, 6.

PULHAM ST MARY

Witch: Robert Casey, mason.

Casey was accused of bewitching to death Dorothy Taylor, the wife of Christopher Taylor; indicted 10 August 1645.

Guilty (no goods). To hang.

The area around Pulham seems to have been a centre of religious heterodoxy in the early 1640s. The future Ranter Lawrence Clarkson was invited to preach here in 1644, and stayed in what he later described as 'a great Parish' for about six months. It may also, however, have afforded refuge for conformist clergy forced out by Parliament at the same time. In August 1646, for example, Stephen Hurry or Harry, ejected from the parish of Alburgh in Norfolk, was living here when he made his will. Hurry had been one of bishop Wren's rural deans and a supporter of the new ceremonialism. In his will, he left legacies to bishop Hall and Dr Corbett, chancellor of the diocese, as well as bequests to twelve sequestered Norfolk clergymen. He may have been encouraged to settle at Pulham by the rector Daniel Sayer, who also suffered sequestration at the same time.

NkRO, C/S3, box 36 [1644-5]; Clarkson, *Lost Sheep Found*, 11; *Wal.Rev.*, 269.

RUSHALL

Witch: Margaret Frances, widow.

She was indicted for bewitching the goods of Henry Locke, 1 June 1645. Witnesses: Henry Locke Snr, Henry Locke Jnr and Thomas Goodnough.

True bill. Guilty.

Very little is known of the history of the parish of Rushall in this period. Henry Locke, however, would appear to have been one of its more prosperous and high-ranking inhabitants. In the year of the witch scare, his son Samuel was admitted to Caius College, Cambridge, and later served the cure of Flixton in Suffolk in 1650. He had buried his wife, Grace, in the parish three years earlier. Locke's name also appears frequently in the parish registers of the nearby Dickleburgh, a larger town disfigured by religious conflict in the period. The loyalist rector Christopher Bernard (d.1680) was ejected for refusing the Covenant, and was replaced by Elias Crabtree (d.1662), who had earlier been admonished by Laud in High Commission in January 1632.

NkRO, C/S3, box 36 [1644-5]; Venn, ii, 97; NkRO, PD 151 & 704; *Wal.Rev.*, 263; *Cal.Rev.*, 140.

STRATTON ST MARY

Witch: Margaret Mego, widow.

She was accused of bewitching the possessions of Robert Baily, 1 July 1645.

True bill. Not guilty.

John Merryweather was sequestered as rector of neighbouring Stratton St Michael.

NkRO, C/S3, box 36 [1644-5]; *Wal.Rev.*, 270.

SWAFFHAM

In an anonymous pamphlet printed in the summer of 1645, there is a brief description of a visit made by a witch, dressed as ‘some great gentle woman’, to the house of one Peter Smith of that town. It was alleged that she threatened the maid after being refused drink and food while the family were in church on the fast day. After the stranger left, some hogs were found bewitched.

Anon., *Signes and Wonders from Heaven*, 3.

UPWELL: see under CAMBRIDGESHIRE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

BURTON LATIMER

Stearne refers to large gatherings of witches at Burton, as confessed by some who attended, but provides no further details.

The parish of Burton Latimer had been radically polarised by the ministry of the Arminian zealot Robert Sibthorp (d.1662), who was appointed rector in 1629. The ecclesiastical records suggest constant antagonism between the Laudian rector and many of his congregation throughout the 1630s. Sibthorp’s influence extended well beyond the boundaries of Burton. As the son-in-law of Sir John Lambe (c.1566-1646) and a JP, he was a constant thorn in the side of Northamptonshire’s puritans. He consistently argued in favour of the divine right of kings and vigorously defended Charles’ policies during the period of the personal rule. Not surprisingly, he was rapidly brought to book for his crimes after 1640. At the outbreak of the civil war, he joined the royalist armies and was consequently sequestered from his living in 1644.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 11, 53; Haigh, *The Plain Man’s Pathways to Heaven*, 69, 167, 211; *ODNB*, sub Sibthorp, Robert; *Wal.Rev.*, 284; Slater, ‘The Lord Lieutenancy on the Eve of the Civil Wars’, 279-96.

DENFORD

According to Stearne, a young man of Denford, ‘who suffered for Witchery since the said time, at Northampton’, confessed among other things to sending imps to kill the cattle of one Cockes (Cox) of Denford.

It is unclear who held the living at the time of the witch trials. Henry Raymond, who was ejected in 1660, was probably vicar. He had served as curate since 1630 and may have replaced the sequestered Arthur Leonard about the time of Stearne's account.

Having perused the parish registers, Gaskill suggests that the victim was probably named **Thomas Cox**. One of this name was churchwarden in 1627.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 23; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 200, 317n.; *Cal.Rev.*, 405.

OLD

According to Stearne, some had confessed to very large gatherings of witches at Old.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 11, 53.

RUSHDEN

Witch: Elizabeth Gurrey (Currey), widow.

According to Stearne, Gurrey or Currey, a poor widow, of 'Risden, Beds', confessed to William Dickens to having made a covenant with the Devil.

Stearne almost certainly errs in referring to a 'Risden' in Bedfordshire. The parish of Rushden in Northamptonshire lay close to the border with Bedfordshire and was located in the area that produced other witches at this period.

Little is known of the religious life of the parish. The ownership of the manor of Rushden, however, was disputed in this period between two men on opposite sides in the religious and political struggles of the 1640s and 1650s. John Ekins was a ship money resister and supporter of Parliament. His brother-in-law Francis Gray, on the other hand, was a staunch royalist. In December 1642 he was alleged to have caused a riot when as clerk of the peace for the county he attempted to prosecute a group of parliamentarian and puritan sympathisers ('round-headed rogues') for pulling down the cross at Isham. He was subsequently imprisoned by the parliamentarian authorities and not released until 1645.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 31; *VCH, Northamptonshire*, vol.4, 44-50; Warburton, *Memoirs of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers*, ii, 84; *HMC. MSS of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensferry*, vol.3, 415-6.

THRAPSTON

Witch: Cherry.

Stearne relates that one Cherry, ‘a very aged man’, was indicted for witchcraft at Northampton and died there in gaol on the day in which his case was found a true bill. He was accused, among other things, of killing a neighbour by witchcraft after a dispute in which he cursed the man. He also confessed to killing two others, who both died in a ‘strange and miserable condition’, as well as harming the cattle of Sir John Washington of Thrapston, despite his munificence in giving him alms. He was said by Stearne to have entered into a covenant with the Devil.

Thrapston had been the site of an earlier witchcraft trial in 1612. **John Winnick** of Molesworth (qv) had also spent time in the village in about 1617 when apprenticed to one Bateman.

The living of Thrapston was in the hands of the non-resident and royalist Thomas Holt, who was also vicar of All Saints with St Peter at Stamford. Following his desertion to the royalist forces, he was accused by a group of villagers of allowing disreputable ministers and other delinquents to serve the cure in his place.

The dominant presence in the village during the period of the witch trials was the resident gentleman **Sir John Washington** (1591-1688), who was also a victim of the witch Cherry. Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, he had suffered numerous bereavements, losing five children and one wife. He was probably sympathetic to the parliamentary cause, unlike his brother Lawrence (d.1653), who was ejected from his Essex living for voicing anti-parliamentarian views from the pulpit.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 34-5; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 201-3; *Wal.Rev.*, 167, 251-2.

WOODFORD

Witch: Anne Goodfellow, widow.

According to Stearne, Goodfellow confessed that shortly after the death of her aunt, she reappeared to her in the shape of a spirit and encouraged her to renounce Christ and sign a covenant with the Devil. Her misdeeds are not recounted, though Stearne does report that she was not impressed with her new mentor whom she found ‘a lyer, for she often wanted after’.

The living of Woodford was split into two medieties or halves, with both ministers being sequestrated in 1645. The living was then consolidated as one under the lay patronage of Rowland St John, who appointed William Floyde as rector in that year.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 31; *Wal.Rev.*, 276, 284; *Cal.Rev.*, 202.

SUFFOLK

ACTON

Witch: According to Stearne, one King confessed to witchcraft.

Acton was a major centre of recusancy before the civil war. Large numbers of catholics were regularly presented in the church courts, as well as named in diocesan visitations. Their presence in a village as small as Acton was almost certainly related to the protection they were afforded by the catholic Daniels family. Their house at Acton Place, close to Long Melford (qv), was searched for arms in early 1642 and was later one of the first to be attacked in Suffolk in the anti-catholic rioting later that year, probably as a result of the family's close kinship ties with the Rivers. The Daniels were also patrons of the living at Acton. Samuel Alsop, vicar since 1635, was sequestered in 1643. Among his many misdeeds, it was claimed that he set up a Jesuits' badge in gold in the chancel and expressed great malignancy towards Parliament.

The **Kings** of Acton figure occasionally in legal records and were probably royalist in politics. In 1660, six indictments (offences unknown) were preferred against **John King** of Acton at the Bury Quarter Sessions. In 1673, one **Thomas King** of Acton petitioned the Ipswich bench for a pension 'shewing that he did for many yeares serve his late Majestie King Charles the first ... in the wars & also his most gracious Majestie that now is whereby he is much disabled in his body'. In the same year, one of the same name, of Acton, was appointed to the bench as a JP. He may be the same as the Thomas King mentioned in a recognizance entered in to by Richard Glamfield of Offton (qv), who was bailed to keep the peace against King in 1652. Glamfield had been active in the prosecution of witches in the neighbouring villages of Chattisham and Hintlesham (qqv) in 1645.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 37; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/3; DN/VIS/6/1; DN/VIS/6/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fo.126; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 46, 208-10, 226, 303; *Wal.Rev.*, 326; ESkRO, B105/2/4, fos 36r, 114r; B105/2/7, fo.131v; TNA, PC 2/64, 29.

ALDEBURGH

Witches: widows Gardner, Wade and five other women (unnamed). The borough archives record payments to Goody Phillips (Mary Phillips) for searching and giving evidence against the suspected witches; to John Paine for hanging the seven women found guilty; to William Dannell for erecting the gallows on which they were hanged; and £2 to Matthew Hopkins. A special rate was levied by Mr Newgate and Mr Richard Browne, on the authority of Thomas Johnson, bailiff, in order to meet the extraordinary cost of the trials.

The port borough of Aldeburgh was in severe decline by the time of the trials. It was also a long established centre of puritan dissent that had been subjected in the 1630s to the ceremonial innovations of Laud. In July 1644, the vicar Richard Topcliffe (appointed

1619) was sequestered for a variety of offences including his observation of ceremonies, antipathy for sermons, and for putting the parish to great expense by beautifying and refurbishing the church. His crimes dated back to at least 1636 when by reason of his 'contention and of his seldom preaching many of the ablest of the parish' were said to have deserted his ministry (one Walter Ashley was prosecuted in the church courts in 1633 on suspicion of holding 'private conventicles' in the town). Shortly before Topcliffe's removal, the church had been visited by Dowsing, who, with the assistance of the town's lecturer **John Swaine** and bailiff Captain **Thomas Johnson** (d.1658), removed various idolatrous statues and pictures. Both men were later active in the prosecution of witches in 1645-6. Swaine, the vicar of nearby Westleton (qv), gave evidence against suspected witches at Halesworth (qv), while the godly captain Johnson, who oversaw the trials in the town in January 1646, had played an important role in the government of Aldeburgh since 1635 when he sought to persuade the Privy Council to reduce its ship money levy on the town. He was probably responsible for the publication of a providential tract in 1642 recounting a recent and portentous thunderstorm near Aldeburgh and was later, as an officer under the command of the earl of Manchester, responsible for overseeing the military affairs of Parliament in the borough. Johnson also served as a lay member for the fourth Presbyterian classis in Suffolk. One **William Daniel** witnessed Johnson's will in 1658.

Like a number of towns and villages visited by Hopkins, Aldeburgh's religious life continued unsettled and deeply divided for much of the 1640s and 1650s. In March 1644, the curate Maptid Violet (d.1676) had been proceeded against for a variety of moral offences (drunkenness, singing ribald songs, etc) and was accused by neighbouring ministers of being a 'base Antinomian [who] is like to be intertayned at Hallisworth [i.e.Halesworth] and teach them libertinisme who need no spurring'. Some of the depositions against him even suggest advanced 'ranterism'; one witness claimed that he had said in a pub in the town, 'Come lett us syn, for the more we syn the better we shall be accepted'. Among those who witnessed against Violet was Mary Howldine, the landlady who was responsible for catering for the judges and witnesses during the witch trials. Others, however, including a number of bailiffs, defended him as a godly minister and he was almost certainly, at an earlier time, a keen puritan. In 1640, for example, while minister at Ellingham in Norfolk, he had been prosecuted in the church courts for saying that 'some of the Lights of the Church of England were gone into New England and that onely the socketts were lefte'. The witchcraft trials did not produce religious amity and union in Aldeburgh. In the 1650s, it was troubled by the Quakers, and after the Restoration loyal government correspondents lamented that 'many disaffected persons and Nonconformists' remained in the town.

ESkRO, EE 1/12/2, fos 248-50, 258v, 273v; Hele, *Notes or Jottings about Aldeburgh*, 42-4; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 181-5; *Wal.Rev.*, 265, 269, 273, 345-6, 346; *HMC. Reports, Various Collections ... Volume IV*, 306-9; NkRO, DN/VIS/6/4; Cooper (ed.), *The Journal of William Dowsing*, 220-1 [no.56]; ESKRO, EE 6/3/3, fo.66v; TNA, SP 24/1, fo.86v; Anon., *A Signe from Heaven*, 3; TNA, PROB 11/289, fos 116v-117v [will of Thomas Johnson, 15 October 1658; proved 14 March 1658/9]; Browne, *History of Congregationalism*, 608-12; *CSPD, 1650*, 426, 430; Holmes (ed.), *The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers*, 115-19; ESKRO, EE

1/P6/5/1; EE 1/P6/6; NkRO, DN/SUN 4(a); Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 667, 668, 671; *CSPD*, 1666-1667, 307.

ATHELINGTON

Witches: details unknown. In January 1646, the magistrates at Ipswich ordered the people of Athelington, Horham and Brandeston to appear before them to ‘hear and determine their differences as to payment of rates towards charges of Witches accused by the town of Branston’. Constables or churchwardens who refused to set a rate, or parishioners who refused to pay, were to be bound over.

Little is known of the religious history of this small parish. It was visited, however, by the iconoclast Dowsing in August 1644.

ESkRO, B105/2/1, fos 81r, 84r; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 312-3 [no.260].

BACTON

Witches: Margaret Benet; Mary Bush, widow; Ellen, the wife of Nicholas Greenleaf; and Elizabeth Watcham. In addition, it is likely that Bacton produced a fifth witch in the shape of Ellen Allen. On 21 August 1645, the magistrates at Bury St Edmunds ordered that she ‘be attached by the constables there and brought to this court to answer charges against her on His Majestys behalf’.

Bush and Benet both confessed to the minister of Bacton John Marleton. The former claimed to have employed imps to kill livestock belonging to Mr Prettyman and Goodman Garnam, as well as using them to torment Elizabeth Heath. Benet told Marleton that she first encountered the Devil on her way from [Old] Newton, and that she used her imps to terrorise the widow Hoggard and Goody Garnam. Ellen Greenleaf confessed that her mother had sent her imps, after which she was often tempted to kill herself. Her victims included Goodman Garnam, Ralph Hoggard and one Mr Lockwood, who was infested with lice.

True bills were found against Bush, Bennet and Greenleaf; ignoramus against Watcham.

The minister at Bacton who was responsible for interrogating the suspect witches was **John Marleton** (d.1663), a moderate puritan who had been instituted to the living in 1633 by **Henry Prettyman**, lord of the manor and himself a victim of the witches’ maleficium. In the early seventeenth century, a lecture has been established in the village under the will of the godly Ipswich merchant Robert Gipps. The village also had a Catholic presence. In 1629 and 1633 members of the Spencer family were presented in the church courts, Vincent Spencer being described as a ‘constant papist’. The Garnhams were yeoman farmers in Bacton. The will of Robert Garnham (1653) was witnessed by **George Pretyman**.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 301-2; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 28-9; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 95-9 [which also supplies much useful additional information, supplied from an unpublished paper by Ivan Bunn, on the lives of the witches and their victims]; Shipps, 'Lay Patronage of East Anglian Puritan Clerics, 253; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/3; DN/VIS/6/4; TNA, PROB 11/245, fos 231r-v [will of Robert Garnham, yeoman, 30 August 1653; proved 22 May 1655]; Hughes-Clarke and Campling (eds), *The Visitation of Norfolk ... 1664*, ii, 174-5.

BELSTEAD

Witches: Mary Goddard and Rebecca Prick, the wife of William Prick.

Rebecca Prick confessed to having entered a covenant with the Devil and possessing two imps. True bills were found against both women. Rebecca may not have been found guilty at her subsequent trial as in 1656 a woman of the same name was bailed to appear at the next assizes to give evidence in a trial for burglary.

The parish had a history of puritanical dissent. In 1636 its minister Richard Raymond (d.1647) fell foul of the Laudian authorities, and was briefly suspended by bishop Wren. Raymond had been presented to the living by the resident puritan gentleman and future parliamentarian, Thomas Blossie (d.1662), who served as sheriff of Suffolk, 1646-7. In January 1644, Belstead was visited by William Dowsing, who removed a number of 'superstitious Pictures' and other objects. In 1647, Benjamin Hubbard, minister of neighbouring Copdock (qv), preached a sermon at Belstead in which he extolled the providential goodness of God in promoting the activities of men like Dowsing and Hopkins and thus securing military victories for the forces of Parliament in the civil war.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 312; ESKRO, B105/2/4, fo.14r; Boorman, 'The Administrative and Disciplinary Problems of the Church', 86; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fos 122v, 144v-145r; TNA, PROB 11/201, fos 225v-226r [will of Richard Raymond, 2 October 1642; proved 10 July 1647]; Venn, i, 168; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 227 [no.74]; Hubbard, *Sermo Secularis*, 19.

BLAXHALL

Witch: Frances Wildes (no details).

William Aldus, the rector of Copdock (qv), was also curate at Blaxhall, and was ejected from both by the earl of Manchester in 1644; see under *Copdock*. Aldus' predecessor at Copdock Thomas Garthwaite died here between 1652 and 1653, having purchased lands from his clerical colleague.

TNA, PROB 11/232, fo.41r [will of Thomas Garthwaite, 7 January 1651/2; proved 24 May 1653].

BRAMFORD

Witches: John Chambers; Alice Marsh; a man called Payne; Margaret Powell; Elizabeth Richmond; Goody Smith; Lydia Taylor.

The examinations of Powell, Richmond, Chambers and Payne were taken by John Curtise. Powell confessed to him that she had received three imps from one ‘Mother Browne’. Richmond claimed that the Devil had appeared to her in the shape of the prophet Daniel and forswore her not to go to church to hear the minister. She consented, and further cursed one ‘Goody Furnis’, who subsequently died. Chambers told Curtise that the Devil appeared to him, too, and forced him to sign a covenant in his own blood, after which he was given three imps which he used to kill a bullock belonging to one Widman, and the horses and child of one Smith (who also testified against him). Payne, likewise, admitted to Curtise and one Sterne* that he had entered into a covenant with Satan. Alice Marsh confessed to William Itiles [i.e.Stiles] that she had signed a pact with the Devil and then engaged in intercourse with him. Rewarded with imps, she used these to kill one Simson’s son and, according to Simson himself, one of his hogs. Henry Sanford testified that Goody Smith had confessed to cursing two of the children of one Parker that subsequently died, as well as the baby of one Fulcher. Moreover, her own husband had apparently admitted to seeing her imps, which she concealed in a bag in her ‘secret parts’. John Beoment claimed that Lydia Taylor, a married woman, had made confession to him of being a witch and possessing imps with which she killed one Bert’s cattle. Edward Cattinge and John Barlet also testified against Taylor.

*** It is usually assumed that the reference to ‘Sterne’ in the examinations taken down in 1645 relates to the witchfinder John Stearne. However, in all probability this is a reference to one Thomas Sterne, a wealthy villager, who paid the highest amount in the ship money returns in 1639-40.**

True bills were found against Powell and Smith; ignoramus against Taylor, with no verdicts recorded for the others.

In the early seventeenth century, Bramford was a noted centre of puritan fervour under the leadership of its painful, preaching minister John Carter. Carter, however, was ‘driven away’. By the 1630s, the church was reported in a state of disrepair, the responsibility of John Acton (d.1662), an Ipswich bailiff who resided at Bramford Hall. Acton may have been a royalist sympathiser. His son, also John (d.1664), married the daughter of the royalist John Buxton of Norfolk, elected MP for the county in 1656, but disbarred from taking his seat on the grounds of his political sympathies. The parish church was visited by Dowsing in February 1644, where many ‘superstitious Pictures’ were removed and other alterations were made. In 1657 one Samuel Sillett, probably an early convert to Quakerism in the village, was imprisoned for ‘disturbing the minister in time of divine service’.

John Curtis, who played a prominent role in examining and watching the suspected witches, held land and property in Bramford and Ipswich, and may have known the ‘attorney’ Hopkins as a result. Of a legal background himself (he was a former member of the Middle Temple), he was also a supporter of Parliament and was eager for office as recompense for his services. In March 1644, for example, he wrote to John Rushworth, ‘desiring him to use his influence in support of his application for the places of Collector of Excise and Receiver of the King’s Rents for the whole or part of Suffolk’.

William Stiles (wrongly transcribed as ‘Itiles’ by Ewen) may have been the parliamentarian soldier of that name from nearby Hemingstone. Lieutenant Colonel William Stiles, who, as a JP, was responsible for examining royalists suspected of plotting in 1658, was the son of John and Elizabeth Stiles. Both he and his father played a leading part in securing the sequestration of Daniel Wicherly, a royalist delinquent and Arminian innovator, from the living of Hemingstone in 1644. William’s sister, Elizabeth, married the puritan minister Tobias Legg at Ipswich in 1656 (though against her father’s dying wishes). Stiles’s brother-in-law, the godly Ipswich magistrate William Tyler, appointed him and fellow puritan William Cage as supervisors of his will in 1643. The will of Stiles’ father, John, was distinctly pious.

Henry Sanford (d.1646) was described in his nuncupative will as a gentleman living in the village. He gave forty shillings to the minister of Bramford, one Mr Brasier.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 293-4; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 30-1, 44-5; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 87-9; Redstone (ed.), *The Ship-Money Returns for ... Suffolk*, 91; Clarke, *Collection of the Lives of Ten Eminent Divines*, 3-6; Blatchly, *Town Library of Ipswich*, 19; Venn, i, 3; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.212; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 234-5 [no.89]; ESKRO, B105/2/4, fos 40v, 42r; ESKRO, C2/18/3; *HMC.Thirteenth Report, Appendix, Part 1. MSS of the Duke of Portland, vol.1*, 171; Thurloe, *State Papers*, vii, 48; Rylands (ed.), *Visitation of the County of Suffolk ... 1664 ... 1668*, 111; *Cal.Rev.*, 322; ESKRO, IC/AA1/83/108 [will of William Stiles of Hemingstone, 19 May 1645; proved 17 March 1645/6]; TNA, PROB 11/257, fos 198r-199r [will of John Style, 3 September 1655; proved 29 August 1656]; TNA, PROB 11/192, fos 247v-248v [will of William Tyler, 29 November 1643; proved 19 January 1644/5]; CUL, Mm.I.45, 44-5; TNA, PROB 11/197, fo.79v [will of Henry Sanford, c.14 May 1646; proved 6 July 1646].

BRANDESTON

Witch: John Lowes, the aged vicar of Brandeston. In his confession, he also alluded to an associate and fellow witch, ‘mother Sherewod’, i.e. Anne Sherwood, of nearby Framlingham.

After consistently refusing to admit to the charge of witchcraft, Lowes was swum and finally confessed before Charles Knowles (‘Ca.Kno.’) that he had seven imps, which he allowed to suck him. Daniel Rayner testified that Lowes had employed one of his imps to destroy ships between Yarmouth and Winterton in Norfolk. Nathaniel Man testified that after falling out with him, Lowes bewitched his child to death.

Lowes was hanged.

Lowes was vicar of Brandeston for almost fifty years, and during that time gained an unsavoury reputation as a litigious and argumentative man, who was twice indicted and once arraigned for witchcraft prior to the 1645 trial. Many villagers were apparently so appalled at Lowes' behaviour that they left the village; some certainly immigrated to New England in 1634. In the early 1640s, many of the parishioners of Brandeston tried to petition Laud to rid themselves of Lowes, but to no avail. In all probability, Lowes was protected by John Revett, the royalist lord of the manor. In 1645, however, when fresh allegations were made against the cantankerous parson, Revett was powerless to act as he had defected to the royal court at Oxford. Once Lowes was removed, religious harmony was seemingly slow to resurface in Brandeston. The sequestration proceedings were long and protracted, and dogged by altercations; in October 1646 a sizable delegation petitioned the Committee for Plundered Ministers objecting to the appointment of Matthew Stoneham as vicar. At the same time, the parish became involved in a dispute with two neighbouring villages, Athelington and Horham (qqv), over the question of who should pay, and how much, toward the charge of prosecuting the witches accused by the inhabitants of Brandeston.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 300-1; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 23-4; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 138-43; BL, Add MS 33,247, 652-3, 665-6; *Wal.Rev.*, 339; Ewen, *Witchcraft in Star Chamber*, 44-54; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration from East Anglia', Appendix 1, i; Anon., *Magazine of Scandall*; BL, Add MS 15,669, fo.103; 15,670, fos 203, 227; Add MS 15,671, fos 67b, 199; ESKRO, B105/2/1, fos 81r, 84r.

BUNGAY

Witch: William Payne, labourer.

On 12 January 1646, the magistrates at Beccles Quarter Sessions issued a writ of *subpoena* for witnesses to appear the following morning in order to testify against Payne, who was accused of witchcraft.

Puritan dissent may have been deep-rooted in Bungay. In 1629, one William Reeve was prosecuted in the church courts for quitting his own church and 'going to other Churches to heare sermons'. Bungay was later the site of a mutiny in June 1640 when soldiers pressed for service in the Scottish wars threatened to kill the deputy lieutenants sent to quell the disorder. One of the abused JPs, Sir William Playters, arrested two of the ringleaders, who were in all probability executed. It was during these commotions that the soldiers executed summary justice on a witch at Beccles. Like Brandeston, the sequestration proceedings, which were not completed until 1652, did not move smoothly at Bungay and suggest deep religious tensions in the town. This is further suggested by the fact that in 1658, following the death of Cromwell, some parishioners attempted to procure the services of one Harwood, 'a malignant minister'.

ESKRO, B105/2/1, fo.80r; NkRO, DN/VIS/6/1; *CSPD*, 1640, 290-1, 336; *Wal.Rev.*, 331; TNA, SP 24/12, fo.106v; *Cal.Rev.*, 450; *CSPD*, 1658-1659, 209-10.

CHATTISHAM

Witches: Anne Alderman; Mary and Nathaniel Bacon; Rebecca, the wife of Francis Morris.

Anne Alderman confessed before Richard Glam[field]* and Moses Rayner that she had been a witch for eight years, and though she initially refused the Devil's entreaties, she finally submitted. She received her imps from one 'mother Cortnell', and among other deeds, admitted to killing her own daughter and wishing her son's child dead. Mary Bacon's accusers included Matthew Hopkins and Edward Smith, who claimed she had received her imps from one 'mother Cortnell' and had used them to kill cows. Mary's husband, Nathaniel, confessed before one Mr Jen[nings?] that he received his imps from 'mother Shipper' (also witnessed against by Moses Rayner). Rebecca Morris, on the testimonies of Rayner and Edward Smith, claimed to have been given her imps by the Devil.

*** Richard Glam is probably Richard Glamfield, the same who testified against the accused witches at nearby Hintlesham (qv). His brother Thomas lived at Copdock (qv).**

True bill against Mary Bacon; verdicts unknown in the other three cases.

Chattisham was deeply divided over religion. Its minister since 1626, Jeremiah Ravens, was not only a womaniser and wife-beater, who was prosecuted for the same in the church and secular courts, but he was also a pluralist and non-resident, holding the living of nearby Great Blakenham. Sequestered as a staunch Arminian and opponent of Parliament in July 1644, he was accused of preaching that all those who refused to come up to the rails to receive communion would be damned, and prosecuted others for hearing sermons elsewhere. As a result, it was said that some parishioners had left the village. He was also suspected of harbouring 'papist' leanings, owning a crucifix and several 'popish pictures'. There is certainly evidence in the records of the church courts and other sources to back up some of these claims. As early as 1620, Chattisham supplied passengers on the *Mayflower*, while in 1629 one Anne Samon or Sansum, described as 'a brownist recusant', was presented for travelling to hear sermons elsewhere.

Shortly before the sequestration of Ravens, Chattisham was visited by the iconoclast Dowsing, who reported that there was 'nothing to be done'. In all probability the villagers, led by their puritan lord of the manor Daniel Meadows (1577-1651), had already acted to purge their church of any vestiges of Catholicism. Meadows had orchestrated the campaign in the village to oust Ravens, and his son John was himself a puritan minister who was ejected from his living at Ousden in Suffolk in 1662. At the Restoration, Chattisham continued as a haven of nonconformity. The eminent preacher Owen Stockton, formerly lecturer at Colchester, resided in the village and occasionally preached in the parish church in the absence of the vicar. He died and was buried in the village in 1680.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 307-8; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 99-100; ESkRO, C8/4/7, 387; *Wal.Rev.*, 342; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 39-41; Tyack, 'Migration from East Anglia', Appendix 1, iii; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/4; BN/VIS/6/1; DN/SUN4(a); Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 226 [no.71]; *Cal.Rev.*, 348, 464; TNA, PROB 11/364, fos 257v-258v [will of Owen Stockton, 6 June 1679; proved 27 November 1680].

CODDENHAM

Witch: according to John Stearne an unnamed woman from 'Codman, Suffolk' confessed to possessing a witch's mark.

Coddenham was a puritan parish that would appear to have suffered at the hands of bishop Wren and his surrogates. Its minister from 1629 until his ejection in 1662 was the local antiquarian and eminent puritan Matthias Candler (1605-1663). He was admonished by Wren in 1636 for 'inconformitie'. Two years later his assistant and the village schoolmaster Thomas Waterhouse immigrated with his wife Anne to New England. Coddenham was also the home of William Dowsing's father in law. Dowsing possessed land in the village and the births of eight of his ten children are recorded in the parish register. His name also appears on a militia list for the village in 1638. John Morrill has speculated that Dowsing left the village at about the same time that Waterhouse travelled to America. In 1644 Dowsing returned to Coddenham to finish the work of purification by removing a number of crosses from the steeple and chancel of the parish church.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 17; *Cal.Rev.*, 100-1, 512-3; Green (ed.), *Diary of John Rous*, 68; Tyack, 'Migration from East Anglia', Appendix 1, cvii; Morrill, 'William Dowsing, the Bureaucratic Puritan', 174-5; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 30-1, 219 [no.53].

COMBS

Witch: Mary Fuller. True bill.

Combs was a parish with a tradition of puritan dissent. Its minister between 1615 and 1647 was the godly Thomas Sothebie, who married the daughter of Edmund Dandy, lord of the manor of Combs. This small village also supplied migrants to New England in 1630. In 1647, a returning émigré, Richard Jennings (1616-1709), became rector of the parish until his ejection in 1662, and like his predecessor he married another daughter of the lord of the manor, Edmund Dandy.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 308; Tyack, 'Migration from East Anglia', Appendix 1, xv; *Cal.Rev.*, 297.

COPDOCK

Witches: Susan Manners; Alice Muntford; Jane Rivet; Mary Skipper.

Their accusers were Robert Hitchcock, Thomas Bull, Rebecca Ustwood, Mother [Mary] Phillips and Mother Mills (the latter both searchers). Skipper confessed to having made a compact with the Devil and using her imps to kill one Lane's child. The Devil also told her to go to church 'and make a greate show', but also warned her that if she did so regularly, he would 'nip her'.

Manners and Rivet were found guilty; verdict unrecorded on Muntford and Skipper.

Thomas Garthwaite, rector in 1637, was probably a Laudian. In 1636 he gave evidence in support of Wren's faction following the puritan rioting at Ipswich in that year. The following year he witnessed the resignation of the puritan John Allen from the living of St Mary at Quay, Ipswich. Copdock itself was a centre of recusancy under the patronage of the resident gentleman Henry Foster. Foster's house was attacked in the Stour Valley riots of 1642, when it was rumoured in Ipswich and surrounding villages that the Fosters were assembling a 'secret army' at Copdock. Equally suspect was the behaviour of the recently appointed rector of the parish, William Aldus (d.1680), who was sequestered both here and at Blaxhall (qv) in 1644. Aldus, who had previously served at Linstead (qv), another parish dominated by a local Catholic family, was accused of being a favourer of the new ceremonialism as well as being a drunkard. Specific charges of reading from the Book of Common Prayer were levelled at Aldus by **Robert Hitchcock**. In January 1644, William Dowsing found much work to do in the parish church, from whence he removed '150 superstitious Pictures' as well as crucifixes and other 'popish' paraphernalia. Aldus was succeeded by Joseph Clifford and Benjamin Hubbard (1608-1660). Hubbard preached a 'victory' sermon at nearby Belstead (qv) in the summer of 1647 in which he alluded to the providential goodness of God in extirpating popery from the land, and specifically mentioned for approval the work of Dowsing and the witchfinders in the great work of 'Reformation'. In November 1648, Thomas Bedingfield of Gray's Inn compounded for the manor of Copdock 'which he lately purchased of Henry Foster, his debtor, a recusant, two thirds being sequestered for his recusancy'. Bedingfield, himself a Catholic and a member of a family with strong Catholic roots in nearby Gislingham, was forced to swear allegiance to the government in 1652.

Rebecca Ustwood, widow, paid the relatively modest sum of 3s 9d in ship money in 1639. She was not able to write, as she signed her will of 1671 with a mark. **Robert Hitchcock** paid a respectable 8s 4d in ship money in 1639. **Thomas Bull**, who does not appear in village records at this time, may have been the gentleman of that name who served as hundred constable in 1645 and lived at Boss Hall in Sproughton and Flowton (qv). Bull (d.1649) was rated the wealthiest man in the village of Flowton in 1640 and served in a variety of parish offices in this period including as overseer of the poor from 1636 to 1640. He was also well connected. Of his three daughters, Jane married Benjamin Cutler Jnr, son and heir of the Ipswich royalist of that name, while the others were married to the Presbyterian Charles Vesey of Hintlesham (qv) and Sgt Major John Moody, the radical Cromwellian, of Ipswich. In his will of 1649, he bequeathed lands at Ramsey (qv) in Essex, and Bramford (qv), Sproughton and Burstall in Suffolk, to his

brother **William Bull** of Ipswich, as well as a smaller bequest of land at Sproughton to his daughter Anne Moody.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 312-3; ESkRO, C2/18/1, 14; B105/2/1, fo.81v; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 218r, 244r; Tanner MS 314, fo.125; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/4; Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, ii, 450; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 44, 51, 328-9; *Wal.Rev.*, 325; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 66-7; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 226-7 [no.73]; Hubbard, *Sermo Secularis*, 19; Green, *CPCC*, iii, 1867; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 208; ESkRO, IC/AA1/101/67 [will of Rebecca Ustwood, 15 August ?; proved 1671]; FB 21/A2/1; *East Anglian Miscellany*, 6 (1912), 50, 52; ESkRO, HD 1538/354/19, 22-24, 28; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 92; TNA, PROB 11/211, fos 103v-104r [will of Thomas Bull of Flowton, 20 September 1648, proved 16 February 1649/50].

CREETING

Witches: Nicholas Hempstead and Anne Hammer.

According to John Stearne, Hempstead was responsible for using witchcraft to kill horses destined for the parliamentary armies and was subsequently executed. Hammer confessed to Stearne that she had slept with the Devil and also admitted responsibility for the death of a child of one Master Campe.

Stearne refers to Hammer as living at Creeting near Needham (i.e.Needham Market). This may refer to one of three villages, Creeting St Mary, Creeting St Peter, or Creeting All Saints, all of which lie just to the north of Needham. Creeting All Saints was a parish with a puritan past. Samuel Spring (d.1653), minister there at the time of the Hopkins' trials, was a puritan, as was his son, also Samuel (c.1619-1674), who succeeded him there, as well as holding the rectories of St Mary's (1649) and St Peter's (1653). He was ejected from All Saints and St Mary's in 1662, but continued preaching at nearby Needham Market. The Springs were related to the local gentry family, the Campes, Samuel Spring Jnr having purchased lands in the village from one John **Campe**. The minister at St Peter's was the Laudian ceremonialist Nathaniel Flick (d.1658), who also held a living in Norfolk. He was ejected from the latter in 1644 on the grounds that he was a strict observer of Wren's injunctions, as well as a disparager of Parliament and its officers, but he somehow managed to hang on at St Peter's.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 18, 31-2; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 90-1 [who suggests Creeting St Mary]; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fos 132, 137; *Cal.Rev.*, 456; TNA, PROB 11/344, fo.392v [will of Samuel Spring Jnr, 25 January 1673/4; proved 13 April 1674]; *Wal.Rev.*, 267.

DUNWICH

Witches: Priscilla Collit and Elizabeth Southerne.

In 1645 Southerne, described as a 'pedlar', confessed to the minister Mr Browne that following a fall-out with 'mother Collit' a year earlier, the latter sent the Devil

in the shape of a ‘crabfish’ [i.e.crayfish]. She also claimed to have met the Devil in the shape of a black boy on the road to Westleton (qv). Mr Browne also gave evidence against Collit. The womens’ other accuser was Thomas Spatchet. He claimed that Collit, following her league with the Devil, was enticed to destroy a boat belonging to Goodman Harper at Newcastle. She had become so deluded by the Devil’s promises that she even tried to walk on water to Boston (perhaps in blasphemous imitation of Christ).

The town accounts for the year 1644-5 contain payments to two ‘watchers’. True bill against both women.

In the immediate period before the civil war, the port and borough of Dunwich was in a state of terminal decline. The silting up of the harbour and encroachments of the sea had left the town depopulated and impoverished. The corporation was particularly active in the 1630s seeking mitigation towards the cost of supplying a ship for royal service. In 1635, for example, it employed **Thomas Johnson** of Aldeburgh (qv) to intervene on its behalf with the Privy Council in London. The town was also deeply divided by religion. Throughout the 1630s, it was a haven for puritan lecturers and ministers, the town records frequently recording payments to visiting preachers. Among their number were **Mr [William] Browne, John Swaine** and **Hugh Driver**, all of whom were involved in the interrogation of suspected witches elsewhere in Suffolk in 1645. All three later signed the puritan petition calling for further godly reform and church settlement in 1646. **Swaine** was paid for preaching in the town in 1645 at the same time as the witch scare. The list of town preachers also included a Mr Pearce or Pierse, who was presented in 1627 for not wearing the surplice. He may have been replaced in the 1630s by one Robert Pake, who was the subject of a petition to Parliament in October 1641 (in 1635, there is also a reference to the examination of ‘Mr Pakes mayd’ by Mr Beddingfield). He refused to pay his rate in that year. The town’s two parish churches, now lost under the sea, were visited by William Dowsing in April 1644. The churchwardens at St Peter’s subsequently agreed to take down many statues and ‘40 superstitious Pictures’ while similar losses were suffered at All Saints.

The borough records provide some details of the impoverished state of **Collit and Southerne**, as well as a great deal of information with regard to one of the chief witnesses, **Thomas Spatchet**. There are records of payments to the sick ‘Mother Sitternes’ and the ‘widow Sitternes’ as early as 1632, and again in 1642, when the Widow Southerne and Widow Collett received small amounts from Sir George Copping’s charity. There is also a reference to moneys paid in 1645-6 ‘for carrying ye widow Clarke’, possibly an allusion to the cost of transporting another suspect witch from the village to her place of trial.

Thomas Spatchet first appeared in the town’s accounts as an officer of the borough in 1634, when he paid his entry fine as a ‘foreigner’. Little more is heard about him until the year of the witch scare, 1645, when he became a freeman of the borough. His rise thereafter was rapid. In August 1646 he was chosen to serve as chamberlain and in the following year was appointed one of the ruling twenty-four. He served as coroner in 1648

and was appointed a bailiff in 1649. He remained active on the town's behalf throughout the commonwealth period, when he also began a career as a congregational minister. His preaching was dramatically curtailed, however, at the Restoration, when he suffered acutely from political humiliation and the loss of his curacy. His fears at this time may well have induced some form of psychosomatic disorder as he suffered throughout much of the 1660s from a series of strange fits that rendered him physically disabled and speechless. He and his colleagues eventually attributed his troubles to witchcraft, but it proved impossible to persuade the authorities to act. Eventually, his fits ceased with the death of his supposed tormentor in 1667, and he subsequently retired to Cookley, where he was licensed to preach under the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672.

In all probability the witch **Priscilla Collit** was related to Spatchet. Thomas' grandfather Robert Spatchet (d.1624) mentioned a sister Phoebe Collet in his will of 1623. The rest of the will is notably pious, with moneys left for the town preacher and his maintenance.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 298-9; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 179-80, 313n; ESkRO EE6/3/3, *passim*; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 300 [nos 236-7]; *Cal.Rev.*, 454; Nickolls (ed.), *Original Letters and Papers of State*, 157; Oldenburg, *Correspondence*, v, 14-15 [Cave Beck to Oldenburg, 15 August 1668]; Petto, *Faithful Narrative of ... Mr.Tho.Spatchet*; TNA, PROB 11/145, fos 351r-352r [will of Robert Spatchet, 20 May 1623; proved 2 May 1625].

FLOWTON

Witch: Judith Kettle. True bill.

William Franklin, the rector of Flowton, was sequestered from the living in 1644. He was charged, among other things, with excommunicating parishioners for not coming up to the rails to receive, observing ceremonies, preaching rarely and never on fast days, and for prosecuting those of his parishioners who went elsewhere for spiritual edification. William Dowsing visited Flowton in the same year and ordered the removal of a font from the chancel.

The churchwardens' accounts testify to the burden that the civil war placed on small parishes like Flowton. They also contain a copy of the Covenant, signed by 29 parishioners including, surprisingly, the rector William Franklin [10 March 1644]. The accounts also contain various references to the **Kettle** family and its receipt of poor relief between 1639 and 1643. One Samuel Kettle was receiving alms just before his death in 1636.

Flowton was the home parish of the puritan hundred constable, **Thomas Bull**, who may have taken part in the interrogation of witches at Copdock (qv).

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 313; *Wal.Rev.*, 334; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 73-4; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 308 [no.251]; ESkRO, FB 21/A2/1, fos 1r, 9v and *passim*; *East Anglian Miscellany*, 6 (1912).

FRAMLINGHAM

Witches: Margaret Bates; Mary Becket; Ellen Driver; Mary Edwards; Elizabeth Man*; Anne, the wife of Robert Moats; Mother Nevill; Anne Palmer; Mary Scrutton; Anne Sherwood; Anne Usher; Elizabeth Warne; Margaret With alias Chimny; Margaret Wyard

Victims of the witches: John Butteram (who was also a witness); one Canvis; Thomas Fisher (also a witness); Mr Mase or Macey; Robert Pallant; the child of John Sheldrake; Fran.Wood or Woods.

Witnesses: John Butteram (also a victim); Ber. Brandin; John Calver; Thomas Fisher (also a victim); Mary Gunnell (8 years previously she was living in the house of Robert Wayts); Matthew Hopkins; Marianne May (servant of Robert Pallant, above); Elizabeth Smith; Mr Trasy; Mary Trasy; Robert Wayts; Edmund Weeding; Elizabeth Woods.

Margaret With, alias Chimny, confessed that John Lowes of Brandeston (qv) ‘did come to her and bad her never confes any thing about witchcraft’. True bills were found against Driver, Edwards (but innocent of two other charges), Moats, Scrutton, Warne (but not guilty of one offence), Usher, With and Wyard (guilty of using incantations, but not guilty of murder by witchcraft). Verdicts of ignoramus were found against Bayts, Becket, Palmer and Sherwood.

*** The case of Elizabeth Man has been attributed by Gaskill to the parish of Wickham Market on the suggestion that she was the woman of the same name accused at Framlingham (qv), about five miles from Wickham Market. However, there is nothing in the manuscript to suggest Man’s place of abode. Man was found guilty of killing Anne Man (witnessed by James Stannar or Stannard and his wife). Her mother had apparently been hanged for a witch.**

Framlingham, site of one of the biggest witch hunts in the 1640s, was a large and disorderly parish that was a veritable hotbed of religious dissent and division. At the centre of the storm was the incumbent Richard Golty (d.1678), who was presented to the living by his Catholic patron, Theophilus Howard, earl of Suffolk, in 1630, following the elevation of his predecessor Thomas Dove to the see of Peterborough. Golty was a loyal supporter of Laud. In 1636, he was active on behalf of bishop Wren in questioning the puritan minister of Somerleyton, John Brinsley, in relation to a large conventicle held there. Edmund Mapletoft, one of Laud’s commissioners, described him at the time as ‘an able understanding man, of good parts, & good estate’. He may have been slow, however, to implement change, probably on account of deep-seated opposition from within the parish. In 1637, for example, he himself was presented for ‘neglect of his office’, a reflection in all probability of his tardiness in persuading the churchwardens to rail in the altar. One effect of Golty’s ministry was to create major disaffection among large numbers of puritans in the parish, many of whom (at least twenty-two) immigrated to New England in the 1630s. One, Francis Baylie, who left in 1638, was also listed as a

ship money defaulter. Others included the former churchwarden Nicholas Danforth, who left for America in 1635. Of those who remained, many absented themselves from communion with Golty or refused to pay their tithes, and some, such as the gentleman Edward Alp, temporarily fled the town (he was also presented as a muster defaulter).

The surviving tithe book kept by Golty sheds considerable light on the religious, economic and broader cultural divisions that existed in Framlingham in the mid 1640s. Golty lamented the fact that he had not pressed harder for the payment of tithes by errant parishioners, many of whom were also ideologically opposed to their royalist and loyal Anglican minister. Even Catholic supporters of Golty refused to pay their tithes. The town undoubtedly contained a sizeable group of royal supporters. Golty, for example, was probably behind the decision to fund witnesses out of parish funds to travel to Bury St Edmunds in 1643 to give evidence against fellow parishioners for 'words spoken against the King'. While the parish was not visited by Dowsing, the organs were removed from the church, but also, mysteriously, set up again elsewhere. At the same time, the town was beset with wounded parliamentarian soldiers. About the time of the trials, Framlingham was also attracting notice as a haven for religious radicals and other extremists. In early 1645, for example, the future ranter Lawrence Clarkson (1616-1667) was accused during his interrogation by the county committee at Bury of having 'dipped six sisters one night naked' near Framlingham. Shortly after, one of the first Baptist churches in the county was established in the town by Thomas Mills (b.c.1623). In 1648, Samuel Habergham (1626-1665), son of Golty's puritan predecessor, Laurence Habergham, preached at Framlingham on a fast day. He would later become a leading figure in the fifth monarchist movement in the county. Golty was finally ejected for refusing to take the Engagement in 1650, and eventually succeeded by the eminent puritan and nonconformist Henry Sampson (c.1629-1700) in 1654, who was himself removed at the Restoration. Golty was then restored and remained as rector until his death in 1678.

A number of those involved in the interrogation and accusation of the witches in 1645 were prominent figures in Framlingham. **John Sheldrake** was described as constable in the ship money returns of 1639-40, as was William Trasy (**Mr Trasy?**). **John Calver**, **Robert Waites (Wayts)** and **Thomas Fisher** all paid above average contributions. In the 1640s, the latter was acting as one of the collectors of the weekly assessment. **Wayts** (Wayth?) may also have served in 1633 as a churchwarden, an important administrative office in the large, unincorporated borough of Framlingham. **Sheldrake**, a burgess holder, may have served the county committee, which met at Cambridge. **Edmund Weeding**, too, was busy in the 1640s working on behalf of the town. In 1644 he was responsible for removing a pregnant woman back to her home parish of Fressingfield (qv). At the same time, **Thomas Fisher** was conducting town business at Bury St Edmunds before the county committee. He was probably involved in the intense negotiations over property rights and tithe obligations that carried on into 1645, when **Edmund Weeding** was paid twice for serving orders on 'all the gentlemen appointed to view the lands'. **Hopkins** himself had links with the town as his father had previously owned land and tenements here.

The accused witches and their families were clearly drawn from the poorest section of Framlingham, most of them living outside the ancient town limits. Most figure prominently in the churchwardens' accounts as recipients of poor relief and other forms of support. Some were clearly longstanding 'problems'. **Mary Beckett**, for example, who lived as an outdweller 'towards Kettleburgh', was presented in the church courts in 1627 for bastardy and standing excommunicate.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 303-7; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 108-13; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/4; DN/VIS 6/4; BL, Add MS 33,247, 385; *Wal.Rev.*, 335-6; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 98r, 212v; NkRO, DN/SUN4(a); Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, lxxviii, lxxiv, xcvi; Powell, *Puritan Village*, 61, 64-5; *CSPD, 1638-1639*, 64, 309, 355; Venn, i, 23; ESkRO, JC/1/29/1; Kilvert, 'The Reverend Richard Golty and his Tithes Account Book', 22-8; TNA, SP 24/1, fos 14v, 15r, 19r, 147r, 163r, 165r; ESkRO, B105/2/1, fo.124v; ESkRO, FC 101/E2/25-30; Clarkson, *Lost Sheep Found*, 15; Klaiber, 'Early Baptist Movements in Suffolk', 118; Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 250-1; *Cal.Rev.*, 240, 425.

FRESSINGFIELD

Witch: Faith Mills.

Mills confessed to John Gooding that she owned several imps that performed various acts of mischief in the village. Among other things, they were held responsible for the deaths of the children of Thomas Aldus and one Page, as well as harming the cattle of Goodman Locke, unseating John Wolnose from his horse, and bewitching one Aldus' cart. Lawrence Calver also gave evidence against Mills.

Verdict unknown.

Fressingfield was a parish with a long history of puritan dissent. During the 1630s, much of this was probably aimed at the minister James Fale (d.1671), who was eventually sequestered some time in the 1640s. In 1633 a number of parishioners, including one John Aldus, were presented in the church courts for failing to have their children baptized, while three years later a number of prominent villagers attended church but stubbornly refused to take communion from Fale. Fale complained to Wren, whose reaction probably led to a mass exodus of the godly from the parish in 1638, when numerous families immigrated to New England. In the changed atmosphere of August 1642, Fale was ordered to admit two lecturers at Fressingfield and he was probably sequestered shortly afterwards. In the interim, the sequestrators struggled to find a replacement and were still trying to make an appointment in 1647. Religious divisions within the ruling puritan elite were almost certainly responsible for the delay. In the early 1650s, an active congregational meeting was being held in the village when the fifth monarchist John Tillinghast (1604-1655) was invited to act as pastor (he declined). Fale was finally restored in 1660, though his troubles did not end there. In 1669 he was charged at the quarter sessions with fathering a bastard on a woman from nearby Hacheston. Dissent remained a feature of village life after the Restoration. In 1675, for example, a number of villagers were prosecuted for conventicling.

The **Aldus** family feature prominently in surviving records relating to the parish. The family of Nathaniel and Mary Aldus were among those who immigrated to America in 1638. Of those who remained, **Thomas Aldus** was among the middle bracket of ratepayers in the ship money returns of 1640, and James Aldhouse (Aldus) was appointed as a sequestrator in 1647. Of the other victims, Daniel Locke of Cheapenhall, probably the same as **Goodman Locke**, was ranked among the highest of ship money payers in 1640 (Fressingfield contained a number of out-parishes or hamlets). There are also references in these records to John Goodwin, probably **John Goodinge**, and **John Wolnose**, a member of the Wolnough family.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 295; *Wal.Rev.*, 333; NkRO, DN/VIS/6/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.209v; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, xv, xciii-xciv; Redstone, 'Presbyterian Church Government in Suffolk, 1643-1647', 163, 169; NkRO, FC 31/1, *sub* February 1650/1; ESKRO, B105/2/7, fos 76v-77r, 150r; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 140-1.

GLEMHAM

Witches: Anne Barker; Ellen Bishop; Margery Blake; Rose Clamfield [Glamfield?]; Thomas Clarke; Anne, the wife of Francis Driver; Alice, the wife of Richard Glamfield; Mary Sexton; Rachel Sexton; Anne Smith; Mary Smith.

Anne and Mary Smith confessed twice, latterly before Nathaniel Bacon, JP at Ipswich, that they had entered into a covenant with the Devil and had received imps from him, which they used to destroy cattle. They were also used to lame goody Barker and to sow contention between her and her husband, and some were sold to Bet Bray and Ann Arnoll of Stradbroke (qv). Either Anne or Mary further confessed that an imp had been sent to 'her sone', who was resolved to goe to the king's party with it'. Mary Sexton claimed that a dog had come to her, sent from Ipswich, which urged her to revenge herself upon the constables 'that had carried her to Ipswich upon misdemeanor'. Anne Barker was accused of the death of one Prior.

True bill against Barker, Sexton and the Smiths. Verdicts unknown in the other cases, where many of the suspects refused to confess.

The witches may have come from one of two Suffolk parishes, Great or Little Glemham. Sandwiched between the two villages was Glemham Hall, the home of the royalist commander Sir Thomas Glemham (1595-1649), who was absent throughout the period of the witch trials. The local area, however, may well have contained a large number of royalist sympathisers, as suggested by the confession of Mary Sexton. As a JP and deputy lieutenant before the civil wars, Glemham had espoused popular causes, being noted for his trenchant opposition to recusancy and acting as a supporter of common rights. In the 1640s, he acted as governor of the besieged city of York and following its capitulation he was made governor of Oxford in October 1645. After the latter's surrender in 1646, he went into brief exile, returned to fight in the second civil war, and was exiled again,

dying in Holland in 1649. He was later buried at Little Glemham. With his son Sackville he had earlier compounded for delinquency in 1646. Suspicions about the family's allegiance persisted; in 1655 Sackville's name appeared on a government list of suspected persons.

The religious history of the two parishes in the period immediately before the witch hunts was in stark contrast. At Great Glemham, Matthew Wilby was presented in 1627 for omitting to wear the surplice. At the time of the witch trials, Richard Jennings, later minister at Combs (qv), briefly held the cure. James Pottle, instituted rector of Little Glemham in 1610 by Sir Thomas Glemham's father, Henry (d.1632), was probably a loyal supporter of bishop Wren. When Richard Atkinson, sequestered at Kessingland, Suffolk, was presented to the living in the 1640s he was said to have been pulled out of the pulpit by opponents.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 311-12; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 114-15 [who suggests Great Glemham]; *ODNB*, sub Glemham, Sir Thomas; Green, *CPC*, ii, 1579; BL, Add.MS 34,013, fo.19r; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/4; *Cal.Rev.*, 297; NkRO, DN/VSC; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.210r; *Wal.Rev.*, 326.

GREAT WALDINGFIELD

Witch: John Bysack alias Gleede.

Bysack alias Gleede made a long confession to Stearne in which he refers to making a pact with the Devil in the shape of a dog, and receiving six imps in the shape of snails. When suspicion fell on his wife, she too was searched but was found to have no visible marks of witchcraft.

The parish, described in 1647 as 'a very poor Town', had a history of religious conflict in the period immediately before the visit of Stearne. It was generated to a large extent by a scramble among a group of ministers to secure the living from the unscrupulous patron Paul Pole following the deprivation of Nicholas Bloxham for simony in 1631 (reinstated briefly 1641-3). In the interim, the cure was served by Andrew Sandiland, an inveterate supporter of the Laudian innovations of the 1630s, who sometime around 1640 attempted to prevent a group of 'strangers', probably soldiers, from pulling down the altar rails in the church by threatening to shoot them. In a petition to the House of Lords in February 1641, a group of parishioners referred to Sandiland as 'a very idle, laysie and unproffitable man [who] seldom preaching himself [was] also an enemy to other faithfull Ministers, observing all vaine & superstitious orders and new innovations'. Having failed to stop the destruction of his beloved altar rails, it was claimed that he refused to deliver communion unless his parishioners 'came and kneeled upon the Steps'.

John Bysack's wife was probably Anne Glead, alias Bisacke, whose will refers to a shop, house and parcel of land in Great Waldingfield. She may have had godly connections: she named as her sole executor William Folkes, a nonconformist minister ejected from the Suffolk parish of Great Cornard.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 41-2; ESKRO, B105/2/1, fo.102v; *Wal.Rev.*, 328; White, *First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests*, 23-4; Gardiner (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, 298-9; NkRO, DN/VIS 6/4; HLRO, MP, 9 February 1640/1; *HMC. Fourth Report*, pp.38, 49, 57, 60; WSkRO, J 545/38, fo.43 [will of Anne Glead, alias Bisacke, of Great Waldingfield, 2 April 1668; proved 9 July 1670].

HALESWORTH

Witches: Mary and Thomas Everard; Marianne Everard (daughter); Elizabeth Hubbard; Jane Linstead; James More*; Sara Spindler.

On the testimony of the minister John Swaine, Thomas Everard, a cooper, confessed that he and his wife (who worked in a brewhouse) had entered into a covenant with the Devil and had killed their own grandchild, as well as ‘Irish John Wods [Woods] his children’ (also attested by Henry Thurston). Jane Linstead claimed to have sent her imps to kill the daughter of one Clarke. Hubbard said that she had sent her imps to kill a child of John Taylor, as well as the children of Richard Lows and Robert Newman. James More of Metfield confessed to having received an imp from his brother-in-law Everard and then entering into a covenant with the Devil. He used his imp to kill his own brother William at Bungay for refusing to pay him a legacy. He and the Everards intended to send imps to Prince Rupert. Spindler confessed to having three imps, which she employed to murder several unnamed individuals.

True bills against all three Everards, Linstead, Hubbard and More. No record of Spindler. Linstead and the Everards were executed on 27 August 1645. The costs of discovering and prosecuting so many men and women clearly took its toll on the parish. In January 1646, the magistrates at Beccles ordered that the churchwardens and overseers of the poor should make a rate to pay these expenses or appear ‘to answer their contempt’.

*** James More resided at Metfield (qv), though he is entered with the Halesworth suspects in the depositions preserved in the British Library.**

The ancient market town of Halesworth possessed a distinctly godly past. In the mid 1630s, bishop Wren noted in the aftermath of his visitation that ‘nothing [was] rightly observed’ in the parish under the stewardship of the aged incumbent Abdias Ashton (1563-1633). Many in the town were also deeply unsympathetic to various aspects of royal policy. The attorney Valentine Coppin, for example, was pursued by the Privy Council in 1627 for stubbornly refusing to pay the forced loan. He was nonetheless pressured to retract, the Suffolk commissioners demanding ‘some speedy course ... for curbing these insolencies, as the common sort are ready to be led by so lewd an example’. The godly may have exacted their revenge in 1640, when proceedings were initiated against Francis Tayler, the royalist coroner of Suffolk, for ‘certain opprobrious speeches’ and other misdemeanours.

The Mr Swaine who examined the witches at Halesworth in 1645 was in all probability the puritan **John Swaine Snr**, vicar of Westleton (qv) in 1636 when he was in trouble with Wren. He preached frequently at the lecture at Dunwich (qv) and later assisted Thomas Johnson in removing images at Aldeburgh (qv). He is easily confused, however, with his son, also John, who was ordained by 1646 when both men signed the *Petition of Suffolk Ministers*. At this time, they would appear to have held livings at two other Suffolk parishes, Stonham Aspel and Cransford. By 1650, one of the two men was serving as rector of Halesworth. Halesworth itself was visited by the iconoclast Dowsing in April 1644, when over 200 ‘superstitious Pictures’ and five ‘popish inscriptions’ were removed, and much other restorative work ordered. Halesworth, however, contained many religious and political dissidents opposed to the puritan revolution in church and state. In 1644, for example, the alehouse of Edmund Browne was an important meeting point for ‘malignant priests’, attracting among others William Raymond of Blyford and Thomas Ambler of Wenhaston. In the same year John de la Havers, described as a clerk of Halesworth, was prosecuted at the Ipswich borough quarter sessions for uttering scandalous words in company with other known royalists. The divisions would appear to have continued at the Restoration, when numerous men from Halesworth were prosecuted for conventicling, while others, like Patrick Quoile or Quie claimed a royalist pension (he was probably a Catholic, as it was subsequently revoked for his refusal to take the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy in 1673).

The Everards may have been related to the prominent recusant family of that name who resided at Linstead (qv), a few miles to the west of Halesworth. They certainly shared the latter’s political sympathies.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 309-11; Anon., *True Relation of the Araignment of Eighteene Witches*, 3-4; ESKRO, B105/2/1, fo.80v; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 116-17; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.212v; *CSPD*, 1627-1628, 29; Lyle (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1627*, 83, 85; Anon., ‘Suffolk County Records’, 157; *Cal.Rev.*, 471; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 334, 425, 426; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 290 [no.219]; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 60, 76; ESKRO, C8/4/7, 405; B105/2/5, fo.94r; B105/2/7, fo.127r.

HAVERHILL

Witch: Binkes (a woman).

According to John Stearne, she confessed to witchcraft and a pet familiar in the form of a horsefly but retracted in the presence of the local puritan minister Samuel Fairclough. She was sent for trial, but was subsequently acquitted.

Haverhill, a small town close to the Essex and Cambridgeshire borders, had a long history of puritan dissent. In the 1630s, some of its inhabitants removed to New England, while in 1636, the activities of the new lecturer at Haverhill, Mr Harwood, who was temporarily suspended, were being closely monitored by bishop Wren and his commissary Dr Corbett. A year later, it was reported in London that one Thomas Cole, a local JP, was alleged to have said in his charge to the grand jurors at the county quarter

sessions that ‘if they knew any who used on Sundays, any of those sports permitted in the King’s book ... or any minister that shall or doth refuse to administer the communion to any unless he come up and kneel at the rail before the communion-table, that they should indict them’. The parish, not surprisingly, underwent further reform in the 1640s. In 1644, the town was visited by Dowsing, who finished the work of earlier iconoclasts by ordering the destruction of about 100 ‘superstitious Pictures’ and many other ‘popish’ relics and inscriptions. The earlier episode of iconoclasm may have been the work of one of Dowsing’s associates, John Crow, who lived at Haverhill.

After the Restoration, the ejected lecturer Stephen Scandrett continued to preach in the town. He was subsequently excommunicated, but avoided further legal sanction by removing to his house across the border in Essex.

Samuel Fairclough (1594-1677), the ‘able Orthodox Divine’ to whom the witch appealed for help in 1645, was an important figure in the local puritan movement. He was a conscientious and popular minister, who not surprisingly suffered at the hands of the church hierarchy for his opposition to the imposition of Arminian innovations. He managed to avoid deprivation, however, in part due to the protection afforded by his powerful patron, Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston (1588-1653). During the early 1640s, he held aloof from the religious and political divisions at Westminster, and was clearly dismayed by the route that the civil war had taken. He later opposed the regicide and refused the Engagement, but was nonetheless ejected from his living at nearby Kedington in 1662.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 16-17, 54-5; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 152-4; Tyack, ‘Puritan Migration’, Appendix 1, xiv, lxv; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.52r; Birch (ed.), *The Court and Times of Charles the First*, ii, 277-8; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 82-3, 214 [no.42]; *CSPD, 1660-1685*, 72; *Cal.Rev.*, 428-9; LPL, MS 639, fo.230v; *ODNB*, sub Fairclough, Samuel; *Cal.Rev.*, 188.

HINTLESHAM

Witches: Bridget Bigsby, widow; Susan Marchant, widow; Joanna Potter; Susanna Stegold.

Marchant confessed to John Easte that she had imps, which she used to lame a cow belonging to her brother Jaferies [Jefferies]. Richard Glamfield* testified that she had renounced her baptism. He also gave evidence against Bigsby (whose grandmother, still living, was said to be a witch), Stegold and Potter. Stegold confessed to John Easte that whatever evil she wished came to pass, including the death of her own husband, who died distracted. Jaffer Ward also claimed that she owned imps. Joan Potter confessed that she had sent imps to kill her own grandchild.

*** Probably the same as the Richard Glam who gave evidence against the witches at neighbouring Chattisham (qv).**

True bill against all four.

Hintlesham was an important outpost of recusancy in the period before the civil war. The resident gentry family of the Timperleys were well connected through marriage to other Catholic families in the region and afforded protection to a large household of co-religionists. In 1626 the head of this household, Thomas Timperley (d.1651), was released from confinement in Hampshire, and the following year large numbers of men and women, including Thomas, were presented as recusants in the church courts. The conservatism of the Timperleys was reflected in the appointment of Thomas Sherman or Shearman (d.1653) to the rectory of the parish. Sherman was eventually sequestrated some time around 1644, after which the parish was thrown into chaos. His successor George Hamilton was himself examined by the earl of Manchester's commissioners at about the time of the witch scare and was relieved of his cure in December 1645. The following month, John Whiting, previously of Offton, was appointed, but two weeks later 'exceptions' were taken against his fitness to serve the cure. He was replaced in February 1646 by William Smith, but no sooner was he in place than the parishioners again petitioned to have him removed and replaced. Hintlesham was also visited by Dowsing in February 1644, who ordered large numbers of 'superstitious Pictures' to be destroyed as well as the levelling of the altar steps.

At the Restoration, John Whiting (probably a Presbyterian; he signed the *Petition* of Suffolk ministers in 1646) was appointed rector of Hintlesham, and held the post until his death in 1672.

Bridget Bigsby was probably the same woman prosecuted at Ipswich quarter sessions in 1643-4 for petty larceny, for which offence she was found not guilty. It is possible that the husband of **Susanna Stegald**, Samuel, was also arrested at the time of the witch scare. In January 1646 it was reported that the keeper of the gaol at Ipswich had voluntarily allowed him to make his escape. **Richard Glamfield**, who gave evidence here and at Chattisham (qv), was probably a resident of the village of nearby Offton (qv). He was left land in the will of his kinsman Thomas Glamfield of Hintlesham who appears in the ship money payments for the village in 1639-40. Richard's brother Thomas lived at Copdock (qv). Interestingly, Thomas Glamfield's will, written in 1647, makes numerous references to various members of the Steggall or Steggold clan. **John Easte**, Esty or Eastey was a yeoman farmer in the village. In 1653, his cousin Thomas Cooke nominated him as executor and one of the major beneficiaries of his will, which was witnessed by the former minister John Whiting.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 297-8; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 100-2; Ryan and Redstone, *Timperley of Hintlesham: A Study of a Suffolk Family*; Lyle (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1626*, 34; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/4; *Wal.Rev.*, 344; Green, *CPCC*, iii, 2133-4; Redstone, 'Presbyterian Church Government', 148, 151, 155-8; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 235-6 [no.92]; *Cal.Rev.*, 527; *CSPD, 1660-1661*, 230; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 210; TNA, PROB 11/295, fos 149v-151r [will of Thomas Glamfield, 17 September 1647; proved 5 September 1659]; TNA, PROB 11/242, fos 218v-219r [will of Thomas Cooke, 25 October 1653; proved 5 May 1654].

HITCHAM

Witches: Anne Crick, widow; Alice Wright, the wife of Edmund Wright.

Both women confessed to Stearne to entering into pacts with the Devil and possessing imps. Alice Wright claimed to have had her four imps for sixty years, which were used to trouble neighbour's cattle. Crick had three imps for seven years, and they too were used to harm local livestock including pigs belonging to John Leverish.

Hitcham was another parish with a history of religious and political conservatism. Its minister from 1620 until his sequestration in 1643 was Lawrence Bretton, DD (d.1657), who served as one of bishop Wren's reviled commissioners and witnessed against those puritans who rioted in Ipswich (qv) in 1636. Sequestered in 1643, he retired to his estates at Hadleigh, where he offered solace and comfort to other sequestered clergy, administering the sacraments according to the Book of Common Prayer to allcomers. He was almost certainly on good terms with the local gentleman, Henry Bing or Byng, who, having fought for the King in the civil war, compounded for his delinquency in 1646. After the Restoration, the Essex gentleman and royalist John Wenlock described how he was granted refuge in Hitcham by the wife of Mr Bing, 'a Captain in his Majesties Army'. He also praised the munificence of 'another worthy Gentlewoman in the same parish', Mrs Bretton, wife of the former rector. The village was clearly a haven for defeated royalists. In 1655, another inhabitant, Henry Lambe, gent., was placed on a government list of suspected persons.

Bretton's successor was the staunch puritan Miles Burkit (d.1669). Between 1636 and 1641, he was involved in a series of suits before the Court of High Commission, and though he promised to amend his ways he remained suspended in 1640. His treatment at the hands of Laud was brought up at the latter's trial. In 1643 he accused his brother William, a royalist parson in Northamptonshire, of oppressing him. Following his ejection from a Norfolk living in 1662 (he had only moved there from Hitcham in 1661), he retired to Monk's Eleigh in Suffolk, the manor of which he had purchased from the sale of dean and chapter lands in 1650. He was well connected. His son Thomas married Sarah Neville, the niece of Cromwell's daughter Bridget Fleetwood.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 26-7, 30; *Wal.Rev.*, 329; ESKRO, C2/18/1, 1, 11, 13; Green (ed.), *CPCC*, ii, 1413; Wenlock, *To His Most Illustrious, High and Mighty Majesty Charles the II*, 73-4 [error in pagination, should read 65-6]; BL, Add MS 34,013, fo.29r; *Cal.Rev.*, 89-90; *CSPD, 1638-1639*, 214-5; *CSPD, 1640*, 400.

HORHAM

Witches: details unknown. In January 1646, the magistrates at Ipswich ordered the people of Athelington, Horham and Brandeston to appear before them to 'hear and determine their differences as to payment of rates towards charges of Witches

accused by the town of Branston'. Constables or churchwardens who refused to set a rate, or parishioners who refused to pay, were to be bound over.

Little is known of the religious history of this small parish. However, it was visited by the iconoclast Dowsing in August 1644.

ESkRO, B105/2/1, fos 81r, 84r; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 312 [no.259].

IPSWICH

Witches: Alice Denham, widow; James and Mary Emerson; Mary Lakeland; Mary Page, widow; Rose, the wife of Christopher Parker; Mary, the wife of John Paine or Payne [ordered to be 'dipped']; Margaret, the wife of James Sutton.

Witnesses: William Bull Jnr, grocer; Peter Cole, tanner; Robert Harte, labourer [recognisance on behalf of Margaret Sutton]; Stephen Johnson, tailor [to give evidence against Lakeland]; Edward Martyn, cordwainer; John Paine [Payne], clothworker; Christopher Parker, currier [recognisance on behalf of his wife Rose]; Samuel Simpson, currier [recognisance on behalf of Rose Parker]; James Sutton, labourer; William Nunn, sherman; Owen Reeve of Colchester, clerk; Henry Skinner, baker [recognisance on behalf of Mary Paine]; John Ward, cooper; Edmund Warner, husbandman [surety for Mary Page]; Thomas Warner, yeoman [surety for Mary Page]; Thomas Warner and Lawrence Wells, dyer [surety for Rose Parker]; Henry Wright [to give evidence against Denham].

Victims: John Cole was said to have been murdered by the witchcraft of Parker. William Lawrence, Elizabeth Alldham and Sarah Clarke were alleged to have been killed by Lakeland. Other victims of Lakeland included the two shipmasters, Henry Reade and John Beale, who were lost at sea with their crews, and Thomas Holgrave. Mary and Robert Wade and Joan Seeley claimed to have been infested with lice sent to them by James and Mary Emerson. Richard Graye was another victim of the couple.

In addition to the evidence in the Ipswich borough court records, further information on the case against Mary Lakeland is provided in a contemporary published account. Here it is alleged that in addition to murdering her husband, for which offence she would be burned, Lakeland was responsible for the deaths of Mr Lawrence (William above) and his child, as well as the maid of one Mrs Jennings. It also refers to the providential recovery of John Beale, who suffered with a large fistula on his belly, following the execution of Lakeland. Alice Denham was hanged. The others, however, would appear to have suffered nothing worse than a temporary period of imprisonment.

Ipswich was a citadel of godly puritanism, and had long held the reputation of being a reformed 'city upon a hill' from the earliest days of the Reformation. In the period immediately before the civil war, however, it became a battlefield in the conflict between

Calvinist orthodoxy and the new Arminianism. Religious politics also intruded into the day-to-day government of the town. Generally speaking, the corporation was preeminently supportive of the cause of godly puritanism and moral reform. It was also decidedly wary and increasingly antagonistic toward the policies pursued by Charles I's government in the era of personal rule.

The first hint of opposition to Charles' regime is evident from the earliest years of the reign when rumours of 'scandalous speeches' aimed at the duke of Buckingham were circulating at Whitehall. Dismissed by the spiritual leader of Ipswich puritanism, Samuel Ward, as little more than the ramblings of 'a man of mean note and unworthy of notice', discontent continued to bubble away beneath the surface. Many defaulted on the forced loan in 1627. Meanwhile, there is growing evidence of both clerical and lay nonconformity in the numerous parishes that constituted the borough of Ipswich. At the 1627 visitation, for example, five Ipswich ministers were presented for a range of offences including failure to wear the surplice. Subsequent visitations saw presentments against a variety of sectaries and Brownists, while recusants were routinely prosecuted in the borough court. Religious matters came to a head when the new bishop, Matthew Wren, provoked widespread rioting in the town when he personally attended the visitation there in 1636. Among those who were subsequently prosecuted for fomenting opposition to the bishop were the Manningtree bricklayer **Edward Parsley** (see under Manningtree, Essex) and the churchwarden of the parish of St Mary le Tower, Ferdinando Adams, who subsequently immigrated to New England. The resulting clampdown on lay nonconformity and the puritan ministry in the town saw many more join Adams in America. At the same time, the puritan pulpits of Ipswich were silenced and the place of deposed ministers filled by Laudian conformists as the right of presentation passed from the corporation into the hands of the King.

Of course, the clampdown ordered and imposed by Wren did not eradicate dissent. In the years immediately prior to the civil war, Ipswich was repeatedly the focus of opposition to the religious and political programme of the Caroline regime. Rhymes, prophecies and 'scandalous papers', many sympathetic to the plight of the Scots, circulated widely in the town during these years. Much of this resentment was undoubtedly fostered by the imposition of the liturgical innovations upon the various parishes of the town. When the tables were turned with the recall of parliament in 1640, the Laudian 'intruders', not surprisingly, bore the brunt of popular hostility. Petitions against many of Wren's acolytes were forwarded to the Long Parliament detailing their various 'crimes' and in time sequestration proceedings were initiated. At the same time, fears of local Catholic plotting continued to grip the population and altar rails were pulled down and burned, the work of destruction completed in late January 1644 following the visit of William Dowsing. But while puritanism prospered in Ipswich, the town remained radically divided. Royalist delinquents and troublemakers were arrested and detained, many accused of speaking 'scandalous words' and spreading seditious verses in the town's inns. Dissident royalist clergy also flocked to Ipswich, and many were prosecuted in the borough court in 1643 and 1644 for fomenting opposition to Parliament. The puritan grip on the borough remained strong throughout the 1640s, but like so many other godly citadels it also attracted its fair share of religious extremists and sectaries. In March 1646,

for example, two Ipswich men were charged with ‘speaking words concerning Christ’. In the same year, the radical Baptist Hanserd Knollys (1598-1691) was imprisoned at Ipswich for his subversive and apocalyptic preaching. Little changed thereafter. After 1660, the town would continue to be the focus of organised dissent and opposition to the restored crown and bishops, its inhabitants carefully watched, scrutinised and occasionally prosecuted for their continuing disloyalty.

Of the accused witches, **Mary Lakeland** was described in a contemporary pamphlet as one who ‘hath been a professour of Religion, a constant hearer of the Word for these many years’. Gaskill’s suggestion that she may have been a member of one of the radical sects then taking root in places like Ipswich is given added credence by the fact that in the late 1660s, one of her co-accused, **Rose Parker**, was arrested at a Quaker meeting in the town. If **Rose Parker** was a Quaker, it is equally possible that the **Samuel Sympson** who provided a surety for her in 1645 was the same as the man called **Simpson**, of St Mary at the Tower, who was presented as a Brownist in 1633. Little is known of the other witches, except that **James Emerson** was indicted and confessed to an unknown crime in July 1644. **Mary Paine** was almost certainly the widow of that name who inherited a small estate at Wherstead, Suffolk, in 1655 following the death of her husband John, ‘clothworker’.

Among the witches’ victims and accusers, **Owen Reeve**, MA, was a former schoolteacher from Debenham in Suffolk, who may have deferred ordination as a priest during the 1630s because of the anti-puritan backlash in the diocese of Norwich. Debenham itself was a centre of intense religious and political conflict in the 1630s. Some time after April 1644, Reeve was put into the place of Joseph Long at Fingringhoe, near Colchester, but was not confirmed in the post as he failed to secure the approval of the Westminster Assembly of Divines [Long was a witness to witchcraft at his other living of Great Clacton in Essex (qv)]. **William Bull Jnr** (b.1610) was a prominent citizen and active puritan in his home parish of St Clement’s, where resistance to the Laudian innovations had been intense. His father William Bull Snr (d.1653) had actively defended the deprived puritan rector, Thomas Scott, in 1636, and was on cordial terms with his successor, John Ward (d.1665), brother of the celebrated Ipswich puritan Samuel Ward, whom he appointed as supervisor of his godly will. During the late 1630s and early 1640s, Bull, like his father before him, served the parish as churchwarden, overseer of the poor and surveyor. He was also active as a magistrate in the local borough courts, where he would appear to have promoted a campaign for moral reform. In May 1643 his father was elected treasurer of the committee for maimed soldiers. Equally prominent in the affairs of the parish of St Peter’s was the tanner, **Peter Cole** (b.c.1608). He served as churchwarden in 1633 and again in 1651 and 1658, as well as overseer of the poor in 1630 and 1647. He was probably a Presbyterian by religious orientation. In the aftermath of the rioting in the town in 1636, when he was described as one of the ruling twenty-four, he went to bishop Wren and challenged him to produce his witnesses against the alleged offenders. In 1663, he, with other prominent men in the parish, attempted to prevent the appointment of Samuel Aldus to the living of St Peter’s, citing a ruling of 1641 that confirmed the right of the parish in such matters. The case went before the House of Lords, where the ‘outrageous Carriage’ of Cole and his associates was duly

admonished. His brother, John Cole (1622-1673) was a puritan minister who was ejected from his living at Wethersfield in Essex in 1660.

Of the other witnesses, **Edward Martyn** was charged with keeping the peace toward Anne Brand, widow, and Margaret, the wife of John Wright, in July 1645. Given the timing, it seems reasonable to assume that Martyn may have harboured suspicions against these two women in addition to those who were formally charged with witchcraft in the same month. The cooper **John Ward** also appears in the legal records in 1647 when he acted as surety for George Clarke who was accused of speaking ‘Words against the government of the Towne’. Clarke may have been related to **Sarah Clarke**, a victim of Mother Lakeland, against whom Ward would testify. Unfortunately, nothing else is known of this case. **Robert Wade** was probably the clothier of that name who left all his estate to his wife and fellow victim **Mary** in his nuncupative will of 1653. His brother John (d.1644) possessed godly connections, leaving money to the puritan lecturer Matthew Lawrence in 1644. He was also the brother-in-law of Captain John Langley of Colchester, a leading parliamentarian, who had spearheaded the town’s opposition to the ‘Catholicism’ of the Lucas family in the early 1640s. In 1637, Wade bailed one of those accused of riot following the visit of bishop Wren to the town. **William Lawrence**, victim of Mary Lakeland, was almost certainly the mariner of that name who died sometime between 1643 and 1645.

ESkRO, C8/4/7, 413-7, 419; B105/2/1, fo.79; Anon., *The Lawes against Witches*, 7-8; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 173-9; CSPD, 1625-1626, 175, 399, 458; Lyle (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1627*, 48, 207-8; CSPD, 1627-1628, 239, 288; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/4; DN/VIS 6/1; DN/VIS 6/4; ESkRO, C8/4/7, 331, 349; [Prynne], *Newes from Ipswich*; Grace, ‘“Schismaticall and Factious Humours”’, 97-119; Bodl., Tanner MS 89, fos 172-3; CSPD, 1636-1637, 129-30, 565; Tyack, ‘Puritan Migration’, Appendix 1, xlviiii-xlix, lxxvii, cvii, cix; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 2v, 30r, 210v, 244r, 287-302, 327; CSPD, 1636-1637, 529-30; CSPD, 1640-1641, 410.

CSPD, 1637-1638, 139-40, 146; CSPD, 1638-1639, 226 CSPD, 1639, 68, 135, 464, 476, 480, 482, 503; CSPD, 1639-1640, 97, 131, 221, 432, 547; CSPD, 1640, 518; CSPD, 1640-1641, 13; CUL, Mm.I.45, 31, 44-5; *Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament* [8-15 August 1642], 7; *Wal.Rev.*, 328, 334-5, 339-40; TNA, PC2/51, fo.195v; Bodl., Tanner MS 220, fos 7-43; *Humble Petitions of the Bailifes, Port-men, and Other the Inhabitants of Ipswich*; Walter, ‘Popular Iconoclasm’, 270 and n.; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 227-33 [nos 75-86]; ESkRO, C8/4/7, 365, 373-81, 383-4, 387, 389, 393, 405, 409, 413, 420; Clarkson, *Lost Sheep Found*, 12.

Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 672; NkRO, DN/VIS/6/4; ESkRO, C8/4/7, 381, 383, 399, 413, 429; TNA, PROB 11/245, fos 149r, 177r [will of John Payne, 27 March 1655; proved 8 May 1655]; NkRO, DN/VSC, sub 22 April 1635; *Wal.Rev.*, 158; ESkRO, FB 98/E3/1; TNA, PROB 11/232, fos 123r-125r [will of William Bull Snr, grocer/apothecary, of Ipswich, 20 October 1652 and 22 January 1652/3; proved 26 May 1653]; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 287-302; Bacon, *The Annals of Ipswich*, 509, 516; BL, Add MS 25,344, fos 64v, 68r, 91r, 92r, 97v, 103r, 105r, 108r, 110v; ESkRO, C2/18/1, 24; C2/18/3; *Lords’ Journal*, xi (1660-1666), 612, 629; *Cal.Rev.*, 124-5; TNA, PROB 11/239, fo.82v [will of Robert Wade, c.28 November 1653; proved 13 February 1653/4]; TNA, PROB 11/192, fos 16r-v [will of John Wade, clothier, of Ipswich, 25 and 26 June 1644; proved 28 November 1644]; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 107-10; TNA, PROB 11/194, fos 164r-v [will of William Lawrence, 29 June 1643; proved 12 November 1645].

LAVENHAM

Witches: Anne Randall; Susan Scot; Sweeting and Golding.

Randall confessed to Stearne that she had been active in the Devil's service for over thirty years, during which time she used her two imps to kill a horse belonging to William Baldwin and a hog of Stephen Humphreys, both men living in the neighbouring village of Thorpe Morieux (qv). In addition, she confessed to sending her imp to take away the hedges being erected by Mr Coppinger of Lavenham. Scot sought to place the blame for her conversion to the Devil and witchcraft on two other women named Sweeting and Golding. Her imps caused the death of Thomasine, the daughter of Mr Coppinger of Lavenham.

Described in 1627 as 'a greate and populous towne, subiecte to muche disorder', during the period of the witch trials Lavenham was a town suffering from marked economic decline as a result of structural changes in the cloth trade. It also suffered from religious conflict and divisions, exacerbated by the fact that it was also home to another important Catholic family, the Skinners of Lavenham Park. In 1637, it was rumoured in godly circles that the eldest son, Thomas Skinner, had threatened to kill the King before leaving for Rome. On a more mundane level, it is highly probable that the Skinners afforded protection to their co-religionists and that their presence in numbers here served as a provocative catalyst for the large-scale riots in the area in August 1642.

Lavenham was also a centre of puritan dissent, which may have contributed to the decision of large numbers of families to leave for New England in the 1630s (they may equally have opted to depart Suffolk for economic reasons, or a combination of the two). Of those who remained, many were determinedly opposed to the innovations of Laud and Wren. In 1636, for example, Roger Kedington of Lavenham was presented in the church courts for 'reproaching ye Ecclesiasticall Court' before the commissary Dr Thomas Eden. Kedington was the father-in-law of the rector of Lavenham, Ambrose Coppinger (1583-1644), who, with his brother, **Henry Coppinger** (1594-c.1659), lord of the manor and patron of the living, exerted considerable influence in the town. The family were staunch supporters of the parliamentary cause and provided military support for the war effort in the first civil war. On Ambrose's death in June 1644, the puritan William Gurnall (1616-1679) succeeded as rector through the influence of his patron Sir Simonds D'Ewes (1602-1650), MP for Sudbury. Correspondence dating from 1644 to 1648 provides valuable insights into the mindsets of the two men who were dedicated to the reform of society along moderate puritan lines. In November 1644, for example, following his recent arrival in Lavenham, Gurnall reflected on the perilous nature of the times as 'fermenting with many errors', and lamented the condition of his former congregation at Sudbury (qv), which was 'now in a state of considerable agitation'. In a series of sermons, later published in three parts, he would repeatedly refer to the activities of witches suggesting that he may well have been involved in their prosecution at Lavenham in 1645. Given his political moderation, and that of his patron (both had reservations about the course of the war), it was little surprise that he conformed at the Restoration, undergoing episcopal ordination in 1662 much to the consternation of former colleagues.

He was re-presented to the living of Lavenham by an old friend of D'Ewes family, Sir Thomas Bowes of Bromley Hall, who had himself taken a prominent role in the witch hunts in his native Tendring in 1645.

Thomasine Coppinger (b.1634) was the daughter of **Henry Coppinger** and his wife Elizabeth, née Sampson.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 22-3, 30; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 85-7; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 46-7, 222 and n., 244, 252; NkRO, DN/VIS/5/3/3; *CSPD, 1641-1643*, 60; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, xiv, xxxiv, l, lxvi, lxxv; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.209r; *Wal.Rev.*, 332; Tanner MS 284, fos 42, 45-7; *ODNB*, sub Gurnall, William; BL, Add MS 22,916, fos 2, 4, 6; Harleian MSS 374, fos 138, 142, 146; 376, fos 41-4; Anon., *Covenant-Renouncers*.

LINSTEAD

Witch: Margaret Eccleston.

Eccleston confessed to killing one Jane Smith. Smith's father testified against her, as did Christopher Legate and one Thomas Looke or Cooke.

There were two villages of this name, Linstead Magna and Linstead Parva, which in the 1630s were both served by the same minister, William Aldus (he also taught school at the former). Aldus was in all likelihood closely allied to the local recusant family, the Everards. He may have been related to the cleric of the same name who was appointed rector of Copdock (qv) in 1643, another parish with strong recusant links. Linstead, under the patronage and protection of William Everard, had become a haven for local recusants, many of whom were frequently prosecuted for their faith in the period before the civil war. The Everards were also related through marriage to other East Anglian Catholic families and were enthusiastic supporters of the royal cause in the 1640s. The estates of William Everard's widow, Dorothy, suffered sequestration in 1648. A son, Francis, would appear to have suffered a similar fate. Both Linstead Magna and Parva were visited by Dowsing in April 1644, who mentions the curate William Aldus as well as Francis Everard, whom he derided as a drunkard and held responsible for carrying out the work of levelling the altar steps. Linstead Parva was also the home of one of Dowsing's deputies, Francis Verdon (d.1670), who served as a commiteeman of the Eastern Association and as a lay member of the fifth Presbyterian classis meeting at Halesworth.

Christopher Legate, of Linstead Parva, paid just two shillings in ship money in 1640. His signature appears prominently in a list of those in the village who subscribed to the Solemn League and Covenant. One **Thomas Cooke** (mistranscribed as 'Looke' by Ewen?) paid one shilling.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 311; NkRO, DN/VSC; DN/VIS 5/3/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fo.126; Langston, 'The Pastons of Horton', 108-9; Green, *CPCC*, iii, 1877; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 76-80, 288-9, 490n [nos 216-7]; ESkRO, FC 193/D1/1; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 77.

LONG MELFORD

Witch: Alexander Sussums.

Sussums, an old acquaintance of Stearne, willingly submitted to a search and subsequently confessed that he was sucked by imps. Under further examination, he claimed that he could not avoid the imputation of witchcraft as his mother, aunt and grandmother were all executed for the same crime. He was tried, but acquitted.

Sussums may have been related to the witch referred to in an anonymous pamphlet published in the summer of 1645 as ‘Soffans, a knowne witch in Suffolk, not above 2 miles from Clare’ (Long Melford is situated about four miles from Clare). She is said to have caused a baker’s wife to abort her baby.

Long Melford, where John Stearne was probably born and grew up, was by the middle of the seventeenth century ‘a swollen village’, a product of the late medieval boom in the cloth trade. It was also a major centre of recusancy under the patronage of the Martin family and was linked to other Catholic ‘hotspots’ in the county through the ties of marriage and kinship entered into by the Martins. Not surprisingly, Catholic suspicions also focused on the rector of Long Melford, Robert Warren (d.1661). As early as 1628 he was reported to the Privy Council on suspicion of harbouring Catholic leanings, probably as a result of the fact that he held the living from the Catholic countess Rivers who held an estate in the parish. He subsequently grew in unpopularity, partly as a result of his activities as a local JP in and around the once godly enclave of Sudbury (qv) and partly through his work as an assiduous agent of bishop Wren. He was accordingly singled out for rough treatment in 1642 at the time of the Stour Valley riots, when it was alleged that some of the enraged local populace dragged him out of his pulpit and proceeded to subject him to mockery and scorn. While it was estimated that almost £40,000 worth of damage was done to the countess’ property at Long Melford, her protégé Warren escaped unharmed. He was however forced to watch while some of the ‘mob’ entered his house in search of his ‘gods’ (antique statues?) and then set them up around the market cross, calling them his ‘young ministers’.

Warren was subsequently sequestered in 1643 and succeeded two years later by the puritan minister Seth Wood (d.1674). He too would appear to have suffered some disquiet of his own in 1653 shortly before he resigned the living and moved to London. After the Restoration, it was reported that between 50 and 60 ‘inferior people’, mostly women, met at Long Melford under the leadership of the ejected lecturer of Haverhill (qv), Stephen Scandrett (d.1706). Religious radicalism, however, was almost certainly a feature of life in the parish long before the civil war. In 1636, for example, two Anabaptists were reported to be living in the village.

Alexander Sussums was almost certainly one of those who had fallen on hard times by the early 1640s. In 1609, he served as an overseer for the poor in the parish, but by 1640 was rated at just two shillings for the ship money.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 36-7; Anon., *Signes and Wonders from Heaven*, 4; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 191-7, 208-10, 227-8, 244; Lyle (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1626*, 334; NkRO, DN/VIS 6/1; *Wal.Rev.*, 167; Green (ed.), *Diary of John Rous*, 121; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 429; *Cal.Rev.*, 542; *CSPD, 1653-1654*, 136; LPL, MS 639, fo.231r; WSkRO, FL 509/5/1/80; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 187.

MENDHAM

Witch: Margery Sparam [Sparham].

Sparham confessed to using her imps to protect her husband, a soldier, and that she was also induced by the Devil to kill Mrs Jacob, who did die, 'but not so soone as she expected'. On the testimony of Jacob Neech, she was described as 'a lewd woman' who seldom went to church.

The parish of Mendham straddles the Norfolk-Suffolk border and would appear to have been a major centre of royalist support in the early stages of the civil war. Eight local notables were responsible for raising large sums of money on behalf of the King in 1642. Included among their number was William Jacob, who may have been the husband of the victim of Margery Sparham's witchcraft, **Mrs Jacob**. His sons, John and William, were educated at Cambridge in the 1630s.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 309; Blomefield, *Essay Towards a Topographical History of ... Norfolk*, iii, 262; Venn, ii, 459, 460.

METFIELD

Witch: James More.

More confessed that he used imps given to him by his brother-in-law Thomas Everard of Halesworth (qv) in order to murder his own brother, William, who refused to pay him a legacy. Three years previously, and at the instigation of his sister, Mary Everard, he also sent imps to assist Prince Rupert. More, who was arrested and imprisoned at Ipswich, subsequently escaped through the negligence of the gaoler, James Rigges.

The small village of Metfield was dominated by the presence of the Jermy family. In August 1644, when William Dowsing visited the church, he found much that was out of order. He also recorded that 'Mr Jermin, the Gentleman in the Town', refused to comply with his orders. Thomas Jermy (1593-1652), the son of Sir Thomas Jermy, was a staunch royalist whose home was a refuge for fellow sympathisers such as the Essex barrister John Wenlock in the 1640s. Jermy's sister, Elizabeth, had married Sir George Waldegrave of Hitcham (qv).

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 310-11; ESkRO, B105/2/1, fo.78v; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 315-7 [no.269]; Wenlock, *To the Most Illustrious ... Charles the II*, 74 [mispaginated; should read 66].

METTINGHAM

Witch: Anne Ellis.

Ellis was accused of using witchcraft to lame Thomas Hudson, who, having recently changed his surgeon, now began to mend. One A.Hudson, Thomas' mother, also witnessed against Ellis.

Ignoramus.

The small village of Mettingham, near Bungay and close to the Norfolk border, was a puritan enclave in the 1630s. Charles Twiste was appointed vicar here in July 1634 by the puritan patron of the living, Sir Edmund Bacon (d.1649). He was soon in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities and was examined as 'not conformable' by Wren's commissioners in 1636. He was succeeded as vicar in 1643 by John Allen, who was himself ejected as a curate at Great Yarmouth (qv) in 1661. The tradition of lay nonconformity continued into the Restoration.

Thomas Hudson described himself as a yeoman in his will of 1652.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 295, 303; NkRO, DN/VSC; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fo.13; MS 68, fo.98v; *Cal.Rev.*, 5; ESkRO, B105/2/6, fo.31v; TNA, PROB 11/242, fos 358r-v [will of Thomas Hudson, 1 November 1652; proved 6 September 1654].

OFFTON

Witch: Margaret Tray.

Tray was accused of using witchcraft to murder Anne Price.

Immediately prior to the witchcraft case here, the village had been deeply divided over a series of disputes focused on the governance of the parish church and the payment of tithes. The issue at stake would appear to have been the relationship between Offton and the neighbouring parish of Bricett, particularly the right of the inhabitants of the latter to serve as churchwardens and other positions at Offton. At the centre of the dispute was the recently appointed rector, John Whiting, who would appear to have fallen out with some of his parishioners over a variety of issues, including their gadding elsewhere to sermons. Despite the fact that Whiting subsequently signed the *Petition* of Suffolk ministers in 1646, he suffered frequent harassment in the 1640s, including temporary sequestration in 1644-5 and again in 1646. Receiving testimonials from 'persons of credit', he was finally confirmed and approved by the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1646. The

accusations levelled at Whiting were almost certainly malicious, and a question mark continued to hang over him throughout this period, coinciding as it did with the activities of Hopkins and Stearne. Indeed, at the time of the arrest and trial of Margaret Tray, the living of Offton once again hung in the balance as William Beech, ‘a godly and orthodox divine’, was ordered to take Whiting’s place. Finally restored to his living in 1646, one of his main opponents in the village, the churchwarden Henry Bacon, continued to obstruct Whiting’s ministry, refusing to deliver up the keys of the rectory. In the midst of these controversies, the iconoclast Dowsing visited Offton in August 1644.

Offton would also appear to have harboured royalist supporters and sympathisers. In the summer of 1645 George and William Copeing compounded as delinquents. William had served as a trooper in the royal armies and suffered so badly after his capture that his toes rotted off. On taking the Covenant, he was released by order of the earl of Essex. The divisions and disputes of the 1640s may well have fuelled further witchcraft accusations in Offton a decade later. Interestingly one of those responsible for bringing these charges was Mary Glanfield, who was paid ten shillings for her pains and expenses. In all probability, she was the wife of **Richard Glamfield**, and shared his passion for hunting down witches. **Glamfield** had been active in the prosecution of a number of witches in the neighbouring villages of Chattisham and Hintlesham (qqv) in 1645. He was described as a resident of Offton in 1640, when he paid the relatively moderate sum of 2s 11d in ship money. In 1652 he was bailed to keep the peace toward one Thomas Kinge. Others active in the witchcraft trials of 1658 included Anne, the wife of Henry Bacon (presumably Whiting’s nemesis). Bacon was clearly a litigious and difficult man who seems to have made enemies easily. In 1663 he took out a libel case against a fellow parishioner, Francis Archer.

Margaret Tray was probably related to Robert Tray of Little Bricett, who paid the middling to high sum of £5 10s in ship money in 1640. One Richard Tray was also listed as one of the defendants in the libel case brought by John Whiting in 1640.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 302; ESKRO, FAA/3/5, fos 1-42; *Cal.Rev.*, 527; *Wal.Rev.*, 347; Redstone, ‘Presbyterian Church Government’, 144, 146, 148, 149, 151, 157, 159; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 309 [no.253]; Green, *CPCC*, ii, 897; ESKRO, B105/2/4, fos 36r, 60r, 61v, 104r; B105/2/5, fos 5r-v; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 100; ESKRO, FAA/3/7, fos 11-13.

PLAYFORD

Witches: Mary Dacon and Margaret Legat.

William Wells, miller, testified that after he fell out with Legate’s son about seven years previously his child fell sick. Having consulted a physician in Ipswich, he concluded the illness was unnatural, but refused to allow the witch to come to her son’s bedside. Other witnesses against Legate included one Clerke, Alice Eayth, Mar.Jason and John Wilkinson (the last two as watchers). No details of the case against Dacon, who refused to confess, survive.

The case against Legate was found ignoramus; but true bill against Dacon.

The Feltons, who owned the manor of Playford, were related to the Gawdys of Norfolk. Sir Henry Felton (d.c.1659) was succeeded by his son, Sir Henry (1619-1690), who served as a portman of Ipswich as well as deputy lieutenant and MP for the county under the Protectorate and at the Restoration. The parish church of Playford was visited by Dowsing on 30 January 1644, where the iconoclast ordered the destruction of various superstitious pictures and images.

William Wells served as constable of Playford in 1640 in which year he paid the middling sum of 5s in ship money. **John Wilkinson** may have been the minister of that name who signed the *Petition* of Suffolk ministers in 1646 and was later ejected from the living of Old Newton in 1662. He was buried at Ipswich in 1676.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 294-5, 298; Blatchly, *Town Library of Ipswich*, 36; Henning, ii, 306-7; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 233-4 [no.87]; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 153; *Cal.Rev.*, 531.

POLSTEAD

Witch: Joan Ruce (Rewes), widow.

According to Stearne, Ruce confessed to selling her soul to the Devil in return for money and imps, which were employed to kill livestock.

The small village of Polstead was another community divided by religion and politics. Once a thriving centre of piety under the ministry of the fanatical puritan Gervase Smith, it later lapsed in the hands of the complacent conformist James Bromell or Bromwell, who held the living from 1617 until his sequestration in 1644. Some of the godly chose to immigrate to New England. Others remained and welcomed Dowsing's visit of April 1644, when many 'popish' idols were smashed and the church 'purified'. The village was also a centre of royalist resistance in the 1640s. John Payne and Edward Alston (d.1682), substantial landowners in the village and surrounding neighbourhood, suffered for their active support for the royal cause. The Paynes, who also owned property in the neighbouring village of Stoke by Nayland, were a recusant family of local prominence, closely allied to the Mannocks of nearby Gifford's Hall. Their estate was almost certainly threatened by anti-catholic 'mobs' in the Stour Valley riots of 1642. In November of the previous year, **Harbottle Grimston** secured an order from the House of Commons to the authorities in Colchester to search the house of Joan Payne (John's heir and sister) for arms and to intercept letters sent from Ireland. In later years, the village of Polstead received little peace as the former minister, Bromwell, refused to leave the rectory and continued to receive the profits of the living. He was finally replaced in 1647 by Mark Lewis.

It is possible that the suspected witch, **Joan Ruce**, was herself a religious refusenik. In 1629 one Joanna Rewes was presented at the annual visitation for 'not receiving the

Communion according to ye Canon'. In 1640, she was clearly among the poorest members of her community when she paid just two shillings in ship money.

Polstead's proximity to the parish of Stoke by Nayland, where the recusant Paynes resided, is interesting because of the latter's links with the original outburst of witch-hunting in Essex, and its later reputation as a centre of religious radicalism. In 1645, **Anne Leech**, one of the first suspects at Mistley (qv) in Essex, confessed that she had first received her imps from her sister-in-law Anne Pearce of Stoke. A few years later, the revelations of a Stoke woman, Anne Hall, née Wells, who claimed to have been part of a radical sect that met at nearby Whatfield and practised miraculous healing, were published in order to discredit local Baptists.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 27-8; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 82-3; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 421-2; *Wal.Rev.*, 329; *Cal.Rev.*, 324; ESKRO, FAA/4/1/85; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, xi; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 302 [no.240]; Green, *CPCC*, i, 96; ii, 1268-9; Venn, i, 24; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 224-5 and n; Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex Borough Records*, iii, 145; NkRO, DN/VIS 6/1; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 190; Anon., *True and Exact Relation of the Severall Informations, Examinations and Confessions of the Late Witches ... of Essex*, 8-9; T.J., *A Brief Representation and Discovery of the Notorious Falshood and Dissimulation contained in a Book Styled, The Gospel-Way Confirmed by Miracles*.

RATTLESDEN

Witches: Meribel Bedford; Henry Carre; Elizabeth Deekes and her unnamed mother*; Mother Orvis; John Scarfe or Scarpe

*** Deekes' brother may have been the unnamed nine year old who Stearne claimed had confessed to being sucked by an imp. His mother had been hanged for witchcraft around Michaelmas 1645.**

Mother Orvis was said to have supplied many of the Rattlesden witches with their familiars. Carre or Care, who may have spent some time at Cambridge as a young man, died in prison at Bury St Edmunds.

The village of Rattlesden was the site of a puritan lectureship that was suspended by bishop Wren in 1636. The rector, Peter Devereux, was also in trouble with the authorities in that year. Along with **John Swaine** of Westleton (qv), he was accused of setting up illegal lectures and complained of for 'inconformity ... and for holding some Conventicles, and for thrusting himself with a Train following him, into another Man's Church without any leave'. He was briefly suspended for these and other offences. Between 1634 and 1640, the parish witnessed a mass exodus of men, women and children destined for New England. Devereux himself remained until 1644, when he resigned the living to William Bedell or Beadle. He clearly possessed close connections with other godly ministers in the county, his daughter Anne marrying Mathias Candler, the puritan minister of nearby Coddendam (qv). Devereux's successor was the son of the

learned and pious bishop of Kilmore, William Bedell (1572-1642). After fleeing Ireland after the death of his father in 1642, he temporarily served the living of Whepstead, near Bury St Edmunds, before taking up residence at Rattlesden where he remained until 1671. Rattlesden was also the home of the godly gentleman and parliamentary soldier, Lieutenant Colonel John Fiske (1609-1684), who lived at Clopton Hall. Fiske served under Fairfax at the siege of Colchester in 1648 and later acted as a JP in the interregnum. The parish continued as a centre of godly preaching and religious radicalism throughout the 1650s and after the Restoration. A gathered church of congregationalists was established here by the mid 1650s. By 1669, Presbyterians, congregationalists and Quakers were meeting in the village.

Parish and other records provide a range of information relating to the families of those accused of witchcraft by Stearne. On the evidence of the parish registers, for example, the **Orvis** family would appear to have had little sympathy with the various puritanical regimes of the 1640s and 1650s. Whereas a number of Orvis' served as questmen in the 1630s, none are recorded again until 1663 when Gregory Orvis was appointed a churchwarden and Thomas Orvis a questman. The Orvis' were clearly not destitute, though like the Scarpe's, to whom they were allied, they may have fallen on hard times in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. The will of **John Scarpe**, described by Stearne as a 'heathenish man', suggests he owned land in the village, some of which he leased to Edward Orvis (questman in 1631 and 1632). His son, also John, was impressed to fight in the Scottish Wars in 1639-40. Of the others, **Henry Carre or Care**, a 'well educated man ... fit for Cambridge, if not a Cambridge Scholler', one Bedford's wife (probably **Meribel Bedford**) and 'old Decks' (**Deekes**) were frequently in receipt of poor relief after 1639. In addition, one William Deikes was excused ship money payment in 1640, presumably on the grounds of temporary financial embarrassment.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 12-13, 19-20, 25, 26, 33, 53; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 92-4; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.168; Tanner MS 314, fo.195r; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, xlvi-xlvii, lxxvii, lxxv, lxxvii, cix, cxiii, cxvii; Powell, *Puritan Village*, Appendix 1, 169; *Cal.Rev.*, 100-1; *ODNB*, sub Bedell, William; Olorenshaw (ed.), *Notes on the History of the Church and Parish of Rattlesden*, 30-2 and *passim*; Nickolls (ed.), *Original Letters and Papers of State*, 157; LPL, MS 639, fo.231r; WSkRO, J545/34, fo.302 [will of John Scarpe, 7 August 1643; proved 17 June 1646]; Rylands (ed.), *The Visitation of Suffolk ... 1664 ... 1668*, 128, 184; BL, Add MS 39,245, fo.180r; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 176.

RUSHMERE ST ANDREW (near Ipswich)

Witch: Susanna Smith.

Smith confessed to Robert Mayhew that she had made a covenant with the Devil eighteen years previously and many times since had been tempted to kill herself. Richard Marnin also gave evidence against Smith.

True bill.

Very little is known about the religious history of this small parish situated a few miles outside Ipswich. It was, however, visited by Dowsing in January 1644 when a picture of the seven deadly sins and fifteen other 'superstitious pictures' were destroyed.

The location of Rushmere St Andrew, *pace* Gaskill, is confirmed by the fact that **Susan Smith**, the wife of William Smith, husbandman, of Rushmere, was ordered to be whipped by the Ipswich magistrates in 1621, having been found guilty of stealing a garment from an Ipswich woman. In 1648, the magistrates at Ipswich ordered that Mary Smith, 'a poor nurse child' placed by **Robert Mayhew** of Rushmere with a woman living in the parish of St Margaret's in Ipswich, should be fully provided for. She may have been the daughter of the executed witch.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 296; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 115-16 [erroneously conflated with Rushmere St Michael]; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 225 [no.70]; ESKRO, C8/4/7, 90; ESKRO, B105/2/1, fo.111r.

RUSHMERE ST MICHAEL (near Beccles)

Witches: Alice and Sarah Warner.

Alice Warner confessed to having entertained evil spirits, which she used to carry lice to one Wright's wife and to one Barnies.

True bill against both women. The execution of the two women is noted in a request to the county bench in January 1650 for the reimbursement of moneys expended in this case. Three villagers would appear to have promoted the case, and were thus seeking payment from the residue of the two women's estate: Thomas Barnes [probably the victim Barnies], Thomas Hasell and John Pope.

Little is known of the religious condition of this small parish in the seventeenth century. William Preston was vicar here in the 1630s, when he was prosecuted in the church courts for failing to wear the surplice. It was visited by Dowsing in April 1644. Rushmere St Michael was the home of a Mr Ceely, whose support for the Cromwellian republic was such that he disinherited his nephew, Thomas Ceely, in 1661 'for his loyalty in coming to serve at the Restoration as life guardsman' to the King. The congregational minister Thomas Spurdance was ejected from Rushmere St Michael in 1662, having previously served as a pastor at neighbouring Henstead.

Thomas Barnes was one of the wealthiest men in the village, paying the second highest contribution to the ship money returns in 1639-40 (17s 6½d). The other victim, **Wright**, was probably the wife of Thomas Wright, listed as an out-dweller in the ship money lists (he paid just 5d). **Thomas Hasell** is of particular interest since he is in all probability the man of the same name who appeared as a witness against several local sequestrated clergy in the period immediately before the witch trials (at Sotherton, Blyford and

Wenhaston). His name does not appear, however, in the ship money returns for the village.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 291; ESKRO, B105/2/1, fo.136r.NkRO, DN/VIS 6/4; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 294 [no.227]; CSPD, 1660-1661, 482; *Cal.Rev.*, 457; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 23; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 59, 60, 76.

SHELLEY

Witch: Thomasine Ratliff or Ratcliffe, widow.

Ratcliffe confessed to Abigail Briggs that she slept with the Devil in the shape of her recently deceased husband about twenty years ago. She was searched by Priscilla Briggs, the searcher from Manningtree (qv), who found two teats, and confessed to John Stearne that she had formerly been a common curser. Ratcliffe was also accused of using incantations. Thomas Monticute claimed to have been infested with lice following an altercation with her. George Waterbury testified that he had lost various livestock after falling out with Ratcliffe. She was also responsible for the deaths of two children of a man called Martin.

There is limited evidence of popular lay nonconformity in the small parish of Shelley before the civil war. In 1633, for example, James Rawlings was presented in the church courts for refusing to kneel during service time. Being commanded to do so by the minister he 'went out of the church'. Shelley was visited by Dowsing in February 1644. The village also contained loyalists. Philip Tilney, a gentleman from Shelley, claimed a royalist pension after the Restoration.

George Waterbury paid 8s 8d in ship money in 1639-40, the fourth highest in the village. Francis, Ralph and James **Martin** are also listed (the first two paying five shillings; James £1 10s). **George Waterbury** was the brother of Robert Waterbury, yeoman, of Shelley, whose pious will makes frequent reference to the providential workings of God. George acted as executor.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 300; Stearne, *Confession*, 22, 36; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 81-2; NkRO, DN/VIS 6/4; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 236 [no.95]; ESKRO, B105/2/5, fo.97v; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 211; TNA, PROB 11/248, fos 245v-246r [will of Robert Waterbury, 4 April 1654; proved 26 May 1655].

SHOTLEY

Witches: Margaret Mixer, widow.

Mixer was accused of various feats of witchcraft. Elizabeth May testified that she possessed a suckling imp in the shape of a toad. She claimed that one Japher Wods or Woods has sent her a toad six years previously. She was also accused of killing

the son of Ja[mes] Pullen. Others who gave evidence against her were John Looke and Sarah Wods or Woods.

True bill.

There is evidence of radical separatism at Shotley before the civil war. In 1627 and again in 1636, Mark Rivers and his wife had been identified by the authorities as Brownists and separatists and punished accordingly. John Featly was presented to the living by the King in 1638. There is no firm evidence identifying this man with the Arminian John Featley (d.1667), who preached a number of sermons berating nonconformists and expressing displeasure at their removal to New England. The fact that he served the king as chaplain in the Scottish Wars in 1639 does lend some credence to the notion that they were one and the same man given the fact that Shotley was a major point of disembarkation for troops heading north in that year.

One Thomas Mixer (Mixer?) appears in the ship money returns for 1640 (he paid 1s 5d). They also record the payments of John Pullen (4d) and **Jeffrey Woode** (4d).

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 296-7; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fo.125; *ODNB*, sub Featley, John; *CSPD*, 1639, 55; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 217.

SOUTHWOLD

There was a case of witchcraft tried here in January 1646.

Southwold was visited by Dowsing in April 1644. Miles Corbett (see under Great Tarmouth) was town steward in this period.

Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 314n; TNA, C 181/5, fos 257v-258; C231/6, 14; KB 9/838, mm 90-1; Cooper (ed.), *The Journal of William Dowsing*, 296-7 [no.232].

STOWMARKET

Witches: Elizabeth Hobert or Hubbard, widow; Goody Low; Goody Mills.

Hobert's accusers included one Maninge, John Hayward, Richard Foreman, William Keeble and Stearne. Maninge and Stearne claimed that she had entered into a covenant with the Devil thirty years previously, and that she wished her cousin Hobert harm (he died three days after she was questioned). Goody Low and Goody Mills are referred to as witches in the parish accounts (no longer extant). The same source indicates that Thomas Scapey, Israel Barrell, William Manning and John Hayward were responsible for collecting the town rate of £23 0s 6d levied for 'discovery of witches' in 1645. In addition, William Wage or Wadge was paid 9s 6d for entertaining Matthew Hopkins, who charged a total of £28 0s 3d for his services.

Hobert was found ignoramus. She may be the same as the Goody Hubbard, who in 1649 was in receipt of parish alms.

Stowmarket was an important local centre of puritan evangelism and the site of a combination lectureship throughout the 1630s. Surprisingly, bishop Wren allowed the lectureship here to continue despite suspending six others in Suffolk at this time. Wren may have relented because of the willingness of the puritan incumbent Thomas Young (c.1587-1655) to change his mind (he was reported to be on the verge of resigning in March 1637) and accede to the bishop's wishes to remove the communion table to the east end of the parish church. The Scots-born Young was a moderate puritan who used his influence as one of the chief authors of the Smectymnuan tracts to counsel for a middle way in religion that allowed for a primitive form of reformed episcopacy along Presbyterian lines. He also promoted strict observation of the sabbath in an anonymous tract published in 1639.

In February 1644 the iconoclast William Dowsing was welcomed to the town, where he received warm support and encouragement from the churchwarden, **William Manning**, an opponent of Charles I's forced loan and one of the key witnesses in the trial of Hobert in 1645. Dowsing's work complemented earlier purges and removals. The altar, for example, was repositioned in 1642, and the large organ dismantled and sold in 1644. Stowmarket would remain a centre of godly preaching throughout the 1640s and 1650s. In 1641-2, for example, 43 lectures or sermons were preached in the town by a variety of high profile and local puritan ministers, including Young's colleague and friend Matthew Newcomen (d.1669) and **John Swaine**. Many of these, moreover, coincided with parliamentary fast days and were paid for by the voluntary contributions of godly parishioners. At the Restoration, the majority of the townspeople would appear to have followed Young's earlier lead and remained loyal to the concept of a national church under the leadership of the conformist puritan Samuel Blackerby (d.1674). In 1673 two ejected ministers from neighbouring parishes praised Blackerby and claimed that 'in the space of almost eleven years there hath not been one that professed Godliness in the town that hath separated from the public preaching of the word'.

Of those who witnessed against Elizabeth Huberd, **John Hayward**, a woollen draper or manufacturer by occupation, served as Thomas Young's right-hand man in the parish, probably assisting in maintaining godly standards during the vicar's frequent absences from his living. Hayward, for example, was solely responsible for maintaining the combination lectureship in the town throughout the period from 1640 to 1660. The moneys were collected by Hayward and paid out by the parish clerk, Goodman Keeble, probably John Keeble, who paid the highest rate (others to contribute included Hayward himself, **William Manning**, **Israel Barrell** and **William Wadge**). In November 1645 Hayward was appointed Presbyterian lay elder for the town in the seventh Suffolk classis. He was also named by Young as a trustee in his will of 1653, and was otherwise busy throughout the 1640s and 1650s acting as a local agent of the interregnum regime in the town. **William Keeble** (d.1660) may have been the minister of that name sequestered from the living of Ringshall, just four miles from Stowmarket, in 1644, but reinstated a

year later. He is known to have retired to the town about the time of the witchcraft trials, and, like **Joseph Long** at Great Clacton, Essex (qv), may have been seeking to ingratiate himself with the authorities by condemning the activities of other malcontents. His ‘malignancy’, moreover, was not clear-cut. Not only had he taken the Protestation, the Association and the Solemn League and Covenant, as well as paying all parliamentary taxes, but he also acquired the support and signatures of a number of local puritan ministers, including Thomas Young of Stowmarket. He was probably related to John Keeble (above), whom he named as a trustee in his will of 1659. John was prosecuted in the church courts in 1633 for absenting himself from worship for more than a year. He later served as churchwarden in 1645 and acted as parish clerk for much of the period, being succeeded in the post in the 1650s by **William Keeble**, possibly the witchfinder, who was appointed registrar of births, marriages and deaths in the town in October 1653. **William Manning**, churchwarden in 1644 (see above), was almost certainly the gentleman of that name who in June 1642 made the highest contribution in the town to the parliamentary levy (organised by John Hayward) for the raising of an armed militia.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 292; Stearne, *Confirmation*, 26; ESKRO, B105/2/1, fo.84r; Hollingsworth, *History of Stowmarket*, 144-8, 162-5, 168-71, 183 and *passim*; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 5r, 137, 200r, 209v, 226r; *ODNB*, sub Young, Thomas; TNA, PROB 11/252, fos 211v-212v [will of Thomas Young, 27 September 1653; proved 31 January 1655/6]; Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England*, 319-20; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 240-1 [no.103]; *Cal.Rev.*, 59, 271; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 426; *Wal.Rev.*, 338; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 95-103; Redstone, ‘Presbyterian Church Government’, 148, 149, 151; NkRO, DN/VIS 6/4; TNA, PROB 11/299, fos 214r-v [will of William Keeble, 5 October 1659; proved 16 July 1660].

STRADBROKE

Witches: Anne Arnoll; Bet Bray; Anne Wright.

Elizabeth Greene of Wingfield (qv) confessed that one Goody Wright of Stradbroke had sent her three imps. Greene’s confederate was probably Anne Wright, separately named as a witch elsewhere in the same depositions. Anne and Mary Smith of Glemham (qv) claimed that they had sold one imp to Bet Bray, and another to Mother Arnoll, both of Stradbroke.

True bill against Wright. It is not known whether Arnoll and Bray were indicted.

More than forty years before the Hopkins’ trials, Stradbroke had been the focus of a witch hunt, with puritanical overtones, when a local woman was executed at Bury St Edmunds in 1599. The case was cited at length by the supporters of the puritan exorcist, John Darrell. By the 1630s, the parish was in the grip of profound religious divisions, exacerbated by the presence of the ultra-Laudian vicar James Buck (d.1686). Appointed in 1623, he was later to serve as a trusty servant and supporter of bishop Wren in this part of Suffolk. Wren’s commissary, Dr Corbett, described him as ‘learned & discreet’ with an ability ‘to confound and silence ye numerous pack of all those Carhurittans, viperous,

scandalous lying libellers, for they do but *actum agere*, and shoot his boultés'. He also greatly antagonised his own puritan parishioners, many of whom were excommunicated in 1636. One, Edward Borrett, refused to acknowledge the sentence and insisted on attending church (he was probably related to the Presbyterian George Borrett Snr, who represented Stradbroke in the eighth county classis in 1645). Others may have gone more quietly, but not without deep resentment. In 1643, they eked their revenge when Buck was imprisoned at Ipswich and sequestered for, among other things, preaching that the pope was the head of the church. A year later Stradbroke was visited by the iconoclast Dowsing, who completed the work of 'reformation' in the parish church.

Buck's successor, **John Swaine** (formerly of Westleton, qv, or his son), was appointed in 1645 but does not appear to have taken up his place. On 17 January 1646, he was asked to show why 'he has neglected to serve the cure'. His answer is not recorded, but judging from the various references to the activities of the Swaines, father and son, at this time elsewhere in Suffolk, the above may well have been busy facilitating the work of moral reformation by testifying against suspected witches. Whatever the case, Swaine resigned and was replaced in 1646 by one Thomas Watts, 'a godly and orthodox divine'. Religious peace in the village was probably short-lived, however, as the Baptist Hanserd Knollys was actively proselytising in the village in the mid-1640s. At the Restoration, Buck was restored to his living and remained as minister until his death in 1686.

Ann Arnoll may have been related to the schoolteacher, one Master Arnold, who was presented in the church courts for teaching school at Stradbroke without a licence in 1627.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 291, 311, 312; Anon., *The Triall of Mais.Dorrell*, 92-8; *Wal.Rev.*, 330; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 4r, 6v, 213v; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 427; White, *Century*, 42-3; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 288 [no.215]; Redstone, 'Presbyterian Church Government', 152, 157, 159, 164; Knollys, *Christ Exalted*, sig.Av; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/4.

SUDBURY

Witch: Anne Boreham, widow.

According to John Stearne, she was tempted by demons to forsake Christ, follow the Devil, and do his bidding in return for various rewards. In all probability the town provided more women accused of witches. The town accounts for 1645 refer to outlays to send witnesses to the assizes at Bury. The witchcraft sceptic Francis Hutchinson later recorded that about this time 'Two Borams, Mother and Daughter' were hanged at Bury St Edmunds.

The corporate borough of Sudbury was a town with a venerable godly past, which, by the 1630s, had become paralysed by religious divisions and tensions. Two factors irked the puritan faction in the town. In the first place, the loss of lay patronage of two of the town's parishes to the Andrews' brothers, Oliver and John, proved disastrous in precipitating prolonged disputes over the right of presentation and other issues. And

secondly, beleaguered on this front, the town's two puritan ministers John Harrison and Robert Smith were soon to face a yet sterner challenge in the shape of bishop Wren and his local commissaries, Thomas Eden and Robert Warren. Warren, minister at Long Melford (qv), was a persistent thorn in the flesh of Sudbury's puritans both as a local JP and through his dominant position in the archdeaconry of Sudbury. A further sad portent for the puritan cause in the town had arisen in 1632, when a conformable minister named Allen had brought a case against his fellow minister Samuel Jemmat in the court of Star Chamber. Jemmat and his supporters were alleged to have provoked a riot in the church by demanding to receive communion seated 'and for throwing the holy sacrament most contemptuously and irreligiously under their feet'. William Prynne acted for the defendant, while Laud promoted the case before the Court, in an action that was to prefigure deep ideological differences between the two men later in the decade.

By 1640, the town was irredeemably split over religious and political issues. Evidence of the acrimony is suggested by the large-scale migration that took place in the previous decade, Sudbury, on one account, providing more immigrants to New England in this period than any other town or village in East Anglia. Those who remained demonstrated remarkable resilience, resisting all attempts by the government to bring the town to order. In 1640, for example, a royal messenger was ignominiously imprisoned in the town cage by the mayor, despite the protestations of various loyalists. The original dispute had been triggered yet again by Laud's emissaries, in this case Dr Thomas Eden. His mere presence in the town – like Wren's at Ipswich (qv) in 1636 – would appear to have been sufficient cause for riot. When a libel against Eden, set up on the church gates, failed to deter him from preaching, a mob of around 200 men, led by an innkeeper named Hodskins, proceeded to tear up the altar rails and use them for weapons. By now, the loyalists, led by Warren and Eden, were largely friendless in the town. Even the Andrews' brothers may have temporarily composed their differences with the town's puritans after they were successfully prosecuted in Star Chamber in 1638 for having unlawfully taken on the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the parish of St Gregory's. Nonetheless, by 1641, one of their appointees, a man called Nash, was the subject of a petition to the House of Lords. By 1642, Sudbury had declared for Parliament. Further religious reform of the town's three parishes took place against a general background of fear and panic. Catholics, malignants and cavaliers were also suspected of plotting arson and other crimes in the town in the autumn of that year. Fifteen months later Dowsing arrived and completed the work begun by Hodskins and his supporters in 1640. Thereafter, Sudbury would remain an important outpost of puritanism and dissent.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 32; WSkRO, EE 501/2/7; Hutchinson, *Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft*, 38; Shipps, 'Lay Patronage', 301-4; Ford (ed.), *Winthrop Papers*, 1 [1498-1628], 317; Forbes (ed.), *Winthrop Papers*, 3 [1631-7], 62, 388; Gardiner (ed.), *Reports ... Star Chamber and High Commission*, 72-3; Powell, *Puritan Village*, 41; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, xiii, xxxiii, lxiv-lxv, cvii; CSPD, 1637-1638, 384; CSPD, 1639-40, 260-1, 562; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 192-4; BL, Harleian MS 589, fos 137-9; CSPD, 1640-1641, 195, 384, 389; BL, Harleian MS 160, fo.153; HLRO, HL/PO/JO/10/1/62, 21 June 1641; HL/PO/JO/10/1/140 [1642]; WSkRO, Sudbury Borough Records, Sextus Book, 25 October 1642; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 212-4 [nos 39-41].

SWEFLING

Witch: Ellen Crispe.

Henry Minstrell testified that Crispe and her parents had the common reputations of witches. Thomas Sier added that following his refusal to give Crispe's husband a load of hay, she bewitched one of his cows.

Ignoramus.

Little is known of the religious history of the parish before the civil war. There is some evidence for lay nonconformity. In 1627, for example, several parishioners were prosecuted in the church courts for not receiving communion, and one for 'deferring the baptizing of his childe'. There is also some evidence of resistance to the payment of ship money in the village. One defaulter, Robert Bond, was hanged and his goods seized. Any puritan sensibilities would undoubtedly have received short shrift from the rector Hugo Brandreth (d.1646). He was ejected some time shortly before his death. The parishioners of nearby Benhall, where he sometimes officiated, numbered him among the ranks of the 'scandalous'. His successor at Swefling, William Powel, had been suspended by bishop Wren at neighbouring Rendham. By the 1650s, there was an established congregational meeting at Swefling.

The chief witness against Crispe, **Henry Minstrell**, was probably the man of that name from the large village of Cransford, a few miles to the west of Swefling. Minstrell was a prominent figure in the parish (he made the third highest ship money payment), which, like so many others in this area, had witnessed the sequestration of its Laudian minister. Moreover, the new minister at Cransford in 1645 was **John Swaine** (see under Westleton). The other witness, **Thomas Sier** was a middle-ranking inhabitant of Swefling, who would appear to have performed the normal parish offices. In January 1650, for example, the magistrates at Woodbridge ordered his arrest if he failed to pay a rate assessed upon him for purchasing corn for the poor.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 296; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/4; CSPD, 1638-1639, 64; *Wal.Rev.*, 329; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 69; *Cal.Rev.*, 336-7, 396-7; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 49, 53; ESkRO, B105/2/6, fo.34r.

TATTINGSTONE

Witch: Ann Marsh.

Marsh was accused by one of her unnamed watchers of gaining revenge by causing the mysterious death of one of her children.

Ignoramus.

Tattingstone would appear to have had a tradition of lay nonconformity provoked in no small measure by the loyal and conformable nature of its ministers. Alexander Reynolds, for example, who was appointed curate in 1623, was later indicted at Ipswich in 1643 for speaking ill words against the parliamentarian general, the earl of Essex. The rector throughout much of the 1630s, John Cole (instituted 1624), may have been the Mr Cole, whom Brampton Gurdon, in a letter to John Winthrop in 1637, alleged had assisted bishop Wren in displacing Samuel Ward at St Mary at Quay, Ipswich. This seems probable if, as seems likely, the John Cole who gave evidence against several of the rioters at Ipswich (qv) in 1636 was the same as the rector of nearby Tattingstone. Cole not only incriminated his brother Jeremy, but he also reported village gossip at 'Tadington' [i.e. Tattingstone], where it was rumoured by William Clarke and others that many were now hoping that bishop Wren would suffer the same fate as the duke of Buckingham. Wren's links with the parish (below) probably exacerbated ill feeling toward the bishop in the village. John Cole had certainly left the parish by the time of the witch trials, when the spiritual leadership of the parish lay in the hands of two men of dubious loyalty to the parliamentary cause. The rector, Richard Ball (d.1684), had been sequestered from the living of Wilby in the north of the county in 1643, but hung on at Tattingstone until 1650. His curate in 1645, Edmund Duncon, had already been ejected from two livings in Norfolk.

In all probability, the conformity of the parish's ministers reflected the fact that bishop Wren had important connections to the parish through his marriage in 1628 to Elizabeth, the sister of the Ipswich merchant and staunch royalist, Benjamin Cutler. Elizabeth had previously been married to Robert Brownrigg of Sproughton and had inherited the manor and advowson of Tattingstone, as well as various other properties scattered throughout Suffolk (including land at Copdock and Ipswich, qqv). Wren was thus in a powerful position to influence the choice of ministers at Tattingstone which by 1639 had passed to his stepdaughter, Elizabeth. It also accounts for the bishop's active role in petitioning the crown in that year (as a ward of the crown, she was officially placed in the custody of her grandfather, Thomas Cutler, and Wren's wife Elizabeth) in order to make suitable arrangements for her marriage.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 295; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/4; Blatchly, *Town Library of Ipswich*, 21; ESkRO, C8/4/7, 387; NkRO, DN/VSC; *Massachusetts Historical Collections*, 4th ser., vol.6, 561 [Brampton Gurdon to John Winthrop, 17 April 1637]; ESkRO, C2/18/1, 21-3; *Wal.Rev.*, 267, 326; *ODNB*, sub Wren, Matthew; *CSPD, 1638-1639*, 336-7, 379.

THORPE MORIEUX

Witch: Anne Randall of Lavenham (qv).

Two of the main witnesses against Randall were William Baldwin and Stephen Humfries who lived in the nearby village of Thorpe Morieux. She confessed to Stearne that she had killed two horses belonging to Baldwin and used her imps to destroy a hog of Humfries after he refused her alms.

John Nuttall, installed as rector in 1607, was probably a supporter of bishop Wren, attending on him at the visitation of 1636. Thomas Coleman, his successor, was appointed to the living of Thorpe Morieux in 1641 by John Risby. He was already rector of Brent Eleigh, which was in the gift of his father, Samuel, a local landowner of some standing. While there is some doubt as to his precise religious affiliations, circumstantial evidence suggests that he was sympathetic to the high church Anglicanism favoured by Wren and Laud. In 1638-9, for example, he became deeply involved in a protracted dispute over the succession to the incumbency of the neighbouring parish of Preston. Coleman supported the claim of his cousin, Nicholas Coleman, who was also the candidate of the patron institution, Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Nicholas was eventually successful, due in no small part to the efforts of his cousin, and once installed rapidly alienated all those in the parish opposed to the recent Laudian reforms. While Nicholas Coleman, not surprisingly, was sequestered in 1644 amid much acrimony, Thomas remained at Thorpe, assisted perhaps by the fact that he possessed important connections among the local gentry. Further evidence of his high church leanings, however, is suggested by the fact that his son, Edward, famously converted to Roman Catholicism at the Restoration and was later implicated by Titus Oates in the murder of the Protestant magistrate, Edmund Berry Godfrey, in 1678.

William Baldwin and **Stephen Humphrey** (d.1647) were the heads of two of the wealthiest families in the village of Thorpe, Baldwin paying the highest contribution in ship money. The latter was almost certainly related to John Baldwin who served as constable in the parish in 1647. The two witnesses were also business partners, as evinced by Stephen Humphrey's will. The chief beneficiary was Stephen's eldest son and namesake, who was of sufficient standing to be appointed as chief constable of Cosford hundred in 1666. Five years earlier he had been named, along with **William Baldwin** and Thomas Bixby of Thorpe, as trustees of lands granted to the village for the use of the poor by the minister, Thomas Coleman. **Stephen Humphrey Snr** may also have known the witchfinder John Stearne personally as his daughter, Dorothy, was married to a fellow parishioner of Lawshall, Henry Wright. In Jun 1646, the magistrates at Bury ordered that Humphrey pay his arrears of rates owed to the churchwardens and overseers of the neighbouring parish of Cockfield. These may have been for lands that he possessed there, though the date suggests the possibility that he may have been involved in the costly practice of witch hunting in the parishes adjacent to his home.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 32-3; NkRO, DN/VSC; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fo.210r; Barclay, 'Rise of Edward Colman', 112-14; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 15; ESkRO, B105/2/1, fos 88v, 111r; WSkRO, J545/35, fo.436 [will of Stephen Humphrey, yeoman, 2 April 1647; proved 10 November 1647]; ESkRO, B105/2/7, fo.31v; WSkRO, 1754/3/14 [copies of will of Thomas Colman, clerk, 12 January 1661; proved 2 June 1664].

WATTISHAM

Witch: Elizabeth Finch.

According to Stearne, Finch, ‘of Watso in Suffolke’, confessed that twenty years before she had entered into a covenant with the Devil and had been plagued by imps. No evidence, however, is adduced of her doing harm to people or livestock.

Little is known of the religious history of Wattisham at the time of the witch trials. It was, however, the scene of another witch trial in 1652 when a woman from the village was accused of the crime by a number of parishioners, as well as one John Blomfield of Ringshall. The case coincided with another in the Court of Indemnity in which Joseph Crosse of Wattisham, a local collector of moneys on behalf of the Eastern Association, was being prosecuted for acting improperly.

Stearne, *Confirmation*, 16; ESkRO, B105/2/3, fo.12r; TNA, SP 24/10, fo.163v.

WESTHORPE

Witch: Susanna Dexe.

Dexe admitted under examination after being watched that she was responsible for the illness of Thomas Mills. She subsequently repeated her confession before the justices.

True bill.

The parish of Westhorpe provides another example of a deeply politicised community in the years immediately prior to the witch hunts. Between 1630 and 1636, the parish was dominated by the uncompromising puritan Robert Stansby, who had been appointed in 1630 by the godly Mrs Elizabeth Barrow (her son, Maurice, later sat in the Long Parliament for the borough of Eye from 1645-8). Previously prosecuted for failing to wear the surplice in 1633, two years later a series of charges were brought against him by the ecclesiastical authorities with the support of three parishioners. He was accused, among other things, of continuing to omit wearing the surplice, refusing to baptise with the sign of the cross, and omitting sections of the Book of Common Prayer. Remaining obstinate to the end, and after frequent admonition, he was finally deprived of his living in 1636, when he was succeeded by the more pliable conformist Samuel Scrivener (d.1658). Stansby’s removal precipitated a puritan exodus in the years that followed. Among those who immigrated to New England from Westhorpe were Dr John Clarke (1609-1676) and his wife Elizabeth, both of whom became followers of the radical prophetess Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) in America. For those who remained, Scrivener’s ministry only succeeded in alienating even further those of tender consciences. When he was sequestered from the living in 1643, he was charged with all the normal offences associated with the Laudians, including moral degeneracy and spiritual idolatry, as well as preaching against ‘this present defensive war’. Some Westhorpe parishioners extended their animus to neighbouring ministers of the same ilk. John Grocer Snr, for example, witnessed against the improprieties of Edmund Mayor, rector of Finningham. His devotion to the godly cause is also suggested by his investment

in the Irish adventure in the early 1640s, an attempt by Parliament to fund the war against the Catholic rebels with the promise of future profits and land.

One **Thomas Milles** paid 18s 6d in ship money in 1640, the fifth highest payment in the village. He may be the same (though unlikely given his profession) as the Thomas Milles (d.1660) of Westhorpe, carpenter, who made his will in 1660, nominating his wife Elizabeth as executrix.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 307; NkRO, DN/VSC; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fos 122, 194v; Boorman, 'Administrative and Disciplinary Problems', 87-8; Brunton and Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament*, 111; NkRO, DN/VIS 6/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 129r-134v; Tyack, 'Puritan Migration', Appendix 1, lxxvii, xcvi, cxvii; *Wal.Rev.*, 343; White, *Century*, 49-50; Holmes (ed.), *Suffolk Committees*, 49; Kings Inn Library, Dublin, Prendergast MSS, vol.5, 92 [error in pagination; should read 102]; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 112; WSkRO, J545/36, fo.30 [will of Thomas Milles, carpenter, 28 May 1660; proved 22 August 1660].

WESTLETON

Witch: Katherine Tooly.

She was accused of witchcraft on the testimony of the minister Mr [Hugh] Driver, who heard her confession. Among other deeds, she claimed to have attempted to kill Driver as he went from Kelsale to preach at Westleton. Her imp, however, was unable to complete the task for 'he had no power over him, and the reason was because he served god'. Tooly's imp also informed her that there was 'a bushell of rusty money in Sir Robert Brooks Closet', but it again failed to deliver on his promise. Robert Haken [Hacon] also testified against Tooly.

True bill.

Westleton had been a centre of puritan activity from the late 1620s under the spiritual leadership of its vicar **John Swaine** (or Swayne). Swaine was originally appointed in 1627 by the patron of the living **Sir Harbottle Grimston**, the Essex magistrate and MP who was to play such a prominent role in the early stages of the Hopkins' witch hunts in his native county. The link is an intriguing one given Swaine's own role in the witch trials in Suffolk, where he gave evidence against the Everards of Halesworth (qv). Prior to the civil war, Swaine had proven a thorn in the side of the ecclesiastical authorities. When a concerted effort was made to silence him in 1636, he attempted to deflect attention away from his own nonconformity by informing against the minister of nearby Darsham, John Eachard, whom he accused of being an 'Eatonist' (i.e. a follower of the perfectionist and antinomian preacher, John Eaton). Westleton itself was the site of a puritan lectureship that was suspended by bishop Wren in 1636. Like Dunwich (qv), it seems to have acted as a magnet for local puritan ministers among whom Samuel Jones, rector at nearby Middleton, was presented at the 1636 visitation for preaching at Westleton without a surplice.

The lecture at Westleton was revived in the early 1640s, when, among others, **William Browne** (probably **Mr Browne** who heard confessions of witches at Dunwich (qv)) preached in the parish. Thereafter, Westleton remained a centre of puritan, and later dissenting, activity. Swaine himself was succeeded in 1653 by William Bence. Both he and his son, also John, were energetic prophets of puritan reform. John Swaine Snr, for example, assisted Dowsing in the destruction of idols at Aldeburgh (qv). He was also an indefatigable preacher of the word, who would appear to have carried his message to all parts of Suffolk in the period immediately before and after the civil war. Among the various towns and villages where he was reported to be active at this time, many, such as Rattlesden, Stowmarket and Stradbroke (qqv), would later produce women suspected of witchcraft. His presence in Dunwich (qv) as a guest lecturer in 1645 provides further evidence of a link between puritanical preaching and witch-hunting. Others to preach here in the same year included **Hugh Driver**, the godly minister against whom Katherine Tooly's imp proved powerless. Driver, alongside **William Browne** and the two **Swaines**, father and son, subsequently signed the 1646 petition of Suffolk ministers calling for further moral reformation and a new settlement of church affairs along puritan lines.

Robert Hacon, who would appear to have been of the lower 'middling sort' (he paid the respectable sum of 6s 2d in ship money in 1640), was a parish activist who clearly supported the cause of godly reform. In 1643 he was probably serving as parish clerk when he was paid for 'wrightinge the Covenant', and he may have been a churchwarden at the time of the trial of Tooly (he certainly served in that office in 1644 and 1646). **Sir Robert Brooke** (d.1646) was the owner of Cockfield Hall at nearby Yoxford (qv). His widow, Elizabeth (1601-1683), was a notable patron of godly preaching, both of dissenting and partially conforming ministers, after the Restoration.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 309; NkRO, DN/VSC; Bodl., Tanner MS 68, fos 99v [Mapletoft would appear to err in referring to Swayne as 'Greene'], 168, 209v; ESKRO, FC63/D1/1, sub baptism, 17 September 1635]; FC 63/E1/1 [sub 1643, 1644, 1646]; EE6/3/3, fos 26v, 75v, 80r, 144r, 145r, 146r, 146v, 147r, 159r; *The Humble Petition of the Counties of Suffolke and Essex* [29 May 1646], sigs.A2v, A3r; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 84; Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent Christian Described and Exemplified*..

WETHERDEN

Witches: Elizabeth Fillet [Tillett] and Grace Gunburgh.

John Spinke, cobbler, testified that his shop was plagued by rodents sent by Tillett and that his child sickened after his wife had refused to visit her when sick. Thomas Gardiner and Thomas Janings [Jennings] also provided evidence against her, the latter informing her of the searchers coming to the town. John Waller and James May testified to what they had seen when they had kept watch over Gunburgh.

Ignoramus in both cases.

The parish and neighbourhood of Wetherden were most notable in the period before the witch hunts as a major centre of recusancy in the county of Suffolk. In Wetherden itself, the household of the Catholic gentleman Thomas Mannock, a relation of the Mannocks of Stoke by Nayland, provided countless prosecutions for the church courts in the 1620s and 1630s. They were almost certainly encouraged, and partially protected, by the presence at nearby Haughley Hall of the Sulyerd family, which was probably subject to the depredations of anti-catholic crowds at the time of the Stour Valley riots in 1642. Gaskill, on the suggestion of Diarmaid MacCulloch, has suggested that the accused witch Elizabeth Tillett was connected to the Sulyerds and may have shared their religion. The family almost certainly supported the royal cause and may have supplied troops for the royal armies. At least one villager claimed as a royalist pensioner in the 1660s.

Despite the proximity of these families, the living of Wetherden would appear to have been held throughout this period by puritan ministers. In 1636, the curate was Robert Devereux, probably a relation of Peter Devereux, the puritan rector of Rattlesden (qv). The village was visited by the iconoclast Dowsing in February 1644, who enthusiastically laid waste to the paraphernalia of Catholic superstition in the church, much of it associated with the Sulyerd family. Religious peace, however, does not appear to have ensued after iconoclasm and witch-hunting. In March 1646, the Committee for Plundered Ministers was requesting the urgent examination of the minister of Wetherden for unspecified offences.

The witness **John Waller** may have been the man of that name from Rattlesden, situated three miles to the south west of Wetherden, whose son John (b.1633) was ejected as curate of Hunsdon in 1662. **James Maye** was the son of Thomas Maye, a yeoman farmer in the village.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 292; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, 94-5; NkRO, DN/VIS 5/3/3; DN/VIS 6/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fo.125; Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 50n, 209; ESKRO, B105/2/5, fos 98v, 105r; B105/2/7, fo.111v; NkRO, DN/VSC; Cooper (ed.), *Journal of William Dowsing*, 241-2 [no.104]; Redstone, 'Presbyterian Church Government', 158; *Cal.Rev.*, 507-8; TNA, PROB 11/243, fos 351v-352v [will of Thomas Maye, 22 August 1654; proved 6 January 1654/5].

WICKHAM SKEITH

Witches: Joan Balls; Mary Brame, daughter of Joan Balls; Sybil Greene; Mary Winter.

The confessions at Wickham Skeith were conducted by the minister Edward Willan. Sybil Greene was searched and suspicious teats were found on her body. Mary Winter confessed to Willan that she received her imps from Greene. She too had marks on her body as testified by the searcher, Mary Read. Joan Balls was also searched and closely interrogated by Willan, confessing only after she had heard that her daughter, Mary Brame, had done the same. According to Willan, Balls 'professed anabaptisme' and was a 'runner after the new secks [sects]'. Brame,

however, refuted any suggestion that she had used those imps that she had received from her mother for any evil purposes.

Balls, Brame and Winter were found true bills; Greene ignoramus.

Thomas Usher, MA, was instituted vicar at Wickham Skeith in February 1631 by Edmund Harvey (1592-1664), who would appear to have resided in the village. He was present throughout the period of the witch trials and was still officiating at Wickham in the 1650s. The village would appear to have been an early centre of religious radicalism in this part of Suffolk. The fears expressed by the minister **Edward Willan** may have been related to the preaching of men like Laurence Clarkson in this area in the spring of 1645. Within a decade, it was at the heart of the embryonic Quaker movement taking shape on the Norfolk-Suffolk border. Some time in the mid-1650s, James Porter, an itinerant vendor, was arrested by Edmund Harvey, JP, and subsequently whipped for disseminating Quaker literature in the village. Porter was arrested at the house of Richard White in Wickham, who was himself repeatedly punished for his Quakerism in the following years, most notably in 1655 when he was implicated in lurid tales of the Quakers' supposed bewitchment of a woman from Starston, just across the border in Norfolk. Again, the prosecuting magistrate was the local justice, Edmund Harvey (not to be confused with the regicide, who also owned property in the county), whose depositions were faithfully recorded in a pamphlet account of the case published in the same year. Susan Green, one of the informants who testified to the diabolical fits of the afflicted woman, may have been related to the accused witch, **Sybil Greene**.

The principal witness and interrogator of the suspected women in 1645 was **Edward Willan**, a Presbyterian clergyman who, within a year of the trials, was appointed rector of nearby Hoxne. Willan, too, was later a great persecutor of the Quakers. In 1658, he was responsible for the arrest and imprisonment of one of the leading members of the nascent Quaker movement, George Whitehead (1637-1724). Around the time of the witch trials, Willan would appear to have been preaching in Norfolk (in June 1645, for example, he gave a sermon at Norwich) and elsewhere in Suffolk. According to the witchcraft sceptic Francis Hutchinson (1660-1739), the witchfinders visited Hoxne in 1645, but after obtaining a confession from one woman were forced to quit the town as a result of the opposition of a local gentry family. Rebuffed here, they, along with Willan, may have diverted their attentions to neighbouring villages such as Wickham Skeith. There is one final link between the parish of Hoxne and the witch scare of 1645. The contemporaneous depositions in the British Library that form the basis of so much of our evidence for the trials were originally in the possession of John Thurston of Hoxne, 'whose ancestors were Justices of the Peace' for Suffolk. It seems highly likely therefore that the depositions were taken by a member of that godly family, probably Nathaniel Thurston (1630-1694), whose brother Clement was appointed rector of Worlingworth in 1644 in place of the sequestrated minister, Philip Tincke.

Mary Brame is listed as paying 2s 6d in ship money in 1640. Given Willan's description of **Joan Balls** as a radical sectary, it is possible that she was the woman of that name (the

wife of one Richard Balles, blockmaker, 'a poor man') who was described as a Brownist at Great Yarmouth in 1630.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 302-3; NkRO, DN/VSC; Clarkson, *Lost Sheep Found*, 12-13; Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 657-8, 662, 665-6, 667, 672; Anon., *Quakers are Inchanters; Humble Petition of the Counties of Suffolke and Essex*, sig.A3r; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, ii, 334; Willan, *Six Sermons*; Hutchinson, *Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft*, 63-4; BL, Add.MS 27,402; NkRO, DN/SUB 1/1 [1644]; *Wal.Rev.*, 345; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 108; Greenwood, 'Origins and Early History of Independency', 65-66.

WINGFIELD

Witch: Elizabeth Greene, widow.

John Browning testified to her confession before him. She claimed to know that she was a witch because of the marks found on her body. Asked how she acquired them, she said that goody Wright of Stradbroke (qv) has sent her three imps. She also claimed that the Devil had appeared to her in the shape of a man, and that he entered into a covenant with her. Richard Aldus provided further testimony.

True bill.

Little is known of the religious history of the parish before the witch hunts. It subsequently became a centre of radical preaching under the ministry of the fifth monarchist Samuel Habergham, who was appointed vicar in 1651. Following his ejection in 1662, he continued to serve as pastor to a congregational church here until his death in January 1665. Wingfield may have harboured royalist sympathisers. Nicholas Garnish was sequestered in the 1640s, while in 1654 Thomas Underwood was implicated in a plot to overthrow the government.

John Browning was probably related to William Browning, who paid one of the highest rates of 15s 9d. **Richard Aldhouse (Aldus)**, who witnessed against Greene, paid the respectable sum of 9s 11d in ship money in 1640. Aldus, a yeoman farmer, also owned land in neighbouring Stradbroke, home to the witch goody Wright. His godly connections are suggested by the fact that the sister of his own sister-in-law Grace Tyler (d.1647) emigrated in 1637 from Stradbroke to New England where her son, John Brock (1620-1688), became a congregational minister.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 291-2; *Cal.Rev.*, 240; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 111-2; TNA, SP 24/1, fo.160v; Thurloe, *State Papers*, ii, 341-2; Redstone (ed.), *Ship-Money Returns*, 149; TNA, PROB 11/264, fos 274v-277v [will of Richard Aldous of Wingfield, 25 September 1656; proved 13 May 1657]; PROB 11/201, fo.202r [will of Grace Tyler of Colchester, 24 May 1647; proved 19 July 1647]; Mather, *Magnalia Christ Americana*, iv, 141-3.

YOXFORD

Witch: Mary, the wife of Richard Cloves [Clowes].

Clowes freely confessed that the Devil had come to her in the shape of a small boy, that she had entered into a covenant with him, and deployed 'her imps in generall service but not in murder'.

True bill.

Prior to the civil war, the parish of Yoxford was dominated by the interests of the recusant Bedingfield family. Sir Thomas, who later supported the royal cause in the civil war, owned the right of presentation to the living and was responsible in 1632 for the appointment of Laurence Eachard, a ceremonialist and Laudian, who survived the mass expulsions of loyalist clergy in the 1640s only to be removed in 1650 for a number of moral and religious shortcomings. During the course of the 1650s, the parish fell increasingly under the influence of Elizabeth Brooke, the godly widow of Sir Robert of Cockfield Hall. Matthias Candler, the puritan minister of Coddenham (qv), also owned land in Yoxford, where his father William had formerly been a schoolmaster. Samuel Chapman acted as vicar following the removal of Eachard, who was restored in 1660. Chapman, who served as chaplain to Lady Brooke, conformed after the Restoration and was reported to be officiating at Yoxford in 1665 in the absence of an incumbent. Dissent lingered on in the parish, however, as suggested by prosecutions at quarter sessions of villagers for nonconformity.

Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 309; NkRO, DN/VSC; DN/VIS 5/3/4; Bodl., Tanner MS 314, fo.126; *Wal.Rev.*, 333; *Cal.Rev.*, 100, 110, 193; ESKRO, B105/2/6, fo.31v.