

Foreword

This booklet is not about witchcraft *per se*, nor is it an attempt to retread old ground concerning the trials of August 1612. It more of an attempt to place one woman's story into the puzzle that was the Lancaster Trials.

In 2001 I paid a visit to Lancaster Castle in an attempt to make some sort of sense of how those lodged there in 1612 must have felt. Whilst there I took the opportunity to peruse the subject matter on offer concerning the Lancashire Witches, and also to satisfy my own curiosity on what the literature had to say about the subject of my booklet, Isabel Robey.

I was not at all surprised to find that there was very little information concerning Isabel, however, I did detect some information that was slightly inaccurate. Isabel Robey was not from Yorkshire; she came from the small township of Windle, which is part of the Metropolitan Borough of St.Helens.

So much has been written about the trials, and all my research has offered the same conclusion regarding Isabel Robey, she was just an unfortunate woman from another town who got caught up in accusations and allegations, but what brought her to Lancaster?

I make no apologies for keeping the trials of the Pendle witches to a minimum, after all they have their place in history. I will apologise for any historical inaccuracies that may be found! What I have tried to present here is Isabel's story, which was no easy task given the lack of information on offer.

With that said, I hope you enjoy what is written.

Mark Marsh.

June 2002.

Historical Background

It was on the 18th of March, 1612 that Alizon Device of Newchurch-in-Pendle met the pedlar John Law near Colne, Lancashire. Alizon begged pins from the pedlar, but he refused to give any, she cursed him and he fell down lame shortly afterwards.

What was to follow on from these events became the most infamous witchcraft trial in English history. Amongst the nineteen people tried for witchcraft in August 1612 was one Isabel Robey of Windle, St. Helens. How could a woman not connected with the Pendle brood come to be tried with them? The tenuous link lay with Alizon Device, for one of the landed gentlemen who gave sympathy to John Law and his son Abraham was Sir Thomas Gerrard, Lord of the Manor of Windle and Justice of the Peace for that area of Lancashire, and this link would eventually bring Isabel Robey to the Lancaster Assizes, for on July 12th 1612 she would be brought before Sir Thomas Gerrard accused by her neighbours, and in particular her God Daughters own husband, of witchcraft.

Little is known about Isabel Robey, she was not afforded the same attention that would later become centred upon the Pendle witches, and yet she stood accused with them, and was condemned to hang with them. The only evidence that we have of her is that of her trial, which was the last to be recorded by Thomas Potts and which would surface in his transcript of the trials *"The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster"* (1613).

Whilst the evidence concerning Isabel is scant, what we do know is that England in the early 17th Century was in Political and Religious turmoil. James I had ascended the throne in 1603 after the death of Elizabeth I, and within the first two years of his reign, attempts would be made on his life, the most notable being the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

James had ordered a repeal of the Elizabethan Witchcraft Act, and replaced it in 1604 with a new act. This act was harsher in its treatment of those accused of witchcraft, and the act stated that all those who *"Practice or exercise any witchcraft, sorcerie, charme, or inchantment....shalle suffer paines of death as a felon or felons"*.

Catholicism had been outlawed, and this view is strongly highlighted in the opening sentences of Isabels trial, as Thomas Potts wrote: *"Thus at one time may you behold witches of all sorts from many places in this Countie of Lancaster which now may be lawfully said to abound asmuch in witches of Divers kinds as Seminaries, Jesuits, and Papists"*

It is interesting to note that Potts draws comparison of witchcraft and the outlawed Catholic Faith, such was the hatred directed towards Catholics at this time.

The Protestant Religion had become the favoured practice in England, especially in the Southern parts of the Country, and even though James' own mother, the famed Queen of Scots had been a staunch Catholic, James distanced himself from the Catholics, preferring to fully embrace the religion of which he, through the Tudor Dynasty, was now Supreme Head. In the North of England, Catholicism remained strong and this was evident in the Catholic sympathies of the established Lancashire families, which included the Gerrards of Bryn and Windle. Indeed, the County of Lancashire had been deemed by the Puritans to be a "dark corner of the land", still steeped in the despised Papist tradition. This division in religious ruling would eventually contribute to the events of 1642 when England would erupt into Civil War.

It is safe to assume that events in England would have affected what was to become the town of St. Helens, which in the early 17th Century consisted of the small villages of Windle, Sutton, Eccleston and Parr. The towns Jesuit past can be seen today in the form of St. Marys Lowe House Church on North Road.

The Gerrard families association with St. Helens was established in the early 15th Century when Sir Thomas Gerrard ordered the building of Windle Chantry in memory of his ancestors soon after returning from Agincourt in 1415. Eventually his descendant, another Sir Thomas, would be one of the first in line to pay £1000 pounds to obtain a Baronetcie.

The title was given, and the money returned to Sir Thomas in recognition of his families support and services to the Kings mother, Mary, Queen of Scots. This relationship with the King would not be without its difficulties; Gerrards brother, John Gerrard was one of the men who would become implicated in the Gunpowder Plot, but the Jesuit priest would escape arrest and eventually found a Jesuit college at Liege.

Evidence of the influence of the ruling families of the area can be seen in place names around the town, especially in the names of the public houses. The Gerard Arms can be found on the juncture of Dentons Green Lane and Kiln Lane, and not far away, in the village of Crank, can be found the Stanley Arms.

The Stanleys were the most important family in the area, having had the Earldom of Derby bestowed upon them in reward for support given to Henry Tudor, later King Henry VII, at the battle of Bosworth in 1485 where Tudor was crowned King. This elevation in status was further strengthened by the marriage of Henrys mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort to Lord Thomas Stanley. By 1587 the Stanleys had settled at Lathom near Ormskirk, and also had another family seat at Knowsley. Lathom House remained the families main seat up until the sieges of 1644 and 1645 when Lathom House was destroyed by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War.

By contrast, the Gerrards could claim descent from Lord Otho, a Baron of England during the reign of Alfred the Great. The family strengthened its ties with a series of fortunate marriages which would give them estates throughout England.

The Gerrards were mainly a military family with descendants fighting in the Crusades. In 1385, Peter Gerard de Bryn of Kingsley, Bryn and Windle was knighted by Richard II for his bravery and valiance during the Scottish Wars. It was from Sir Peter that the Lords of the Manor of Windle would descend. The Gerrards were also a profoundly religious family and supporters of the Catholic faith, and because of this they would lose estates and wealth, but such was the extent of the faith, some members of the family became nuns and priests.

The third Sir Thomas (c 1525-1601) was a staunch Catholic who refused to obey the religious laws of Elizabeth I, and was sent to the Tower of London in 1571 for openly sympathising with the plight of the Queen of Scots. In 1586 he became implicated in the Babington Plot in which it was hoped that the conspirators would deliver the Scottish Queen from her confinement, assassinate the Protestant Elizabeth, and place Mary upon the throne of England. Sir Thomas saved his own neck by giving evidence against the Earl of Arundel, and to raise money for his fines he was forced to sell his estates at Bromley, and half of his land at Rainhill. Another condition of his freedom was to embrace the Conformity laws, but Catholicism would remain at the heart of the family throughout its history.

It was this view of religion that would separate these two ruling Lancashire families. The Stanleys had allied themselves with the Reformation of Henry VIII and Lord Stanley would

go so far to have Puritan Ministers preaching at his dual family Seats of Lathom and Knowsley.

By 1603, with the accession to the throne of James I, the religious divide would begin to affect the rural population of England. The Puritans frowned upon the “pagan” practices of such things as the May-Day celebrations where Robin, Lord of the May would be attended by his consort the May Queen, and what shocked the Puritans even more was the singing and merriment accompanying this event, especially dancing around the Maypole. Even worse was the fact that these merry events took place within the venerated grounds of the churchyard. These pagan ideas had gradually become embroiled with witchcraft, of which James I harboured both a fear and a fascination. In 1591 a group of Scottish witches had been accused and brought to trial for allegedly attempting to murder James’ future Queen, Anne of Denmark, by raising storms off the coast of Scotland. In 1597 the King had wrote his own book, “*Daemonologie*” about the subject of witches and their black art. It is possible that he would be familiar with an earlier book, “*Malleus Malificarum*” written by the two German monks Sprenger and Kramer some one hundred years previously, which had been used as the basis of previous witch persecutions across Europe.

The King had also commended his own authorised version of the Bible, in which the lines “*Thou shalt not suffer a poisoner to live*” had been supplanted with “*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live*” By 1603, the first year of his reign in England, James had ordered a reprint of his book, and by the following year he had ordered his own version of the Witchcraft Act. In “*Daemonologie*”, James gives a very detailed description of the powers of witches. He describes how a witch can hold the power of life and death over their enemies, and how they can cause terrible afflictions on a persons body. He gives an account of how the witch can cause a person to lose the use of their limbs, or worse. He also describes how the power of witchcraft can harm animals, raise storms and blight crops, and all this is attributed to the witch selling their soul to the Devil himself.

James also describes the methods used to detect witches, and which methods of torture are to be used on those suspected of witchcraft. One method was searching for the “witches mark”, which all practitioners of the Diabolical Arts would have upon their bodies to allow their familiars to suckle, taking blood from the place that Satan had taken blood. If this mark was pricked the witch would feel no pain, neither would the mark bleed. Another favourite method would be to swim the witch, in which the accused would be bound and thrown into a river or pond. If you sank you were innocent but if you floated you were guilty. The poor individual, half drowned would then be hung.

James believed that women were the source and main perpetrators of witchcraft, for in the book he writes “*The reason is easie, for as that sex is frailer than a man is, so it is easier to be entrapped in those grosse snares of the Devil as was over well proved to be true by the Serpents deceiving of Eve at the beginning*”.

The circulation of the book fuelled the flames of suspicion, and all through Britain people actually believed that witches could indeed carry out all manner of mischief, murder and mayhem, and this very book, written by the King himself, would undoubtedly imprint suspicion of witchcraft onto the minds of his subjects. Eventually this hysteria would give rise to a series of witchcraft trials which would reach their height during the Civil War when the turmoil sweeping the Country would give opportunities to the likes of the self styled “Witchfinder Generals”, the most infamous of these being Matthew Hopkins who was responsible for the trial and deaths of some 230 supposed witches in the Counties of Essex,

Norfolk and Suffolk. The hysteria began to decline in the latter half of the 17th Century, and the last execution in England occurred at Exeter in 1684. The 1604 Act remained in force until 1736, and the practice of witchcraft was illegal up until 1951, when the Act was replaced by the Fraudulent Mediums Act.

It was against this turbulent backdrop that Isabel Robey became implicated by her neighbours. In those times it was all too easy to condemn a troublesome neighbour or a feuding relative as a witch as Isabel Robey found out when she was brought before Sir Thomas Gerrard to answer to charges of witchcraft in July 1612.

So what do we know of Isabel Robey? The site of her cottage can be seen today at the junction of the Rainford By-pass and Windle Island. The site is now occupied by a bungalow. Across from the site of Isabel's home is the land which contains the remains of Windle Chantry, now the St. Helens Cemetery.

The eyes of the 21st Century must afford some imagination to events which happened some 400 years ago, but the land surrounding Isabel's home gives a feel of Lancashire in 1612. Isabel, it seems, was a woman of great age and feared by the locals. Given this great age, and knowing that these events took place in 1612 gives her birth at c1540, during the last years of the reign of Henry VIII. Taking this into account Isabel would have lived through the reigns of Edward VI (1547-1553), Lady Jane Grey (1553), Mary I (1553-1558), and Elizabeth I (1558-1603).

She would see the Royal Dynasty pass from the hands of Tudor to Stuart, and possibly survive some of the most unsettled periods of English history, only to succumb to the fear and suspicion of her neighbours accused of being a witch. During my reading and research I found evidence of others accused of witchcraft in St. Helens but the sketchy details only provide evidence of two women brought to trial in St. Helens Chapel in 1602, then sent to the Assizes in Lancaster. Nothing is known of how or why these women were implicated, but given that Sir Thomas Gerrard was MP for Liverpool in 1597 and also a Justice of the Peace, it is highly likely that they would have been brought before him for trial. If this was so, this could have had a possible impact on the trials of 1612. Gerrard would have certainly known Sir Edward Bromley who judged the trials, and it is conceivable that conversations regarding witchcraft activity in Lancashire would have taken place.

The people of Windle, and surrounding areas, would have known about the incidents of 1602, especially as St. Helens Chapel had been built so that the inhabitants of the four villages did not have to travel the long distance to Prescott Parish to worship. Windle would have been no different to any other Lancashire village, and news of suspected witchcraft would have travelled along the lanes prompting local gossip of others suspected of being witches, such was the suspicion of these times.

The events in Windle are shrouded in the mists of time, and a certain amount of speculation must be afforded to make sense of what happened. Fortunately, Isabel's trial was documented, and although Thomas Potts writes extensively about the actions of the witches in Pendle, it gives a clear indication that belief in, and suspicion of witchcraft was evident in a small town that would not fully develop until the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th Centuries.

The Accusations

The Examination of Peter Chaddock before Sir Thomas Gerrard, July 12th 1612

The allegations against Isabel Robey were heard before Sir Thomas Gerrard at Windle, and from reading Thomas Potts' transcription of the trial it becomes clear that the main perpetrator of these allegations is Peter Chaddock.

The events leading up to the trial appear to have happened over a for year period from around 1608 to 1612 and the dating of events, though somewhat confusing in Potts' account, unfurl as the trial progresses. During his examination Chaddock accuses Isabel of witchcraft before his marriage, and it is clearly obvious that Isabel is far from happy with Peter Chaddocks courtship of her Goddaughter, let alone marriage to him.

This apparent clash of personalities is clear, for at the commencement of Chaddocks examination it is written that Chaddock "does not care" for Isabel Robey, and "*called the said Isabel witch*"

Barely two days after this alleged clash, Peter Chaddock becomes "*sore pained in his bones*", and he also bears witness to the far reaching effects of Isabels maleficia.

This is indicated when Peter asks a companion, Thomas Lyon, to accompany him to Peasley Cross to meet with a friend, John Hawarden. Peasley Cross is some distance away from Windle yet as they make their way home, both Chaddock and Lyon find themselves "*in evill case*". This particular event appears to have taken place sometime in 1612, and to strengthen his case against the witch, Chaddock relates an incident which appears to have taken place some four years previously.

Sometime in 1608, Isabel and Chaddock's "now wife" engage in a heated argument over Peter, to which Isabel leaves the house "not well pleased". Later that same day, events take a dramatic turn, for while Peter is "*at work in the hay with his now wife*", he is suddenly struck down with "*a paine and starknesse in the neck which grieved him very sore*". Having been so mysteriously stricken, the Chaddocks call upon the services of James a Glover, who appears to be the local wise man.

Rural folk often called upon the wise man or woman of the village to protect themselves and their livestock against various ills. These “cunning folk”, as they were also known, were very often the first line of defence against the malevolent charms of the black witch, and used prayer or supplied good luck charms to the bewitched individual. These people were highly respected members of the village, and were largely left alone to carry out their practices in relative peace.

Eventually, as the witch hysteria reached its height, even the cunning folk would succumb to the witchfinders who would make no distinction between helpful and harmful magic, and believed that all witches, black or white, were the instruments of Satan.

Peter Chaddocks consultation with Glover appears to have had some effect, and through the power of prayer he is on the mend within four or five days. Unfortunately, Peter has some form of relapse and becomes “*very sore pained, thirsty, and hot within his bodie*”. He was also unable to drink, so powerful was Isabels charms against him that “*he would have given anything he had to have slaked his thirst*”. Once again, the wise man is consulted, who advises him to “*take that drinke, and in the name of the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, drinke it saying the Devill and witches are not able to prevail against God and His Word*”. Upon doing this, Peter makes a remarkable recovery, and continues in good health until “*Our Ladie Day in Lent was twelvemonth or thereabout*”

Chaddocks symptoms slowly but surely return, and once again he is “*sore pained, with great warch in his bones and all his limmes*”. The resumption of his illness and pain are firmly attributed to Isabel Robey and witchcraft, and Peter steadfastly believes that his “*said warch and pain*” are indeed the results of the witches evil doing, rather than more natural, earthly means.

The Examination of Jane Wilkinson before Sir Thomas Gerrard, July 12th 1612

The next piece of evidence presented to Gerrard is that of a neighbour, and although Potts’ transcript of Jane Wilkinsons evidence is relatively short, it gives an indication of how the perceived power of the witch can strike at their victim over long distances.

Jane’s ordeal began when Isabel came begging milk, to which Jane refused. Isabel must have cursed her there and then for the refusal of this request, because Jane, on meeting Isabel down the lane “*waxed afraid of her*” and shortly after this meeting with the witch, Jane was “*presently sicke and so pained she could not stand*”. Jane Wilkinsons fear of Isabel Robey is so strong that whilst on her way to Warrington, a town some considerable distance away from St.Helens, she feels a pinching sensation in the thigh area. This pinching “*with foure fingers and a thumbe twice together*” has quite a marked effect on the poor woman who “*thereupon was sicke*”.

So struck with fear and obvious panic, Jane believes that she is also a victim of the wicked Robey, and furthermore, Isabels bewitchment prevents her from walking home, she can only get home “*upon horse-backe*”. Once home, Jane Wilkinson also makes a remarkable recovery from witchcraft, just as Peter Chaddock and Thomas Lyon did on their way home from Peasley Cross.

The Examination of Margaret Lyon before Sir Thomas Gerrard, July 12th 1612

The next person to give evidence is a friend of both Isabel and her Goddaughter, and appears to have been collated from conversations held between the three women. Again, the ongoing feud between Peter and Isabel is highlighted which becomes apparent as the evidence unfurls. Here, Isabel pays a visit to Margarets house and discusses the recent events that have been occurring. Isabel wants forgiveness from Peter Chaddock otherwise “he shall never mend”, but the mutual dislike of each other is so strong that Isabel knows that this is unlikely to happen. Margaret does try to ease the situation between the two, for she says that Peter Chaddock is “*a true Christian*” and he would ask for forgiveness. Isabel is in no mood to hear this. She thinks that yes, he may be a true Christian, but he will never ask her for forgiveness and as far as she is concerned, she hopes he never mends.

At the Chaddock household, Margaret has a conversation with the Goddaughter who reveals that her husband has sought the help of Halesworth “*which they call a wise man*”.

Interestingly, for this case, it emerges that after the consultation Halesworth deems Isabel Robey to be “no witch”. The Goddaughter also affirms that on the whole, her husband is satisfied with this, and she pleads with him to heed the wise mans words. However, the question of asking Isabel for forgiveness in the matter is rejected by the stubborn Peter Chaddock. The wife says to Margaret “*I thinke my husband will never mend until he have asked her for forgiveness*”. Peter, on the other hand, feels he has done no wrong, for as the wife says to Margaret concerning Peters reply, “*when he did need to aske her for forgiveness, he would, but he did think he did not, for anything he knew*”.

Despite the affirmations of Halesworth the wise man, Chaddocks fear of Isabel remains. He confirms to his wife that Isabel has “*done him much hurt*”, and this fear is confirmed by Isabel herself who admits that he does indeed turn his back on her when he meets her down the lane.

The Examination of Margaret Parre before Sir Thomas Gerrard, July 12th, 1612

Margaret Parre is the last to give evidence against Isabel, and her short statement is the most damning peice of evidence to be used against her, for within it Isabel seals her own fate. Isabel visits Margaret Parre’s house, whereupon Margaret enquires of Isabel how Peter Chaddock is.

Isabel refuses to talk about her enemy, and says that “*she knew not, for she went not to see*”. Margaret also enquires about Jane Wilkinson for “*she has been lately sicke and suspected to have been bewitched*”.

This questioning proves too much for the headstrong Isabel, for she says to her neighbour “*I have bewitched her too*”. This is confirmed “*twice together*”, and Isabel goes so far as to try and frighten Margaret Parre by saying “*would you defie me?*”. Unfortunately for Isabel, Margaret believes she can “*blesse herselfe from all witches*”, and yes, she will defy her. Having finally met someone who is not in the least afraid of her, Isabel leaves the house “*not well pleased*”.

The Hard Road to Lancaster

On the strength of the evidence given by her neighbours, and her own apparent confession, Isabel Robey was despatched to Lancaster Castle to face trial before Sir Edward Bromley for her wicked acts. The trial took place at the Lancaster Assizes of August 19th, 1612, and despite her plea of not guilty, she was sentenced to hang along with John Bulcock, Jane Bulcock, Alizon Device, Elizabeth Device, James Device, Anne Redfearne, Alice Nutter, Anne Whittle (alias Chattox), and Katherine Hewit (alias Mouldheels). These unfortunate people were hanged on the 20th August 1612, after being allowed one last drink at the Golden Lion Inn at Lancaster.

Having now been presented with the evidence, it becomes clear that Isabel Robey was perceived by her neighbours in general, and by Peter Chaddock in particular, to be a troublesome nuisance who needed to be out of their lives. What better way to despatch an enemy by accusing them of witchcraft? Isabels accusation couldn't have come at a better time, especially with the unfolding events in Pendle, and Thomas Gerrards association with them. Isabels neighbours had the perfect opportunity to finally rid themselves of this troublesome witch.

It seems that Isabel Robey was much maligned. She was probably a strong willed, maybe cantankerous old woman who was certainly not afraid of speaking out at against what she perceived as wrong. Given the fact that she was indeed feared by her neighbours possibly emanates from her scathing, cursing nature. Isabel Robeys first mistake was interfering in Peter Chaddocks relationship with her own Goddaughter, and her last was to openly admit to bewitching both him and Jane Wilkinson. Isabel Robey did not cause death by witchcraft, neither did she blight crops, harm animals, sour milk nor make images to harm her supposed

victims. There is no recorded evidence of her ever attending a Sabbat, or any of the things that the Pendle Witches were accused of. It appears that Isabel was a victim of the times, and of circumstance, and by sheer coincidence was she to languish in the same prison cell as the Pendle accused.

How very convenient this must have been for Sir Thomas Gerrard, who was involved with the Pendle enquiry and also sat upon the Jury, and what a better way to hide his own Catholic sympathies by sending a woman from his own area of jurisdiction to her demise, knowing that his own religious belief coincided with her supposed witchcraft. He knew the outcome, for the Kings act stated that *“Wherebie any person shalle be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, lamed in his or her bodie or any part therof....being of the saide offences dylie and lawfullie convicted and attainted, shalle suffer paines of death as a felon or felons....”*

Isabels fate was duly sealed, even though the evidence given by Margaret Lyon stated the fact that Halesworth the wise man had deemed her to be no witch, and Peter Chaddock had actually accepted this, she still took the long walk to the gallows and to her death. Isabel Robeys “crime” was to beg milk and utter curses, her “crime” was to interfere in a relationship that she felt, rightly or wrongly, to be no good for her Goddaughter. This “criminal” was an obstinate old woman set into her ways. As opposed to Margaret Pearson, who was tried with Isabel and actually found guilty of murder, and who received the lesser punishment of the pillory on market days, Isabel herself was despatched on the long road to Lancaster to receive the harsher penalty of death for a seemingly lesser crime.

The year 2001 was the 50th anniversary of the repeal of the Witchcraft Act, and a plaque was unveiled in the Golden Lion Inn in honour of those who were hanged on that fateful day in August 1612. This goes some way towards bringing to attention the intolerance and injustice suffered by all those throughout history who were persecuted for a simple belief.

Isabel Robey remains an enigma, a name synonymous with, but detached from, the Lancashire Witch story, yet she is a part of the forgotten history of St.Helens. I hope this booklet serves as some small token to the memory of Isabel Robey, Windle Witch.

Extract from
The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster
By
Thomas Potts esq.
1613

The Arraignement and Triall of Isabel Robey
In the Countie of Lancaster, for Witch-Craft: upon Wednesday the Nineteenth of August,
1612.
At the Assizes and generall Gaol-delivery, holden at Lancaster before Sir Edward Bromley,
Knight, one of His Majesties Justices of Assize at Lancaster.

Isabel Robey.

Thus at one time may you behold Witches of all sorts from as many places in this Countie of Lancaster which now may be lawfully said to abound asmuch as Witches of divers kinds as

Seminaries, Jesuits and Papists. Her then is the last to act her part in this lamentable and woefull tragedie, wherin his Majestie hath lost so many subjects, Mothers their Children, Fathers their Friends, and Kinsfolkes the like whereof hath not beene set forth in any age. What hath the Kings Majestie written and published in his Daemonologie, by way of premonition and prevention, which hath not here by the first or last beene executed, put in practise or discovered? What Witches have ever upon their arraignment and triall made such open liberall and voluntarie declarations of their lives, and such confessions of their offences: The manner of their attempts and bloudie practises, their meetings, consultations and what not? Therefore I shall now conclude with this Isabel Robey who is now come to her triall.

This Isabel Robey Prisoner in the Castle at Lancaster being brought to the Barre before the Great Seat of Justice was there according to the former order, and Indicted and Arraigned, for that she did feloniously had practised, exercised, and used her Devilish and Wicked Artes called Witchcrafts, inchantments, charmes and sorceries.

Upon her Arraignment to this indictment she pleaded not guiltie, and for the triall of her life, put herself upon God and her Countrie.

So as now the Gentlemen of the Jurie of life and death stand charged with her as others.

The Evidence against Isabel Robey prisoner at the Barre

The Examination of Peter Chaddock of Windle, in the Countie of Lancaster: Taken at Windle aforesaid, the 12 day of July Before Sir Thomas Gerrard Knight and Barronet. One of his Majesties Justices of the Peace within the said Countie.

The said examine upon his oath saith, that before his marriage he heard say that the said Isabel Robey was not pleased that he should marrie his now wife: whereupon this examine called the said Isabel Witch, and that he did not care for her. Then within two days next after this examine was sore pained in his bones: and this examine having occasion to meete Master John Hawarden at Peaseley Crosse, wished one Thomas Lyon to go with him, which they did both so; but as they came homewards they were both in evill case. But within a short time after, this examine and the said Thomas Lyon were both very well amended.

And this examine further saith that about foure years last past, his now wife was angrie with the said Isabel, she being in the house, and his said wife went thereupon out of the house, and presently after that the said Isabel went likewise out of the house not well pleased, as this examine did thinke, and presently after upon the same day, this examine with his said wife working the hay, a paine and starknesse felle into the necke of this examine which grieved him very sore whereupon this examine sent to one James a Glover, which then dwelt in Windle, and desired him to pray for him, and within foure or five days next after this examine did mend very well. Nevertheless this examine during the same time was very sore pained, and so thirstie withall, and hot within his bodie, that he would have given anything he to have slaked his thirst, having drinke enough in the house, and yet could not drinke until the time that the said James a Glover came to him, and this examine then said before the said Glover, I would to God that I could drinke, whereupon the said Glover said to this examine, take that drinke, and in the name of the Father, the Sonne, and the Holy Ghost, drinke it saying; The Devill and Witches are not able to prevail against GOD and His Word, whereupon this examine then took the glasse of drinke, and did drinke it all, and afterwards mended very well, and so did continue in good health until Our Ladie Day in Lent was twelvemonth or thereabouts, since which time this examine saith that he hath been sore pained with great warch in his bones and all his limmes, and yet so continueth and this examine further saith that his said warch and paine came to him rather by the means of the said Isabel Robey, than otherwise as he verily thinketh.

The Examination of Jane Wilkinson, Wife of Francis Wilkinson, of Windle aforesaid: Taken before Sir Thomas Gerrard Knight and Barronet, the day and place aforesaid, against the said Isabel Robey.

The said examine upon her oath saith, that upon a time the said Isabel asked her milke, and she denied to give her any: And afterwards she met the said Isabel whereupon this examine waxed afraid of her, and was then presently sicke, and so pained she could not stand, and the next day after, this examine going to Warrington was suddenly pinched on her thigh as she thought, with foure fingers and a thumbe twice together, and thereupon was sicke, in so much as she could not get home but on horse-backe yet soon after she did mend.

The Examination of Margaret Lyon, Wife of Thomas Lyon the Younger of Windle aforesaid: Taken before Sir Thomas Gerrard Knight and Barronet, the day and place aforesaid, against the said Isabel Robey.

The said Margaret Lyon upon her oath said that upon a time Isabel Robey came to her house and said that Peter Chaddock should never mend until he had asked for forgiveness; and that she knew he would never do: whereupon this examine said, how do you know that for he is a true Christian, and he would ask all the world for forgiveness? Then the said Isabel said, that all is one, for he will never ask me for forgiveness, therefore he shall never mend. And this examine further saith that she being in the house of the said Peter Chaddock, the wife of the said Peter, who is God-Daughter of the said Isabel, and hath in times used her companie much, did affirme that the said Peter was now satisfied that the said Isabel Robey was no Witch, by sending to one Halesworths which they call a wise-man. And the wife of the said Peter then said to abide on it. I thinke my husband will never mend until he have asked her for forgiveness, choose him whether he be angrie or pleased, for this is my opinion, to which he answered when he did need to ask her forgiveness he would, but he thought he did not need for anything he knew. And yet this examine further saith that the said Peter Chaddock had often told her that he was very afraid that the said Isabel had done him much hurt: and that he being fearfull to meet her, he hath turned his backe at such times he did meet her alone, which the said Isabel hath since affirmed to be true, saying that he, Peter, did turne againe when he met her in the lane.

The Examination of Margaret Parre, Wife of Hugh Parre of Windle aforesaid. Taken before Sir Thomas Gerrard Knight and Barronet, the day and place aforesaid, against the said Isabel Robey.

The said examine upon her oath saith, that upon a time, the said Isabel Robey came to her house, and this examine asked how Peter Chaddock did, and the said Isabel answered she knew not, for went not to see, and then this examine asked how Jane Wilkinson did, for that she had lately been sicke and suspected to have been bewitched: then the said Isabel said twice together, I have bewtiched her too: and then this examine said that she trusted she could blesse herselfe from all Witches and defied them; then the said Isabel said twice together, would you defie me? And afterward the said Isabel went away not well pleased.

Here the Gentlemen of the Jurie of Life and Death having taken great paines, the time being farre spent, and the number of prisoners great, returned into the Court to deliver up their verdict as followeth.

The Verdict of Life and Death

Who upon their oaths found the said Isabel Robey guiltie of the fellonie by Witch-Craft, contained in the indictment against her.

The names of the prisoners at the Barre to receive their judgement of Life and Death.

***Anne Whittle alias Chattox.
Elizabeth Device.
Anne Redfearne.
Alice Nutter.
Katherine Hewet alias Mouldheels.
John Bulcock.
Jane Bulcock.
Alizon Device.
Isabel Robey.***

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The Raven Moot, St.Helens.
And to Isabel Robey, may her soul rest in peace...*

*Mark Marsh
2002*