

ABSTRACT 'Witchcraft prosecutions in Essex, 1560-1680; a sociological analysis.' by A.D.J. Macfarlane.

The purpose of this thesis is to consider the connections between witchcraft prosecutions and other social phenomena. A single county and a limited period of time have been chosen so that a study in depth can be made. W. Notestein's History of Witchcraft in England 1558-1718 (Washington, 1911) had already surveyed English witchcraft beliefs at a general level and the various works by C.L. Ewen, particularly his Witch Hunting and Witch Trials (1929), had shown that there was still a considerable amount of legal material relating to the prosecution of witches in the archives. Ewen's abstracts from Assize indictments suggested that Essex would be a suitable county for intensive study since it produced an overwhelming proportion of his witchcraft cases. The first part of the thesis is therefore an extension of the work of Ewen and Notestein. It discusses the various sources which may be used to analyse witchcraft beliefs. The cases which result from the investigation of these sources are presented in an appendix of prosecutions.

Among the problems which lie behind the discussion of sources for the study of Essex witchcraft beliefs are the following. How accurate and complete is the work of C.L. Ewen? How distorted a picture of witchcraft beliefs

would we receive if we merely used literary evidence? To what extent do cases overlap between various courts? Is it fair to say that the witchcraft prosecutions which reached the courts were only a small proportion of the current suspicions? How were witchcraft cases treated in the secular and ecclesiastical courts? Can court records be used as the basis for a statistical discussion of witchcraft accusations? The records of the Assize courts and the pamphlet and literary sources had already been used by Notestein or Ewen. The major part of the new material for this thesis was found in the ecclesiastical court records, which are very voluminous for Essex at this period. New cases were also found in Quarter Sessions, Borough, and Central court records. The cases, approximately a thousand of them in all, are then analysed in three ways. A series of maps show the villages where accusations took place in particular years, in ten-year periods and during the whole period. It is shown that accusations started in central Essex and spread outwards and that the central-northern region was the area of densest prosecution. A series of graphs show when accusations occurred and the proportion of the accused who were punished. They establish that the 1580's and 1590's witnessed the highest number of indictments for witchcraft. Finally

lead. The material for the study of witchcraft is as

the importance of witchcraft cases as compared to other types of offence is assessed. It is shown that they constituted one of the most frequent crimes in Essex at this time; for instance, some thirteen per cent of all the indictments at the Essex Assizes over a ten-year period were for this offence. Comparison of the indictments and pamphlet depositions further indicates that surviving accusations represent only a small proportion of the actual suspicions circulating in villages.

The thesis is titled a 'sociological analysis' because it is an explicit attempt to apply the methods developed by social anthropologists in their study of contemporary witchcraft in Africa to the Essex evidence. Since the publication of Professor E.E. Evans-Pritchard's Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937) anthropologists have analyzed witchcraft accusations as one form of social relationship. They have attempted to link witchcraft beliefs to other beliefs about the origin of evil and suffering, and to relate specific suspicions to tensions between groups or individuals. Not all the conclusions of Africanists have been adopted, but the problems set by anthropologists have been pursued. It is not too much to say that the second half of this thesis would have been totally impossible without their lead. The material for the study of witchcraft is so

bizarre, and the treatment of suspected witches so cruel, that it is very tempting to dismiss the phenomenon as 'superstition' and to seek for no further explanation. Without the experience of those who have actually seen witchcraft beliefs in action this temptation would be overwhelming.

Three intermediary chapters deal with various aspects of the counter-actions to be taken against supposed witches, for anthropologists have shown that it is from such behaviour that we learn most about witchcraft beliefs. The way in which a person came to be suspected as a witch and the informal methods of protecting oneself against witches are discussed. From this we see how much activity preceded the final accusation at court. Another chapter analyses the Essex counterpart to the 'witch-doctor'. It reveals a group of practitioners variously termed 'cunning folk' or 'wise men' who treated those who believed themselves to be bewitched and helped people to find lost goods. A final chapter on the witchcraft accusations in 1645 analyses the importance of the witch-finder Matthew Hopkins and assesses how far the prosecutions in that year were exceptional.

Witchcraft prosecutions are then analysed from an economic viewpoint. Tables are produced to show the

occupational level of the accused and their supposed victims. From these figures it appears that 'witches' were usually from a slightly lower social level than their accusers, but evidence is given to show that they were not necessarily the poorest in the village.

Comparison of the distribution of prosecutions throughout the county with the areas of enclosure, the types of inheritance system, the density of population, and the yearly fluctuation of harvest prices shows a possible correlation with the first two factors only. In the following chapter the personality of the accused, the marital position of the suspected, and the proportion of men and women as accused and accusers are investigated. It is shown that it was personality more than looks that determined who was suspected and that, although 'witches' were usually women, it was quite possible for men to be accused of this offence. There does not seem to have been any marked sexual element implicit in the majority of the accusations. The suspects were often widows, but women who were still married were also tried. It seems that witchcraft was seldom suspected unless the suspect was roughly forty years old or more.

Another chapter of social analysis shows that there is little evidence that witchcraft accusations occurred between kin. Both in theory and in accusations, however,

witchcraft power seems to have been believed to have been inherited. Much more important in witchcraft tensions was the link between neighbours. Witchcraft accusations nearly always occurred within the village. The motives of witches were nearly always the same: the anger caused by the refusal of neighbourly obligations by their subsequent victim. Whenever really detailed evidence is required it is drawn from a microscopic study of three sample Essex villages. The methodology developed by the new schools of English local history is wedded to the problems of anthropologists.

Two final chapters of analysis discuss the relationship between witchcraft prosecutions, medicine, and religion. We find that it was most often lingering illness or death that was blamed on witches. Infant mortality seems hardly ever to have been ascribed to their power. Nor do the recorded symptoms suggest that it was only particular illnesses, for instance epilepsy or 'plague', that were explained in terms of witchcraft. In fact a very wide variety of symptoms were diagnosed as caused by witches. It is argued that it was the social situation within which the illness occurred that determined the type of explanation selected, for instance whether a sick person had previously offended one of his neighbours. The distribution of prosecutions shows no

obvious connection with Puritan centres, nor with Roman Catholic strongholds. Nor does the analysis of the three sample villages show any correlation between church attendance, changes of vicar, and witchcraft accusations.

The hypothesis suggested to explain witchcraft beliefs in Essex is then outlined. Very simply, it is argued that witchcraft accusations occurred when a traditional ethic of neighbourly charity was being undermined. Villagers still felt the power of earlier sanctions toward neighbourly assistance and expected their village acquaintances to reciprocate any uncharitable behaviour on their part. By the mechanism of witchcraft beliefs, however, the guilt for the breach of close bonds and traditional duties was removed from the original offender and placed on the person who had precipitated the situation of conflict by his or her presence and demands. Viewed in this way, witchcraft accusations are seen as a possible means by which values may be changed in a tradition-bound society while, on the surface, communal ideals appear to be maintained. Accusations are regarded as one of the possible concomitants of social change and are therefore related to other phenomena such as a changing attitude to poverty or the old. The effects of witchcraft accusations seem far more radical when seen in a historical context than in the contemporary

anthropological accounts, where their conservative effects are usually stressed.

The final chapter, which briefly sets the Essex cases in their English context, suggests a number of areas where further research could be profitably undertaken. Analysis of witchcraft accusations in one or two other counties is needed before we can be sure of the full significance of the Essex findings. We know very little about witchcraft in medieval England. We know hardly anything about all the problems in village life that surround and influence witchcraft beliefs: the treatment of the old and the poor; the effects of population growth and rapid movement between villages on groups of kin and neighbours; the amount of violence and tension in everyday life; the ideas of causation and reactions to suffering and illness in the village. Until these and many other similar problems have been studied this account of witchcraft prosecution in Essex will remain in a vacuum. The thesis has concentrated on a 'sociological' analysis. This is only one among a number of ways of approaching the problem of why people believed in witchcraft. Just as necessary is an examination of the philosophical background, the effects of changes in ideas of God and the Devil. This has

received rather more attention from previous historians, however, than the analysis of actual people involved in trials. An examination of witchcraft trials also has its justification in the fact that it takes us into many important yet little explored areas of Tudor and Stuart life. There is perhaps no more intimate introduction to 'popular mentality' than through witchcraft pamphlets, even if this mentality is very different from what we might expect if we used the more normal sources: wills, parish registers, manorial records. Witchcraft accusations, like suicides, are among the most valuable indices of social tensions available to the historian. The fact that many of the conclusions of this thesis are negative ones and that it poses more problems than it solves does not, it is believed, detract from its value. For it is meant to be not only a contribution to the study of witchcraft and of village life, but also a demonstration of the importance of applying anthropological insights to historical problems.

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<u>Gaule, Select Cases.</u>	John Gaule, <u>Select Cases of Witches Touching Witches and Witchcraft</u> (1648).
<u>Gifford, Discourse.</u>	George Gifford, <u>A Discourse of the Subtilty, Fraudfulness of Witches by Witches and Sorcerers</u> (1597).
<u>Gifford, Dialogue.</u>	George Gifford, <u>A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraft</u> (1597); the University Association Facsimile edn., 1931, was used.
<u>Hopkins, Discovery.</u>	Matthew Hopkins, <u>The Discovery of Witches</u> (1667); the 1928 edition by R. Sumners was used and references are to this edition.
<u>Mitredge, Witchcraft.</u>	D. L. Mitredge, <u>Witchcraft in Old and New England</u> (New York, 1929).
<u>Norton, Index.</u>	Philip Norton, <u>The Witches and Apparitions of the County of Essex 1580-1600</u> , 2 vols.
<u>Newcourt, Reporting.</u>	Richard Newcourt, <u>Reporting Collections Paraphrased 1578-1700</u> , 3 vols.
<u>Perkins, Record Art.</u>	William Perkins, <u>A Discourse of the Record Art</u> (London, 1605).

ABBREVIATIONS, CONVENTIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Abbreviated titles.

- Ady, Candle. Thomas Ady, A Candle in the Dark: or, A Treatise Concerning the Nature of Witches and Witchcraft(1656).
- Bernard, Guide. Richard Bernard, A Guide to Grand Jury Men(1627).
- Dauids, Annals. T.W.Dauids, Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in the County of Essex, From the Time of Wycliffe to the Restoration (1863).
- Ewen I. C.L.Ewen, Witch Hunting and Witch Trials(1929).
- Ewen II. C.L.Ewen, Witchcraft and Demonianism(1933).
- Gaule, Select Cases. John Gaule, Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcrafts(1646).
- Gifford, Discourse. George Gifford, A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devils by Witches and Sorcerers(1587).
- Gifford, Dialogue. George Gifford, A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts(1593; the Shakespeare Association Facsimile edn., 1931, was used).
- Hopkins, Discovery. Matthew Hopkins, The Discovery of Witches (1647; the 1928 edition by M. Summers was used and references are to this edition).
- Kittredge, Witchcraft. G.L.Kittredge, Witchcraft in Old and New England(New York, 1929).
- Morant, Essex. Philip Morant, The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex(1816), 2 vols.
- Newcourt, Repertorium. Richard Newcourt, Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense(1708-1710), 2 vols.
- Perkins, Damned Art. William Perkins, A Discourse of the Damned Art of witchcraft(Cambridge, 1608).

- 1645 Pamphlet. A True and Exact Relation of the Several Informations, Examinations, and Confessions of
 Scot, Discovery. the Reginald Scot, The Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584; all references are to the 1964 reprint, preface by H.R. Williamson)
- Stearne, Confirmation. John Stearne, A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft (1648).
- Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis. Dicta Steph John and S.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis (Cambridge, 1922-7), 4 vols.
- Essex pamphlets. Essex Record Office, Colchester, Essex.
Essex Record Office, Colchester, Essex.
Essex Record Office, Colchester, Essex.
Essex Record Office, Colchester, Essex.
- 1566 Pamphlet. The Examination and Confession of Certain Wytches at Chensford in the Countie of Essex before the Queens maiesties Judges, the xxvi day of July Anno 1566 (1566: the only copy is in the Lambeth Palace library and there is no consistent foliation; page references are therefore to the reprinted version in Ewen I, pp. 317-324).
- 1579 Pamphlet. A Detection of damnable driftes, practized by three Witches arraigned at Chelmsforde in Essex, at the late Assises there holden, which were executed in Aprill. 1579 (1579; a copy is in the British Museum, and Ewen II, pp. 149-51 prints abstracts).
- 1582 Pamphlet. A True and Just Recorde of the Information, Examination and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S. Oses in the countie of Essex (1582; abstracts in Ewen II, pp. 155-63 and a microfilm copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Films S.T.C., 1014), by W.W.
- 1589 Pamphlet. The Apprehension and Confession of three notorious Witches, Arreigned and by Iustice condemned and executed at Chelmsforde, in the Countye of Essex, the 5. day of Iulye, last past. 1589 (1589; the only copy is in the Lambeth Palace library; abstracts are printed in Ewen II, pp. 167-8, and there is a microfilm copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Films S.T.C., 952).

1645 Pamphlet. A True and Exact Relation of the Several Informations, Examinations, and Confessions of the late Witches, arraigned and executed in the County of Essex (1645; there are several copies and abstracts are printed in Ewen II, pp. 262-77).

Other abbreviations and conventions.

D.N.B. Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (1908-9).

E.R.O. Essex Record Office, Chelmsford, Essex.

g.c. gaol calendar.

K.B. King's Bench.

P.R.O. Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London.

Q/SR. Quarter Sessions Rolls.

All references to unpaginated material are to the recto side, unless 'v' for verso is specifically indicated.

Place of publication of books and pamphlets is London, unless otherwise stated.

All dates are in new style. When a double date is given, for example 15 January 1578/9, the latter is the modern dating.

Footnotes containing references to 'Case 152', or another number, refer to the numbered witchcraft cases in Appendix 1.

The meaning attached to the word 'witchcraft' is explained in the introductory chapter. The use of this word, and of the word 'witch', does not imply any belief in the actual existence of witches or in the power of witchcraft. To speak of someone as a 'witch' is merely a contracted way of saying 'a person suspected to be a witch by her accusers'.

Two technical terms used are 'cunning folk' and 'familiars'. The former were magical practitioners who possessed 'cunning' or knowledge and who could heal animals, detect witches, and find lost property. A witch's familiar was a small creature of diabolic origin, often in the shape of a cat or a toad, which was believed to carry out the wishes of the witch.

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Secondly, a considerable part of the research for this thesis would have been impossible without the superb facilities offered by the Essex Record Office. Indexes, transcripts, and, above all, the generous help of Miss Hilda Grieve and her charming assistants, made research at Chelmsford far more profitable and pleasurable than it would otherwise have been. I thank the County Archivist, F.G. Emmison, and all the staff.

Finally, my own nuclear family are to be thanked. They not only provided the background of a restful year in a garden shed in the Lake District, but also expert assistance in the analysis of the social background to witchcraft prosecutions in the three Essex villages used as a sample.

CHAPTER 1.

Introduction: definitions, sources, and problems.

i. Definitions.

The terms 'witchcraft', 'sorcery', and 'magic' are notoriously difficult to define. There is no consensus of opinion on their meaning either among present-day historians and anthropologists, or among writers living in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Various attempted definitions and the over-all state of confusion are discussed elsewhere.¹ Here we merely state quite simply how various words will be used in the following analysis while recognising that such usage does not entirely reflect all shades of opinion in either the past or present. It has been remarked that

'No social phenomenon can be adequately studied merely in the language and categories of thought in which the people among whom it is found represent it to themselves'.²

This has been found to be especially true in the study of the history of English witchcraft beliefs.

The word 'witchcraft' has, in fact, been used in two ways. Firstly it has been employed as an undifferentiated term to cover all the activities which came within the scope of the English Witchcraft Statutes of 1542, 1563 and 1604, or the ecclesiastical visitation articles which

1. See Appendix 2.

2. G.Lienhardt, Social Anthropology (2nd edn., Oxford, 1966), p.123.

enquired about 'witchcraft, conjuring, southsaying, charmes'. In this broad sense a 'witchcraft prosecution' might as easily be for looking in a crystal ball to discover where lost goods were as for supposedly injuring a person by evil and supernatural means. The second use of the word 'witchcraft' is more precise.

It is supernatural activity, believed to be the result of power given by some external force (the Devil) and to result in physical injury to the person or object attacked by it. There is not necessarily any outward action or words on the part of the 'witch'. It is basically an internal power. The opposite of this is 'white witchcraft' which is the reverse both because its ends are beneficial physically, healing rather than hurting, and because it employs outward means, for instance gazing into a crystal ball. In this sense, a number of the offences punished by the Witchcraft Statutes were 'white witchcraft'. The term 'sorcery' is normally used in the following pages to mean 'white witchcraft' strongly disapproved of by authority. For instance, there were many presentments in the church courts for 'going to sorcerers', that is for resorting to 'white witches'. The reasoning was that since the power of white witches did not come from heaven they must clearly have made a secret compact with Hell.¹ Another meaning for the word 'sorcery' is suggested at the end, but actual Essex cases of this kind are so infrequent that it is seldom employed. This second meaning combines the explicit means of 'white witchcraft' with the harmful ends of 'black witchcraft'.²

1. See, for examples of this argument, p.158 below.

2. P.382 and Figure 1 below. Case 1202 in Appendix 1 is almost the only Essex case of this kind.

ii. Sources and Problems.

Until the publication of Wallace Notestein's History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718, in 1911, studies of English witchcraft had been based almost exclusively on two sources; literary accounts, and descriptions of witchcraft trials in contemporary pamphlets. Notestein not only provided a far more detailed description of the literary controversy and of the famous trials, but also made an attempt to use other legal records. Since he attempted to cover the whole of England for 160 years, he was, on the whole, only able to look at cases already in print. These included witchcraft prosecutions from a number of central and local courts, yet he admitted that 'no history of the subject has the right to be called final' until someone had been round English counties and searched 'the masses of gaol delivery records and municipal archives'. His prediction that 'it seems improbable that such a search would uncover so many unlisted trials as seriously to modify the narrative'¹ was shown to be incorrect in 1929 when C.L.Ewen published the Home Circuit Assize court indictments for witchcraft.² Of the 790 indictments he listed, only a few had been discovered by Notestein. This can be seen from the fact that, from all sources and for

1. Notestein, Witchcraft, p.x.

2. Ewen I. Without Ewen's accurate and energetic work in transcribing witchcraft cases, much of the forthcoming analysis would have been impossible.

the whole of England, Notestein had only been able to compile a list of approximately 400 references. In Essex, for example, this meant that, instead of the fifteen trials listed by Notestein, in which there are references to about forty individuals, Ewen provided some 473 indictments, referring to 299 persons. These indictments usually included crucial details such as the exact nature of the offence, and the place of residence of both witch and victim. These facts were often unobtainable from many of Notestein's references. In his second work on the subject, Ewen supplemented Notestein's list by adding further cases from other printed and unprinted legal records.¹

The first object of this thesis is to extend the work of Ewen and Notestein on the direct sources for the study of witchcraft. They made it clear that no adequate history of the subject could be written without a detailed analysis of the actual prosecutions, and Ewen provided a review of one important and unused source, the Assize records. But printed cases in Ewen's works suggested that material from at least three other types of court, borough, quarter session, and ecclesiastical, needed investigation. The first part of this thesis is therefore a survey, within the context of one county, of all the possible direct sources for the study of the history of witchcraft. The jurisdiction and procedure

of the various courts are analysed so that the actual prosecutions can be more easily understood and the relative value of statistics derived from different sources can be estimated. Furthermore, the accuracy of the impression derived from literary sources is tested.

The county of Essex was chosen for several reasons. It possesses very good series of all the important court records. While it is one of the five counties in England which have sixteenth century Assize records, it surpasses the other four in this class in the early commencement of its Quarter Sessions material; this starts in 1556, some thirty-three years before that of any of the other four. Essex has excellent Elizabethan ecclesiastical court records, and adequate borough archives. Furthermore, its records are made easily accessible by the excellent indexing and other facilities of the local Record Office. This easy accessibility is especially important for the second part of the thesis. Having discovered the names and locations of Essex witches from all sources, an attempt has been made to relate some of the people involved in the witchcraft prosecutions to their social background. Essex is particularly suitable for such an attempt because the names and villages of more suspected witches and their victims are known for this county, largely because of Ewen's research on Assize

indictments, than for any other. As well as an intensive investigation into the direct records of witchcraft cases, an attempt has been made to use the rich resources utilized by local historians, for example wills, manorial records, parish registers, and subsidy assessments, in order to learn more about the background to prosecutions.

A more extensive use of all the sources for the study of witchcraft prosecutions has allowed a new range of questions to be asked. Until legal records were used, only very broad problems about the nature of witchcraft beliefs could be studied. Literary accounts are more sensational than court cases, and earlier historians were clearly horrified and disgusted by their subject. Their major problem was how to explain the flourishing of this apparently absurd 'superstition' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The subject was usually studied on the European level and correlations between the degree of 'persecution' and the differing political, religious, and legal systems were sought. Often an attempt was made to locate the 'blame' for the prosecutions in certain groups, for instance the clergy,¹ or the Puritans,² or to see the whole episode as an 'epidemic' arising out of a struggle

1. For example Preserved Smith, History of Modern Culture (1930), i, p. 437 & Ch. xiv passim; W. E. H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe (1865), i, 8.
2. R. Trevor Davies, Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs (1947), passim.

between progress and reaction, science and religion.¹ Notestein and Ewen themselves, while modifying such theories, accepted the general assumption that witchcraft was an illogical 'superstition' which would die before the onset of modern experimental science and better living conditions.² Although they produced a mass of new evidence, they asked few significantly new questions, and therefore provided no general explanation of the phenomenon.

The most radical attempt to provide a new explanation of witchcraft prosecutions was made by Miss Margaret Murray.³ Her work was based on the two assumptions that witchcraft beliefs can not be profitably examined in isolation from other systems of ideas and that they cannot be dismissed as mere nonsense. These convictions were shared by G.L. Kittredge whose wide learning illuminated the subject.⁴ Having decided that quite reasonable people really did fear witches and that others, without torture, freely confessed to this crime, Margaret Murray took what in many ways was a logical step and argued that there really must have been witches. They were, however, not the evil

1. E.g. A.D. White, History of the Warfare of Science with Theology (New York, 1896), i, pp. 350-63; R.H. Robbins, Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology (1959), p. 3.
2. Ewen I, pp. 113-115. Notestein, Witchcraft, pp. 309-10, still speaks broadly in terms of 'superstitions', yet, on pp. 114-9, he makes a preliminary sociological analysis which anticipates, in certain ways, the approach in this thesis.
3. M.A. Murray, Witch-Cult in Western Europe (Oxf.^d 1921). As Professor Trevor-Roper recently pointed out, however, many of Murray's theories were anticipated by Jakob Grimm (H.R. Trevor-Roper, 'Witches & Witchcraft', Encounter, xxviii, No. 5 (May 1967), p. 15).
4. Kittredge, Witchcraft. On pp. 372-3 Kittredge states his premises.

creatures described by their persecutors, but a highly organized pagan cult. She applied a number of Sir James Frazer's theories to English witchcraft, for instance the importance of rituals for increasing fertility in primitive religion, and thereby constructed a detailed picture of this 'witch-cult'. Witches, she claimed, met regularly at their 'Sabbats', they formed 'covens' of thirteen, each of which had a leader dressed in animal guise. They feasted, danced, and sang. This she termed 'ritual' witchcraft. Then the Christian inquisitors, in their attempt to stamp out paganism, turned this cult of pre-Christian gaiety into a deadly onslaught on the values of society. The leaders of the covens were transformed in their hands into the Devil, the innocent meetings were described as orgies. The 'witches' were believed to have made a secret or open compact with the Devil whereby they exchanged their soul for transitory power and pleasure.

Miss Murray's work was immediately criticized and has continued to be attacked.¹ The major criticism is that by extracting and quoting out of context from the whole of European folklore she created a totally false

1. Among the many criticisms are those of G.L. Burr in a review article, American Hist. Rev. xxvii, No. 4 (1922); pp. 780-3; C.L. Ewen, Some Witchcraft Criticisms: A Plea for the Blue Pencil (n.p., 1938); R.H. Robbins, Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology (1959), pp. 116-117; E.E. Rose, A Razor for a Goat (Toronto, 1962).

1. The trial of 1645 is described in Ch. II, page 240, however, would have delighted Miss Murray as an example of ritual witchcraft.

picture. She mistook what people believed to be happening for what actually did happen. Though she showed that people thought there was a witch-cult, she failed to demonstrate that there actually was one. Her thesis will not be examined directly in the following pages. There are very few descriptions of the phenomena which she discusses in Essex witchcraft, for instance, the Sabbat, coven, and diabolic compact are absent, except in the exceptional trials of 1645.¹ Nor does more detailed examination of those accused of witchcraft in Essex lend any support to the argument that there really was an underground pagan cult. Probably there were those who came to believe themselves to be witches, but there is no evidence that they formed a self-conscious organization. This is a negative conclusion and impossible to document. All that can be said is that the Essex evidence does not support her conclusions and, indeed, makes her picture of the witch-cult seem far too sophisticated and articulate for the society with which we are concerned. Yet her assumptions about the necessity to treat accusations as something more than intolerant superstition are subscribed to.

The major development in witchcraft studies in the last thirty years has occurred outside the field of English or European history. Anthropologists and sociologists, enabled to ask new questions by their personal contact with

1. The trial of 1645 is described in Ch. 11. Case 840, however, would have delighted Miss Murray as an example of ritual witchcraft.

people who still believe in witchcraft, have provided analyses and explanations of this phenomenon which suggest many new problems for the historical student.¹ Many of their themes will appear in this thesis. It has been entitled a 'sociological analysis' because attention has primarily been focused on the persons actually involved in prosecutions, rather than on the philosophical background to witchcraft beliefs. Rather than asking 'why did people believe in witchcraft', this study primarily attempts to explain what types of people were the accusers, victims and suspects, given such a framework of beliefs. Obviously, no rigid distinction can be made between these two approaches. Nevertheless it is important to state that this is only one of several feasible ways of analysing the problems posed by witchcraft accusations; for instance, inquiry into the philosophical basis of witchcraft beliefs and their relation to the religious and scientific ideas of the times, might be a better approach if the primary aim was to show why witchcraft beliefs subsided in the seventeenth century. This study is mainly concerned with showing how witchcraft functioned, once the basic assumptions about the nature of evil, the types of causation, and

1. Insights and suggestions received from anthropological writing have not always been explicitly acknowledged. It is necessary to say that all the works cited on pp. 397-8 of the bibliography provided many useful ideas. Those familiar with anthropological studies will realize how closely this thesis follows earlier lines of enquiry.

origins of 'power' were present. Individuals involved in prosecutions are analysed by geographical area, temporal distribution, class, age, sex, occupation, kinship, and other criteria. As in the studies of social anthropologists, not only have the victims and witches been examined in isolation, but also in their relationship to each other. Since social scientists increasingly try to see witchcraft accusations as the product of certain situations, analyses have also been made of such problems as the process by which a person became suspected of witchcraft, and the types of injury or tension which were related to prosecutions. Particular studies are made of a witch-finding movement and the Essex equivalent of the witch-doctor. Attempts to correlate the changes with other factors such as medical change, religious groupings, types of social conflict, and economic organization, are also made. In all these analyses it is the questions which sociologists have posed, rather than the explanations which they offer, which have proved to be of prime value. While their conclusions, derived from other cultures and other centuries, may be inapplicable, their interests and general approach have been a most stimulating influence in the study of Essex accusations.

The unit chosen for study, the county of Essex, is situated to the north-east of London. It is bordered by

the sea on the east and south, and the counties of Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk on the landward side. Approximately forty miles long and forty miles wide, it had a population of around 100,000 inhabitants in 1638, the only date for which we have an estimate.¹ They lived in some 425 villages and seven chartered boroughs; the largest of the latter was Colchester, followed by Chelmsford, Maldon, and Harwich. This flat county was still predominantly agricultural, but the late sixteenth century witnessed the growth of an important cloth industry in the north-east of the county. In the opposite corner, around Epping and Waltham in the south-west, was the bulk of the remaining forest, most of which had disappeared before our period. Most of the county, with the major exception of the north-west, had been enclosed before the sixteenth century. Five major geographical and agricultural regions can be distinguished: the Thames terrace, a district of light soil close to London; an extensive belt of London clay including all south and south-eastern Essex, the latter particularly noted for its marshes; the lighter soils of the north-east; the region of chalky hills on the north-west, the main

1. This general description is primarily based on two unpublished theses: F.Hull, 'Agriculture & Rural Society in Essex, 1560-1640' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1950), and B.W. Quintrell, 'The Government of the County of Essex, 1603-1642' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1965). Some of the geographical features are illustrated on Map 8.

arable farming area; and the boulder clay plateau of northern and central Essex. Contemporaries thought that Essex ranked with Kent and Suffolk as one of the most advanced and prosperous counties in England during this period. Among the reasons for this may have been the demand for Essex supplies from the swiftly growing metropolis. Both politically and religiously it had a reputation for radicalism. It was in this county that Puritanism and the opposition to the Stuarts found their strongest backing.

Witchcraft prosecutions in Essex have been studied over the period 1560-1680. It was decided to choose round figures for the outside dates for statistical purposes. 1560 was chosen as the starting date since the Statute under which the majority of Essex prosecutions occurred was passed in 1563. Although the Statute was not repealed until 1736, the last recorded Essex prosecution occurred in 1675; this suggested 1680 as a convenient round date at which to end. Essex is analysed in isolation from other counties and from Europe, until the concluding chapter where there is a brief comparison between various regions. This treatment is based on the belief that witchcraft accusations and beliefs differed significantly between England and Europe. The detailed treatment attempted precluded a larger unit than one county from examination.

CHAPTER 2.

The legal background to Essex witchcraft prosecutions at the secular courts.

The first English Statute concerning witchcraft was enacted in 1542.¹ The position before that date is not altogether clear. Although Britton and Fleta declared that 'an enquiry about sorcerers is one of the articles of the sheriff's turn',² most authorities suggest that witchcraft was treated as a branch of heresy, an ecclesiastical offence which was later punished by the State under the writ de haeretico comburendo.³ The general impression is that prosecutions were scarce before 1542.⁴ In 1547 all the new Henrician Statutes were repealed, including that of 1542 concerning witchcraft. Until the passage of a new Statute in 1563 the legal situation reverted to its pre-1542 state. Bishop Grindal in 1561 wrote to William Cecil asking for punishment of a magician because 'My Lord Cheif Justice sayeth the temporal law will not meddle with them'.⁵ Meanwhile the Queen's Attorney

1. 33 Henry VIII, cap. 8; all the Statutes against witchcraft hereafter cited are printed, with only punctuation and spelling modified, in Ewen I, pp. 13-21, 44-45.

2. Sir F. Pollock & F. W. Maitland, History of English Law (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1898), ii. 554; Sir W. Holdsworth, History of English Law (3rd edn., 1924), iv. 509, agreed with this interpretation.

3. Pollock and Maitland, History of English Law, ii. 555; Holdsworth History of English Law, iv. 509; H. G. Richardson, 'Heresy and the Lay Power Under Richard II', English Historical Review, li (1936), pp. 4-5; Edward Coke, Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England (1644), p. 44.

4. Pollock & Maitland, History of English Law, ii. 555-6. See pp. 282-3 below for some medieval cases.

5. Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1547-1589, p. 173.

had to send some London conjurors to the bishop for punishment.¹ Yet, despite the absence of any relevant Statute, two people are known to have been accused of witchcraft at the Essex Assizes in 1560.²

In March 1563 an 'Act agaynst Conjuracions Inchantments and Withecrafteres' was passed. This was repealed by a severer Act in 1604. The Act of 1604 continued in force until 1736.³ An important factor in encouraging the 1563 Statute was the concern of the government at the amount of contemporary treasonable activity which took the form of false prophecies, astrological predictions, and other amateur conjuring.⁴ The increased harshness of the Statute in 1604, when it was redrafted by Sir Edward Coke and others, was, at the most, only partly the result of James I's interest in the subject.⁵

The Act of 1563 laid down the death penalty for

1. Acts of the Privy Council, n.s.vii (1893),p.22.
2. Cases 1 and 2. It is difficult to see on what pretext these two cases were tried.
3. 1 James I, cap.12; 9 George II, cap.5.
4. There is a useful discussion of the background to the 1563 Act in Kittredge, Witchcraft, pp.255-261.
5. Statistics in Ewen I showing that prosecutions in the Home Circuit declined under James I, as well as an excellent defence of James by Kittredge (Witchcraft, ch.XVII), have undermined the king's reputation as a witch-finder. Already in Scotland in 1597 he had 'curtailed the persecution' by revoking standing commissions for the prosecution of witches. (C.Ross, 'Calvinism and the Witchcraft Prosecution in England', Jnl.of Presbyterian Hist.Soc. of England, xii,no.1 (1960),p.23).

'Invocacon of evill and wicked Spirites, to or for any Intent or Purpose', and for using 'Witchecrafte Enchantment Charme or Sorcerie, wherby any p(er)son shall happen to bee killed or destroyed'. Both those who offended and 'their Concello(u)rs & Aidours' were to die.

Imprisonment for one year with four appearances in the pillory for the first offence, and death for the second, was the punishment for injuring people or their property by witchcraft. Similar imprisonment for the first offence, but life imprisonment and forfeit of goods for the second, was the punishment for using witchcraft to declare where treasure or lost property might be found, and for intending 'to provoke any p(er)son to unlawful love, or to hurte or destroye any p(er)son in his or her body, Member or Goodes'. In 1604 this Act was replaced by a more severe one. The invocation of spirits was elaborated: men were forbidden to 'consult covenant with entertaine employ feede or rewarde any evill and wicked Spirit'. A new offence was added: dead bodies were not to be taken out of their graves 'to be imployed or used in any manner of Witchecrafte, Sorcerie, Charme or Inchantment.'¹

Injuring a person or his property was now punished by death for the first offence instead of the second. In all the above offences, where the first offence was now punished

1. Mere intention to use such bodies for witchcraft, Coke stressed (Institutes, iii.p.45), was a felony.

by death, 'Aydors Abettors and Counsellors' were likewise punishable. All the offences which under the Act of 1563 had been punished by life imprisonment for the second offence, were now punished by death on the second. Greater stress was laid on the punishment of intention to use witchcraft as well as its actual use: intending to hurt or destroy people or property was punishable 'although the same be not effected and done'. Put into tabular form the punishments were as follows:

TABLE 1: Punishment in the Witchcraft Statutes, 1563-1736.

Offence	First conviction.		Second conviction	
	1563	1604	1563	1604
Using witchcraft to search for treasure or lost property ...	1 year	1 year	Life	Death
Injuring people or property by witchcraft	1 year	Death	Death	Death
Causing the death of a human being by witchcraft	Death	Death	Death	Death
Taking dead bodies out of graves to use in witchcraft	-	Death	-	Death
Conjuring evil spirits	Death	Death	Death	Death
<u>Intending to</u>				
Injure people or property by witchcraft	1 year	1 year	Life	Death
Cause death of a human being by witchcraft	1 year	1 year	Life	Death
Provoke a person 'to unlawful love' by witchcraft	1 year	1 year	Life	Death

Notes: 1 year = a year's imprisonment; Life = life imprisonment. Death = capital punishment. 1563 and 1604 refer to the Statutes of those years.

Although, as Coke pointed out,¹ felons usually forfeited their goods, the rights of wives and successors were specifically safeguarded in the 1604 Act, just as they had been by that of 1563. The only offences for which goods were forfeit were those in the 1563 Act which incurred life imprisonment accompanied by loss of goods for the second offence. Both Statutes stated that those guilty of a capital offence lost the rights of clergy and sanctuary. Likewise, general pardons, for instance those of 23 Elizabeth and 21 James, excepted witchcraft.²

The least severe punishment for witchcraft was a year's imprisonment, during which,³

'once in every Quarter of the said yere (the prisoner) shall in some Market Towne, upon the Market day or at suche tyme as any Fayer shall bee kept there, stande openly upon the Pillorie by the space of Sixe Houres, and there shall openly confesse his or her Erro(u)r and offence;'

The conditions of gaols frequently made such imprisonment equivalent to a death sentence.⁴ Death was by hanging unless 'petty treason' had been committed, in which case the convicted person was burnt.⁵ Nevertheless it seems to

1. Edward Coke, Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England (1644), p.47.
2. References, and some exceptions, are given in Ewen I, pp.19,21,39.
3. 1 James I, cap.12. Three months in the House of Correction was the punishment for some suspected witches in Essex in 1670. (cases 759-763).
4. The condition of gaols and the number of accused witches who died of gaol fever are discussed on p.54 below.
5. 'Petty treason' occurred when a woman killed her husband or a servant his master. No definite cases of this kind, in which a woman was accused of killing her husband by witchcraft, have been discovered in the Essex court records.

have been a popular belief that witches were burnt. An Essex Justice threatened in 1582 that those witches who did not confess 'shall bee burnt and hanged'.¹ An Essex author illustrated the hatred against witches in the same county by making a country-woman say 'If I had but one fagot in the world, I would carry it a myle upon my shoulders to burne a witch'.² A number of other examples exist of this interesting confusion between what was believed to occur and what actually did.³ The idea of burning possibly reflected memories of the medieval burning of witches as heretics, or the punishment of continental witches in this manner.

Witchcraft, like murder by poison, was considered a crime apart. As M.B. pointed out in Gifford's Dialogue, the secret nature of the crime made normal legal evidence, confession and two direct witnesses, most unlikely. Consequently, in his opinion, 'if there were any likelihood, and suspicion, and common fame' that was 'proof ynough'.⁴

1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig.B6^v.
2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.D^v. The career and writings of George Gifford are discussed on p. 104 below.
3. 1582 Pamphlet, sig.E5^v; J.O.Haweis, Sketches of the Reformation and Elizabethan Age (1844), p.220. I owe the latter reference to Mr.K.V.Thomas. Reginald Scot(1538?-99), a Kentish squire educated at Hart Hall, Oxford, and notable for his sceptical attitude to witchcraft(Notestein, Witchcraft, devotes ch.3 to his work)suggested the same thing, Discovery, p.259.
4. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.H2^v.

It was only possible to testify to motives and effects, not to witness the actual act of witchcraft or the invisible way in which this force operated. If direct witnesses had been demanded, many argued that 'it will be then impossible to put any one to death ... (for).... hardly can a man be brought, which upon his owne knowledge, can averre such things'.¹ For this reason it was stated in the leading contemporary manual for Justices of the Peace that, in cases of witchcraft and poisoning, 'half proofes are to be allowed, and are good causes of suspition'.² The extreme difficulty of providing evidence meant that special provisions were made. For instance it was 'lawful to give in Evidence Matters that are no ways relating to that Fact, and done many Years before'.³ Moreover, the peculiar nature of the crime precluded the possibility of an alibi. Absence from the scene of the crime was immaterial. The offence occurred within the individual. A person could be many miles from the victim and yet responsible. In this way witchcraft was similar to murder

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1. Perkins, Damned Art, pp. 214-15. William Perkins, the famous Puritan divine and preacher, was a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. He died in 1602 and his work on witchcraft was published posthumously.
 2. Michael Dalton, Countrey Justice (1618), p. 268. John Gaule, vicar of Great Staughton in Huntingdonshire after 1646 and supporter of both royalists and Commonwealth men, would also have allowed circumstantial evidence (Select Cases, p. 194).
 3. Francis Hutchinson, Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft (1718), p. 58. Hutchinson was born in 1660 and therefore wrote when the worst of the trials were over; he was made Bishop of Down and Connor in 1721.

by poison, but differed from all other crimes.¹ In all criminal investigation during our period there was a far greater stress on assessing the character of the suspect than in modern proceedings. In a witchcraft case, however, where especial emphasis was laid on indirect evidence concerning the motives and possible hostilities of the suspect, such examination was especially important. The methods of examination recommended to Justices of the Peace in all cases of felony were particularly relevant in witchcraft examination. Justices were directed to discover the following facts about a suspect.

'His parents, if they were wicked, and given to the same kind of fault His nature; if civill, or hastie, wittie and subtill, a quarreller, pilferer, or bloudie minded, &c... His trade; for if a man liveth idly or vagarant..... it is a good cause to arrest him upon suspition, if there have been any felony committed. His companie; if Ruffians, suspected persons, or his being in companie with any the offenders. His course of life; sc. if a common Ale-house-ha(u)nter, or ryottous in dyet, play, or apparrell. Whether he be of evill fame, or report.'²

In witchcraft suspicions, therefore, as in other felonies, the likelihood of guilt was related to the whole social background of the accused; his parent's character, his friendships, drinking habits and general reputation.

The difficulty of proving a person guilty of witchcraft meant that extraordinary witnesses were permitted. Although at least two witnesses were still required,³ no

1. Francis Hutchinson, Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft (1718), pp. vi-vii.
2. Michael Dalton, Countrey Justice (1618), p. 266.
3. Perkins, Damned Art, p. 213; Gifford, Dialogue, sig. H2.

class of person was debarred. Bernard, in his Guide to Grand Jury Men, gave the following list of suitable witnesses: the 'afflicted party'; the friends and relations of the afflicted; 'indifferent neighbours' ('fearfull, superstitious, or children, or old silly persons' were to be examined, but their testimonies treated with caution); 'suspected adversaries, either to the afflicted, or to the suspected Witch', for, as the author remarked, such people 'pry very narrowly into every thing'; the physician, if one had been called; 'the report of a White or good Witch'; the suspected Witches whole family able and fit to answer

also such as be known to have had inward familiarity with the suspected'; the suspected witch.¹ Also of importance were other suspected witches.² Not only was the accused person's spouse allowed to witness, contrary to normal rules,³ but children, also, were permitted to give evidence against their parents, clearly an unusual proceeding.⁴

1. Bernard, Guide, pp.228-238.

2. This is clear from the Essex trials; see also Scot, Discovery, p.39, although it is based on continental demonologists.

3. M. Dalton, Countrey Justice, (1618), p.261.

4. Idem., where Dalton implies that such procedure was unusual and only cites precedents from the Lancashire witch trial of 1612. Gifford was clearly shocked at such occurrences in Essex (Dialogue, sig.L). For Essex examples and a discussion of the way in which child-witnesses have been overstressed by historians, see p.227 below.

The kinds of evidence to be used to prove a person guilty of witchcraft were based on the current ideas concerning the nature of witches' activity. There were three degrees of evidence. There was that evidence which was strong enough for the suspect to be examined before a magistrate; that which was a 'strong presumption', several of which presumptions taken together might lead to a conviction; and conclusive 'proofs'.¹ The following 'evidence' was enough to bring a person to court on a charge of witchcraft: notorious reputation as a witch; cursing followed by an injury to the person cursed; known malice followed by a misfortune to the object of the malice; a relationship by blood or friendship to a proven witch; the victim's recovery after the suspected witch had been scratched or some of her property had been burnt; failure of the suspect to sink when immersed in water; an implicit confession by the suspect ('you should have left me alone then', in answer to an accusation by a neighbour, is an example); over-diligent interest in a sick neighbour on the part of a suspected witch. The 'strong presumptions', several of which could lead to conviction, included accusation by a 'white witch' and a

1. The following account is based on Perkins, Damned Art, pp.200-218; Bernard, Guide, pp.204-224; Gaule, Select Cases, pp.75-88. This leaves Elizabeth's reign without an authority. Unfortunately, Scot's Discovery, book II, which alone treats this subject, is too heavily based on continental demonologists to be anything except misleading for an analysis of English procedure. None of the above, of course, were official guides.

death-bed accusation by the supposed victim of witchcraft. The 'sufficient proofs', any one of which could lead to conviction, were as follows: accusation by another witch; an unnatural mark on the body supposedly caused by the Devil or a familiar; two witnesses who claimed to have seen the accused either make a pact with Satan or entertain her familiars. Other adequate 'evidences' were: the discovery of pictures or images of the victim in the suspect's house; the bleeding of the corpse when touched by the suspect; a gift from the supposed witch followed by the injury of the recipient; and the confession of the suspect herself. The type of evidence required for conviction as a witch can be illustrated by one example. Bernard urged that if a woman gave a child an apple and the receiver became ill soon afterwards, as long as there was known malice between them, this was proof enough for the execution of the accused.

Only a selection of these types of evidence was actually used in Essex. An examination of the Elizabethan trial pamphlets for that county has revealed no use of the water ordeal, no witnessing to the Satanic pact, no hunting for pictures or images of the victim, no bleeding of the corpse at the touch of the witch.¹ These same pamphlets show that the greatest stress in the earlier

1. For a discussion of the evidence in these pamphlets, see ch.6.

trials was put on showing that known malice had been followed by an injury. There was also much description of the activities of the witch's familiar. An excellent outline of the type of evidence on which most of the Essex prosecutions rested is given by the Essex clergyman George Gifford.¹ One of his characters is made to say

' I was of a Jurie not many yeares past, when there was an old woman arraigned for a witch. There came in eight or ten which gave evidence against her.... One woman came in and testified upon her oath that her husband upon his death bed, tooke it upon his death, that he was bewitched, for he pined a long time. And he sayde further, he was sure that woman had bewitched him. He tooke her to be naught, and thought she was angry with him, because she would have borrowed five shillings of him, and he denyed to lend it her. The woman tooke her oath also, that she thought in her conscience that the old woman was a witch, and that she killed her husband There came in an other, He tooke his oath directly that she was a witch: I did once anger her sayde he, but I did repent me: for I looked somewhat would follow. And the next night, I saw the ugliest sight that ever I saw: I awaked suddainely out of my sleepe, and there was me thought a great face, as bigge as they use to set up in the signe of the Saracens-head, looked full in my face ... Then followed a man, and he sayde he could not tell, but he thought she was once angry with him because she came to begge a few pot-herbes, and he denied her: and presently after he heard a thing as he thought to whisper in his eare, thou shalt be bewitched. The next day he had such a paine in his back, that he could not sit upright: he sayd he sent to a cunning woman, shee tolde he was bewitched, and by a woman that came for pot-herbes... Then came in two or three grave honest men, which testified that she was by common fame accounted a witch. We found her giltie, for what could we doe lesse, she was condemned and executed: and upon the ladder she made her prayer, and tooke it upon her death shee was innocent and free from all such dealings.'

1. Gifford, Dialogue, sigs. L3-L3^v

We see in the above passage that there was no necessity for the accused to admit her guilt. The opinion of her neighbours, who drew a link between her supposed malice and an observed illness or strange event, was enough to lead to a conviction of witchcraft. Injuries and personal tensions were interwoven as cause and effect.

There were slight changes in the nature of the evidence used over the period 1560-1680 in Essex. The water ordeal spread as a method of proving a witch in the seventeenth century,¹ although there is no evidence that it was used in Essex before 1645. Probably increasing stress was laid on finding the witch's mark, though such marks had been used as evidence from the very first Essex trials.² Meanwhile, no major types of evidence approved of at the beginning of the century had been eliminated by 1680.³ In theory, the proof that a person was a witch was the same in 1680 as it had been in 1600.

Since a confession by the accused was one of the few absolute proofs of guilt, there was considerable pressure

1. Scot, Discovery, p.255 implied that the water ordeal was not used in England in 1584, while Perkins in 1608 (Damned Art, p.206) only referred to its use 'in other cuntries'. Yet it seems to have been in fairly widespread use by 1616 according to John Cotta, Triall of Witchcraft (1616), p.104.

2. At first they were merely spots on the face, later they probably became protruding lumps. The Queen's Attorney discovered such spots in 1566, (1566 Pamphlet, p.323), and a group of women searched for the mark in 1582 (1582 Pamphlet, sig.D4). There is a detailed description of such a search, carried out in 1650, in case 843.

3. For instance, the wording of the 1697 edn. of Michael Dalton's Countray Justice is exactly the same as the 1630 edn, which, in turn, had been based, at least in its description of how to find a witch, on Bernard's Guide.

to secure such evidence. Moreover, if a person confessed, she became a powerful witness against others. Confession was also enjoined as an acceptance of society's verdict. In both ecclesiastical and secular courts public confession was a stipulated part of the punishment. Nevertheless, confessions do not seem to have occurred in the majority of the Essex prosecutions. For instance, at the Essex Lent Assizes in 1582, five women confessed, but nine denied the charge of witchcraft,¹ despite the browbeating of the Judge who warned that 'they which doe confesse the truth of their doings, they shall have much favour; but the other they shall bee burnt and hanged'.²

Torture, both physical and mental, has been suggested as an explanation of some of the confessions. There is no evidence that physical torture was ever officially allowed in England, except where treason was involved.³ If no other methods worked,⁴

'then such as have authority to examine, should begin to use sharp speeches, and to threaten with imprisonment and death. And if the presumptions bee strong, then if the Law will permit (as it doth in other countries in this case) to use torture.'

-
1. 1582 Pamphlet, passim.v
 2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. B6^v.
 3. Perkins discussed its use in witchcraft cases and concluded that it could only be used on the continent (Damned Art, p.204).
 4. Bernard, Guide, pp.239-240.

The activities which came closest to torture in England occurred in the Essex trials of 1645; they included keeping the suspects awake for several nights, immersing them in water, and continuous questioning.¹ Probably of much more general importance were indirect pressures; the mounting suspicion of neighbours, the persuasive advice, threats, and promises of clergy and justices. A witch, said the witch-finder Matthew Hopkins, was kept in solitary confinement and

'so by good counsell brought into a sad condition, by understanding of the horribleness of her sin, and the judgements threatened against her; and knowing the Devill's malice and subtile circumventions, is brought to remorse and sorrow for complying with Satan so long, and disobeying God's sacred Commands, doth then desire to unfold her mind with much bitterness'.²

There is little evidence, in Essex, that mental breakdown led to voluntary confessions.³

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1. For a description of these methods, see p.180 below.
 2. Hopkins, Discovery, p.59.
 3. For a discussion of witchcraft and mental breakdown see p.254 below.

1. J.S. Cox, Three Centuries of English Witchcraft (1892), 11.80; Alan I., p.48; William Lamont, Witchcraft in the Office of the Justices of Peace (1887), 10.11-12.

2. A possible exception is the case of the witchcraft.

CHAPTER 3.

The intensity of Essex witchcraft prosecutions;
evidence from Assize and Quarter Session records.

Some three hundred and fourteen people are known to have been prosecuted under the witchcraft Statutes between 1560-1680 at the Essex Assize and Quarter Session courts. Since this figure represents more than two thirds of those known to have been accused of witchcraft in Essex, it is necessary to say something about the procedure of the two courts.

The Quarter Sessions, as their name suggests, were held four times a year. They were an inferior court to the Assizes and so felony could not be tried at them, yet they were empowered to examine felons.¹ Witchcraft is mentioned in presentments by panels of jurors to this court; if the presentment was found to be accurate, the indictment was sent to the next Assize. Recognizances for the appearance of the accused, accuser, or witnesses at the Assizes, as well as examinations of those involved, sometimes mentioned witchcraft, as did gaol records kept with Quarter Session archives. Thus, while no accused witches were judged at this court,² witchcraft is mentioned on seventy-four occasions in the remaining records.

1. J.C.Cox, Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals (1890), ii.88; Ewen I, p.46; William Lambard, Eirenarcha: or of the Office of the Justices of Peace (1582), ii, 447, 320; Michael Dalton, The Countrey Justice (1618), pp.39ff, 243, 361-8.

2. A possible exception is case 849 (in the appendix).

The Assizes met twice a year, in the Hilary and Trinity terms, usually at Brentwood or Chelmsford. There were two judges.¹ At the start of the Assize a calendar of prisoners in the gaol was read out; often this included the name of imprisoned persons accused of witchcraft.² Presentments from the Quarter Sessions and elsewhere were then examined by the Grand Jury, mainly chosen from the minor gentry.³ The presentment was either dismissed as 'ignoramus' or passed as a 'true bill', in which case it became an indictment. It is these indictments which form the bulk of the evidence for Essex witchcraft prosecutions. The first indictment was then read and the named accused called to the Bar. The prisoner was asked if he pleaded guilty or not guilty, and the next was summoned. Those who confessed were put on one side until the time of judgement. The Petty Jurors were then called by the Sheriff, their names read, and the prisoners given a chance to challenge them.

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1. For the names and dates of the Essex judges see Ewen I, pp.102-108; Ewen provides a brief description of some of these on pp.50-52.
 2. Ewen omitted gaol calendar references to witches in his abstracts of Assize witchcraft cases, except in 1582 and 1645 or when they added new names; information from such records, however, has been given in the appendix of cases 1-767 when it adds to our knowledge concerning the treatment of imprisoned witches.
 3. For the gentlemanly status of the Grand Jury in Essex see B.W.Quintrell, 'The Government of the County of Essex, 1603-1642' (London Univ. Ph.D.thesis 1965), p.82.

Reading of the names of the accused, as they were called, was evidence that witches were generally believed to be during the air in 17th-century England (P. F. Collier, *Witchcraft* (Penguin, 1963), p.36).

A group of middling yeomen and artisans,¹ it was they who decided the guilt or innocence of the accused. Witnesses against the accused were then publicly called for, and examinations of the accused taken before the Justices of the Peace were read to the jury, if they were evidence for the Crown. The accused could call witnesses, but not on oath unless the crime was a felony.² When the group of prisoners was large enough, the jury retired with a list of prisoners 'for their better direction and help of their memory to know who they have in charge'.³ Finally they returned and gave their verdict of guilty or not guilty, whereupon the Judge passed sentence. Largely formal enquiries were also to be made as to the felon's goods and whether he or she had fled after committing the crime.⁴

1. Bernard (Guide, p.25) described the Petty Jury as 'a Jury of simple men, who proceed too often upon relations of meere presumptions'. Gaule (Select Cases, pp.194-5) argued that 'these Twelve good men and True' should not be 'Impannelled of ordinary Countrey People', but of learned physicians, lawyer and divines. It seems that, contrary to theory, jurmen were ofte 'picked up in court as they might be needed' (Minutes of Proceedings in Quarter Sessions held for Parts of Kesteven, ed. S.A. Peyton (Lincs. Rec. Soc., xxv, 1931), p. lxxii).

2. W.T., Office of Clerk of Assize (1676), p.14; pp.6-17 of this work contain a good outline of the procedure at the Assizes. It is upon this and the introduction to Somerset Assize Orders, 1629-40, ed. T.G. Barnes (Somerset Rec. Soc., lxxv, 1959), that the above account is based.

3. W.T., Clerk of Assize, p.15.

4. Ewen I, p.96 explains the abbreviation used throughout his abstracts to mean that the culprit did not flee, run away or fly from justice. A recent work, unfortunately mistaking the meaning of 'fly', uses the 'Not guilty, no flying', as strong evidence that witches were popularly believed to fly through the air in 17th-century England (G. Parrinder, Witchcraft (Pelican, 1958), p.38).

There were over five hundred indictments for witchcraft at the Essex Assizes. A typical one will show the nature of prosecutions at this court. At the Essex Hilary Sessions in 1579, Ellen Smyth of Maldon, spinster, was accused of bewitching Susan Webbe, aged about four years. The bewitching was said to have occurred on 7th March 1579 and the child to have died at Maldon on the 8th. The presentment was found to be a 'true bill' by the Grand Jury and the defendant was found guilty and judged according to the Statute.¹ It will be immediately seen that such indictments provide information on a number of problems: the place of residence, age, sex, and marital position of witch and victim; the duration and nature of the bewitching; the verdict of the two juries. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that indictments only give a summary of the outline of the prosecutions. The examinations and evidence at the Assize are omitted. The occasional contemporary account of an Assize trial preserved in a witchcraft pamphlet correct the distorted effect of such indictments.² Ellen Smyth's case is among those described at greater length in a pamphlet.³

1. Case 119.

2. For an analysis and description of these pamphlets see Ch.6.

3. 1579. Pamphlet, sigs. AV^v-Avi^v.

We learn that Ellen was the daughter of Alice Chaundeler, previously executed for witchcraft; that Ellen quarrelled with her step-father over an inheritance and that he subsequently became ill; that she was believed to own a toad familiar which, when burnt, caused its mistress pain; that her child-victim's mother was sent mad by the sight of another familiar like a black dog; that Ellen's son described his mother's three spirits called 'greate Dicke', 'little Dicke' and 'willet' and that the bottles and woolpack in which they were supposedly housed were discovered after a search of her house. Thus we see that the evidence written down in the Assize and Quarter Session records is only the barest outline of a mass of beliefs and suspicions.

References to witchcraft occur on seventy-four occasions in the Quarter Sessions records belonging to Essex. Most of these occur in the Sessions Rolls which are almost complete after 1556.¹ Of the forty-eight accused persons, thirty-five were at the court for 'black' witchcraft, that is for hurting people or property.²

1. For a description of the type and survival of Quarter Session records see bibliography p. 384; for abstracts of all these cases see ^{the} appendix, nos. 791-855. Cases have obviously been lost, see cases 1204-5.

2. Three lists of imprisoned witches (814-816) have been omitted from these calculations since the documents in which they occur are, in fact, Assize records, though they have survived among the Quarter Sessions archives.

They usually name the offender, but not the name of the accused.

The other cases concerned treasure-seeking, trying to find lost goods or gain money, or tell fortunes by the aid of witchcraft. Thus three-quarters of the cases which are recorded at the lower court were for harmful witchcraft; most of these occurred before 1603. Of the thirty-five women mentioned as black witches, all but eight appear in the Assize records: but only five of the thirteen cases of conjuration appear in the higher court. A comparison with those accused at the Assizes reveals that the Quarter Sessions witnessed only a very small percentage of the Essex witchcraft prosecutions. Of over three hundred people accused under the Witchcraft Statute at the Assizes, less than thirty are noted in the Quarter Sessions records. Quarter Sessions documents cannot, by themselves, be taken as an accurate index of the amount of witchcraft prosecution in a county.

The Essex Assize records contain some five hundred and three indictments for offences under the witchcraft statutes in the years between 1560-1680; an average of over four cases a year for a hundred and twenty years.¹ In these indictments some 303 persons were accused; their offences were as follows:

1. For simplicity's sake, and following Owen, indictments, inquisitions, and references to otherwise unknown witches in gaol records, have all been grouped under the term 'indictment'. In fact the gaol records, which mention 23 otherwise unmentioned suspects, are less useful than indictments since they usually omit the offence, victim, and village of the accused.

TABLE 2: Types of offence under the Witchcraft Statutes
tried at the Essex Assizes.

	<u>No. of cases</u>	<u>No. of persons involved</u>
Injuring/killing people or property	462	271
Invocation of evil spirits	28	29
Treasure or lost goods sought by witchcraft	9	11
'Intent' to murder or injure	2	2
Using dead bodies for witchcraft	1	1
Fortune telling	1	1
'Consulting' witches	1	1

(Some of the cases and persons overlap from different categories; for instance half those accused of invoking evil spirits were also accused of particular injuries inflicted on people or property. The totals of table 2 are therefore larger than the actual totals of persons and cases)

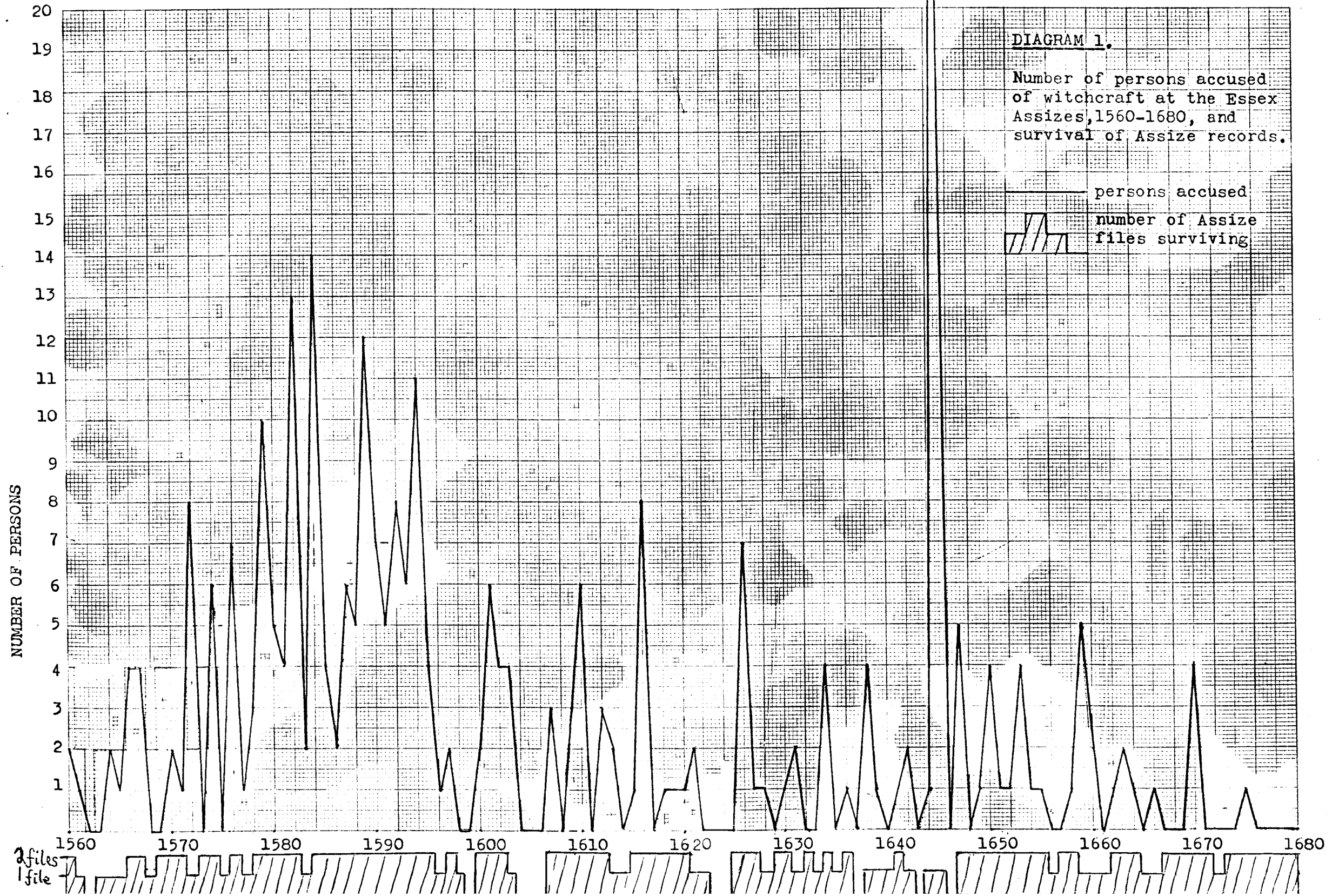
Thus, all but eleven of the 503 cases were for 'black' witchcraft: it is with this offence that we will be primarily concerned. By far the largest category was 'for injuring or killing humans or their property'.

Indictments for entertaining evil spirits, eighteen of twenty-eight of which occurred in 1645,¹ differ from these in that it is impossible to analyse the relationship between the accused and her victim. Nevertheless, whenever it is possible to use these twenty-eight indictments, for example when maps of the distribution of witches are being drawn, they will be treated as

1. For a description of the exceptional trial of 1645 see Ch.11.

before p.45

DIAGRAM 1.



2 files
1 file

statistically equivalent to accusations of causing injury or death. The justification for this is that where people accused of invocation of evil spirits were also accused of another offence, as happened in thirteen of the twenty-eight such cases, all were accused of bewitching men or animals.

The majority of the prosecutions for black witchcraft occurred before 1600. The comparative density of cases in six twenty-year periods is shown in the following table.

TABLE 3: Temporal distribution of witchcraft prosecutions at the Essex Assizes, 1560-1680.

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number of persons</u>	<u>Number of indictments</u>
1560-1579	52	82
1580-1599	111	195
1600-1619	44	78
1620-1639	25	35
1640-1659	63	83 (50 of them in 1645)
1669-1679	12	14

This can be demonstrated graphically, as in Diagram 1. This first graph also shows the survival of Assize records, a factor which must obviously be taken into account when discussing changes in the rate of prosecutions. For instance, we can account for the absence of prosecutions in 1562, 1599, and 1604-6 by the loss of records for those years. Often only one of the two Assize files have survived. It is clear from the diagram that records survive most fully between 1570-1595 and after 1646; the

before p.46

DIAGRAM 2.

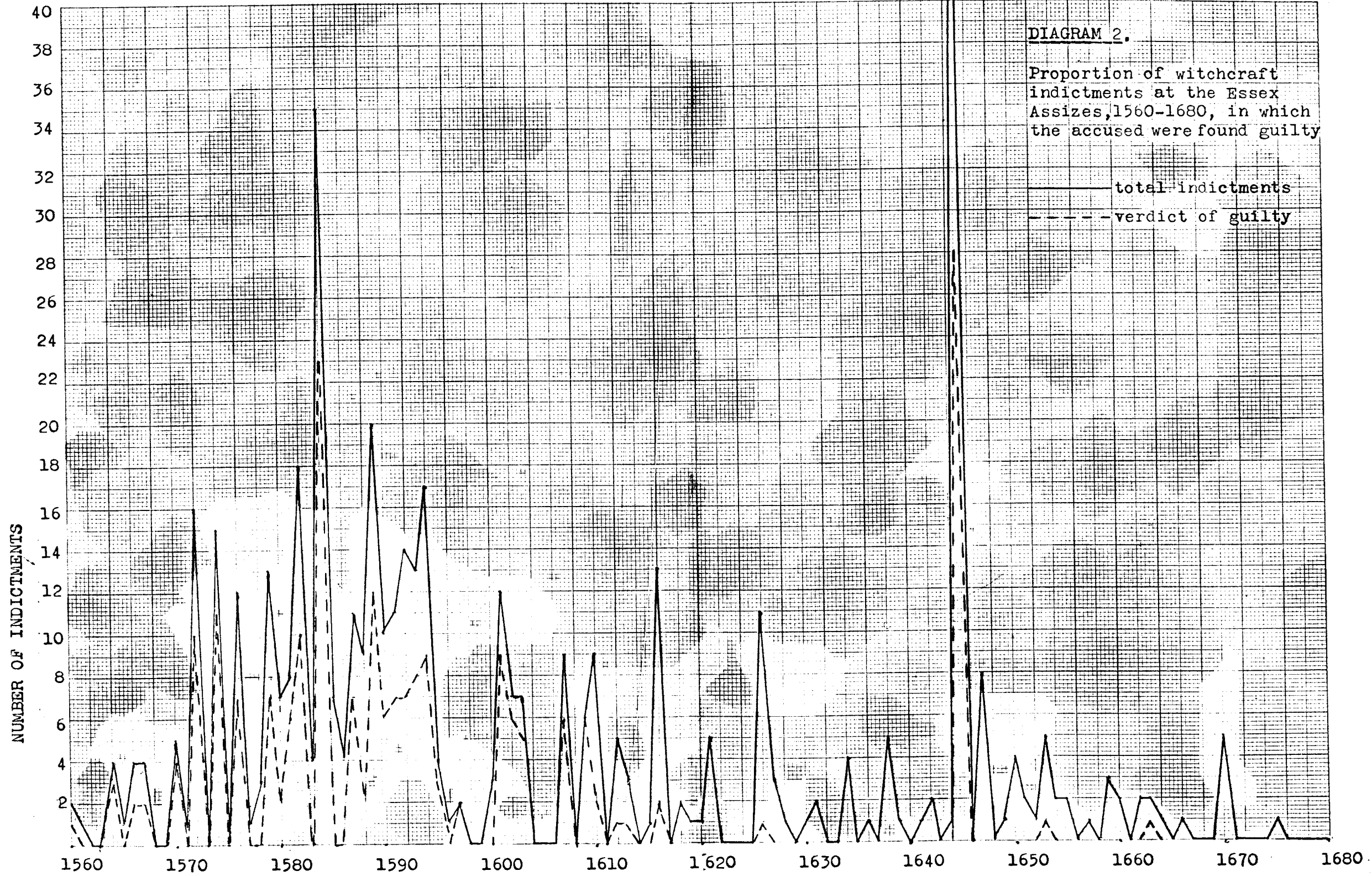


DIAGRAM 2.
Proportion of witchcraft indictments at the Essex Assizes, 1560-1680, in which the accused were found guilty

— total indictments
- - - - verdict of guilty

most extensive losses are in 1595-1600, 1604-6 and throughout the period 1620-40. Yet the graph of persons indicted does not merely reflect the survival of records. It shows a number of interesting features quite unrelated to the above. The numbers rise from fairly low figures in the 1560's to a peak in 1584. The 1580's and 1590's are consistently the highest years. Though there were peaks in 1601, 1612, 1616 and 1626, the forty years after 1600 were freer from accusations. There is the one towering figure in 1645 and then intermittent accusations petering away in 1670. The last case occurred in 1675. This shows the preponderance of the Elizabethan period as a time of accusations. It also demonstrates that prosecutions were not occasional and sporadic occurrences. Year by year accusations appeared. Though there were high peaks, there were many years when three or more people were accused of witchcraft. Of the ninety years between 1560-1660 for which there are surviving Assize records, only seventeen have no indictments for this offence. Diagram 2 shows the number of indictments for witchcraft each year; it emphasizes the impression gained from the first graph, that Elizabethan prosecutions were much more frequent than later indictments and that the 1620's and 1630's were a quiet period.

The geographical distribution and spread of witchcraft prosecutions at the Essex Assizes are shown in Maps 3 to 5.

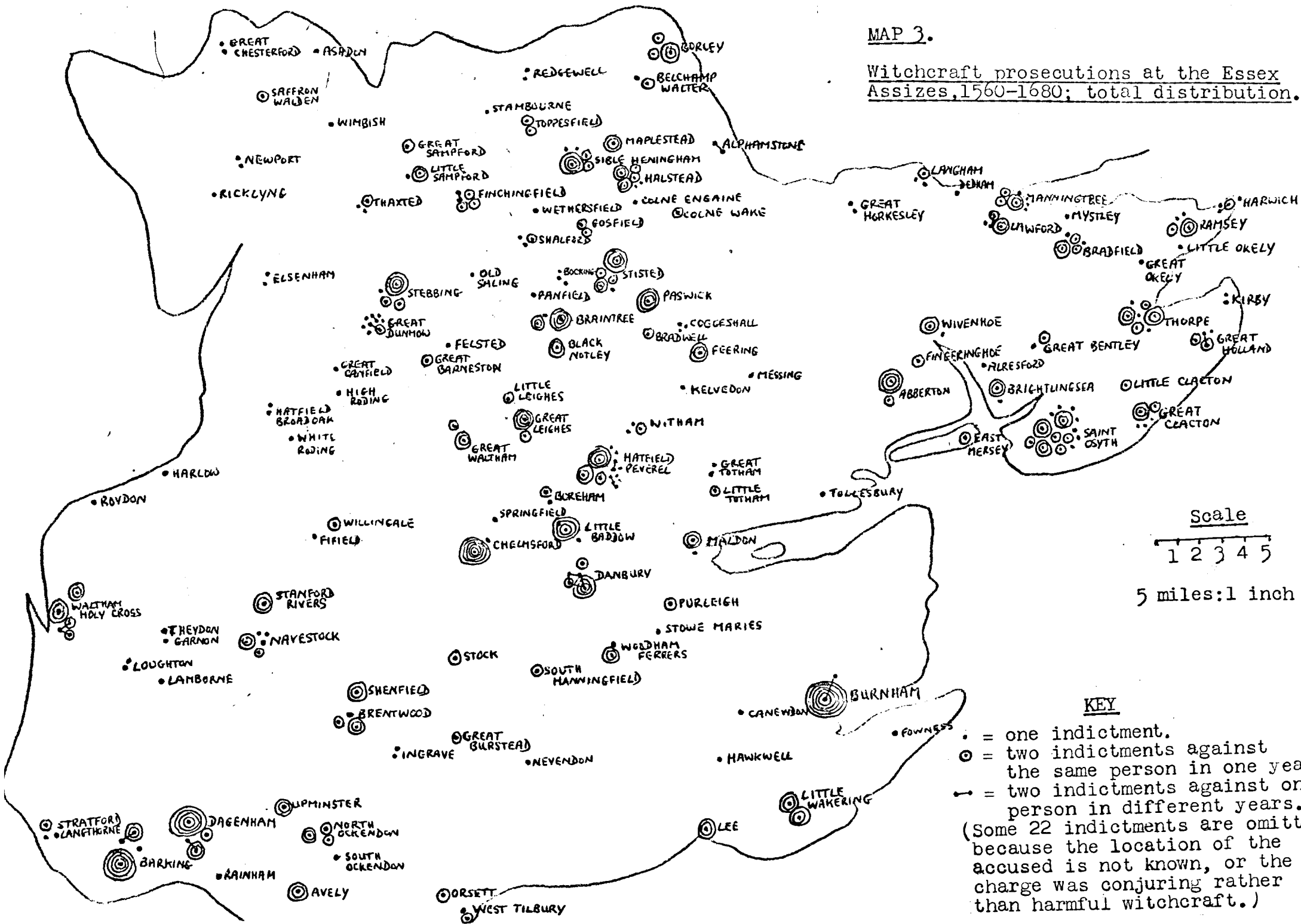
before p.47

MAP 3

(see end of thesis for maps 4 and 5)

MAP 3.

Witchcraft prosecutions at the Essex Assizes, 1560-1680; total distribution.



Scale
1 2 3 4 5
5 miles:1 inch

KEY

- = one indictment.
- ⊙ = two indictments against the same person in one year.
- ⊘ = two indictments against one person in different years.

(Some 22 indictments are omitted because the location of the accused is not known, or the charge was conjuring rather than harmful witchcraft.)

Map 3 outlines the distribution of all the prosecutions at the Assizes between 1560-1680. Significantly, there are no parts of Essex without any prosecutions, although the density varies. The most intensive prosecutions seem to have occurred in two areas; in the north-east, mainly in the Tendring hundred, and in a central belt some twenty miles wide and thirty miles high. This latter area stretched from Thaxted on the west to Colne Wake on the east, from Borley in the north to Danbury in the south. The centre, around Braintree and Halstead, was particularly heavy in the number of indictments. On the other hand, the western regions of Essex had only scattered accusations. Some one hundred and eight villages in Essex witnessed one or more indictments; almost exactly a quarter of the 426 villages in the county.

Map 3, a static representation, is misleading in a number of ways. The distortions emerge when we look at Maps 4 and 5.¹ From these it will be seen that the two densest areas were very different in the pattern of the accusations. The high number of prosecutions in the central area arose out of a constant flow of cases, most marked in the 1580's and 1590's, but continuing until 1640. But nearly all the prosecutions in the north-eastern tip of the county occurred in two years, 1582 and 1645. These two years were different from all the

1. At the end of the thesis, pp. 405, 406.

other years of numerous indictments in their concentration on one small part of the county. Thus, while the density in the central area reflected continued prosecutions over a period of eighty years, the density in the north-east arose out of massive prosecutions in 1582 and 1645, with scattered cases in other years.

Map 4 also helps us to trace the spread of witchcraft accusations over the years. In the first decade they were entirely concentrated in a wide belt in the centre of Essex. In the next ten years they had moved further north, south and west, but there had still been no accusations in the north-eastern area. As in the first decade, the area around Hatfield Peverel and Danbury was especially notable for the number of accusations. In the 1580's the whole of Essex was covered, although the western border was still fairly free from indictments. The west was again only thinly represented in the 1590's, as was the south-eastern marshland. The central belt was again predominant in this decade. The south in the first decade of the seventeenth century, and then the north-east and north-west in the next decade, were clear. In the following twenty years the prosecutions lessened in number and the distribution grows less significant. The preponderance of the north-east in the 1640's was almost entirely the product of

the 1645 trial. In the 1650's the north-west, for the first time, assumed relative importance. There were only a few prosecutions in the following twenty years; apart from an isolated central case, they occurred in the north-east.

The various yearly distributions shown in Map 5 are important because they show that prosecutions were very widely scattered. Accused witches from many miles apart were summoned to trial at the Assizes in any one year. This indicates that such accusations were the product of both general factors, and local pressures. It suggests that similar causes were working in different villages although these cases were unrelated at a personal level. For instance, if we look at the accusations in 1579 or 1584, it is difficult to believe that these prosecutions were directly interconnected; there seems to be no question of suspicions spreading from place to place. There are no grounds for using terms like 'epidemic' to describe the growth of accusations. It would be more realistic to see prosecutions as eruptions in separate communities, the products of particular and local conditions which in turn acted on more generalized factors. If this is the case in eleven of the thirteen years included, there were, as we have said, two important exceptions. They were the years 1582 and 1645; in both

cases the prosecutions occurred in a small group of neighbouring villages. Here it would be justifiable to look for some outside agent; in both, it will be shown, there was present a man of more than ordinary energy, skill, and interest in finding witches.

Yet the exceptional nature of these trials constantly needs to be stressed. The normal pattern in the geographical distribution of prosecutions, like that in the temporal distribution, was far more widespread than one might expect. Witchcraft prosecutions did not occur as occasional eruptions, abnormal reactions to particular crises. They seem to have been a normal part of village life, widespread and regular.

The frequency and importance of accusations of witchcraft at the Assizes is well demonstrated if we compare them to indictments for other offences. From Table 3 we can see that between 1580 and 1599 an average number of five or six people a year was tried at the Essex Assizes on a charge of witchcraft. Over the whole period 1560-1680 witchcraft indictments constituted some five per cent of all the criminal proceedings at this court.¹ In the years 1580-89, a hundred and eighteen of the total 890 indictments for all offences concerned

1. The number of indictments for all offences at the Essex Assizes varied between 20 and 80 per Assize; it averaged about 90 per year to 1600, 100 per year to 1680.

witchcraft; approximately thirteen per cent of all the prosecutions. The trial of witchcraft was second only in its frequency to the trial of thieves at the Essex Assizes. It was no peripheral, abnormal, crime but of central importance. As has been demonstrated, there were few years when indictments did not occur. When we remember that Assize prosecutions were only the barest summary of the suspicions, it will be realised that witchcraft ideas were of considerable everyday importance in Essex.

Not all those accused of witchcraft were found guilty. On twenty-four occasions the Grand Jury refused to 'find' the bill of presentment and returned a verdict of Ignoramus. No complete rejections of bills occurred before 1647.¹ In the years after 1647 the total number of presentments for witchcraft decreased rapidly; altogether there were only thirty-nine between 1647-1680. Yet twenty of these were rejected as Ignoramus. This reflected a great change in the attitude of the minor gentry of whom this jury was composed. Though, as we shall see, this was paralleled by a growing reluctance

1. One bill was rejected as 'insufficient' in 1579; three others were pronounced Ignoramus with regard to one of the two people jointly prosecuted, but found to be true concerning the other. The cases are 122, 227, 272, 403.

on the part of the Petty Jury to find accused persons guilty of witchcraft, it was, in itself, an important factor in the decline of witchcraft prosecutions in Essex.

Unfortunately it is impossible to assess from the Assize records how many people confessed or pleaded guilty. From the indictments we learn of only seven who confessed,¹ but comparison with the witchcraft pamphlets reveals that a much larger number of suspects admitted their guilt.² Probably more accurately recorded were the cases where the accused pleaded pregnancy. Theoretically this only delayed the execution of the sentence.³ Only five women are known to have made such a plea when charged with witchcraft at the Essex Assizes.⁴

Witnesses to the indictments are named from 1600 on. From that date they appear on nearly all the bills, varying in number between one and six. Occasionally the surname of a witness is the same as that of the accused,⁵ and there

1 Cases 17-19, 165, 201, 683, 742; Ewen I, pp. 59-60 discusses confession.

2. For example, the Assize indictments only note one of the women as confessing in 1582 (case 165), yet the pamphlet of that year shows that at least 5 confessed at the Lent Assizes.

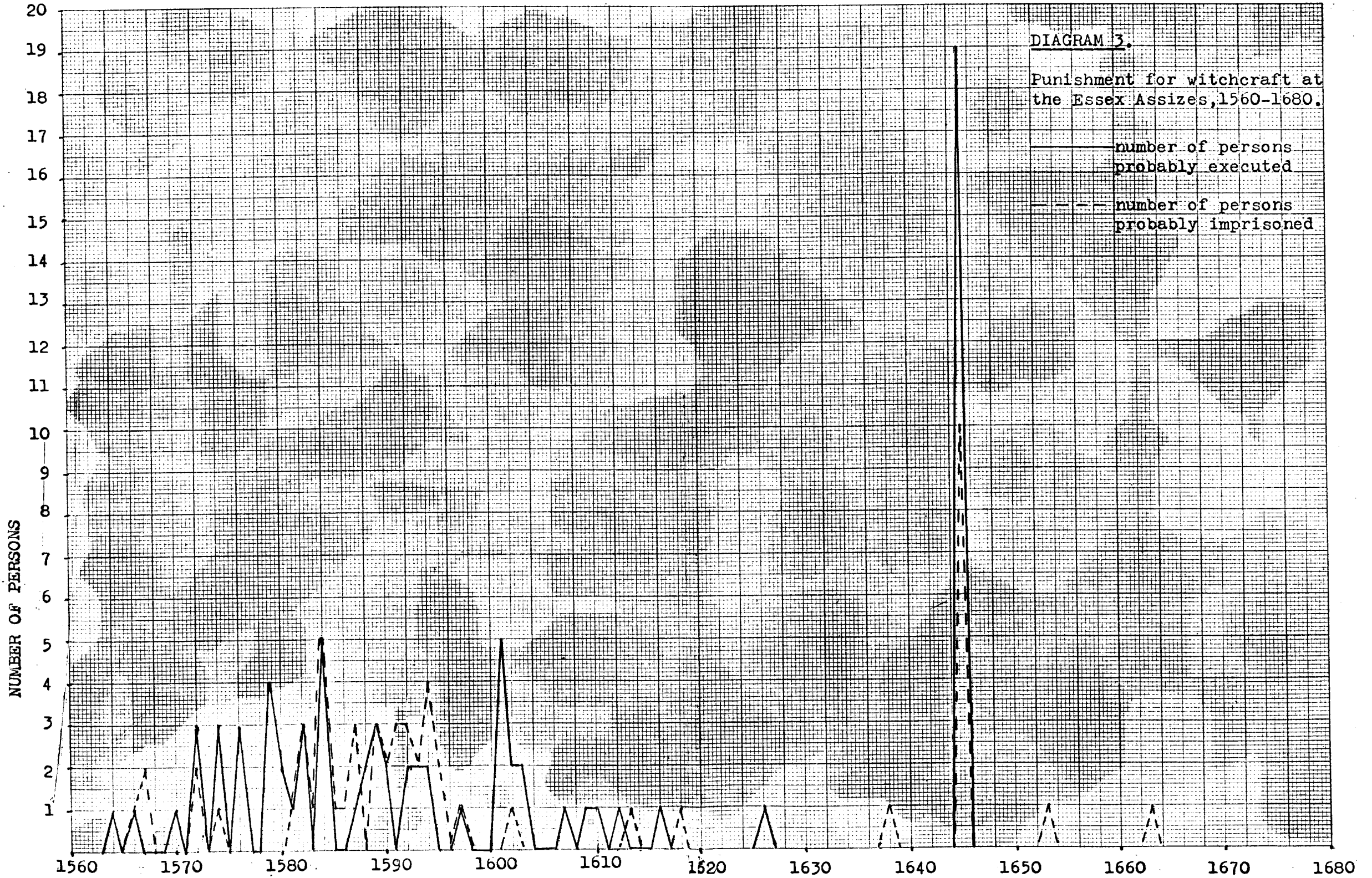
3. In one case it may have saved the accused: though guilty of capital bewitching to death, Avice Cony pleaded pregnant, was reprieved, and was still alive, though in prison, a year later, (cases 286-7); see also 58-61.

4. Cases 3-5, 61, 286-7, 347-8, 493-6.

5. For example in 499.

before p.53

DIAGRAM 3.



if 1645 is excepted, took place in 1626, and there were only three imprisonments, again excepting 1645, for this offence after 1620. This tends to emphasize the Elizabethan period as the harshest for suspected witches and to isolate the 1645 trial as quite exceptional.¹ After 1620 the percentage of acquittals rose enormously.

Imprisonment of guilty witches theoretically lasted a year.² The dismal conditions of the prisons, however, meant that a number of those serving a prison sentence, or awaiting execution, died of gaol fever.³ In Essex we know that at least thirty-six accused witches died of illness in goal. This added another thirty-two to these already condemned to die by execution. In all some one hundred and ten people are known to have died on an accusation of black witchcraft tried at the Essex Assizes.

Although enough of the Essex Assize records remain for the statistics from them to be reasonably helpful,⁴ it may be wondered how many people tried for witchcraft at this

1. For the graphical demonstration of the verdicts and punishments in Assize witchcraft cases, see Diagram 3, on the previous page.

2. Sometimes they seem to have been in prison longer; for an imprisonment lasting up to 6 years, see case 160.

3. Ewen I, p. 27 discusses the conditions in an Elizabethan gaol; for a more general description see Shakespeare in His Own Age, ed. A. Nicoll (Shakespeare Survey, 17, 1954), ch. 7. Death by 'divine visitation' in Colchester gaol was recorded in the Essex coroner's inquisitions, now deposited with records of the King's Bench (for a discussion of these records see p. 77 below). Between 1560-1603 some 142 prisoners died of gaol fever in Colchester gaol, according to these inquisitions.

4. 43 out of 240 Essex Assize files between 1560-1679 are completely missing; for their comparative survival see Diagram 1.

court are not known to us through the loss of documents. More generally, there is the problem of what percentage of the suspicions in the Essex country-side grew so strong that people took the matter to court. A comparison of Assize records with other evidence provides a rough answer to these questions. The Quarter Sessions records, we have seen, include eight black witches who do not appear at the Assizes: in other words, just over three-quarters of the suspected black witches appear at the higher court. Coroner's inquisitions on deaths in Colchester gaol give the names of twenty-one persons accused of witchcraft dying in gaol 1560-1603. Of these, some fifteen appear in the Assize records. If we include four women who were almost certainly in prison on a charge of witchcraft,¹ we find that Assize records only contain some two-thirds of those who were actually imprisoned for witchcraft and died of plague. From the above comparisons, and from incidental references to people sent to the Assizes who do not appear in the surviving documents,² it would be a conservative estimate to suggest that the 291 people whom we know were prosecuted at the Assizes for black witchcraft were only some seventy-five per cent of those actually indicted. We might therefore

1. Cases 1187-1190.

2. For example, case 1134. See Case 1122 for a woman who died on the way to the Assizes.

expect a total of nearly 400 black witches in Essex. Furthermore, a comparison with those prosecuted at the other Essex courts, particularly the ecclesiastical ones,¹ and with the witchcraft pamphlets, considerably extends the actual number of witches believed to live in Essex. Comparison with the pamphlets, for example, suggests that one in four of those strongly suspected of witchcraft in Essex villages were never taken to court at all. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the more than 500 indictments, or over 650 if these are only three-quarters of the actual total, are only some one-third of the actual accusations made at the Assize court.² A speculative total of 400 accused witches, charged with over 1,500 crimes, of which some 650 were turned into indictments, seems probable for the Essex Assize courts as a whole. Even this was only the projecting surface of far more widespread suspicions.

later. The aim of this chapter is to give a brief account of the jurisdiction and procedure of ecclesiastical courts in witchcraft cases, and a broad outline of the

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1. See p. 71 below.
 2. For ~~the~~ evidence of this statement see p. 94 below.

There were several overlapping ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Essex. The more important were those of the bishop of London and the archdeacons of Middlesex,

1. See page 30 for a summary of English ecclesiastical cases. Only a small proportion of the ecclesiastical records have, of course, been printed.

Colchester, CHAPTER 4.

Essex witchcraft prosecutions and the Church: evidence from the ecclesiastical records.

Between 1560 and 1680 some two hundred and thirty men and women from Essex are known to have been presented at the ecclesiastical courts for offences related to witchcraft and sorcery. Few of these cases have previously been printed. Altogether they constitute more ecclesiastical cases than have been discovered in printed sources for the whole of the rest of England for that period.¹ Evidence from ecclesiastical cases provides important information on a number of problems: the efforts to counter the power of a witch and the methods and numbers of cunning folk; the characters and motives of suspected witches; the geographical and temporal distribution of accusations against suspected witches. Most of these problems will be discussed later. The aim of this chapter is to give a brief account of the jurisdiction and procedure of ecclesiastical courts in witchcraft cases, and a broad outline of the types of offence and number of cases which came before such courts.

There were several overlapping ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Essex. The more important were those of the bishop of London and the archdeacons of Middlesex,

1. See page 309 for a summary of English ecclesiastical cases. Only a small proportion of the ecclesiastical records have, of course, been printed.

Colchester, and Essex.¹ The Bishop had two courts, that of his Commissary in Essex and Hertfordshire, and his Consistory. The former covered about one hundred villages in Essex; only eight witchcraft or sorcery cases were discovered in this source, but growing accessibility of the material will almost certainly furnish new cases. Similarly, the nineteen cases so far encountered in the Consistory Court records probably only constitute a fraction of all the witchcraft and sorcery cases tried there.²

A north-western strip of Essex, covering a little under a quarter of the county lay within the Archdeaconry of Middlesex. Unfortunately, no pre-1660 court records have survived for this area. Consequently, a region which was one of dense prosecutions according to the Assize records, has few relevant archdeaconry records. There are no recorded witchcraft cases from this source. Much more fortunate in the survival of its records was the Archdeaconry of Colchester which covered the north-east, and a small strip in the north-west, of Essex. The records start effectively in 1575 and a hundred and seventeen cases of witchcraft and sorcery have been

1. These are shown on Map 7, before page 68.

2. All the cases referred to in this chapter will be found in abbreviated form in the appendix; the Consistory and Commissary material is given in cases 1111-1127 and 1128-1138.

discovered in them. Likewise, the Archdeaconry of Essex, covering the southern half of Essex, has many surviving records for this period. They start in bulk some ten years before those of Colchester Archdeaconry and there are a hundred and twenty-six cases of witchcraft and sorcery in them.¹ In both these archdeaconries, almost without exception, the cases are to be found in the detection or 'Act' books, arising out of churchwarden's presentments in answer to articles of visitation from the archdeacon or bishop.

Enquiries concerning suspected witchcraft and sorcery were included in both the Royal Articles of 1559 and Archbishop Parker's Articles for the Province of Canterbury in 1560.² Within the diocese of London, in which Essex was situated, it was usual to make such an enquiry in the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1554 the Catholic bishop, Bonner, had enquired 'whether there be any that do use charms, witchcraft, sorcery, enchantments, false soothsayings, or any such-like thing' and similar questions were asked in 1571, 1577 and 1586. In 1571 Bishop Sandys asked for the presentment of 'any that useth sorcery, witchcraft, enchantments, incantations, charms, unlawful prayers, or invocations in Latin'.³ This was repeated, word for

1. Cases 991-1108 and 861-986 in the appendix.

2. Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation, ed. W.H. Frere (Alcuin Club Collections, xvi, 1910), pp. 5, 85.

3. Articles and Injunctions, ed. Frere, Vol XV, p. 353 and Vol. XVI, p. 313.

word, in 1577 and 1586 with the addition of 'and namely midwyves in the time of womens travayle of childe. And whether any do resort to any such for helpe or counsayle, and what be their names'. Such wording suggests that the authorities were especially interested in white witchcraft. In 1601 a new wording was used in which reference was made to witchcraft 'punishable by the ecclesiasticall lawes', thereby implying that ecclesiastical and secular courts dealt with different branches of witchcraft. Such a division was explicitly stated in the 1628 set of Articles, after witchcraft had been omitted entirely from those of 1612 and 1615. In 1628 the bishop enquired

'Have you any in your Parish, which have used any inchantments, sorceries, witchcrafts, or Incantations, which are not made Felony by the Statutes of this Realme, or any Charmes; or which do resort to any such for helpe or Counsell?'

Six years later this was repeated in a new set of articles, but it was for the last time; in 1640 and 1664 there was no mention of witchcraft. Nor was witchcraft mentioned in the articles for the Bishop's Commissary in Essex and Hertfordshire in 1625.¹

The only surviving Elizabethan archdeaconry articles covering Essex are for the Archdeaconry of Middlesex in 1582. In article 27 it was asked

1. British Museum 5155.c.10.

'Whether there bee anye man or woman in your parish that useth witchcraft, cojniuring, southsaying, charmes, or unlawful Prayers or invocations in Latin or English for or upon any Christian bodie, or beast, and what be their names, or anye that do go or seeke for helpe at such sorcerers handes?'

None of the three early sets of articles for Colchester Archdeaconry, issued in 1607, 1631 and 1633, contain anything concerning witchcraft. Likewise, only the first of the Archdeaconry of Essex articles, lists of which survive for 1610, 1615, 1635, 1636, 1639 and 1672, mentions this offence; the wording is exactly the same as that in the 1582 Middlesex article quoted above.¹

The impression is, therefore, that it became increasingly unusual to enquire about this offence some time in the early years of the seventeenth century, and that there was a recognition of the jurisdiction of the secular courts in offences laid down by the Statute of 1604. It will be seen that such a change in the enquiries exactly coincided with a rapid decline in presentations for witchcraft and sorcery after 1605.²

1. The location of these sets of articles is given in the bibliography, p. 389.

2. Some offences, for instance attempting to heal a person by magical means, remained within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts after 1604 since they were not made offences by the Statute of that year.

3. This account of ecclesiastical court procedure is based on the following authorities as well as the actual court records: E. H. Brinkworth, 'The Study and Use of Archdeacon's Court Records', *Trans. Hist. Soc.*, 20, 1st ser., xiv (1943); John Cox, *The Ecclesiastical and Secular Discipline in Yorkshire, 1550-1715* (Yorkshire Institute publications, 24, 1953); Kathleen Major, 'The Lincoln Diocesan Records', *Trans. Hist. Soc.*, 20, 1st ser., xii (1940).

Accusations of alleged witchcraft might appear before the ecclesiastical courts in two forms.¹ Firstly there were causes of 'office', disciplinary proceedings usually resulting from the presentation of offenders by incumbents and church-wardens. These 'detections' were written in an 'Act' book, as it was called in Essex, before the court sat, and were in answer to the sets of visitation articles discussed above. If the accused appeared, a scribbled summary was made by the clerk. Witchcraft might also appear in 'instance' cases, that is in prosecutions directly between plaintiff and defendant equivalent to modern civil suits. In the latter, witchcraft appeared infrequently and indirectly as one of the forms of libel in the frequent defamation cases. Defamation cases have been included in this study since they extend our knowledge concerning witchcraft beliefs. In some respects, however, they are the reverse of normal prosecutions since it was not the suspected witch but her accuser who was presented at court.

Nearly all the known Essex witchcraft and sorcery cases in ecclesiastical records arose out of churchwarden's

1. This account of ecclesiastical court procedure is based on the following authorities as well as the actual court records: E.R.Brinkworth, 'The Study and Use of Archdeacon's Court Records', Trans.Roy.Hist.Soc., 4th ser., xxv (1943); John Addy, The Archdeacon and Ecclesiastical Discipline in Yorkshire, 1598-1714. (Borthwick Institute publications, 24, 1963); Kathleen Major, 'The Lincoln Diocesan Records', Trans.Roy.Hist.Soc., 4th ser., xxii (1940).

presentments at the Archdeaconry courts. This court met at intervals of just over a month. The first recorded stage was the detection, usually on the basis of 'common fame' or rumour, by incumbent and churchwardens. Thus the attitude of the churchwardens to witchcraft and sorcery was of considerable importance in determining the extent of presentments.¹ If the accused repeatedly refused to appear at the court he or she was pronounced contumacious and was excommunicated.² Usually those accused of witchcraft or sorcery denied the accusation and were ordered to 'purge' themselves.³ Purgation consisted of a process whereby the accused brought a number of 'honest neighbours', usually three or four, who swore an oath that the denial of guilt by the accused was true. Successful purgation meant that the accused was restored to his or her former good reputation. This occurred in six Essex witchcraft cases, while ten suspected witches failed to purge themselves through the refusal of their neighbours to support them.⁴ Thus a person's guilt or innocence depended largely on the attitude of his or her

1. For examples of churchwardens presenting out of personal malice or being themselves presented for not detecting witches see cases 970, 1063.

2. For example, in case 931.

3. An exception was case 920 where a man was detected 'to be a wiche by his own confession'.

4. In all, we know of some 42 accused witches who were ordered to purge themselves, but in only these 16 cases has the result been found.

neighbours. Presented because of a general rumour, the individual could only be cleared if supported by a group of fellow villagers.

If the offence was admitted or purgation failed, the accused was ordered to do public penance, that is to confess and promise amendment of life in front of the other villagers. This was usually on a Sunday in the parish church and the accused wore a white sheet and carried a white wand. For example, a woman was ordered to 'penitentlie confesse that she is hartelie sorrie for that she hath geven vehement suspicion of wichecrafte and wicherie.¹ Having asked for the forgiveness of God and of her neighbours, the accused was dismissed after payment of fees and production of a certificate of a completed penance.²

Three major types of offence may be distinguished from the presentments; those accused for 'witchcraft and sorcery', those for white witchcraft, and those for defaming a person as a witch. It is not always possible

1. Case 910; details of the confession have been omitted in the appendix, that in 1001 being particularly long and interesting.

2. The payment of fees, which is sometimes recorded, has been omitted in the appendix. Purgation could be costly; for instance in case 917, after successful purgation, a woman owed 7s.9d. The warning to certify to the performance of the penance is also omitted in the appendix.

to distinguish with absolute certainty between types of case or to fit cases neatly into these categories, but the following table indicates the general pattern.

TABLE 4: Offences related to witchcraft at the Essex ecclesiastical courts, 1560-1680.

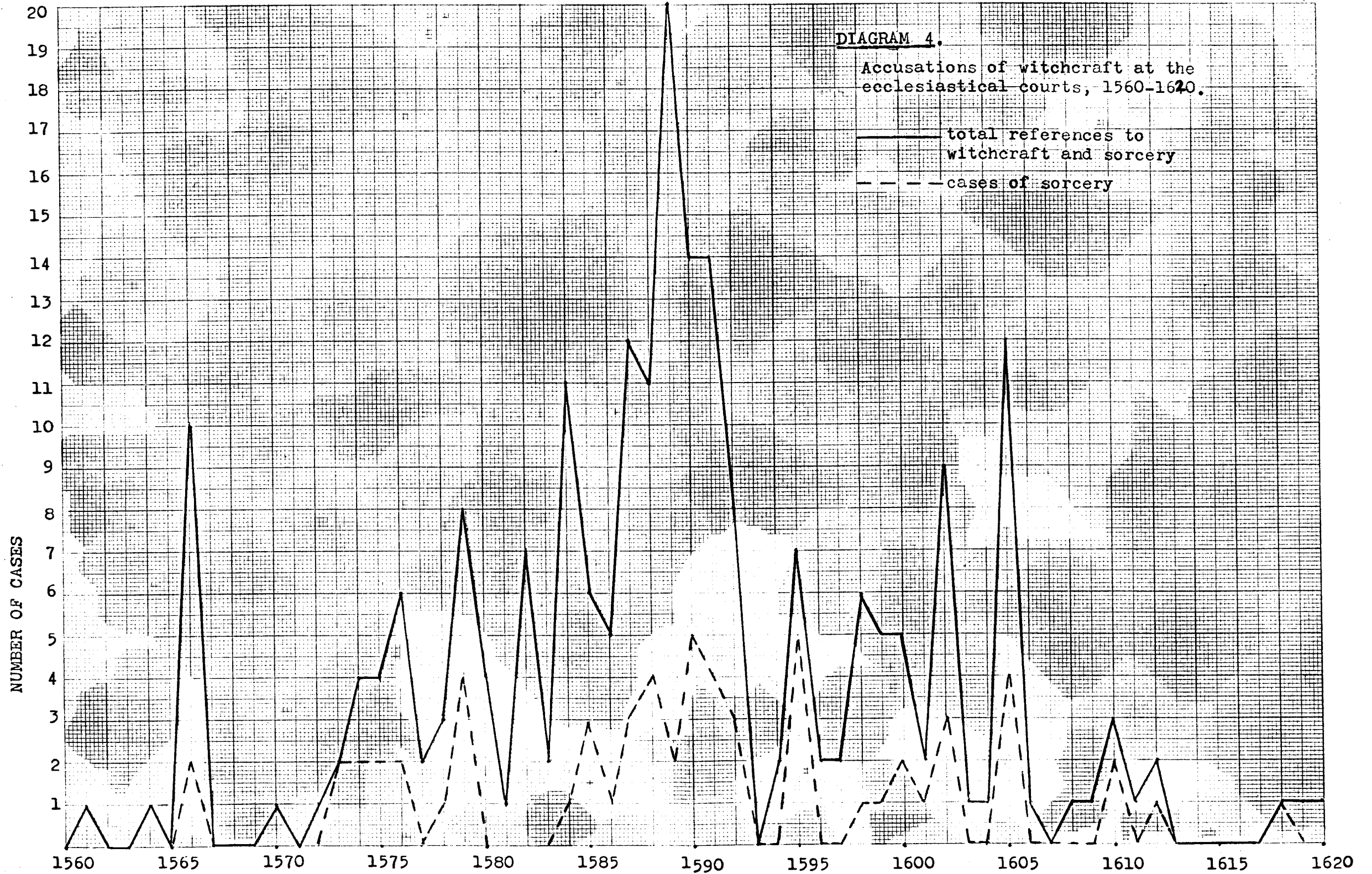
<u>Type of Offence</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Example</u> ¹
'Witchcraft and sorcery'	135	922
Being a sorcerer		
working with a 'sieve and shears'	5	964
'casting a figure'	1	1042
'soothsaier, forediviner'	1	865
finding lost goods by magic	4	1079
healing by magic	6	873
unspecified	8	977
	<u>25</u>	
Going to sorcerers		
for bewitched humans/animals	5	957
for lost goods	12	898
for help in sickness	5	875
unspecified	16	1073
	<u>38</u>	
Individual sorcery		
being present at a magical ceremony	1	991
anti-witchcraft magic (burning an animal)	3	983
love magic	2	1025
	<u>6</u>	
Miscellaneous		
'wishes herself a witch for revenge'	1	984
calling her vicar a witch	1	1135
defamation	22	959
	<u>24</u>	

In all, if we count persons rather than cases, some two hundred and thirty people are known to have been accused of some activity related to witchcraft.

1. This refers to the number of a case in the appendix.

before p.66

DIAGRAM 4.



Of these, more than half were accused of the ambiguous 'sorcery and witchcraft'. From other court records we learn that at least twenty-five of these were suspected 'black' witches,¹ and in some other cases the wording of the presentment suggests that the accused was thought to be an evil witch, for example Joan Page was admitted to be 'develishe of her tonge'.² Although this cannot be proved, the general impression is that over half the cases that came before the ecclesiastical courts concerned women suspected to be maleficent witches. The actual number of persons accused, rather than those discovered in the surviving records, must also remain at a speculative level. Taking into account the missing and inaccessible records, it would probably be no exaggeration to suggest that upwards of three hundred and fifty persons were accused of activities connected with witchcraft and sorcery at the Essex ecclesiastical courts between 1560-1680.

The temporal distribution of ecclesiastical court accusations is plotted in Diagram 4. From this diagram it will be apparent that nearly all the cases occurred between 1572 and 1602. More than half of them occurred between 1580-1592. No cases after 1611 have been discovered in the Colchester Archdeaconry records, though

1. For example, cases 947/1143, 1084/167, 1049/269 are pairs from ecclesiastical and other sources.

2. Case 1024.

there are five cases after 1620 in the Essex Archdeaconry and Consistory Court records.¹ It has already been suggested that a major reason for this rapid decline in the early seventeenth century was the recognition that most witchcraft offences came under the 1604 Statute and should therefore be tried at the secular courts. To a certain extent, the diagram is influenced by the comparative survival of records; for example the peaks in 1566 and 1605 reflect the survival of two detailed court books. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the peak of accusations was in the later part of Elizabeth's reign and that there was a rapid decline after 1605. The proportion of unmistakable cases of sorcery also increased as time went on; this may reflect the growing recognition of secular jurisdiction over black witchcraft already suggested. The peak of accusations was in 1589 with twenty witchcraft and two sorcery cases. Since cases were deferred from one court to the next, the general impression is of an even greater amount of interest in witchcraft presentments. At the peak period, witchcraft and sorcery were among the most common offences at the ecclesiastical courts.²

1. Cases 983-985, 1126-7.

2. On p. 115 below the percentage of ecclesiastical business concerned with this offence in three villages is shown in tabular form.

MAP 7

before p.68

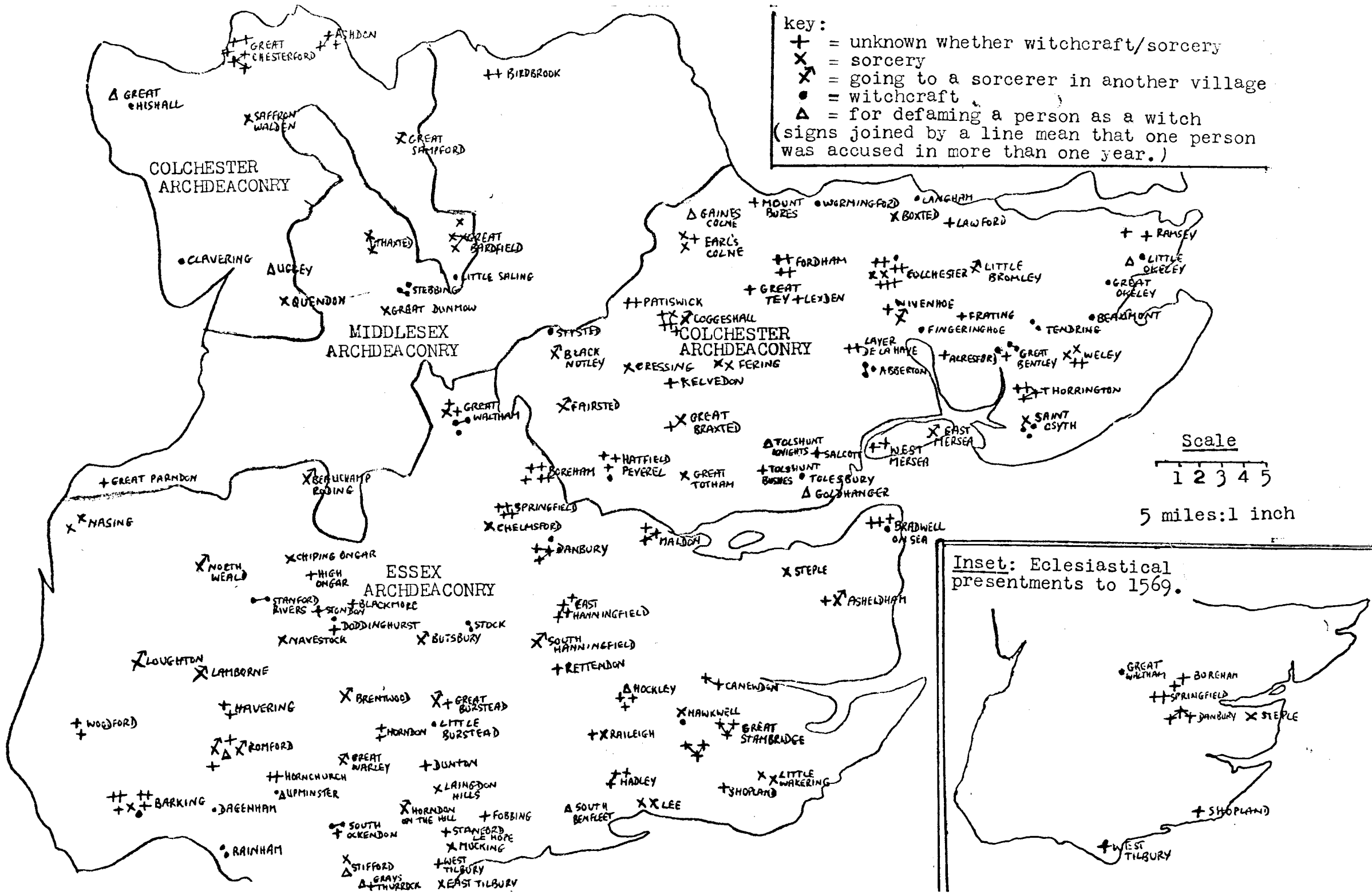
MAP 7

Witchcraft and sorcery accusations
at the ecclesiastical courts, 1560-1640.

key:

- + = unknown whether witchcraft/sorcery
- X = sorcery
- X with arrow = going to a sorcerer in another village
- = witchcraft
- Δ = for defaming a person as a witch

(signs joined by a line mean that one person was accused in more than one year.)



The geographical distribution of cases is shown in Map 7. From this it can be seen that presentments are to be found wherever records have survived. If there is any pattern at all, it is one of an emphasis on sorcery in the south-west and on witchcraft in the east and north. Over one hundred and twenty-five places or more than 25 per cent of all Essex villages, were involved in some way with presentments, despite the absence of early Middlesex Archdeaconry and other records. From the inset to Map 7, which shows the distribution of presentments until 1569, we see that cases first appeared in the area near Chelmsford as in the early Assize records.

There does not seem to have been any obvious correlation between the amount of presentments for witchcraft and sorcery and the personality of the ecclesiastical judges. For example, in the Archdeaconry of Colchester the last presentment occurred in 1611, yet George Withers remained archdeacon until 1617, a position he had held since 1570. Thus the considerable variations in the presentments all occurred within the time of his appointment. Although the most notorious male witch in Essex lived in Danbury, of which George Withers was rector, there is nothing to connect Withers

with this or any other witchcraft case.¹ Similarly, presentments for witchcraft and sorcery in the Archdeaconry of Essex were made before six different archdeacons. The first of these, Thomas Cole, who held the office from 1559-1571, is known to have examined witches and even presided at a trial of witches at the Assizes.² A Marian exile and reformer, it might be argued that he had a special interest in witchcraft, but presentments did not subside, but, rather, increased, under his successors John Walker and William Tabor. These two held office from 1571 to 1585 and 1585-1602 respectively, and were followed by Samuel Harsnet. Harsnet may have been a moderating influence since he was currently engaged in a controversy with the exorcist John Darrell and is known to have had extremely sceptical views on the possibility of witchcraft.³ During the

1. The Danbury male witch appears, for example, in cases 241, 250, 253. This account of the ecclesiastical officials is based on Newcourt, Repertorium, i.73,92. There are useful accounts of Cole and Harsnet in the D.N.B.

2. In case 794 a witch was said to have fled 'upon her confessyon before Mr. Archdeacon Cole' and the 1566 Pamphlet states that some of the Assize cases were tried before Cole.

3. Harsnet's works on witchcraft and possible influence on trials are outlined on p. 101 below.

1. Cases 770-4.

2. Case 1122.

3. The twenty year gap was between 1585 (Joan Osborne), that of ten years between 1585 and 1595 (Agnes Beard).

period 1603-1609, when he was archdeacon, four cases, all concerning supposed black witchcraft, were presented; three of them were dismissed.¹ But, as we have seen, the Essex archdeaconry was not peculiar in witnessing a decline of presentments at this period. In fact, under Harsnet's successors, George Goldman and Edward Layfield, presentments continued to appear long after they had ceased in the Archdeaconry of Colchester.

Throughout the period there was a certain amount of overlapping of witchcraft and sorcery cases between the ecclesiastical and secular courts. Twenty-two of those accused at the ecclesiastical courts appeared charged with witchcraft at the Assizes, another three in the Borough and Quarter Sessions records. One person accused at an ecclesiastical court died on the way to the Assizes.² Usually the accused appeared at the Assizes between three and twelve months after appearing at the ecclesiastical court, though we cannot be certain that they were sent from one to the other. On three occasions the ecclesiastical presentment took place after the secular trial had finished; in two of these the gap of twenty years and ten years suggests that suspicions had re-emerged and a new case had been opened.³

1. Cases 970-4.

2. Case 1122.

3. The twenty year gap was between cases 22 and 1035 (Joan Osborne), that of ten years between cases 167 and 1084 (Agnes Heard).

On only one occasion did the accused appear simultaneously at both courts.¹ Equally rare was the case of a transition from an accusation for 'healing sorcery' at the ecclesiastical courts to an indictment, six years later, for bewitching humans tried at the Assizes.² A comparison of Assize and ecclesiastical courts, and those presented at them, confirms the view that witchcraft beliefs and prosecutions were far more widespread than any one set of records would suggest. Only about one in fifteen of those accused of witchcraft at the Assizes appeared at the ecclesiastical courts and approximately only one in eight of those accused at the ecclesiastical courts appear elsewhere. Despite the fact that we have two long lists of people suspected in connection with witchcraft, there is little overlapping.

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1. Cases 269 and 1049 (Joan Pakeman).
 2. Cases 46 and 873, noted in Ewen I, p.125. This is the only case of such a transition to have been found in Essex court material.

CHAPTER 5.Essex witchcraft prosecutions in borough and central records.a) Borough records.

The widespread nature of witchcraft prosecutions in Essex villages has already been demonstrated. It remains to be seen how far such prosecutions were a rural phenomenon, or whether suspicions were just as strong in the towns of Essex whose borough records survive. Some twenty-five persons are known to have been accused in the borough courts of Maldon, Colchester and Harwich.¹ Several other towns, for instance Chelmsford, Brentwood, and Braintree, had no borough courts: the number of witchcraft prosecutions from them, tried at the Assizes, does not suggest that witchcraft accusations were different in intensity according to the size of the town.²

A number of Maldon witchcraft cases appeared at the Assize and ecclesiastical courts.³ The borough court records add details concerning the activities of a group of treasure-seekers in 1591 who used magic and consulted Dr. Dee. The combined information concerning

1. There is a comparison of Essex and English borough witchcraft cases on p.307 below. Thaxted and Great Dunmow, though chartered boroughs, have no criminal court records for the period.

2. See Map 1 for cases from these towns.

3. The following Maldon cases occurred in other than borough records: 67-9, 119, 870, 947, 949, 1200. The Maldon borough cases are 1141-1143.

Maldon witchcraft to be derived from a pamphlet account and the informations against Margaret Wiseman in the borough records gives us a considerable insight into the situation in this town. Apart from the reference to a broom which mysteriously swept by itself, it seems that beliefs about witches were not essentially different here to those in nearby villages: there were the same fears of being cursed after quarrelling with a neighbour, and the same small, evil-looking, animals. Maldon has an especial interest as the home of George Gifford whose works are of such importance for the study of Essex witchcraft. Gifford was vicar of All Saint's only from 1582-4, though he was a preacher there for most of the period until the end of the century. There is nothing to connect him directly with the prosecutions of 1574, 1579 and 1592. Nevertheless, it seems more than likely that some of his material was drawn from these accusations, and it may be more than a coincidence that his greatest work on the subject, the Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts, should have been published in 1593, the year after the long and controversial trials of Margaret Wiseman both at the borough and ecclesiastical courts.¹

1. There is a description of Gifford's works on witchcraft on p.104 below; for Wiseman, see cases 947, 949, 1143, 1075.

Roughly similar to Maldon, both in size and in its coastal position, was Harwich. There is no evidence that its borough court was active before 1601, but between that date and 1645 at least thirteen Harwich residents, two of them men and the rest women, are known to have been accused of witchcraft there.¹ The five accusations which took place in 1601 all ended in verdicts of guilty and an order that the suspects be executed. Other women were sentenced to execution in 1606 and 1619. Unlike Maldon, therefore, the borough authorities inflicted the death penalty. As well as the indictments and recognizances there are two long depositions against suspected witches in 1618 and 1633. Both show that behind the prosecutions lay the same beliefs as we shall find in the villages: that the witch acted out of malice after being refused something, that she employed small animals to carry her evil power, that she caused violent and sudden illness. Reflecting the position of Harwich as a port, there was a preponderance of sailors as victims of witchcraft.

Only a third of the Elizabethan sessions rolls for Colchester borough court have survived. Some eight suspected witches, all but one of them women, were

1. Harwich cases are listed in the appendix as numbers 1144-1163. Other Harwich women were sent to the Assizes in cases 580 (a-d), 586, 588 and in case 1219 we hear of a woman in Harwich gaol on suspicion of witchcraft in 1645.

discovered in these records.¹ None of these appears to have been sentenced to execution, though at least two were imprisoned for a year and made to appear in the stocks. Three of these eight had previously been accused at the ecclesiastical courts, though none of them appears in the Assize records. There is a reference, however, in an Assize trial pamphlet of 1582 to a Colchester man who received a familiar from another witch.² The examinations of witches and witnesses reveal many interesting details, among them the suspicion of Alexander Bradock, surgeon, and Marcel Goodwyn, physician, of Colchester.³ The fear of witches, and beliefs concerning their familiars and their evil activities, seem to have been both widespread and very similar to those in other parts of Essex.

b) Central Courts.

Only four witchcraft cases from Essex have been discovered in the Star Chamber records; these are all from the reign of James I. The practically unexplored Elizabethan records almost certainly contain a few more cases, but the bulk of such a source makes a search

1. Cases 1164-1176.

2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig.D2.

3. The latter was almost certainly the cunning man 'Goodin of Colchester' to whom a man sent in 1598 (case 1096), and whose will is to be found at Chelmsford. (E.R.D., D/ACW, 7/125). There is no reference to magical equipment in the will.

impracticable until there is an index.¹ Only one of the four Essex cases appears in other Essex records, this concerned Edwin Haddesley who, a year after being accused of trying to use his 'magik glasse, or familier and coniuring glasse' to secure his release from a charge of deer-stealing, was accused at the Assizes for bewitching two people.² In none of the cases was the charge merely witchcraft. For example, in the first, the charge was fraud, counterfeiting the symptoms of being bewitched to earn money from sympathisers. The second case, we have seen, mainly concerned deer-stealing and assault. In the third, the vicar of Radwinter believed that his enemies, in an attempt to oust him from his living, had conjured up 'fearfull and uglie shapes and formes of evill spiritts or divills'. The final case was a dispute over property; witchcraft only appeared incidentally as one of the means whereby a man was driven mad and hence gave away his land.

The records of the King's, or, in the Elizabethan period, Queen's, Bench are primarily of interest to the student of witchcraft because they contain coroner's

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1. Essex cases are 1181-1184 in the appendix. There are no sorcery cases in the selections and calendars for the period 1477-1603 listed in the bibliography, p. 385 .
 2. Cases 488-9.

inquests.¹ These inquests were often on prisoners who had died in Colchester gaol and among them are a number of suspected witches. Some fourteen persons whose indictments are to be found in the Assize records died in prison between 1560-1603, but we also learn the names of six witches who do not appear in other records and another four who were also, almost certainly, incarcerated for witchcraft.² Of the thirty-five accused women in 1645, at least nine had died of gaol fever or old age by 1647. As well as the inquisitions, we find three more obvious witchcraft cases. One already in print, was a slander case in 1612, but the other two have not been included in the list of cases since they are identical to cases at the Assizes. The first, in 1561, concerned John Samon of Danbury and was transferred by writ to the Assizes where it was tried in the same year. The second case was that of Edmund Mansell, accused at the Assizes in 1584 of burning a barn by

1. Where the inquest refers to a person already known to be a witch from other records, the reference is given alongside the previous case, as in case 335. Otherwise, unknown cases are listed as numbers 1185-1195.

2. Since the offence for which a person was committed is not always given, it is impossible to be certain whether some individuals were witches. Probable cases, with the reasons for thinking that they were witches, are given in cases 1187-1190.

'magic art', a charge which came up in identical form at the Queen's Bench the following year; there is no recorded verdict.¹

Only infrequently do we find references to witchcraft in the State Papers. In the seventeenth century there are a number of pardons granted to suspected witches in various parts of England, but none of these are from Essex. The only two Essex cases concern a Roman Catholic priest who, in 1561, was examined for taking masses in Essex and for love magic in Hampshire, and a case of treasure-seeking by magic in 1577.²

From another source, the papers of the House of Lords, we learn of a petition for the pardon of nine accused witches in 1645.³ This petition may have saved some lives, but five of the accused were still in prison in 1648 and the rest had died in gaol.

The Privy Council only intervened in witchcraft

1. For John Samon see cases 1,2b; he appears in P.R.O., K.B.9, 600, m.149-151 and 602, m.209. Mansell was accused in cases 224, 225; see P.R.O., K.B.9,662, m.48.

2. Cases 1196-1197. The second of these is continued in case 1199.

3. The details are included in cases 613, 618, 624, 629, 637, 639, 645, 647, 648.

cases where there was also a suspicion of treason, coining, prophesying, or other affairs of state. This intervention was infrequent before 1560, reached a peak between 1578-81, and terminated in 1589.¹ All seven Essex cases concerned sorcery, rather than that bewitching of one human by another which, we have seen, formed the bulk of the Assize cases. The first Essex case occurred in 1577 when Henry Chittam was sought and captured for the offences of coining and conjuring; the verdict is unknown, nor has Chittam's case been found in the Assize records, the court to which he was ordered. Another case of conjuration was ordered before the Privy Council in 1580, this overlaps with the treasure-seeking case of 1577 in the State Papers. In the same month a letter was sent to Mr. Darcie of Tiptree, soon to become notorious as a judge in the trial of witches,² to apprehend Humfrey Poles 'for conjuration'; nothing more is known of this case. Within two months another letter was sent by the Privy Council, this time ordering that the boy accomplice of William Randell, committed with his master for conjuration, was to be released unless a serious charge could be brought against him. Randell was executed in 1581.³ Again in 1580, Nicholas

1. For Essex cases see numbers 1198-1203. Notestein, Witchcraft, Appdx.C. cites most of the English cases from this source.

2. For a description of Darcie's influence on witchcraft trials see p. 91.

3. R. Holinshed, Chronicles (1808 edn), iv, 433.

Johson was ordered to be released and examined concerning his sorcery, especially the 'making of her Majesties picture in wax'. The final group of letters written by the Privy Council, in 1580 and 1581, concerned the escape of Robert Mantell alias Bloise from Colchester gaol. His crime, that of pretending to be King Edward, would not concern us if it had not been for the activities of his accomplices in the escape; they were accused 'with lewde practises of sorceries and conjurations'. Mantell was sentenced to execution at the Hilary Assizes 1581.¹

It is possible that cases of slander which involved calling a person a witch may be found in the Courts of Request and Common Pleas. Sampling of these extensive records has not, so far, produced any Essex cases.² On the whole however, it seems fair to say that an analysis of witchcraft as represented in records deposited at the Public Record Office, excepting the Assize records, would give a very distorted and limited impression of Essex witchcraft. Very few of the more than five hundred Essex individuals known to have been accused of witchcraft or sorcery appear in central records. No accurate study could be based merely on such sources. Nor can a

1. P.R.O., Assizes 35/23/H m.48,49.

2. No cases were found in Select Cases in the Court of Requests, ed. I.S. Leadam (Selden Soc., xii, 1898) or Proceedings in the Court of Requests, 137-203 (P.R.O., Lists and Indexes xxi, 1963). Ewen found a slander case in the Court of Common Pleas (Ewen I, pp.271-6).

comprehensive list of those suspected of witchcraft and sorcery be made until the massive central records are fully indexed. Cases are still being discovered, for instance the names of three otherwise unknown Essex conjurors who were pardoned in 1568 have only recently appeared in a Calendar of Patent Rolls and it seems likely that new cases will emerge as the Calendar proceeds.¹

is possible since they all recorded before the year 1568 in courts which can be checked against the central records. On the other hand, the complexity of these records allows an estimate to be made regarding the number of the Essex conjurors. The records themselves provide three principal lines of information of value for this study; they give exact information about those

involved in prosecutions, their ages, sex, and occupations.

1. Case 1206. I owe the reference to Mr. K. V. Thomas. One of the conjurors, John Wentworth of Little Horkesley, was probably the John Wentworth, knight, Lord of the manor of Little Horkesley, who died on 15th September 1567, or a near relation. Morant, Essex, ii, p. 235.

witches and the actual incidents which were alleged to have prompted the bewitching. As such they are of vital importance in the subsequent analysis.

Essex is fortunate in possessing five hundred printed

1. See p. 21 below for a comparison with the records for other counties. Essex deposits, however, were made for some circuits, although they have been lost for the Essex circuit. These contain the same names of people as the pamphlets. The full titles and locations of the Essex pamphlets are given on p. 7 above.

CHAPTER 6.

The background to formal prosecutions; evidence from the witchcraft pamphlets.

Reports of the depositions of witnesses and the examinations of suspects have occasionally survived in the form of popular pamphlets whose titles suggest that they were written for the sensation-loving London literary market. It will be one of the major tasks of this chapter to discuss how reliable these accounts are. This is possible since they all describe trials at the Assize courts which can be checked against the actual indictments. On the other hand, the comparison of these two sources allows an estimate to be made concerning the fullness of the Assize indictments. The pamphlets themselves provide three principal kinds of information of value for this study; they give added information about those involved in prosecutions, their age, wealth, personality, and relationships; they indicate how witchcraft was believed to work, the power of cursing, the use of spells and familiars; they reveal the motives ascribed to witches and the actual incident which was believed to have prompted the bewitching. As such they are of vital importance in the subsequent analysis.

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Essex is fortunate in possessing five detailed pamphlets.

1. See p.302 below for a comparison with the pamphlets for other counties. Assize depositions, however, have survived for some circuits, although they have been lost for the Home Circuit. These contain the same degree of detail as the pamphlets. The full titles and location of the Essex pamphlets are given on p. 7 above.

These did not necessarily mirror the actual number of prosecutions as may be seen in the following table.

TABLE 5: Assize prosecutions and pamphlets compared, Essex 1560-1680.

(Years with 12 or more indictments, a pamphlet, or both)

Year	Number of Indictments	Pamphlet	Year	Number of Indictments	Pamphlet
1566	4	P	1589	19	P
1572	16	-	1592	14	-
1574	15	-	1593	13	-
1576	12	-	1594	17	-
1579	13	P	1601	12	-
1582	18	P	1616	13	-
1584	35	-	1645	50	P (x2)

Thus we see that the year 1584 with thirty-five indictments has no surviving pamphlet, while 1566, with only four indictments, has a pamphlet account. Another point to emerge from Table 5 is that the state of affairs revealed in the pamphlets is not extraordinary, though it may appear so to us. Taken by themselves, pamphlet accounts might appear to describe isolated outbreaks of prosecutions, perhaps encouraged by some particular crisis or witch-hunter. Yet, when they are compared to the known Assize indictments, they come to be seen as only a minute sample of what was occurring at the time. Of one hundred and sixty-three men and women who are known to have been indicted for witchcraft at the Essex Assizes between 1560-1600, only twenty-three were

described in the Elizabethan pamphlets, detailed though they are. Another one hundred and forty trials are not described. Nor, if we compare the descriptions in the pamphlets to those in accounts which are as detailed, do we find them to be unrepresentative of current ideas.¹

As indicated in table 5, there are Essex pamphlets for 1566, 1579, 1582, 1589, and two for 1645. At least one further pamphlet is known to have existed but appears to have been lost. This described the activities of a notorious Essex witch executed in 1575: five indictments against her have survived in the Assize records.² The first Essex pamphlet, therefore, describes the Assize trial in 1566. The cases, involving three women all from the village of Hatfield Peverel, came before a distinguished panel of judges including the queen's attorney, a later Chancellor of the Exchequer and a justice of the queen's bench. The whole pamphlet gives the impression that witchcraft beliefs were

1. For instance, the depositions in cases 1163, 1170, 1173 and 1204 are very similar, as is the whole of Gifford's Dialogue.

2. The pamphlet was entitled The Examination & Confession of a notorious witch named Mother Arnold, alias Whitecote, alias Glastonbury, at the Assize of Burntwood in July, 1574: who was hanged for Witchcraft at Barking, 1575. Notestein, Witchcraft, p. 386 wrongly ascribed this 'Burntwood' to Staffordshire, but there can be little doubt that, as Ewen (I, p. 129) noted, this refers to Brentwood in Essex and the indictments to Cecilia Glasenberye of Barking, cases 75-79. The title is mentioned in W.T. Lowndes, Bibliographer's Manual (1834), iv. 1967, but no further trace of it has been found.

already complex and widespread.¹

Ten people were prosecuted at the Essex Assizes in 1579. They came from widely spaced villages and there is no evidence that any of the cases were linked.² This, therefore, can be used as a sample year; it has neither a concentration of cases in one area, nor an extraordinary number of prosecutions. It seems fair to assume that if we can gain a more detailed account of some of the cases so barely set out in the indictments we could apply conclusions drawn from them to other years with a similar pattern. Fortunately, such an account is available because the Lent Assizes were described in a contemporary pamphlet. Of the seven women against whom indictments were made, only four appear in the pamphlet account.³

Ellen Smythe, spinster, was prosecuted at the Assizes for bewitching a child, Susan Webbe, on the seventh of March so that it died on the next day; she was found guilty. This bare outline is filled in by the pamphlet. Ellen confessed that, after a quarrel between her daughter and the daughter of Widow Webbe, she met young Susan and, being angry, 'gave here a blowe

1. Those involved in this pamphlet are described in Ch. 8.

2. See Map 5 for distribution of prosecutions at the various trials.

3. Cases 118-123. Elizabeth Francis, described in the 1556 pamphlet, is omitted in the ensuing description.

on the face, whereupon so soone as the child came home she sickened, and languishyng two daies, cried continually, awaie with the Witche, awaie with the Witch, and so died'. Immediately after this Widow Webbe saw 'a thyng like to a blacke Dogge goe out at her doors, and presently at the sight thereof, she fell distraught of her wittes'. This second bewitching, like two other suspicions, did not appear as an indictment. We also learn that Ellen Smithe was the daughter of an earlier Maldon witch, Alice Chaundler¹, and that among the witnesses was Ellen's own son, aged thirteen years, who described his mother's familiars in great detail.

Another woman described in the pamphlet was Margery Stanton of Wimbish. In 1578 she had been found guilty at the Quarter Sessions of bewitching a gelding. The case was later tried at the Assizes but the indictment, probably because it failed to name the owner of the bewitched gelding, was found insufficient.² From court records alone this would appear to be a mild prosecution, but the pamphlet reveals a web of suspicions behind this one official accusation. Among the misfortunes supposedly inflicted by Margery's witchcraft were: tormenting a man,

1. Alice Chaundler appeared at the Assizes in 1574, cases 67-9.

2. Cases 122, 810.

killing chickens, causing a woman to swell so that she looked pregnant and nearly burst, making cattle give 'gore stynking blood' instead of milk, making a child ill, and tormenting another so that it 'fell into suche shrickyng and staryng, wringyng and writhyng of the bodie to an fro, that all that sawe it, were doubtful of the life of it'. Perhaps the most peculiar effect of her wrath occurred after she had been denied yeast. After her departure,

' a child in the Cradle was taken vehmently sicke, in a mervelous strange maner, whereupon the mother of the childe tooke it up in her armes to comferte it, which beyng done, the Cradle rocked of it self, sixe or seven tymes, in presence of one of the Earle of Surries gentilmen, who seying it stabbed his dagger three or fower tymes into the Cradle ere it staid: Merily iestyng and saieyng, that he would kill the Devill, if he could bee rocked there'.

This type of witchcraft act was hardly likely to appear in a formal indictment. Nor did the motives of the witch. In Margery's case she quarrelled with a man who cut her face, later he grabbed some corn she was carrying and threw it to his chickens; these promptly died. In another case she 'came often to the house of one John Hopwood of Walden, and had continually her requestes, at the laste beyng denied of a Leathern thong she went her waie offended and the same night his Geldyng in the stable died sodainly'. She did not employ familiars, but her suspicious behaviour aroused comment. When asked what she was doing making a circle in front

of a house and digging it full of holes, she replied that she was making 'a shitying house for her self after that sorte': the next day the goodwife fell sick on the spot. Perhaps most interesting of all was the fact that among her victims was the vicar of Wimbish's child, the child recovering on the godly man's return. The vicar was no other than William Harrison who had two years earlier published his famous description of England.¹

The final case concerned 'Mother Nokes' of Lamborne, the Alice Nokes who was found guilty of bewitching Elizabeth Barfott to death.² This case is a little different from the others in that the motives for the supposed bewitchings were not refused loans but rudeness, sexual jealousy, and quarrelling. In one instance Mother Nokes' daughter had her gloves snatched away by a youth and her mother was angry: the unfortunate young man was paralyzed soon after and had to be carried home in a wheelbarrow. In another case she was angered by the refusal of a ploughman to answer her questions, or so the ploughman conjectured when he ascribed the

1. William Harrison, An Historical Description of the Island of Britayne first published in Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles (1577), vol.1. Harrison was vicar of Wimbish from 1571 to 1581 and the bewitched son was almost certainly Edmund. There is no known reference to this affair in his writings. Newcourt, Repertorium, ii.674.

2. Case 120.

swelling on his horse's head to her witchcraft rather than to his own carelessness. This act of witchcraft, as well as the bewitching of the youth, were not recorded in the indictments.

Even a lengthy summary of the 1579 trial does not do justice to the wealth of detail provided by the pamphlet, but it does indicate how limited an impression the actual indictments provide. A comparison of the 1589 pamphlet with the indictments for that year emphasizes this point. In the Assize indictments we learn that Joan Cunny was suspected of bewitching four people.¹ To this the pamphlet adds a lengthy description of how Joan obtained her power. She had been taught her witchcraft by one mother Humfrye of Maplestead² who told her 'that she must kneele down upon her knees, and make a Circle on the ground, and pray unto Sathan the cheefe of the Devills'. She tried this and was rewarded with two spirits like 'two black frogges' to whom she promised her soul. Nor does the single indictment against Joan Prentice give any hint of the long struggle with the Devil which Joan underwent before becoming a witch. While sitting in her chamber one night the devil appeared

1. Cases 288-291.

2. Possibly the cunning woman 'Mother Humfrey' in case 992.

to her 'in the shape and proportion of a dunnish coloured ferrit' and demanded 'Jane Prentice give me thy soule' to whom she answered 'In the name of god what art thou' to which, in hideous parody, the ferret replied 'I am satan, feare me not'. The most unusual feature of the pamphlet, however, was the final description of the scene at the scaffold. First the circuit judge commended the illegitimate children for their depositions and then 'one Maister Ward a learned divine', exhorted the women to repent.¹ The convicted women then said a few prayers with the preacher and admitted that they deserved to die. Joan Upney was especially penitent, crying out that 'she had greevously sinned, that the devill had deceived her asking God and the world forgiveness, even to ye last gaspe'.

In the number of indictments at the Assizes, the year 1582 was not exceptional. Two years later there were twice as many. On the other hand, both 1582 and 1645, the years of the remaining three pamphlets, can be seen to be exceptional from Map 5. Unlike other trials

1. Probably John Warde, the well-known preacher of Haverhill in Suffolk and Writtle near Chelmsford, in Essex; Davids, Annals, pp.119-120; Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis, s.v.

the author. For example, the pamphlet's writer, 'these aforesaid 3 last recited matters, being confessed by the said Upney privately to me the said Brian Vintour' (sig. 40^v). The pamphlet was dedicated to Vintour's father.

4. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. 24 and 25^v.

they were concentrated on a small area, in both cases the north-east tip of Essex. Another common feature was the presence in each year of a man more than normally interested in the trial of witches, in 1582 Justice Darcy, in 1645 Matthew Hopkins.¹ Unfortunately, it has been on accounts of these somewhat exceptional trials with their long pamphlets that most descriptions of Essex witchcraft have been based.²

Another possibly exceptional feature of the 1582 pamphlet is that it may have been written by Brian Darcy, the presiding judge at the Assize trial, under the initials 'W.W.'.³ Brian Darcy certainly took particular pains in examining the suspects and his methods included much cajoling and bullying. Some of the confessions, as Reginald Scot argued, were 'wonne through hope of favour, and extorted by flatterie or threats' and the trial contains the first Essex evidence of a jury of women systematically searching for the witch's mark.⁴

1. The 1645 trial is so complex that it has been described separately in Ch.11.

2. For example, see below p.105 .

3. A detailed knowledge of what happened both in the court room and in private conversations between Darcy and various suspects, added to a tendency to lapse into the first person singular, suggest that Brian Darcy was the author. For example, the pamphleteer wrote, 'These aforesaide 5 last recited matters, being confessed by the saide Ursley privately to me the sayde Brian Darcey' (sig.A8^v). The pamphlet was dedicated to Brian Darcy's father.

4. 1582 Pamphlet, sigs.D4 and E5^v.

Darcy's interest is further explained by the fact that his family owned property or church presentations in all the villages from which suspects came. He himself was lord of one of the manors in St. Osyth's, the pivot of the prosecutions. Lord Darcy his father was believed to have been bewitched to death,¹ and Ursula Kempe, the woman whose confessions formed the backbone of the prosecutions, bewitched Grace Thurlowe's child, Grace being a servant of Lord Darcy.² On the other hand, there is no simple correlation between Darcy property and the prosecutions. The family was powerful in a number of villages in which there were few or no prosecutions during Elizabeth's reign.³

Comparison of indictments and pamphlet accounts supports the general accuracy of both sources. Although there is not always exact overlapping since each source contains material not found in the other,⁴ when they are

1. Ibid., sig. C8.

2. Ibid., sig. A^v.

3. For instance Tolshunt Darcy, Brightlingsea, Great Wigborough and Weleigh. For the Darcy family see Morant, Essex, (i. pp. 457-59, 476-488) and ii. pp. 111, 139-140. Little can be discovered about Brian Darcy except that he sent his son to Caius College, Cambridge after an education at the Puritan School at Dedham, (Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses). Brian's first son was born in 1560 and so^{his} father was probably in his late forties at the time of the 1582 trial.

4. Usually the pamphlets were much more detailed, but occasionally as in cases 17, 18, an indictment contained information omitted in the pamphlet account.

describing the same event there is little direct contradiction. When there is disagreement it is on minor matters and supports the general impression of accuracy. For instance, the indictment against Annis Herd in 1582 declared that she had bewitched one cow, ten sheep and ten lambs of John Wade: the pamphlet said that John's bewitched livestock were all lambs.¹ Or there were slight disagreements over dates; for example, in the 1579 pamphlet Elizabeth Francis confessed to bewitching Poole's wife 'about Lent last (as she now remembreth)', while the indictment stated that she bewitched Alice Poole, wife of Richard, on the 26th of June - a little late for Lent.² It can, therefore, be confidently stated that those who wrote the pamphlets were accurate and almost certainly eye-witness reporters.

A comparison of the pamphlets and indictments further shows that the four hundred and eighty-seven indictments for black witchcraft which reached the Assize courts were only a small portion of the actual suspicions against witches. Comparison of the 1579 indictments and pamphlet have shown how much lay behind

1. Case 167.

2. Case 123.

each indictment, and if we look at the other pamphlets we find further evidence that prosecutions seriously understress the actual accusations made at the courts. There are surviving indictments in the Assize records for eighteen women who were also described in the pamphlets. In these indictments they are specified as having thirty-one victims. From the pamphlets, however, we learn the names of another fifty-seven victims not mentioned in the indictments, yet suffering from the witchcraft of these eighteen women.¹ Thus it would appear that approximately one in three of those believing themselves to be bewitched went as far as making a formal charge in the courts, registered as an indictment. Thus for each witch there were roughly four victims. Instead of the impression created by the indictments of a direct quarrel between two persons, witchcraft begins to emerge as the result of a person being suspected by a number of village families, all of whom felt themselves to have been injured. Further, it

1. 'Victim' is used here to mean either the actual human being maimed or killed, or the owner of bewitched property. These four 'pamphlets' used to compare with the indictments are, in fact, those of 1566, 1579, 1589 and a set of ecclesiastical depositions summarized in the appendix as case 861. The latter is included rather than the very detailed 1582 pamphlet because, for the reasons explained, the 1582 trial seems exceptional.

appears that, just as only one in three suspicions became formulated into an indictment, possibly more than one in four suspected witches were never openly accused in court at all. In the four pamphlets twenty-seven witches are named, but only eighteen appear in the indictments.¹ This corroborates evidence from other sources.² Pamphlets, therefore, are a vital and reliable source, providing otherwise inaccessible material and correcting the somewhat narrow impression of witchcraft prosecutions given by indictments.

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1. The suspected witches mentioned in pamphlets but omitted from court records are listed as cases 1208-1216.
 2. See p. 55 above.

CHAPTER 7.

Contemporary Comments on Essex Witchcraft Prosecutions:
Evidence from Literary sources.

Diarists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seldom mentioned witchcraft trials; in Essex only three diaries contain such references.¹ Although there were many witch trials in neighbouring villages, Richard Rogers, preacher at Wethersfield from about 1575 to 1618, showed no interest in the subject in his diary which covers the years 1587-1590.² The next diarist of interest to us, Arthur Wilson, was an extreme protestant like Rogers. In his capacity as steward to the Earl of Warwick he was present at the sensational trial of witches in 1645. He showed considerable scepticism in his later comments on the trial, arguing that he 'could see nothing in the evidence which did perswade me to thinke them other than poore, mellenchollie, envious, mischevous, ill-disposed, ill-dieted, atrabilius constitutions.'³ Covering the same period as Wilson's account is the diary of Ralph Josselin, vicar of Earl's Colne from 1640-1683. No prosecutions for witchcraft or sorcery, after 1587,

1. English diaries, generally, are not known to contain many references to witchcraft, for example Notestein, Witchcraft, Appdx. C. only cites one extra-Essex diary.
2. Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, ed. M. M. Knappen (Chicago, 1933); nor does the other diary, that of Samuel Ward, contain any witchcraft reference. For trials in villages neighbouring Wethersfield see Map 1; the first recorded Wethersfield case did not occur until 1626.
3. Francis Peck, Desiderata Curiosa (1779), ii. p. 476.

have been discovered for this village, yet Josselin twice noted informal suspicions of witchcraft.¹ In 1656 'one J. Biford was clamoured on as a witch, and Mr. C. thought his child ill by it' but Josselin believed the 'poor wretch innocent as to that evil'. On the second occasion the case was reported by the minister of Gaines Colne and concerned one Anne Crow who was suspected as a witch and was discovered acting suspiciously beside a grave. These two suspicions never seem to have grown into formal prosecutions, reminding us that the court cases upon which statistics are based only represent a fraction of the actual witchcraft beliefs. The final diary account describes the ducking of a witch in 1699, beyond the limit of this thesis. Some very extraordinary details are given, but the case is not known to have come before the courts.²

The minute books of religious and political bodies are even less informative about Essex witchcraft. Among the many matters discussed at the Dedham Classis in 1588 was the question, moved by Mr. Salmon, of how a witch might be known.

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1. The first extract comes from the printed, ^{the} second from the unprinted, part of the diary; they are reprinted in H. Smith, Ecclesiastical History of Essex (n.d., about 1932), pp. 222, 417.
 2. William Gilbert, 'Witchcraft in Essex', Trans. Essex Arch. Soc. n.s. xi (1911), 211-218; E. L. Cutts, 'Curious extracts from a MS. diary, of the time of James II and William & Mary', Trans. Essex Arch. Soc., i (1858), 126-7.

' it was thought fittest to geve it over to some justice to examyne it, and that there must be some usuall experience of evell effects to ensue of their displeasure and some presumption of the death of man or beast: some said she might be found out by serche in her bodie, some thought that to be fancy in the people easilie conceiving such a thinge and to be reproved in them.'¹.

Thus this group of Puritan ministers showed a mixture of credulity and caution. In a minute book of another kind, that of the Parliamentary County Committee during the Civil War, there is no reference to witchcraft at all, although there is such a reference in the equivalent records for Suffolk.²

There are no references to Essex witchcraft in contemporary newspaper accounts, though they refer to witchcraft trials in nearby counties.³ Only slightly more helpful are contemporary biographies, one of which

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1. The Presbyterian Movement in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, ed. R.G. Usher (Camden Soc., 3rd Ser., viii, 1905), p. 70. Nothing further appears concerning this discussion, nor does Salmon appear to have been an Essex minister; Usher states (p. xlvi) that he lived outside Essex, at Ewerton, and Newcourt's Repertorium does not include such a man.
 2. There is no reference in the Romford Committee's Order Book as described in B.W. Quintrell 'The Divisional Committee for Southern Essex during the Civil War' (Manchester Univ. M.A. thesis 1962) and Mr. Quintrell has kindly informed the writer that he has not come across witchcraft in any other Committee records, or in the Colchester civil war papers. For Suffolk see Alan Everitt, Suffolk & the Great Rebellion, 1640-60 (Suffolk Rec. Soc., iii, 1960), p. 73.
 3. For newspaper references to witchcraft in other counties, including description of the Essex witchfinder Matthew Hopkins when he was in Suffolk, see Notestein, Witchcraft, Appdx. C. under the years 1643-52.

refers to some examinations in two witchcraft prosecutions at the Quarter Sessions in 1570. These were held before Sir-Thomas Smith and include fascinating details concerning anti-witchcraft charms, familiars, the motives of witches and other matters. Smith showed no particular scepticism at the extraordinary accounts.¹ None of the individuals concerned appear in other records; without this accidental reference we would never have known that Theydon Garnon was the scene of witchcraft suspicions.

The activities of seventeenth century astrologers occasionally provide evidence about Essex witchcraft. There is a letter to Richard Napier from Matthew Evans, requesting the return of various books mislaid by Evans when he was accused of conjuring. Two years after this letter, in 1623, Evans was again in trouble and was examined in connection with the supposed bewitching of the Countess of Sussex in Hampshire. The ancestral home of the Earl of Sussex was at Boreham in Essex, but nothing concerning Evans or the bewitching of the Countess has been discovered in Essex records.² In the same Richard

1. See case 1204; only literary references to actual prosecutions have been listed in ^mappendix. Smith had earlier examined William Wycherley concerning sorcery, Kittredge, Witchcraft, pp. 211-2; neither incident is mentioned in Mary Dewar, Sir Thomas Smith: a Tudor Intellectual in Office (1964).
2. Bodleian Library, Ashmole MSS. 421, fol. 170; I owe this reference to Mr. Thomas. For the 1623 case see C. L. Ewen, Robert Ratcliffe, 5th Earl of Sussex: The Witchcraft Allegations in his Family (n.p., 1938).

Napier's case book there is a very detailed and interesting account of the supposed bewitching of the house, grounds, and persons belonging to the Aylett family of Magdalen Laver.¹ The case started in 1633 and continued until at least 1646, in the later part in the case-books of the astrologer William Lilly. None of the possible total of fifteen suspected witches appear in the court records, although the whole case may overlap with some strange magical rites occurring in 1643.²

As in other counties, references to witchcraft continued to appear in literary sources throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These illustrate that beliefs did not immediately evaporate the moment official prosecutions ended. Old women were still informally tried by being immersed in water. Nevertheless, it is clear that this is a different phenomenon from the universally approved and widespread prosecutions of the earlier period.³ No references to Essex witchcraft were

1. See Case 1207; again I owe most of the references to Mr. Thomas. The Ayletts are easily traced as they were a big gentry family. (Morant, Essex, i.142).

2. Case 840.

3. For eighteenth and nineteenth century cases in Essex see p. 384 in the bibliography.

2. Scot. Discovery, pp. 57, 62, 236; see also A Discovery of the Devils and Spirits, appendix to the 1504 edition of Discovery but omitted in later editions.

3. Case 1205.

4. For witchcraft cases while Harriet was in the country see p. 69 above; for a discussion of Harriet see Harriet and Notestein, Witchcraft, ch. iv.

found in either family papers or the poetry and drama of the period.¹

A number of writers included Essex examples in their general works on English witchcraft. It is possible that Reginald Scot was goaded into writing his classic work by the 1582 Essex trial. Certainly he alluded to it with scorn and may be describing the same trial, though his evidence is not from the pamphlet, when he described an Essex justice who 'thought he was bewitched, in the verie instant whiles he examined the witch; so as his leg was broken thereby.'² The next Essex reference occurs in a work by the exorcist John Darrell. Although this purported to be an actual trial at the Quarter Sessions, no record of the case has been discovered in the actual rolls of the court.³ One of Darrell's major critics was Samuel Harsnet, the author of a number of works on witchcraft and Archdeacon of Essex from 1603-1609. Harsnet does not, however, refer to any specifically Essex cases in his works.⁴ It is

1. There are few family papers for Elizabeth's reign at Chelmsford; although these were not searched it seems likely that the presence of an extensive description of witchcraft would have been brought to the writer's attention. Neither Notestein, Witchcraft, nor K.M. Briggs, Pale Hecate's Team (1962), the latter an excellent description of literary sources, contain any specifically Essex references in poetry or drama.
2. Scot, Discovery, pp. 37, 62, 236: see also A Discourse upon divels and spirits, appendix to the 1584 edition of Scot's Discovery but omitted in later editions, pp. 542-3.
3. Case 1205.
4. For witchcraft cases while Harsnet was archdeacon see p. 69 above; for a discussion of Harsnet and his works see Notestein, Witchcraft, ch. iv.

just possible that Darrell's case of possession is the same as that referred to in the following year by Doctor Jorden. As an example of a womb disease he cited 'an Essex Gentlewoman of good note' who was convulsed and distracted over a period of fifteen years and was persuaded 'by a stranger Physition' that she was bewitched.¹

It is not until 1627 that there is another Essex reference. In that year Richard Bernard narrated how he had a long discussion at Castle Hedingham in Essex with a penitent white witch, one Edmunds of Cambridge.² Three years later a young man at Colchester was molested by the Devil, according to a subsequent account by Nathaniel Crouch. The same author described the 1645 Essex trial of witches, but added no fresh details to the pamphlet account.³ More important for the history of Essex witchcraft is the work of Thomas Ady, published in 1656. He drew examples of old spells, the discovery of fraudulent cunning folk, and the use of ventriloquism to counterfeit possession, from Essex, and it is probable that he lived at Wethersfield in that county.⁴

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1. Edward Jorden, A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother (1603), pp. 6, 17, 22. A passing reference to a possession case at Colchester at the turn of the century is made in John Swan, A True and Briefe Report of Mary Glover's Vexation (1603), p. 70.
 2. Bernard Guide, p. 137. Edmunds does not appear elsewhere in Essex sources.
 3. R. B., Kingdom of Darkness (1688), pp. 21, 22, 148-159.
 4. Ady, Candle, pp. 58, 62, 79, 101, 109. Part of the evidence for the residence of a family headed by at least two generations of Thomas Ady at Wethersfield during the middle of the 17th century is a will of 1647. E. R. O., D/AMW 5/53.

The 1645 trial in Essex attracted the attention of Richard Baxter at the end of the century, though he added no significant details despite his talks to 'many Understanding, Pious and Credible Persons' who witnessed the trial.¹ Nor does Francis Hutchinson, writing in 1718, add any new details in his descriptions of the famous 1582 and 1645 trials. He makes three allusions to the latter trials, but muddles up the Essex and Suffolk confessions.² One other writer with general Essex connections was Thomas Pickering who wrote a long introduction to William Perkins' Damned Art of Witchcraft in 1608. Pickering made no specific references to Essex witchcraft cases, but he was Minister of Finchingfield in Essex at the time. His presence at Finchingfield had no recorded effect on witchcraft prosecutions; there were no cases during the years of his residence.

Two other writers who concentrated their attention on the 1645 Essex trial were John Stearne and Matthew Hopkins.³ Both were resident in the county and both took a leading part in the actual prosecutions. It is in large measure their works which have been the basis for the reputation of Essex as a centre of prosecution. Neither

1. Richard Baxter, The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits (1691), pp. 52-3.
2. Francis Hutchinson, An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft (1718), pp. 29, 61, 70.
3. John Stearne, A Confirmation & Discovery of Witchcraft (1645); Hopkins, Discovery, (1647). For their works and activities, see Ch. 11.

however, discussed any other Essex trial.

The most valuable authority for Essex witchcraft is George Gifford. Because of his supreme importance, discussion of his work has been reserved to the end of the chapter. Gifford was a leading Essex Puritan, and minister and lecturer at Maldon for most of the time after 1582 until his death in 1620. His two books on witchcraft written in 1587 and 1593 provide a wealth of personal observation which will be incorporated in subsequent chapters.¹ Comparison of these works with the descriptions of actual prosecutions shows that Gifford was a keen and accurate observer. Unfortunately, however, it has been impossible to relate the various narratives of witchcraft cases included in the books to actual cases. For instance, when Gifford speaks of a witch being executed who lived at 'W.H.' seven miles away, it is tempting to deduce that this is West Haningfield, eight miles from Maldon,² but there is no known prosecution in that village. Again, 'old mother W of great T' fits no one living in either of the Essex 'great T's', 'reat Totham and Great Tey.³ There is no known 'Mother Barlie of W', nor have any

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1. Gifford Dialogue and Discourse. For cases in Maldon at the time see p. 73.
 2. Dialogue, sig. D4.
 3. Dialogue, sig. C4.

2. Dialogue, sig. 44.

familiar with the names of Lightfoot, Lunch or Makeshift emerged in any of the pamphlets.¹ Thus Gifford either altered initials and names, or invented fictitious, if typical, cases. A third, though less likely possibility, is that all the records for these cases have been lost. The general impression from Gifford's works is that witchcraft was a familiar and pervasive force; as one speaker put it, 'They say there is scarce any towne or village in all this shire, but there is one or two witches at the least in it'.²

If we except Gifford, the literary evidence for Essex witchcraft would give an entirely distorted impression of prosecutions. It would leave us with the opinion that there were only three trials of any consequence in Essex, in 1570, 1582 and 1645, the last of these being by far the most important. We would also know of a few instances of trickery and fraud, some charms, and two suspected witches recorded by a mid-seventeenth century vicar. If we compare this with the actual pattern of prosecutions and beliefs revealed in legal records, we see what a distortion and under-estimation this would be.

1. Dialogue, sig.C; no cunning woman at 'R.H.' (Sig.B) was located. Thus it seems a little premature to include Gifford's cases in a list of actual prosecutions, as did Notestein, Witchcraft, pp.394-5.

2. Dialogue, sig.A4^v.

CHAPTER 8.

The Background to Witchcraft Prosecutions in Three Essex Villages, 1560-1599.

Previous chapters have discussed the location and distribution of witchcraft prosecutions throughout Essex. Many of the most important problems facing the historian of witchcraft can, however, only be solved after very intensive research. Such research is only possible at the village level because the task of discovering everything about the social background to witchcraft accusations necessitates detailed local knowledge. Among the questions that such a study would hope to answer, a few may be singled out as illustrations: the proportion of all misfortunes in a village which were attributed to witches; the frequency with which suspected witches were also suspected of other offences, for instance adultery or scolding; whether people were believed to bewitch their cognates or affines or non-relatives; to what extent accusations were confined to groups of neighbours living in the same street or the same manor. A detailed analysis of three villages within which there were a number of witchcraft accusations has been undertaken. The results of this analysis will be incorporated in subsequent chapters on specific problems. In this chapter the

sources and methods of study will be outlined and the villages will be described generally.

The three villages chosen were the adjacent ones of Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, and Little Baddow. They were selected because Hatfield Peverel is the earliest Essex village to be described in a witchcraft pamphlet, that of 1566.¹ The two neighbouring villages, both of them containing prosecuted witches, were selected as a balance to the clearly exceptional Hatfield Peverel. The group lies some five miles to the east of Chelmsford, in the area where prosecutions first emerged in Essex.² In all, there were fourteen persons prosecuted at the Assizes from these three villages. If we compare this to the total of two hundred and ninety-one persons for the whole of Essex, it is clear that this is a small sample of the widespread suspicions in the county. The following table lists the names of suspected witches in the three villages.

1. The whole of the 1566 Pamphlet is concerned with Hatfield Peverel; the 1579 Pamphlet also contains on sigs. Aiiii-Av the confession of a Hatfield witch.

2. See Map 1.

TABLE 7: List of suspected witches in three Essex Villages, 1560-1599.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates of trials</u>	<u>Courts</u>	<u>Case No.</u>
<u>Hatfield Peverel</u>			
Lora Winchester	1566	Assize	16
Elizabeth Fraunces	1566, 1572, 1579	Assize, Quarter Ss.	17, 50, 123.
Agnes Waterhouse	1566	Assize, Quarter Ss.	18, 793
Joan Waterhouse	1566	Assize, Quarter Ss.	19, 793
Joan Osborne	1567, 1579, 1587	Assize, Arch- deaconry	22, 1035
Agnes Francys	1572	Assize	58-61
Agnes Bromley	1576	Assize	97-99
(Elizabeth Lorde mentioned as a witch in 1579 Pamphlet)			
Agnes Duke	1584, 1589	Assize	203, 272
Joan Cocke	1584	Assize	208, 209
Elizabeth Pillgram	1587	Archdeaconry	1030, 1034
Mary Godfrey	1587	Archdeaconry	1032
John Gosse and wife	1587	Archdeaconry	1033, 1036
John Heare/Jenny	1589	Assize	272
<u>Boreham</u>			
'Mason's wife'	1566	Archdeaconry	863
Mary Belsted/ Middleton	1566, 1576, 1594	Archdeaconry, Assize	862, 890, 892, 393
Margaret Poole	1576	Archdeaconry	889
Agnes Haven	1593	Assize	357, 358
<u>Little Baddow</u>			
Alice Bambricke	1570	Assize	33
Alice Swallow	1570	Assize	29-32

In none of the villages were there prosecutions after 1594. A comparison of the dates of the accusations suggests that the pressures behind them were very localized. Even in three neighbouring villages witches were accused in different years. It would seem that it was particular pressures within the village, rather

than an external event such as the arrival of a witch-hunter, a general economic recession, or political uncertainty, which led to accusations.

This table also clearly illustrates how some people were accused of witchcraft on several occasions and over a long period of time. Thus Elizabeth Fraunces, Joan Osborne, and Mary Belsted were each accused over a period of more than ten years.

The sources for studying the background of village life, out of which the accusations emerged, are immense.¹ All three villages provide Elizabethan wills, over one hundred and twenty in all, which can be used to reconstitute the kinship structure and, through the witnesses to them, groups of friends. Parish registers have survived from this period for Boreham and Little Baddow and this enables us not only to add to our knowledge about kinship, but also suggests years of heavy mortality which can be compared to deaths by witchcraft. In Boreham we have an Elizabethan churchwardens' account book and an almost unique set of Elizabethan 'Overseers of the Poor' accounts. These enable us to see who were the poorest in the village

1. The sources are described in the bibliography, pp. 384-5. The extremely onerous work of analyzing the huge amount of material was only made possible through the generous assistance of the writer's family.

and how serious the problem of poverty was at different periods; this again can be compared to the prosecutions. Subsidy assessments for all three villages during the whole of the sixteenth century enable us to check the economic level of victims and witches, they also provide information on the amount of migration from the village. Manorial records, including an excellent court leet roll, have only been examined for Hatfield Peverel; from these we can judge whether witchcraft was restricted to the inhabitants of a particular manor, and whether suspected witches were also involved in petty quarrels settled at this court. A similar use can be made of the court records of the Assize, Quarter Session, and Archdeaconry courts. Since all these exist from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign for all three villages,¹ we can see how far witchcraft overlapped with other offences. A number of other records, for instance those kept by coroners on sudden deaths, have also been used. The result is that witchcraft prosecutions, too often seen in isolation from their background, can be related to other religious, economic, and social factors.

Another use for the local records is as a check on the accuracy of the witchcraft prosecutions recorded

1. Except, as noted in the bibliography, the archdeaconry records for Hatfield Peverel; these commence effectively in the late 1570's.

in court records. A comparison of Assize indictments and pamphlets describing the trials suggested that both sources, independent yet agreeing, are accurate. This impression is substantiated from a comparison with local records. Though there are minor divergencies, it is the similarity that is striking. In Little Baddow three people were said to have been bewitched to death. These can be compared to entries in the parish register. Richard Hawkes was supposedly bewitched at the age of seven days on the ninth of October 1568, and then died on the first of September in the following year. The register noted the marriage of his parents in October 1567, then the birth of Richard on the 14th of October 1568, some twelve days from the time specified by the indictment. His death, however, is not recorded. In the case of Elizabeth Goores, supposedly bewitched to death on the 2nd of March 1568, there appears to have been a slip with the regnal year, since the register notes her death on the 10th of February 1567.¹ The most accurate indictment concerned the bewitching to death of Elizabeth Eastwick on the 1st of May, 1569. Perhaps because she was not buried for a few days, the register gives her burial on the 11th instead of the 1st of May. In Boreham, Edith Hawes

1. Here, as elsewhere, dates have been made uniform, starting the year on 1 January.

was bewitched to death on the 20th of December, 1587 according to the indictment; the register noted her burial on the 25th of December, 1587. In Hatfield Peverel only wills can be used to check the indictments since the parish register is missing. Thus John Baker was bewitched to death on 17th September, 1575, according to the indictment; on the 26th of November in the same year he was noted as dying intestate by the officials of the archdeaconry court.¹ John Bird died of supposed witchcraft on the 23rd of February, 1584, six days after he had made his will. Walter Wilmott made his will on the 1st of April, 1572, the same day as that on which he was alleged to have been bewitched to death. Both Bird and Wilmott admitted in their wills to being 'sick in body', but neither suggested that this was due to witchcraft.

It is difficult to obtain more than a rough estimate of the total population of these three villages. Yet some general total is necessary in order to see how important witchcraft beliefs were in village life. The Boreham churchwardens' accounts provide the only clear figures. In 1575 there were seventy-eight

1. E.R.O., D/ACA/6, fol. 267.

households, which suggests a population of between 350-400.¹ Over a period of thirty years some four people were suspected as witches and another six people, whose names are known, were related directly as either victims or husbands of witches.

The population of Hatfield Peverel can only be guessed from comparing its total records to those of Boreham, for instance the number of wills, persons listed in subsidy returns, court cases; all these suggest that Boreham was roughly ^{two-thirds of} the size of Hatfield Peverel.

If we assume that the latter contained between 550-650 people, we can see that the fifteen suspected witches and thirty named victims or husbands represented a reasonable proportion of the total village population. The same method applied to Little Baddow, itself some two-thirds the size of Boreham, means that a village of about two hundred and fifty people contained two known

1. Depending, of course, on the multiplier used. Another problem is the extent to which population grew between 1560-1600. While the surplus of births over deaths recorded in the parish registers of the two villages with registers suggests enormous growth (e.g., there was a surplus of 265 in Little Baddow over these years), there are indications that most of the surplus migrated. Thus the Boreham Churchwardens' accounts, recording the collections from communicants, suggest the following attendances: 1580- 222 persons, 1592 - 224 persons, in 1600 - 192 persons, in 1603 - 224 persons. It is hoped to discuss this and other problems concerning these three villages in a future study.

witches and four known victims.¹ Naturally, this only shows the surface of suspicions. Many others in the villages would be connected to witchcraft prosecutions through links of blood or co-residence. For example, we would never have known that John Pilbarough of Hatfield Peverel was aware of witchcraft suspicions if he had not specified that no charity was to be given to witches; his is the only will, of more than 190 examined for the three villages, to mention the subject.²

Another way of testing the relative importance of witchcraft prosecutions in everyday village life is to compare the number accused of this offence with those accused of other offences. The results of such a comparison are set out in the following table.

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1. The density of witchcraft thus seems roughly similar to that in the African Ceŵa tribe, where a village of 200 has at least three suspected witches (M.G. Marwick, Sorcery in its Social Setting (Manchester, 1965), p.272).
 2. Having left various sums of money to be distributed among the poor of the three villages, the testator added 'reproving mien (sic) executors that none which ar(e) or shalbe then any waye suspected or detected in the develish art of sorcery and witchcraft may have no parte of these my saied legasies or bequestes' (E.R.O., D/ACW, 4/182).

TABLE 8: Witchcraft and other Offences in three Essex Villages, 1560-1599.

Offence	(Number of persons offending)		
	Hatfield Peverel	Boreham	Little Baddow
Assault	26	5	8
Murder	2	1	1
Theft	11	20	9
Witchcraft	14	4	2
Breaking the sabbath by working	2	2	1
Non-attendance at church	52	29	23
Drunkenness	2	2	1
Marital disputes	4	6	-
Misbehaviour in churchyard	1	2	-
Quarrelling/scolding	-	4	1
Refusing to pay church rates	8	9	3
Sexual offences	80	46	30

Notes to table: the figures are, as yet, only approximate. They are based on Assize, Quarter Session, King's Bench and Archdeaconry records. Offences are divided into those at secular and those at ecclesiastical courts; witchcraft, however, is treated under one head only. Totals for sexual offences include both offenders.

From the table we can see that witchcraft was a less common offence than theft and assault, more frequent than murder. Compared to ecclesiastical offences, it was less common than sexual misdemeanours and failing to attend church, but more often presented than breaking the sabbath, drunkenness, marital disputes, quarrelling, and misbehaviour on church premises. Thus it seems clear that witchcraft prosecutions were of central

importance in village life in these three villages.

Their importance will emerge even more clearly in subsequent analyses of those involved as witches.

It has already been pointed out that the far more complex series of accusations employed to battle against the power of witches illustrates this contention. Such counter-action can be usefully divided into three stages, which are dependent yet distinct. Before the witch attacks, certain precautions could be taken to avert the objects of witchcraft; once witchcraft has been used, means could be sought to locate the witch and either drive her or withdraw her power or have her punished. The prosecutions were merely one method in the latter period. Such counter-action has been termed 'interior' to distinguish it from both the overt prosecution and the activity of specialized people, namely the witch-finders, who were employed to deal with witchcraft. Among the more general problems illustrated by the methods employed to ward off witches are two of particular importance. The first is the process by which accusations become focused on a certain individual in a village.

The second is the factor by which a village is divided into

1. Gaining folk, witch-finders, and other people are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9.Informal Counter-Action against Witchcraft.

It has already been suggested that witchcraft prosecutions in Essex were only the final stage in a far more complex series of suspicions. The methods employed to battle against the power of witches illustrates this contention. Such counter-action may be usefully divided into three stages, mutually interdependent yet distinct. Before the witch attacked, certain precautions could be taken to safeguard likely objects of witchcraft; once witchcraft was believed to have been used, cures could be sought; finally, attempts were made to locate the witch and either force her to withdraw her power or have her punished. Thus the prosecutions were merely one method in the final reaction. Such counter-action has been termed 'informal' to distinguish it from both the court prosecutions and also the activity of specialized people, cunning folk and witch-finders, who were employed to deal with witchcraft.¹ Among the more general problems illuminated by the methods employed to ward off witches are two of particular importance. The first is the process by which suspicions became focused on a certain individual in a village. The second is the degree to which belief in witchcraft,

1. Cunning folk, witch-finders and their activities are discussed in the two subsequent chapters.

by providing a set of magical and other activities in cases of misfortune and anxiety, provided an attractive response to the problem of suffering. Unfortunately, ^{the} informal nature of the remedies has meant that no quantitative estimate can be made of the amount of such activity. In fact, much of the evidence for counter-activity comes from literary evidence and it is only occasionally that we learn about it from Essex prosecutions.

There were two principal methods of avoiding being bewitched: taking magical precautions, or regulating one's life so that a witch was unlikely, or unable, to attack. There is considerable literary evidence for the impression that people surrounded themselves with a wall of magical objects and gestures, intended to ward off evil generally and a witch specifically. Hanging holy writing around the neck, especially the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, was much favoured.¹ The Essex writer George Gifford told how a woman 'haunted with a Fairy' was rumoured to wear 'about her Saint Johns Gospel, or some part of it'.² Charms were either worn around the neck or carried in the pocket,

1. Among those who referred to it were Scot, Discovery, pp.212,230 and Bernard, Guide, p.135.

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.B^v. Elizabeth Shymell may have been referring to this (in case 1172) when she said that 'she never did ware any paper about hir neck' nor showed it to another woman.

they might be certain plants, roots or stones, or the holy objects which the pre-Reformation clergy had advocated as amulets against evil.¹ Among the most common of these objects were a holed stone, salt, communion wafers, holy water and the sign of the cross.²

Unfortunately we cannot go further than to say that it seems likely that these were commonly employed in Essex, for when we turn from the generalizations of contemporaries to the legal records we are left with a gap in the evidence. A few buried bottles with curious contents have been discovered; these were probably used to prevent or cure witchcraft.³ We know that the use of plants and other objects to ward off witchcraft was widespread in the nineteenth century and there are scattered instances from all over England for the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, specific cases in Essex are scarce.⁴

1. For example, see Ady, Candle, p.47; Perkins, Damned Art, p.149; Visitation Articles & Injunctions, ed. W.H. Frere & W.M. Kennedy (Alcuin Club Collections, xiv-xvi, 1910), xv, 126, 183-7.

2. Examples may be found in Kittredge, Witchcraft, p.220; Perkins Damned Art, p.245; Scot, Discovery, p.236.

3. R. Merrifield, 'The Use of Bellarmine's as Witch Bottles', The Guildhall Miscellany, i, 3 (1954), 3-15; for Essex examples see Memorials of Old Essex, ed. A.C. Kelway, (1908), p.252.

4. There is a vivid account showing the enormous preoccupation with counter-witchcraft in a nineteenth century Yorkshire village in J.C. Atkinson, Forty Years in a Moorland Parish (1891) pp.91-102. For a sixteenth century example, see Churchwardens' Presentments, Part 1, Archdeaconry of Chichester, ed. H. Johnstone (Sussex Rec. Soc., xlix, 1947-8), p.92. A possible Essex case is number 1170. Charms to be hung in a barrel were prescribed in case No.1207(b).

Another preventive against witchcraft was to behave in such a way that a witch could not or would not attack one. The most extreme solution was to move from a particularly witch-infested area. There is only one known reference to such an action in Essex. Gifford made one of his speakers say, after a long description of the witchcraft in his village, 'I had no minde to dwell in that place any longer'.¹ It is also possible that people tried to prevent witchcraft by refusing to have witches living near them. A witness in the 1582 Assize trial told how her husband was asked for the sale of a house and acre of land by a witch's husband; he refused to sell because 'he would not have him his neighbour'.² Better documented is the belief that a witch might be placated and witchcraft avoided if no motive for hatred was given. 'These miserable wretches', wrote Scot, 'are so odious unto all their neighbors, and so feared, as few dare offend them, or denie them anie thing they aske'.³ Another writer noted that people 'for feare doe give something unto them', but he also remarked that those who gave in this way were the most likely victims of witchcraft.⁴ This double idea,

1. Dialogue, sig.C.

2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig.F6^v.

3. Scot, Discovery, p.29. see also 4. Bernard, Guide, p.184.

that an attempt could be made to avoid the anger of the witch by kindness, but that such an effort usually broke down as the victim's patience cracked or the demands became more extreme, is vividly illustrated by the Essex writer Gifford. One of the speakers in his Dialogue, asked why he should have been bewitched, replied,

'Trust me I cannot tell, but I feare me I have, for there be two or three in our towne which I like not, but especially an old woman, I have been as careful to please her as ever I was to please mine own mother, and to give her ever anon one thing or other, and yet me thinkes she frownes at me now and then.' 1.

The same author gave another example of this attempt to humour the suspected witch: a man, asked why a certain woman should have bewitched him, replied that it may have been because he and his wife asked her to keep her chickens out of his garden and she took offence at this, although 'Wee spake her as fayre as wee could for our lives'.²

It seems that, up to a point, the fear of the witch acted as a sanction in enforcing neighbourly conduct; that people gave to others because they feared their evil power. A conflicting idea, however, also existed. This was that the best way to prevent witchcraft was to sever all connections with the suspect,

1. Dialogue, sig. A4^v-B.

2. Discourse, sigs. G4-G4^v; on p. 235 below it is shown how witches were people whose demands had long been met, but who were finally rejected.

Since witches often worked through physical objects it was best to avoid all borrowing from, and lending to, suspects. The continental Malleus Maleficarum warned people not to give or lend butter, milk or cheese to a begging witch,¹ and English authorities agreed that witches sometimes worked 'by leaving something of theirs in your House' or by 'getting something of yours into their House'. It was even dangerous to co-operate with them in everyday activities since they also worked 'ingrately, and by occasion of good turns'.² If they loitered near one's house they should be warned off since they might be burying their magic under the bedstraw or threshold.³ Joseph Glanvil agreed with Scot that it was commonly believed to be dangerous to receive an apple or similar gift from a witch.⁴ There are a number of occasions in Essex when gifts from a witch caused the downfall of the recipient, though there is only a little direct evidence of the article lent to the witch being bewitched.⁵ Many must have found it attractive to combine Christianity with prudence, shunning the emissaries of the devil by refusing to give

1. Cited in Scot, Discovery, p.238.

2. Gaule, Select Cases, p.129.

3. Ibid., p.144.

4. Joseph Glanvill, Some Philosophical Considerations Touching the Being of Witches and Witchcrafts(1667),p.25; Scot, Discovery, p.62.

5. For the methods of Essex witches, see p.232 below.

them neighbourly support. The way in which this fitted in with the contemporary attack on indiscriminate charity is well illustrated in the words of a Puritan writer in 1617. To avoid witchcraft, he told his audience, we should

'be wise in our Liberalities, and Almesdeedes, not distributing to each sort of poore, because many times witches go under this habite especially, to take heed if any such suspected seeke unto us; to bee straight-handed towards them, not to entertaine them in our houses, not to relieve them with our morsels.'¹

That the witch was believed to be responding in fury to such a breach in neighbourly relations is clear from the pamphlet accounts.²

The writer who counselled Christians to avoid giving to begging witches offered one other preventive, 'to renue our right in Christ daily by unfained repentance'. He also suggested that houses should be spiritually protected by dedication and prayer, by a virtuous family life, observation of the sabbath and other similarly Christian conduct.³ This was the normal

1. Thomas Cooper, Mystery of Witchcraft, (1617), pp.287-8; a very literal interpretation, in which an Essex man made a will which stated that his charitable bequests should exclude witches, is given on p.114 below.

2. Discussed in chapter six.

3. T.Cooper, Mystery of Witchcraft (1617), p.290.

remedy suggested by writers. Gifford stressed that faith alone was a shield against witchcraft, and Stearne quoted the Psalms to the effect that the godly need not fear witchcraft since they were protected.¹ One writer even tried to argue that the religious were less subject to attack than other people:

'Though God may try his dearest children this way, yet it is very seldome, and upon their goods rather then upon their bodies'.

Nevertheless he was forced to admit that 'sometimes it hath beene found, that they have prevailed to the taking away of the life of some, who have been reputed religious'.² A similarly ambivalent attitude was shown by William Perkins who remarked that 'Though the godly man be not exempted from witchcraft, yet he is a thousand folde more free from the power thereof, then other men are'.³ This double idea is reflected in the actual Essex cases. On several occasions the devoutness of the hoped-for victim baffled the witch. A witch in 1566 admitted that she was unable to bewitch a man because he 'was so stronge in fayth',⁴ and in 1589 another Essex woman confessed that,

1. Gifford, Discourse, sigs. I3-I3^v; Stearne, Confirmation p. 3.

2. Bernard, Guide, p.182.

3. Damned Art, pp.223-4.

4. 1566 Pamphlet, p.324.

2. Scale, Salted Cases, pp. 151-3.

'she sent her saide sprites, to hurt Master Kitchin Minister of the saide towne, and also unto one George Coe of the saide towne but they could not, and the cause why they could not, as the saide sprites tolde her, was because they had at their comming a strong faith in God, and had invocated and called upon him, that they could doo them no harme'. 1

Among the conclusions contemporaries could draw from this apparent immunity of the godly, was the fact that one method of avoiding physical disaster was to be ardent in religion. This was implied by Jonn Gaule when he made a list of godly actions, for instance prayers, thanksgiving, and purity of thought, which were the real answer to a threat of witchcraft.²

Unfortunately, the Essex evidence cannot help solve the problem of whether, in actual life, fear of witchcraft led to increased outward religious devotion. One reason for doubting whether this was so is the suggestion that people, in fact, realised that godliness was no protection.

George Gifford was sensitive to the fact that among his Essex congregation an obsession with witchcraft counter-action undermined 'true faith'. He wrote that

' many nowe doe even quake and tremble, and their faith doth stagger. Hathe hee power (thinke they) over such as be cunning in the scriptures, then what are they the better for their profession? the

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1. 1589 Pamphlet, sig. A3^v. Richard Kitchen, mentioned as a double-beneficed minister in 1586, held both Inworth and Stisted between 1562-1599 (Davids, Annals, p. 104).
 2. Gaule, Select Cases, pp. 151-3.

witch is on their bones as well as upon others. By this it might seeme, and so they take it, that other helpes and remedies are to be sought than by the scriptures. And so they run and seeke help where they ought not.' 1

Such disruptive effects on conventional religious attitudes are graphically illustrated in the struggle of an Essex minister to save his dying wife. She believed herself to be bewitched and, in considerable pain, told her husband of her fears. As befitted his position as parson of Beaumont, he answered,

'I pray you be content and thinke not so, but trust in God and put your trust in him onely, and he will defend you from her, and from the Divell himselfe also: and said moreover, what will the people say, that I beeing a Preacher shoulde have my wife so weake in faith'.

However, the situation grew graver, and after his wife had threatened to seek help from her father if her husband would not co-operate, the parson began to waver, still exhorting her to pray to God, but saying that he would hang the witch if he could prove her guilt. When he encountered the suspect over the garden fence he shouted at her

'I am glad you are here, you vield strumpet, saying, I do think you have bewitched my wife, and as truly as God doth live, if I can perceive yt she be troubled any more as she hath been, I will not leave a whole bone about thee, and besides I will

1. Dialogue, sig. D4.

seeke to have thee hanged.'¹

Given the combination of a painful and prolonged illness and a notorious witch, faith was of little avail.

The parson of Beaumont was dealing with witchcraft already, so it was believed, at work. This second stage in the counter-action against witches could lead to several types of activity. One choice was between private action and consulting an expert. For instance, one of Gifford's characters was in a state of indecision because of conflicting advice from his friends. Finding his animals dying at an unprecedented rate, he stated anxiously that,

'Some of my neighbours wishe me to burne some thing alive, as a henne or a hogge. Others will me in time to seeke helpe at the handes of some cunning man, before I have any further harne.'²

The first alternative, using fire as a cure or preventive, was obviously widely employed in Essex. Gifford told how a woman on the scaffold admitted that after a pig

1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. F2^v-F3. If, as Newcourt suggests, Richard Harrison was parson of Beaumont from 1566-91, apart for a short deprivation in 1586, Venn is wrong in identifying him with the Richard Harryson who matriculated from Christ's in 1575. Newcourt, *Repertorium*, ii.41; Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis*. Harrison does not appear in the Puritan survey of 1586, where Beaumont is omitted.

2. *Dialogue*, sig. B.

had been burnt alive, 'her cat would never go thither any more'.¹ In 1582 we hear of a pig being cured of witchcraft by having its ears cut off and burnt, and in the trial of 1579 a man stated that he had lost twenty hogs before he burnt one 'whereby as he thinketh, he saved the reste'.² Since such incidents are only casually recorded, it is impossible to tell whether it was normal for a villager to burn parts of his property when he noticed a high level of death or disease among his animals. There are two cases in the church courts of animals being burnt alive and their owners being presented,³ but normally it is only by accident that we hear of such incidents. Thus another man was presented in the same court, not because he 'did burne a lambe on o(u)r common w(hi)ch he sayth was bewitched', but rather because he was foolish enough to do this on a Sunday, during evening service, and 'so set fire on the common' which drew the congregation 'w(i)th amazement from the church'.⁴ Other private remedies were employed in Essex

1. Dialogue, sig.E; there is another case at sig.L4^v.
2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig.F^v; 1579 Pamphlet, sig.B1. A number of similar cases from all over England are listed in Kittredge, Witchcraft, p.96.
3. Cases 1128 and 976, though, in the former, it was actually the churchwarden who was presented for not presenting the offender.
4. Case 983. Possibly in this category was the man who could not approach his bewitched cow until he had kissed under its tail (Dufford, Dialogue, sig. 20^v).
5. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. 20^v.

in the attempt to cure animals, among them certain prayers and ritual actions.¹

Animals, however, were not the only agricultural property whose safety depended on anti-witchcraft spells and actions. Butter, cheese, and beer were especially vulnerable to witches and we consequently learn of spells and activities to make them free from witches.² The attempt of a woman in 1582 to make butter illustrates one of the most common of the anti-witchcraft cures, the red-hot horseshoe. It also shows how a person went through several possible explanations for a strange phenomenon before deciding whether witchcraft was at work. Unable to turn her milk into butter, the woman thought that this might be because of

'the feeding of her beasts, or els that the vessels were not sweete, whereupon she saith, she scalded her vessels, and scoured them with salt, thinking that might helpe, but it was never the better but as before: then she saith, shee was full of care..... then shee saith it came into her mind to approve another way, which was, shee tooke a horse shoe and made it redde hot, and put it into the milke in the vessals, and so into her creame: and then she saith, shee coulde seath her milke, fleete her creame, and make her butter in good sort.' 3

The theory behind this, as well as the assumption that such methods were commonly employed in Essex, is

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1. Case 1007; possibly in this category was the man who could not approach his bewitched cow until he had kissed under its tail (Gifford, Dialogue, sig. L4^v).
 2. Ady, Candle, p.59; Scot, Discovery, p.238.
 3. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. E3^v.

illustrated by Gifford who asked in the person of 'M.B.' how metal stuck into cream could hurt the witch, 'you did not thinke she was in your creame, did you?'. To this it was replied, 'Some thinke she is there, and therefore, when they thrust in the spitte they say, If thou beest here have at thine eie'.¹ Similar methods were employed, according to an Essex pamphlet, to save bewitched beer.²

Burning part of the victim and using pieces of red-hot metal were possible responses to attacks on livestock and dairy-products, but they were obviously impracticable in the majority of Essex cases, where the attack was on a human being. A few of the spells and methods actually used to cure a bewitched person have been preserved by chance in the Essex records, in most cases such methods are not recorded. One woman, examined in 1570,

'bore her husband in hand that he was bewitched: and as a remedy thereof, she caused a trivet (i.e. metal frame for a fireplace) to be set and certain pieces of elder and white hazel wood to be laid upon the trivet across, with a fire under it; and then him, who was at that time not well in his wits, to kneel down and say certain prayers, as she taught him; and thereby, she said, he could be delivered of his bewitching, or his witch should consume as the fire did.'³

1. Gifford, *Dialogue*, sigs. M3^V-M4.
2. 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. E3, F^V, F2.
3. Case 1204. The nature of the cures used, a mixture of plants and prayers, can be seen in case 873.

Another woman, the most notorious witch in the trial of 1582, told how she

'was troubled with a lameness in her bones, and for ease thereof, went to one Cokes wife of Weley, nowe deceased, who telled this examine that shee was bewitched, and at her entretie taught her to unwitcher her self; And had her take hogges dunge and charnell, and put them together and holde them in her left hand, and to take in the other hande a knife and then to cast the said into the fire and to take the said knife and to make three pricks under a table and to pricke the medicine three times, and to make three pricks under a table, and to let the knife sticke there: and after that to take three leves of sage, and as much of herbe John (alias herbe grace) and put them into ale, and drink it last at night and first in the morning, and then shee taking the same, had ease of her lameness.'¹

As can be seen in both quotations, it was essential to be certain that it was witchcraft that was responsible for the death of illness; it was also important to find out the name of the witch. Nearly all the methods of curing bewitched humans depended on being certain of these two facts. 'Burning of the thatch of the suspected parties house' which is 'thought to be able to cure the partie bewitched';² 'daring and defying the Witch',³ or threatening her;⁴ 'Banging and basting, scratching and clawing, to draw blood of the witch',⁵ and making her touch the victim,⁶ all these methods were probably

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1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. A7-A7^v.
 2. Perkins, Damned Art, p.206.
 3. Gaule, Select Cases, p.144.
 4. As in the case of Richard Harrison, parson of Beaumont, or, more successfully, in the 1582 Pamphlet, sig. E2^v.
 5. Gaule, Select Cases, p.144; Gifford, Dialogue, sig. B^v, E3^v, described this.
 6. Bernard, Guide, p.193.

in Essex.¹ All required knowledge of who was the likely culprit.

A further implication is that all these methods helped to make a hitherto hidden tension into an open breach, often with a considerable show of hostility. If such action failed, and the suffering person died, the counter-action might be taken a stage further; the suspect was taken to the law courts. There a new set of tests, to prove or disprove the suspicions, were employed. But in a large number of cases the informal re-actions to suspected witchcraft probably dealt with the problem: the victim recovered, the butter churned, the suspect moved or died. When the cases came to the courts it meant that the informal solutions had failed and that nothing less than the death or complete confession and reconciliation of the suspect were acceptable. Seen in this way the punishment of witches was not merely for past offences. It was part of the whole graded series of counter-actions and was regarded as a prerequisite for healing from witchcraft and an insurance against future disasters. For example, Bernard stated that healing sometimes required the death of the witch.²

1. For example in the 1582 Pamphlet, sig. C3; 1579

Pamphlet, sig. Avii; case 1170.

2. Bernard, Guide, p.146.

To find a witch one could either use private magic, go to a cunning man, or both. Since witchcraft was such a mysterious force, a series of tests were employed to confirm that current gossip and suspicions were correct. A person suspecting witchcraft to be at work might burn something belonging to the supposed witch, or part of the object bewitched, and would then wait to see if the suspect came hurrying round.¹ Ellen Smith, of Maldon in Essex, was among those caught in this manner.² Not only did such a method confirm and clarify previous suspicions, allowing the individual an opportunity to seek the opinion of his neighbours on the matter, it was also connected with the idea that witches were people who were always dropping in for small loans, or to enquire about personal affairs, such as the health of the family. There are a number of excellent contemporary accounts of how suspicions focused on a certain person in a village. They show how a person became increasingly disliked; the part played by gossip and rumour and the pooling of opinions. Richard Bernard, for instance, divided the growth of suspicions into eight stages. First there is fear of witches in general, then this becomes localised and

1. Among the property of the witch most valued in counter-witchcraft was urine, thatch, and articles of clothing: Perkins, Damned Art, p.206; Stearne, Confirmation, p.34; Kittredge, Witchcraft, pp.102-3, 428.

2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig.Avi.

'if any thing happen amisse, hee (the Devil) suggesteth a suspicion of this or that party to be a witch'.

Thirdly the individual communicates his fears to a neighbour who then divulges that he himself, has his own fears. In the fifth stage all the gossips get together and the rumour spreads right round the village until 'it is taken for granted, that such an one is a Witch'. Once a person is a known witch she becomes generally disliked 'so as others upon any ill hap, begin likewise to blame the same partie for that ill accident'. From then on every word or deed of the suspect is interpreted to fit the conviction of her guilt, people become 'suspicious to marke all the words and deeds of the suspected and to interpret the worst of them'. Just to confirm their suspicions, they go off to a cunning man who tells them 'that they are bewitched, that they live by ill neighbours'. The final stage, which leads to an accusation at the courts, may be initiated by one of a number of villagers: 'the Divell stirreth up some impatient, more fiery and inraged then the rest, to seeke revenge, to hale the suspected before Authoritie'.¹

In this description we see that withcraft suspicions tended to move in an ever-widening ripple through the village, the final accusation being based on a general consensus of

1. Bernard, Guide, pp.81-3.

opinion, which rested on the mutual exchange of fears through gossip. Such a consensus is most obvious in the presentments at the church courts. These were made by the church-wardens on the basis of 'common fame' in the parish. Thus counter-action against witches was a village affair in its later stages. Not merely the concern of an individual, it mobilized a number of emotional forces in the parish.

The way in which people connected certain events with a woman whom they disliked is well illustrated by Reginald Scot. He wrote that the process occurred over a 'tract of time' and that 'the witch waxeth odious and tedious to hir neighbors; and they againe are despised and despited of hir.' She then went round cursing them and, some time later, strange deaths and sickness visited the village. Not only the suspecting villagers, but also the suspected witch herself, interpret the malice and misfortune as being somehow inter-related.¹ The way in which the first stage in the growth of suspicions, the individual reaction, occurred is described by Thomas Ady. Seldom is a person hurt, Ady wrote, without crying out that he is bewitched.

1. Scot, Discovery, p.30.

'for, saith he, such an old man or woman came lately to my door, and desired some relief, and I denied it, and God forgive me, my heart did rise against her at that time, my mind gave me she looked like a witch, and presently my Child, my Wife, my Self, my Horse or somewhat was thus and thus handled.' 1

This suggests that an individual first angered another and then, expecting retribution, suffered some misfortune.

This is similar to the description of a man who angered a woman, but repented 'for I looked somewhat would follow. And next night, I saw the ugliest sight that ever I saw'.² Possibly the sequence was sometimes reversed, thus one man seems to have suffered an injury, and then cast round in his mind, examining his neighbourly relationships, to see who might have had the motive to bewitch him.³ In many cases it is impossible to tell whether the injury, or the specific realization that one was likely to be bewitched, came first. Thus a woman was detected at the Archdeacon of Colchester's court as a quarreller,

'And because some of hir neighbours after she hath fallen out w(i)th them have had evell successe w(i)th the Cattell therfore they have conceived an opinion that she ys a witche'. 4

What seems evident from Ady's description, however, is that it was the social relationship which determined

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1. Ady, Candle, p.114.
 2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.L3.
 3. Ibid., sig. B.
 4. Case 1046.

the selection of a likely witch. Though witches may also have been ugly, poor or old, it was not primarily this that was likely to lead to suspicion. Essex evidence clearly shows that it was the motive for bewitching which was most strongly stressed.¹ A person came to look like a witch when they acted like a witch; as Ady put it, 'my mind did give me she looked like a witch' when turned from the door.

One final description of the way in which suspicions grew, were pooled, and finally exploded into a charge, deserves full quotation. It was written by George Gifford who, with his Essex background, is particularly well placed to understand the informal activity which took place in a village before a prosecution was made.

'Some woman doth fal out bitterly with her neighbour: there followeth some great hurt, There is a suspicion conceived. Within fewea yeares after shee is in some iarre with an other. Hee is also plagued. This is noted of all. Great fame is spread of the matter. Mother W. is a witch. She hath bewitched goodman B. Two hogges died strangely: or else hee is taken lame. Wel, mother W doth begin to bee very odious and terrible unto many. her neighbours, dare say nothing but yet in their heartes they wish shee were hanged. Shortly after an other falleth sicke and doth pine, hee can have no stomacke unto his meate, nor hee can not sleepe. The neighbours come to visit him. Well neighbour, sayth one, do ye not suspect some naughty dealing: did yee never anger mother W? truly neighbour (sayth he) I have not liked the woman a long tyme. I can not tell how I should displease her, unlesse it were this other day,

1. See Ch.14 below.

my wife prayed her, and so did I, that shee would keepe her hennes out of my garden. Wee spake her as fayre as wee could for our lives. I thinke verely shee hath bewitched me. Every body sayth now that mother W is a witch in deede, and hath bewitched the good man E. Hee cannot eate his meate. It is out of all doubt: for there were (those) which saw a weasil runne from her housward into his yard even a little before hee fell sicke. The sicke man dieth, and taketh it upon his death that he is bewitched: then is mother W apprehended, and sent to prison, shee is arrayned and condemned.' 1

The Essex pamphlets corroborate this description of the gradual growth of suspicions, a process in which no event was ascribed to the evil will of the witch for several years at a time, and then more and more disaster was laid at her door. Gifford suggested that, by the end, 'every body' agreed that a certain person was a witch, that she became 'very odious and terrible to many,' that 'great fame is apread of the matter'. This supports the impression from Essex legal records that a large number of village families became involved as victims, relatives or friends. As we might expect, it seems that the whole village population became involved in the subsequent tension and gossip. Gifford's description also shows very strikingly how a man cast round in his mind, encouraged by his neighbours, to see who might have bewitched him: in this case he selected a person with whom he felt uneasy and against

1. Gifford, Discourse, sigs. G4-G4^v.

whom he had offended. The popular attitude to witches, they were 'odious and terrible', became more bitter because it had to remain unreleased: her neighbours 'dare say nothing but yet in their heartes they wish shee were hanged'. When enough proof was accumulated, and the village was united, the prosecution could occur.

Unfortunately, the Essex records do not allow any quantitative measure to be made of the amount of counter-witchcraft activities. Yet it seems that the prosecutions at the law courts were only the final, and necessarily partial, expressions of far more widespread suspicions in the village. One accusation, as has been seen from other evidence, might emerge from a complicated background in which the whole village, through rumour and gossip, took part. Thus witchcraft does not appear as some random outburst on the part of an individual, but rather as a phenomenon arising from the roots of society. It would thus be fair to suggest that, since 229 Essex villages are known to have been connected in some way to witchcraft prosecutions and 291 people were accused of black witchcraft between 1560-1680 at the Essex Assizes, the amount of gossip, rumour, and tension in this county must have been immense. Though it cannot be proved, it seems likely that villagers were constantly

engaged in contending with, or discussing, witches. Through counter-action against witches, sufferers were united with their neighbours in a series of magical and other activities which not only brought present relief and some sort of explanation, but hope of eradicating future misery.

There were always a considerable number of magical practitioners throughout England in our period. One researcher reported in 1870 that there were over five hundred, and, more recently, other writers argued that 'throughout the last century, there were thousands and thousands of such people in every village'.²

1. There were a number of interchangeable terms for these practitioners, 'wills', 'geas', or 'cunning' folk, 'wise-women', 'witches', 'sorcerers', 'charm-men' or 'wise men' are used in this chapter since they were the most frequent terms. See F. J. Hyde, 'A Survey of the Superstitions of the Seventeenth Century', in *English Archaeologist*, 1 (1911), pp. 103-117.
 2. The evidence for this is discussed on p. 63 above.
 3. *Illustrations of the History of the English People*, ed. by J. G. Ballard, London, 1911, p. 219; note especially p. 217, and the evidence on p. 218.

CHAPTER 10.

Cunning Folk and Essex Witchcraft Prosecutions.

In the previous chapter, it was seen that one step in the procedure towards prosecuting a suspected witch was the consultation of a cunning man, witch-finder or witch-doctor.¹ Analysis of the activities of cunning folk is therefore necessary before we can understand the pressures behind accusations at the Essex courts. Furthermore, cunning folk were themselves prosecuted as 'witches', especially at the ecclesiastical courts. Indeed it is arguable that it was primarily against cunning folk that the visitation articles were directed.²

There were clearly a considerable number of magical practitioners throughout England in our period. One sorcerer asserted in 1549 that there were over five hundred, and, some seventy years later, Robert Burton argued that 'Sorcerers are too common, Cunning men, Wisards and white-witches in every village'.³

1. There were a number of interchangeable terms for these practitioners, 'white', 'good', or 'unbinding' witches, blessers, wizards, sorcerers; cunning folk or wise men are used in this chapter since they were the most frequent terms. See F.J.Pope, 'A Conjuror or Cunningman of the Seventeenth Century', The British Archivist, i (1914), 18.pp.145-147.

2. The evidence for this is discussed on p. 60 above.

3. Kittredge, Witchcraft, pp.211-12; Robert Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy (Oxford, 1621), p.289; Scot, Discovery, p.27, put the numbers even higher.

Table 6 lists sixty-one possible cunning folk named in connection with Essex. Some of them lived outside Essex; in a few cases we cannot be certain that those accused or referred to were really magical practitioners. But we can be fairly sure that at least forty-one both lived in Essex and acted as cunning folk.

This list represents only a fraction of those who actually were cunning folk in Essex. As Stearne pointed out, 'not many' cunning folk were brought to court because 'men rather uphold them, and say, why should any man be questioned for doing good'.¹ One example of how much has been lost through the absence of records can be seen by comparing court records to depositions recorded in the pamphlets. There is only one prosecution during the whole period in Essex in which a person was accused of curing bewitched cattle or humans;² thus we would have been left with little indication that it was a common part of a cunning man's trade to detect witches. Yet, chance references suggest that it was normal to send to cunning folk to enquire about possible witchcraft. In 1564 a 'woman under Munckewoode' and 'the woman of Paswic' were consulted; in 1582, Mother Ratcliffe,

1. Stearne, Confirmation, p.11.

2. Catherine Reve in Table 6.

Ursley Kempe, 'Cocke's wife', 'one Herring', a cunning man at Ipswich and a man 'of skill' were all instructing people on how to deal with witchcraft; in 1589 and 1645 other cunning folk were mentioned as being consulted concerning possible witchcraft.¹ Since it seems that it was primarily the magical activity associated with trying to discover lost goods that was prosecuted, there is a bias towards men in the table, and in the following calculations. There are other distortions also. As with prosecutions for black witchcraft, but even more so in this instance, we are dealing with activities which have left only a marginal trace in the surviving records. It is largely for this reason that the following reconstruction depends heavily on contemporary opinions of the activities of cunning folk.

Gifford described a cunning woman who had 'a great name' and to whom there was 'great resort ...dayly'.² Yet it is difficult to obtain any quantitative estimate of how many people actually did go to cunning folk or in what percentage of all cases of illness, suspected witchcraft, or theft, they were consulted. 'Out of question they be innumerable which receive helpe by going to the

1. These cases are listed in Table 6 which is a list of all references to cunning folk in Essex records, not merely those mentioned in court records.

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. B.

4. For example, cases 838, 842, 1272.

cunning men' argued the same author. He also provided the only quantitative estimate when he said that 'There be thousands in the land deceived. The woman at R.H. by report hath some weeke fourtie come unto her, and many of them not of the meaner sort'.¹ It is also interesting that in all but one of the nine cases in which Gifford described counter-action against suspected witchcraft in his Dialogue the victim or near friend went to a cunning man.² If people consulted cunning folk in only half the many hundreds of cases of suspected witchcraft, it seems likely that such practitioners must have been more numerous and important than table 6 suggests. Cunning folk themselves infrequently described their clients. When such descriptions survive they are vague. For instance, an Essex cunning man admitted, in 1651, that,

'there have come unto him div(er)s people in these three yeares last past to inquire in the same kind for stollen goods, but how many he cannot tell.'³

In the archdeaconries of Essex and Colchester thirty-seven cases of resorting to cunning folk were presented, but it is impossible to tell how large a proportion of the actual instances this was.⁴ Thus we never hear of any

1. Ibid., sigs. G3,H.

2. For convenience 'cunning man' will be used as the singular of cunning folk, though the practitioners were often female. The cases in Gifford's Dialogue are on sigs. B,B,B^v,B2^v,C,D4^v,E3^v,E3^v,I3^v.

3. Case 846.

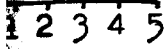
4. For example, cases 898, 942, 1065.

before p.145

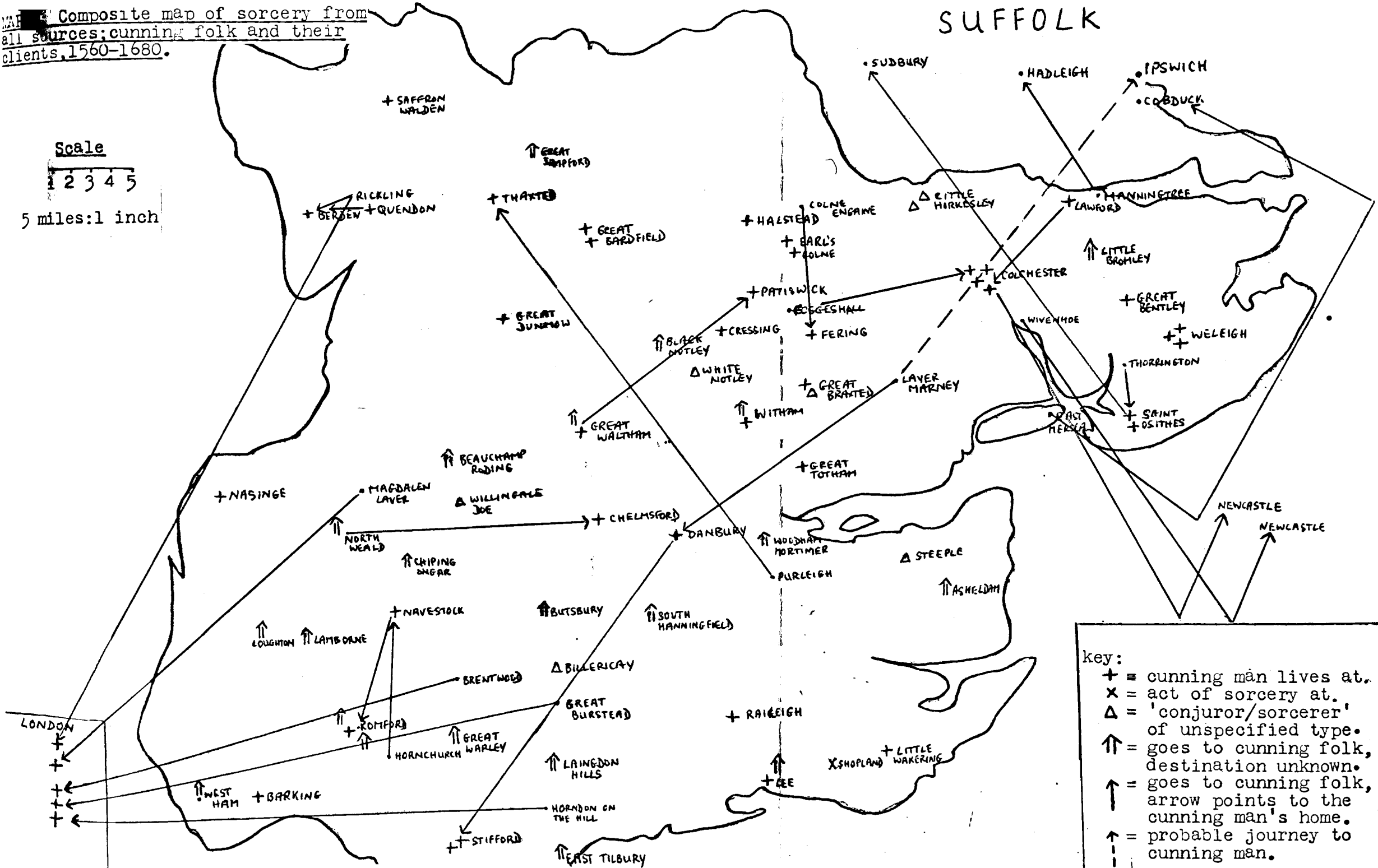
MAP 4 Composite map of sorcery from all sources; cunning folk and their clients, 1560-1680.

SUFFOLK

Scale



5 miles:1 inch



key:

- + = cunning man lives at.
- x = act of sorcery at.
- Δ = 'conjurer/sorcerer' of unspecified type.
- ↑↑ = goes to cunning folk, destination unknown.
- ↑ = goes to cunning folk, arrow points to the cunning man's home.
- - - = probable journey to cunning man.

of the clients of either Thomas Maunde, to whom 'ignorant people resorte as a wysard', nor those of Henry Gower who had deceived 'many people'.¹

The location of known Essex cunning folk and the movement of their clients are plotted in Map 2 and 2a. Although cunning folk continued to be accused until the end of our period, Map 2a is limited to the period of Elizabeth's reign; this is the best documented period, since church courts were throughout active centres of the presentation of cunning folk and their clients. This map illustrates that nowhere in Essex was there a village more than ten miles from a known cunning man. The county was covered by a network of magical practitioners, sometimes several in a town as at Colchester, Great Bardfield, or Weeley, but usually more scattered, Map 2, showing the distances people travelled to consult wise-men and women during the whole period, reveals that people even travelled beyond the county boundaries in search of help. Suffolk, London, and even Newcastle, were the homes of a number of experts consulted by Essex villagers.² Thus we know that people travelled over

1. Cases 1120 and 1115.

2. One Newcastle case (1173) is listed in table 6; the other (1072) is omitted since no cunning man was named. Both clients lived in estuary towns and there is no other 'New Castle' in East Anglia.

ated counterparts, the judicial astrologers, as can be seen in the notebooks of William Lilly and Robert Taylor. For example those cited in case 1201. For cunning folk consulted on marital problems in Norfolk, see *Witchcraft*, p.107.

five miles on more than nineteen occasions, and more than twenty miles on eight of these nineteen journeys. Gifford seems to have been accurately reflecting the situation when he made a man wonder whether to go twenty miles to a cunning man, or twenty-five to a cunning woman.¹ The distance travelled cannot be used to measure the availability of cunning folk; as at Navestock in 1570, sufferers seem to have travelled to further off cunning folk in preference to local practitioners. Increased prestige through remoteness was possibly one of the attractions of London cunning folk. Bernard suggested that it was a common technique of cunning folk who had failed, to advise clients to go to another, more powerful, practitioner.² Thus, when an Essex man in 1651 failed to receive help at nearby Berden, he went to London.³

Cunning folk were, according to the records, primarily consulted about health and lost property. It is quite possible, however, that people also brought to them other problems of a personal nature.⁴ One of the rare known cases of this was the woman presented at the Archdeacon

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1. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.B.
 2. Bernard, Guide, p.147; Scot, Discovery, p.33, made the same point.
 3. Case 846.
 4. This was certainly the case with their more sophisticated counterparts, the judicial astrologers, as can be seen in the notebooks of William Lilly and Richard Napier, for example those cited in case 1207. For cunning folk consulted on marital problems in Norfolk, see Kettredge, Witchcraft, p.107.

of Colchester's court for using magic 'to know whether a woman be w(i)th childe w(i)th a man childe or a woman Childe'.¹ As an Essex clergyman admitted,

'as the Ministers of God doe give resolution to the conscience, in matters doubtfull and difficult; so the Ministers of Satan, under the name of Wise-men, and Wise-women, are at hand, by his appointment, to resolve, direct and helpe ignorant and unsettled persons, in cases of distraction, losse, or other outward calamities'.²

If this was true, it seems that a person might have gone to consult a cunning man in many situations of anguish or indecision. Unfortunately, however, it is only when the cunning folk clashed with the direct interests of other professional groups, particularly the clergy and doctors, that their activity has been recorded.

Cunning folk, were only consulted about theft and illness in special circumstances. In several of the cases of theft where they were consulted, it was the rumoured suspect who went to a wise man to clear himself. Thus one man said he had been to a wise man 'to clear himself of stealing the shirt, and the cunning man gave him a note to clear himself'; another went to London to free himself from suspicion.³ Gifford provided an excellent example of how, when normal legal methods were impossible because a theft was within a household,

1. Case 1060.
2. Introduction to Perkins, Damned Art, p.3.
3. Cases 855 and 846; case 839 seems similar.

a cunning man was consulted.¹ Thomas Ady gives further evidence that cunning folk helped people locate their enemies in intimate situations which prohibited open or immediate accusations. He remarked that 'Cunning Men, or good Witches will undertake to shew the face of the Thief in the Glass, or of any other that hath done his Neighbour wrong privily'.² It was the secret wrongs of neighbours, relatives, or supposed friends which called for secret detection. This aspect is especially important when the cunning man was being consulted about possible witchcraft. As we will see, one of the main attractions of cunning folk was that they provided an outside, apparently objective and impartial, analysis of a person's relationships. A cunning man from a distant village with prestige and confidence-inducing techniques could provide a means of bringing suspicions out into the open, despite the pressures against open hostility between neighbours.

Bernard suggested that three principal reasons for the popularity of cunning folk were that their clients could not get help from elsewhere and were in 'great torment'; that many had received successful treatment from them; and 'that they have helpe from these at a little or no cost at all, whereas Physicke is very chargeable'.³

1. Gifford, Discourse, sig. H2.

2. Ady, Candle, p.40.

3. Bernard, Guide, pp.151-153.

All three statements are supported by actual Essex cases.¹ One other incentive to go to cunning folk is omitted by Bernard. This was their ability to provide not only a remedy for the physical pain, but also an explanation of why the suffering had occurred: that is, they could confirm that the misfortune was the result of witchcraft. An excellent description of how someone received more satisfaction from visiting a cunning man than an ordinary doctor is given for Essex in 1582. A sailor, landing at Ipswich, found that his daughter was very ill and therefore took a sample of her urine to a local physician. The sailor asked the doctor 'if that his daughter were not bewitched' but the latter replied 'that hee woulde not deale so farre to tell him,' so, 'not satisfied to his minde', the sick child's father went to a local cunning man who confirmed that the child was bewitched.² The cunning man, we see in this case, dealt with both physical and mental needs, and translated, at his client's request, a physical misfortune into a symptom of spiritual malice.

The actual methods employed by cunning folk in Essex are only vaguely suggested in the records. Techniques clearly differed from practitioner to practitioner and

1. For fees of cunning men and their success see later in the chapter; the type of illness they were asked to cure is discussed on p.248 below.
 2. 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. E-E^v.

depended on whether they were asked about theft, illness or other problems. When the client first arrived, he was often warned that he was only just in time for help. Thus, in the description of the Ipswich affair just referred to, the sailor was told that 'if hee had not commen with some great haste to seeke helpe, hee had come too late'. This would arouse the interest of the client and provide a loop-hole if remedies failed. Thus a cunning woman in 1582 said that 'she doubted she shoulde doe it (a sick child) any good, yet she ministered unto it'.¹ The next stage in the consultation was the vital one. The cunning man would enquire about the nature of the trouble and seek to find out about the social relationships of the victim, especially who he or she suspected of inflicting the misfortune. People usually seem to have visited cunning folk with some idea of what was wrong with them and of who was to blame; the cunning man's aim was to bring this out into the open and to give it confirmation. There are numerous examples of this process. A cunning woman confirmed that a sick man was bewitched, 'She saith he is forspoken indeede';² Gifford said explicitly that people 'run to Coniurers to know if they be not witches who they suspect'.³ Scot noted that it was a normal

1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig.A3^v.

2. Gifford, Discourse, sig.H.

3. Ibid., sig.I; there are other examples in Gifford, Dialogue, sigs. D4^v, C.

practice of cunning folk to ask the client 'whether they mistrusted not some bad neighbour'.¹ This process of confirmation of pre-existing suspicions is vividly shown in an Essex examination in 1570.

A woman 'suspecting that she was bewitched by the said Anne, went to one Cobham of Romford, who was thought to be cunning in such matters; and he declared to her that she was bewitched by the same woman, telling her the words which passed betwixt Anne Vicars and her.'²

Sometimes, it seems, the client was not as consciously aware of the likely witch as in the above case. Ady suggested that cunning folk initiated suspicions, that they 'will undertake to tell them who hath bewitched them, who, and which of their Neighbours it was'.³ This was probably true in the sense that the client was not aware, before questioning, that he already suspected someone. It was not until the cunning man had asked probing questions, making suggestions that were not open to discussion with neighbours and using his magical apparatus to give them authority, that the client's suspicions became focused.

Probably, the cunning folk were unwilling to actually suggest the name of a likely witch, preferring to leave the final decision to the client. For instance, in Essex in 1645, a man deposed that, his wife being sick of a disease that he believed to be 'more than merely

1. Scot, Discovery, p.221.

2. Case 1204.

3. Ady, Candle, p.159; Bernard, Guide, p.154 suggested that white witches 'discover' black witches.

naturall', he went to a cunning woman,

'who told this Informant, that his wife was cursed by two women who were neere neighbours to this Informant, the one dwelling a little above his house, and the other beneath his house, this Informants house standing on the side of an Hill: Whereupon he beleevved his said wife was bewitched by one Elizabeth Clarke.' 1

Here we see three stages. The client made the original selection and chose to believe that the illness was supernaturally inspired; the cunning woman confirmed this and, probably through discreet questions, learnt that her client was particularly anxious about his near neighbours and directed the worried man into consciously examining which of these might be the guilty person; the client then made the final selection himself. He would do this by combining his own hostility with more general suspicions that a certain person was a witch. This gradual elimination and concentration is further illustrated by Gifford. A cunning woman told a client that,

'he was plagued by a witch, adding moreover, that there were three women witches in that towne, and one man witch: willing him to look whom he most suspected: he suspected one old woman, and caused her to be carried before a Justice of Peace.' 2

Cunning folk would have known, from gossip, rumour, and previous consultations, the names of local witches.

1. 1645 Pamphlet. p.1.

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.C.

They would convey this information to their clients, releasing them in this manner from individual anxiety and putting them in touch with suspicions circulating in their own village. In a sense they acted as information centres, entrepreneurs in the business of allocating blame and distributing antidotes. Many features of their activities, for example their reluctance to actually name the culprit, are well shown in the most detailed Essex account of an interview between a client and a cunning man. When the client first arrived the expert 'made the matter strange to him', but shortly after 'told this examine he woulde doe the best he coulde for him'. This was the preparatory stage in which the practitioner warned the client of the difficulties inherent in the situation. Then the client was told to go away for nine days while the cunning man decided whether he could help. This was possibly a general practice and would allow cunning folk time to make inquiries and to sound local gossip. The client, on his return, looked in a magic mirror and was instructed by the cunning man that 'as farr as he coulde gesse, he shulde see the face of him that had the said lynnen', but, when the client saw a face and pressed for absolute confirmation, the cunning man refused to say that the mirror-image was definitely the culprit.¹

1. Case 809.

Again, the final decision was with the client; the cunning folk only provided the mechanisms for making a choice.

In their attempts to turn vague suspicions into concrete beliefs, the cunning folk were aided by various magical devices. Possibly they started off with a psychological advantage by wearing strange costumes and filling their consulting room with impressive pieces of equipment.¹ What is more certain is that they had at their command a host of spells, oracles, and other devices.² Two of these seem to have been especially favoured in Essex. The first of these was the oracle of the 'sieve and sheeres'. Gifford stated that some wisemen 'deal with the sive and a paire of sheeres, using certain words';³ among the Essex cases of their use was the detection of Alice Reade who used them to find lost goods.⁴ A contemporary description of how this oracle was to be worked suggests that, like any other method of divination, subtle questioning and sleight of hand could be used to influence an apparently external and objective test.⁵ Hidden thoughts could be brought into the open and made to appear as if they were dictated by a

1. This was certainly so in nineteenth century Essex. (E. Maple, Dark World of Witches (Pan edn., 1965) p.175).

2. For instance, John Gaule gave a list of over 50 methods of divination in his Mag-Astro-Mancer (1652), pp.165-166.

3. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. F4v.

4. Case 1130.

5. Scot, Discovery, p.224.

power outside the consulter. The other most popular Essex oracle, the mirror, basin of water, or other reflecting surface, also reveals this process of projection of inner thoughts on to an external object. Scot realised that the state of mind of the client could be externalised by a reflector: 'you may have glasses so made, as what image or favour soever you print in your imagination, you shall thinke you see the same therein'.¹ Contemporaries stated that this was one of the most popular methods employed by cunning folk,² and Gifford described the use of reflecting devices on several occasions.³ One Essex woman admitted that she went to a conjuror on London Bridge for lost money and he showed 'her in a glass a boye in a sherte glenings Corne resemblinge the countenance of John Hayes that had her monye'.⁴ An even better account is given in the 1578 interview already quoted. The cunning man took his client out into the hall, and

'browghte with him a looking glasse, (about vii or viii inches square, and did hange the said glasse up over the benche in his said hawle, upon a nayle, and bade the said examine look in yt, and said as farr as he coulde gesse, he shulde see the face of him that had the said lynn'.⁵

The guilty party was duly seen.

1. Scot, Discovery, p.265.
2. Among them Bernard, Guide, p.137; Ady, Candle, p.40.
3. Dialogue, sig. B, E4, F3.
4. Case 886.
5. Case 809.

In locating stolen goods, the cunning man's activities ceased when he had helped his client to find the thief or the property, but in cases of illness, and especially where witchcraft was selected as the reason for the disease, further treatment was necessary. Cunning folk prescribed 'Charmes of words' to be used over the victim; herbs, bags of seeds, or holy writings were also recommended to be worn by the victim.¹ Sometimes they cured the witchcraft immediately. One cured a 'mouth drawne awrye' by taking a cloth and, covering his client's eyes, striking 'him on the same side with a stronge blowe'.² Others passed on traditional remedies, for instance the red-hot spit stuck in cream, or the burning of the victim's hair.³ As purveyors of magical counter-activities, suggesting and circulating methods of keeping evil under control, they played an especially important part in both spreading and directing witchcraft beliefs. There is no evidence in Essex, however, that they extracted 'nayles, needles, feathers' and other articles from the victim, persuading their clients that they would recover if the witchcraft 'poison' was

1. Examples and methods are described in Perkins, Damned Art, p.175; Bernard, Guide, pp.99-100, 133-135; 1582 Pamphlet, sig. A7^v, C2^v; Gifford, Dialogue, sig. B^v. A number of remedies were suggested by Richard Napier the astrologer in case 1207.

2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. C7.

3. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. B2^v, E4.

extracted, though this remedy was current in Europe.¹ Nor is there Essex evidence for sympathetic suffering on the part of cunning men, though this is a phenomenon described by more general, English, authorities.² These omissions are probably due to the apparent absence of 'diabolic possession' in Essex; on only one occasion do we know of an Essex cunning man being employed to exorcise spirits in a possessed person.³

There was considerable contemporary argument as to the origins of the power of cunning folk. Since no Essex cunning folk have left a record of their opinion on this subject we have to rely ~~for information~~ on contemporary writers, mostly hostile, for suggestions. Gifford wrote that cunning folk believed that 'the spirits which appeare unto them in the Christall, or in the glasse, or water, or that any way do speake, and shewe matters unto them' were 'holy Angels, or the soules of excellent men, as of Moses, Samuel, David, and others'.⁴ Gaule likewise wrote that some cunning folk 'have imagined their Familiars to be no other than good Angles(sic)'.⁵ Those who opposed the cunning folk, especially the clergy,

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1. E. Jordan, Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother (1603), p.24^v.
 2. For instance in Bernard, Guide, pp.138,141.
 3. Case 1183; for a discussion of Essex possession cases see p. 252 below.
 4. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.F^v; see also sig.E2^v.
 5. Gaule, Select Cases, p.125.

preferred to see their power as derived from the Devil.¹ Yet all agreed that their power was supernatural, that they learnt to control spirits, or to say spells of great force. They were believed to use powers already at work in the universe, channelled by their special rituals. In this we can distinguish them from their enemy, the witch, whose power lay within her, in an evil essence rather than in the acquisition of a set of magical techniques. Cunning folk worked 'by vertue of words',² often they used purely automatic devices which seem to have involved no animistic power. Unlike Essex witches, they did not employ small animals, 'familiars', to carry out their instructions. Yet, for those who sought to discredit them, they were still working, albeit at second hand, with the devil.³

Just as their power differed from that of witches, so did their motives. To a certain extent they worked for money, though their fees were less than those of doctors.⁴ Fees were related to the type of activity

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1. This was argued, for example, by Bernard, Guide, p.134, and Perkins, Damned Art, p.175.
 2. Ady, Candle, p.63.
 3. Supernatural power could only be derived from God or the Devil, Gifford argued, and since cunning folk were clearly not divinely inspired, they must be in league with the Devil; Gifford, Dialogue, sig. F4^v and Discourse, sig. B3^v.
 4. Doctors, echoing Bernard, Guide, p.153, could argue that it was 'a miserable sparing, to spare the purse, and to damne the soule'.

undertaken and the degree of success.¹ Some cunning folk refused payment. 'Some may not take any thing at all, as some have professed, that if they should take any thing they could doe no good'.² Others left fees to the discretion of their clients.³ It is also clear that cunning folk sometimes put pressure on their clients, and also that extra payments or presents were made if success attended their efforts. For instance, an Essex cunning man who claimed that he did not exact fees, also admitted that in one consultation his clients 'did give him a shilling for his paines, and (he, i.e. the cunning man) told them that for ye p(re)sent it should suffice, but withall, if they had the goods againe he desired further satisfaction.'⁴ This partly reflected the precarious legal position of cunning folk; they were less vulnerable to an action of fraud if they could show that their fees were voluntary. Otherwise they might suffer the fate of the Essex surgeon who, in 1620, was prosecuted at the Assizes because he had taken five shillings from a man to tell him who had stolen his cloth and had failed to name the culprit.⁵ Usually the fees

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1. Only a 'penny and a loaf' was claimed by cattle-curing cunning folk according to Scot, Discovery, p.211.
 2. Bernard, Guide, p.131.
 3. Ibid, p.131; for an Essex example, see case 809.
 4. Case 846.
 5. Case 553b.

seem to have been less than this. In 1582 a cunning woman offered to cure a woman of lameness for 12d.¹ and the Chelmsford cunning man was given 8d. and 10d. on separate occasions.² Though it may have been a lucrative profession when combined with astrology in a city,³ the general impression from Essex material is that cunning folk were neither professional nor full-time practitioners. It was as much, or more, the desire for prestige rather than payment, which attracted people. Scot said their motives were 'glorie, fame, or gaine', and it is the former that Bernard stressed when he said that they were 'fantastically proud', and boasted of 'their gift and power'.⁴

Further evidence that cunning folk acted only part-time comes from an analysis of their professions and status. Only the male practitioners have recorded occupations and these are listed in table 6. Seven out of twenty-three whose occupation we know were connected with the medical profession;⁵ another three were probably

1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. A2^v.

2. Case 846.

3. For example, the retired Cambridge cunning man referred to in Bernard, Guide, p.138, claimed that he could have made 'two hundred pounds per annum of his skill'.

4. Scot, Discovery, p.30; Bernard, Guide, p.132.

5. Only two of these have been discovered in other records. Marcell Goodwin of Colchester's will survives at Chelmsford (see p.75 above) & Gilbert Wakering of Halstead subscribed to the Oath of Supremacy in 1631 (J.H.Bloom and R.R.James, Medical Practitioners in the Diocese of London, (Cambridge, 1935), p.72).

clerics.¹ A further six, consisting of two schoolmasters, two astrologers,² a churchwarden³ and a 'gent' were in the upper professional group. Only one third were artisans or agriculturalists, consisting of two yeomen, two labourers, a miller, comber, and shoemaker. There is some evidence as to their degree of literacy. One gave a 'note' to a client,⁴ another had been taught by the astrologer William Lilly and could 'cast a figure' with pen and paper,⁵ a third maintained some impeccable churchwardens accounts. Unfortunately, we have little information concerning their character and mentality, beyond the general criticism that they had 'a mind addicted unto curiosity and vaine estimation'.⁶

1. Mr. Fountayne, Mr. Hawes and Henry Gower; none of them, however, appeared in Newcourt or other sources to have had livings in Essex.
2. John Thomas who lived on London bridge may have been the John Thomas who published a Prognostication rectified and composed for Bridgwater in 1612. It seems more certain that the 'Gressam' of London was Edward Gresham who published almanacks in 1598, 1604-1606 and who died in 1612 (Short Title Catalogue, No. 12360 and Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS. 242, fol. 200).
3. Miles Blomfield was presented as a cunning man in 1578; he was churchwarden between 1582 and 1587 and owned a house bordering on the churchyard, his churchwardens' accounts are excellent; see Irvine Gray, 'Footnote to an Alchemist', Cambridge Review, lxxviii. No. 1658 (1946), p. 172.
4. Case 855.
5. Case 845.
6. Gifford, Discourse, sig. I2.

It has already been suggested that bias in the records distorts any impression of the proportion of male and female cunning folk. This even deceived contemporaries. Thus John Stearne, of Manningtree in Essex, wrote that black witches were nearly all women, while cunning folk 'almost generally they be men'.¹ On the other hand, Thomas Cooper assumed that cunning folk would be women.² From the Essex evidence it seems that while men were more likely to be presented at court, since they predominated in finding lost goods, and possibly as healers, women were often consulted in the attempt to counter witchcraft. We only hear of the latter indirectly,³ or when their previous reputation as a cunning woman later led them to be accused of black witchcraft. Thus in 1582 Ursley Kempe, formerly a 'white' witch was accused at the Assizes for 'black' witchcraft. Similarly, in 1572, Margery Skelton was prosecuted at the same court for evil witchcraft, whereas she had been summoned to the ecclesiastical court six years previously for 'white' witchcraft.⁴ The same was

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1. Stearne, Confirmation, p.11.
 2. Thomas Cooper, Mystery of Witchcraft (1617), p.219.
 3. Examples are given on p. 142 above.
 4. For Margery Skelton see cases 46-48, 873; another possible instance is case 1204 where a woman was suspected of 'black' witchcraft when, she claimed, she was merely trying to cure her bewitched husband.

4. Gifford, Diabolus. also p. 37, 38, 44, 157.
5. Case 873.

true in the cases of Catherine Reve and Edwin Hadesley.¹ Yet, though there may have been other cases, those who were accused of both black and white witchcraft seem to have been few in Essex. Of forty-one definite Essex cunning folk, only four were later recorded as accused of 'black' witchcraft, while less than half a dozen of a total of over four hundred persons accused of black witchcraft are known to have been cunning folk.

There can be little doubt that cunning folk were often successful. Though hostile, Gifford could not deny that 'out of question they be innumerable which receive helpe by going to the cunning men'.² On visiting wisemen 'the meanes are received, applied, and used, the sicke partie accordingly recovereth, and the conclusion of all is, the usual acclamation; Oh happie is the day, that ever I met with such a man or woman to helpe me!'³ There are a number of examples in Essex records of successful cures. Gifford gave cases of the successful recovery of a communion cup, the curing of a sick child, and the saving of bewitched cream on the advice of a cunning man.⁴ Margery Skelton claimed that she had healed seven people.⁵ A woman was healed by having a

1. Cases 1007, 1167 (Reve) and 488, 1181 (Hadesley).

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. G3.

3. Perkins, Damned Art, p. 175; see also Gifford, Discourse, sig. H.

4. Gifford, Dialogue, sigs. B^v, B2^v, E3^v, G4, L3^v.

5. Case 873.

seed-bag strapped to her in 1582;¹ another recovered her health in 1570.² Lost property was recovered in 1578 and 1651.³ Even their failures could be woven into the system and be made to support witchcraft suspicions.

Bernard noted that,

'These Witches, to keepe their credit, often deliver the medicines with an If: If it doe no good, come againe. When they returne and finde that the Devill hath not removed the disease ... the Wizards blame them, that they came not in time, or they applied not the meanes aright, or that they wanted faith to beleeve, or at least they acknowledged their power not great inough, and therefore they advise them to goe to a more cunning man or woman.'⁴

Thus successes were noted and praised, while failures were explained within the context of witchcraft beliefs by attributing them to mistakes in performing rituals or to particular circumstances. The basic premises were meanwhile left unchallenged.⁵

One possible reason for failure, Bernard suggested, was that the client 'wanted faith to beleeve'. This faith-healing element was of considerable importance in a number of cures. Gifford stressed that when a charm was used a patient was told by the cunning man that 'you

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1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. C2^V.
 2. Case 1204.
 3. Cases 846 and 809.
 4. Bernard, Guide, pp.146-7.
 5. Though, clearly, some people, for instance Scot and Ady, saw 'through' cunning folk.

must beleeve it will helpe, or els it will doe you no good at all'.¹ As he said 'Imagination is a strong thing to hurt, all men doe finde, and why should it not then be strong also to help, when the parties mind is cheered, by beleaving fully that he receiveth ease ?'² If, as suggested earlier, cunning folk were principally consulted in cases of indecision, when an objective, outside, opinion was needed to clear away anxiety and doubt, their promise of hope when others had despaired, and their sympathetic probing of the mind of the patient, may have helped to a considerable extent. They foreshadowed modern psychiatrists in relating physical illness to disturbed social relationships. They interpreted the feelings aroused in disturbances in current, witchcraft, terms. Here they filled a vacuum and supplied a need.³ They admitted that 'they cannot heale such as doe not beleeve in them',⁴ and perceptive doctors realised that magical cures could work 'by reason of the confident perswasion which melancholike and passionate people may have in them'.⁵ There is no

1. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.G4^v.

2. Ibid, sig.G4.

3. The faith-healing element was normally missing in ordinary physic said Bernard, Guide, p.139.

4. Idem.

5. E.Jorden, Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother (1603), p.25.

evidence as to whether the cunning folk themselves believed in their cures and methods. Undoubtedly some of them used sleight of hand and other tricks,¹ yet this does not necessarily mean that either they, or those who were aware of such tricks, questioned the general efficacy of white witchcraft. Many people probably agreed with Joseph Glanvil when he argued that one true story of witchcraft 'is worth a thousand tales of forgery and imposture'.²

Contemporaries varied enormously in their attitude towards cunning folk. Even legal authorities wavered. Although cunning folk could be prosecuted at both ecclesiastical and secular courts, yet their accusation was a 'great presumption' in the case against a black witch.³ Most vehement in their hostility were Puritan writers. William Perkins warned that christians should 'abhorre the wizard, as the most pernicious enemie of our salvation as the greatest enemie of Gods name,

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1. For instance the fraudulent methods in Essex described in Ady, Candle, p.62.
 2. J. Glanvil, Philosophical Considerations Touching the Being of Witches (1667), pp.33-34. Like many of the hypotheses in this chapter, it cannot be fully proved, although it can be shown to be true in contemporary societies. Thus the above description is similar to the reaction to failure and fraud described in E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937), pp.183, 193, 243, 255.
 3. Bernard, Guide, p.212; Perkins, Damned Art, p.209, also maintained an ambivalent attitude to the legality of evidence produced by cunning folk.

worship, and glorie, that is in the world, next to Satan himselfe'.¹ He believed that, like black witches, they should be executed.² Gaule argued that they were even worse than black witches, and that seeking to them constituted a tacit compact with the Devil.³ This horror reflected their real threat to the monopoly and assumptions of Christianity. They used methods and provided explanations based on supernatural power, but power not derived directly from the Christian God. Their prescription for pain was neither ordinary physic nor prayer and soul-searching. They suggested that misfortune was not related to the guilt of the sufferer but to that of another human being. In problems concerning the spirit and emotions of men, traditionally the preserve of the clergy, they competed with successful solutions. The clash is well demonstrated in the penance enjoined on one of their clients in Essex in 1585. He was ordered to stand up in church and to confess 'him self hartelie sorie for sekinge mans helpe and refusinge ye helpe of god'.⁴ If God would not help, the Puritans argued that 'better it were to loose a thing finally, and by faith to expect till God make

1. Perkins, Damned Art, pp.177-78.

2. Ibid, p.255.

3. Gaule, Select Cases, pp.30-31.

4. Case 911; as Perkins wrote (Damned Art, p.257), people depended on the white witch 'as their god'.

supplie another way; then in this (i.e. by recourse to judicial astrologers) to recover it againe'.¹

Essex villagers, however, often felt differently.

The Essex records show that people went long distances to consult cunning folk, despite the censure of the church. The friendly attitude towards cunning folk on the part of the majority of the Essex population was reflected by Gifford when he made one of his country characters say of a wisewoman that 'she doeth more good in one yeare than all these scripture men will doe so long as they live.'² No wonder the 'scripture men' were apprehensive. Even when reprimanded, people clung to their views. Thus the man whom we saw ordered to confess himself sorry for 'sekinge mans helpe' had earlier admitted to going to a cunning man 'and saethe yt for the helpe of his wief he went to him and if it weare againe he wold do the like to helpe his wief'.³ It is possible that some of the country clergy more than tolerated them;⁴ they may even have been seen as godly parishioners.⁵ Churchwardens' behaviour may be taken as an example of the ambivalent attitude towards

1. Perkins, Damned Art, p.88.

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. M3^v.

3. Case 911.

4. Scot, Discovery, p.27, implies this.

5. A Somersetshire white witch had the reputation of being a 'religious woman' (Meric Casaubon, A Treatise Proving Spirits (1672), p.116).

6. Perkins, Damned Art, p.153.

these practitioners. As officials they were expected to present cunning folk and their clients; as private individuals they often approved of them. One of them was himself a cunning man,¹ another went to a cunning man for news of his landlord's lost horse.² Gifford tells that on one occasion 'the Communion cup was stolen: the Churchwardens rode to a wise man, he gave them direction ... and certainly they had it again'.³ One result of this was that they were slack in their presentations: on two occasions in Essex they were detected for not presenting 'witches'.⁴ Likewise, village constables, as in 1651,⁵ might patronise wise men.

There can be little doubt concerning the popularity or versatility of Essex cunning folk. As in other parts of England, 'Charming is in as great request as Physicke, and Charmers more sought unto then Physicians in time of neede'.⁶ What is less clear is when they originated. This problem lies outside the scope of this thesis and it can only be suggested that the pre-Reformation clergy

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1. Case 809.
 2. Case 1096.
 3. Gifford, *Dialogue*, sig. E3^v; there are actual cases of churchwardens in Berkshire, and a whole congregation in Lincolnshire, sending to cunning folk in Kittredge, *Witchcraft*, pp. 197-198.
 4. Cases 1128, 1063; the latter, however, may have been a 'black' witch.
 5. Case 846.
 6. Perkins, *Damned Art*, p. 153.

undertook many of the activities later performed by cunning folk. They probably cursed for theft, helped people take decisions and resolved quarrels between neighbours. They also prescribed charms and blessed against evil.¹ By our period such activities were looked on by the Anglican Church as popish and evil, yet they were still in demand. Consequently, cunning folk remained powerful in Essex until at least the nineteenth century: the most famous of them died in 1860. But it was especially in the century after 1560 that they played a major role in directing witchcraft suspicions.

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1. For an Essex case of the alleged prescription of charms by Roman Catholic clergy see Ady, *Candle*, pp.58-59. As late as the nineteenth century, in Yorkshire, 'priests 'o' t'au'd church' were believed to have been powerful conjurors according to J.C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish* (1891), p.59. The same author, pp.103-125, gives a superb account of Yorkshire cunning folk.

CHAPTER 11.

The Witch-Finding Movement of 1645 in Essex.

At the Summer Assizes held at Chelmsford in 1645 there were fifty indictments against suspected witches. These were exceptional, in number, content, and in occurring after years of gradual decline in witchcraft prosecutions at the Assizes.¹ Since they have received more attention from subsequent writers than other aspects of Essex prosecutions, only a short analysis of them will be given here.² Some separate analysis is necessary, however, for various reasons. The 1645 trial was described in greater detail than any other Essex witchcraft inquisition.³ It is therefore easier to reconstruct the pressures behind the accusations in 1645 than in earlier prosecutions. Secondly, many of the recent theories attempting to explain witchcraft prosecutions are based on evidence from this trial.⁴ Thirdly, a comparison of events

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1. See cases 599-648(g); Diagram 1 shows how exceptional the trial was.
 2. The best account of the Essex trial and of Hopkins' tour through Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely is still Notestein, Witchcraft, pp.164-205. The Assize documents, unused by Notestein, are printed in Ewen I, pp.221-231; Ewen discusses and analyses these in his 2nd book, Ewen II, pp.254-279. Other works on Hopkins are cited in the bibliography, but none adds significantly to these accounts.
 3. The main sources are the 1645 Pamphlet, the Assize records cited above, Hopkins, Discovery, and Stearne, Confirmation. For reasons outlined in the bibliography, a very distorted pamphlet written in 1700 has not been used.
 4. For instance, M.A. Murray, Witch-Cult in Western Europe (Oxford, paperback edn., 1962) used the depositions at this trial on over twenty occasions to prove the existence of covens and Sabbats in England.

in 1645 with the descriptions of prosecutions in the Elizabethan period, enables us to see in what ways beliefs concerning witches changed over time. Finally, the 1645 prosecutions are the only ones which can be definitely related to the presence of 'witch-hunters', that is people who seem to have specialized in accusing and finding witches. It seems to be true that, as Gaule argued, 'such a Profession (i.e. witch-finding) or occupation has not been heard of heretofore'.¹ While it is true that cunning folk, as we have seen, gave advice to those supposedly bewitched, they seem to have acted in a far less formal capacity. They did not travel from village to village searching for witches and being paid for this; nor did they play a major part in the actual trials of witches.²

Some thirty-six suspects, all women, were imprisoned or tried for witchcraft at the 1645 Essex Assizes. Of these, nineteen were almost certainly executed, nine died of gaol fever, six were still in prison in 1648 and only one, a woman from another part of Essex, was acquitted and escaped free. Another woman, Rebecca West, was also

1. Gaule, Select Cases, p.88.

2. The only real comparison is with Brian Darcy in the 1582 trial, see p. 91. Gifford, however, suggested that 'divers well disposed menhave seriously taken the matter (i.e.witchcraft) in hande, and have hunted those puckerils out of their neastes' (Gifford, Discourse, sig.G3). For witch-finders in other parts of Britain, see Ewen I, pp.69-70.

released after acting as the Crown's chief witness. Compared to other trials, the percentage of the accused who were executed was abnormally high. Another marked contrast to earlier trials (except that of 1582) was the geographical concentration of the prosecutions. Thirty-five of the suspects came from twelve villages, all within fifteen miles of Manningtree.¹ The witnesses against the witches included men and women from all levels of society; in all, the indictments and pamphlet name some ninety-two such witnesses, fifty-eight male and thirty-four female. The two 'witch-finders', Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne, obviously found ready support for their accusations. Among the witnesses were three clergymen, John Edes, George Eatoney and Joseph Longe.²

1. See Map 5.

2. John Edes who gave evidence against Rebecca West of Lawford (case 609 & 1645 Pamphlet, p.11) was rector of Lawford between 1615-58. He was a minister in the Tendring Classis and signed the Presbyterian Testimony in 1648; Davids, Annals, p.296; H. Smith, Ecclesiastical History of Essex (n.d.) p.110; Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis. George Eatoney appeared as 'clericus' as a witness in the indictments against 3 suspects (cases 605-6, 639, 640), but he is absent from both the 1645 Pamphlet and from the standard ecclesiastical histories of Essex, as well as Venn and Foster. Joseph Longe gave evidence in the 1645 pamphlet, pp.18-19, concerning the spirits of Anne Cooper of Clacton and was a witness in the indictments of 3 Clacton women, cases 631-6, 629. Depositions had been taken against him the previous year as a pluralist and he had been deprived of Fingeringhoe but he retained the vicarage of Great Clacton until 1662. He was also accused of being 'cruel in exacting his tithes; an innovator; would not give the sacrament but to those who come up to the rails; a common alehouse haunter, obscene in his discourse, and a usual swearer by his faith', Davids Annals, p.396; Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis.

They witnessed to the appearance of familiars and corroborated Hopkins and Stearne. One clergyman, however, helped to procure a reprieve for a suspect.¹ A special group were the women searchers, a panel of professed experts whose names appear with regularity in different indictments and who witnessed, as the pamphlet shows, to the presence of suspicious lumps or other marks on witches.² Otherwise, as far as we can tell, the witnesses were normal citizens, many of whom can be traced in contemporary wills, ship money assessments, or lists of Presbyterian elders.³ Different groups of individuals acted as witnesses in different villages. Hopkins and Stearne, for example, only appeared as witnesses against suspects from four of the twelve neighbouring villages

1. Mary Coppine, according to the gaol calendar, was reprieved 'uppon desire of Mr. Gray the minister'; she was still in prison 3 years later however (case 624). Although there were parsons and rectors of that surname at Wickford, Wickham Bishops and Mashbury in Essex at this time, no such man is known to have been minister of Mary Coppine's town, Kirby.
2. See, for instance, the group of 4 woman shown in Figure 2.
3. All these sources could be used to reconstruct a detailed picture of the social and religious background of those involved. For instance, in the Ship-Money assessment in 1637, at least 30 of those later to be found as victims or witnesses appear; only one witch's husband was assessed, Edward Gooding of Manningtree at the low sum of 2s.6d. (see cases 627-8). Among the 22 named elders of the Tendring Classis of the Essex Presbyterian movement were Sir Thomas Bowes and Sir Harbottle Grimston, the 2 magistrates who took most of the confessions, Robert Tayler a principal witness in Manningtree (see Figure 2), and George Francis, who believed his only son to have been bewitched (1645 Pamphlet, p.12; Davids, Annals, pp.296-99). The transcript of the Essex Ship Money assessment is catalogued at the E.R.O. as T/A 42.



Figure 2: Accusations of witchcraft in Manningtree, 1645.

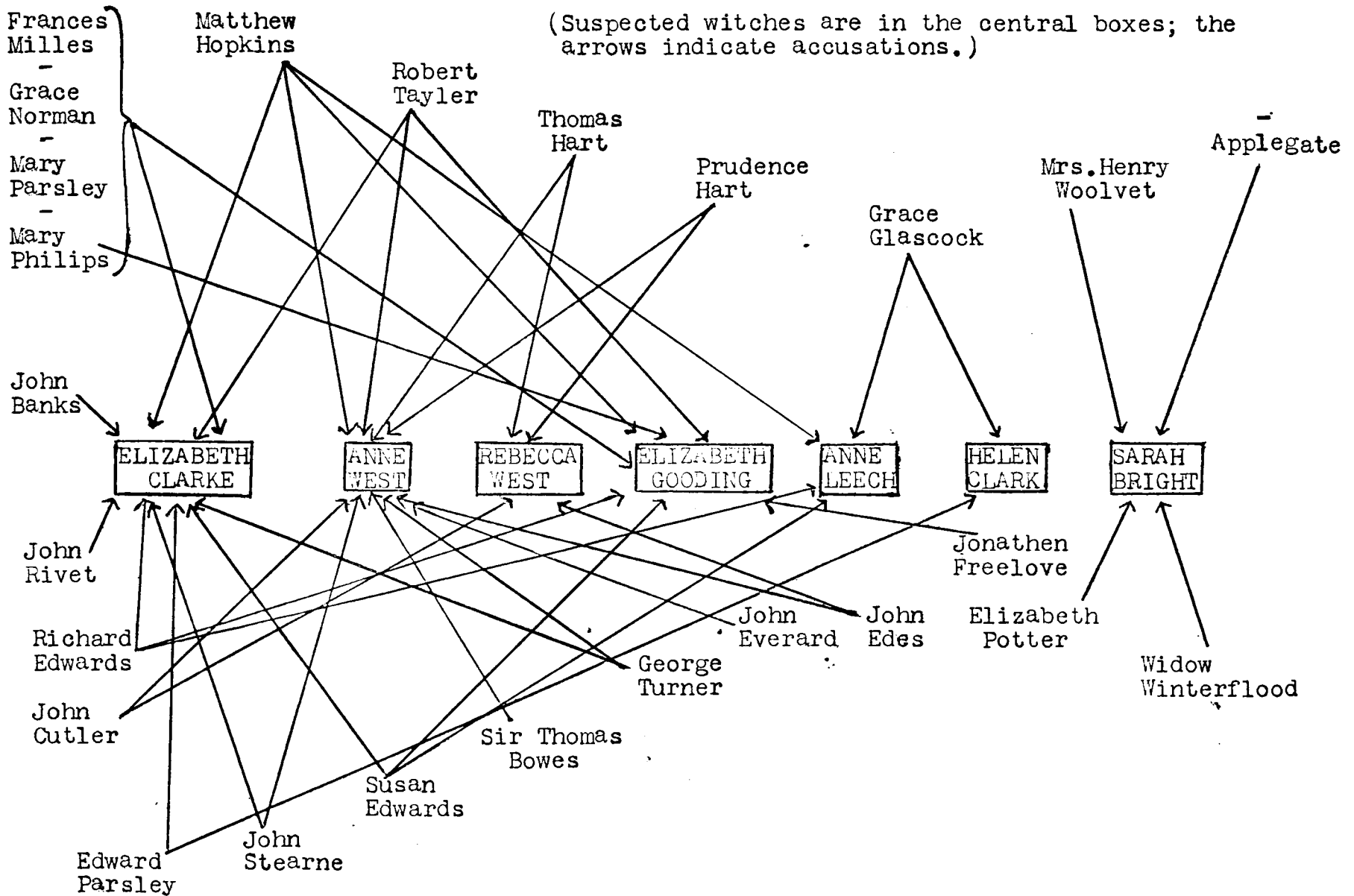
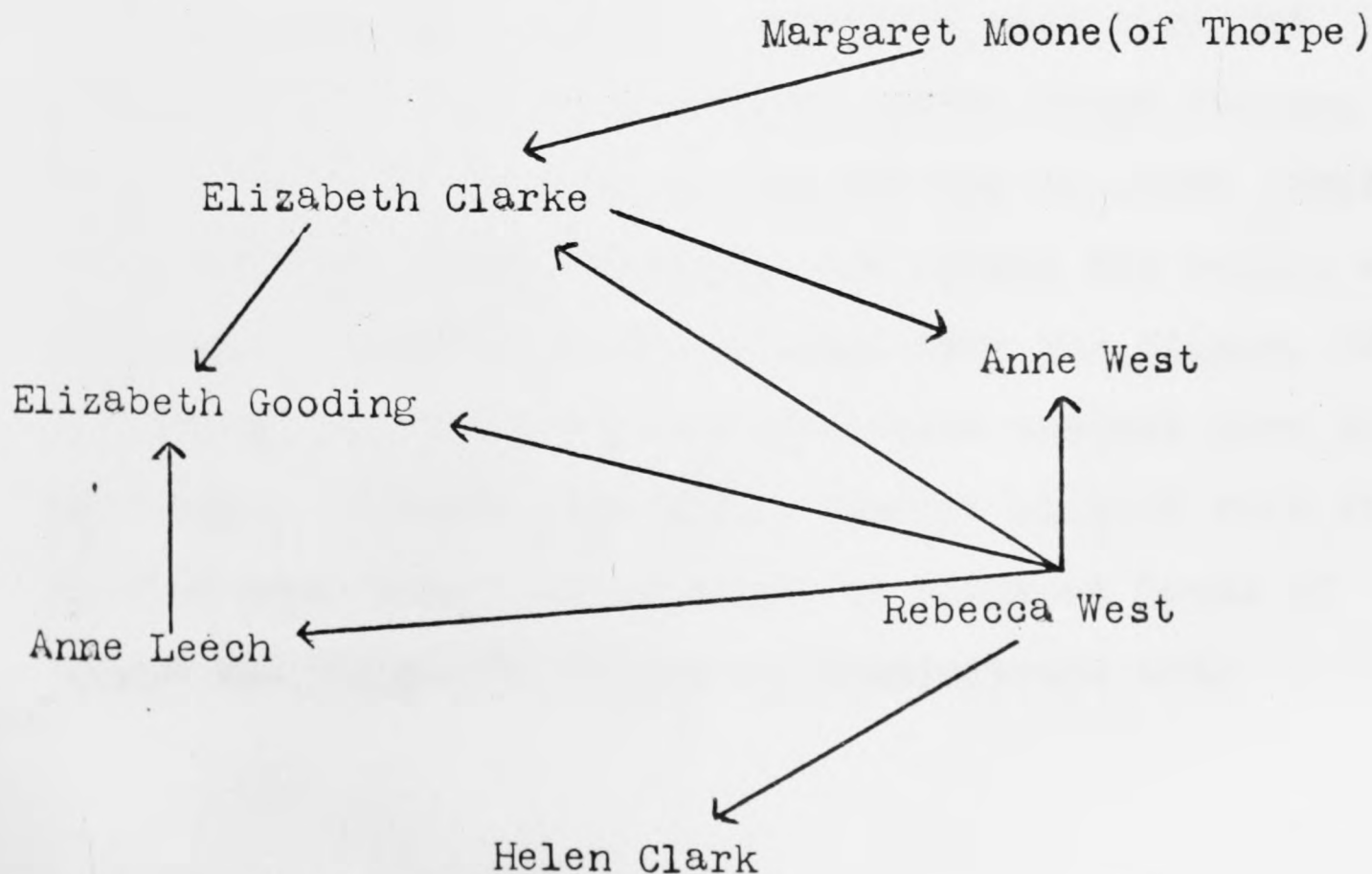


Figure 3: Inter-accusation between suspected witches in 1645.

(An arrow represents an accusation made by one suspected witch against another. All except Margaret Moone lived in Manningtree.)



involved: Langham, Mistle, Ramsey and Manningtree. In the other villages, other groups of inhabitants supported and formulated the accusations.

Even near Manningtree, the efforts of Hopkins and Stearne could not have succeeded without wider support; over twenty people, including these two, witnessed against the six most notorious witches. The direction of accusations is shown in Figure 2. Here we see the complicated overlapping of accusations, centering on Elizabeth Clarke and Anne West. One Manningtree suspect, Sarah Bright, appears to have been independently accused. The cumulative effect of such corroboration was further consolidated by the inter-accusation between the suspects. This also can be best demonstrated in a similar way in Figure 3. Here we see especially clearly the importance of the Crown's witness, Rebecca West.

If we concentrate our attention even more and select just one of the witnesses in the first figure, Richard Edwards, we begin to see the way in which suspicions reflected much wider tensions, not merely the malice of two witch-finders. As can be seen from the figure, Edwards was one of the three men who witnessed against more than two women. Further than this, Edwards claimed that his son had been bewitched to death by Margaret Moone of Thorpe and Elizabeth Clarke of Manningtree; both of them

confessed to this offence, as did a Mistley woman who also bewitched his beer. His alleged misfortunes did not end here; Rebecca West corroborated his own account of how his horse, crossing a bridge, had been frightened by a strange shriek and had nearly thrown him: again the work of a witch. Thus it was on Edwards that the Manningtree witches were supposed to have centred their activities.¹ But he was a dangerous enemy to rouse. From the assessment for the Ship Money in 1637, it appears that he owned property in Ramsey, was the third largest property holder in Mistley and the second largest in Lawford. In Manningtree itself he was styled 'gent' and was assessed to pay £3; the next highest assessment in that village was fourteen shillings.² It is almost certain that he was Chief Constable of Tendring Hundred in 1642.³ He was thus not only one of the most attacked, but also one of the most powerful men in the area.

While we can see that Hopkins and Stearne were only part of an influential group who wished to exterminate witches, there is also evidence of counter-pressure. Again this illustrates the way in which witchcraft accusations mobilized wider rivalries in the village.

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1. For Edwards' activities see cases 602-3, 611 & 1645 Pamphlet, pp. 3, 7-8, 12-13, 22.
 2. E.R.O., T/A 42.
 3. Assizes 35/83/42 at the P.R.O.

Stearne described how more than forty people, among them himself, had been outlawed on a writ of Conspiracy for witch-hunting 'by the means of one who is reported to have been one of the greatest agents in Colchester-busnesse, within the Towne'. He then went on to describe earlier opposition. This is worth full quotation since, largely overlooked by historians,¹ it is a unique example, in Essex, of a faction struggle over the guilt of a supposed witch.

'This man,' Stearne wrote 'with another who is likewise reported to have been fellow-agent with him in that busnesse, and the two chiefest in it, was the cause that some were not questioned in that Towne: but for his part, I saw him labour and endeavour all he could to keep this woman, whom he so much held withal from her legal Trial, and likewise heard him threaten both me and all that had given evidence against her as I since have heard, she was condemned at that Assize, and by his procurement reprieved.'²

Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify with certainty either the defenders or the woman they reprieved.³

There are a number of ways in which the 1645 trial seems to have been similar to those described in earlier

1. Notestein, Witchcraft, p.192, merely notes the incident in passing, and Ewen does not refer to the episode.
2. Stearne, Confirmation, p.58.
3. None of the Manningtree suspects are recorded as having been reprieved. Another interesting insight into the background of suspicions occurs in a petition from the inhabitants of Manningtree in 1642 (E.R.O., Q/SBa 2/46). This concerns the threat of Thomas Clarke to abandon his wife, almost certainly the witch Helen Clarke (case 625); the petition was signed or marked by several of those later involved in witchcraft accusations, including Richard Edwards, Robert Hayward and Robert Tayler.

pamphlets. The motive of the witch, the methods she was supposed to employ, the length of time she was believed to have been a witch before being accused, all these are similar.¹ Likewise, comparison of the indictments and the other accounts show how much the former omit. Although only twenty-three of those accused at the Assizes were described in the pamphlet account, we learn of another forty-nine offences not mentioned in the indictments.² Several witches mentioned in the pamphlet do not appear in surviving legal records; there is no record of Elizabeth Clarke's mother and kinsfolk who were supposed to have been executed for witchcraft, nor of the previous accusation against Margaret Moone.³ Neither Goodwife Hagtree, who had brought a woman her familiars some ten years before,⁴ nor Judith Moone on whom the witch's mark was found,⁵ appear in other records. In certain ways, therefore, the trial of 1645 can be seen as a continuation of earlier tendencies.

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1. The similarities are outlined in subsequent chapters.
 2. This is shown on p. 200 below in tabular form.
 3. 1645 Pamphlet, pp. 1, 22; naturally it is impossible to be certain that Elizabeth Clarke's mother and kinsfolk do not appear elsewhere under a different surname.
 4. 1645 Pamphlet, p. 29.
 5. 1645 Pamphlet, p. 24. Sarah Barton, the sister of one of the accused, is also absent from the Assize records since she was dealt with by the Harwich borough authorities (case 1219).

In other ways, however, it was different. The difference has already been noticed in the abnormal proportion of executions, in the geographical concentration, and in the presence of witch-finders. Another unusual feature was the unusually high proportion of indictments for merely entertaining evil spirits: eighteen of the twenty-eight known indictments for this office during the whole period in Essex came from this trial. The familiars also had become much more strange. Though plentiful in earlier pamphlets, none had been as bizarre as the legless dog, ox-headed greyhound and other monstrosities which visited one of the suspects as she was being watched by eight people. Nor were their names as fanciful, on the whole, as the Vinegar Tom, Sacke and Sugar, Griezzell Greedigutt and others described in the 1645 pamphlet. Nor is there any trace in earlier evidence of the ritual marriage of the witch and devil, of the appearance of the devil as a man, or of sexual intercourse between the devil and the witch.¹ Among other innovations were the idea of the weekly (Friday) meeting of witches, and the description of their activities at this meeting, including reading out of a book.² Here, it seems, we see

1. These activities are described in the 1645 Pamphlet (in the above order) on pp. 14-15, 32-3, 2.

2. 1645 Pamphlet, p. 12. There is very little evidence before 1645 that witches were believed to meet together or perform any joint rituals. Perhaps the nearest suggestion of this is a curious suggestion in a Colchester examination of 1599 (case 1173) that a witch could not visit her victim's house until she had 'agreed w(i)th the villaynes', possibly meaning the other witches. See also the 'Company of Witches' in case 1207.

the influence of continental ideas, perhaps mediated through Matthew Hopkins.¹

The evidence from the 1645 trial is further biased because special methods were used to induce confessions. Pricking the witch to see if she had any dead spots, thought to be a sure sign of guilt; searching the suspect for any strange excrescences; swimming her to see if she floated; keeping her awake for several nights and walking her back and forth until her feet were blistered, all these were methods used at the Chelmsford trial.² We have seen that people confessed and were found guilty in the Elizabethan period when all these methods, except the searching for a spot or lump, were absent. Therefore it is clear that we must not place too much stress on physical pressure as the cause of witchcraft beliefs. Likewise, it is wrong to think that such methods were highly illegal. They were done with the cognizance of the Essex justices, Sir Harbottle Grimston and Sir Thomas Bowes;³ only

1. Hopkins certainly knew King James I's Daemonologie which contained such ideas as the use of the water ordeal; (Hopkins, Discovery, p.56).

2. They are all described in Hopkins, Discovery.

3. 'Upon command from the Justice' the witches were kept from sleep to see if their familiars came to them (Hopkins, Discovery, p.50). Sir Harbottle Grimston was a moderate puritan gentleman, later purged by Pride after earlier support of the parliamentarians; he had a special interest in the trials since he had been born at Bradfield Hall, near Manningtree, and held manors in Bradfield, Tendring, Mistley, Ramsey, Kirby and Lawford, most of them inhabited by accused witches (D.N.B. and Morant, Essex, i, 464). Likewise Sir Thomas Bowes, justice of the peace for Essex for 50 years, was intimately involved, since his home was in Gt. Bromley, a village some 5 miles south of Manningtree (Morant, Essex, i, 442).

later were some of these methods disallowed.¹ Nevertheless, as Ady pointed out, the combination of sleeplessness and isolation 'will tame any wilde Beast how much more may it make men or women yeeld to confess Lyes, and impossibilities.'² Peculiar means resulted in a unique trial.

The usual explanation for the prosecutions is that they were stirred up by Hopkins and Stearne. The usual motive ascribed to them is greed. They were certainly paid for their witch-hunting activities in other counties, but the suggestion that they started looking for witches because they were impecunious, though often repeated, appears to have no factual basis.³ The other suggested motive for their activity is religious fanaticism; again there is little evidence that Hopkins was moved by religious enthusiasm.⁴ Among their victims were clergymen and

1. For instance, keeping the witches awake was later 'not allowed of by the Judges and other Magistrates' (Hopkins, Discovery, p. 55). Nevertheless, confessions continued.

2. Ady, Candle, p. 99.

3. Ewen II, p. 259, points out that no authority has been given for the constant assertion that Hopkins was an impecunious lawyer from Ipswich. For payments in other counties see the same page of Ewen.

4. As Montague Summers suggested in the introduction to Hopkins, Discovery, p. 23, Hopkins' defence is, 'from a Puritan point of view', 'singularly lukewarm'. Stearne's work is fuller of references to the devil and to biblical authorities.

Persons were used by the devil to bewitch Stearne, Confirmation, p. 30, 31. For the description of a classroom in Suffolk, see V. B. Wood, The Devil of Suffolk, p. 213 (n.p. 1937).

5. Hopkins, Discovery, p. 21; Stearne, Confirmation, p. 30.

6. Gauld, Satan's Possession, 412-43.

ardent church-goers, among their opponents Puritan extremists.¹ The real spur to their activity, at least in Essex, seems much more prosaic. It seems to have been a combination of curiosity, bewilderment, and anxiety, with a desire to exercise power and perform a useful public duty. Though Hopkins claims to have been, with Stearne, in personal danger,² the total impression is that this was in the background; more striking is the feeling of surprise, mingled with horror, at the conspiracy which they had unearthed. Such a conclusion can only remain an impression culled from the pamphlet and other accounts. A similar impression is that Hopkins and Stearne, like the justices, clergymen, and other notable inhabitants, really believed that they were performing a public service, dealing with a public menace. The witch-finders repeatedly asserted that they did not go around stirring up trouble, but only answered a public demand: as Hopkins said in a letter, he only went to towns where he was welcomed and given 'thankes and recompense'.³ Stearne denied the allegation that they did this work for their owne private ends, for

1. Stearne commented on the fact that many proven witches were outwardly 'very religious people, and would constantly repair to all Sermons neer them'; he even suggested that sermons were used by the devil to entice witches (Stearne, Confirmation, pp. 39, 59). For the execution of a clergyman in Suffolk, see C. L. Ewen, The Trials of John Lowes, clerk (n.p., 1937).

2. Hopkins, Discovery, p. 51; Stearne, Confirmation, p. 15.

3. Gaule, Select Cases, sig. A3^v.

'gaine and such like'.¹ He also stated that he was only called in after the Manningtree suspicions had already been voiced.² Of course there is a danger in accepting the witch-finders post facto defence of their motives. But it would also be naïve to isolate these two as black hearted villains leading on an innocent populace, as some have done.³ examination of the 1645 trial in its historical and local setting does not support such a conclusion.

The pressures behind the trials could not have been exerted by a small group of witch-finders; they were distributed far more widely, and even the victims played a part. One example of an unexpected pressure is given by Hopkins when he was discussing water ordeals. He argued that the Devil's belief that 'the country being

'perswading many to come of their owne accord to be tryed, perswading them their marks are so close they shall not be found out, so as diverse have come 10 or 12 miles to be searched of their own accord, and hanged for their labour, (as one Meggs, a Baker did, who lived within 7 miles of Norwich and was hanged at Norwich Assizes for witchcraft), then when they find that the Devil tells them false they reflect on him, and he, (as 40 have confessed) adviseth them to be swome'.

This argument, that swimming was only used at the request of the victims, was repeated by Stearne, but it has been

1. Stearne, Confirmation, sig. A2.
2. Ibid, p.14, which shows that he was not present at the first examination although he 'was one which caused her to be questioned'.
3. For one example of the extreme hostility to Hopkins see E. Maple, The Dark World of Witches (Pan edn., 1965) pp. 83-90.
4. Hopkins, Discovery, p. 56.

ignored by subsequent historians.¹ The simplest explanation of the voluntary ordeal would be that it performed a cathartic function. Villages were still intimate societies within which a suspected witch would feel increasingly isolated, surrounded by a wall of hostility. She might, therefore, welcome an ordeal as a deliverance from otherwise irrefutable suspicions, especially since she would naturally be convinced of her innocence.² This may have been connected with a possible millenarian tinge to the movement. Since witches were the cause of so much evil, their extinction, it was argued, would make the world into a more prosperous and happy place. Thus Gifford had earlier scoffed at the simple countryman's belief that 'the country being rid of the witches and their spirits, men's bodies and their cattell should bee safe'.³ Though there is no explicitly millenarian statement by the movement leaders in East Anglia in the 1640's, it seems that villagers, already imbued with millenarian concepts,⁴ viewed the witch-finders

1. Neither Ewen nor Notestein mention this episode.
2. This is the interpretation given by Mary Douglas of a recent witch-finding movement in J. Middleton and E.H. Winter(eds.), Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa (1963), pp. 133, 135, 140.
3. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. H2^v.
4. No localized studies of millenarianism in East Anglia have been found; on the subject generally see C. Hill, Puritanism and Revolution (1958), ch. 12, and N. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium (Mercury edn., 1962), pp. 321-378.

with considerable excitement. As Gaule, one of Hopkins' opponents, complained,

'the Cuntry People talke already, and that more frequently, more affectedly, of the infallible and wonderfull power of the Witchfinders; then they doe of God, or Christ, or the Gospell preached'.¹

Given the demand for their services, Hopkins and Stearne could well argue that they merely gave local authorities expert advice. No doubt they exacerbated the prosecutions by their reputation and energy, but all the time, as we have seen in Essex, they were building on pre-existing and localised tensions. Although not as free from the charge of using physical pressure, they may be compared to the leader of a contemporary witch-finding cult:

'The general impression I got of him was that he is very genuinely concerned with the growing incidence of man's wickedness His function is comparable with that of a father-confessor or a psychiatrist in our own society he may be misguided, his sincerity seems striking.'²

The idea of Matthew Hopkins as the instigator of prosecutions may have as little truth as the myth which reflected it, that Hopkins himself was swum as a witch.³

If we minimize the personal influence of Hopkins and Stearne in the Essex prosecutions, we are left with the central problem: why were there savage prosecutions in 1645? The answer seems to lie in a combination of

1. Gaule, Select Cases, p.93.
2. M.G.Marwick, 'Another Modern Anti-Witchcraft Movement in East Central Africa', Africa, xx, No.2(1950), 103.
3. For a refutation of the myth that Hopkins was himself swum as a witch, see Kittredge, Witchcraft, p.595.

particular factors, especially the disruption of local government and justice by the Civil War and, possibly, the economic, spiritual and other tensions which War created, with beliefs in witchcraft which, though usually kept just below the surface, were no less widespread and powerful than they had been in the sixteenth century.¹

1. Notestein, Witchcraft, pp.199-201, having dismissed the suggestion that Puritanism was to blame for the prosecutions, suggests the lack of government as a major factor. If he had been aware of the existence of Assize court records for 1645 he would not have stated that 'England was in a state of judicial anarchy' in that year. If this had ever been true, it was in 1643 when the Assizes do not appear to have been held. Thus lack of government, in itself, cannot explain the 1645 trial.

CHAPTER 12
Witchcraft Prosecutions and Economic Problems in Essex.

Previous chapters have described the sources for the study of witchcraft and analysed the general geographical and temporal distribution of prosecutions.

In this and following chapters an analysis of prosecutions will be made in an attempt to correlate prosecutions with religious, economic, social and other phenomena.

Naturally the boundaries chosen are unreal; the aged were a religious, economic, and social problem, though they are only treated under the last heading in the subsequent analysis.

It may be assumed that there was a considerable growth of population during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and that this levelled off after 1660.¹ At first sight this trend seems to mirror that of witchcraft prosecutions in Essex and a causal connection could well be suggested. Growing pressure on economic resources led to increasing tensions and hatred towards the old and the poor. Unfortunately it is not possible to demonstrate any direct connections. At the village level there was no obvious correlation between population growth and witchcraft accusations. An analysis of the parish

1. As yet, there has been no detailed analysis of population changes in Essex during this period; the general outline given above is that which has been suggested for the whole of England, for example by Professor Habakkuk in Population in History, ed. D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (1965), pp. 147-8.

registers of Little Baddow and Boreham has failed to show any significant connections between the fluctuations in deaths, births, or marriages, and years of prosecution in those villages. Certainly there was, or would have been without migration, enormous growth. In both Little Baddow and Boreham the surplus of births over deaths between 1560-1600 would have nearly doubled the population by the latter date. There was an average surplus of six persons per year, rising as high as fifteen in 1577, in Boreham. The traditional social organization, the groups of neighbours and kin, must have come under considerable strain in the attempt to absorb the new children. In Little Baddow, a group of roughly sixty adult males in 1560 were working for an extra six months a year; without migration they would have been feeding an extra child each by 1566, for already births had exceeded deaths by sixty. However, there are no known witchcraft prosecutions in Little Baddow after 1570, despite continued population increase.

Nor does there seem to be any correlation at the county level between population density and witchcraft prosecutions. A comparison of a map of the distribution of prosecutions with tentative population figures based on the Essex Ship Money Assessment of 1638 shows no overlap with either the most densely or most sparsely

populated parts of the county.¹ Prosecutions were most intense in the moderately populated central-northern belt of Essex. The dense area around Colchester and in the south-east, and the marshlands of the south-west were less often the areas of prosecution. The larger towns like Maldon, Colchester, and Harwich had their share of prosecutions, but there seems to have been no particular concentration varying with the size of the town or village.² The outskirts of London appear to have been normal in the number of witchcraft indictments. Thus population factors, in themselves, cannot explain either the variation over time, or area, of Essex prosecutions. Closely related to population growth was population movement, the pattern of migration. It has long been obvious that villages were not stable, unchanging, units in the sixteenth century, but the social effects of rapid movement have received little attention.³ One example from a village known to contain witches suggests the dimensions of the problem.

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1. See Maps 1, 8. F. Hall, 'Agriculture and Rural Society in Essex, 1560-1640' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1950), pp. 552-7 and map 6 forms the basis for estimates of population density in 1638.
 2. For prosecutions in towns see p. 72 above.
 3. Massive movement in Elizabethan society have been emphasized in E. E. Rich, 'The Population of Elizabethan England', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, ii (1949), pp. 247-265; and in S. A. Peyton, 'The Village Population in the Tudor Lay Subsidy Rolls', *English Historical Review*, xxx (1915), pp. 234-250.

TABLE 9: Social Mobility in Boreham from subsidy 1 assessments, 1524-1598.

	<u>1524</u>	<u>1544</u>	<u>1566</u>	<u>1572</u>	<u>1598</u>
Total of families assessed	42	36	30	23	10
Number of new families	-	24	15	2	4

This shows considerable change; between 1544 and 1566 the population changed to such an extent that only half those assessed at the latter date had been assessed twenty-two years earlier. By 1598 only three of the forty-two family names of 1524 were represented. Yet even this underrates the amount of movement: it only shows changes among the most propertied, and probably least mobile elements in the village, and it only indicates that some member of the family stayed in the village. Those most likely to move were younger sons and daughters, leaving one member of the family on the land. Such extensive movement may have had far-reaching consequences. It may have affected people's feelings of security, whether people lived in groups of kin or neighbours, and the many personal problems of insurance, education, policing and health in the village. Witchcraft prosecutions, also, may have been affected.

It is very difficult to generalise about whether

1. This table is based on P.R.O., E.179 108/51, 108/241, 109/291, 110/422, 111/447, 111/501.

accusations took place between long-established families in the village, or whether recently arrived individuals were thought of as witches. In Hatfield Peverel it seems that the fiercest accusations took place between families who had been living in the village some forty years before. The four major families involved in witchcraft prosecutions, Duke, Frauncis, Osborne and Waterhouse, had all been present in the village in 1524, as were a number of their victim's families, Wilmott, Hawkin, Higham, Augur, Wardoll.¹ In Boreham, only one family, the Poole's, connected with witchcraft had been assessed in 1524. But the other suspected witches were not newcomers, all of them are recorded in earlier local records. From this very small sample it would seem that accusations were not normally made against newcomers to the village as a veiled method of controlling or reacting to frequent mobility. The only known case of a newcomer being prosecuted was that of Joan Cocke; this was almost certainly because she was already a known witch, suspected in the village in which she had previously lived.²

1. The sources used for the study of Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, and Little Baddow were described in Ch. 8, and are described in detail in the bibliography, pp. 384-5.

2. Cases 21 and 208-9. Local records prove that these cases referred to the same Joan Cocke.

Another general economic change, occurring during this period in Essex, was the growth of a clothing industry in the region to the north and east of Colchester, producing both ordinary cloth and the new, lighter, draperies.¹ Many of the centres of the cloth industry were also the centres of prosecutions: Bocking, Braintree, Coggeshall, Witham, Colchester, and Halstead were the main centres of the new draperies. All of them witnessed prosecutions. Manningtree, Dedham, Boxted, Langham, Wivenhoe, and Horkesley were the main cloth-making towns; all except Boxted suffered prosecutions. But any closer connection is difficult to establish. Many villages and towns not concerned with the cloth industry were as severe in their indictments as the above; fluctuations in the cloth industry, particularly the crises of the 1620's and 1630's were not reflected in sudden outbreaks of accusations; the actual individuals accused were not necessarily connected with cloth-making.² The relative importance of the cloth and other industries in Essex

1. A description and map of the cloth industry is provided by J.E. Pilgrim, 'The Rise of the 'New Draperies' in Essex', University of Birmingham Historical Journal, VII, No. 1 (1958), pp. 36-59.
2. The most notorious Braintree witch, Alice Aylett, was the wife of a shoemaker, cases 301-5; on the other hand, a clothmaker was bewitched in 1582. Yet it was not a suspected witch, whom he employed as a spinner (Elizabeth Bennet), who attacked him, but rather another woman to whom he had refused poor relief as overseer of the poor. (1582 Pamphlet, sigs. A4, A6^v-A7, B4^v, C6).

witchcraft prosecutions, and the predominance of agricultural groups is shown in the following table.

TABLE 10: Occupations of the husbands and victims of those accused of witchcraft at the Essex Assizes, 1560-1680.

	<u>husbands of accused witches.</u>	<u>victims of suspected witches (or their relatives)</u>
labourer	23	6
husbandman	11	4
yeoman	4	16
gentleman	-	1
beerbrewer	1	-
tailor	4	-
weaver	1	1
shoemaker	1	-
sailor	2	5
mason	2	1
bricklayer	-	2
carpenter	-	1
fletcher	-	1
basket-maker	-	1
glover	-	2
tanner	-	1
smith	-	1
butcher	-	1
milller	-	1
	<u>49</u>	<u>45</u>

Note: The above occupations are given on the indictments; if the victim was a child or animal the owner or father's occupation was often given. The occupations of male witches are analysed on p. 213 below.

From the table it can be seen that only a very small proportion of individuals were connected in a full-time capacity, as tailors, or weavers, to the cloth industry. On the other hand, a comparison of the occupations of the victim's, with those of the suspect's husbands, suggests that small artificers and tradesmen were considerably more important in the former class. While nearly eighty per cent of the husbands of suspected witches were involved in agricultural work, only sixty per cent of the 'victims' were so engaged. While witchcraft accusations predominantly flowed between agriculturalists, sailors, bricklayers, and other non-agricultural workers were quite likely to be victims of witchcraft.

Another difference between suspected witches' husbands and their victims, illustrated by Table 10, is in social class. While labourers predominate in the first list, yeomen are by far the largest single category in the second. Witches seem to have been poorer than their victims. The microscopic research necessary before it is possible to see whether there is any widespread connection between a 'rising' yeoman class and the suspected witchcraft of their less successful neighbours has not been feasible. Yet evidence at the village level does suggest that victims were from more prosperous families

than their bewitchers. This has already been shown in the case of the 1645 trial,¹ and it seems to have been the case in the three villages. A Hatfield Peverel witch gave her familiar to 'one mother Waterhouse her neybour (a pore woman)'. Mother Waterhouse had been a widow for nine years, her husband, in all probability, had been assessed some twenty years earlier at 2d., the lowest assessment in the subsidy. In 1582 a woman was believed to have bewitched the collector for the poor because he would not give her 12d. for her sick husband,² and another woman, in 1589, became a witch when resident in the Almshouses.³ Literary authorities agreed that witches often seemed poor,⁴ and it was a characteristic feature of their behaviour to beg.⁵ But it would be a mistake to assume that it was the poorest in the village who were automatically suspected. It was usually the moderately poor, like the woman who felt she ought to get poor relief but was denied it, who were accused. The witch Margaret Poole of Boreham was married to a man who had been constable of the village and who, in 1566, was one of the assessors of the lay subsidy and himself

1. Where the accusers, but not accused, had earlier been assessed for Ship Money, p. 174 above.

2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. A7.

3. 1589 Pamphlet, sig. B.

4. For example, Scot, *Discovery*, pp. 29, 30, 53, 374; Stearne, *Confirmation*, p. 33; Bernard, *Guide*, p. 155.

5. For example, Ady, *Candle*, p. 114.

the sixteenth highest contributor. Elizabeth Frauncis, a notorious witch of Hatfield Peverel, was married to a man styled as a 'yeoman' in 1572, though she complained that he was 'not so rich' as the first man who promised to marry her.¹ Agnes Frauncis, of the same village, had a weaver as a husband. None of the ten people noted by the Boreham overseers of the poor as receivers of parish assistance during the later sixteenth century are recorded as suspected witches.

The victims of the witches appear to have come from a slightly higher level. In Little Baddow they were described as 'husbandman' and 'yeoman' and belonged to influential village families, the Dagnetts and Bastwicks. In Boreham, one victim was a member of the Brett family, a group of considerable size and status, one of whose members, for example, was an overseer of the poor in 1590 and one of the thirteen taxpayers in the village in 1598. Another victim had as her father a weaver or coverlet-maker.² In Hatfield Peverel the victims included a miller, labourer, butcher, husbandman, the constable of the village, and two yeomen. This does not include the Wilmott family, one of the leading yeoman families in the village, which was subjected to a mass attack by witches.

A sample of the Hatfield Peveral Lay Subsidy for 1563

1. Case 50 and 1566 Pamphlet, p.318.
2. Edith Hawes' father was a weaver according to E.R.O., Q/SR. 126/24,25.

suggests the social level of some of the victims. Only twenty-eight people in this large village were listed, as compared to seventy in 1524, and they may therefore be taken to be the richest yeomen and above. Of these John Higham, assessed to pay 12s., Walter Wilmott (8s.) John Bird (5s.) Alexander Wilmott (16d.), John Some (30s.) and James Hawkins (15s.), are all known to have been involved, as victims, in witchcraft accusations. To take only one further example, the widow of James Hawkins, bewitched in 1589, held fifty-eight acres of land of the manor of Mugdon Hall according to a manorial survey taken the same year. On the whole it seems to have been among the middle and upper ranks of village society that witchcraft tensions arose.

There is other evidence that sheer destitution did not lead to witchcraft accusations. If this had been so, we would have expected there to be some reflection of high prices and bad harvests in the accusations. One example will show that this did not happen. It seems evident that the last five years of the sixteenth century saw a minor economic crisis in parts of Essex. For example, in Boreham, the poor-overseers accounts show a sudden increase and so do their disbursements. In Hatfield Peverel there was a simultaneous worsening of conditions. In 1594 a villager of Hatfield was

indicted at the Assizes for saying that 'Corne wilbe dere and ther is one in the tower that doth prophecye that wheate wilbe at Sixteene shillings a Bushell shortely'.¹ Yet there were no witchcraft accusations after this date in any of the three villages; in Essex, generally, the accusations appear to have been lower, in the late 1590's.² Nor do English wheat prices show any significant correlation with witchcraft prosecutions in Essex. According to Professor Hoskins, the years of highest prices in England between 1560-1619 were 1562, 1565, 1573, 1586, 1594-7, 1608, 1613. These years do not coincide with Essex prosecutions which were at their highest in the early 1580's and early 1590's, two periods of relatively plentiful harvest.³ Two other indications that prosecutions were not directly related to localised famines are the widespread location of accusations in any one year and the fact that such accusations occurred in different years in the three neighbouring villages selected for detailed study.

Nor do the seasonal variations in supposed bewitchings suggest agricultural fluctuations and shortages.

Calculations based on the Assize indictments suggest that

1. P.R.O., Assizes 35/36/T,m.39.
2. See Diagram 1.
3. W.G.Hoskins 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History, 1480-1619', Agricultural History Review, xii (1964).p.39.

February to June were the time of most bewitchings, while August to October were freest from them, but the differences are hardly significant.¹ There does not seem to have been a significant increase of accusations in the early spring resulting from hunger.

Another way of measuring the extent to which accusations of witchcraft centred on agricultural problems is to examine the nature of injuries attributed to witches; to see whether their attacks were mainly on domestic livestock, or on manufacturing processes. The following table gives the offences for which individuals were accused at the Assizes.

TABLE 11: Victims of witchcraft in Essex Assize indictments, 1560-1680.

	Number of Cases
Humans: illness	108
Animals: death	233
Miscellaneous: total	341
Animals	80
Other property	6

From the table it would seem that humans were the most likely victims of witchcraft, and that death, rather than illness, was most likely to be attributed to witches.

The 'other property' listed above was as follows: two barns burnt down, twenty brewings of beer spoilt, one

1. The indictments state when a bewitching began and ended, yet detailed analysis of the months of most bewitching showed no obvious patterns. For example, only 8 people died of witchcraft in September, 25 in February, but bewitchings began almost as commonly in September as February.

~~the~~ windmill bewitched, cheese prevented from forming, and four gallons of cream prevented from becoming butter.¹ While these figures usefully indicate the type of offence forming indictments, comparison of indictments with pamphlet accounts of the trials show that only the more serious suspicions were selected for formal charges and that there were many other acts of witchcraft suggested by villagers, yet never recorded. This is shown in Table 12 where the offences of eighteen suspected witches who appear described in both Assize records and pamphlets are compared.²

TABLE 12: Nature of the injuries blamed on 18 Essex witches, 1564-1589.

	<u>In the indictments</u>	<u>In the pamphlets</u>
Humans: death	21	32
sickness	4	17
Animals(usually death of)	3	14
Miscellaneous:		
burning a barn	1	1
spoilng beer	-	7
spoilng butter	-	3
preventing spinning	-	1
cattle give blood	-	1
familiars steal milk	-	1
knocking down tree	-	1
knocking down wood-pile	-	1
mysterious rocking of		
cradle	-	1
cart stuck fast	-	1

1. In the order above, the cases were 166, 224, 171, 251, 293, 324.
2. For a description of these 18 suspected witches see p. 94 above.

This Table shows that the supposed activities of witches were far more diverse than the indictments would suggest. Causing the death of humans, though still the most important single category, only accounts for about forty per cent of the cases instead of roughly seventy per cent. Witches were blamed in an increased number of cases for agricultural misfortunes; the injury of animals, the loss of butter and beer, mysterious accidents to carts and piles of wood. In only one case, where spinning was prevented, did witches attack 'industrial' activities. It was primarily for injuries to humans that witches were blamed and secondarily for loss of animals and farm produce. The value of the animals supposedly bewitched provides some indication of the current pre-occupation with witchcraft. From Tables 11 and 12 it would seem that the eighty recorded indictments for bewitching animals represent less than a quarter of the actual suspected attacks. Yet, analysis of the eighty cases alone suggests extensive damage to property. Indictments record the number, kind and suggested value of animal victims. These are analysed in the following table.

1. Case 325.

2. Case 403.

3. There are detailed descriptions of the bewitching of cows, beer and butter in case 1207.

TABLE 13: Animals recorded as bewitched in Assize
indictments, 1560-1680.

	<u>Number bewitched</u>	<u>Value of an animal (c. 1580)</u>
Cows/calves	110	£1-2
Horses/colts	63	£2-4
Pigs/piglets	124	2-4s.
Sheep/ewes	123	2-3s.
Chickens/capons	11	4d.-6d.

One suspected witch might be accused of causing considerable damage. In 1593 a woman was accused of bewitching to death twenty-two sheep valued at £5, one cow valued at 40s., one pig valued at 8s., and a calf valued at 8s.¹ Even more expensive were the activities of a spinster of Ingrave who was accused of bewitching to death four geldings valued at £12, and sixteen cows valued at £50.² There is no indication that it was animals in the special care of women, for instance poultry or young animals, which were especially attacked, nor do certain animals seem to have been more commonly bewitched than others.³

The agricultural background to Essex witchcraft prosecutions was influenced by a number of factors, among them the extent of enclosure and forest, and the patterns of land inheritance. Most of Essex had been enclosed before 1560, but there were one large and two small areas

1. Case 353.

2. Case 403.

3. There are detailed descriptions of the bewitching of cows, beer and butter in case 1207.

which remained unenclosed until the late eighteenth century.¹ The large region was the north-west corner, nearly one-fifth of the county, and the small ones were round Colchester and along the south-west border of the county. In the map of the distribution of witchcraft prosecutions there is a curious absence of witchcraft cases round Colchester and prosecutions are generally sparsest in the north-west. Comparison with other counties will be needed before it is possible to see whether there were more prosecutions in the early^{en} ~~closed~~, enclosing, or open-field areas; if the Essex pattern is general it may be that witchcraft was related to the problems of a growing population pressing on already enclosed land. On the other hand, there does not seem to have been any particular correlation between forested areas and areas of prosecution. There was little forest left in Essex by 1560; the bulk of what remained was on the outskirts of London, round Epping, and this was not peculiarly savage in its witchcraft prosecutions.²

They were densest in the area of mixed farming, where wheat and hops were the main crops, in the centre and north of the county. Yet they also occurred in all the

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1. Essex enclosures are described in R. Coles 'Enclosures: Essex Agriculture, 1500-1900', Essex Naturalist, xxvi (1937-40), pp. 2-25.
 2. R. Coles, 'The Past History of the Forest of Essex', Essex Naturalist, xxiv (1932-5), pp. 115-133. A brief description of Essex agriculture is given on p. 21 above. See also Map 8.

other regions.

While early enclosure may have prevented access to the land for a growing population, another factor which may have differentiated villages and caused more tensions in some than others were customs of inheritance, partible or impartible. Although the evidence is scanty, there does seem to have been some connection between partible inheritance and witchcraft accusations. In all three manors upon which there is known to have been partible inheritance there were witchcraft accusations.¹ Nothing more than a tentative hypothesis can be advanced, however, until there has been further research to show whether some of the other villages where there were even higher numbers of accusations were also affected by partible inheritance.

Another possible connection is between converted monastic property and the location of prosecutions. The first impression is that there was such a link. The concentration of witchcraft suspicions within the manor which had formerly been the priory of Hatfield Peverel

1. The manors were Hatfield Broad Oak, Waltham, and Thorpe le Soken. R.J. Faith, 'Peasant Families and Inheritance Customs in Medieval England', Agricultural History Review, xiv, part 2 (1966), pp. 93-4. Unfortunately neither Faith nor G.C. Homans, from whom she cites, state whether the 'Waltham' was Great Waltham or Waltham Holy Cross, nor has it been possible to locate Homans' P.R.O. reference. Both Walthams, however, witnessed witchcraft accusations, as did the other two villages (see Map 1).

suggested that people might be reacting to increased severity on the part of lay landlords. The famous trials at the village where the Abbey of St. Osithes had been situated appeared to corroborate this view. Yet a wider comparison of maps of monastic property with maps of the distribution of witchcraft accusations does not bear out any such hypothesis. Prosecutions seem to have occurred with equal frequency on monastic and non-monastic land.¹

The conclusions of this chapter have been largely negative: no single economic factor can explain the distribution of Essex witchcraft prosecutions. The major positive conclusion is that the suspects were, on the whole, of a slightly lower status than their accusers. Yet they were not necessarily the poorest in the village. No direct connection can be drawn between poverty and accusations. Further evidence for this assertion is the absence of any correlation between areas of greatest poverty in the county and accusations for witchcraft. Small holdings, insufficient to support families, were most common in the north-west and north-east. The central

1. Felix Hull, 'Agriculture and Rural Society in Essex, 1560-1640' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1950), map 9, shows the distribution of monastic property.

region of Essex was, comparatively, the least troubled by poverty: this was the region of most accusation.¹ Thus the parish overseers accounts of a north-western village, Heydon, show an acute problem of agrarian poverty, yet there were no known prosecutions in that village. In Boreham, however, the poor officers were always left with a surplus on their hands until 1594, yet there were a number of witchcraft prosecutions before that date.²

1. Ibid. p.471.

2. The Heydon accounts and those of Boreham are described in F.G. Emmison, 'The Care of the Poor in Elizabethan Essex', Essex Review, lxi, no. 248 (1953), pp. 7-28. Hull, on p. 479 of the thesis cited above, took a graver view than Emmison of the Heydon accounts, and stated that they showed 'an acute problem of agrarian poverty'.

CHAPTER 13

Witchcraft prosecutions and social phenomena
(1): personality, sex, age and marriage.

Literary accounts of witches written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often stress the suspect's ugliness. For instance, Gaule suggested that 'every old woman with a wrinkled face, a furr'd brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voyce, or a scolding tongue' was 'prnounced for a witch'.¹ Other authorities described them as 'commonlie lame', 'foule', 'toothless', 'leane and deformed', ' of an horrid countenance'.² Although there were occasional references to lame witches in Essex, the descriptions of actual trials lay no particular emphasis on the physical stereotype of the witch.³ Nor does Gifford's description of Essex witchcraft suggest that people were selected as potential witches because of their looks. The impression from Essex evidence is that actions and personality, rather than physical factors, were the determining criteria. It may, however, have been true, as Ady suggested, that someone

1. Gaule, Select Cases, p.5.

2. Scot, Discovery, pp.29,34,190; Bernard, Guide, p.138. Other literary caricatures of the witch are quoted in K.M.Briggs, Pale Hecate's Team (1962), pp.83,90.

3. Elizabeth Clark in the 1645 Pamphlet, p.6, and Ursley Kempe in that of 1582, sig.A7, were both lame; both were key suspects.

began to look like the stereotype of the witch when she acted like one.¹ This sequence was reflected in the other physical characteristic of supposed witches, their mark. People were first suspected because they acted like witches; only later were they searched for some physical oddity, protuberance or cavity, which would confirm or refute suspicions. Such a mark was usually in a secret place.²

Several writers outlined the personality types associated with witchcraft. Those who were boastful, illiterate, miserable, lustful and leading a 'lewd and naughty kind of life', melancholy; all were likely to be witches.³ Above all, they were thought to be the type of person who went round begging,⁴ and those who had vicious tongues. Witches were people of 'ill natures, of a wicked disposition, and spitefully malicious';⁵ 'malicious people, full of revenge, having hearts swolne with rancour'.⁶ They were scolds and peevish.⁷ These

1. Ady, Candle, p.114.
2. Examples of the searching of Essex witches after they were suspected occur in the 1582 Pamphlet, sig.E5, and case 843.
3. Such adjectives were used by Bernard, Guide, p.103; Gaule, Select Cases, pp.51, 64, 80; Scot, Discovery, p.29.
4. Scot, Discovery, p.30.
5. Bernard, Guide, p.156.
6. Stearne, Confirmation, p.20.
7. Gaule, Select Cases, p.85; Scot, Discovery, p.50

generalizations about the cantankerous and anti-social witch can be tested against the actual cases in the Essex records; furthermore, we are able to see whether suspected witches were often accused of other types of offence, for example incest or petty crime.

Presentments for witchcraft at the ecclesiastical courts in Essex occasionally gave details of other offences also alleged against the suspect. One suspected witch failed to live with her husband, another was suspected of incest with her son, another allowed her daughter to be incontinent and was herself incontinent.¹ More vaguely, another was 'a light woman of filthey behaviour and hathe played the bawde'.² Several women were also scolds, 'sowers of discord' or brawlers. The narrow border between tongue-lashing and witchcraft was suggested by some churchwardens who said that a woman was 'crymed for a wytche w(i)ch we know not but by here saye but she ys develishe of her tonge'.³ As well as being a rumoured witch, a man was 'a comon Brawler and sower of discorde between neighbours', and Margaret Saunders admitted that 'she is suspected of witchcraft and thought to be a skoulde'.⁴

But it was not only the witches who were of suspect

1. Cases 892, 910, 934.
2. Case 1086.
3. Case 1024.
4. Cases 1017, 882; case 1132 is even more extreme.

behaviour. Those who resorted to cunning folk,¹ and who called other people witches² might be just as evil. This last point suggests that it would be over-simplifying to see a necessary connection between witchcraft and other anti-social behaviour. The above instances represent only a very small proportion of the more than one hundred people presented for witchcraft at the ecclesiastical courts. Analysis of the witchcraft pamphlets, where the suspected witch is often described in considerable detail, further suggests that witches did not necessarily misbehave in other obvious ways. Some forty-three suspected witches were described in the Essex pamphlets. Of these, only nine had a wider reputation for misbehaviour. Four had had illegitimate children, or became pregnant before marriage;³ one was suspected of incest with her son;⁴ one had quarrelled with her husband;⁵ one said her prayers in latin;⁶ two others were called 'old whore' or 'a lewd woman'.⁷ But one type of behaviour seems to have been common to all of them. This was begging, combined with grumbling or cursing when they were refused. For example, Mother Cunny asked a neighbour

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1. Case 1088.
 2. Cases 1103, 1106.
 3. Elizabeth Frauncis in 1566, Ursley Kempe and Annis Herd in 1582, and Joan Cunny in 1589.
 4. Joan Pechey in ^{the} 1582 Pamphlet, sig. C6.
 5. Alice Newman in 1582.
 6. Agnes Waterhouse in 1566.
 7. Elizabeth Bennet in 1582 and Elizabeth Gooding in 1645.

for some drink but 'his wife being busie and abrewing, tolde her she had no leysure to give her any. Then Joane Cunnye went away discontented'. Next day her refuser was in terrible pain.¹

Detailed analysis of offences in the three sample villages also suggests that people suspected of various anti-social activities, for instance sexual misdemeanours or theft, were not necessarily believed to be witches and vice versa. In the table of offences for the three villages there was little overlapping between witchcraft and other crimes.² Of the twenty suspects in the three villages, only three are known to have been accused of other offences. Agnes Duke was probably accused of theft some twenty years before being accused of witchcraft;³ Mary Belsted quarrelled with her husband;⁴ Alice Bambrick was accused of theft, not attending church, and because she was 'a troublesome woman in her tonge amongeste her neighboures'.⁵ Meanwhile, of the approximately one hundred and eighty people who are known to have been suspected of sexual offences in the three villages, only Alice Bambrick

1. 1589 Pamphlet, sig. Aiv.

2. See p. 115 above, for the table.

3. Agnes was accused of witchcraft in 1584 (case 203); a woman of the same name and village was accused of theft in 1564, E.R.O., Q/SR. 16/17, 17/45.

4. The quarrel is described in considerable detail; E.R.O., D/AEA/9 fols. 32, 36, 63^v, 87, 114^v.

5. E.R.O., Q/SR 14/3; D/AEV/1 fol. 18; D/ABA/3 fols. 36^v, 63^v, 125.

There is a little doubt in this case about the identification of Alice Bambrick, but detailed reconstruction suggests that she was the same person as Agnes Bambrick of Boreham.

was also suspected of witchcraft. Again, only one in five of those formally accused of scolding or quarrelling were also accused of witchcraft. This adds confirmation to the impression that when people suspected witchcraft they did not automatically select the most notorious prostitutes or criminals in the neighbourhood as likely witches; rather, as will be seen, they examined their relationship to others. These others might well be law-abiding citizens.

Comparison of witchcraft and other offences has shown that witches were not necessarily suspected of sexual offences.¹ Nor does a sexual element seem to have been important in Essex prosecutions generally. It is true that, as contemporaries observed,² witches were usually women. Only twenty-three of the two hundred and ninety-one accused witches were men.³ Even among these twenty-three, eleven were either married to an accused witch or appeared in a joint indictment with a woman. Seven of them were found guilty, a slightly lower proportion than among women; their occupations were diverse.

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1. Nor were sexual offenders necessarily suspected as witches; of the 25 cases of incest noted in the Essex archdeaconry records, 1570-1670, only 1 was definitely connected to witchcraft suspicions.
 2. For instance, Gaule, Select Cases, p.52, and Stearne, Confirmation, p.10.
 3. Cases 1, 6, 45-8, 125, 133-5, 210-1, 224-5, 272, 280-2, 391-2, 392(b), 403, 459, 488-9, 510-1, 518-20, 519-20, 532, 649, 659-61, 736, 753, 762.

There were twelve labourers, three yeomen, one gentleman, one beerbrewer, one clerk, one joiner, and two tailors and two glovers. Men were accused in every decade between 1560 and 1670, except for a gap between 1616 and 1647. Thus, there does not seem to have been any obvious objection to the idea of male witches. Yet women predominated. Any explanation of witchcraft prosecutions must account for this fact. Certain hypotheses do not find support in the Essex material. There is no evidence that hostility between the sexes lay behind the prosecutions. Essex pamphlets show women witnessing as often as men against other women, nor does the following table of the sex of those supposed to be bewitched show any particular attack on males.

TABLE 14: Sex of those recorded as bewitched, in Assize indictments, 1560-1680.

<u>Period</u>	<u>Death</u>		<u>Illness</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
1560-79	20	22	11	8
1580-99	41	58	18	21
1600-19	17	13	6	17
1620-39	7	7	3	5
1640-59	13	12	6	5
1660-79	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	103	116	45	57

Total male: 148

Total female: 173

1. See p. 179 above.

2. Perkins, *Journal*, p. 163.

From this we see that females were slightly more likely to be bewitched, in most periods, than males. Analysis of the types of offences attributed to witches in Essex showed no sexual content. They did not attack virility in any form, either by blasting the crops or bewitching men's genitals. Essex witches, as described in the pamphlets and by Gifford, were not believed to attend sexual orgies, have sexual relations with their familiars, or fly. They were not searched, except by other women, and the phallic witch-pin or suggestive broom-sticks, upon which they rode in myth, in other countries, were absent. The only suggestions of a sexual motif in all the Essex evidence comes in the trial of 1645 in the demure accounts of two women's sexual relations with the devil. This trial, it has been argued, was exceptional and influenced by continental ideas.¹

Contemporary writers saw the explanation of the predominance of female witches in the temperament of women. As men, they suggested that the female sex was both weak and vicious, weak towards Satan and vicious towards fellow human beings. Perkins observed that 'the woman being the weaker sexe, is sooner entangled by the devills illusions with this damnable art, then (sic) the man'.²

1. See p. 179 above.

3. Perkins, Damned Art, p.168.

Stearne suggested that it was because women were 'commonly impatient, and being displeased more malicious, and so more apt to revenge according to their power, and thereby more fit instruments for the Devill.'¹ This interpretation is similar to that advanced later in this thesis. If, as is argued later, witchcraft reflected tensions between an ideal of neighbourliness and the necessities of economic and social change, women were commonly thought of as witches because they were more resistant to such change. It was their social position and power which led to mounting hatred against them.

As wives and mothers and gossips they tended to be more intimately connected with various village groups, they were the co-ordinating element in village society. People would feel most uneasy about them when society was segmenting.² It was they who borrowed and lent most, and it was their curse which was most feared.

Related to the problem of the sex of witch and victim is that of their age. Contemporaries suggested that witches were, almost without exception, 'old'.³ Just how old they were it is impossible to tell in the majority of

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1. Stearne, Confirmation, p.11; see also Scot, Discovery, p.236.
 2. Obviously there are immense problems here; there is a further discussion of some of these points on p.280 below.
 3. For instance, Perkins, Damned Art, pp.186,191; Scot, Discovery, pp.25,53.

1. Stearne, Confirmation, p.11; see also Scot, Discovery, p.236.
 2. Obviously there are immense problems here; there is a further discussion of some of these points on p.280 below.
 3. For instance, Perkins, Damned Art, pp.186,191; Scot, Discovery, pp.25,53.

cases since indictments do not record ages. But from incidental information in the pamphlets and coroner's inquests on some of those imprisoned in 1645, we know the age of fifteen of those accused at the Assizes.¹ Of these, two were between 40-9, three between 50-9, seven between 60-9, and three between 80-9. Although some of the ages were stated to be approximate, it does seem reasonable to argue that, in Essex, the likeliest age for a witch was between fifty and seventy. The pamphlets suggest that people gradually became witches, in their own and their neighbour's eyes, and that the longer a witch lived the worse her power was supposed to be. This was noted by John Gaule when he remarked that 'the longer witches are suffered to live, the worse they are, not onely do they do more mischief to others, but grow more wicked within themselves'.² Children could not be powerful witches: thus Stearne told of a boy of nine in Northamptonshire who was accused of witchcraft 'when all know he could not be of much capacity'.³ In one long description in 1564 both mother and daughter were believed to be witches, but the daughter claimed that her mother was 'the stronger witch'. She also suggested that a person of good reputation when young might gradually become hated

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1. Only between 1645 and 1647 were the ages of suspected witches recorded in coroner's inquests, 4 examples are cases 648(c)-(f).
 2. Gaule, Select Cases, p.175
 3. Stearne, Confirmation, p.19; the only recorded young suspect in Essex (Joan Waterhouse, 1566 Pamphlet, p.320) was aged 18, perhaps this was the reason for her acquittal, despite her confession, case 19.

and suspected; as she lamented to her daughters ' I am bro(u)ght out of my good name to an yll'.¹ The way in which suspicions gradually built up in a village has already been outlined; this process was reflected in the confessions of suspected witches who echoed their neighbour's fears. They all stated that they had 'acquired' witchcraft some years before, rather than being born with the power. In 1566 Elizabeth Francis claimed to have been initiated by her grandmother at the age of twelve, but she kept her familiar for fifteen or sixteen years before she handed it over to Agnes Waterhouse. Agnes said, in the same pamphlet, that she had been a witch for fifteen years. In the 1589 pamphlet, all three confessions included the length of time the suspect believed themselves to have possessed diabolic power: Joan Cunny had received her witchcraft some twenty years before and claimed to have hurt many people during the last sixteen or twenty years; Joan Upney said she had been given her witchcraft some seven or eight years previously; the devil had first appeared to Joan Prentice six years before the trial. Those who confessed in 1645 were divided between nine who stated that they had been witches for a considerable length of time, averaging some fifteen years, and five who said that they had

1. Case 861.

2. Case 147.

become witches some six months before their examination. The latter group were possibly a product of the exceptional circumstances of 1645.

While suspected witches were characteristically middle-aged or old,¹ their victims appear to have been younger adults. The Assize indictments often stated, in the case of children, the age of the victim; in a number of instances the victim was said to be the 'son of' or 'daughter of' another person. It seems likely that this was only recorded when the victim was a child. The following ages of children were recorded.

TABLE 15: Number of children of various ages recorded in the Assize indictments as bewitched, 1560-1680.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>
An unborn child ²	1
Months - 3	3
6	1
9	1
'infant'	3
Years - 1	4
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	3
6	1
7	1
8	2
9	1
10	1
11	1

1. Further evidence of their age, albeit impressionistic, comes from the pamphlet descriptions of 'old women' who were witches. As was shown in Table 7, p108, a number of women remained suspected for many years; when they were buried they might be recorded, as was the witch Mary Belsted or Middleton of Boreham, as 'an old woman'.

2. Case 145.

As well as these cases, there were sixty in which the victim was described as the 'son' or 'daughter' of another. Comparing these ninety-two victims with the total of three hundred and forty-one victims altogether, it would seem that over two-thirds of those believed to be bewitched were adults: mortality at childbirth, as the above table shows, hardly ever seems to have been ascribed to witches. This picture of predominantly adult victims of witchcraft becomes even stronger when we remember that even where a child was bewitched it was the parent who brought the accusation and felt the attack. As with attacks on property, the 'victim' might be the person who was indirectly injured. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to collect information on the exact age of accusers; only indirect evidence, such as the presence of young children in the family who were bewitched, remains. This gives an impression that they were quite often a generation younger than the accused.

One explanation of the fact that witches were usually old was suggested by Reginald Scot. He argued that it was because old women were often suffering delusions because of 'the stopping of their monethlie melancholike flux or issue of bloud'; such women were widely believed to have the evil eye.¹ This explanation hardly seems

1. Scot, Discovery, pp.65,399.

helpful in explaining Essex accusations where the major problem is the reason for accusations rather than confessions. The theory that will be advanced later in the thesis concerning the origin of witchcraft beliefs will attempt to account for an apparent tension between generations, rather than the particular psychology of the old. Pressure on economic resources, and growing unease at the neighbourly values of village society, it will be argued, naturally tended to cause friction with the older inhabitants who by their very presence made demands on younger village families. The problem of the aged was likely to be particularly acute when methods and ideals of charity were changing, as they seem to have been in this period. Such a clash might lead to many situations of worry. When widow Susan Cock was refused relief at the age of about fifty and was told that 'shee was a young woman, and able to worke for her living', she was believed to have bewitched some livestock of her refuser.¹ Thus witchcraft prosecutions, to a certain extent, may be seen as a response to changes in the age-structure of the population, and the methods of dealing with the ageing process. Age brought with it mystical power which could be used for good, or, in the case of the witch's curse as employed in Essex, evil.

1. 1645 Pamphlet, p.32.

Just as suspected witches seem to have been old, so they were almost always 'wives and widows' rather than unmarried women.¹ Unfortunately, the Assize indictments often leave the marital position of the accused vague, describing her as 'spinster'. Thus of two hundred and seventy-seven accused women we only know that sixty-eight were married and forty-nine widowed; if there was no bias in recording married suspects, this would suggest that just over forty per cent of the accused were widows. When a person was designated a 'spinster' this did not necessarily mean that she was unmarried; the witches Grevell, Newman and Glascock in 1582, for example, were described as 'spinster' in the indictments, while two were specified as married and one as widowed in the pamphlet.² The marital state of the accused was particularly well recorded in the indictments for 1645 and from these we know that sixteen were married, thirteen were widows and three 'spinsters'. Again, it seems as if married suspects were slightly more common than widows. The proportion is reversed in the sample three villages. Of the nineteen women who were accused of witchcraft in all three, we only know for certain that one was unmarried; that was Joan Waterhouse, aged eighteen, who was acquitted. We do not know the

1. Ady, Candle, p.110.

2. Cases 158, 160, 155.

marital state of four of the accused, but all the rest were, or had been, married. Of the fourteen about whom we can be certain, eight were widows, while six were married. Two of the six married suspects had far from satisfactory marriages.¹ This high proportion of witches who were widows does suggest that widowhood was a serious problem in Elizabethan villages.² But it also seems clear that widowhood, in itself, was not enough to bring suspicion of witchcraft. The parish register of Boreham recorded the names of twenty widows buried in the village between 1560-1599, none of whom are recorded witches. In Little Baddow, only one of the ten buried widows was a suspected witch. Nor, as we have seen, were married women, many of them with children, safe from suspicion.³

-
1. Elizabeth Fraunces bewitched her husband after constant friction with him, 1566⁴ Pamphlet, p.318; Mary Belsted, as shown on p.211 note⁴ above, constantly quarrelled with her husband.
 2. Little is known concerning the percentage of women over the age of 40 who were widows; the fact that 15.3% of Clayworth households in 1676 were headed by widows, suggests, however, that the number might be large, (An Introduction to English Historical Demography, ed. E.A.Wrigley (1966), p.203). A connection between widows and witches, as well as some illustrations of the number of solitary widows in various villages, is suggested in P.Laslett, The World We Have Lost (University Paperback, edn.,1965), pp.95-6.
 3. There seems to have been no connection between childlessness and witchcraft; a number of the suspects were accused by their children (see p.227below) or believed to have given their witchcraft to them.

MAP 6



The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the above report, in the order in which they were mentioned:

1. J. S. [Name]

2. [Name]

3. [Name]

4. [Name]

5. [Name]

6. [Name]

7. [Name]

8. [Name]

9. [Name]

10. [Name]

11. [Name]

12. [Name]

13. [Name]

14. [Name]

15. [Name]

16. [Name]

17. [Name]

18. [Name]

19. [Name]

20. [Name]

21. [Name]

22. [Name]

23. [Name]

24. [Name]

25. [Name]

26. [Name]

27. [Name]

28. [Name]

29. [Name]

30. [Name]

31. [Name]

32. [Name]

33. [Name]

34. [Name]

35. [Name]

36. [Name]

37. [Name]

38. [Name]

39. [Name]

40. [Name]

41. [Name]

42. [Name]

43. [Name]

44. [Name]

45. [Name]

46. [Name]

47. [Name]

48. [Name]

49. [Name]

50. [Name]

51. [Name]

52. [Name]

53. [Name]

54. [Name]

55. [Name]

56. [Name]

57. [Name]

58. [Name]

59. [Name]

60. [Name]

61. [Name]

62. [Name]

63. [Name]

64. [Name]

65. [Name]

66. [Name]

67. [Name]

68. [Name]

69. [Name]

70. [Name]

71. [Name]

72. [Name]

73. [Name]

74. [Name]

75. [Name]

76. [Name]

77. [Name]

78. [Name]

79. [Name]

80. [Name]

81. [Name]

82. [Name]

83. [Name]

84. [Name]

85. [Name]

86. [Name]

87. [Name]

88. [Name]

89. [Name]

90. [Name]

91. [Name]

92. [Name]

93. [Name]

94. [Name]

95. [Name]

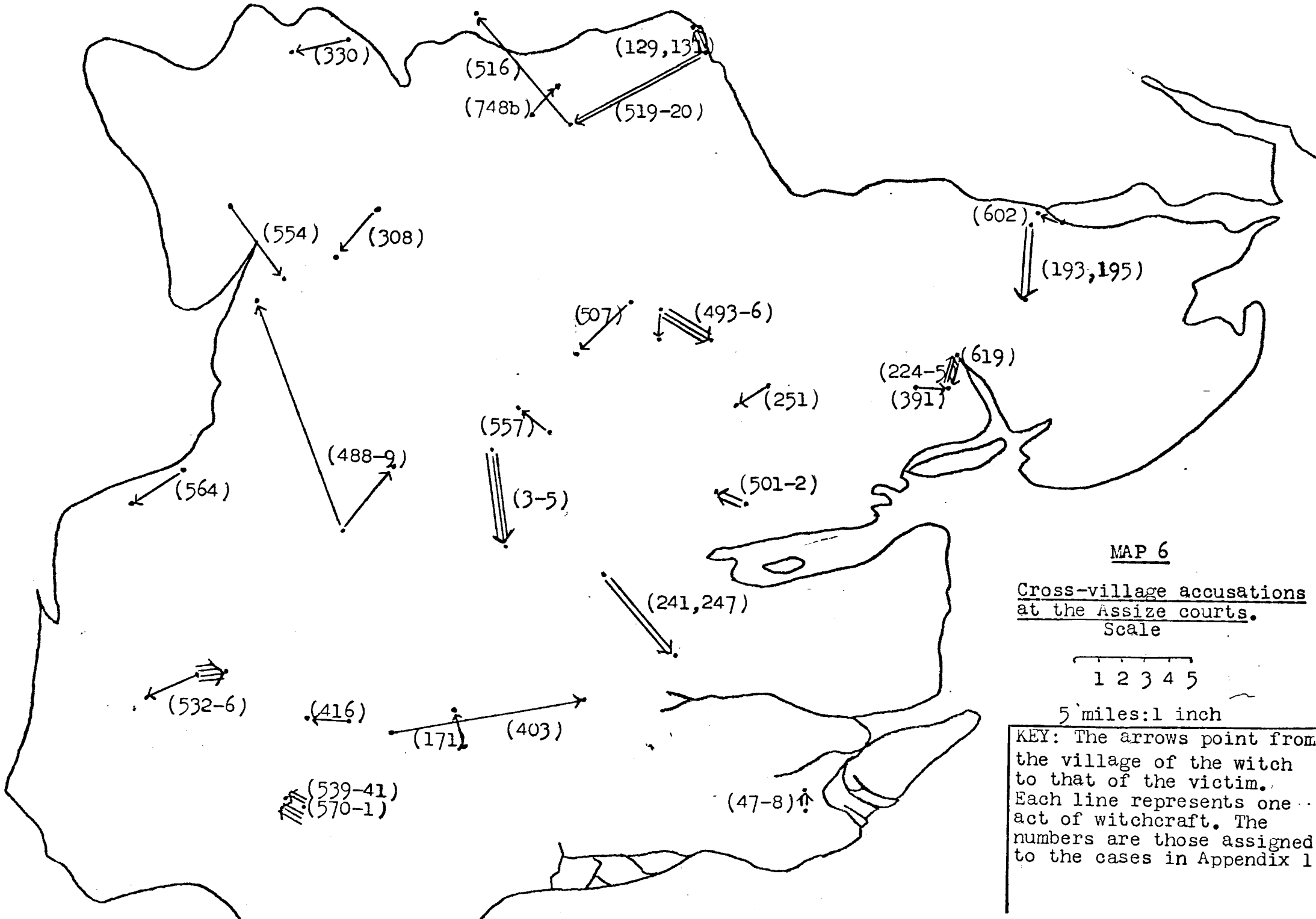
96. [Name]

97. [Name]

98. [Name]

99. [Name]

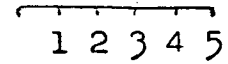
100. [Name]



MAP 6

Cross-village accusations
at the Assize courts.

Scale



5 miles:1 inch

KEY: The arrows point from the village of the witch to that of the victim. Each line represents one act of witchcraft. The numbers are those assigned to the cases in Appendix 1.

his house', CHAPTER 14

Witchcraft prosecutions and social phenomena (2):
kinship and neighbours,

There is no doubt that witchcraft prosecutions were made between people who knew each other intimately. Very few accusations were made against people who lived far away. As shown in Map 6, only fifty out of four hundred and sixty indictments at the Assizes for bewitching property or persons placed victim and witch in different villages. Only five accusations were over a distance of five miles. Thus accusations seem to have been limited to the area of intense relationships between individuals. The power of the witch was limited to a few miles. As Reginald Scot argued, their power reached as far as their social contacts, which was not far: 'for their furthest fetches that I can comprehend, are but to fetch a pot of milke, &c: from their neighbors house, halfe a mile distant from them.'¹ The Essex pamphlets give abundant evidence that witch and victim were linked in many ways. They even, occasionally, show that suspect and accuser were living next door to each other. For instance, a man in 1645 was told that his sick wife 'was cursed by two women who were neere neighbours to this Informant, the one dwelling a little above his house, and the other beneath

1. Scot, Discovery, p.374.

his house', the house being on a hill.¹ A contemporary map of Stock Common in 1575 shows the house of the notorious witch Widow Sawel, and, next door, that of her victim's father, Roger Veale.² Only very detailed research will show exactly how close were the houses of victim and witch and whether they tended to be in the village or outlying farms. Preliminary research on the village of Hatfield Peverel suggests that those involved in prosecutions not only lived in the same village, but came from the same part of the village.

Hatfield Peverel contained two large and three small manors in the sixteenth century, of which the two largest have surviving court records. The contrast between the number of persons connected with witchcraft prosecutions holding land in these two manors is considerable. The manor of Mugdon Hall in the southern part of the parish was surveyed in 1589 and this survey, combined with a list of those who took homage in the 1550's, provides a list of twenty tenants. Of these, three possibly had connections with prosecutions.³ Two however, also had land in the manor of Hatfield Peverel, once the Priory, and it may have been by virtue of this

1. 1645 Pamphlet. p.1.
2. Case 108: the map is in the E.R.O.
3. These were William Bastwick, John Fraunces, and James Hawkins.

that they came into contact with suspected witches, for the situation on this second manor was quite different. A simple analysis of those who paid homage at the manor court in June 1566, the first witchcraft trial year, shows that, of fifteen resident families, eight were directly connected with witchcraft prosecutions.¹ Those involved in prosecutions were thus related not only through the village church, through co-residence, and through the bonds of neighbourhood, but also through the manorial organization and economic ties.

Another possible link between witch and accuser is that of kinship. The tensions between kin have been stressed by anthropologists as one of the major factors in African witchcraft suspicions.² There is little evidence that relationship by blood or by marriage was important in Essex witchcraft prosecutions. The surnames of victims in indictments were never the same as those of witches; this eliminates certain family relationships, for instance that between husband and wife, from obvious importance in the accusations. No contemporary writers noted any particular likelihood of bewitching occurring between blood-relatives. Nor has detailed analysis of

1. Those probably connected were Robert Waterhouse, Walter Wilmott, Henry Jenyn, James Hawkyn, Alexander Fraunces, William Higham, John Burde and Thomas Carsey; e.g. William Higham was bewitched in 1566.
2. Thus nearly all the essays in Witchcraft & Sorcery in East Africa, ed. John Middleton and E.H. Winter (1963), analyse witchcraft accusations in terms of kinship tensions.

the kinship structure of the village of Boreham, where there were known witches, shown any connection by blood between the accused and the accusers.¹ For instance, there is no evidence that the suspected witches Agnes Haven or Margaret Poole were related to any other families in the village. Nor do the pamphlet accounts, which often go into great detail, suggest that those involved were anything but neighbours. There is a certain amount of evidence that witchcraft accusations sometimes reflected tensions between affines, that is between relations by marriage. Two cases from the Essex pamphlets are those of John Chaundler, whose wife having been executed as a witch, demanded money from his wife's daughter, upon which she supposedly bewitched him;² and that of a woman who believed that she had been bewitched by her sister-in-law.³ Most common of all was the bewitching of the husband by the wife. Perhaps because it was difficult to prove, no indictments for this offence are known for Essex. Yet the pamphlets describe a few instances, and other instances occasionally emerge by chance. In 1564 a man blamed his lameness on his wife,⁴ and two years later both Agnes Waterhouse and

1. The results are too detailed to include here; the major families in the village, and especially all those related to prosecutions, were reconstituted, on the basis of parish registers and wills, for the period 1560-1600.

2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Av^v.

3. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. E5.

4. Case 861.

Elizabeth Fraunces confessed to bewitching their respective husbands.¹ In 1582 both Alice Newman and Margeret Grevell were supposed to have bewitched their own husbands to death.² Close to this was the case of the man who went round trying to persuade his sick neighbours that they were bewitched by his wife.³ When placed against the hundreds of other bewitchings in Essex, these few cases do not seem of great importance. Yet they show that it was believed possible for a witch to attack her husband, just as it was possible for her to attack her child.

As Gifford pointed out,⁴ children quite frequently gave evidence against their parents in cases of witchcraft. For instance, the son of a witch gave evidence against his mother in 1579 in Essex,⁵ and two bastard boys gave 'great evidence' against their mother and grandmother in 1589.⁶ Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to see child-parent hostility as an important contributing factor in witchcraft prosecutions. Not only do the pamphlets, and witnesses' names on the indictments, show that the majority of cases were tried without child

1. 1566 Pamphlet, pp.318-319

2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. F8^v

3. Case 981

4. Gifford, Discourse, sig. G4^v

5. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. A vi

6. 1589 Pamphlet, sig. A iv.

5. Elizabeth Fraunces's husband was her own brother, familiar by her grandmother; Margeret Grevell was the mother of Joan Waterhouse and sister to Robert Waterhouse; all three were suspected witches.

witnesses, but it also seems apparent that such witnesses were only brought in to give added proof. They did not start suspicions, but were persuaded to give testimony. 'Many go so farre, that if they can intice children to accuse their parents, they thinke it a good worke'.¹ Often children must have supported their parents, as in 1564.² It is possible that an added pressure on children was the knowledge that if they refused to support charges against their parents they, in turn, might be accused of being witches. It is clear that there was a strong popular belief that witchcraft was hereditary. 'Suspected Ancestors' were to be used as evidence that a person was a witch.³ Witches, said the Essex witch-hunter Stearne, 'leave' witchcraft to 'Children, servants, or to some others': people born of 'bad and wicked parents' were deemed likely to be witches.⁴ If we turn to the actual Essex cases there are a considerable number of examples of daughters, and even grand-daughters, of accused witches being suspected of the same crime. In 1566, several of the witches were related by blood,⁵ and three generations

1. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.L.

2. Case 981.

3. Gaule, Select Cases, p.46.

4. Stearne, Confirmation, pp.12,29,33; among those who made the same point were Bernard, Guide, pp.211-212, and Perkins, Damned Art, pp.202-3.

5. Elizabeth Fraunces claimed she had been given her familiar by her grandmother; Agnes Waterhouse was the mother of Joan Waterhouse and sister to Mother Osborne, all three were suspected witches.

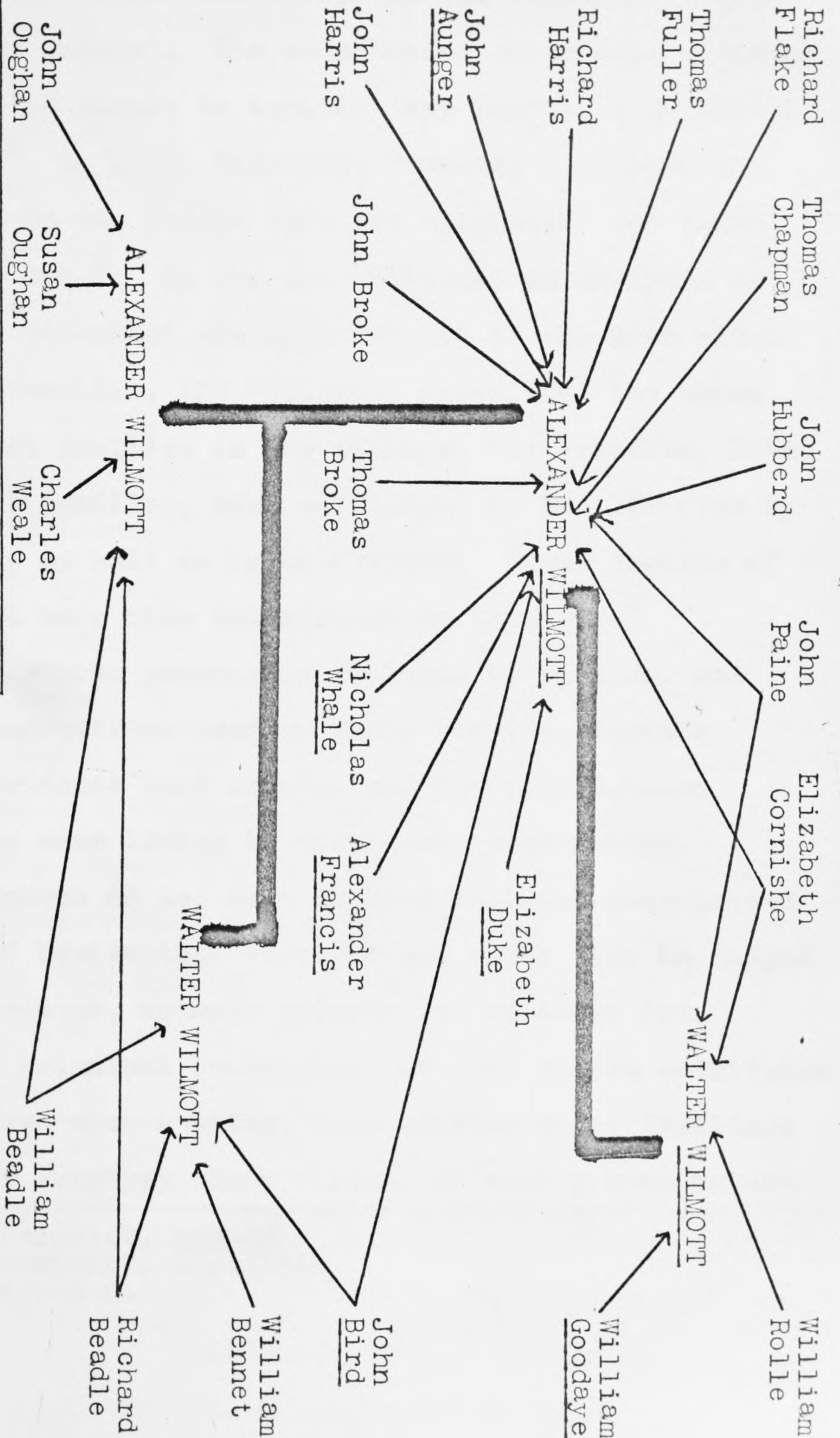
of suspected witches are illustrated in the Harwich Borough records and two in those of Maldon.¹ Other cases can be found in the 1582, 1589, and 1645 pamphlets.² Possibly this was a feature in nearly one in ten of the Essex cases.³

While it has been demonstrated that witch and victim lived close to each other, no important ties of kinship seem to have linked them. Much more important were the bonds of neighbourliness. That witches were supposed to bewitch their neighbours is clear from the Essex evidence. Widow Tibboulde was 'a slauderer of hir neighbours, And because some of hir neighbours after she hathe fallen out w(i)th them have had evell successe w(i)th the Cattell therfore they have conceived an opinion that she ys a witch'.⁴ In Hatfield Peverel this link of neighbourliness is clearly implied. One witch gave her familiar to 'mother Waterhouse her neighbor' and she, in turn, 'falling out wyth another of her neybour' killed three geese and 'falling out with another of her neybour' and his wife' killed the husband.

Mother Waterhouse's daughter employed witchcraft after

1. At Maldon, Ellen Smith was the daughter of Alice Chaundler (1579 Pamphlet, sig. Av^v) and at Harwich Elizabeth Hanby, executed in 1601, was the mother of Jane Prentice or Hanby, tried in 1634, and again in 1638, with her daughter Susan (cases 1146, 580, 586, 588, 589).
2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. C4; 1589 Pamphlet, sig. B; 1645 Pamphlet, pp. 1, 12.
3. Four cases of mother and daughter being suspected witches are listed in case 1207.
4. Case 1046.

Figure 4: Witnessing to wills and witchcraft accusations in Hatfield Peverel, 1540-1599.



KEY: The broad lines indicate the family connections of three generations of the Wilmott family of Hatfield Peverel (the relationship of James Wilmott is unknown). Arrows indicate witnessing to wills and those with surnames underlined were involved in witchcraft accusations.

Alexander Osborne
 ↓
 JAMES WILMOTT

being refused bread and cheese at the house of 'a girl
 a neybour chylde'. The same Mother Waterhouse admitted
 that she was unable to bewitch 'one Wardol, a neighbour
 of hers'.¹ In 1579, Elizabeth Frauncis explained how
 'she came to one Pooles wife her neighbour' and later
 bewitched her.² In the same village, an analysis of
 those who witnessed the wills of one of the most witch-
 attacked families, the Wilmotts, shows that the three
 major witch families in the village, the Fraunces, Duke,
 and Osborne families, were all linked to the Wilmotts by
 friendship as well as by witchcraft. Other victims of
 witchcraft were also interlinked in this way.³

The methods supposedly employed by witches, and
 the counter-actions used by their victims, provide
 further evidence that strains and tensions between
 neighbours were linked to witchcraft accusations.
 Essex suspects do not seem to have employed complicated
 methods of bewitching. They did not stick pins in images
 of their victim, or make poisons out of human fat.
 Their two principal techniques, if such simple activities
 can be given such a title, were sending their familiars
 to bite or frighten their victim, or making some remark

-
1. 1566 Pamphlet, passim.
 2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Aiiii.
 3. See Figure 4.

5. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. 07; see also
6. Case 1173.

which might be interpreted as vicious. In fact, these two were not sharply divided; often a familiar would first appear when a woman cursed a neighbour.¹ Often their words to a neighbour were spiteful. 'Witches', Perkins wrote, 'are wont to practise their mischevous facts by cursing and banning'.² There are a number of Essex examples ranging from an unusual rhyming curse and ritual cursing on the knees,³ to hardly audible mumbling in discontent which was interpreted by the future victim as evil.⁴ What seems clear is that it was not the content of the remark which mattered, but rather the context in which it was spoken and the interpretation put on it. Thus even outwardly friendly overtures might be interpreted as malicious. For instance, three women in 1582 admired and fondled a child saying 'here is a iolie and likely childe God blesse it';⁵ it promptly sickened and died of witchcraft. The same fate befell some pigs praised by a Colchester suspect.⁶ Similarly, actions were carefully interpreted, and the most innocent neighbourly gesture might be shunned as

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1. For instance in the 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Aiiii.
 2. Perkins, Damned Art, p.202.
 3. Both occur in case 861; such methods are discussed in Thomas Cooper, Mystery of Witchcraft (1617), pp.208-9, but they seem rare in Essex.
 4. Examples are numerous, for instance ^{the} 1582 Pamphlet, sig. A3. Vague threats, also, might be interpreted as dangerous, for example in ^{the} 1582 Pamphlet, sig. C7^v, or Gifford, Discourse, sig. G3.
 5. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. D3; see case 843 also.
 6. Case 1173.

likely to lead to a bewitching. One Essex suspect, in 1645, was especially notorious for giving children gifts, an apple, or bread and butter, and also complimenting them or kissing them, all of which led to subsequent disaster.¹ Another was described as bewitching another through gifts of food, a drink and an apple cake.² An exceptional case was the drawing of a circle outside a neighbour's door; even here the activity was interpreted differently by the witch, who claimed to be making a 'shitying house', and the victim, who subsequently became ill on the spot.³ One way of explaining these supposed methods of witches is to link them to the relations ideally obtaining between neighbours. Whereas neighbours normally lent each other small objects and showed concern and interest in each other's business, witches were, in a sense, either too good as neighbours or impossible. Either they cursed and banned and became intolerable, or, perhaps worse than this, they were too solicitous, too eager to lend and borrow. This belief has already been seen at work in the counter-actions against witches, many of them involving the severing of all connections with the suspect.⁴ It can also be

1. 1645 Pamphlet, pp.17,20.
2. 1579 Pamphlet, sigs^v. Aiv^v-Av.
3. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Aviii^v.
4. See pp.121-2 above.

illustrated from the occasions when witchcraft was most feared. Illness was a time when neighbours co-operated and showed mutual concern in village society, but it was also the occasion when witches were most active. Diligent enquiry after a sick person, though an action to be commended when it occurred between real friends, was prime evidence that the inquirer was a witch if relations were felt to be strained.¹ One of the best methods of detecting, or proving, a witch, was to burn some object belonging to either witch or victim, and then to see whether the suspect hurried round to inquire how the sick person fared.² An extreme example of this occurred when the witch Elizabeth Bennet visited a neighbour and, seeing the neighbour sick, said 'how thou art loden, and then clasped her in her armes, and kissed her: whereupon presently after her upper Lippe swelled and was very bigge, and her eyes much sunked into her head'.³ Illness was the time when people would draw closer together, when past quarrels would be forgiven, the occasion when people brought 'some small thing to curry favour againe'.⁴ It was also

1. Michael Dalton, The Country Justice (1630), p.273.
2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig.Avi, is an example where it was the supposed familiar of the witch that was burnt.
3. 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. B5^v-B6; another example is given in the same pamphlet, sig.E5.
4. Bernard, Guide, p.207.

a time when relationships were finally severed, and decisions about whether a person was really a witch were made.

The clearest evidence, however, that witchcraft accusations occurred in the context of quarrels between neighbours are the supposed motives of witches. Witches did not act without some provocation and commentators noted that their common emotion was discontent and a desire for revenge.¹ They acted, Ady suggested, after being refused by a neighbour.² Anger at being denied the benefits of neighbourly help was the dominant emotion leading to witchcraft acts suggested Gifford.³ Commenting on the confessions of Essex and other suspects, Stearne remarked that 'you may observe in most of their Confessions, they did it because they had not such things as they desired, or used to have'.⁴ These general comments are amply substantiated in the Essex records of prosecutions whenever details are given. The following table gives the motives suggested by confessing suspects or their accusers as reported in the 1582 Pamphlet.

-
1. Among those who suggested such motives were Thomas Cooper, Mystery of Witchcraft (1617), p.57; Gaule, Select Cases, p.51.
 2. Ady, Candle, pp.114,129.
 3. Gifford, Discourse, sigs. G3-G4,12.
 4. Stearne, Confirmation, p.36.

TABLE 16: Alleged motives of witches tried at the Assizes in 1582.

Name of Accused.	Alleged motive	Sig. ref.
Ursley Kemp	was refused nursing of a child	A ^V
	was refused a promised payment	A2 ^V
	was refused a loan of 'scouring sand'	A3
	had been called 'whore' and other names	B2
	was physically attacked	E5
Joan Pechey	a food dole given to her not of sufficient quality	A4
Alice Newman	was refused 12d. for her sick husband	A7
Elizabeth Bennet	was cursed, maligned, and her cattle cursed, her swine beaten and pitchforked	B6 ^V B7
Elizabeth Ewstace	her daughter, a servant, threatened her geese driven off a neighbour's land and hurt	C7 E4
Cicely Celles	was denied mault at the price she wanted	C8 ^V
	her cattle hunted off a neighbour's land	C8 ^V
	was refused the nursing of a child	D8 ^V
Alice Hunt	was denied a piece of pork	D5
Alice Manfield	a thatcher refused to work for her	C6 ^V
	was refused a 'mess of milk'	E2 ^V
	was denied 'curdes'	D6
	a 'green place' in front of her house made muddy	D7
Margaret Grevell	was denied 'Godesgood'	E2 ^V
	was denied mutton	E3
Anne Herd	was not offered sufficient support at church court	E6 ^V
	bough she placed over muddy patch removed	E7
	it was implied that she would keep a borrowed dish	E8
	money she had borrowed demanded back	F
	a promised pig given to another by victim	F2 ^V
	was accused of stealing ducklings	F2 ^V

(Table 16, continued)

Joan Robinson was denied a 'hayer'	F6
was denied the hire of a pasture	F6
was denied the use of another 'hayer'	F6 ^v
was refused the sale of a pig	F7 ^v
was refused a cheese	F7 ^v
was refused a pig	F8
was refused payment for goods 'at her own reckoning'	F8

The motives ascribed to witches, listed above, immediately suggest that it was tension between neighbours which led to acts of witchcraft. A person was refused some small object and in their anger retaliated by bewitching her refuser. The sphere of neighbourly conduct was not merely limited to gifts, it included all the ways in which people were linked. For example, as we see in the case of Anne Herd above, even an action like removing a piece of wood from a muddy patch might be construed as unneighbourly and lead to tension. Another feature common to all the motives is that it was the victim who had made an open breach in neighbourly conduct, rather than the witch. It was the victim who had reason to feel guilty and anxious at having turned away a neighbour, while the suspect might become hated as the agent causing such a feeling. The 1582 Pamphlet also makes it clear that there was often a relationship between the type of motive and the type of injury. Thus when a cart which

was fetching dung made a mess in front of a suspected witch's door it was the cart that was later bewitched.¹ When a woman refused a neighbour some milk on the excuse that she had not got enough to suckle her calf, the calf was soon destroyed by witchcraft.²

The pamphlet of 1582 is in no way exceptional in showing that witchcraft occurred after neighbours had fallen out over their mutual obligations. In 1570 also acts of witchcraft were believed to be repaying lack of charity on the part of the future victim. One woman was bewitched after refusing to bring home some sprats from the London market for her neighbour, another suffered after turning an old woman off a piece of common where she used to collect wood. A classic instance of the neglected neighbour at neighbourly celebrations also occurred on this occasion. A man 'having a sheep-shearing about that time, and not inviting her (i.e. the witch) thereto, being his neighbour, she, as he supposed, bewitched two of his sheep'.³ The pamphlet of 1645 suggests similar tensions. In seven cases the motive for an act of witchcraft was alleged to be the refusal of a loan or a gift of food or money: in one instance

1. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. D7.

2. 1582 Pamphlet, sig. E2^v. Other examples in the same pamphlet are on sigs. F^v, F6^v, F7^v.

3. Case 1204; a continental parallel, of a woman neglected at a wedding, is described in Henry More, An Antidote Against Atheism (1655), p.173.

the victim refused to pay back a 2d loan; in another the victim slandered the suspect; once the witch was refused credit at a shop and went away mumbling; another time a woman's daughter refused to fetch wood for her mother and was bewitched. There were two cases of the beating of the children of supposed witches by a neighbour leading to witchcraft in retaliation. One woman was angry at the impressment of her husband as a soldier. On two occasions a person was filled with rage at being evicted from her house. Detailed ecclesiastical depositions in 1564 give further examples of the type of quarrel that led to accusations. After a squabble over the right to work, a woman openly accused another of lying and being a witch; the accuser subsequently suffered. On another occasion a victim lost two pigs mysteriously, soon after demanding back a loan of 6s.8d. Most curious of all, a witch was suspected of killing a lamb by witchcraft; on visiting a neighbour she had found the lamb being fed with white bread and milk and had yelled 'must yt be fed w(i)th the mete of childrene': the lamb died the next day. In the first case it was the victim who called the other a liar and witch, in the second it was the victim who broke off a relationship by demanding her loan back, in the third it was the victim who was offending against the ethics of a subsistence economy

by feeding animals on food suitable for children.¹

The relative importance of disputes between neighbours and between kin is of such crucial interest in an analysis of Essex prosecutions that one more table is included to demonstrate the area and objects of disputes.

This is based on the pamphlets of 1566, 1579, 1582, and 1589 and the depositions of 1564.

TABLE 17: Types of dispute leading to witchcraft prosecutions in Essex, 1564-1589.

Kinship relationships:

Husband-wife	4	(unspecified quarrels(2), sexual jealousy(1), broken marriage contract(1))
Step-father-step-child...	1	(over inheritance)
Grandmother-grandchild ..	1	(obligation to collect wood)
		Total: 6

Neighbourly relationships:

(Object of dispute)		
Food/drink	12	
Animals	4	
Money	8	
Implements	4	
Unspecified loans	3	
Boundaries/land ..	4	
Children	3	
Obligations, to speak to	1	
to support at law .	1	
not to attack by word		
or deed	6	
Privilege of, spinning	1	
nursing child	1	
		Total: 48

1. Case 861.

CHAPTER 15

Thus we see that, in the limited evidence available, quarrels over gifts and loans of food and, to a lesser extent, money and implements, precipitated the majority of the witchcraft attacks. The actual object of the dispute, the loan of an implement, or the demand that money should be returned, were merely the final stage in the severing of a relationship. Much more was at stake than the particular article or privilege; in effect it was the total relationship between two neighbours. Viewed in this way, the enormous emotion generated by an apparently simple act like asking for a few pennies to be returned becomes understandable.¹

years later. Finally, it might be argued that a combination of these two factors made the period between 1550-1650 peculiar. All that can be said is that such changes in illness or in remedies have not been demonstrated at the village level.² Until they are, such an explanation seems unhelpful. Without denying that frequent and incurable illness may have been an essential background to witchcraft beliefs, it does not seem that

1. The problems of interpreting tensions behind acts of witchcraft are discussed more fully in chapter 17 to below.

2. For instance by Kishredge, *Witchcraft*, p. 5, among other writers, and *ibid.*, pp. 103-4, among contemporary

2. It could plausibly be argued indeed that conditions worsened health in the later 17th century, as W.G. Hoskins, *Provincial England* (1964), p. 144.

CHAPTER 15.

Witchcraft prosecutions and illness in Essex.

It has frequently been suggested that witchcraft prosecutions merely reflected the high incidence of illness and the lack of medical knowledge in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.¹ This explanation cannot, by itself, account for the growth of accusations in Essex after 1560 or their decline after 1650. To do so it would have to show either that illness became worse in some way after 1560 and declined rapidly in the early seventeenth century, or that medical ignorance grew in the early sixteenth century while knowledge of the cause of various diseases grew rapidly a hundred years later. Finally, it might be argued that a combination of these two factors made the period between 1560-1650 peculiar. All that can be said is that such changes in illness or in remedies have not been demonstrated at the village level.² Until they are, such an explanation seems unhelpful. Without denying that frequent and incurable illness may have been an essential background to witchcraft beliefs, it does not seem that changes in beliefs can be explained merely by reference to the medical conditions and changes of the period.

1. For instance by Kittredge, Witchcraft, p.5, among modern writers, and Ady, Candle, pp.103-4, among contemporaries.
2. It could plausibly be argued indeed that overcrowding worsened health in the later 17th century, as suggested in W.G.Hoskins, Provincial England(1964), p.148.

An examination of the actual types of illness which were blamed on witches in Essex provides further evidence on this problem.

There is little doubt that much illness and many deaths were explained without reference to witches in sixteenth century Essex. This can be demonstrated by comparing known cases of witchcraft suspicions with all the illness and death in the three sample villages. Even allowing for the fact that the known suspicions only represent a quarter or less of actual fears,¹ there is a huge gap between the total number of accidents, and the number of witchcraft explanations. The two witches in Little Baddow were believed to have killed three people and injured another two. As a proportion of all death and illness in the village over forty years this was very small. Between 1560-1599, the parish register records the deaths of one hundred and seventy-five people. In Boreham, witches were accused of killing one child, making another man languish, destroying a horse worth £3, and four hogs valued at 26s. and 8d. There is no record of animal illness in parish sources, but the one death they were blamed for can be compared to the three hundred and fifty-one recorded in the parish

1. This point is demonstrated on p.94 above.

register for the period 1560-1599. Lack of parish registers makes such a comparison impossible for Hatfield Peverel. Yet a useful comparison can be made for that village by using the information, recorded by the coroners, on sudden deaths. In 1562 a labourer fell down and broke his leg and subsequently died; the verdict was 'death by misfortune'.¹ The same verdict was returned in 1570, a year sandwiched between two series of witchcraft prosecutions, when a servant of William Higham, another of whose servants was bewitched nine years later,² fell from the pear tree in which he was climbing and immediately died.³ Another explanation was given for the death of Richard Duke, possibly a relation of the witch Agnes Duke. He was judged to have died 'ex visitacione divina', in other words, of plague.⁴ These inquisitions were held before leading villagers, most, if not all, of whom must have been aware that witchcraft was a possible explanation of an accident. Yet there is no suggestion that they believed witchcraft to have been involved. The same was true in Boreham. Verdicts of death 'by misfortune' were returned on the bodies of two young men who were squashed to death by a landslide, and, in 1581, on the body of

1. P.R.O., K.B.9,605,m.69.

2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Av.

3. P.R.O., K.B.9,628,m.234.

4. P.R.O., K.B.9,662,m.172,

another inhabitant who fell into a stream and drowned.¹ Analysis of the Essex coroner's inquests for the sample years 1580-9 gives the impression that, concurrently with the years of fiercest prosecution, many people died sudden deaths which were not blamed on witches. Some forty-three people in all are named, their cause of death varying from drowning to being squashed by collapsing buildings or trees. None of them have been traced as supposed victims of witches.² It is possible, of course, that those most intimately connected with the deceased always attributed the death to the malice of witches. In this case a suspicion would remain dormant unless it was shared by a large enough group of villagers. It is more likely, however, that there were certain types of misfortune which were hardly ever blamed on witches. It will also be argued that the explanation suggested for illness and death further depended on the social relationships of the injured individual.

One type of illness which does not seem to have borne any necessary relationship to witchcraft prosecutions was 'plague', using that word to cover the variety of epidemic diseases prevalent in the period. This negative

1. Idem., 608, m.129 and 656, m.155.

2. Idem., files 650-674; only deaths 'by misfortune' are counted here.

3. Cases 337-349.

conclusion can be seen at both the county and village level. The worst years for plague in Essex during our period were 1597-1599; these were not exceptional for the number of prosecutions.¹ Nor do individual villages show a coincidence. At Great Clacton there was high mortality, in 1561-2, 1570-1, 1587-9 and 1602; the only known witchcraft prosecution occurred in 1593.² The only prosecution recorded for the town of Saffron Walden occurred in 1594. At first sight the two indictments against one person in that year might be seen as connected to the plague of the previous year. In fact, they illustrate clearly how it was not plague deaths which were blamed on witches. Although ninety-seven deaths had occurred during the previous year, almost twice the yearly average, Agnes Bett was accused of bewitching a man in 1591 and a calf in 1593.³ There are no reasons for believing that the 1580's, the worst years for Essex, witchcraft prosecutions, were particularly plague-ridden, nor that 1645, the year of exceptional prosecutions in the seventeenth century, was an epidemic year. The three sample villages show the

1. See Diagram 1. I am indebted to Mr Paul Slack of Balliol College, Oxford for the following details concerning plague in Essex taken from his forthcoming Oxford D.Phil.thesis 'Plague in England, 1538-1640'.

2. Case 367. *only were recorded. The length of time*

3. Cases 387-388. *for a more detailed analysis of victims ages.*

2. Until an authoritative list of Essex villages is available the lack of connection between plagues and witch must remain tentative.

same absence of connection between years of high mortality and accusations: for instance, in Little Baddow, the actual year in which prosecutions took place, 1570, saw a high number of deaths, twelve in all, but there were equally high numbers in 1566, 1567, and 1602 and no prosecutions. The actual deaths blamed on those prosecuted in 1570 were supposed to have occurred in 1568 and 1569, neither of them noted for particularly high death rates.

Infant mortality was another phenomenon which does not seem to have been directly related to prosecutions. Analysis of the age of victims of witchcraft has already shown that only nine of the three hundred and forty-one victims recorded in Assize indictments were children of under a year old.¹ Nor do midwives seem to have been important in Essex prosecutions, except as searchers for the mark of the witch. No suspected witches in Essex are known to have been midwives, nor is there any counterpart to continental fears that midwives killed the delivered babies with long pins.²

Some indication of the types of suffering caused to human beings can be gained from the Assize indictments, where the date of both the beginning and end of a supposed act of witchcraft were recorded. The length of time

1. See p. 218 above for a more detailed analysis of victims' ages.
2. Until an authoritative list of Essex midwives is available the lack of connection between midwife and witch must remain tentative.

recorded in this source is analysed below.

TABLE 18: Duration of illness ascribed to witches in Essex Assize indictments, 1560-1680.

<u>Length of time</u>	<u>Illness</u>	<u>Illness leading to death</u>
Immediate	-	17
1-7 days	5	38
8-30 days	7	43
1-3 months	10	70
4-11 months	4	33
1-3 years	6	13
over 3 years	1	-
'languished'	50	-
'lamed'	10	-

It is apparent that it was not immediate, sudden, deaths which were most commonly attributed to witchcraft.

Rather it was a death in which the deceased had lingered in illness for between a week and three months. The same lingering nature of illness attributed to witches is apparent in the large number who 'languished' and were 'lamed' without a specific term being set to their misfortune. They were probably often still suffering when the suspect was tried; for instance a man was stated to be 'lamed in his body and yet is' in 1572.¹ These lingering illnesses are often described in the contemporary accounts. Such descriptions enable us to see whether it was not only prolonged, but also particularly painful or violent types of illness which were ascribed to witchcraft.

The symptoms of illnesses ascribed to the power of witchcraft were so diverse that it is clear that

1. Case 56.

no particular types of disease were always explained in this manner. In the seven cases where details are given in the Assize indictments the injuries were as following: a girl was 'made decrepid in her right leg and in her right arm'; another woman 'became decrepit and so remained'; one man totally lost the sight of an eye; a boy became lame, 'both his feet remaining crooked and useless'; a woman 'lost the user of the upper part of her body'; a person's right thigh 'did rot off'; and a man languished 'troubled in his left leg'.¹

The symptoms were further elaborated in the pamphlets. One child's hands were 'turned where the backes shoulde bee, and the backe in the place of the palmes', another 'appeared to bee in most pitious sort consumed, and the privie and hinder partes thereof, to be in a most strange and wonderfull case'.² One man was hurt in the back 'whereof hee languisheth and is greatly payned'; a woman, having been kissed by a witch, 'her upper Lippeswelled and was very bigge, and her eyes much sunked into her head'; another woman 'by many yeares past was much troubled with straung aches in her bones, and otherwise: whereof shee consumed by the

1. Cases 19, 559, 285, 108, 346, 299, 286, in that order.

2. These two instances, and the following, are all taken from the 1582 Pamphlet as follows, sigs. A^v, B, B4^v, B6, C2, C7, D4^v, E4^v, C6, D8^v.

space of two or three years'. Among other victims were a man 'with his mouth drawne awrye, well neere uppe to the upper parts of his cheeke'; a girl who was 'stroke at the hart, in such sort as shee could not stand, goe nor speake', and a man who was likewise 'cast amongst Bushes, and was in that case that hee couldne neyther see, heare, nor speake'.

Sometimes, however, the manner of death was not strange; it was merely the unexpectedness that caused wonder.

A witch being asked 'what she thought of the sodaine death of Johnson the Collector, saith, he was a very honest man, and dyed very sodainly'. A child aged four 'being in good liking and well, went but out of the doores into the yarde, who presently fell downe dead, and after by helpe being brought to life, the saide childe was in a pitious case, and so died presently'.

The other pamphlets and depositions show a similar variety of symptoms: loss of the use of limbs, inability to keep down food, swelling of the body.¹ Thus the malice of a witch might be used to explain a wide range of illnesses afflicting all parts of the body. It is difficult to show that it was particularly associated with any major type of disease.

1. All three instances come from the 1579 Pamphlet, sigs. Bii, Av^v, Aviii^v. Other symptoms are described in detail in case 1207. They varied from menstrual disorder to tooth-ache.

The assertion that witchcraft accusations were not connected with any specific diseases contradicts the opinion of a number of writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Matthew Hopkins suggested that witches were blamed for 'sudden disease, (as by experience I have found) as Plurisie, Imposthume, &c.',¹ while Gifford argued that it was lingering sickness that provoked suspicions.² Both kinds have been shown in the Essex evidence. Even more emphasis was laid on the strange and inexplicable nature of the disease. Perkins argued that inchanters procured 'strange passions and torments in mens bodies',³ and children who were 'visited with diseases that vex them strangelie: as apoplexies, epilepsies, convulsions, hot fevers, wormes, &c.' were suspected to be bewitched, Scot remarked.⁴ The strangeness was indeed stressed in some Essex cases, for example a little child 'fell so straungely sicke as for the space of a Weeke, as no bodie thought it would live'.⁵ On the other hand, the illness, for example in the case where a woman was believed to have caused a 'bludye fluxe', were not always unusual.⁶ Nor were all cases of strange illness attributed to the power of witches: when a woman

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1. Hopkins, Discovery, p.60.
 2. Gifford, Discourse, sig.H.
 3. Perkins, Damned Art, p.128.
 4. Scot, Discovery, p.30.
 5. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Aviii.
 6. 1566 Pamphlet, p.319.

suffered from a 'disease called the mother' for six years, in Boreham, she did not blame witches. Nor did Hugo Gill of Little Baddow who explained his absence from church by saying that 'by reason he hathe bene visited by the hande of god w(i)th greate paine in one of his knees' he was unable to 'sturæ for the space of viii or ix weeks'.¹ Thus Gaule was going too far when he stated that 'every disease whereof they neither understand the Cause, nor are acquainted with the Symptoms must bee suspected for witchcraft'.² As Reginald Scot pointed out,³ witchcraft was only suspected if the victim had previously quarrelled with someone. It was the social relationship of the victim, rather than the painful or inexplicable nature of the illness, that determined a person's reaction to misfortune. This interpretation explains why witches were blamed for such a variety of evils, from burning barns and knocking down trees, to making legs crooked and causing heart-attacks. In accounting for the growth and decline of witchcraft fears, therefore, the problem is not to prove that there was more sickness in the late sixteenth century than earlier, and that both conditions and knowledge of

1. E.R.O., D/AED/1, fol. 26^v and D/AEA/13, fol. 161.

2. Gaule, Select Cases, p. 85.

3. Scot, Discovery, p. 30.

the scientific basis of illness improved, suddenly, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Rather, it is to show that the social relationships which determine the way in which people react to misfortune changed.

A final illustration that witchcraft prosecutions did not merely arise out of a combination of violent illness and lack of medical knowledge is the reaction to hysterical outbreaks, the 'apoplexies, epilepsies, convulsions, hot fevers' listed by Reginald Scot.

Essex records describe over twenty cases of insanity; for instance a man was noted in the Great Coggeshall parish register as dying 'sodainlye uppo(n) an apoplexie'.¹ Yet none of these have been related to witchcraft prosecutions. On the other hand, as we have seen, the vast majority of the injuries blamed on witches were either to animals, dairy products, or physical illness to humans. There is only a very slight connection, in Essex, between mental derangement and witchcraft beliefs. The only reference in the pamphlets to such an injury was in 1579 when a woman 'fell distraught of her wittes' after seeing a witch's familiar.² George Gifford, a sensitive observer,

1. E.R.O., D/P, 36/1/1. Most of the other cases occur in court records, for example, a coroner's inquest returned a verdict of 'misfortune' on a victim of 'falling sickness' or epilepsy (P.R.O., K.B.9, 658, m.402).

2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Avi^v. *Witchcraft in Essex* (1603), p.70.

6. *Id.*, sig. Cxxix. p.79.

7. William Clark, *True Relation of one Mrs Jane Farmer's Rite Stebbing in Essex, being possessed & vish by the Devil* (1707).

made little connection between mental breakdown and witchcraft.¹ There are, it is true, three cases where the victim suffered convulsive fits,² and there is a particularly extraordinary case where a man 'crowed like a Cock, barked like a Dogge, sung tunes, and groaned'.³ Yet these were a very small proportion of all the injuries. Nor does the Essex evidence suggest that diabolic possession, that is the belief that the contortions of the victim were caused by the Devil being inside the afflicted person, was at all common in Essex. The only prosecution recorded in the legal records was discovered to be a fraud,⁴ although there may have been one or more cases of a more serious nature around the year 1600 to which there are several literary references.⁵ Neither these, nor a description of another fraudulent case in the 1650's at Braintree,⁶ have survived as prosecutions. In fact, the only detailed description of a case of possession in Essex is of one that occurred in 1700.⁷ Only in this case, and in the fraudulent possession of 1621, do we know of attempts to exorcize the devil.

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1. He briefly discussed exorcism and diabolic possession in his Dialogue, sig. I2^v.
 2. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. Aviii; case 861; case 1162.
 3. 1645 Pamphlet, p. 31.
 4. Case 1183.
 5. Case 1205; E. Jordan, A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother (1603), p. 17; John Swan, A True and Briefe Report of Mary Glovers Vexation (1603), p. 70.
 6. Ady, Candle, p. 79.
 7. William Clark, True Relation of one Mrs Jane Farrer's of Stebbin in Essex, being possess'd with the Devil (1710).

Thus Essex witchcraft prosecutions continued without, as far as we can tell, the presence of a band of exorcists or a series of sensational cases of possession.

A final problem which is of considerable importance is the extent to which illness supposedly caused by witchcraft was psycho-somatic. It has already been suggested that one reason for the success of cunning folk was their ability to relate physical illness to mental strains, their provision of an explanation, not only of the physical pain, but ^{of} the feelings of hostility and indecision associated with the witch.¹ Their clients were often cured 'when the parties mind is cheered', and this implies that some, at least, of the illness arose out of mental instability. Although there are several well-documented cases where this process of worry leading to illness seem to be illustrated,² it is impossible to give anything approaching a statistical answer to the problem. Perhaps the most conscious connection between anxiety and bewitching was given in an ecclesiastical presentation where the churchwardens stated that 'Barbara Pond falling out with one of her neighbors she said it had byn better for her she had delt sow(i)th her wherupon the woman fell lame & p(er)swaded her self she was

1. See p.165 above.

2. Especially in the 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. F2^V-F3^V, E4^V; also Gifford, Dialogue, sig. L3.

bewitched by her the same Barbara Pond'.¹ Yet even in this case it is impossible to prove that the illness was psycho-somatic; it may have merely been an instance of the interpretation of future misfortunes being influenced by fear of witchcraft. The many injuries to the animals, children, and other property of the person who had quarrelled with a witch suggest that illness of a psycho-somatic nature only played a small part in witchcraft prosecution.

The reaction of physicians to witchcraft prosecutions seems to have been ambivalent. This is illustrated by Thomas Ady. Probably, a licensed physician himself and very sceptical about the power of witches,² he harshly castigates his fellow practitioners, many of whom confirmed that their patients were bewitched.³ In theory, physicians were to be consulted before witchcraft prosecutions took place;⁴ but it seems likely that in many cases no doctor was available. Perhaps the best evidence that medical practitioners were ^{un}likely to provide a bulwark against witchcraft prosecutions is the fact that nearly a third

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1. Case 1125.
 2. A Thomas Ady of Wethersfield (the village where Ady probably lived. see p.102 above) was a doctor. (J.H. Rasch, A Directory of English Country Physicians, 1603-43 (1962), p.21).
 3. Ady, Candle, p.115.
 4. Bernard, Guide, p.24.

of the twenty-three cunning men whose profession are known were either surgeons or physicians.¹ It seems hardly surprising that, if a doctor as eminent as Sir Thomas Browne endorsed current witchcraft beliefs, there should be no Essex evidence that country practitioners opposed prosecutions.²

witch-hunting was encouraged by Puritanism, and even Roman Catholics were often the victims of unprovoked prosecution. At this level a direct connection between those involved and interested in witchcraft is sought. In a subsequent chapter the broader links between religious change and witchcraft beliefs will be examined. The distinction is between the sociological analysis of those known to be involved, and a more philosophical analysis of the assumptions upon which witchcraft accusations were based.

Superficially, there seems to be such evidence in Essex for the argument that Puritanism was a major

1. They are described on p.160 above. A number of them were, however, unlicensed.
2. Browne's views are outlined in K.M. Briggs, Pale Hecate's Team (1962), pp.45-46, and Religio Medici (Everyman edn., 1962), pp.34-35.

prosecutions. Villages such as Hatfield Forest were the centres of both diabolism and witchcraft.

1. For example, Geoffrey Scorer, Local Customs of Essex - Beliefs (1947), pp. 117-118, 120-121, 123-124. Ch. xviii, argues against a connection.

CHAPTER 16

Witchcraft Prosecutions and Religion.

Essex during our period was renowned for its radical religious tradition. It may, therefore, be wondered how far Essex witchcraft prosecutions reflected religious tensions, whether, as some have argued,¹ witch-hunting was encouraged by Puritanism, and whether Roman Catholics were often the victims of witchcraft prosecution. At this level a direct connection between those involved and interested in witchcraft is sought. In a subsequent chapter the broader links between religious change and witchcraft beliefs will be examined. The distinction is between the sociological analysis of those known to be involved, and a more philosophical analysis of the assumptions upon which witchcraft accusations were based.

Superficially, there seems to be much evidence in Essex for the argument that Puritanism was a major factor in causing witchcraft prosecutions. The two periods of most marked Puritan activity, the 1580's and 1640's, were also those of the greatest number of prosecutions. Villages such as Hatfield Peverel were the centres of both Puritanism and prosecutions. The

1. For example, R. Trevor Davies, Four Centuries of Witch-Beliefs (1947), passim; Kittredge, Witchcraft, Ch. xviii, argues against a connection.

very fact that witchcraft prosecutions were so common in a strongly Puritan country. All these facts suggest a connection.¹ Closer examination, however, destroys any such simple correlation. Of the literary commentators on Essex witchcraft, or those born in that county, the majority were both Puritan and either uninterested or sceptical of witchcraft. The Puritan preacher Richard Rogers did not mention it in his diary: Arthur Wilson, protestant steward to the Earl of Warwick, showed unusual scepticism when describing a witch trial. George Gifford, Puritan preacher at Maldon, showed both compassion and scepticism in his works on witchcraft.² On the other hand, the witchfinder Matthew Hopkins, the most vehement man in Essex in his denunciation of witches, cannot be shown to have been a Puritan, or particularly interested in religion at all.³

If we compare the temporal and geographical distribution of witchcraft prosecutions with what we know about Puritanism in Essex we find that there is little overlapping. References in the 1566 Pamphlet

1. Thus, it has been argued that 'the history of the persecution of witches in England ... directly parallels the career of the Puritans', M. Walzer, 'Puritanism as a Revolutionary Ideology', History and Theory, iii, 1 (1963), p. 77.
2. These writers are discussed in Ch. 7 above.
3. See p. 181 above.

to learning witchcraft long before, and to sending for the 'priest', suggest that witchcraft beliefs were prevalent well before 1558 and the return of the Marian exiles.¹ There were a number of witchcraft trials in the early 1560's and 1570's, before Puritan teaching could have spread widely. Nor did prosecutions end in 1586 after the crushing of the Puritan Classical movement by Bishop Aylmer; they continued in full force well into the 1590's. Finally, when the Puritans were in power between 1641-1660 prosecutions did not continue. After 1646 there were no more executions for witchcraft.² Likewise, a comparison of the villages in which prosecutions took place and those known to have been the residence of a Puritan cleric, shows no more than chance overlapping. Of the seventy-six towns and villages listed by Dr. Collinson as, at one time or another during the 1570's and 1580's, the residence of Puritan ministers, only twenty-five also produced witchcraft cases.³ Less

1. 1566 Pamphlet, pp.317,322. Among those present at the 1566 trial was Dr. Thomas Cole, himself a Marian exile (Newcourt, Repertorium, i. p. 73). Yet the general impression from the Pamphlet is that the pressures were from below and that the judges were curious spectators.

2. See Diagram 3.

3. P. Collinson, 'The Puritan Classical Movement in the Reign of Elizabeth I' (London Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1957), pp. 1255 to 1258. Only witchcraft prosecutions occurring in years 1570-90, that is when a Puritan minister was possibly present, have been counted. The proportion is roughly equivalent to that for the whole of Essex.

connected with a witchcraft prosecution. See also
 Presbyterian Movement in the reign of James Elizabeth
 (1905), pp. xxx-xxxiii, although they discussed the
 subject on one occasion (p. 70).

than a dozen Essex clergy are known to have been involved in witchcraft prosecutions, and, of these, only five are witnesses against suspected witches. Not only is this a minute fraction of the hundreds of witnesses named in the pamphlet accounts and indictments, but there is nothing to suggest that these five were more Puritan than their colleagues.¹ Combined with the mild punishments inflicted by the church courts, this fact rules out the possibility that witchcraft prosecutions were primarily the work of a persecuting clergy. This lack of influence on the part of the clergy can further be illustrated from the three sample villages.

As with the whole of Essex, a first glance at the three villages seems to bear out a direct correlation between Puritanism and witchcraft prosecution; an impression subsequently destroyed by closer analysis. While Hatfield Peveral was well-known as the meeting-place of a possible conventicle and the home of one of

1. George Eatoney, John Edes, and Joseph Longe, witnesses in the 1645 trial, are described on p.173 above; Edes was a Puritan, Longe a pluralist and alehouse haunter. Richard Harrison is described on p. 127 above; there is no evidence that either he or William Denman, witness in case 1173 and Rector of Greenstead from 1598 according to Newcourt, Repertorium, ii, p.287, were Puritans. It is significant that none of the more extreme Puritans who met as the Dedham Classis between 1582-9 are known to be directly connected with a witchcraft prosecution (R.G.Usher (ed), Presbyterian Movement in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth (1905), pp,xxxv-xlviii), although they discussed the subject on one occasion. (p.70).

the most adamant and persecuted of Elizabethan Puritans, Thomas Carew, it was also notorious as the centre of witchcraft prosecutions.¹ The other two villages had unpreaching ministers in 1586, and far fewer witchcraft cases.² Yet detailed examination has revealed that neither Carew nor the members of his conventicle were directly connected with prosecutions in Hatfield, whereas the unpreaching Gilbert Annand of Boreham was.³ Yet it was not Annand who introduced accusations into the village. His predecessor, Edmund Blackbourne, one time Roman Catholic priest, and vicar until 1567, was present during the first Boreham cases.⁴ Similarly, in Hatfield Peverel prosecutions occurred despite constant changes of vicar.⁵ In fact, it may possibly be that prosecutions occurred partly because of the constant changes caused by friction between two of the leading village families over the right of presentation. The background to three

1. On Puritanism in Hatfield Peverell see Davids, Annals, pp.118-119.
2. Gilbert Annand was described as 'an alehouse haunter and gamester' and Henry Steare of Little Baddow as a 'gamester, sometime a tailor' in a Puritan survey of ministers made in 1586, Davids, Annals, p.98.
3. It is almost certain that the 'Mr. Gilbert' mentioned in case 392 was Gilbert Annand.
4. Newcourt, Repertorium, ii. p.75.
5. It has been impossible to find the names of any vicars before 1584. In the twelve years following 1584 there were six different vicars; Newcourt, Repertorium, ii. p.318, gives four of them.

witchcraft prosecutions in 1584 was a town where 'the abusesgrew to be so great' that 'the people could neither meete to serve God, nor to take Order for Towne Matters, the poore crying out for lack of food, and the people became Strangers one to another'.¹ This gives a hint of the situation out of which prosecutions might emerge. Yet, in the neighbouring village of Boreham there were accusations without similar recorded confusion. At all events, the actual personality of the vicar seems to have been of secondary importance: prosecutions were made regardless.

Just as there seems no particular connection between Puritan ministers and the witchcraft accusations, so there is no evidence that lay Puritans were especially interested in prosecuting witches. Very little direct information can be obtained on the religious position of those involved in witchcraft trials; one of the few feasible methods is to use the pious formula at the beginning of wills.²

1. MS. transcript of The Seconde Parte of a Register, p.653, in the Dr. Williams's Library, London.

2. The majority of the wills commenced 'I commend my soul into the Hands of Almighty God and my body to be buried in the churchyard of ...'. But some 33% of the 30 Boreham wills for the period 1560-99, and 18% of those from Hatfield Peverel for the same period had a more extreme introduction. This usually spoke at some length of being 'saved' by the 'precious merits and death' of Christ. For example, that of William Bretton of Boreham commences 'I commend my soul to the Almighty God, my maker and to his son my Redeemer and to the Holy Ghost my comforter in whom and by whose death and passion I do verily trust to be saved and my sins to be forgiven, in this is my very and true faith and belief' (E.R.O., D/AER 14/282).

Judging from those who invoked the 'precious merits and death' of Christ in Hatfield Feverel and Boreham, there seems to be no more than a random correlation between those who prefaced their wills in this manner and the victims and accusers in witchcraft cases. None of the ten men in Hatfield Feverel who made particularly devout wills between 1580-1600 are known to have been connected with witchcraft, nor are any of the ten in Boreham who commenced their wills in the same manner between 1570-1600. Nor is there any evidence that those who were accused were either Roman Catholics, or heretics, or ungodly. None of the several hundred accused witches in Essex is known to have been a Roman Catholic. Neither the ecclesiastical court presentments which often gave other offences of the accused, nor the pamphlet accounts, which frequently described the character of the accused, suggest a connection with Roman Catholicism. Although papists were sometimes generally termed 'witches' and even reading the psalms was termed 'coniuration', there is no convincing evidence that witchcraft prosecutions were linked to an attack on Roman Catholics.¹ The pamphlets show that the accused

1. Ady, Candle, p. 56, called Roman Catholic clergy 'the Witches of these latter times' and Scot, Discovery, p. 29, was among others who connected the two in a general way. Case 1135 illustrates the tendency to call all high church activity 'witchcraft'. None of the recusants listed in M.O'Dwyer, 'Catholic Recusants in Essex' c. 1580-1600' (London Univ. M.A. thesis 1960), are known to have been accused witches. The only connection in the Essex evidence is the witch who was asked why she failed to say her prayers in English, 1566 Pamphlet, p. 324.

were often church-goers, and John Stearne explicitly stated that they often seemed 'by their carriage' 'to be very religious people, and would constantly repair to all Sermons neer them.'¹ Of the twenty accused witches in the three sample villages, only one was among the one hundred and four people presented at the church courts for non-attendance at church: the other nineteen were, presumably, church-goers.²

People did not accuse their neighbours of witchcraft out of religious fervour. As Gifford remarked 'it is no godly zeale but furious rage' which led to the punishment of witches.³ The atmosphere of fear and hostility within which accusations were nurtured has already been described; it had little to do in a direct way with particular religious creeds. Nor was the assumed motive of the witch, anger at being treated in an unneighbourly manner, directly related to religion, even if it was of ethical concern. Witchcraft was treated by the authorities as a breach of Christianity; the guilty witch was exhorted to

1. Stearne, Confirmation, p.39. In case 1173 a man told how his wife was bewitched after thrusting past Parnell Abbott who was already seated in church. Scot, Discovery, p.29, however, argued that witches were often irreligious.
2. For the cases per village see table 8, p.115 above.
3. Gifford, Discourse, sig. H4.

confess her sin and ask the forgiveness of God and the congregation, whether at the ecclesiastical court or the gallows.¹ Yet the impression from the Essex evidence is that those who brought the accusations were mostly uninterested in the supposed compact with the Devil, the loss of the accused person's soul, or any presumed attack on Christianity. The Devil never appeared as a man in Essex before the exceptional trial of 1645; when he did appear before then it was usually as a small animal, a cat or a ferret.² This was far from the awful conception of Satan harboured by the Puritans. As one of Gifford's characters asked scornfully after a description of a tree-dwelling devil, 'doe you thinke Satan lodgeth in an hollow tree? Is hee become so lazy, and idle? hath he left off to be as a roaring lion?'³ In the majority of the descriptions of Essex witchcraft there was no mention of the Devil at all, or of a supposed

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1. Confession at the gallows is described in the 1566 Pamphlet, p.324; a confession at the archdeaconry court is quoted on p.64 above.
 2. Elizabeth Frauncis was told to give her blood to Satan who was 'delyvered her in the lykeness of a whyte spotted Catte', 1566 Pamphlet, p.317. The devil appeared to Joan Prentice 'in the shape and proportion of a dunnish colloured ferrit', 1589 Pamphlet, sig.B.
 3. Gifford, Dialogue, sig.K.

compact by the witch who thereby exchanged her soul for diabolic power.¹ The problem of where the power of witchcraft originated does not seem to have particularly interested Essex villagers. Their concern was to show the link between anger and accident. Nor were they curious as to the method used in bewitching. Few accounts described the use of elaborate magical devices and there is no suggestion that witches perverted normal Christian rituals to gain power or used Roman Catholic practices.² Both these might have been expected if the fear of witchcraft had been linked to religious tensions. Likewise, it seems probable that the ecclesiastical authorities would have examined those presented as witches at some length if they had suspected witchcraft to be a brand of heresy. There is little evidence that

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1. Among the few exceptions was the testimony of a girl of 18 that her mother's familiar asked her 'what she wolde geve hym, and she saide a red kocke, then sayde hee no, but thou shalt geve me thy body and sowle' (1566 Pamphlet, p. 320).
 2. In this, as in other ways, Essex witchcraft differed from that described by continental demonologists. For the absence of descriptions of the methods employed by witches, see p.230 above.

they did so.¹ Indeed, as we have seen, the Church authorities were far less severe towards witchcraft than the officers of the State.

Witchcraft prosecutions in Essex cannot be directly related to religious tensions through the study of particular individuals. Yet, as a method of explaining misfortune and evil, witchcraft beliefs to some extent overlapped with religious explanations. Thus changes in religious thought during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are of immense importance in understanding the rise and decline of prosecutions. An approach to the immense problems involved in tracing intellectual changes affecting witchcraft prosecutions will be made in the next chapter.

1. The only detailed examination before ecclesiastical authorities is case 861 in 1564. The references have to a kneeling invocation to Christ to come and kill her enemies makes the examination of Elizabeth Lowys very close to a heresy trial.

1. *Adm. Concl.*, p. 116.

2. *Decc. Miscellany*, p. 25; see also *Decc. Miscellany*, p. 25.

3. 1545 Pamphlet, p. 23.

CHAPTER 17

Witchcraft beliefs as an explanation of suffering
and a means of resolving conflict.

Those who stormed against the folly of believing in witchcraft stated that nearly every strange or painful event was blamed on witches.

Ady complained that,

'seldom hath a man the hand of God against him in his estate, or health of body, or any way, but presently he cryeth out of some poor innocent Neighbour, that he, or she hath bewitched him.'¹

Reginald Scot also remonstrated,

'that fewe or none can (nowadaies)with patience indure the hand and correction of God. For if any adversitie, greefe, sicknesse, losse of children, corne, cattell, or libertie happen unto them; by & by they exclaime upon witches'.²

Analysis of the Essex prosecutions, and particularly comparison of death and sickness in the sample villages with known cases of witchcraft, has shown that witchcraft was suggested as a cause of misfortune in only a small proportion of the accidents occurring during our period. This poses the problem of why people blamed certain misfortunes and not others on witches. Several possibilities have already been ruled out. Although there was sometimes an emphasis on the strangeness of an event, for instance, when a woman was suddenly covered by lice which 'were long, and lean, and not like other Lice',³ strangness, in

1. Ady, Candle, p.114.

2. Scot, Discovery, p.25; see also Gaule, Select Cases, p.85.

3. 1645 Pamphlet. p.23.

itself, was not enough to produce a suspicion of witchcraft. Likewise, witches were not merely sought when there was a gap in contemporary medical knowledge or when a death was particularly sudden, painful or unexpected. It is true that individual witchcraft only explained particular, as opposed to general, misfortunes. While witches, in theory, were believed 'to raise winds and tempests' and cause 'thunder and lightning', the actual court prosecutions show that they were only blamed for specific damage.¹ But the variety of the damage blamed on witches, and the many misfortunes which were not attributed to their power, suggests that there was another, determining, factor. This factor, it will be argued, was the relationship between witch and victim.

When witchcraft was used as an 'explanation' of a misfortune, this did not necessarily preclude other explanations. For analytic purposes, therefore, we need to distinguish between natural and supernatural explanation: thus witchcraft was a supernatural cause of an illness, while syphilis, for example, was a 'natural' cause. Since the interpreters of an accident might be seeking to 'explain'

1. Gifford, Discourse, sig.H4^v; Ady, Candle, p.113. Thus there seems to have been a direct relationship between ^{the} dimensions of the misfortune and the size of the enemy blamed; Ady, Candle, p.104, noted that general misfortunes (tempests, plague) were blamed on the large company of dead witches, rather than on specific, living, ones.

a variety of things, the supernatural and natural might co-exist. Thus a villager might recognise quite clearly the series of events leading up, on the physical side, to an accident. He might see that a child died 'because' it fell from a chair and broke its neck. 'Because' here meant 'how' it died, the outward, observable, reasons. Explanation was also needed as to 'why' it died. Why this child, on this day, died.¹ This would explain to an anxious parent why her child, rather than that of a neighbour, had died. Thus witchcraft could be the 'cause' in the sense that it explained the purpose, motive, or will, behind an injury, while the 'cause', in another sense, was a perfectly well understood disease or accident. This distinction meant that the same symptoms might be interpreted in very different ways depending on the attitude of the sufferer. The two levels of causation were recognised by the Essex witch-finder Matthew Hopkins who distinguished between a natural illness and supernatural malice.

'God suffers the Devill many times to doe much hurt, and the devill doth play many times the deluder and impostor with these Witches, in perswading them that they are the cause of such and such a murder wrought by him with their consents, when and indeed neither he nor they had any hand in it, as thus: We must needs argue, he is of a long standing.... and so have the

1. The classic discussion of this distinction is in E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937), especially in part 1, chapter 4.

the best skill in Physicke, judgment in Physiognomie, and knowledge of what disease is reigning or predominant in this or that man's body (and so for cattell too).....as Flurisie, Imposthume, &c.'

The Devil waits until a person is nearly dead, then offers to kill him for his enemy, a witch. He dies, and everyone believes that the witch has done it 'when and indeed the disease kills the party, not the Witch, nor the Devill'.¹

Hopkins implied that the disaster would have happened in any case. Here he was probably more sceptical than the majority of the Essex population, as well as many other writers. While they would have agreed that the misfortune might occur, on occasions, without being sent by a witch, yet they stressed that it happened more often and more horribly because of the will of evil people. This was the opinion of Sir Thomas Browne when asked for his advice at a witchcraft trial in 1664. He stated that the witches and Satan only worked on natural causes, but such natural causes were exacerbated by supernatural methods.² This view was echoed by William Perkins. The Devil, he wrote, was the principal agent of evil, but the witch was rightly punished, 'because if

1. Hopkins, Discovery, pp.59-21. This is an almost exact paraphrase of Bernard, Guide, pp.202-3, and was, presumably, therefore well-known to the jurymen for whom Bernard wrote and who tried witchcraft cases.

2. A Tryal of Witches at Bury St. Edmunds on the Tenth Day of March 1664 contained in A Collection of Rare and Curious Tracts relating to Witchcraft, (1838), p.16.

the devill were not stirred up, and provoked by the witch, he would never do so much hurt as he doth'.¹ A similar view seems to have been held by Essex villagers. They were convinced that many accidents would never have happened if there had been no witch. Gifford expressed this popular attitude with clarity.

'men looke no further then unto ye witch: they fret and rage against her: they never looke so high as unto God: they looke not to the cause why ye devil hath power over them: they seeke not to appease Gods wrath. But they fly upon ye witch: they think if shee were not, they should doo well enough: shee is made the cause of all plagues & mischiefes'.²

Thus witchcraft was an explanation which involved the idea that pain was not random, but caused by the motive or will of a person. An event which could, from one angle, be seen as the culmination of a series of uncontrollable physical circumstances, could, from another, be examined for origins in human or divine planning.

It is very difficult to estimate what percentage of accidents in our period demanded an interpretation in terms of personal will. It has been suggested that in a small-scale, 'face-to-face', society where there are few specialized relationships and where close personal bonds serve most men's interests, 'all events tend to be explained by what occurs in those relationships'.³ The many deaths by

1. Perkins Damned Art, page 253.
2. Gifford, Discourse, sig. H3.
3. M. Gluckman, Custom & Conflict in Africa (Paperback edn., Oxford, 1963), p. 95. There is a statistical analysis of the proportion of injuries attributed to witches in M. G. Marwick, Sorcery in its Social Setting (Manchester, 1965), pp. 15, 37, 73.

'misfortune' listed in the Essex coroner's inquisitions suggest that English society may have already passed beyond this stage and people may have accepted that illness and death often occurred without purpose.¹ Yet the comments of Puritan writers show clearly that a connection between sin and disease, or between suffering and human failure, was often drawn. The difference between the Puritans and those they castigated was merely in the details of the connection. Once a person sought to relate an injury to personal motivation there were three alternatives from which to choose. He could either blame himself, his neighbours, or God. While those who advocated the punishment of witches chose the middle solution, Puritans laid stress on the first and last of the three alternatives. George Gifford's complaint was that people would not face up to the responsibility of admitting that misfortune was their own fault. 'They can by no means see, that God is provoked by their sinnes to give the devill such instruments to work withall, but rage against the witch'.² Persons thinking themselves bewitched, will find on self-examination, William Perkins declared, 'that their owne sinnes are the true and proper causes of these evils'.³

1. This probably constitutes a major difference between English and Zande society, hence their systems of witchcraft; the Azande say, 'Death has always a cause, and no man dies without a reason', according to E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937) p. 111.

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. D3v.

3. Perkins, Damned Art, p. 230.

Ady commented that 'no Incantment can hurt us, but the only thing that can hurt any man is sinning against God'.¹ If such an interpretation had been widely accepted it would have led to an enormous weight of guilt for the individual, since all natural misfortunes would have to be related back to personal failure.

Others would have been in the position of Ralph Josselin who blamed his own unseasonable chess-playing for the death of his infant son.² The alternative offered by the Puritans was based on the story of Job and stressed patience in the face of the testing hand of God. This might, however, face the individual with a contradiction between a benign and loving Father, and the idea of a torturing and cruel task-master.³ Moreover, this interpretation lacked one great advantage of the other alternatives, the possibility of counter-action, of taking active steps to avoid future suffering and end present misery.

It is arguable that the Catholic Church in England before the Reformation provided a more satisfactory answer to the problem of explaining suffering. Catholic ritual, with its dramatization of the expulsion of evil,

1. Ady, Candle, p.53.

2. This point in Josselin's diary is cited in W. Notestein, English People on the Eve of Colonization (Harper Torchbook edn., New York, 1962), p.152.

3. This whole problem of how to reconcile an ideal of God and personal suffering is discussed in a stimulating manner in S.F. Nadal, Nupee Religion (1954), pp.201-5.

and communal propitiation of God, may have offered a solution to the misfortunes of daily life which did not involve the blame being centred on either the individual or his neighbours. Prayers and activities offered people satisfactory counter-action in times of distress and the hope that their environment might be controlled. At the Reformation, it might be suggested, the misfortunes and worries continued, but the whole ritual framework designed to deal with them was destroyed. This huge topic cannot be dealt with satisfactorily in a sociological analysis of prosecutions in one county starting in 1560; but Essex material does suggest that witchcraft beliefs were one method of dealing with problems of human suffering and hence they pose the question, how were such problems solved in previous centuries?

In the classic instance of witchcraft being used as an explanation of why a misfortune happens, people suffer an injury first and then look round to see who might have bewitched them.¹ Individuals are not permanently thought of as witches and the incident is soon forgotten. In Essex prosecutions the process seems to have been different; once a suspicion had arisen about

1. 'Azande is interested in witchcraft only as an agent on definite occasions and in relation to his own interests, and not as a permanent condition of individuals', writes E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles & Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937), p.26.

a certain person future injuries were blamed on her. Someone first offended a neighbour, and subsequently suffered. In fact, the links were more complicated than this. Often it seems, a person would not remember that he had denied a neighbour until some tragedy happened.¹ Yet there is little doubt that the stress was on the motive for the bewitching, not on the strangeness of the injury. What was being explained, in fact, was the feeling between two people, rather than a physical injury. When a person felt that he had angered someone, he himself felt angry and worried. The subsequent hostility could be interpreted in the ideology of witchcraft. The victim would feel justified in hating someone because she was an evil witch and had injured him physically: her rage was felt to be the rage of a wicked woman. This interpretation also accords with the conclusion that only certain injuries were blamed on witches and that these misfortunes were not necessarily exceptional in any way. It was the social context which determined the interpretation. A man who knew he had deeply offended a neighbour and that she had reason to curse him would interpret subsequent events differently from the man who felt no particular malice towards, or from, his co-villagers. Furthermore, it has been argued that it was often the victim who felt the

1. The growth of suspicions and allocation of blame is discussed on p. 133ff .

hostility and guilt and projected this on to the witch. It was only when hatred was known to be prevalent that people would feel precarious enough, angry enough, and anxious enough to press a charge of witchcraft. Thus witchcraft was not just an automatic explanation of all, or specific, types of misfortune. Rather, it was a combined solution of why a certain painful event had happened, and why a person felt a certain painful emotion. To both types of uncertainty it promised relief.

Witchcraft prosecutions, we have seen, were usually between people who knew each other intimately, that is, between village neighbours. They almost always rose from quarrels over gifts and loans in which the victim refused the witch some small gift, heard her muttering under her breath or threatening him, and subsequently suffered some misfortune. It was usually the person who had done the first wrong under the old ideals of charity who felt himself bewitched. The weight of these old ideals, as well as the belief that a moral offence would be afflicted by physical punishment, is excellently illustrated by Thomas Ady.

'God hath given it as a strict Command to all men to relieve the poor, Levit.25.35. and in the next chapter it followeth, vers.14,15. Whosoever hearkeneth not to all the Commandments of the Lord to do them, (whereof relieving the poor is one) the Lord will send several crosses and afflictions, and diseases upon them, as followeth in the Chapter, and therefore men should

look into the Scriptures, and search what sins bring afflictions from Gods hands, and not say presently, what old man or woman was last at my door, that I may hand him or her for a Witche: yea we should rather say, Because I did not relieve such a poor body that was lately at my door, but gave him harsh and bitter words, therefore God hath laid this Affliction upon me, for God saith, Exod.22.23.24. If thou any way afflict widows, and fatherless, and they at all cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot against thee.' 1

Physical afflictions were the punishment for social deviation and men might well tremble when they heard a widow's curse, backed, as it was said to be in the Bible, by God's power. But by suggesting that the widow was a witch the power of the old sanctions to neighbourly behaviour, especially cursing, was broken. As Ady recognized, an accusation of witchcraft was a clever way of reversing the guilt, of transferring it from the person who had failed in his social obligation under the old standard, to the person who had made him fail. Through the mechanism of the law, and the informal methods of gossip and village opinion, society was permitted to support the accuser.

From a certain viewpoint, therefore, witchcraft prosecutions may be seen as a means of effecting a deep social change; a change from a 'neighbourly', highly

1. Ady, Candle, p.130.

2. Thomas Cooper, The History of Witchcraft, 1707, p.100

3. J.O.W. Davis, Sketches of the Beliefs and Customs of the West of England (1846), p.224.

integrated and mutually interdependent village society, to a more individualistic one. Both the necessity and dangers of such a change are illustrated by Thomas Cooper when he warned the godly in 1617 to forgo indiscriminate charity and to be especially hard on suspected witches, 'to bee straight-handed towards them, not to entertaine them in our houses, not to relieve them with our morsels': not to fear the spiritual consequences, to 'use a Christian courage in all our Actions, not to feare their curses, nor seeke for their blessings.'¹

Among the counter-actions against witches a number have already been noted that would have the effect of severing relationships between neighbours. The danger was again emphasized by an Elizabethan preacher who told his congregation that

'we may see how experience, and the very confessions of witches, agree that the merciful lenders and givers are preserved of God, and unmerciful usurers and covetous Nabals are vexed and troubled of Satan'.²

Thus witchcraft beliefs provided both the justification for severing contact, and an explanation of the guilt and fear still felt by the individual when he did so; he might expect to be repaid on the spiritual plane for his lack of charity, but could be satisfied that this was witchcraft, and thus evil, rather than punishment

1. Thomas Cooper, The Mystery of Witchcraft, (1617), p.288.

2. J.O.W.Haweis, Sketches of the Reformation and Elizabethan Age, (1844), p.224.

for his own shortcomings. In one sense, witchcraft beliefs can be seen as a form of reciprocal relationship. One neighbour injures another, both on the physical level, by refusing a gift, but also, more generally, by denying the existence of a mutual relationship. The witch reciprocates on two levels also, through a physical attack which is accompanied by a malice equivalent to that of the victim. All this occurred within the context of village life where there were immense difficulties facing those who wished to deny the existence of a neighbourly bond. Christianity, as we have seen from Ady's quotation from the Bible, still upheld communal values. There was no code to which a person who felt the need to cut down or re-direct his relationships could appeal. Yet, through the idiom of witchcraft prosecutions, the older values were undermined or changed, while on the surface, they were maintained. Witchcraft prosecutions, therefore, may have been principally important as a radical force which broke down the communal pattern inherited from the medieval period. Anthropologists, perhaps because they tend to make static studies, usually stress the conservative effects of witchcraft beliefs. They argue that such beliefs maintain and reinforce

social relationships.¹ A historical study suggests that prosecutions may just as well be a means of destroying old relationships and ideals.

Yet this explanation leaves many unanswered problems. Some villages were free of witchcraft accusations in Essex. Clearly witchcraft accusations were not the necessary or only mechanism for dealing with a conflict between an ideal of neighbourliness and the practical consequences of social and economic change. Nor does it seem probable that disputes between neighbours were absent before 1560, or that they ended abruptly in the middle of the seventeenth century. This leads us directly to the problems surrounding the rise and decline of witchcraft accusations.

1. For example, Marwick argues that 'sorcery and witchcraft emerge as conservative social forces; and their conservative character is brought into sharp relief when they operate under conditions of social change' (M. G. Marwick, Sorcery in its Social Setting (Manchester, 1965), p.221).

CHAPTER 18

Reasons for the rise and decline of witchcraft prosecutions.

Even after extensive research the factual outlines of witchcraft prosecutions are still blurred. It is particularly difficult to assess the number of witchcraft prosecutions before 1560. In Essex, for example, only one case has been discovered before that date. Even this was 'white witchcraft', blessing a plough.¹ Yet it is hardly surprising that no cases have been found in Assize, Quarter Sessions or ecclesiastical records, the main sources for prosecutions in the later period, since these only survive from 1560 onwards in Essex.² The problem is in many ways similar for the whole of England. Although scattered cases of witchcraft can be discovered in medieval literature or court records,³ it is doubtful whether statistical comparison will ever be possible between the Elizabethan and earlier periods. Printed ecclesiastical records show a considerable number of sorcery cases in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, possibly on a level with those for the period

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1. Two women were accused, at a Colchester Law Hundred in 1532, of blessing a plough (Essex Review, 47 (1938), p.167).
 2. In fact the Quarter Sessions Rolls commence in 1556.
 3. For example, there are miscellaneous cases cited in Kittredge, Witchcraft, ch.2; Notestein, Witchcraft, ch.1; Ewen 1, pp.1-12.

we are studying.¹ There are also references in early Privy Council records and earlier Assize rolls.² Nevertheless, the general impression, based on a brief examination of printed medieval court records, is that prosecutions for witchcraft were not widespread.

The picture is clearer after 1560. In Essex the worst years for suspected witches were from 1570-1600. The severity of the courts was definitely lessening after about 1620. Apart from 1645, there were no executions at the Assizes for this county after 1626. Bills of presentment were increasingly often rejected by the grand jury from 1650 onwards. The last known ecclesiastical court case appeared in 1638, the last at the Quarter Sessions in 1664, the last at the Assizes in 1675. In other parts of England the prosecutions continued in force until the beginning of the eighteenth

1. For some examples see Depositions and other Ecclesiastical Proceedings from the Courts of Durham, ed. James Raine (Surtees Soc., xxi, 1845), pp. 27, 29, 33; William Hale, Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes, 1475-1640 (1847), pp. 3, 7, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 32-3, 36-7, 61, 63, 77, 102, 107-8, 139; Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-31, ed. A. H. Thompson (Lincs. Rec. Soc., xxxiii, 1940), i, xlix; Tudor Studies, presented to A. F. Pollard, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (1924), pp. 72-4.

2. See, for example, Select Cases before the King's Council, 1243-1482, ed. I. S. Leadam (Selden Soc., xxxv, 1918), pp. xxxiv-xxxv. A witchcraft case in a Northumberland Assize roll of 1279 is described in Kittredge, Witchcraft, p. 47. The general impression is that witchcraft was infrequently prosecuted at the medieval Assizes; thus there are no cases in the Assize rolls published by the Selden Society (vols. xxx, liii, lvi, lix) or by the Lincolnshire Record Society (vols. 22, 36).

century.¹ In Essex, as elsewhere in England, there were informal attacks on suspected witches after prosecutions had ceased at the courts. Old women were thrown into ponds by angry mobs, and people burnt their animals to prevent them being bewitched.² But the formal prosecutions ended over fifty years before the Witchcraft Act was repealed in 1736.

To attempt an explanation of changes in the intensity of witchcraft beliefs is really beyond the scope of this thesis since we need to know far more about earlier beliefs and about accusations in other counties before any reasonable account can be given. The following hypotheses, therefore, are at a much more speculative and general level than the conclusions in other chapters. They are merely suggestions as to the way in which one might approach an explanation. They look forward to work that needs to be undertaken rather than back over facts established by the Essex material. Nevertheless, although they cannot all be fully documented as yet, all the arguments to be presented seem to fit the Essex material.

One possible reason for variations over the years

1. Late cases in the Home Circuit are printed in Ewen I, pp.261-5, and Notestein, Witchcraft, ch.xiii, discusses trials elsewhere in England.

2. A number of instances are cited in R.Trevor Davies, Four Centuries of Witch-Beliefs (1947), pp.188-200.

was the legal treatment of witchcraft, both in laws and in the court procedure. Although it could be forcefully argued that without the law against witches in 1563 there would have been few witchcraft prosecutions, a law by itself cannot generate beliefs. It may be that there were many witchcraft tensions before 1560 which lay hidden for lack of a secular law. We do not know. But the situation at the end of the period shows that people need not avail themselves of a law; it provides the possibility of action, but not the impulse. Witchcraft accusations, we have seen, declined some fifty years before the law was repealed, at least in Essex. Nor can any change in legal procedure explain this decline. The law against witches may have provided the indispensable framework for accusations, and the court cases may have spread and strengthened witchcraft beliefs. In this sense the institutionalization of the punishment of witches can be seen as a 'necessary' cause of witchcraft prosecutions, but it is not a 'sufficient' one.

Another reason for changes was the intellectual framework upon which witchcraft beliefs were based. Previous chapters have tended to concentrate, in their sociological analysis, on the groups involved in accusations rather than on the ideas behind prosecutions.

Yet, as a belief, it is clear that witchcraft charges need to be understood, partially at least, as one type of idea and not merely as a tension or emotion. At the very simplest, there cannot be a belief in witchcraft if it is thought impossible for one human being to harm another physically through non-physical means. If, as today, there is no general belief in the possibility of one person damaging another at a distance merely by wishing them evil, then witchcraft beliefs are without foundation. Witchcraft beliefs, in fact, pre-suppose a world in which the thoughts and words of one person are believed to have the power to damage another. The power of cursing and prayer in the middle ages is the best illustration that people lived in such a world before our period.¹ It has been argued that the power of curses was still felt as a sanction during the sixteenth century in Essex. It could be further argued that, among certain groups at least, changes occurring during the century after the Reformation undermined both the intellectual and emotional foundation of such an assumption. As the gentry became more educated, as their close and multiple personal ties with villagers became weakened, the idea

1. Fines for cursing are instanced in G.G.Coulton, Medieval Village, Manor and Monastery (Harper Torchbook edn., 1960), p. 91. The biblical justification for cursing is set out by George Herbert in A Priest to the Temple (Everyman edn., 1908), p. 288.

of interdependence not only on the physical but also on the spiritual level suffered attrition. The assumption that a neighbour's malice will cause another person physical harm may indeed be founded on experience in a subsistence-level village where people are intimately connected in everyday life and where co-operation and unanimity is vitally necessary.¹ But during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the combination of a less collectivist religion, a market economy, greater social mobility, and a growing separation of people through the formation of institutional rather than personal ties would have serious effects of such beliefs.² The gentry, who formed the juries in Essex which first rejected witchcraft indictments in the 1650's, may not have felt so involved with their neighbours that they feared them, nor have believed that evil will alone could lead to physical harm. In some strange way the particular inter-relationship of moral and physical spheres had become split. Hostility and anger could be permitted without leading to disruption. A person could feel bitterly about his neighbour without either being accused of being a witch, or feeling it necessary to project the

1. This idea is based on the discussion in M. Gluckman, Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society (Oxford, 1965), pp. 243-4.

2. Obviously these sweeping generalizations need modification. For instance, the growth of social mobility in the 16th century might well be disputed.

bitterness onto another who he believed to be bewitching him. People were far enough apart, so to speak, to be able to hate each other without repercussions on the mystical plane. The way in which this actually happened can only be established after extensive studies of attitudes to prayer, cursing, hostility and similar topics.

Another obvious factor is the amount of physical suffering in a society and the methods prescribed by that society to deal with it. It has already been argued that the actual amount of physical suffering is not, in itself, a direct cause of changes in witchcraft beliefs. Firstly it would be difficult to show that disease and loss increased in mid-sixteenth century Essex or declined in that county after about 1650. Secondly we have seen that witchcraft suspicions only occurred in certain cases of death and illness; that, for instance, very few witches were blamed for the death of infants. Nor do changes in medical knowledge provide a complete explanation of changes in beliefs. There is little evidence, of course, that there was a deterioration in medical knowledge in the early sixteenth century, nor is there evidence that juries and justices knew more about the majority of human or animal illnesses in 1660 than they had done in 1600. Decline in witchcraft beliefs predated the revolution in medical knowledge and techniques,

which only occurred in the nineteenth century.

Another reason why it seems improbable that changes in medical knowledge could have had much effect on witchcraft beliefs has already been suggested. This is the fact that a witchcraft 'explanation' could co-exist beside a perfectly adequate 'explanation' of how the illness occurred.¹ When a person died after a long illness his relatives might be aware that he had died of a known disease, but might also seek an explanation of why he, rather than another person, had caught this disease. In this sense death can never be 'explained' by medical science. The painful emotions it arouses need an 'emotional explanation', that is a series of counteractions and beliefs which bring relief as well as intellectual knowledge. A death is treated like a murder. It is not enough to know the weapon, the time and manner of death: one must also know the motive behind the killing and the identity of the murderer. What really needs to be explained, therefore, is why a proportion of deaths in Essex villages ceased to be treated as murders. Part

1. As an anthropologist has written: 'The decline in belief in witchcraft and sorcery is not purely a matter of extending scientific knowledge - our answer must cover the astute Pondo teacher who said to me: "It may be quite true that typhus is carried by lice, but who sent the infected louse? Why did it bite one man and not another?"'. M. Wilson, 'Witch Beliefs and Social Structure', American Jnl. of Sociology, lvi, no. 4 (1951), p. 313.

of the answer may lie in the nature of suffering and loss. Changes in the structure of society during our period may have meant that economic loss, the loss of children, death, all became more bearable. This might have happened in a number of ways. Future studies of insurance against the many losses by fire and other accidents, both through economic aid^{and} through religious assurance and social relationships, may show how this happened. Yet anyone who reads contemporary diaries, for instance the mid-seventeenth century Essex diary of Ralph Josselin,¹ will be aware that people continued to live in a constant state of personal anxiety about possible threats of illness and accident throughout the seventeenth century. It could be argued, however, that anxiety lessened.

Another part of the solution lies in the ideas about causation current during our period. To blame a witch was to explain misfortune in personal terms. As such it competed with other explanations. For analytic purposes it could be argued that a person seeking to explain misfortune could seek a solution either in terms of personal will, that is in the design or scheme of a living creature, or in impersonal forces which moved

1. The edited version for the Camden Society (3rd ser., xv, 1908) omits much of the detailed account of daily fears and anxieties of the original (E.R.O., T/B 9(1) is a full transcript.)

either randomly or according to scientific, mechanistic, laws. The 'personal' explanation could again be subdivided into three, as we saw in the previous chapter. The misfortune could be ascribed to God, to another person, or to the individual himself. The idea that God was punishing a person was sometimes an indirect way of saying that an individual's suffering was his own fault, but he might also be punished for the sins of the community. These explanations can best be distinguished by looking at the counter-actions which they enjoin. God requires prayer, propitiation and sacrifice. He may be placated either by the whole community or the individual.

Explanations in such terms have the advantage of providing a set of counter-rituals which may alleviate pain and prevent future misfortune. It seems probable however, that this type of explanation became less convincing after the Reformation. It might explain general misfortunes to the whole village, but when a specific person was injured God may have seemed too distant and impersonal an explanation. The effectiveness of a communal propitiation may have seemed less. This would lay more stress on the other two interpretations.

Where a personalized agent was sought the third solution, self-blame, may have been the most attractive in

God, he can put himself at a distance. certain circumstances. For instance, to blame misfortune on one's own sins gives control over accident and suffering. Avoidance of sin will lead to a happy life. Both explanations interlink sin and misfortune in such a way as to provide an automatic set of sanctions in which moral rules are supported by natural events. Individuals conform, since any pain they suffer is interpreted both by them and their neighbours as punishment for their non-conformity. This interlocking system is appropriate for a society where moral rules are unchanging.

The special advantage of the middle explanation, in which another person is blamed, is that, by breaking automatic sanctions against non-conformity, it allows considerable changes to occur. If a neighbour is blamed for one's misfortunes there is a double effect. On the one hand the sufferer is allowed to escape from the circular, automatic, controls of a collective society. Although still holding the belief that pain is not random and beyond human control, he does not need to examine and modify his own behaviour, but he can blame another. On the other hand, he may cut off relations with his supposed attacker. Instead of being drawn closer to his fellows through acknowledging his break with communal values, or by partaking in a communal ritual to a universal

God, he can put himself at a distance.

While witchcraft accusations were founded on an implicit acceptance of the mystical link between individuals in which one person's well-being was dependent on the attitude of others, they also helped to differentiate and distance people by giving them a reason for turning from their neighbours. As has already been stressed, a witchcraft accusation was a mechanism whereby a person who broke with communal values, and who was expecting retaliation for this, could reverse the guilt. Instead of accepting ensuing suffering as deserved punishment, he could project the blame on to the person who had ostensibly been upholding such values. Thus the woman who went round making demands on neighbours in Essex, and who used traditional sanctions such as cursing to enforce them, was the witch. Witchcraft accusations occurred when there was an overlap between an old idea that misfortunes were the result of personal will, and a new social and economic atmosphere in which people wished to adopt new values and models of behaviour.

The overlap ended when the explanation of misfortune ceased to be sought in personal will. It was a change from a view of causation that is personalized to one where it is accepted that death and suffering may be the result of 'abstract' forces. Sometimes these abstract

forces can be analysed into scientific 'laws'. On other occasions they seem to work at random by 'luck' and 'chance'. In this sense the crucial change in the seventeenth century was not the growth of scientific knowledge, but the decline of the area where personalized explanations in terms of human will were sought. It was the growth in the area of 'chance' that was important. The history of this growth is clearly beyond the scope of this thesis. Its effect, however, may well be traced by future research into the attitude of the gentry and yeomen towards personal misfortune. It is likely that the decline in witchcraft beliefs occurred at the same time as a decline in the belief that suffering was the result of personal sin or God's punishing hand.¹

One final factor needs consideration. This is the considerable social and economic change occurring during our period. Witchcraft prosecutions in Essex centred on the relationship between middling to rich villagers and their slightly less prosperous and older neighbours. These neighbours were usually women, and often widows.

1. The interpretation of misfortune in personal terms has been extensively studied by anthropologists. In Ceylon villagers tend to attribute all misfortune and illness to sin, writes E.R. Leach, Pul Eliya (Cambridge, 1961), p. 36. See also V.W. Turner, Schism and Continuity in an African Society (Manchester, 1964), pp. 142-3. As R.H. Tawney put it in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Penguin edn., 1961), p. 41, 'Much that is now mechanical was then personal, intimate, and direct'.

It seems, therefore, that as well as that of suffering, two other problems were of particular importance in witchcraft accusations, the first was that of poverty, the second was that of the old. Neither of these was narrowly confined in a sixteenth century village. The problem of 'poverty', viewed broadly, included the relative wealth of villagers, their interdependent labour co-operation, their mutual insurance and help in periodic economic crises. Within the problem of 'old age' was included that of the relations between the old and young in matters of authority, as well as the burden of old people and the methods of inheritance of possessions.

It could be argued that the significant changes during our period were twofold. Firstly it seems that population growth and changes in land-ownership created a group of poorer villagers whose ties to their slightly wealthier neighbours became more tenuous.¹ People increasingly had to decide whether to invest their wealth in maintaining the old at a decent standard of living, or in improvements which would keep them abreast of their yeomen neighbours. Secondly, it seems that there were

1. This process has been described for the Leicestershire village of Wigston Magna (W.G.Hoskins, The Midland Peasant (1957), Chps.5-7) and a Cambridge village (M.Spufford, A Cambridgeshire Community (Leicester Univ.Press, 1965), pp.31-52). Unfortunately there are as yet no detailed studies of Essex villages from this aspect. It is therefore impossible to be certain whether there were growing class distinctions.

two stages in the response to such changes. During the period between 1560 and about 1650 the informal institutions which had dealt with the old and poor, church relief, the manorial organization, neighbourly and kinship ties, were strained.¹ This was the period of witchcraft accusations. People still felt enjoined to help and support each other, while also feeling the necessity to invest their capital in buying land and providing for their children. The very poor were not the problem. They could be whipped and sent on their way, or hired as labourers. It was the slightly less affluent neighbours or kin who only demanded a little help who became an increasing source of anxiety. To refuse them was to break a whole web of long held values.

The situation may have changed in two ways in Essex during the seventeenth century. The problems of old age and poverty may have lessened with changes in population and price trends. But what seems likely to prove more important were alterations in the attitudes and institutions for dealing with these problems. Once workhouses had been established, when it had come a Christian's duty to abstain from indiscriminate charity,² as soon as there

1. These broad generalizations are purely speculative and cannot be substantiated until detailed studies of the treatment of the poor and old, of kinship and neighbourly values, and of many other subjects have been undertaken.

2. A change discussed in C. Hill, Puritanism and Revolution (Mercury edn., 1962) ch.7 on 'William Perkins and the Poor'.

had been a change from the informal, day-to-day, treatment of the poor and old to a more conscious and formal situation, the anxieties may have lessened. Rules were laid down and each individual did not need to take exceedingly painful choices about his priorities. The conflict between ideals and behaviour which, it has been argued, lay behind the witchcraft accusations died away. There is little doubt that villagers still believed in witchcraft long after indictments ceased coming to the courts. But such beliefs ceased to be felt by a large enough proportion of the influential villagers to be made into formal charges. One of the facts demonstrated in this thesis has been that witchcraft accusations were not merely the result of tensions between two individuals, but rather between a group of villagers and an individual suspect. In a situation where witchcraft continued to be an explanation of personal misfortune, but had ceased to represent a wider feeling of loathing on the part of a number of families who felt guilty at having denied neighbourly help to someone, witchcraft accusations lost something of their energy.

In this chapter the microscope has been abandoned and the telescope employed. The resulting attempt to provide a very general framework of problems for future

discussion has necessitated many generalizations and much guesswork. The hypotheses are obviously at a very tentative stage. Every assertion needs qualification and documentation. It is believed, however, that only by looking at the witchcraft prosecutions in Essex in the total intellectual and social background of sixteenth and seventeenth century England will a solution to the problem of why they arose and declined be found.

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CHAPTER 19

Conclusion: witchcraft prosecutions in a wider context.

A study of Essex has shown that witchcraft prosecutions were an important part of village life. Perkins wrote that 'witchcraft is a rife and common sinne in these our daies, and very many are intangled in it',¹ while Gaule attacked the multitude who 'conclude peremptorily..... that witches not only are, but are in every place, and Parish with them'.² These general impressions were echoed, in Essex, by Samuel's remark in Gifford's Dialogue that 'there is scarce any towne or village in all this shire, but there is one or two witches at the least in it'.³ A detailed study of all offences prosecuted in the three sample villages showed that witchcraft was one of the most common charges.

Some 496 Assize indictments for black witchcraft listed in the appendix to this thesis, estimated to be less than a third of all the suspected acts of witchcraft in the county, support Gifford's testimony. Of the 426 villages in Essex, some 229 are known to have been connected with witchcraft prosecutions in one way or another. At the peak period of accusations, thirteen per cent of all types of case occurring at the Essex Assize court concerned this offence. All this was merely the surface.

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1. Perkins, Damned Art, p.1.
 2. Gaule, Select Cases, p.4.
 3. Gifford Dialogue, sig.A4^v.

The occasional glimpses afforded by the witchcraft pamphlets suggest a background of complex and widely distributed beliefs about witchcraft behind the formal accusations. Cunning folk and magical counter-action against witches also absorbed much of the interest and time of villagers. It may well be asked whether Essex was exceptional in all this; whether the majority of the English population during this period were living in a world of witchcraft and magic, an atmosphere which has only escaped the notice of the historian because of his lack of interest. If Yorkshire in the later nineteenth century was saturated in witchcraft beliefs so that it was 'difficult to exaggerate the dimensions of that element of folklore',¹ we may wonder how far this was true in the earlier period.

Contemporary writers did not comment on the fact that Essex was in any way exceptional in the intensity of its prosecutions; for instance Reginald Scot drew most of his examples of witchcraft from his native county of Kent. Gifford, alone, remarked that, as far as witchcraft was concerned, Essex was a 'bad countrey, I think even one of the worst in England'.² Since he had lived in this county practically all his life, his opinion,

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1. J.C. Atkinson, Forty Years in a Moorland Parish (1891), p. 74.
 2. Gifford, Dialogue, sig. A4^v.

though interesting, is impressionistic. Recent studies of the whole of English witchcraft suggest that beliefs and prosecutions were widespread. In his second book, Ewen quotes some eighty-three depositions and confessions.¹ Seven of these come from Essex and seventy-six from other parts of the country. These include six from Somerset, Suffolk and London; five from Yorkshire and Kent; and two or more from Northumberland, Cornwall, Dorset, Huntingdonshire, Staffordshire, Bedfordshire, Worcestershire, Middlesex, Leicestershire, Lancashire, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Devon, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire. Another five come singly from counties. If Essex leads here, it is by a narrow margin. Notestein's study of the whole of England does not give the impression that witchcraft prosecutions were localised. His 299 placed references in the appendix of cases indicate that in witchcraft we are dealing with a widespread phenomenon.² The list shows Middlesex (51 cases), Yorkshire (32) and Norfolk (21) to be areas of apparently intense prosecution, with Northumberland (19), Kent (18) and Wiltshire (15) next; Lancashire (14), Essex (14), Somerset (13) and Suffolk (11) also have over ten references. There are thirteen other counties with over four references and another fifteen with between one and three. The only

1. Ewen II, in the text; other cases are printed in his appendices.

2. Notestein, Witchcraft, Appdx.C.

county not mentioned is Westmorland. These figures have been given at length because they show that, until intensive research was undertaken on Essex legal records, that county did not appear exceptional.

Although five of the twenty-eight 'Major English Witch Trials as Recorded in Contemporary Pamphlets'¹ were from Essex, it has been shown that pamphlets are not an accurate indication of the number of prosecutions.² Rather the large proportion of Essex pamphlets stresses the early interest in Essex witchcraft trials. Between 1560-1590 there were only six pamphlets, in this list, for the whole of England; four of these came from Essex. But of the twenty-two pamphlets which appeared between 1590-1682, Essex inspired only one. Of the twenty-seven major writers on English witchcraft listed by the same authority,³ four had Essex connections; Gifford, Harsnett, Hopkins, and Ady, although Harsnett wrote when absent from the county.

At first it was hoped that it would be possible to make a statistical comparison of witchcraft prosecutions in different counties on the basis of legal records. It soon became obvious, however, that records for various counties have survived to such an unequal degree that this is not feasible. The following comparisons, therefore, are

1. R.H. Robbins, Encyclopedia of Witchcraft & Demonology (1959), pp. 168-9.
2. See p. 83 above.
3. Robbins, Encyclopedia, p. 167.

Merely designed to indicate in a general manner the English background to the Essex statistics, and to stress that wherever there are surviving court records of the right type, ecclesiastical or secular, there witchcraft prosecutions will be found.

Assize records.

As part of the Home Circuit, Essex witchcraft indictments may fairly be compared to those in the other counties comprising that circuit. This comparison has, in fact, already been made by C.L.Ewen and his figures are as follows.¹

TABLE 19: Witchcraft indictments in the Home Circuit. 1560-1700

County	Persons indicted	Indictments	Executions
Sussex	17	33	1
Surrey	54	71	5
Hertford	52	81	8
Kent	91	132	16
Essex	<u>299</u>	<u>473</u>	<u>82</u>
	513	790	112

From this, as Ewen remarked, 'a glance leads to the immediate conclusion that the belief in witchcraft was much more pronounced in Essex..... The Essex indictments actually outnumber those of the four counties of Herts, Kent, Surrey and Sussex combined'.² This cannot be even

1. From the table in Ewen I, p.99: the slight modifications to Ewen's Essex figures have not been incorporated since similar changes could probably be made to the figures for other counties.

2. Ewen I, p.100.

partly explained by the better survival of Essex Assize rolls, despite Ewen's suggestion to this effect.¹ Within the Home Circuit, Essex was exceptional, though other counties all had their prosecutions.

Detailed comparisons with other Assize records cannot be made since no other circuits have Elizabethan survivals; only the Palatinates of Durham and Chester have such documents.² Apart from the Home Circuit, the Palatinates, Middlesex, and scattered Northern circuit documents, there are no surviving indictments for England until 1654 when they start for the Oxford, Norfolk, and Northern circuits. After that date there were eighty indictments in the Home circuit, eighteen in the Norfolk, thirty-nine in the Northern, four in the Oxford. If we are prepared to compare the Home circuit indictments to the Western circuit gaol books, which start in 1670, we find that after that date there are thirty-three indictments for the Home, and sixty-nine references to witchcraft in the Western circuit.

1. Ewen I, pp. 97, 99, suggested that Essex records, especially gaol records, were better preserved than those of the other 4 counties. But analysis of the files at the P.R.O. shows that the number lost per county in the period 1560-1660 was as follows: Surrey (lost 36), Kent (42), Essex (43), Sussex (51), Herts (65).

2. For the statistics on which the following account is based see Ewen I, pp. 109-111; Ewen II, appendices; Ewen Witchcraft in the Norfolk Circuit (n.p., 1939) *passim*. For a description of the circuits and the survival of records see Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office (1963), i. pp. 127-131. Some further cases in the Northern Circuit, 14 sets of recognizances for the years 1649-59 were discovered in P.R.O., Assizes 47, 14-15.

Thus, for the only period when records remain for the Western circuit, they show a doubled incidence when compared to a different type of record for the Home circuit. In all, Ewen added a little over 450 Assize cases from outside the Home circuit.¹ He guessed that the number of executions for witchcraft in England from 1542-1736 would be less than a thousand.² In the Home counties the average number of persons indicted per county between 1560-1706 (if we leave Essex on one side as exceptional) was a little over fifty; the number of executions slightly over seven per county. Middlesex, with forty-eight persons indicted,³ supports this average. If this is the survival from some seventy-seven per cent of the records, and these counties are at all representative of England as a whole, we might expect something like a total of two thousand persons tried during the whole period in all the Assize courts, and some three hundred executed. Seen in this framework, Ewen's figures for Essex of 299 persons indicted and 82 executed, appears exceptional.

1. Nearly all are printed in summary form in the appendices of Ewen II.

2. Ewen I, p.112.

3. The cases are printed in Middlesex County Records, ed. J.C. Jeaffreson (Middlesex Co. Rec. Soc., i-iv, 1886-92) and Calendar to the Sessions Records, ed. W. Le Hardy (Middlesex Co. Rec. Soc., n.s. 1-4, 1935-41); most of the cases are listed in Ewen II, appdx. J. For description of the exceptional nature of the Middlesex records see E.D. Mercer, 'The Middlesex County Record Office', Archives, vi (1963), pp.30-31.

Yet the rest of England is far from free of prosecutions. Thomas Cooper, writing in 1617, hardly exaggerated when he inquired rhetorically 'Doth not every Assize almost throughout the Land, resound of the arraignment and conviction of notorious Witches'.¹

Quarter Sessions.

Quarter Sessions records are even less useful than Assize documents for showing the comparative density of English witchcraft prosecutions. Not only do counties vary widely in the date and volume of their records, and the degree to which these records are accessible in printed form, but Essex cases suggest that over ninety per cent of those tried at the Assizes did not appear at the Quarter Sessions. Yet it may still be asked how the seventy-four references to witchcraft activity discovered in the very extensive Essex Quarter Sessions records compare to those of other counties. Witchcraft references in records of this court were found for the following counties:² Lincolnshire (1) Northamptonshire (1), Worcestershire (2), West Riding of Yorkshire (3), Norfolk (4), North Riding of Yorkshire (6), Nottinghamshire (10), Somerset (10). The only

1. Thomas Cooper, The Mystery of Witchcraft, (1617), p.15.

2. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of cases of witchcraft. Many of these cases are printed in the appendices to Ewen II; see also the asterisked secondary works in the bibliography p.391 which contain witchcraft cases; page references are given there.

two counties which can, at all fairly, be compared to Essex in their printed sessions records are Hertfordshire and Wiltshire. There are nine Hertfordshire cases after 1589, including some long depositions. Wiltshire records, starting in 1563, include twenty-three references to witchcraft. Again the impression is that Essex is exceptional: there are more references for this county than for the rest of England excluding Wiltshire. But this impression is partly the result of the splendid survival of Essex records and the fact that they alone have been searched in the original. If Essex, as was the case with other counties, had only been judged from its printed Quarter Sessions records, few witchcraft cases would have been discovered.¹

Other secular courts.

A search of Essex borough records produced a total of twenty-five accused witches. Similar records from other counties remain to be searched in detail, but it seems likely that a considerable number of such cases were tried in them. Wallace Notestein listed over three dozen witchcraft references in borough records from all over England,

1. The Historical Manuscripts Commission 10th Report, Appendix, part iv (1885), pp. 466-513, printed extracts from Essex Quarter Sessions records; yet examination of these extracts would lead one to suppose that only 3 cases of witchcraft or conjuring (pp. 473, 476, 511) appeared before the Essex Justices of the Peace.

among them, for instance, five from Great Yarmouth, four from King's Lynn, and five from Newcastle.¹ In his list there were only two Essex cases. Search of unprinted Essex material multiplied this by a factor of twelve. If this is a fair sample, we might expect over four hundred cases for the whole of England, though it is probable that the total will be a good deal less than this. Again witchcraft prosecutions are seen as a widespread phenomenon, with Essex heading the list.

The records of the central organs of government, we have seen, do not begin to suggest the widespread nature of witchcraft prosecutions in Essex. In the State Papers, Domestic there are only two references to Essex witchcraft in the total of more than thirty cases for the whole of England.² After 1560 there were twenty-five references to witchcraft and conjuring in the Privy Council Acts, all occurring before 1589. Of these twenty-five, seven were Essex references, an exceptional proportion. All those accused in Essex were, however, men who had become suspected of sorcery or conjuring, rather than witchcraft.³

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1. Notestein, Witchcraft, Appendix C.
 2. The Calendar of State Papers, Domestic for years 1547-1660 was searched; most of the references have been collected in Notestein, Witchcraft, Appdx. C.
 3. The Essex cases have been discussed on p. 79 above.

4. Bishop Lodge's Visitation, 1772, ed. J. F. Williams (Oxford, 1903), p. 26.

5. J. A. Purvis, Early Parish Records of the Diocese of York (Cambridge, 1903), pp. 150-3.

Ecclesiastical courts

In comparing the more than 220 persons in Essex accused at the ecclesiastical courts of witchcraft, black and white, to the rest of the country, the same difficulties occur as in a comparison of Assize prosecutions. The survival of records is uneven, the availability of printed material varies, the type of record for each area, as well as the comparative size of the population of each, differ enormously. Printed extracts from Winchester, Sussex, Oxford, Nottingham and Durham ecclesiastical court records only yield 21 cases of witchcraft.¹ The only printed documents which contain a reasonable number of cases are the Churchwardens Presentments for the archdeaconries of Norwich, Norfolk and Suffolk in 1597; witchcraft was presented 15 times.²

If we turn to unprinted sources, however, we become aware of many more prosecutions. Some 46 cases have been either printed or alluded to in the Diocese of York.

On the basis of these it was concluded that 'for the laity it ranks as one of the major offences about on a level with scolding and more frequent than drunkenness'.³

1. The sources for these cases are asterisked, and the page references to witchcraft cases given, in the bibliography, pp.391-3. Other cases are included in more general works, for instance in C.M.L. Bouch, Prelates and People of the Lake Counties (Kendal, 1948), pp.216, 236.

2. Bishop Redman's Visitation, 1597, ed. J.F. Williams (Norfolk Rec. Soc., xviii, 1946), p.26.

3. J.S. Purvis, Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York (Cambridge, 1948), pp.198-9.

A more detailed search of the unprinted cases has revealed a much larger number of cases, at least 111 between 1561 and 1637.¹ Of these, 72 were for 'white' witchcraft, 34 for the ambiguous 'witchcraft and sorcery' and only five for definitely maleficent witchcraft. The largest number of cases occurred in 1590 and 1598 (seventeen in each year).

An impression based on the printed extracts from Essex ecclesiastical records would not suggest anything exceptional about this county. Archdeacon Hale, using the Act Books of the Archdeaconry of Essex, printed seven cases for the years 1564-1632.² Andrew Clark noted another nine cases from the same source:³ but a total of sixteen is completely misleading. A more thorough search of the documents used by Hale and Clark has revealed over 126 cases: more references to witchcraft in one archdeaconry than could be gleaned from the printed ecclesiastical sources for the rest of England. This warns us not to trust printed extracts. It also suggests that, even compared to what we know of Yorkshire, Essex was exceptional. In one county there are a good many more cases than those

1. Dr. Philip Tyler of Magdalen College, Oxford kindly lent the writer his abstracts of witchcraft cases: Mr K.V. Thomas has found some further cases in the York Diocesan Archives.

2. William Hale, Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes, 1475-1640 (1847), pp. 147, 148, 157, 163, 185-6, 219, 254.

3. Lincoln Diocese Documents, 1450-1544, ed. Andrew Clark (Early Eng. Text Soc., 1914), pp. 108-110.

surviving for the whole of the Diocese of York.

The general impression is that Essex was exceptional in the number of prosecutions occurring in all its courts. The known cases from that county almost equal in number all cases so far discovered for the whole of England. This can partly be explained by the excellence of the Essex records, partly by the fact that original documents have been searched. Printed extracts give a very meagre and distorted impression. But these factors cannot completely account for the density of Essex prosecutions. How far Essex was also exceptional in the temporal distribution of its cases it is difficult to say. The early date of the Essex pamphlets as well as the fact that the majority of prosecutions had taken place before 1600 in Essex, whereas the bulk seem to have occurred after that date in other counties, does suggest that Essex was earlier. But speculation is hardly justified until a detailed study has been made of early unprinted records in other counties. Again, it seems as if prosecutions ended earlier in Essex than in other parts of England. For instance, Essex cases became a trickle after 1660, while this was just the time when witchcraft was most fiercely prosecuted in Wiltshire and Somerset.¹

1. For the transition from the south and east to the north and west as centres of prosecution after 1660 see Notestein, Witchcraft, pp. 254-255 and ch. xi passim.

No attempt has been made to compare Essex and the rest of the country qualitatively, that is, to see whether witches in other parts of England were believed to act on the same motives, use the same methods, perpetrate similar acts, be countered by the same tactics. An analysis along the lines of this study of those involved in prosecutions in other counties, their age, sex, relationships, and distribution, must be made before it can be seen whether conclusions about the nature of witchcraft in Essex are applicable elsewhere. An impression derived from reading witchcraft cases from different parts of the country is that, while details varied considerably, for instance methods of finding and curing witchcraft, or the curses witches were supposed to utter, the basic structure of witchcraft beliefs largely conformed to Essex: that witches were usually middle-aged or old women, often of a disagreeable temperament, who were turned away from the door and retaliated by cursing, or by sending their familiar to injure their neighbour; that there were a host of magical counter-actions against witches, including resort to a cunning man.¹

Just as Essex has been treated in isolation from

1. The works of Motestein and Ewen, covering the whole of England, do not give the impression that witchcraft was basically different in different regions.

Bibliography, p. 27.

2. Sifford, *Witchcraft*, p. 117.

the rest of England, so no attempt has been made to compare prosecutions in England with those on the continent or in Scotland. The major figures in continental witchcraft, for instance, the authors of the Malleus Maleficarum, Weyer, Bodin, Cornelius Loos, Del Rio, Boguet, and Balthasar Bekker, as well as the general outlines of the prosecution of witches have received considerable attention elsewhere.¹ The methods of detecting and trying witches differed from country to country and, partly as a result of this, the type of person believed to be a witch, the numbers accused, the punishments inflicted, and the myths which surrounded their activities, differed. Thus Essex witches were not believed to fly, did not meet for 'Sabbats' or orgies, dance and feast, indulge in sexual perversions. Gifford was forced to cite examples of such activities as turning into animals, and raising storms, from Germany.² There were, in Essex, no possessed convents, no financial profits to be made from witch-hunting, no professional inquisitors or celibate clergy. The slight exception occurred, we have seen, when Matthew Hopkins was active in 1645. During this one year only Essex prosecutions seem to have borne some resemblance to continental trials.

1. For general accounts of witchcraft in Europe see the bibliography, p. 394.

2. Gifford, Dialogue, sigs. K2^v-K3^v.

Just as the ideas varied from country to country, as they do from tribe to tribe in contemporary Africa, so it seems likely that the sociology of those involved varied. Thus in some countries the accused may have been from the higher classes, been young, far from ugly, and often men. Similar questions to those asked for Essex may be suggested, but the answers will, in all likelihood, be different.

Witchcraft prosecutions, it has been argued, were intimately linked to every other feature of society. A sociological analysis has been made of some of these links in order to demonstrate that it is more fruitful to investigate how such an apparently strange set of beliefs fitted into the society, rather than to isolate it and thereby make it even more extraordinary. Attempts directly to correlate prosecutions either in time, area, or personnel, with economic, religious, medical, or social factors have only been partially successful. Such an approach, as was argued in the introduction, does not answer, directly at least, the question of why witchcraft prosecutions arose and why they declined. But the attempt has suggested, it is hoped, many new fields of enquiry, and shown that

the society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is as susceptible to sociological analysis as any modern housing estate or Pacific island. Certainly it has born out Hutchinson's warning that -

'As the very Nature of the Subject carries both Horror and Difficulty, polite Men, and great Lovers of Ease, will turn away their Thoughts from it with Disdain.' 1

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1. Francis Hutchinson, Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft (1718). p.vii.

APPENDIX ONE.

APPENDIX OF ESSEX WITCHCRAFT PROSECUTIONS, 1560-1680.

ASSIZE PROSECUTIONS.

Abstracts from Assize indictments have already been printed in Ewen 1. To include full abstracts in this appendix would add over 20,000 words to its length. This appendix, therefore, merely summarizes the cases printed by Ewen by giving the date, name, and place in the accusation. Ewen's numbering is followed and, since he included cases from four other counties, this will explain the gaps in the numbers. Any additional material, as well as slight corrections to Ewen's transcripts (which are underlined) are given in the right-hand column. The corrections are not extensive and only ten new suspected witches were added. Such added cases are given sub-numbers.

The indictments come from the records of the Clerks of Assize for the South-Eastern circuit which are deposited at the Public Record Office (Assizes 35). In order to economize on space, references have only been given by date. Thus, for example, a new indictment, number 403b, is merely given the reference of the date 1595T. It indicates Trinity Assize, the Hilary or Lent sessions. To order this document, therefore, the files for the 37th year of Elizabeth (i.e. 1595) would have to be ordered at the Public Record Office. The boxes are numbered by regnal years, so this would be box 37. Within the box would be the file for the Essex Trinity Assizes. Thus the full location would be Assizes 35, box 37, file 2.

References to imprisoned witches in the gaol calendars or gaol delivery rolls (abbreviated as E.C. or G.d.r.) have been given in the right-hand column only when they add something new and previously unknown. Deaths by 'divine visitation', termed 'plague' in the appendix, as recorded in the coroner's inquests, are included with their full P.R.O. reference. Also, a petition for the pardon of nine of those found guilty at the Assizes in 1645, made to the House of Lords in March 1646 (House of Lords Main Papers, March 10, 1645/6, fol. 136) is noted in the appendix as 'Lords pardon, March 1646'.

Names of the accused have been left in the original spelling, with Christian names modernized or abbreviated; for example Jn. is employed for John and Eliz. for Elizabeth. The names of villages have been modernized. 'Samon/Smythe' or 'Salmon also Smythe' denotes a pseudonym.

For the overlapping of cases between different courts, and between different years at the same court, see Map 1. In that map all prosecutions, from whatever source, are grouped under villages. Prosecutions against a single individual are linked. Thus, if one wished to discover whether any further accusations had been made against a person listed in this appendix, it would be best to look under the village name in Map 1. This would give all other cases concerning that individual. In the few cases where the village of the accused is unknown this is denoted by a - sign. If the indictment does not state the village, but it can be added from other sources, this is shown by bracketing the name of the village.

CASES.

	Date	Name of accused	Village	Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.
1.	1560T	Jn.Samond/Smythe	Danbury	
2.	1560T	Joan Haddon	Witham	
2b.	1561H	Jn.Samon/Smythe	Danbury	cf.Ewen II,p.46 also a writ
3.	1564T	Eliz.Lowys	Great Waltham	John Wodley,aged three months
4.	1564T	Eliz.Lowys	Great " "	
5.	"	"	"	for yeoman read labourer
6.	1564T	Wm. Rande	Great Totham	cow languished until 17 Jan. died of plague,30 Oct 1564;K.B.9 610 m.244
8.	1565H	Anne Vale	White Roding	Jn.Berde,husbandman; pigs died 28 Oct
16.	1566T	Lora Wynchester	Hatfield Peverel	
17.	1566T	Eliz.Fraunces	Hatfield Peverel	
18.	"	Agnes Waterhowse	"	
19.	"	Joan Waterhouse	"	
20.	1567H	Alice Prestmarie	Great Dunmow	died of plague,7 May 1567; K.B.9 619 m.102
21.	"	Joan Cocke	Kelvedon	
22.	"	Joan Osborne	Hatfield Peverel	
23.	1567T	Alice Atrum	Great Coggeshall	
29.	1570H	Alice Swallow	Little Baddow	
30.	"	"	"	Ewen 1,29-33, wrongly dated
31.	"	"	"	
32.	"	"	"	

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

Date	Name of accused	Village	
33.	1570H Alice Bambricke	Little Baddow	
42.	1571H Eliz. Egles	Fifield	
45.	1572H Wm. Skelton	Little Wakering	
46.	" Margery Skelton	"	
47.	" Wm. and Margery Skelton	"	
48.	" "	"	
49.	" Katherine Pullen	Tollesbury	
50.	" Eliz. Francis	Hatfield Peverel	remanded in g.c., H and T 1573
55.	1572T Jn. Smythe/Salmon	Danbury	'guilty' added above 'not guilty'
56.	" " and Joan	"	
57.	" Joan Smyth	"	
58.	" Agnes Francys	Hatfield Peverel	remanded in g.c., 1573H and T died of plague, 10 Dec. 1573; K.B.9 636m.239
59.	" "	"	
60.	" "	"	
61.	" "	"	
62.	" Agnes Steadman	Halstead	remanded in g.c., H and T 1573
63.	" "	"	
64.	" "	"	
64b	1573T Robt. Wallys a tailor	Chishall	on 20 June, at Rochford and elsewhere, falsely pretended that he could obtain treasure by invocation of evil spirits not guilty, but guilty of vagabondage
67.	1574H Alice Chaundeler	Maldon	
68.	" "	"	
69.	" "	"	
70.	" Joan Stubbinge	Ridgewell	
71.	" "	"	
75.	1574T Cecilia Glasenbery Barking (also Arnold/Whitcote)		
76.	" "	"	
77.	" "	"	
78.	" "	"	
79.	" "	"	
80.	" Eliz. Taylor	Thaxted	
81.	" "	"	

Date	Name of accused	Village	Additions/corrections to Ewen l.
82.	1574T Alice Hynckson	Thaxted	remanded in g.c., 1575H
83.	1574T Agnes Dix	Belchamp Walter	died of plague, 4 May 1575; K.B.9 640 m.305
84.	" "	"	
95.	1576H Margery Pavett	High Roothing	
96.	" "	"	
97.	" Agnes Bromley	Hatfield Peverel	remanded in g.c., 1576T
98.	" "	"	
99.	" "	"	
100.	" Margt. Saunder	Rainham	
101.	1576T Margery Spencer	Halstead	
102.	" "	"	
103.	" Joan Baker/Johnson	Brentwood	
104.	" " and Eliz. Aylett	"	
105.	" "	"	
106.	" Agnes Berden	Elsenham	
107.	1577H Robert Chambers	West Ham	Robert Chambers, yeoman
108.	" Agnes Sawen	Stock	
108b.	" "	"	
108c.	1578H Cecily Turner (spinster)	Roydon	Inquisition, same as indictment, 25 jurors On 1 July at Roydon bewitched Robt. Hill, whereby he languished until 4 Feb. 1578 when he died. true bill. not guilty.
108d.	" Thos. Barker	Hockley	On 1 July, 1577 invoked an evil spirit at Hockley with the intention of gaining large sums of money, and Jn. Foxe of the same was present. true bill. not guilty. labourers memorandum: that Thos. Barker of Gesting- thorpe, surgeon, should appear at next court; meanwhile to conjure no spirits
108e.	" "	"	
108f.	" Margt. Ganzey or Harvey	(Borley)	recognizance that Thos. Shave, husbandman, Jn. Taps, wheelright, and Joan his wife, and John Semer, labourer, all of Elsenham, give evidence against aforesaid Margt. a witch
114.	1578T Joan Prestmary	Great Dunmow	

Date	Name of accused	Village	Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.
115.	1578T Jane Buxstone	Stratford	Langthorne
115b.	"	"	recognizance printed in E 1, p. 56-7
115c.	" Joan Norfolk	Borley	Recognizance that Jn. Brage, Wm. Fyrmyn, Wm. Blackwell, Nicholas Norfocke of Borley husbandmen, and Alice Fyrmyn and Alice Byrde of same, widows, give evidence re. witchcraft of said Joan
115d.	" Joan Prestmary	Great Dunmow	recognizance that Nicholas Whale, husbandman, and Wm. Long, yeoman, of Great Dunmow, see to appearance of said Joan, imprisoned in Colchester Gaol for suspicion of witchcraft
118.	1579H Margt. Rogers	Stratford	Langthorne
119.	" Ellen Smythe	Maldon	
120.	1579H Alice Nokes	Lamborne	
121.	" Margt. Ganne/Welles and Joan Norfolk	Borley	
122.	" Margery Stanton	Wimbish	
123.	" Eliz. Fraunces	Hatfield	Peverel
125.	1579T Richard and Joan Prestmary	Great Dunmow	
126.	" Eliz. Hardinge	Barking	
127.	"	"	on 1 Nov., 20 Eliz.
128.	"	"	
129.	" Joan Norfolk	Borley	
130.	"	"	
131.	" Margt. Welles/Gan	"	
133.	1580H Jn. Symonde	Shenfield	
134.	"	"	
135.	"	"	
136.	" Agnes Mylles	Dedham	for Perpyne read Perpoynt
137.	1580H Eliz. Hardyng	Barking	still in prison
141.	1580T Rose Pye	Canewdon	Richard Snow, <u>tailor</u>
142.	" Joan Dowtie	Brightlingsea	
143.	1581H Joan Turner	Stisted	
144.	"	"	
145.	"	"	

Additions/corrections to Ewen L.

Date	Name of accused	Village	
146.	1581T Alice Mylles	Brightlingsea (cf. Dedham)	on 8 March 23 Eliz.
147.	"	"	
148.	"	"	
149.	Margt. Rogers	Stratford Langthorne	
150.	Benneta Buxton	"	
155.	1582H Agnes Glascock	St. Osyth	
156.	"	"	
157.	"	"	
158.	Margt. Grevell	Thorpe-le-Soken	remanded in g.c., 1582T
159.	Cecilia Celles	Little Clacton	Alice Newman remanded in gaol; 1582T, 1584T, 1585T, 1586H, 1586T, 1587H, 1587T, 1588H.
160.	Ursula Kemp/Grey and Alice Newman	St. Osyth	
161.	"	"	
162.	"	"	
163.	Alice Hunt	"	in g.c., 1582T
164.	"	"	
165.	Eliz. Bennett	"	wife of John, <u>husbandman</u>
166.	Cecilia Celles and Alice Manfield	Clacton	
167.	Agnes Heard	Thorpe-le-Soken	
168.	Eliz. Ewstace	Little Okely	
169.	Joan Pechye	-	in g.c., 1582T
171.	1582T Agnes Bryant	Great Burstead	
172.	1582T	"	
173.	"	"	
174.	Anne Swallowe or Eswell	St. Osyth	
189.	1583T Margt. Hogden	Stebbing	
190.	"	"	
191.	"	"	
192.	Anne Smythe	-	in g.c. 1584 H and T; pardoned in g.d. 1585H
193.	1584H Joan Thatcher/Dyxe Lawford	"	died of plague, 11 June 1584; K.B. 9 660 m. 267
194.	"	"	
195.	"	"	

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

Date	Name of accused	Village	Additional info
196.	Margery Barnes	St. Osyth	
197.	Agnes Byllynge	North Ockendon	
198.	"	"	
199.	"	"	
200.	Eliz. Brooke	Great Leighs	
201.	"	"	
202.	Joan Dale and Margery Barnes	St. Osyth	
203.	Agnes Duke	Hatfield Peverel	died of plague, 12 Jan. 1590; K.B. 9 676 m. 232; in g.c., 1590H. died on 23 Feb.
204.	Lucy Fysshier	Feering	
205.	"	"	
206.	"	"	
207.	"	"	
208.	Joan Cocke	Hatfield Peverel (cf. Kelvedon)	
209.	"	"	
210.	Thos. Kyng	South Hanningfield	
211.	"	"	
212.	Joan Colson	East Mersea	on 12 Jan., 23 Eliz.; remanded in g.c., 1585T
213.	"	"	
214.	Joan Thorock	Burnham	
215-219.	"	"	
220.	Margt. Lyttelberie	Bradwell-on-sea	remanded in g.c., 1585 H and T
221.	"	"	languished until 7 June
222.	Eliz. Morrisbee or Morsby	Great Chesterford	
223.	"	"	
224.	Edmund Mansell	Fingeringhoe and Feering	
225.	"	"	
226.	Alice Bolton and Eliz. Lumney	St. Osyth	remanded in g.c., 1585H, delivered 1585T Lumney not guilty.
227.	"	"	

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>	
228.	1585H Lettice Tybbold	Maplestead	
229.	1585H "	"	
230.	"	"	
231.	" Alice Drage	Finchingfield	
232.	" Agnes Thurrock	Burnham	
233.	"	"	
233b.	1585T Anne Bonner	-	g.d., 1585T: guilty of witchcraft and judged according to form of Statute. died of plague, 27 Aug. 1585; K.B. 9 665 m. 223
237.	1586H Anne Joyce	Stanford Rivers	discharged in g.c., 1586T
238.	"	"	
239.	"	"	
239b.	" Elizabeth Barwick	-	cf. case 815: remanded in g.c., 1583T to 1587M when she is noted as dead. died of plague, 12 Jan. 1587; K.B. 9 668 m. 272
241.	1587H Jn. Smythe/Salmon	Danbury	
242.	" Joan & Frances Preston/Little Sampford	remanded in g.c., 1587T (Frances)	
243.	1587H Joan Preston	"	remanded in g.c., 1587T
244.	"	"	
245.	1587H Rose Clarens	Great Sampford	remanded in g.c., 1587T
246.	"	"	
247.	" Jn. Smythe/Salmon	Danbury	8 cows worth £21, 6 calves worth 40s, 3 pigs worth 30s, 7 ewes worth 40s.
250.	1587T Jn. Smythe/Salmon	"	
251.	" Joan Gibson	Messing	
252.	" Alice Bust	Alphamstone	
253.	1587T Jn. Smythe	Danbury	
253b.	"	"	Inquisition, for same offence as 253.
261.	1588H Eliz. Harris	Witham	
262.	"	"	
263.	" Margt. Harrison	Hawkwell	
264-6.	"	"	

Date	Name of accused	Village	Additions/corrections to Ewen I.
267.	1588H Wm. Bennet and Edward Mason	Finchingfield Bardfield	both Bennet and Mason were acquitted in g.c., 1588T
268.	"	Finchingfield	
269.	1588T Joan Pakeman	Great Oakley	
270.	"	Sible Hedingham	
271.	"	"	
272.	1589H John Heare/Jenny and Agnes Duke	Hatfield Peverel	
279.	1589T Joan Prentice	Sible Hedingham	
280.	"	Waltham Holy Cross	
281.	"	"	bewitched Henry Ladd
282.	"	"	
283.	"	Great Waltham	Margery Baulderson; remanded in g.c., from 1590H to 1591H.
284.	"	"	
285.	"	Stisted	lost the sight in <u>one</u> eye; remanded in g.c., 1590T
286.	"	"	Avice remanded in g.c., 1590T and 1590H
287.	"	"	
288.	"	"	
289-291.	"	"	
292.	"	Theydon Garnon	
293-294.	"	"	
295.	"	Great Bentley	
296.	"	Dagenham	
297.	"	"	
299.	1590H Anne Crabbe	Colne Engaine	remanded in g.c., 1590T, 1591H and 1594H
300.	"	Joan and Agnes Mose Loughton	Agnes died of plague; 19 Feb. 1590; K.B.9 676 m. 229
301.	"	Braintree	remanded in g.c., 1590T and 1591H
302-5.	"	"	

Date	Name of accused	Village	Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.
306.	1590H Agnes Whitland	Dagenham	remanded in g.c., 1592T
307.	" Alice Adcock	"	remanded in g.c., 1590T
308.	1590T Margt. Snell	Thaxted	
320.	1591T Ellen Graye	Dagenham	
321-324.	" "	"	
325.	" Margt. Rooman	Bocking	rerieved in g.c., 1592H. Thos. Olmesteede
326.	" Alice Crake	Finchingfield	
327.	" Agnes Whitland	Dagenham	
328-9.	" "	"	
330.	" Juliana Cocke	Ashdon	in g.c., 1592T: died of plague, 13 April 1592; K.B. 9 683 m. 154
335.	1592H Agnes Hales	Stebbing	in g.c., 1592T: died of plague, 19 June 1592; K.B. 9 683 m. 153
336.	" "	"	
337.	" Margery Dickes	Bradfield	
338-9.	" also Thatcher	"	
340.	" Margt. Hogden	Witham	
341.	" Elizabeth Boxer	Aveley	
342-3.	" "	"	
344.	1592T Anne Scott	Great Dunmow	
345.	" Audrea Mathewe	"	remanded in g.c., 1593T
346.	" Agnes Draper	"	remanded in g.c., 1593T: Alice Handley, who lost the use of the upper part of her body
347.	" Jane Wallys	Stebbing	
348.	" "	"	
353.	1593H Alice Alberte	Felsted	remanded in g.c., 1593T and 1594H (dead)
354.	" Eliz. Esterford	Sible Hedingham	remanded in g.c., 1593T and 1594H
357.	1593T Agnes Haven	Boreham	
358.	" "	"	on 1 Dec., 30 Eliz.
359.	" Eliz. Easterford	Sible Hedingham	
360-361.	" "	"	
362.	" Margt. Saunder	"	
363.	" Margt. Mynnet	Woodham Ferrers	
364-6.	" "	"	
367.	" Eliz. Packman	Great Clacton	

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

Village
Saffron Walden
"
Gosfield
"
Abberton
"
"
Boreham
Thorpe-le-soken
"
Great Dunmow
"
Thorpe-le-soken
"
Manningtree
"
Great Horkesley
"
"
Stebbing
Brentwood

Name of accused
Agnes Bett
"
Eliz. and Joan
Garrett
Stephen Hugrave
" and Alice
"
"
Mary Belsted or
Mulleton
Anne Harrison
"
Audrea Mathewe
"
Bridget Hayle
" and Eliz.
Anne Hervey
"
Jn. and Grace Trower
Rose More
wife of James
Margt. Childe
"
"
Agnes Smithe
Alice Warren

Date
1594H
"
1594H
"
"
"
"
"
"
1594T
"
"
"
"
"
1595H
1595T
"
"
"
1596T
1597H

Joan remanded in g.c., 1595H

On 1 Apr. 1593 at Abberton bewitched four hogs worth 26s. 8d. and eight pigs worth 20s., belonging to Thos. Clarke senior, so that they died. true bill. not guilty.
remanded in g.c., 1595H

remanded in g.c., 1595H (dead)

remanded in g.c., 1595H

On 30 Nov. 1594, at Coggeshall, bewitched Jeremy W(arner) aged 3 months who languished until 3 March following when he died. true bill. not guilty

(badly torn) a witch oxen worth 30s.
true bill. guilty. judged
(badly torn) June, Eliz.
true bill. guilty. judged

died of plague, 7 Aug. 1598; K.B. 9 696 m. 7

Date	Name of accused	Village	Additions/corrections to Ewen I.
416b. 1597H	Joan Fysher spinster, wife of Christopher Fysher, labourer.	Halstead	On 23 Sept. 1595 bewitched Joan Lewes who languished until 14 Oct. following when she died. true bill. guilty. to be hanged
417. 1598H	Robt. Browning	Aldham	died of plague, 20 Feb. 1599; K.B. 9 698 m. 335
421. 1600H	Isabella Whyte	Purleigh	
422. "	"	"	
424. 1600T	Rose Chapman	Belchamp	Walter in g.c., 1602H
424b. "	"	"	recognizance of Wm. Payne of Belchamp, labourer, to give evidence against Chapman.
424c. "	"	"	recognizance of Edward Coe, of Belchamp, gent. to give evidence against Chapman, charged by Ellen, wife of Peter Cranfield of the same, with having caused the death of John Payne.
424d. "	"	"	recognizance of same Edward Coe against the same Chapman, charged by Maryan, wife of the same Edward, with causing death of Payne.
429. 1601T	Ursula Harvy	Ramsey	
430. "	"	"	
431. "	Anne Harris	Feeringe	
432. "	"	"	
433. "	"	"	
434. "	Helen Alyer/Ayleard	Black Notley	
435. "	"	"	
436. "	Clemence Vale/Fall	Feering	
437. "	Lucy Eltheridge	Thorpe-le-soken	
438-9. "	"	"	
440. "	Magdalen Purcas	Panfield	
445. 1602H	Anne Hyble	Shalford	
446. "	Anne Wytght	Hatfield Broad Oak	
447. 1602T	Eliz. Pegge	Braintree	died of plague, 12 Aug. 1603; K.B. 9 712 m. 178
448-9. "	"	"	

until 10 July

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>
450.	Audrey Pond	Old Saling
451.	"	"
456.	Margery Wilson	Black Notley
457-8.	"	"
459.	Jn. Banckes	Newport (Pond) until 17 Feb.
460.	Joan Roath/Worth	Great Bentley
461.	"	"
462.	Anne Horne	Halstead
481.	Blanche Worman	Moulsham
482-6.	"	"
487.	Anne Harvye	Coggeshall
488.	Edwin Haddesley	Willingale Doe
489.	"	"
492.	Anne Feilde	-
493.	Mary Wade	Pattiswick
494.	"	"
495-6.	"	"
497.	Alice Buske/Bust	Alphamstone
498.	Anne Prentice	Bocking
499.	Katherine Lawrett	Wakes Colne
500.	"	"
501,2.	Anne Pennyfather	Little Totham
503.	Lucy Buttler	Halstead
504.	"	"
505.	Winifred Stowers	Halstead
507.	Alice Pitches	Stisted
510.	Richard and Ann	North Ockendon
511.	John	"
514.	Alice Batty	Toppesfield
515-6.	"	"
518.	Robt. Parker	"
519.	" and	"
	Jn. Cornell	Borley
520.	" " (both)	"

remanded in g.c., 1600H

wife of Thos. Buttler

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>
525.	Grace Tabour	Stow Maries
528.	Blanche Prisle	Navestock
529.	Anne	"
530.	Katherine	"
532.	Jn. Godfrie	Lambourne
533.	Sarah Godfrie	"
534-6.	"	"
537.	Margt. Lambe	South Ockendon
538.	Susan Barker	Upminster
539-41.	"	"
545.	Mary Holt	Little Leighs
546.	"	"
552.	Anne Byford	-
553.	Margt. Greene	Foulness
553b.	Gilbert Wakering surgeon	Halstead
554.	Eliz. Parnsbye	Rickling
555.	Anne Hewghes	Great Leighs
556.	"	"
557-8.	"	"
559.	Helen Pedder	South Halstead
560-1.	"	"
561b.	Anne Wilson	-

On 3 Feb. and other days persuaded people that he could tell them who had stolen goods from them. On 3 Feb. he took 5s. from Richard Billingham of Bocking, fuller, to tell him the name of the person who had stolen 20 yards of bays, worth 40s., from him, but Gilbert never told him the name. Witnesses. Richard Billingham, Francis Cornishe, Wm. Dodd. true bill. acquitted.

in g.c., committed by Richard Franck for witchcraft; prisoner dies in gaol

Additions/corrections to Ewen I.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>until 10 May following</u>
563.	Dannis Nash	Springfield	
564.	Joan Freeman	Harlow	
565.	Dorothy Hills	Wethersfield	
566.	"	"	
567.	Katherine Kinge and Anne West	Shalford	2 Charles I
568.	"	"	
569.	Barbara Augur or Bright	Upminster	
570-1.	"	"	
572.	Anne Freeman	-	
573.	Dionisia Josselyn	Great Canfield	
576.	"	"	
576b.	Parnell Smyth	-	in g.c., committed by Tho. Barrington for suspicion of witchcraft.
580.	Jane Prentice or Hanby	Harwich	
580b.	Anne Poulter	"	sent from Harwich by a writ directed to the High Sheriff upon suspicion of witchcraft
580c.	"	"	"
580d.	Jane Wiggins Jane Seabrooke	-	in g.c. and g.d.r.; committed by John Wakering for witchcraft, delivered by proclamation.
585.	Parnella Boutwood	Braintree	on 11 Jan., 11 Charles I
586.	Susan Prentice	Harwich	
587.	Elinor Witherill	-	
588.	Jane Prentice	Harwich	
589.	"	"	
590.	Anne Cade	Great Holland	
593.	Anne Lamperill	-	
594.	Robt. Garnett	-	
595.	Anne West	Lawford	in g.c., 1642T, delivered by proclamation.
597.	Anne Wace	-	
598.	Mary Webb	Hatfield Broad Oak	
598b.	Dorothy Ilford	-	printed in Ewen II, p. 430; committed to Colchester Gaol suspected of witchcraft

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.</u>
599.	Helen Bretton	Kirby-le-Soken	
600.	Margery Grew	Walton-le-Soken	John Munt, <u>husbandman</u>
601.	"	"	
602.	Anne Leach	Mistley	
603.	Eliz. Clarke	Manningtree	
604.	"	"	
605.	Rebecca Jonas	St. Osyth	
606.	"	"	
607.	Rebecca West	Lawford	
608.	Anne West	"	
609.	"	"	
610.	Margt. Moone	Thorpe-le-Soken	
611-2.	"	"	
613.	Mary Sterling	Langham	Lords pardon, March 1646; in g.c., 1647 and 1648H - to remain in gaol.
614.	"	"	Robert Potter, yeoman, <u>junior</u>
615.	Anne Cate/Cade	Great Holland	
616.	or Maidenhead	"	
617.	Alice Dixon	Wivenhoe	
618.	Mary Johnson	"	Lords pardon, March 1646; in g.c., 1647 and 1648H - to remain in gaol.
619.	"	"	
620.	"	"	Daniel Occlam, <u>seaman</u>
621.	Joan Rowle	Leigh	
622-3.	"	"	
624.	Mary Coppin	Kirby-le-Soken	Lords pardon, March 1646; in g.c., 1647 and 1648H - to remain in gaol.
625.	Ellen Clarke	Manningtree	
626.	Sarah Bright	"	
627.	Eliz. Goodwyn	"	
628.	"	"	
629.	Dorothy Waters	Great Clacton	Lords pardon, March 1646; died of plague (aged 40), 24 Feb. 1646; K.B. 9 838 m. 380
630.	Eliz. Heare	"	

Additions/corrections to Ewen I.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>	
631.	Mary Wiles	Great Clacton	
632-3.	"	"	
634.	Anne Cooper	"	
635-6.	"	"	
637.	Anne Therston	Great Holland	Lords pardon, March 1646; in g.c., 1647T and 1648H - to remain in gaol.
638.	"	"	
639.	Susan Cocke	St. Osyth	Lords pardon, March 1646; died of plague (aged about 50), 18 Oct. 1646; K.B.9 838 m.376
640.	Joyce Boones	"	
641.	Margt. Landish	St. Osyth	
642.	Sarah Hatyn/Hating	Ramsey	
643-4.	"	"	
645.	Eliz. Harvy	"	Lords pardon, March 1646; died of plague (aged 70), 30 Aug. 1645; K.B.9 838 m.382
646.	Mary Hockett	"	
647.	Bridget Mayers	Great Holland	Lords pardon, March 1646; in g.c., 1647T and 1648H - to remain in gaol.
648.	Susanna Went	Langham	Lords pardon, March 1646; died of plague (aged 70), 4 Apr. 1646; K.B.9 838 m.381
648b.	Mary Greycliffe	(Alresford)	Ewen I, p.222 & Appdx 1; died of plague (widow - aged about 84), 15 Aug. 1645; K.B.9 838 m.377
648c.	Rose Hallybread	St. Osyth	Ewen I, p.222.
648d.	Eliz. Gibson	Thorpe-le-Soken	Ewen I, p.222.
648e.	Joan Cooper	Great Clacton	Ewen I, pp.222-3.
648f.	Mary Cooke	Langham	Ewen I, pp.222-3.
648g.	Dorothy Brooke	-	Ewen I, p.222 & Appdx I; in g.c., 1647T and 1648H - to remain in gaol.
649.	Nicholas Leech	Manningtree	
650.	Helen Disse	Ridgewell	
657.	Jane Lavender	Navestock	
658.	"	"	

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of accused</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.</u>
659.	Francis Lavender	Navestock	
660-1.	"	"	
661b.	Anne Clarke wife of Stephen, labourer	Waltham Cross	On 1 March 1647 there bewitched Philip Blott, whereby he was wasted and consumed. Witnesses: Thos. Foreman, Henry Blott, Francis Burges, Edith Legge, Susan Killhogge, Anne Sherborne. true bill. not guilty.
			g.d.r., 1647T -- to be delivered on payment of her fees.
667.	Ruth Stephens	-	
674.	Eliz. Balden	Knebsworth	
675.	Mary Welby	Newport (Pond)	
676.	Eliz. Whitelocke	Great Chesterford	
677.	Deborah Naylor	Elsenham	
679.	Joan Wayte	Barnston	
680.	"	"	
683.	Eliz. Hynes	Thorpe-le-Soken	
702.	Susan Haveringe	West Tilbury	
703.	"	"	
704.	Eliz. Wyndell	"	
711.	Benjamyn Brand	(Stebbing)	
712.	Mary Hurst	Nevendon	
712b.	Mary Aylett wife of Richard, labourer.	Bocking	On 10 Feb. 1653 bewitched Rich. Balls so that his body wasted away. Witnesses: Richard and Eliz. Balls. no true bill.
713.	Anne Clark	Waltham Holy Cross	
714.	"	"	
721.	"	"	
722.	"	"	
726.	Mary Symons	Great Totham	
736.	Wm. Bones and Abraham Bones and Mary Warner	Finchingfield	

Additions/corrections to Ewen 1.

Village

Name of accused

Date

737.

Alice Warner

1659T

-

Chelmsford

738.

Anne Woolward

"

-

Chelmsford

742.

Eliz. Huntsman

1660T

-

Harwich

743.

Bridget Weaver

"

-

Harwich

745.

Anne Silvester

1662H

"

Orsett

746.

"

"

"

747.

.....lley

1663H

-

-

748.

Sarah Houghton

1663H

-

-

748b.

spinster

1663H

-

Stamborne

On 19th Dec. (torn) and 14th. at Ridgewell bewitched.... 30th year and by these 'consumed and made infirme' John Smyth who pined from 29th Dec. 1662. true bill. (in another hand, 'jury': Robt. Smyth, Mathew Butcher, Jn. Levett, Daniel Foulter, (blank) Nelson. guilty. to be hanged reprieved after judgement

753.

Robt. Copping

1664T

Woodham Ferrers

754.

Martha Driver/Chalk Barking

1666H

Stapleford Tawney

754b.

Anne Betts spinster

1666H

Stapleford Tawney

Being a person of ill-fame, on 25 Jan. 1666, on pretence of telling the fortune of Mary Prescott, fraudulently obtained from her two silk scarves worth 20s. and 8s. in money. Witness: Mary Prescott. In Colchester gaol.

759.

Margt Leech

1670T

Bradfield

760.

Sarah Ladbroke

"

"

761.

" and

"

"

762.

John Wood

"

"

763.

Joan Crumpe

"

Weley

767.

Eliz. Gynn

1675H

Great Dunmow

QUARTER SESSIONS PROSECUTIONS.

The records of the Essex Quarter Sessions are deposited in the Essex Record Office; their nature is described in the bibliography. The abbreviations used in the following abstracts of ~~xxxxxx~~ cases are similar to those used and explained in the previous section. When the name of a village is not given in the records, yet we know the location of the case from other sources (as in the first case, number 791) brackets are employed. The date under 'Date/Source' is that of the meeting of the court, not that of the prosecution. Only three of the 74 cases have been discovered printed elsewhere. The Hist. MSS. Commission 10th Report, Appendix, part IV(1885), pp. 473, 476, 511, printed extracts from cases 795, 809, 845.

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>
791.	March 1565 Q/SR 13/15	Eliz. Lowes	(Great Waltham)	cf. case 3 tried and found not pregnant, indicted.
792.	March 1566 Q/SR 18/41	Agnes Duke Robt. Wallys	(Hatfield Peverel)	cf. case 203 guilty, no goods, pregnant. cf. case 799 guilty, no goods, claims benefit of clergy.
793.	July 1566 Q/SR 19/5	Eliz. Fraunces Joan and Agnes Waterhouse Emma Crosse	all taken at Hatfield Peverel taken at Manningtree	suspected of witchcraft " " "
794.	July 1566 Q/SR 19/36	-	Boreham	jury present that there was a witch in Boreham 'and upon her confessyon before Mr. Archdeacon Cole she fled and went her way'
795.	July 1567 Q/SR 21/19	Joan Cocke	Kelvedon	lamed Richard Sherman by touching his knee
796.	" "	wife of Noble	"	(daughter of Joan Cocke above), being refused butter she bewitched 3 cows, one of which died, the others gave 'milke of all colors'; they were property of 'Belfilde's wyfe of Infforde' (Inworth)

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u> wife of	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>
797. July 1567 Q/SR 21/19	Ram	Cressing	suspected by Jn. Wafforde to have bewitched his cattle
798. Jan. 1574 Q/SR 47/43	Joan Stubbyng	Ridgewell	a witch, to be apprehended by constables
799. Apr. 1574 Q/SR 48/61	Robt. Wallys	-	a wandering vagabond and 'sothsayer'
800. May 1576 Q/SR 57/27	wife of Nicholas Baker (a painter)	Brentwood	suspected witch
801. May 1576 Q/SR 57/36	Agnes Berden (widow)	Elsenham	to answer to suspicion of witchcraft
802. May 1576 Q/SR 57/40	"	"	presentment as in case 106; victim languished for 3 days, his body vexed and troubled with a strange disease
803. May 1576 Q/SR 57/81	"	"	Agnes handed in bail to Jn. Stock and Jn. Waylett
804. Oct. 1576 Q/SR 59/9	Agnes Sawen	Stock	for bewitching Christopher Veale 'so that his feet were and now remain curved...'
805. Jan. 1577 Q/SR 60/2, 48, 49, 62 " 62/9, 56	"	"	writes for appearance of Agnes Sawen and Jn. Woode of West Hanningfield bound over to keep the peace towards Agnes
806. July 1577 Q/SR 63/16	Agnes Sawen	"	prisoners in Colchester gaol, not guilty. Foster and Bale presented with the enchantress Sawen
807. Jan. 1578 Q/SR 65/2, 3	Thos. Barker (surgeon)	Gestingthorpe	handed in bail, not to conjure or invoke false spirits
808. Jan. 1578 Q/SR 65/6	"	"	for appearance of Barker
809. July 1578 Q/SR 67/2, 44-6	Miles Blomfield	Chelmsford	depositions of Sybell Browne, Thos. Lynforde, and George Freeman concerning the activities of the cunning man Miles Blomfield who discovered lost goods (cf. pp. 153-4 above for extracts and analysis)
810. Oct. 1578 Q/SR 68/35	Margery Stanton	Wimbish	inquisition as in case 122; jurors find her guilty
811. Oct. 1578 Q/SR 68/34	Margt. Ganne Joan Norfolk	Borley	for bewitching Jn. Furmyn to death as in case 121

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>
812.	Jan. 1579 Q/SR 69/47	Eliz. Fraunces	Hatfield Peverel	for bewitching woman to death, as in case 123
813.	Apr. 1583 Q/SR 84/19, 35	Margt. Hogdine (w/Thos)	Stebbing	for bewitching woman to death, as in case 191
814.	Apr. 1584 Q/SR 88/86	Note of prisoners (deleted) Guilty. Eliz. Morsbye... Chester... a witch, for murder; Margt. Littleberrye of Bradwell, a witch; Joan Thurrock, a witch, for three murders; Joan Colson, a witch, for murder; Edmond Mansell, clerk, a witch; Alice Bolton and Eliz. Lumney of St. Osyth, for witches, not guilty. (cf. cases 212-3, 214-9, 222-5, 227)		
815.	Apr. 1586 Q/SR 96a/8	List of felons (properly part of an Assize roll) properly part of an Assize roll: Eliz. Barwick, Alice Newman, and Anne Joyce for witchcraft. (cf. cases 160-2, 237-9)		
816.	March 1587 Q/SR 99/1	Gaol delivery roll (properly part of an Assize roll): Alice Newman - respited; Eliz. Barwick - dead; Jn. Smyth alias Salmon, a witch, not guilty; Rose Colyne; Rose Clarevence, guilty; Lettice Hayward. (cf. cases 160-2, 245-6, 250)		
817.	July 1587 Q/SR 101/50	John Smyth/Samond	Danbury	for bewitching cow, as in case 253
818.	Oct. 1589 Q/SR 110/70	Agnes Whitland	Dagenham	for bewitching child to death, as in case 306
819.	Oct. 1589 Q/SR 110/75-9	Alice Aylett	Braintree	for bewitching three people to death, as in cases 302, 304, 305
820.	Jan. 1589 Q/SR 143/171-2 (in fact part of roll 111)	Agnes Whitland	Dagenham	Richard Foster, Wm. Willis, Richard Burdhead, Henry Woodborne, all yeomen of Dagenham, to give evidence against the witch Agnes Whitland a witch
821.	Apr. 1590 Q/SR 112/42	"	"	
822.	July 1591 Q/SR 117/38	Mother Saunders	'Muche Bardwell'	being called a witch she fled
823.	Apr. 1592 Q/SR 120/27, 28	Jane Wallis	Stebbing	for bewitching a cow and a man to death, as in cases 347, 348
824.	July 1593 Q/SR 125/2, 43 (w/Ralph)	Eliz. Pakeman	Great Clacton	Elizabeth to appear at next sessions to answer Thos. Crosse and Wm. Tiall, labourers of Great Clacton concerning the breaking of the peace (cf. case 367)

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence
825. Jan. 1596 Q/SR 132/77	Faith Somer	Wigborough	Thos. Wiseman to keep the peace towards Faith, wife of Thos. Somer of the same, husbandman
826. Oct. 1596 Q/SR 135/72	Faith Somer	"	Thos. Wiseman and his servant Jn. Vickers to give evidence against Faith, committed for witchcraft
827. Jan. 1597 Q/SR 136/112	Joan Fisher (w/Christopher, labourer)	Halstead	for bewitching woman to death, as in case 416(b)
828. Jan. 1599 Q/SR 144/98, 106 (cf. Q/SR 145/2)	Christian Hunt (w/Jn.)	Tollesbury	Jn. Courttman and Jn. Marchant to ensure the appearance of Christian on a charge of witchcraft; Wm. Greene, yeoman, Richard Bampton and his wife, Henry Peroure and his wife, Wm. Wallis and Thos. Alleyn all of Tollesbury to witness against her.
829. Jan. 1600 Q/SR 148/37, 43	Isabel White	Purleigh	constables to ensure appearance of Jn. Hitch and his wife, Thos. Shettlewood, Jn. Purdye and their wives and Margery Savory; all to give evidence against Isabel for bewitching cattle of Thos. Warde bewitched animals as in cases 421, 422
830. Jan. 1600 Q/SR 148/141, 2	"	"	"
831. Jan. 1600 Q/SR 148/147	Alice Aylett (w/Thos)	Braintree	Mark Mootte of Braintree, yeoman, Wm. Skinner, clothier, Wm. Huckabye, butcher, Thos. Egles, clothier, all of Braintree to give evidence against Alice concerning her witchcraft; cf. cases 301-305
832. Jan. 1601 Q/SR 152/172	Margt. Ellis (spinster)	Sible Hedingham	for bewitching two cows worth £4, one gelding worth 40s. (deleted), and one colt worth 10s. belonging to Thos. Hibbs, at the same, so that they died. Not guilty. Witnesses: Thos. Hibbs and Anthony Ellis.
833. Jan. 1603 Q/SR 160/217	Joan Thorndon	-	Names of prisoners in Colchester gaol: J.T., by warrant of the Lord Suffragan of Colchester and William Ayloffe, esquire, for witchcraft; to the Assizes.
834. Oct. 1605 Q/SR 173/114	Nicholas Slater	Roydon	for calling a neighbour's wife 'pockye whoare and old witch'
835. Apr. 1609 Q/SR 187/54	Edmund Munt	Great Bentley	in anger called wife of Jn. Haris 'old whore and witch'

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence
836. May 1614 Q/SR 206/19 Q/SBa 1/16 Q/SPa 1/1	Alice Batty (widow)	Toppesfield	1613 bewitched Thos. Perrie, son of Jn. Perrie, aged 3 years, who died on 30 Oct.; witnesses--John Perrie, Olive Perrie, Jn. Drewrye. true bill. 'transmitted to the Assizes and there she was acquitted'
837. Apr. 1616 Q/SR 213/85	John Scates	Billericay	Rich. Tarling, husbandman, to give evidence against Scates, a weaver, for his 'conjuration and practising with the devill for money'
838. Oct. 1624 Q/SR 246/119	George Burte	Brentwood	to answer for suspicion of witchcraft
839. 1641 Q/SBa 2/44	Thos. Fuller	Layer Marney	examination of Thos. Fuller who went to 'a supposed cunning man' named Barnard at Danbury, while his master Henry Clitherowe went to a cunning man at Ipswich. They went about lost plate and other goods stolen while Fuller was coachman to Clitherowe.
840. 1645 Q/SR 324/118-9	various of Stisted		depositions of Martha Hurrell and Eliz. Gallant concerning magical rites, sexual promiscuity and feasting at various gentleman's houses, including John Alston of Stisted, in 1643. (for a further description see p. 375)
841. Apr. 1646 Q/SBa 2/60	Debora Nailer	Elsenham	Information of Tewe Wade of Henham, and Jn. Crabbo of Elsenham who stated that George and Jn. Pakeman were convinced in their illness that Deborah Naylor had bewitched them. Information of Debora Nailer, daughter of above Debora, that there was a quarrel and her mother entreated Mr. Willson, Minister of the parish, to help her. Examination of Debora Nailer.
842. Apr. 1646 Q/SR 328/94	" (senior, widow)	"	to give evidence concerning the death by witchcraft of Jn. and George Pakeman to Henry Robson
843. 1650 Q/SBa 2/74	"	"	information of 7 women appointed to search Naylor for suspicious witches' marks; also of Martha Cannon of Henham that she became sick after Debora prayed for her health.

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>
844. 1650 Q/SBa 2/74	Debora Naylor	Elsenham	Information of Jn. Crabbe of Elsenham that Jn. Pakeman quarrelled with Debora and then fell sick, proclaiming himself bewitched; examination of Tewar Wade of Henham against Debora, concerning Jn. and George Pakeman's illness.
845. July 1651 Q/SR 349/92, 125,128	William Hills	Berden	Wm. Hills, James Winstanley and his mother Eliz., Edward Stephen, all to give evidence in a case in which Hills was suspected of falsely pretending to help Eliz. to find some stolen goods.
846. July 1651 Q/SBa 2/76	"	" (Rickling also)	Long informations of Stephens, Hills, Eliz. and James Winstanley, and Thos. Law of how James Winstanley went to consult Hills a cunning man about some stolen property and also went to consult a 'Mr. Ladland att Puddledocke' in London who was also a reputed cunning man. Hills was a pupil of Lilly and gave detailed instructions on how to find the thief.
847. Epiphany 1653 Q/SR 355/104, 105	John Lock	(Great Bentley)	calendar of prisoners in Colchester gaol: committed for trying to find lost goods by magic; acquitted
848. Epiphany 1653 Q/SR 355/119	" (labourer)	"	indictment for trying 'by witchcrafts, enchantments charms and sorceries' to discover lost goods; witness: Edmund Drury gent. Ignoramus.
849. Apr. 1653 Q/SR 356/18, 50,89	Benjamin Brand and his wife Joan (Benjamin = a comber)	Stebbing	Indictment, and recognizances for appearance of witnesses against, of Brand and his wife who used sorcery to tell where lost goods and cattle were. Witnesses: Wm. Playle, Josias Stanes, Wm. Marriage. true bill. acknowledged and was committed to gaol for one year.
850. Michaelmas 1653 Q/SR 358/82,87, 88	Helen Dishe (w/Jn. labourer)	Takeley	Thos. Bowler, haberdasher, and Reuben his son, both of Wickanbrook, Suffolk, to indict Helen Dishe. Helen was committed for a strong suspicion of bewitching Reuben Bowler whom she had formerly threatened and who had since then suffered from 'strong and painful fits'; to be tried at Assizes.

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence
851. Michaelmas 1653 Q/SR 358/87-8	Thos. White	(Great Braxted)	calendar of prisoners: in gaol for using 'conjurations'.
852. Oct. 1653 Q/SR 358/106-8	Helen Dishe	Takeley	Inquisition, indictment and recognizance for appearance of: on 3 Sept. she bewitched Reuben Bowler so that he languished until this day (4th Oct.). Witness. Thos. Bowler. endorsed 'a true bill'.
853. Oct. 1653 Q/SBa 2/85	"	"	Information of Rewben Bowler, bewitched by Helen Dishe between Eisenham and Takeley: detailed.
854. Epiphany 1654 Q/SR 359/60	Thos. White	Great Braxted	Recognizance for appearance of Thos. White, gent., to answer an indictment for 'conjuratioun'.
855. 1664 Q/SR 402/128-9	John Webb	Woodham Mortimer	Examination of Webb, blacksmith, who tried to clear himself of suspicion of stealing a shirt by going to a cunning man, Mr Higgs. Information of Mary Tyler of the same concerning Webb.

ECCLESIASTICAL COURT PRESENTMENTS.

Cases 861 to 1138 are abstracted from the records of various ecclesiastical courts with jurisdiction in Essex. The majority of the cases come from the records of the Archdeacons of Essex and Colchester, but there are also a number of cases from the Bishop of London's Consistory and Commissary court archives. All these records are fully described in the bibliography. Only 17 of the 230 people accused in connection with witchcraft at these courts have already appeared in print. Cases 863, 873, 885, 893, 911, 957, 984 were printed in William Hale, Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes, 1475-1640 (1847), pp. 147, 148, 157, 163, 185-186, 219, 254. Cases 940-947, 953, appeared in Lincoln Diocese Documents, 1450-1544, ed. Andrew Clark (Early English Text Soc., 1914), pp. 108-110. Three of these cases (940, 944, 947) and case 1007, wrongly dated, were included in W. J. Pressey, 'Records of the Archdeacons of Essex and Colchester', Transactions of Essex Arch. Soc., n.s. xix (1927-30), pp. 18-20. Cases 1133 and 1135 were noted by F. W. X. Fincham, 'Notes from the Ecclesiastical Court Records at Somerset House', Transactions of Royal Historical Society, 4th Ser., iv (1921), p. 120.

The abstracts are only summaries of the accusations and procedure against suspects. For example 'a witch' in the abstract might be 'that she used witchcraft, charms and sorceries' in the original document. Under the heading 'Name' are the names of those accused at the courts for an offence related to witchcraft, though, as may be seen, they may not themselves be suspected witches. If the place of residence, or proceedings against the accused, are not given this is denoted by a - sign. The procedure at the ecclesiastical courts is outlined in chapter four above; the meaning of the terms 'contumacious', 'purgation', 'penance' and others are found there. When an accused person was married this is recorded as w/Jn. (wife of John). Seven of the cases, cases 863, 864, 867, 868, 869, 872, 877, were crossed out in the original. Since this seems merely to have denoted that the case was closed, they have been included in the abstracts.

Certain other abbreviations have been employed to prevent the abstracts from becoming intolerably long. They are:

- next court/to appear = to appear at the next court to undergo further process of law.
- to P/4, or P fails/succeeds = to purge herself with four people, or purgation fails/succeeds.
- ex., or stands ex. = excommunicated, or remains excommunicated.
- penance/ to confess = to undergo a public penance in the church, including confession and promise of amendment of life.

Archdeaconry of Essex.

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
861. June 1564 AEA/2 f.61 (w/Jn.)	Eliz. Lowys	Great Waltham	questioned 'who it is that can unwyche that w(hi)ch a nother wyche dothe bewyche a nother or who was she that Wodlands Karcher that dyed of wychecraft' Her replies and other examinations are written at the end of the Act Book, for these cf. p.376.	examined
862. July 1566 AEA/3 f.37	Widow Middleton	Boreham	a witch	denied dismissed
863. July 1566 AEA/3 f.37 ^v	Alice Gardiner	"	'she gave counsell to one Masons wief (sic) of boram who was a witche that she shulde confesse nothinge for yff thow dust thow wilt dyve for hit and thow wilt turne they neighbours to troble'	denied to P/4
864. July 1566 AEA/3 f.37 ^v	Widow Stokes	Danbury	a witch	appeared
865. July 1566 AEA/3 f.40 ^v	----- Lone	Creeksea (Rector of)	to witness concerning Mr. Hawes of did saie of him self that he was a forediviner or a southsaier'	next court
866. Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f.66	William Harris	"	he said 'that Mr. Hawes should be a divinar/ or elles he had a Famylar'; Richmond, another diviner, was quoted to the same effect, warning against Hawes as 'a naughtie man'.	to be judged
867. Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f.79 ^v	Mother Stookes	Danbury	a witch	denied to P/4
868. Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f.82 ^v	----- Gyles	Springfield	a witch	denied to P/4
869. Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f.82 ^v	Mother Wheatley	"	a witch	denied to P/4
870. Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f.85 ^v	wife of Nethersall	Maldon (St. Peter)	a witch	denied to P/8 is a pauper

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
871.	Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f. 95	Margery Skelton	Little Wakering	a witch	denied, to be examined
872.	Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f. 95	Eliz. Fullar	Rayleigh	a witch	denied fact to P/5
873.	Sept. 1566 AEA/3 f. 95 ^v	Margery Skelton	Little Wakering	a sorceress; asked whether she ever healed women or children she said 'she hath w(i)th prayinge of her prayers' healed 7 persons(named), cures included nut tree leaves and sage leaves	examined
874.	Dec. 1566 AEA/3 f. 106 ^v	Mother Lewin	Bulphan	a witch	next court
875.	Dec. 1566 AEA/3 f. 124 ^v	wife of Clarke	-	sent to a cunning man at Witham about her sick child	next court
876.	Dec. 1566 AEA/3 f. 125 ^v	Mother Stockes	Danbury	a witch	her P/4 succeeded
877.	Dec. 1566 AEA/3 f. 126	----- Giles	Springfield	a witch	her P/4 succeeded
878.	Dec. 1566 AEA/3 f. 126	Mother Wheatley	Springfield	a witch	to P/4
879.	- 1566 AEA/3 f. 145 ^v	Joan Knowlar	West Tilbury	a witch	denied to P/6
880.	July 1570 AEA/5 f. 72 ^v	Agnes Coples	Romford	called Gentry's wife a witch in anger	admitted penance
881.	Dec. 1572 AEA/7 f. 169 ^v	----- Miller (w/Thos)	Haveringe	a witch, among those suspecting her were Mr. Willis, curate of Haveringe	denied to P/6
882.	Apr. 1574 AEA/8 f. 14	Margt. Sanders	Rainham	a witch and scold	denied to P/6
883.	Oct. 1574 AEA/8 f. 97 ^v	Anne Brewer(w/Robt)	Dunton	a witch	denied to P/4
884.	Oct. 1574 AEA/8 f. 98	Katherine Slowman	Horndon	a witch	denied to P/4
885.	Oct. 1574 AEA/8 f. 99a ^v	Joan Allen	Leigh	went to a cunning woman, widow Jackson; she admitted that she had said this, but it was a lie	to confess her fault

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
886. Feb. 1575 AEA/8 f. 136 ^v	Juliana Woodward	Brentwood	she admitted 'that she went to one John Thomas a coninge man dwellinge upon London bridge for v ^s of monie she loste and the same Coninge man did shewe her in a glass a boye in a sherte a gleninge Corne resemblinge the countenance of John Hayes that had her monye'	penance
887. Sept. 1575 AEA/8 f. 230	Joan Turner	Romford	for going 'to a wise woman who told her	dismissed
888. - 1575 ^v AEA/9 f. 1	↑ Joan Litelberie	Bradwell- iuxta-Mare	a witch	dismissed
889. Jan. 1576 AEA/9 f. 32	Margt. Poole(w/Roger)	Boreham	a witch	contumacious next court
890. Jan. 1576 AEA/9 f. 32	Mary Belsted(w/Thos)	Boreham	a witch	denied to P/4
891. June 1576 AEA/9 f. 63	Widow Sawell	Stock	a witch	denied to P/4
892. June 1576 ^v AEA/9 f. 63	Margt. Belsted(w/Thos)	Boreham	a witch and not living with her husband; suspected a witch on the 'conference... of Mr Gilbert'	penance
893. June 1576 ^v AEA/9 f. 72	James Hopkinne	Hornchurch	for going to 'mother P(er)sorne at Navestocke Coninge Woman to knowe by what me(a)ns his masters Cattell was bewitched'	next court
894. Dec. 1576 AEA/8 f. 247 ^v	Joan Pynder(w/Geo.)	Barking	a curser and witch	denied to P/6
895. Jan. 1577 AEA/8 f. 251 ^v	"	"	"	to P/6, P succeeds
896. Apr. 1577 AEA/8 f. 285 ^v	Margery Sowman	Bradwell- iuxta-Mare	(names of purgators) a witch	to confess
897. Apr. 1577 AEA/8 f. 285 ^v	Joan Litelberie	"	a witch	to confess
898. June 1578 AEA/10 f. 52	Ralph Grange	Chipping Ongar	went to cunning man about lost goods, paying 2s. fee	to confess
899. July 1578 AEA/10 f. 61	Wm. Leonard and wife	Hornchurch	witches	deney, to P/6

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
900. Sept. 1578 AEA/10 f. 141 ^v	Wm. Leonard and his wife Brigit)	Hornchurch	witches	P fails penance
901. March 1579 AEA/11 f. 6	Wm. Elkin and wife Weald	North	went to a cunning man, one of Chelmsford, who told him which way his lost cattle had gone	to confess
902. May 1579 AEA/11 f. 20	Joan Burton	Great Stambridge	a witch	denied to P/4
903. June 1579 AEA/11 f. 35 ^v	Thos. Longe	Lamborne	going to cunning folk 'for help'	contumacious ex.
904. Jan. 1580 AEA/11 f. 109 ^v	Joyce Duckerell (married)	South Ockendon	a witch	denied to P/4
905. March 1580 AEA/11 f. 127 ^v	Eliz. Boxworthe(w/Thos)	Stock	a witch	denied to P/3
906. Sept. 1583 AEA/12 f. 14	Richard Barker and wife	Romford	'for usinge of their talke somethynge/next court savoringe false doctryne. And she somthinge suspecte of wycherie'	
907. Sept. 1583 AEA/12 f. 14 ^v	Joan Barker(w/Rich.)	"	a witch (see above)	denied to P/5
908. Dec. 1583 AEA/12 f. 51 ^v	Agnes Billinge	South Ockendon	a witch	to P/10
909. Jan. 1584 AEA/12 f. 57	Joan Burton	Great Stambridge	a witch	-
910. Jan. 1584 AEA/12 f. 62 ^v	Agnes Billinge	South Ockendon	a witch, and also to confess for giving suspicion of 'incestuous lieff w(i)th hir sonne', lying in bed with him, he being aged 17 or 18 years.	P fails, to confess
911. Apr. 1585 AEA/12 f. 255 ^v	Jn. Shounke (senior)	Romford	went to a cunning man, 'father Parfoothe'/admits, for help for his wife; admits and says he/ he would do the same again, to confess himself 'hartelie sorie for sekinge mans helpe and refusinge ye helpe of god'	denied, to P/5 -fails to confess
912. May 1585 AEA/12 f. 271 ^v	Cicily Makyn(w/Jn)	Canewdon	a witch	

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
913.	Jan. 1586 AEA/12 f. 361v	Agnes Welles	High Ongar	a witch	denied to P/6 in prison
914.	Feb. 1586 AEA/12 f. 371	Widow Joyce	Stanford Rivers	a witch	
915.	Nov. 1586 AEA/13 f. 34v	Joan Foster	Broomfield	a witch	denied to P/5
916.	June 1587 AEA/13 f. 107	Margt. Harrison	Hawkwell	a witch	denied to P/4
917.	July 1587 AEA/13 f. 123	(Joan) Foster	(Broomfield)	a witch	P succeeded, dismissed
918.	Oct. 1587 AEA/13 f. 139v	Jane Cotsall	Upminster	called goodwife Locksmith a witch in anger	to admit guilt
919.	Jan. 1588 AEA/13 f. 177	Ellinor Bett	Great Waltham	a witch, on accusation of Margerie Dawson	presentation insufficient
920.	Jan. 1588 AEA/13 f. 183	Henry Barbor	Barking	'to be a Witche by his own confession'	next court
921.	Feb. 1588 AEA/13 f. 191v	Helen Bedwell	-	a witch and blasphemmer	-
922.	Jan. 1588 AEA/14 f. 46	Ellena Bett	Great Waltham	a witch	next court
923.	Jan. 1589 AEA/14 f. 46v	Thos. Corde	Langdon Hills	went to cunning man for lost goods	to confess
924.	May 1589 AEA/14 f. 86	----- Upney(w/Wm)	Dagenham	a witch; imprisoned at Colchester on relation of Mr. Lambert vicar of Hornchurch	-
925.	May 1589 AEA/14 f. 105	↑ Margt. Johnson	Asheldham	a witch	denied, to bring six testimonials next court
926.	May 1589 AEA/14 f. 107	----- Hinckson	Rochford	a witch	
927.	May 1589 AEA/14 f. 107v	----- Hamond	Hadleigh	a witch 'and therefore our min(is)ter would not receive her to the Communion'	next court
928.	June 1589 AEA/14 f. 116v	Joan Hinckson	Rochford	a witch; Mr. John Frith, rector of Hawkwell brought a certificate of her blamelessness and stated her virtue	dismissed

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
929. June 1589 AEA/14 f.124v	----- Sloughter(w/Thos)	Horndon	a witch, on suspicion of Wm.Coxall and.Richard Hamon	ex.
930. Sept.1589 AEA/14 f.148v	Margt. Wright/Willet	Havering	a witch	denied to P/3
931. Jan.1590 AEA/14 f.193	Joan Burton	Great Stambridge	a witch	contumacious ex.
932. Jan.1590 AEA/14 f.194	Agnes Hamon	Hadleigh	a witch	denied to P/4
933. Feb.1590 AEA/14 f.210	----- Makins(w/Jn.)	Canewdon	a witch	stands ex.
934. May 1590 AEA/14 f.250	Agnes Berry (widow)	Great Burstead	a witch, her daughter accused of incontinency	-
935. June 1590 AEA/14 f.265v	Alice Bateman	East Hanningfield	a witch	denied to P/6
936. July 1590 AEA/14 f.287v	"	"	a witch, and also failed to receive communion at Easter last	to P/6
937. July 1590 AEA/14 f.290v	Francisca Pashall	South Hanningfield	'sent to sorcerers for comforte'	stands ex.
938. Feb.1591 AEA/15 f.72	wife of Thos.Sare	Barking	a witch, on suspicion of goodman Harwood, Shelton and their wives; because of this Sare and his wife fail to attend Communion	to receive Communion
939. March 1591 AEA/15 f.92	"	"	Harwood and Shelton say that the matter had long since been settled before a J.P. but Sare's wife 'hath nowe of late rene(we)d the said matter' and been 'a very Skoulding and disquiet woman among her neighbours'	to confess
940. July 1591 AEA/15 f.148	Widow May	Woodford	a witch, on suspicion of Wm.Foxe	stands ex.
941. July 1591 AEA/15 f.148	Widow Coppres	Woodford	a witch, suspected a long time and lately by Jn.Poole	-
942. Feb.1592 AEA/16 f.17v	Jn. Monday	Loughton	went to cunning man for lost goods	denied dismissed
943. May 1592 AEA/16 f.56	Alice Foster	Barking	a witch, but church-wardens say she is not thus suspected so.....dismissed	dismissed

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
944.	May 1592 AEA/16 f.56	John Crave	Romford	for going to cunning folk; admits that his wife went to 'father Perfoche' and for medicine for sick cattle	cautioned and dismissed as above
945.	May 1592 AEA/16 f.56	Wm. Moushowe	"	as in above	as above
946.	May 1592 AEA/16 f.61	Joan Bell	Fobbing	for not receiving communion; she alleges that 'one Whaple' made complaint/certificate of her as a witch; to bring certificate signed by four honest neighbours	to bring to bring
947.	May 1592 AEA/16 f.64	Margt. Wiseman	Maldon	a witch (7 purgators named)	P/7 succeeds dismissed stands ex.
948.	July 1592 AEA/16 f.91 ^v	Joan Playle	Great Waltham	a witch	
949.	July 1592 AEA/16 f.94	Margt. Wiseman(w/Jn.)	Maldon	a witch	to P/7 (sic)
950.	March 1595 AEA/17 f.1 ^v	Joan Foster	Broomfield	a witch	next court
951.	March 1595 AEA/17 f.7	Anne Moore	Rayleigh	a soothsaler and sorceress, telling where lost goods were	-
952.	July 1595 AEA/17 f.55	Joan Foster	Broomfield	a witch	denied to P/4
953.	July 1595 AEA/17 f.64	----- Carter	Barking	a cunning man, telling where lost property was, e.g. 2 cloaks and a ring	-
954.	Oct. 1595 AEA/17 f.80	Thos. Forby	Asheldham	for going to cunning folk for lost goods/	next court
955.	July 1596 AEA/17 f.164	----- Jones(w/Maurice)	Barking	on request of 'Robgent's wife' for medicine she fell on her knees and cursed her, since when Robgent's wife suffered	stands ex.
956.	Jan. 1598 AEA/18 f.151	Thos. Morrice	Beauchamp Roothing	went to 'worker w(i)th familiar spirites/denied for certain fishes' that were lost and seldom attended church	
957.	Apr. 1599 AEA/19 f.198	Thos. Ward	Purleigh	'having lost certain cattell and suspecting that they were bewitched' went to 'one Tailer in Thaxted a wysard'	to confess
958.	July 1599 AEA/19 f.272 ^v	Eliz. Batcheler	Stifford	unable to receive communion because called a witch by John Grene	to receive communion

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence	Process
959. Sept. 1599 AEA/19 f. 342	John Watson and wife	South Benfleet	for living disorderly together and she accuses him of incontinency with Snow's wife, calling honeste women witches!	cautioned dismissed
960. Jan. 1600 AEA/20 f. 37 ^v	Stephen Vincent	Hockley	in anger suggested that Mary Hollinton/cautioned had 'by her evill tonge' bewitched a horse, sheep and cattle; said he was sorry	cautioned dismissed
961. Apr. 1600 AEA/20 f. 74 ^v	----- Lavander (w/Wm)	Doddinghurst	a witch	cited
962. Oct. 1600 AEA/20 f. 217	James Hamon	East Tilbury	going to a conjuror or sorcerer	dismissed
963. Dec. 1600 AEA/20 f. 237	Thos. Saye	Buttsbury	went to a wizard for help for his child, /cautioned admitted he went to a man for medicine	dismissed
964. Sept. 1601 AEA/21 f. 193 ^v	John Arwaker	Great Waltham	suspected charming with sieve and shears/denied in his house	dismissed
965. Feb. 1602 AEA/21 f. 229 ^v	Margery Murfield (widow)	Hockley	a witch and for incontinency	-
966. Apr. 1602 AEA/22 f. 3 ^v	Thos. Veare	Horndon-on-the-Hill	he said that goodman Clarke the carpenter had been to London 'at the bankes side' consulting a cunning woman about a stolen petticoat for going to cunning folk	next court
967. May 1602 AEA/22 f. 6 ^v	Agnes Wilkinge (w/Jn)	North Weald		-
968. May 1602 AEA/22 f. 7	Robt. Frend	Great Warley	for going to a cunning man about a lost purse	-
969. Oct. 1602 AEA/22 f. 95	Agnes Gyll	Grays Thurrock	she and Jane Curtis quarrelling called each other whore and witch	-
970. Apr. 1604 AEA/23 f. 12 ^v	Katherine Weaver	Blackmore	a witch, but says that only one churchwarden presented her, and he did/ it out of malice	cautioned dismissed
971. June 1605 AEA/23 f. 169	Grace Browne	Hadleigh	a witch	denied to P/3
972. June 1608 AEA/25 f. 41 ^v	Various (see across)	East Hanningfield	Henry Pechie, his wife and daughter, Wm. Mawr and wife Suzanne, for witchcraft	dismissed
973. June 1608 AEA/25 f. 41 ^v	wife of Adam Seley	East Hanningfield	as in above case	dismissed

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
974.	Jan. 1610 AEA/25 f. 235	John Skafe	Great Burstead	for going 'to one Gressam a sothsayer in London' about a lost horse and man a witch	- egrotat
975.	May 1610 AEA/25 f. 278 ^v	Anne Roberts	Little Thurrock	burning a lamb alive 'supposing his shepe had bin bewicht'	-
976.	Aug. 1610 AEA/25 f. 322	----- Lunne	Mucking	offending against the article concerning 'sothsayinge Charmes &c' and other offences	next court
977.	May 1612 AEA/26 f. 138	Giles Payson	Nazeing		next court
978.	May 1612 AEA/26 f. 138	Mary Clarke	"	as above	next court
979.	May 1612 AEA/26 f. 138	Thos. Campe	"	as above	next court
980.	July 1612 AEA/26 f. 217 ^v	Agnes Rawlins (widow)	Hockley	a witch	next court
981.	May 1619 AEA/31 f. 69	Wm. Walford	Cold Norton	for living scandalously with his wife, calling her 'Jade queane witch etc' and persuading his neighbours that she has bewitched them	admits, and fined dismissed
982.	Dec. 1620 AEA/32 f. 76	Alice Trittle (w/Jn)	Rettendon	a witch, suspected for many years and an 'evill tongued woman'	denied to P/4
983.	July 1624 AEA/34 f. 79 ^v	John Crushe	Hawkwell	burnt a lamb alive during Sunday service, believing it to be bewitched, and set the apologiste common alight so that service was disturbed	to
984.	Aug. 1632 AEA/39 f. 29	Mary Cutford (w/Hen.)	Rainham	'she did most wickedlie wishe herselfe to/ be a witch for a tyme that she might be revenged of her adversarie', Anne Dawdrie	admitted to confess
985.	Feb. 1638 AEA/41 f. 220	Catherine/Stanford-le-Hope Hooke/Allison		a witch	denied dismissed
986.	Nov. 1591 AED/3 f. 113 ^v -114 f. 124-125	Sara Kempe	Stondon	Wm. Ingold, Wm. Tyng, Wm. Warner and Thos. Regnold, all of Stondon, depose that they heard the late Mr. Lawrence Hollingworth say that Sara Kempe had been driven out of Whitechapel, London for witchcraft	-

Archdeaconry of Colchester.

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
991. Feb.1573 ACA/5 f.121v	Helen Wedon	Colchester (St.James)	present at a magical ceremony ('quod veneficia adit')	denied to P/5
992. Feb.1573 ACA/5 f.122	Benjamin Fairstead	"	confessed that he had sent to 'mother Humfrey' for his hogs, which he thought were bewitched.	admitted penance
993. Oct.1576 ACA/7 f.64	Various (see across)	Great Totham	Jn.Plummer, Joan Tomson and Mary Tomson; Plumer admitted that they used the sieve and shears	penance
994. March.1578 ACA/7 f.273v	Thomasina Wood(w/Rich.)	Fingringhoe	a witch	denied to P/6
995. July 1579. ACA/8 f.148	Joan Michell	Saffron Walden	medical sorcery; to confess offence to neighbours and 5 medical practioners	to confess
996. Oct.1579 ACA/8 f.205v	Robt. Crake	Boxted	for using siwe and shears	admitted penance
997. Nov.1579 ACA/8 f.233	Agnes Taster	Weeley	a witch and not receiving communtion	denied to P/4
998. Nov.1579 ACA/8 f.238v	Eliz. Moresby	Great Chesterford	a witch	denied to P/5
999. Jan.1580 ACA/8 f.261v	Agnes Taster	Weeley	a witch	penance
1000. Jan.1580 ACA/8 f.269	Jane Moresby	Great Chesterford	a witch	denied to P/5
1001. March 1580 ACA/8 f.315v	Eliz. Moresby	"	a witch	P/5 failed penance
1002. Jan.1581 ACA/9 f.99	Mary Greane	Earls Colne	sorcery and witchcraft	denied to P/4
1003. Apr.1582 ACA/10 f.45	Catherine Reve	Colchester (St.James)	a witch	denied to P/4
1004. Apr.1582 ACA/10 f.45	Henry Driver	Colchester (St.Leonard)	a witch	denied to P/5
1005. Apr.1582 ACA/10 f.45	Margt. Hobigge	Colchester (St.Leonard)	a witch	denied to P/5
1006. Apr.1582 ACA/10 f.45	Sara Hobigge	Colchester (St.Leonard)	a witch	denied to P/5

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
1007. Apr. 1582 ACA/10 f. 47	Catherine Reve	Colchester (St. James)	a witch, denied but admitted that she had learnt a counter-witchcraft spell from goodwife George of Abberton and had used it on a cow and herself	-
1008. Apr. 1582 ACA/10 f. 50 ^v	"	"	a witch	fails P/5 penance
1009. Apr. 1582 ACA/10 f. 50 ^v	Henry Dryver	Colchester (St. Leonard)	a witch	fails P/5 penance
1010. Apr. 1582 ACA/10 f. 50 ^v	Sara Hobig	Colchester (St. Leonard)	a witch	fails P/5 penance
1011. July 1582 ACA/10 f. 65 ^v	Eliz. Newman	Wormingford/	a witch	denied to P/4
1012. Nov. 1582 ACA/10 f. 102	Michael Smythe and Joyce) his wife	Ramsey	witches	denied each to P/4
1013. Feb. 1583 ACA/11 f. 11	Wm. Curswell and wife (Joan)	Layer-de- la-Haye	witches	-
1014. March 1584 ACA/11 f. 23 ^v	as above	"	witches	denied each to P/5 stand ex.
1015. March 1584 ACA/12 f. 103 ^v	Eliz. Moresby and daughter Jane)	Great Chesterford	witches, on long suspicion	
1016. March 1584 ACA/12 f. 107 ^v	"	"	witches	denied to P/5
1017. Nov. 1584 ACA/11 f. 119	Stephan Hugrave	Abberton	a witch and 'comon Brawler and sower of discorde between neighbours'	denied to P/5
1018. Nov. 1584 ACA/11 f. 119	Alice Hugrave(w/Steph)	Abberton	a witch	denied to P/7
1019. Feb. 1585 ACA/13 f. 35 ^v	Wm. Asplin	Great Bardfield	'we p(re)sent Wm Asplin o(u)r scole- -master to take upon him to tell fortunes' and to give out charms for agues	next court
1020. June 1585 ACA/13 f. 78 ^v	Agnes Lea	Great Tey	a witch	next court

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
1021. Oct. 1585 ACA/13 f. 110	Edward Mason	Great Bardfield	for using characters (charm) for the ague; admitted passing on such a charm to 'one Asplin', but not to using it a witch	cautioned dismissed next court
1022. Oct. 1585 ACA/13 f. 116	----- Davye (widow)	Great Braxted	a witch	denied to P/5 stands ex.
1023. Nov. 1585 ACA/13 f. 123v	"	"	a witch	
1024. Jan. 1586 ACA/13 f. 142	Joan Page	Great Chesterford	a witch and 'develishe of her tonge'	
1025. May 1586 ACA/13 f. 188v	Richard Cole	Hempstead	for using loving powder on a woman, but he says she made it up and he has not used any sorsery' or been adulterous	denied next court
1026. Apr. 1587 ACA/14 f. 145v	Joan Abbott	Mount Bures	a witch	
1027. May 1587 ACA/14 f. 155	Joan Abbott	Mount Bures	a witch	very sick dismissed for poverty fails to appear next court
1028. Sept. 1587 ACA/14 f. 198v	Alan Moore	Lexden	a witch and not receiving communion	
1029. Oct. 1587 ACA/15 f. 15v	Edward Mason	Great Bardfield	a sorcerer	
1030. Sept. 1587 ACA/16 f. 5	Eliz. Pillgram	Hatfield Peverel	a witch	to P/5
1031. Sept. 1587 ACA/16 f. 5v	Joan Osborne	"	a witch	to P/5
1032. Sept. 1587 ACA/16 f. 5v	Mary Godfrey	"	a witch	P succeeds dismissed next court
1033. Sept. 1587 ACA/16 f. 5v	John Gosse and wife	"	witches	
1034. Oct. 1587 ACA/16 f. 15v	Eliz. Pilgrim(widow)	"	a witch	P/5 fails penance P/5 fails penance P/5 fails penance
1035. Oct. 1587 ACA/16 f. 15v	Joan Osborne	"	a witch	
1036. Oct. 1587 ACA/16 f. 16	Jn. Gosse and wife	"	witches	

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence	Process
1037. Oct. 1587 ACA/16 f. 20 ^v	Thos. Smith	Earls Colne	a sorcerer	next court
1038. Oct. 1587 ACA/16 f. 23	Thos. Wayland	Witham	for going to cunning folk for help	ex.
1039. Oct. 1587 ACA/16 f. 23	Robt. Armon	"	"	ex.
1040. Nov. 1587 ACA/15 f. 23	Edward Mason	Great Bardfield	a sorcerer, denies and says that he is bound to appear at assizes for this	next court
1041. March 1588 ACA/16 f. 68	Margt. Ellys (w/Anthony)	Pattiswick	a witch	denied to P/5
1042. March 1588 ACA/16 f. 68	Margt. Murdett	Great Braxted	she said that 'Mr Fountayne did cast a figure'	-
1043. March 1588 ACA/16 f. 78	(Margt) Ellis	Pattiswick	a witch	-
1044. Apr. 1588 ACA/16 f. 88 ^v	George Haven	Coggeshall	a witch 'or one that ys addicted to sutche develishe practizes'	next court
1045. Apr. 1588 ACA/16 f. 90	Margt. Ellis	Pattiswick	a witch (3 compurgators named)	P/5 succeeds dismissed
1046. Apr. 1588 ACA/14 f. 291 ^v	Widow Tibboulde	Langham	a witch, an unquiet and slanderous woman and people falling out with her subsequently have 'evell successe' with their cattle	contumacious hence ex.
1047. June 1588 ACA/17 f. 22	Katherine Hayr (widow)	Thorrington	a witch, on suspicion of neighbours and 'one Brian of St Osythes' a cunning man	to P/6
1048. July 1588 ACA/17 f. 33 ^v	Widow Dawson	Salcott	a witch	to appear
1049. July 1588 ACA/17 f. 41 ^v	Joan Pakeman (w/Thos)	Great Oakley	a witch	next court
1050. Nov. 1588 ACA/17 f. 87	Widow Heard	Thorrington	a witch	next court
1051. Nov. 1588 ACA/17 f. 89	"	"	"	"
1052. Feb. 1589 ACA/16 f. 184 ^v	Thos. Harding and wife)	Witham	witches (using 'Caricters')	brought testimonial, dismissed

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
1053. Feb. 1589 ACA/15 f. 147	Henry Perrye	Great Sampford	going to a cunning man for stolen money	next court
1054. Apr. 1589 ACA/17 f. 159	Margt. Newman	Great Bentley	a witch	next court
1055. Apr. 1589 ACA/17 f. 159	John Warman(sic)	"	a witch	next court
1056. Apr. 1589 ACA/17 f. 159	Joan Warman(w/Jn.)	"	a witch	next court
1057. May 1589 ACA/17 f. 177	Widow Hare	Thorrington/a witch		denied to P/6
1058. May 1589 ACA/17 f. 195	Margt. Prior	West Mersea	a witch, she says that only her enemies think this	denied to P/4
1059. June 1589 ACA/18 f. 39v	Margery Banby(w/Edward)	Kelvedon	a witch	next court
1060. Nov. 1589 ACA/18 f. 80	wife of --- Wilcockes	Cressing	a sorceress, using sieve and shears to know if baby will be male or female and to locate lost goods(3 witnesses named)	next court
1061. Nov. 1589 ACA/18 f. 80	Agnes Browne	Cressing	as above, same witnesses	next court
1062. Dec. 1589 ACA/18 f. 92v	George Haven	Coggeshall/a witch		stands ex.
1063. Jan. 1590 ACA/18 f. 114v	Church-wardens of	Coggeshall	for not presenting 'one Margaret ---' in their last presentment as a witch	warned to present her
1064. March. 1590 ACA/18 f. 132v	John Wade and wife	"	for making a magic ointment to cure their children's sickness, admitted they did it on advice of Mr Shereman of Colchester, physician	next court with Shereman
1065. March 1590 ACA/18 f. 138v	Thos. Browninge/Browne	Coggeshall	'seekinge helpe to Witches'	dismissed
1066. March. 1590 ACA/18 f. 138v	John Badlye	Coggeshall	as above	dismissed
1067. March 1590 ACA/18 f. 139	Thos. Browne and wife	"	"	dismissed
1068. March 1590 ACA/18 f. 139	wife of Leonard	Coggeshall	"	dismissed

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence	Process
1069. March 1590 ACA/18 f.139	Margt. Foster	Coggeshall	a witch, 'she is at Maldon'	-
1070. March 1590 ACA/17 f.332v	Jn.Church/Fordham and wife		use witchcraft	cited, ex.
1071. March 1590 ACA/17 f.332v	Robt. Wright and wife	"	"	cited, ex.
1072. Nov.1590 ACA/19 f.88v	John Gyles	Wivenhoe	for sending his daughter to a cunning woman at 'newcastell'	next court
1073. Apr.1591 ACA/19 f.156v	Thos. Harvy	East Mersea	sought help for himself and others at 'one Creeke of Cobduck in Suff(olk)'	admits to confess
1074. Apr.1591 ACA/19 f.157v	Eliz. Maun	West Mersea	a witch	next court
1075. Apr.1591 ACA/19 f.157v	Margt. Wiseman	"	a witch, daughter of Eliz. above; now and Bradwell(cf.Maldon) at Bradwell-iuxta-Mare.	next court
1076. July 1591 ACA/19 f.201	(John) Churche	Fordham	use witchcraft	stands ex.
1077. July 1591 ACA/19 f.201	wife of Robt.Wright	"	"	stands ex.
1078. July 1591 ACA/19 f.201	Alice Jenitas(widow)	Alresford	a witch	next court
1079. Nov.1591 ACA/19 f.240v	John Carter	Weeley	for boasting himself able to find lost goods by spells	denied dismissed
1080. Nov.1591 ACA/19 f.240v	-----Bryant	"	for using sorcery under the guise of surgery	dismissed
1081. Dec.1591 ACA/19 f.258v	Margt. Coalle(w/Joseph)	Frating	a witch	denied to P/5
1082. Dec.1591 ACA/19 f.270	Agnes Heard	Wivenhoe	a witch	next court
1083. March 1592 ACA/20 f.179	Amos Manship	Colne Engaine	going to a cunning woman at or near Feering	-
1084. June 1592 ACA/19 f.367v	Anne Heard	Little Oakley	a witch, long suspected	stands ex. next court
1085. June 1594 ACA/22 f.100	Widow Howe	Tolleshunt Knights(Bushes)	a witch	denied to P/5

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
1086. July 1594 ACA/21 f.253	Margt. Clarke	Tendring	a witch and a 'woman of filthy behaviour'	denied to P/4
1087. July 1594 ACA/21 f.253	Mary Bright	"	a witch, mother of Margt. Clarke (above)	denied to P/4
1088. June 1595 ACA/21 f.390v	Alice Tibbould	Little Bromley	a scold, slanderer, and resorted to cunning men for help	stands ex. cited
1089. July 1595 ACA/22 f.187v	Alice Marshall	Stisted	said to have used 'Loving powder' to make a man love her	next court
1090. July 1595 ACA/23 f.68	Eliz. Woodborne (w/Thos.)	Clavering	a witch	next court
1091. Oct. 1596 ACA/23 f.122	wife of Jn. Rawe	Ashdon	a witch	next court
1092. June 1597 ACA/22 f.271v	John Manning and wife	Tolleshunt Knights	for not receiving communion, John replied that Smith's wife called his wife, 'being an old woman', 'Witche and bytche' so that he and his wife could not receive	to receive communion
1093. Oct. 1597 ACA/23 f.177v	Augustin Elliott	Great Chishall	called Margery Marshall whore and witch, admits, but says it was 'uppon iust causes'	to be reconciled next court
1094. Apr. 1598 ACA/22 f.325v	Christian Hunt	Tollesbury	a witch	next court
1095. May 1598 ACA/24 f.115v	Joan Rooth	Great Bentley	a witch and scolded in the church	next court
1096. May 1598 ACA/24 f.120v	William Ruffle	Lawford	sent his wife to a cunning man, 'Goodin / next court of Colchester', about his stolen horse; also, being a churchwarden, failed to make presentments and for attempted incontinency	said to be 'free of witchery' stands ex. cited
1097. May 1598 ACA/24 f.122v	Joan Rothe	Great Bentley	a witch and scolder	stands ex. cited
1098. Aug. 1598 ACA/23 f.212	Anne Rawe	Ashdon	(to confess for scolding)	stands ex. cited
1099. Aug. 1598 ACA/23 f.212	Mary Rawe	Ashdon	a witch	stands ex. cited
1000. July 1599 ACA/25 f.50	Edmund Crosse	Goldhanger	called Mary Hatchman whore and witch	stands ex. cited

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence	Process
1101. July 1600 ACA/24 f. 296	Widow Howgrave	Abberton	a witch and continually absent from church	-
1102. Apr. 1601 ACA/24 f. 361v	----- Hugrave	"	"	dismissed
1103. July 1601 ACA/24 f. 382	David Tarver	Little Oakley	a slanderer and called the wife of James Bean a witch and fought with another woman	denied, to P/; then admits, penance
1104. Dec. 1606 ACA/29 f. 284	Mary Woodward	Ramsey	a witch	P/4 failed to confess
1105. Nov. 1609 ACA/32 f. 126v	Alice Potchys(widow)	(Stisted)	a witch	dismissed
1106. Apr. 1611 ACA/32 f. 255	Anne Harvy (w/Thos)	Colne Engaine	a slanderous person, calling Cicely Lepingwell a witch	churchwardens to certify detection
1107. May 1611 ACA/32 f. 262v	"	"	"	churchwardens ex.
1108. Dec. 1588 ACD/1 f. 36v, 37v (see across)	various	Witham	Wm. Roman of Witham, yeoman, deposed that Eliz. Harris, wife of George, was believed to have bewitched the child of Robt. Armond and had been tried at the Assizes. Jn. Barker of Witham corroborated this and said that he had heard that Armond went for help for his sick child to a cunning woman near Stiford.	
<u>Comissary Court records at E.R.O.</u>				
1111. 1618 ABD/1 f. 170	various (see across)	Danbury	In libel case between Susan Spilman and Edward Saffold, Jn. Newton of Danbury deposed that Saffold said that there 'was an old witch' who came to his house when he was out and hanged his dog, implying that Susan Spilman was the witch.	
<u>Consistory Court records.</u>				
1112. Nov. 1575 DL/C 212 f. 156v-157v, f. 160	various	Little Saling	Wm. Bendlowes and Henry Smith both deposed that Jn. Reynoldes and his wife libelled Jn. Kirkham by alledging that he was a witch and had bewitched Reynoldes' wife (who lay 'sick and full of blisters') and daughter: Kirkham, like Smith, was a servant of Bendlowes. Jn. Maryan deposed that Thomas Wood and his wife Alice libelled Margery Kirkham in saying that she had bewitched their child, suddenly sick.	

Date/Source	Name	Village	Offence	Process
1113. July 1584 DL/C/301 f.29 ^v Joyce	-----	Stanford Rivers	had been ordered to undergo public penance and to 'p(ro)test that she will not meddle with sorcery and witchcraft'	to certify of penance of witchcraft'
1114. Oct. 1584 DL/C/301 f.18 ^v Morsby and daughter	Eliz. Morsby	Great Chesterford	stand excommunicated for witchcraft	
1115. Oct. 1584 DL/C/301 f.22 ^v Gower (cleric)	Henry Gower	Quendon	dwells in Quendon, having no living and a suspected 'charmer or sorcerer' who 'deceaveth many people'	
1116. Oct. 1584 DL/C/301 f.23 ^v	Alice Bolton (wife) wife of Cooke Eliz. Lomley	St. Osyth	a witch - already imprisoned a witch - dead a witch - denied the detection; dismissed because a faulty detection and because she alleged 'that she hath byn convented and clered for it by the temporal magistra(te)'	
1117. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.236	Thos. Welles and wife	Birdbrook	witches	
1118. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.246	wife of Robt. Ager	Stebbing	a witch on 31 May Robt. Ager certified that she had done penance 'for bewitching of women', therefore dismissed	
1119. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.246 ^v Pond (w/Edward)	Barbara	"	a witch	next court
1120. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.255 ^v Maunde	Thos. Maunde	Great Dunmow	commonly thought a wizard, he replied that some people who came to him he sent to 'one Brite' now deceased	to be examined
1121. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.260 ^v Taylor	George Taylor	Thaxted	using sorcery to tell where lost goods were, 'deceavinge divers people'	a ex.
1122. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.301 ^v Austyn Houlder	wife of Austyn Houlder	Beaumont	a witch, bound over by Mr. Pirton, J.P., to the next Assizes; 'mortua as she went	to the sides
1123. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.338 ^v John Frauncis	wife of John Frauncis	Hockley	a witch	stands ex.
1124. March 1602 DL/C/303 f.359	William Burles	Black Notley	resorted to sorcerers; had left Notley	stands ex.

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Process</u>
1125. May 1602 DL/C/303 f.409 ^v	Barbara Pound (w/Edward)	Stebbing	a witch; churchwardens said 'that Barbara Pond falling out with one of her neighbors she said it had byn better for her she had delt so w(i)th her wherupon the woman fell lame and p(er)swaded her self she was bewiched by her the same Barbara Pond'; the suspicion occurred at midsummer and Barbara hence claimed the 'benefitt of the p(ar)don' - dismissed	
1126. Dec.1631 DL/C/319 f.29 ^v	Edmund Rowlande	Stifford	a physician without licence and suspected to work 'by witchcraft' for the last seven years; unable to produce licence	
1127. Apr.1622 DL/C/325 f.25	Alice Soles(w/Jn)	Leigh	a sorceress; she said she had been questioned by justices of the pease, therefore ordered to bring a certificate of such questioning	

Records in transit, temporarily deposited at the P.R.O.

1128. Sept.1561	Churchwardens of Shopland		presented for 'myntenans of sorcery', having approved of the act of Margt. Hosie who burnt a calf 'in wichcraft to p(re)serve the slyenck (sic)', and who said in court that 'she was a honest wooman who can not be paid'; to pay 6d. to the poor, and dismissed	
1129. Dec.1574	Thomas Smith	Earls Colne	for conjuring, and teaching without a licence; denied the charges; to stop teaching until he produced a licence and certificate from his neighbours	
1130. Dec.1574 (as above case)	Alice Reade	Lawford	for using a sieve and shears to find lost goods; to be examined at the next court	
1131. Hilary 1579	Brigitte Bradye	Doddinghurst	Wm. Waylet deposed how B. Bradye asked where a woman who had been mad ('dryven about the towne with a ratt or a moale') was; the woman, Alice Clement, replied 'Naye it was neither ratt nor Moale: but sutch an old witch as thow art; Thomas Fisher of London also heard	

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Offence/Process</u>
1132. March 1605	Margt. Prentize (w/Thos.) Comissary Court Correction Book, from March 1605 on, f.1	Little Burstead	a witch and 'a Rayler Curser and scoulder, and is said to be a rayler againste the marriage of ministers'; to attend Mr. Bockman 'to be taught her dutie'
1133. March 1605	Christine Upminster as above, f.16	Upminster (widow)	a witch (note: 'to be heard of Justices')
1134. March 1605	John Comines and wife as above, f.55v	Great Parndon	'sorcery or witchcraft'; John said that he was bound to appear at the Assizes, therefore ordered to 'be instructed in the principles of Religion' (at f.25l brings certificate of honest behaviour)
1135. March 1605	Eliz. Chapman(widow) as above, f.69	Ugley	disturbed minister when he was reading the psalms by shouting at him 'to leave of(f) his witchery coniuration and sorcery', she also struck him. a user of 'witchcraft' and resorted to similar witches for advice and help.
1136. March 1605	William Duffield as above, f.119	Great Waltham	
1137. March 1605	----- as above, f.127	Rochford	a witch
1138. March 1605	Richard Banckes as above, f.202	Earls Colne	for sorcery

BOROUGH COURT PROSECUTIONS.

Only five of the cases from Borough court records are known to have been printed before.* Ewen included cases 1165, 1176 from Colchester in his list of Essex cases (the references are given under the cases); cases 1142 and 1143 are described and partially printed in the Essex Review, xvi (1907), pp. 68ff, 161-2; case 1175 was reprinted in the Essex Notebook and Suffolk Gleaner (Colchester, May 1885, no. 8), p. 88.

The location and nature of these records are described in the bibliography. In the Harwich and Colchester prosecutions the date in the column 'Date/Source' is that of the sitting of the court (with the documentary reference below). The date under 'Offence/Process' is that of the supposed offence.

'S.R.' in the Colchester prosecutions is an abbreviation for Sessions Roll. 'G.C.' stands for gaol calendar; 'f' for folio; 'm' for membrane. For other abbreviations, see the introduction to the Assize cases.

*Two references were discovered too late for inclusion; case 1141 and a presentment at Maldon in connection with case 807 are printed in Shirburn Ballads, 1585-1616, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1907), p. 153.

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Offence/Process</u>
1141.	1572 D/B 3 1/6 f. 149v	Alice Chaundeler	Indictment for bewitching a child to death, exactly as in case 67.
1142.	1591 D/B 3 1/8 f. 23, 23v, 87v.	Edmund Hunt	Examination of Hunt for searching for lost treasure at Beleigh Abbey. He consulted Thomas Collyne who suggested that he took a piece of earth to Doctor Dee; Hunt also procured parchment with magical drawings on it. George Oder was also examined concerning the affair.
1143.	1592 D/B 3 1/8 f. 39v, 34, 38, 41, 53v	Margt. Wiseman	Recognizances of a number of men and women to appear to witness against Margaret concerning her witchcraft and recognizances taken of others to ensure her good behaviour; details concerning her witchcraft, which included a description of a magical broom which swept on its own.

Harwich

	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Offence/Process</u>
1144.	Apr. 1601 98/14 f.1	Eliz. Hudson (spinster)	on 20 Nov., 1598 at Harwich bewitched Wm. Charnoll, son of Richard C., of H., taylor, so that he died on 25 Nov. to be hanged.
1145.	" " f.1v	"	on 6 Jan. 1601 at H. bewitched Margt. Maynard, daughter of Walter M. of H., sailor, who died on 25th of same month. confesses guilt. to be hanged
1146.	Apr. 1601 " " f.2	Eliz. Hanby (widow)	on 18 June 1598, at H., bewitched Judith Blabbe, daughter of Wm. B. of H., mariner, who died on 8 Aug. following. denied. guilty, to be executed
1147.	Aug. 1601 " " f.2v	Alice Babbe (widow)	on 19 March 1601 bewitched Alice Taylor, daughter of Jn. T. of H., who died on 24th of the same month. denied. guilty. to be executed.
1148.	Aug. 1601 " " f.3	Eliz. Hankinson (spinster)	on 19 May 1601 bewitched Katherine Lawrence, daughter of Jn. L. of H., inholder, who died on 22nd of the same month: she also bewitched Jn. Ingate, son of Jn. I. of H., mariner, who languished from 6th to 9th Aug. 1600, when he died. confessed. guilty. to be executed.
1149.	Aug. 1601 " " f.3v	Margt. Grove (w/Jn. tailor)	on 12 Dec. 1602 bewitched Jn. Wolnaughe, son of Nicholas W. of H., mariner, who died the same day. confessed. to be executed.
1150.	Aug. 1605 " " f.15v	Mary Harte (spinster)	on 4 July 1605 bewitched 7 lb. of meat worth 11d. of the goods of Robt. Smarte of Dovercourt, which putrifed ('putrificat fetide'). denied. not guilty. acquitted.
1151.	Sept. 1606 " " f.17v, 18, 19	"	Inquisition and indictment: on 24 Feb. 1582 (sic) bewitched Jn. Graye of H., sailor, who died on 9 March following: on 3 March 1605 at H. bewitched Ursula Man, wife of Jn. M. of H., mariner, who died on 22 July following. guilty. to be executed.
1152.	Oct. 1609 " " f.40v	Thos. Barneby	he appeared personally and was exonerated from suspicion of felony and witchcraft.

Harwich (continued)

Offence/Process

Name

Date/Source

Cecily and
Peter Wigborough

1153.

Oct. 1609
98/14 f. 41, 41v

six people, three men and three women, bound to give evidence against Cecily and Peter for witchcraft

1154.

Jan. 1610
" f. 41v, 42

" (shoemaker)

Inquisition on oaths of 17 men that: Peter W. of H. on 25 Nov. 1609 bewitched Jn. Ponder of H., sailor, who died on 5 Dec. following; and Cecily W. his wife, on 8 Nov. 1609 bewitched Robt. Braxted, son of Robt. of H., mariner, who languished to the present. both deny. neither guilty.

1155.

Dec. 1611
" f. 50

on 10 Sept. 1611 bewitched Eliz. Skynner, wife of Wm. S. of H., sailor, who was lamed and wasted. --

1156.

March 1612
" f. 51v, 52, 53v

Inquisition on oath of various that Cecilia Wigborow on 20 May 1611 bewitched Eliz. Thorne of H. who languished to 10 Dec. following. not guilty.

1157.

Aug. 1615
" f. 61

Margt.
Buller (widow)

committed to gaol of Harwich; Wm. Derifall bound to give evidence against Margt. for bewitching his wife Eliz. to death.

1158.

Sept. 1615
" f. 61v

" of Dovercourt

Inquisition on oaths of several who say that on 26 June, 1615 Margt. bewitched Eliz. Derifall who died on following 4 July. denied. not guilty.

1159.

Feb. 1618
" f. 67v

Anne
Buller

Wm. Derifall and Wm. Camper bound to appear against Anne.

1160.

Sept. 1619
" f. 68

Margt.
Buller

indicted for murder and witchcraft on body of Christopher Derifall. guilty. to be executed. and also for the same on Jn. Camper.

1161.

July 1618
29/4" f.
29/10

Anne Buller

Wm. Camper to frame an indictment against Anne for bewitching his son Jn. to death; likewise Wm. Derifall, his brother Christopher having been

1162.

July 1618
133/2

"

/bewitched. Very detailed deposition of Wm. Camper concerning the bewitching of his son John. Includes details of the familiar and nature of the illness (contortions).

1163.

Aug. 1633
65/7

Jane Wiggins

Examination of Thomazine, wife of Richard Hedge, who accused Jane of diverse attacks on the lives and property of various; includes details of familiars and the quarrels which led to witchcraft.

Colchester

Date/Source

Name

1164.

Apr. 1576

Ethelreda

in prison for suspicion of witchery; Ethelreda, of St. Mary C. on 29 Oct. 1575 bewitched Joan Masselyne, wife of Wm. M. of C., butcher, who died on 12 Dec. true bill. not guilty.

S.R. 18 Eliz.

Pilgrim (spinster)

g.c. and m. 12

1165.

1582-3

Margt.

indicted for bewitching Eliz. Pickas; imprisoned for a year.

Ewen II, p. 429

Holbeye

1165b.

Apr. 1585

" (spinster)

in gaol for 'witchery'; various women bound to give evidence against her; on 2 July 1582 bewitched Susan Pikas of C., spinster, who was wasted and consumed. true bill. guilty, year's imprisonment. on 2 July 1584 bewitched Wm. Goonbye who died on 6 Dec. following. true bill. not guilty.

S.R. 27 Eliz.

"

g.c. and m. 4, 14

1166.

Apr. 1585

Henry and

prisoners on bail: Henry and Alice Driver; various bound to give evidence against them for witchcraft.

S.R. 27 Eliz.

Alice Driver

1167.

"

Katherine

on bail; various to give evidence against. Katherine, of St. James C., on 26 Feb. 1584 bewitched Helen Brownsmyth, wife of Andrew of C., currier, who was tormented to 10 Jan. following. guilty. imprisoned one year.

" g.c., m. 11

Reve (spinster)

1168.

July 1592

Alice Driver

in gaol; on 3 Aug. 1591 bewitched Anne Ostelyn, daughter of Eliz., who died on following 7 Aug. true bill. not guilty.

S.R. 34 Eliz. m. 8

(widow)

1169.

July 1592

Margt.

on bail, various to give evidence against her; jury say bill of presentment a true one, therefore indicted that on 28 Nov. 1591 she bewitched Judith Lingwood, wife of Jn. L. of C., tailor, who languished until 7 Dec. following. not guilty.

S.R. 34 Eliz. m. 2

Rand (widow)

Ewen I, p. 284

1170.

May 1593 (10th)

"

Examination of Susan Compstone; told how Lingwood's wife scratched Widow Rand on the face and a horseshoe was nailed to the threshold and the witch pushed over it.

1588-1600, no foliation.

1171.

Apr. 1599

Eliz.

on bail; on 1 Apr. 1599 bewitched one cow worth 20s. and one pig worth 10s. of Philip Smyth, they died. true bill. not guilty.

S.R. 41 Eliz.

Shymell (spinster)

Colchester (continued)

Date/Source Name

1172. 21 Apr. 1599 Eliz.

Examination Book, Shymell (w/Edward)
1588-1600, no foliation.

Offence/Process

Examined concerning her relations with various suspected victims of her witchcraft, includes a reference to 'Robyn the devill'. mark of Eliz. four men bound for her appearance at court.

1173. 26 May 1599 Parnella

Examination Book, Abbott (of Greenstead)
1588-1600, no foliation.

Detailed examinations of four men and a woman, including Wm. Denman, incumbent of Greenstead, as well as Parnella herself. Descriptions of various quarrels and injuries supposedly connected by witchcraft. Parnella had killed several men and been suspected as a witch for over 20 years. One victim went to 'Anne Cryx of New Castle' for a remedy after being bewitched. Parnella told how Alexander Bradock, surgeon of Colchester, asked her to keep a familiar for him, and Marcellus Goodwyn, physician of the same town, 'did Clapp two Claves o to this examynates head'.

1174. Apr. 1600 Petronella

S.R. Eliz. 42
g.c. and m. 11

Abbott (spinster)

in gaol; various bound to give evidence against her, including Jn. Dyxson of Greenstead, labourer; on 10 Apr. 1599 bewitched Susan Dyxson, daughter of Jn., who died on 10 May following. not guilty.

1175. June 1651 Margt. Burgis

Corporation
Records (see introduction)
1651

(w/Thos.)
John

Information of three men of Horndon on the Hill about the suspected bewitching of a man by Margt.

1176. Ewen 1, p. 285 Lock

for using 'witchcraft' to discover the lost yarn of Wm. Fayrcloth.

PROSECUTIONS IN CENTRAL RECORDS.

All the central sources from which the following cases are taken are located at the P.R.O. Cases 1182 and 1183 are printed, with comments, in C.L. Ewen, Witchcraft in the Star Chamber (n.p., 1938), pp. 15, 55-6. Case 1195 is printed on pp. 9-10 of the same pamphlet by Ewen. Ewen I, pp. 282-283 also printed cases 1198, 1200, 1202 from the Acts of the Privy Council. Case 1196 is discussed by G.L. Kittredge in Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, xvi (Harvard, 1934), pp. 97-101.

<u>Star Chamber</u>	<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name/Village</u>	<u>Offence/Process</u>
1181.	Oct. 1606 St. Cha. 8 58/5	Edwin Hadslye of Willingale Doe	among those accused of deer-stealing and assault in the park of Lord Morley, and a 'Comon Coniurer'; article 12 enquired whether he offered information about the other deer thieves, obtained from his magic glass, in exchange for his release.
1182.	1606 St. Cha. 8 207/21	Richard Cradock, clerk, and others	accused by Jn. Mountford, vicar of Radwinter, of conjuring up false spirits in the church and churchyard in an attempt to secure possession.
1183.	1621-2 St. Cha. 8 32/13	Katherine Malpas of West Ham	counterfeited possession with an evil spirit and caused goodwives Hedlyn and White to be taken for witches. Mr. Jennings, vicar at Westham, and Master Holbrooke, the preacher there, prayed for the possessed girl. Dr. Franklin of Ratcliffe, a user of 'sawcerie' was employed and given 20s. The girl was examined in 1622 by King James. (for further details see p. above)
1184.	1621-3 St. Cha. 8 213/7	Anne Mortlake of Birdbrook	accused of procuring a sorcerer (widow Chapman) to drive her husband mad so that she obtained his property and he wandered around as 'Mad Mortlake'.
<u>King's Bench</u>			
1185.	1578 K. B. 9 647 m. 237	Katherine Howe	committed to gaol for 'maleficii' and died in prison 4 June 1578
1186.	1583 K. B. 9 658 m. 369	Joan Maidston	committed to gaol for 'fascination' and died there of plague on 20 Apr. 1583
1187.	1587 K. B. 9 668 m. 274	Lettice Harris	probably a witch; died of plague in Colchester gaol 7 March 1587. The following year Eliz. Harris of Witham was tried as a witch; see case 262.
1188.	1587 K. B. 9 668 m. 277	Eliz. Jackson	probably a witch since she was one of seven people appearing in a gaol delivery roll, six of whom are known to have been witches; died of plague 7 March.
1189.	1589 K. B. 9 676 m. 230	Joan Adcock	probably a witch since she immediately follows the known witch Agnes Mose and an Alice Adcock was accused of witchcraft at the next Assizes, case 307; died of plague 28 Oct. 1589.

<u>Date/Source</u>	<u>Name/Village</u>	<u>Offence/Process</u>
1190. 1589 K.B.9 676 m.231	Francisca Upney	probably a witch and the daughter of the witch Joan Uptney of Dagenham (cases 296,297) who confessed (1589 Pamphlet sig.B) to having two daughters who were witches; the other was probably Alice Upney, delivered according to the gaol calendar of the 1589 Trinity Assizes.
1191. 1593 K.B.9 683 m.152	Joan Grine	imprisoned for suspected 'fascination' and died of plague on 5 Apr.1592
1192. 1596 K.B.9 690 m.285	Joan Luckyn	imprisoned for 'fascination' and died on 4 Dec.1595 of plague
1193. 1596 K.B.9 690 m.283	Joan Gardiner alias Webb	imprisoned for 'fascination', died on 9 Dec.1995
1194. 1596 K.B.9 690 m.289	Mary Luckyn	imprisoned for 'maleficii', died of plague on 18 Dec.1595
1195. 1612 K.B.27 1435 m.392	Alice Arthur (widow),Chelmsford/	she complained that Robt.Fuller slandered her by saying 'she is a witch and hath bewitched my childe'; Damages claimed £40. Robert pleaded not guilty. no verdict.
<u>State Papers</u>		
1196. Apr.1561 St.Pap.12/16 f.117,120	Jn.Devon alias Cox	for holding masses in Essex (at Newhall) and for love magic at Winchester.
1197. Sept.1577 St.Pap.12/186 f.221-5	Robt. Mantell	examination concerning his escape from Colchester gaol and of Doctors Elkes and Spacie about treasure-seeking, having a familiar in a ring and using alchemy, in Essex and London.
<u>Privy Council Acts</u>		
1198. Aug.1577 Acts P.C.n.s.ix, pp.391-2	Henry Chitham of Great Bardfield	suspected of coining money and conjuring
1199. May 1580 Acts P.C.n.s.xii, pp.23-4	Various	Ralph Spacy of Southminster and Thos.Lovekin, --- Warner, ---Constance, to be apprehended for conjuring.

Date/Source Name/Village Offence/Process

May 1580 Humfrey Poles to be apprehended for conjuring

Acts P.C.n.s.xii, p.34 of Maldon

July 1580 'one Randell' that the boy accomplice of Randell, committed

Acts P.C.n.s.xii, p.102 with him for conjuring, should be set free at the next Assizes.

Nov. 1580 Nicholas Johnson, accused of sorcery, making a wax image of the

Acts P.C.n.s.xii, pp.251-2 of Woodham Mortimer. Queen; bailed, to next Assizes.

1580-1581 Robt. Mantell/Bloise concerning his escape from prison, treason,

Acts P.C.n.s.xii, pp.29, 353-4 and sorcery of his accomplices (cf. also P.R.O., Assizes 35/23 Hilary, nos. 48, 49)

Contemporary literary references to prosecutions.

1204. Apr.-May 1570 Sir Thos. Smith examined witnesses concerning Malter's wife of Theydon Mount, and Anne

John Strype, Life of Sir Thomas Smith (1820), pp. 97-100. Vicars of Navestock; various

charges including bewitching animals and humans and having familiars,

also details of counter-witchcraft activity and of a visit to a

cunning man, 'one Cobham of Romford'.

1205. Apr. 1602 Alice Bentley tried at the Quarter Sessions at Saffron Walden 13

John Darrel, A Survey of Certain Dialogical Discourses (1602), p. 54/ Apr. 1602 for

bewitching Susan Boyton who was possessed.

Miscellaneous references.

1206. 2 June 1568, pardon for John Wentworth, late of Little Horkeley, Armigerous, for

Thomas Bridge, yeoman, late of Little Horkeley, and for Robert Ellys, late of

White Notley, yeoman, for all conjurations of evil spirits committed before the

present date. Cal. Patent Rolls. Eliz. I, iv, 1566-1569 (1964), p. 169.

1207. 1633-1647 There are a number of references to Essex witchcraft in the

Ashmole MS. deposited at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Of the three cases, (b)

is especially long. References between 1633 and 1641 were found in Richard

Napier's astrological practice-book which was continued by his successor Sir

Richard Napier. Cases between 1645 and 1647 appear in the first three volumes

of 'Figures set upon Horary Questions by Mr William Lilly'.

1207(a). 18 August 1634, Eliz. Wilkins and Emma Tayler her daughter were suspected of witchcraft in another county and it was suspected that the latter had travelled into Essex. There is no reference in known Essex prosecutions to either of these women. Ashmole MS. 412, fol. 153.

1207(b). There are numerous references to the bewitching of Elinor Aylet of Magdalen Laver Hall in Little Laver. She was the wife of John Aylet Lord of the manor of Magdalen Laver (Morant, Essex, ii, 142), one of the ten Essex gentlemen summoned in March 1643 for not attending a local muster (Commons Journals, 22 March 1642/3; I owe this reference to Mr. Arthur Searle of the E.R.O.).

Ashmole MS. 412, fol. 13^v: 23 Oct. 1633

Mrs Elinor Aylet of Aythorpe Roothing was supposedly bewitched by Eliz. Spacy and goody Mathewe. Also mentioned were Jane Lasco and her daughter Jane Case of Magdalen Laver; Rebecca Write, Jone Dowsit, and Parnel Sharpe of Aythorpe Roothing. In this, as in most of the references, there are various astrological calculations.

Ibid., fol. 16: 26 Oct. 1633

E.A.; now said to be of Magdalen Laver, was 'troubled w(i)th a soden loosenes' which first occurred on her husband's death. 'Elisab Spacie' is written above the diagram.

Ibid., fol. 19v: 17 Oct. 1633 (sic)

Elis. Spacy of High Roding appeared plainly to her in her sleep this nighte and then not 2 or 3 dayes after'.

Ibid., fol. 117: 7 April 1634

E.A. suspects witchcraft 'her husband selfe and family have bin much tormented' and her cattle die, give no milk, or kick down the pails.

Ibid., fol. 125: 23 April 1634

E.A. desires to visit Napier.

Ibid., fol. 141v: 10 June 1634

E.A. 'sorely tormented and vexed with a company of witches' and 'feares they will worke her End'; her son and cows both attacked and she is feverish and 'something comes like a fly roaringe and Bussing about her'.

1207(b), continued.

Ibid., fol. 146: 9 July 1634

E.A. came to Napier. The following names are listed: Elizabeth Spacy of High Rooding and Rebecca, Richard Pavitt and wife of Leaden Rooding, Parnel Sharpe, An Mathew of Harlow, Jeffery Holmes and Joane and her mother Joane Dowsett. E.A. was 'very much troubled in her head and a dazling in her Eyes'; her urine was good, but had 'a great white sedement'; she fainted often and did not sleep well. She was first ill in child bed, but had had nine children since. Her husband, daughter, and cows also attacked.

Ibid., fol. 153V: - 1634

Two of those E.A. suspected 'lay about her house' and would not go away until they had spoken to her or her husband; she refused to see them. The two suspects were 'Somes his wife and her mother'.

Ibid., fol. 157: 7 Oct. 1634

E.A. was taken with a fainting fit and flushed all over her body. She suspects Elizabeth Spacy most. Her daughter of five years has a running sore on her back and her son of six 'was taken in the night and his eye lids drawn all awry and divers little knobbs like warts on his eye lids'.

Ibid., fol. 175V: 19 Feb. 1635

E.A. sent a letter.

Ibid., fol. 279: 12 April 1639

E.A. again very sick with her old fainting fits. Much 'troubled with a cold in her stomache and with a swelling in her Belly and sick at her heart'. 'hath sometymes a dry tickling Coffe'; a Burneing heate at her backe very paynefull'; 'he(r) Courses stayd for 6 weekes and then she came down and she was very ill after the stay(ing)'; 'cannot sleep'.

Ibid., fol. 282V: 19 May 1639

E.A. very sick and 'they feare she could not live till morneinge'; cannot sleep and sick and fainting.

Ibid., fol. 292V: 3 March 1640

A list of medicines for E.A.

1207(b), continued.

Ashmole MS. 164, inside the back cover: no date, c. 1645
Mention of Mrs Aylett of Magdalen Laver Hall.

Ashmole MS. 178, fol. 31: 1645

'A House and Grounds bewitched in Essex', 'Maudlin hall in Essex: in Little Laver', John Aylett, Ellinor'.

Ashmole MS. 185, fol. 270v: 26 April 1647

E.A. of 'Maudlin Hall' bewitched; medicines including 'duobus nailes'.

1207(c). In a number of the references in case 1207(b) there is, alongside, a reference to another, though possibly connected, case. This concerned Faith Say or Sage of High Laver. The first known reference to this case occurred on 7 April 1634 (Ashmole MS. 412, fol. 117) where 'Faythe Saye for the like strong p(re)sumptions of witchcraft' is appended to the case of Elinor Aylett. On 7 July following (Ibid., fol. 146v) her cattle, butter, cheese, and beer were said to have been attacked by witches. Powder, ointment for the udders of the cows and a parchment to be hung in a barrel were prescribed. At an unspecified date later in the same year (Ibid., fol. 153v) her milk, cheese, and beer had been cured, but her husband 'for a great payne in his back feares those ill people'. On 7 October (Ibid., fol. 157) her husband was still sick and she herself suffered from 'a litenes in her head and a payne in her Teeth and a trembling at her heart'. She was still receiving treatment on 9 Feb. 1635 (Ibid., fol. 175v). It is possible that a reference to 'Goodwife Faith saith ye old woman nowe ill' inside the back cover of Ashmole MS. 184 (1645) is to the same case.

- Cases 1208-1220: suspected witches named in depositions but not in indictments.
1208. The mother of Elizabeth Lowys of Great Waltham. See case 861.
1209. Eve (Mother) of Hatfield Peverel who taught Eliz. Frauncis her witchcraft. 1566 Pamphlet, p.318.
1210. Elizabeth Lorde, widow, of Hatfield Peverel. She bewitched Goodman Some and Jone Roberts. 1579 Pamphlet, sig. A111^v.
1211. Margery Sammon of St. Osithes, various acts of witchcraft. (cf. Assizes 35/36/T, g.c.c.) 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. A5, v C4, C4.
1212. Henry Celles of Little Clapton, various acts of witchcraft. 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. C8, D, D^v, D3.
1213. Joan Robinson of Walton, various acts of witchcraft. 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. F5^v-F8.
1214. Elizabeth Ewstace of Thorpe, various acts of witchcraft. (cf. gaol calendar case 168) 1582 Pamphlet, sigs. C7, D7^v, E4, E6.
1215. Elizabeth Motte of Heningham Sible, uses a familiar. 1589 Pamphlet, sig. B2^v.
1216. Elizabeth Whale of Heningham Sible, uses a familiar. 1589 Pamphlet, sig. B2^v.
1217. Elizabeth Clarke's mother (Bedingfield?) and kinsfolk of Manningtree; previously executed. 1645 Pamphlet, p.1.
1218. Judith Moone of Thorpe has the marks of a witch. 1645 Pamphlet, p.25.
1219. Sarah Burton imprisoned at Harwich for witchcraft. 1645 Pamphlet, p.28.
1220. Goodwife Hagtree had an 'imp' fifteen years before. 1645 Pamphlet, p.29.

840.

Case 840 is so curious that it merits further discussion. A number of the families involved, the Aylett's, Maxie's, and Alston's, were prominent gentry families and are easily located in Morant, Essex. The exact nature of what was supposed to have occurred is obscure. Since the link with witchcraft prosecution is obscure, the case has not been followed up. Those implicated sent a petition to the Justices of the Peace (E.R.O., Q/SBa 2/56-8) stating that the charges of 'Coniurac'on, Theft, Whoredome and many other misdemean(ou)rs' were false. The first part of the deposition of Martha Hurrell will be enough to show the extraordinary allegations. Those interested will find more lurid details in E.R.O., Q/SR 324/118.

'She deposeth that betweene Easter and Mich(ae)lmas 1643... Mr Robert Aylett and Mr Tho Ailett, Mr James Richardson, Sarah Fletcher, Abraham Rich, Jo: Drake, Jo: Dier (all of Stinstead), Lambert Smith, and the Coniurer, that went in black Apparell, of a browne haire, and a blackish beard, a man of a middle size (and various others, named).... had half a dozen meetings. At her M(aste)rs twice and att Wm Drakes half a score times, and att Sr Wm Maxies house and att my La(dy) Edens once or twice, and they rode to Sr Wms and my Ladies, and once att Sr Martin Lumelyes.... and these meetings were alwaies in the night ... And w(hen) they thus mett they went into the bed chambers of those p(er)sons att whose houses they mett, sometimes, and att her Mrs. they tooke M(ist)ris Drurie out of her bed and carried her into the hall chamber and there the Coniurer and Henry had the use of her bodie, and Henry first, once a piece, and then the(y) fetcht her husband and laid by her, and then Eliz. Waite and Sarah Fletcher, and then they kissed him and puld up his shirt, and took up their Coates, and lay downe on the top of him, and they said that he did them some good....'

Among the other activities were stealing clothes and money, banquettings where they 'feasted and had filders from Coggishall and Sr Wm Maxies maid plaid on the virginals', and some conjuring. Sr Wm. Maxies man did conjure by making a cirle in her Mrs hall and setting up 3 candles w(hi)ch burnt blue and w(he)n they put them out they did it w(i)th milk and soote.'

(Punctuation is slightly modified to make the sense clearer.)

861. Depositions written at the end of an Archdeaconry Act Book (E.R.O., D/AEA/2).
 The first person to be accused of witchcraft in Essex after the Witchcraft Statute of 1563 was Elizabeth Lowys. She was found guilty at the Summer Assizes but pleaded pregnancy. A month before the Assizes she was questioned at the Archdeaconry court. Her deposition and those of witnesses have survived at the end of the Act Book. They are unique and of considerable interest, especially because they are the earliest qualitative evidence for witchcraft beliefs in Essex. They show, among other things, the type of neighbourly quarrelling that surrounded witchcraft accusations. For these reasons the depositions have been fully transcribed with only punctuation slightly modified. Miss Tessa Ward of Chelmsford very kindly helped to transcribe the difficult script. (cf. cases 3-5, 861 above)

1) Henry Geale, aged 80 or thereabouts, of Waltham Magna where he had lived six or seven years, being examined, said:
 'Firste that John Lewys and ollif his daughter aboute this tyme ii yeres had stolen a capon of this depo(n)ent, and when she came to demaund yt he denied yt utterlie, tyll at the last, when he sawe this depo(nent) wold goe farther, he confessed yt and offered hym monye, but noo certein some. And (he had) sold yt to one Mary Barnard, Prowes wife sistar, w(hi)ch capon the said Lewys fetched againe. He wold have d(elivere)d yt on a mud wall, but this depo(nent) refused so to doo and will hym to come into this depon(ent) house. For this depo(nent) had be(e)n to see Tho Gryges (the) constable, who willed hym to sende for som(e) other man at the reseipt of the capon. And after the d(elivery) of the said capon at the p(er)swacyon of 'ho Wignoll. The said Gryges wif(e), who was godmother to ollif Lowys (who holpid her father to stele the capon), said to ollif 'Thou art my goddaught(er) and suerlie, if th(e)y parents will not convert thee, I will', and soo then and there she bete her.

This the capon de(livere)d, they fell in talke. The said wignoll said to the said John Lowys in this wise. 'Fye for shame Lowys, beinge an old man willt not leve thy pilferinge? For thirty y(er)es past my father toke a handsawe out ~~of~~ thy hous.' Then said Lowys, 'I prairie yow end this matter and I will nev(er) do so more'. To whome againe the said Wignoll saide. 'Thow hast ben a prettie man in thy daies'. 'Ye' said Lowes 'I may thanke my wif of this my Lamenes for soo she hathe bewyched me lame, and then I sent for the conynge woman of Wytham and she told me

861(continued).

yt was my wifes doinge.

And then and there Lowys wif and her mother fell at variac(ons), and for her p(ar)t she the said Lowys wif, being werie of the exercysinge of her wytcherie because her mother was strong(e)r in bewytchinge then she was, said she wolld devoure her self; and uppon that her husband, beinge in feare of her, beinge in the stret, went home and comynge home she was hanged in the hous. She hanged herself still(sic) she were sterke dede. And h(er) husbnde cut the rope. And beinge relieved, Tho Wignall and other(s) demaunded of her whye she did so; she said she dyd yt to the (e)nd her husbnde and mother skulld be hanged because her mother was the strong(e)r wytche.

Mr Warter has the examining.

(2) Philippa Geale, aged thirty-two, of Great Waltham, being examined said: That Elizabeth Lewys, wife to John Lowys, and this depo(nen)t fell at varia(c)ons for takynge in of worke, in that the said Lewys wif went to John Bernard's wif and said that this depo(nen)t wold spyn no more of her worke. Thereuppon at the next meatyng they fell out. And this dep(nen)t tollde her that she lied and had tollde a wronge tale. And, amonge other talke, this deponent saiethe that she said 'yf it be as folke saye, thow art a wytche'. To whome the said Lewys wif answered, 'yf I be a wyche the dyvell thee twytche'. And ymmediatly upon that this depo(nen)t fell on a grete quyvering and quakeringe. And this was don about Satirday aboutes five yeres past. And soo after that (she) went home, continuynge soo till wednesdaie, at w(hi)ch daie she fell downe ded, and was so sick fourteen daies yt no bodie thought shee wold have lyved. And then her neighbors sent for the preistes, to whome she utterid all. And then he sent for the said Lewys wif, threatenynge her if this depo(nen)t died she shulld be brent (i.e. burnt), and after her comynge this depo(nen)t mended. And otherwise she knows nothing.

(3) Agnes Devenyshe, aged forty-seven, of Waltham where she had resided eight years, deposed that: she hathe herde a comon brute (i.e. rumour) that Lewys wif ys a wytche. Item, that about M(ar)ch last, gooinge to Comes house, she wente to the said Lowys wifes hous, and then they talked about a sore arme of hers. And then she (i.e. Eliz. Lowys) counselled her to goo to a woman under Munckewoode. And goynge thith(e)r, the folkes tollde her husbnde and her that she was a wyche.

861 (continued).

It(em). the saide Lewys wif did then and there aske her how Johnson drink did worke. And she this deponent aunswerid that yt was as yt did. Then the said Lewys wif said, 'lett hym com and speke w(i)th me. It(em). that this depo(nen)t goynge to her for monnye, viz. vii^s viiid whiche she colde not spare, and aft(er) that she had two piges and one of them sodenlie died, and the other ev(er) pyned tyll she was fayne to sell yt. And she judgeth that yt is the doynge of the said Lowys wiff. And then she this depo(nen)t fell sicke, w(i)th her husband and child w(i)th all, in(?) pain and grief.

Item. that on(e) maye even, being at Canell(es) hous, John Canell his chillde being sicke, (it) laye w(i)th the neck clene awrye, the face und(er) the lift~~x~~ (sic) shollder, and the right arme drawn w(i)th the hande clene backwarde and upwarde, the shullder pynt before the brest pight (sic), the boddie lyinge from yt an oth(er) waie, not right but wrythinge, and the right legge clene backwarde behinde the boddie - contrarie to all nature; as they suppose the verye doynge of the said Lowys wif.

And otherwise she knows nothing to depose.

(4) Lewys wif, being examined, said:

'Whether or when she was in her garden or y(ar)de.'
 She replied 'that she hathe a y(ar)de and in yt yerbes.'
 'It(em). how many tymes she hathe lien flatt or knelid in the yarde. she saithe she neve(r) knelid or laye flatt in the y(ar)de.'
 Item. whether she in the y(ar)de or hous knelinge standing or lyinge flatt spake theis wordes, viz. Christ my christ, yf thow be a saviour come down(e) and avenge me of my enemyes, or elles thow shall not be a saviour. Denies.
 It(em) whether she confess(e)d that she killed a Lamb by wytcherye, yeld 'might yt chene (sic), must yt be fed w(i)th the mete of childrene?' when yt was a fedynge w(i)th mylke and whitebrede. She admitted 'that she said that she cam(e) unto the hous where a woman was feadynge a Lambe w(i)th mylk and whitebrede and spake 'what, must yt be fed w(i)th whitebrede and mylke?', and that then the woman putt upp the Lambe, And the next daie yt diedd (b)y eatynge w(i)th whitebrede and mylke ov(er) muche.
 It(em). whether she was a doer in the h^{yt}tinge of Gregorie Canells chillde. Denied and said 'that she was noo doer of yt.'

- 861 (continued).
 It(em). whether she was ev(er) at Maplestedd. She says 'she was nev(er) ther, but her husband hathe sent some thether.
 It(em). whether she counselled Canell to goo to the Woman of Paswykke for the childes recov(er)ie. She replies 'that she willed his wif to goo thithere aboutes the childe.
 It(em). that her daughters, Anne, Allice, and Ollyf, were at home w(i)th her sins (i.e. since) the corte and dwell in the hundred, and were at home seven daies comynge on the tuesdaye and went on the tuisdaie. And (she) sent for thre -em becaus she was in troble, to have them praie for her, by Henrey Lewgarr. And after, she confessed that she sent for them by Lewgar, and when they cam(e) she said, 'children I am brought out of my good name to an yll'. The (e)ldest said 'o mother, I am sorie that we ar(e) com(e) to this lamentacyon. Item. yt she nev(er) talk w(i)th them in a chambere; and at there dep(ar)ting she gave them gods blëssinge.
 It(em). her oth(er) daughters were at home sins her troble - Phillice and Jone. Gregory Canell affirms that his childe sykened the mundaie afore the Corte. And, after the Corte, the saide Childe died, beinge soo difformyd as nev(er) was sene, viz. the right arme tirnyng clene contrarie, and the legg contrarie to that, and rysinge double to the hed of the childe.
 (5) Henry Lewgar, aged thirty, deposed that:
 at or going to ch(ur)ch Lewys wif gave hym viiid to goo fetche her daughters in dengye hall and in that town; and that she knew p(er)fytle that her daughter was at dengye hall, and one dwelling w(i)th the Clarke and th(e)other dwelling w(i)th reynold. And comynge first to Annie, said in the kychin in the hall house to her, and said to her that y(ou)r frether (sic) and mother praied her to com(e) to them. And th(e) other at Reynolds in the hall. And he laye at his brothers to Sudmyster. And to the thirde he and th(e) other sister went, to Clarkes, and soo they cam w(i)th hym to little Waltham. And Ollif cam to Walltham and then in a felde p(ar)ted from her. It(em) that he hathe herd by talke that she hathe been suspect of wytcherie ev(er)ie four yeres.
 It(em). that he cam(e) to Wignalls hous the night before he went, and went into the house to have his counsell before he went for them. And said, 'Mother Lowe hereth me to go for her daughters.
 It(em) that she nev(er) taught them anie of her arte or cunying.'

APPENDIX TWO. DEFINITIONS OF 'WITCHCRAFT'.

Recent historians of English witchcraft have had considerable difficulty in their attempts to define the basic terminology.¹ Nor is there unanimity among anthropologists. The classic distinction between 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' in Africa was first outlined by Professor Evans-Pritchard in the following words.

'Azande believe that some people are witches and can injure them in virtue of an inherent quality. A witch performs no rite, utters no spell, and possesses no medicines. An act of witchcraft is a psychic act. They believe also that sorcerers may do them ill by performing magic rites with bad medicines.'²

The distinction in this passage is between different types of means employed; the end is similar. Both witches and sorcerers injure people. Among the Azande a person is a witch. Witchcraft is an inherent quality, whereas sorcerers act in a certain way. Sorcerers are conscious of their activities, whereas witches, whose power is internal, may not be aware that they are witches until they are accused. While the witch is the vehicle for a power greater than herself, often the unwilling agent of vast evil forces, the sorcerer controls the power inherent in certain 'medicines' or other objects. Although both are driven by anti-social feelings, the witch is permanently malicious, having inherited her power or been taught it very early in life, while the sorcerer is only dangerous at specific times and acquires the power of evil later in life by a more self-conscious transmission.

Unfortunately these analytic distinctions have not always been applied in societies other than the Azande. Thus, in Cewa society, there are 'sorcerers' who always use outward medicines and gestures and are conscious agents, but who, like 'witches',³ are permanently evil and learn their evil power early in life. Even the Azande themselves do not have 'witches' by all these criteria: people are not permanently motivated by witchcraft, but only on specific occasions.⁴ There have been other criticisms

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1. K.M. Briggs, Pale Hecate's Team (1962), p.3, discusses various definitions and suggests the effects of definitional differences among historians. Among other recent discussions those of C.L. Ewen (Ewen I, pp.21-4) and G. Parrinder, Witchcraft (Pelican edn., 1958), pp.8-13 are the most helpful.
 2. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937), p.21.
 3. M.G. Marwick, Sorcery in its Social Setting (Manchester, 1965), pp.81-2 discusses the inapplicability of the 'witchcraft/sorcery' distinction in the Cewa setting.
 4. 'A Zande is interested in witchcraft only as an agent on definite occasions' (Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft among the Azande p.26).

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of the whole distinction, yet it has been found useful as a tool in the analysis of witchcraft beliefs in Tudor and Stuart Essex. We may therefore ask to what extent people in sixteenth and seventeenth century England distinguished between various types of 'witchcraft' and how far there were generally accepted definitions.

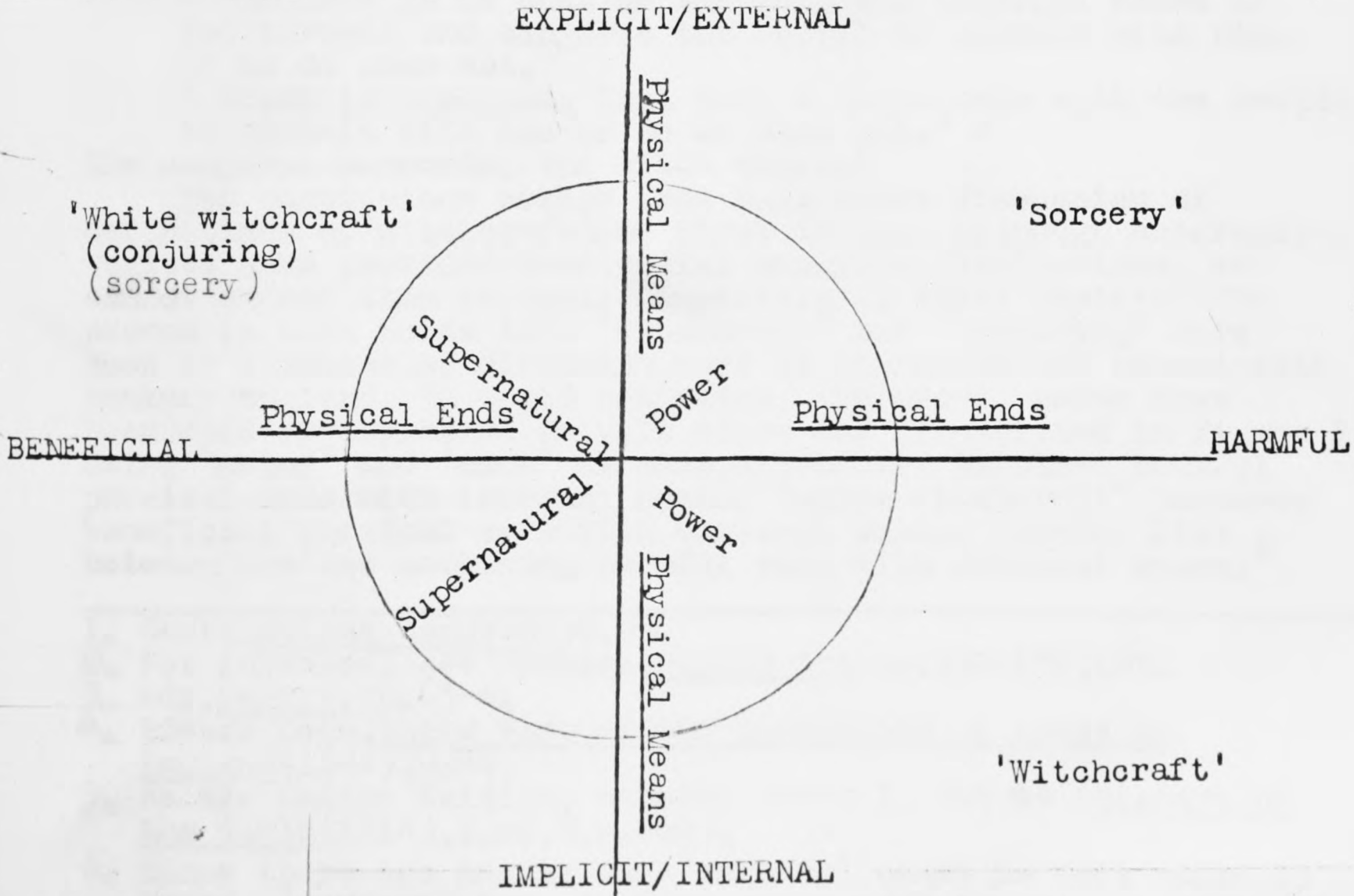
Examination of historical material on the basis of the distinctions above immediately reveals that there was immense confusion and variation. There were a number of reasons for this. Some authorities based their definitions on the works of continental demonologists, others on the opinions of country folk. Opinions of witchcraft changed between 1560-1680. Attitudes differed between social and religious groups. One illustration of the way in which a number of opposing concepts were subsumed under the word 'witchcraft' occurs in the work of the Kentish squire, Reginald Scot. 'Witchcraft', he said, was both good and bad in its effects, both inward and outward in its means, at least in the 'estimation of the vulgar people'. 'The effect and end' of witchcraft was 'sometimes evill, as when thereby man or beast, grasse, trees, or corne, &c; is hurt: sometimes good, as whereby sicke folkes are healed, theeves bewraied(sic), and true men come to their goods, &c'. Here we see that a person who cured an animal by magical means was, in common parlance, a 'witch'. Likewise, although outward rituals and medicines were used, inherent power of a personal kind was also needed. 'The matter and instruments, wherewith it is accomplished, are words, charmes, signes, images, characters, &c:', in other words external qualities. But their power depended on a certain personality. 'The which words although any other creature doo pronounce, in maner and forme as they do, leaving out no circumstance requisite or usuall for that action: yet none is said to have the grace or gift to performe the matter, except she be a witch.'² A person was a witch and also acted as a witch.

Other writers did not agree with Scot that the 'vulgar people' failed to distinguish between types of witchcraft. In fact, it was just such a tendency to make such a distinction between the 'good' and the 'bad' witch that angered John Gaule. As he wrote, in the middle of the seventeenth century,

'According to the vulgar conceit, distinction is usually made betwixt the White and the Blacke Witch: the Good and the Bad Witch. The Bad Witch, they are wont to call him or her,

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1. One of the most forceful of the attacks on Professor Evans-Pritchard's distinction was made by V.W. Turner, 'Witchcraft and Sorcery: Taxonomy versus Dynamics', *Africa*, xxxiv no.4 (1964), pp. 319-324.
 2. Scot, *Discovery*, p. 389.

Figure 1: Definitions of terminology.



that works Malefice or Mischiefe to the Bodies of Men or Beasts: The good Witch they count him or her that helps to reveale, prevent or remove the same.¹

The Witchcraft Statutes also distinguished between different ends. The punishments for attempting to find lost goods, for instance, were different from those for trying to kill someone by witchcraft. Yet the Statutes, by including both offences, blurred the differences. Thus a 'good witch' in popular estimation might, theoretically, be executed just like a 'bad' witch.

There seems to have been, in fact, a constant struggle between those who wished to differentiate and those who wished to amalgamate. On the one hand there were those who wanted to punish equally all those who used 'magical' power, irrespective of their ends, and irrespective of the degree of their control over such power. For them all 'superstition', especially that emanating from Rome, was 'witchcraft'.² For them the words 'witch' and 'conjuror' were synonyms.³ On the other hand there were those who wished to differentiate 'good' and 'bad' witches by their effects, and 'witches' and 'conjurors' by their degree of control over their power. The distinction by effects we have seen illustrated in the passage by John Gaule quoted above. The distinction by degree of control can be shown in the words of Sir Edward Coke.

A Conjuror is he that by the holy and powerful names of God invokes and conjures the Devill to consult with him, or to do some act.

(a) A Witch is a person, that hath a conference with the Devill, to consult with him or to do some act.⁴

The conjuror commands, the witch obeys.⁵

Two conclusions emerge from this short discussion of definitions of 'witchcraft'. The first is that although anthropologists have provided some useful analytic distinctions, we cannot expect them to apply completely in every society. The second is that words like 'witchcraft' and 'conjuring' were used in a number of different ways in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. To avoid confusion, therefore, terms have been used as explained on p.11 above and illustrated in figure 1. Using 'means' and 'ends' as axes, witchcraft combines harmful physical ends with internal means; 'white witchcraft' combines beneficial physical ends with external means; sorcery lies between the two combining harmful ends with external means.

1. Gaule, Select Cases, p.30.

2. For instance, see Perkins, Damned Art, pp.150-152, 167.

3. Ady, Candle, pp.63-4.

4. Edward Coke, Third Part of the Institutes of Lawes of England (1644), p.44.

5. As Sir Walter Raleigh, echoing James I, put it (History of the World (1614), I, xi, 6, p.209).

6. Since there are hardly any 'sorcery' cases in this sense in Essex, 'sorcery' has, in fact, been used as an alternative word to describe 'white witchcraft'. But the analytic distinction may be more useful in other counties.

BIBLIOGRAPHYA. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES.

1. ESSEX RECORD OFFICE.

The Essex sources are described in F.G. Emmison, Guide to the Essex Record Office (Colchester, 1946-8), parts 1, 2. Those records found most useful for the study of witchcraft prosecutions are listed in section (a) below. The sources used for the reconstruction of the social background to prosecutions in a sample three villages (as described in chapter 8) are grouped in section (b). + against a source not in section (b) indicates that it was also used for the three village study. For example, quarter sessions material was useful both as a source for witchcraft prosecutions and for its references to events in Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, and Little Baddow.

Undoubtedly the most important single source for witchcraft accusations are the Act Books of the Essex and Colchester Archdeaconry courts. Also of major importance are the Quarter Sessions records, and Maldon Borough records.

(a) Witchcraft sources.

Ecclesiastical records:

Archdeaconry of Essex,

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| + Act Books, 1560-1671. | D/AEA/1-44. |
| + Deposition Books, 1576-1630. | D/AED/1-5, 8-10. |
| Cause Books, 1581-1623. | D/AEC/1-8. |
| Visitation Books, 1565, 1614. | D/AEV/1, 5. |

Archdeaconry of Colchester,

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| + Act Books, 1540-1666. | D/ACA/1-55. |
| + Deposition Books, 1587-1641. | D/ACD/1-7. |
| Cause Books, 1588-1623. | D/ACC/1-10. |
| Visitation Book, 1586-8. | D/ACV/1. |

Archdeaconry of Middlesex,

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Acts/Visitations, 1662-1680. | D/AMV/1-6. |
|------------------------------|------------|

Bishop of London's Consistory Court,

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Visitations, 1625-9, 1634-9. | D/ALV/1, 2. |
|------------------------------|-------------|

Bishop of London's Commissary in Essex and Herts.
 Act Books, 1616-1668. D/ABA/1-12.
 Depositions, 1618-1642. D/ABD/1-8.
 Miscellaneous, 1631-1680. D/AXD/1-3.

Quarter Sessions records:

+ Rolls, 1556-1680. Q/SR/1-441.
 Bundles, 1610-1680. Q/SBa/1-2.
 Order Books, 1652-1680. Q/SO/1, 2.
 Minute Book, 1632-1643. Q/SMg/1-5.
 Estreats of Fines, 1626-1649. Q/SPe/1-4.

Maldon Borough records:

+ Court Books, 1557-1623. D/B/3/1/5-10.
 Court Papers, 1594-1595. D/B/3/3/65.

Transcripts at the E.R.O.

Essex Ship Money, 1637. T/A/42.
 Diary of Ralph Josselin. T/B/9/1.

Miscellaneous notes on witchcraft - of little value.

An essay on Matthew Hopkins. T/P/51/3.
 Ducking of witches at Kelvedon. T/P/58.
 Witchcraft in the eastern counties. T/Z/11/62, 79.
 Witchcraft at Little Dunmow. T/P/107/1.
 Burial of reputed witch, 1755. D/P/36/1/3.
 A Colchester witch, 1747. D/DRg/4/57.
 Notes on Manningtree witchcraft. T/P/114/9.
 Notes on witchcraft. T/P/156/11.

(b) Sources for the study of Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, and Little Baddow, 1560-1603.

As well as the sources listed below, all references in other sections of the bibliography with + against them were used in the three-village study.

Wills:

Wills for Hatfield Peverel and Boreham between 1540-1610, as indexed and listed in Wills at Chelmsford, 1400-1619, ed. F.G. Emmison (Index Library, 78, 1958).

Parish registers:

Boreham register, 1560-1603. D/P/29/1/1.
 Little Baddow register, 1560-1603. D/P/35/1/1.

Boreham accounts:

Churchwarden's and collectors for
the poor, 1565-1603.

D/P/29/5.

Hatfield Peverel, manorial:

Mugdon Hall, court book, 1499-1558.

D/DBd/M4.

Mugdon Hall, survey, 1589.

D/DBd/M6/1,2.

Hatfield Peverel, court roll, 1553-1603.

D/DBr/M50.

ii. PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE.

Assize records:

+ Home Circuit Indictments, 1559-1680.

Assizes 35/1-121.

King's Bench:

+ Ancient Indictments, 1560-1603, 1645-7.

K.B. 9/597-712,
830-839.

Controlment Rolls, 1582, 1647.

K.B. 29/216, 296.

Star Chamber:

Proceedings, James I.

St. Ch. 8.

(Unfortunately the Elizabethan Star Chamber Proceedings have not yet been calendared. A search of the only 31 bundles (St. Ch. 7) which have been calendared, and of 10 original bundles (St. Ch. 5/A. 1-9), revealed no cases of witchcraft. At present, therefore, it seems unlikely that a search for witchcraft cases in the 972 Elizabethan bundles would repay the labour involved. If cases appear in the Elizabethan records at roughly the same intervals as those in the Jacobean, we could only expect one Essex case every eighty or more bundles. No pre-1560 cases were discovered in Select Cases in the Star Chamber, 1477-1544, ed. I. S. Leadam (Selden Soc., ~~xiii~~ xvi, xxv, 1903, 1911) or in the P.R.O. Lists and Indexes (xiii, 1901), which is a calendar of proceedings, 1485-1558.)

Exchequer records:

+ Lay Subsidy Rolls, 1524-1599.

E/179/108-111.

Ecclesiastical records:

(These are on temporary deposit at the P.R.O. while awaiting transfer to the Guildhall Library.)

Archdeaconry of Essex Act Book, 1561-2.

Uncatalogued.

Fragment of Consistory Court of London

Correction Book, 1574.

"

Consistory Court (London) Deposition Book, 1578-1580.

"

Commissary Court (London) Correction Book, 1588-1593.

"

Consistory Court (London) Correction Book, 1589-1590.

"

Commissary Court (London) Correction Book, 1605.

"

Commissary Court (London) Correction Book, 1619-20.

"

iii. LONDON COUNTY RECORD OFFICE.

Certain volumes of ecclesiastical records were unfit for production, as specified below. When these have been repaired, additional cases of Essex witchcraft are almost certain to appear.

The series entitled 'Miscellaneous Books' comes closest to the E.R.O. 'Act' books and is the most useful source for the historian of witchcraft.

Consistory Court of the Bishop of London:

Act Books, 1570-73, 1577-9, 1626-8.	DL/C/8, 10, 24.
Assignment Book, 1638-1640.	DL/C/89.
Deposition Books, 1566-1625.	DL/C/210-2, 221-4, 227-9 (those for 1586-1611, 1617-1620 were unfit for production).
Miscellaneous Books, 1583-1683.	DL/C/300-328. (vols. 300, 302, 307, 313 were unfit for production).
Personal Answer Book, 1617-1620.	DL/C/192.
+ Wills, 1547-1627.	DL/C/418.

iv. COLCHESTER BOROUGH RECORDS. (Town Hall, Colchester).

Colchester borough court:

Sessions rolls, 1562-1601.	No catalogue mark. (Only 13/43 years have rolls)
Sessions rolls, 1605-1620.	No catalogue mark. (Only 11/15 years have rolls)
Books of examinations and recognizances, 1581-1600.	7c, 8c.

v. HARWICH BOROUGH RECORDS. (Town Hall, Harwich).

Harwich borough court:

Sessions of the Peace, 1601-1639.	98/14.
Miscellaneous memoranda and files of proceedings.	29/4, 29/8, 29/10, 37/2, 65/7, 133/12.

vi. BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

Ashmole Manuscripts:

178, 184, 185.	Figures set by Mr William Lilly upon Horary Questions, volumes I-III (1644-1647).
412.	Mr Richard Napier's Practice-book, 1633 to 1635, continued by Sir Richard Napier, his successor, to 1641.
421 (fol. 170a).	Letter from Mathias Evans to Richard Napier in 1621 concerning conjuring books.

vii. PRINCIPAL PROBATE REGISTRY. (Somerset House, Strand, London).

+ Wills relating to the parishioners of Hatfield Peverel and Boreham, 1560-1604.

viii. HOUSE OF LORDS RECORD OFFICE.

Pardon of Essex witches.

House of Lords, Main Papers,
10 March 1645/6.

ix. DR. WILLIAMS' LIBRARY. (14 Gordon Square, London)

+ The Seconde Parte of a Register.

B. PRINTED SOURCES.

(The place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.
Titles are abbreviated.)

i. PRIMARY SOURCES.

a) Contemporary pamphlets on Essex witchcraft.

(The contents and accuracy of the pamphlets are discussed
in chapter six above).

1566 Pamphlet. The Examination and Confession of Certain Wytches at Chensford in the Countie of Essex before the Queens maiesties Judges, the xxvi day of July Anno 1566 (1566; the only copy is in the Lambeth Palace library: it is largely reprinted in Ewen I, pp. 317-324 and references in the text refer to Ewen's numbering since the original numbering is confused).

1579 Pamphlet. A Detection of damnable driftes, practized by three Witches arraigned at Chelmissforde in Essex, at the late Assises there holden, whiche were executed in Aprill. 1579 (1579; there is a copy in the British Museum, and selections are printed in Ewen II, pp. 149-151).

- 1582 Pamphlet. A True and Just Recorde of the Information, Examination and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S.Oses in the countie of Essex(1582; abstracts are printed in Ewen,II,pp.155-163 and there is a microfilm copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Films S.T.C.,1014),by W.W.
- 1589 Pamphlet. The Apprehension and Confession of three notorious Witches. Arreigned and by Justice condemned and executed at Chelmesforde, in the Countye of Essex, the 5. day of Iulye,last past.1589(1589; the only copy is in the Lambeth Palace library; abstracts are printed in Ewen II, pp.167-8; there is a microfilm copy in the Bodleian Library,Oxford, in Films S.T.C.,952).
- 1645 Pamphlet. A True and Exact Relation of the Several Informations, Examinations, and Confessions of the late Witches, arraigned and executed in the county of Essex(1645; there are several copies and abstracts are printed in Ewen II, pp.262-277).

One other pamphlet relating to Essex witchcraft exists but has not been used as a source since it neither adds to our information nor seems to be accurate. It is The Full Tryals, Examination, and Condemnation of Four Notorious Witches,At the Assizes held at Worcester, on Tuesday the 4th of March(London, printed by I.W.,no date). Some of it appears to be based on the 1645 Essex pamphlet, but there are added details. The witches Rebecca West, Margaret Landish, Susan Cock, and Rose Hallybread featured in the Essex trials, but there is no mention of their victims Obadiah Peak, Abraham Chad, or Elin Shearcroft. Nor is there any 'Preston' in Essex. The pamphleteer states that Rebecca West and Rose Hallybread were burnt at the stake and 'Dyed very Stubborn' although we know from other records that Rebecca West was reprieved and Rose Hallybread died in gaol(see cases 607,648c). It seems, in fact, as if the pamphlet was a later fabrication based on the Essex pamphlet of 1645 and, possibly, on another account from another county. It is difficult to see why the trial should have been located at Worcester.

b) Contemporary books on law and witchcraft.

- ADY,Thomas, A Candle in the Dark: or, A Treatise Concerning the Nature of Witches and Witchcraft(1656).
- BERNARD,Richard, A Guide to Grand Jury Men(1627).

- CASAUBON, Meric, Of Credulity and Incredulity in things Natural, Civil and Divine(1672).
- CLARK, William, True Relation of one M^{rs} Jane Farrer's of Stebbin in Essex, being possess'd with the Devil(1710).
- COKE, Sir Edward, Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England(1644), pp.44-47.
- COOPER, Thomas, The Mystery of Witchcraft(1617).
- COTTA, John, A Short Discovery of the Unobserved Dangers of Several Sorts of Ignorant and Unconsiderate Practisers of Physicke in England(1612).
- " " The Triall of Witch-craft(1616).
- DALTON, Michael, The Countrey Justice(1618).

ENGLAND, Church of, Visitation Articles.

(On p.61 above, evidence from a number of visitation articles for archdeaonries within the county of Essex was cited. These articles are located as follows. I am indebted to the respective librarians for information concerning the articles in their possession. The 'S.T.C.' numbers refer to the numbers in A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England...1475-1640, compiled by A.W.Pollard and G.R.Redgrave(1926), or to the additions to the S.T.C. being made under the direction of Miss K.F.Pantzer of Harvard University.)

	<u>S.T.C. number.</u>	<u>Location.</u>
Middlesex Archdeaconry:		
1582	10275	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
Essex Archdeaconry:		
1610	10198	Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin.
1615	10198.5	Trinity College, Dublin.
1635	10199	University Library, Cambridge.
1636	10199.5	Trinity College, Dublin.
1639	10201	University Library, Cambridge.
1672	-	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
Colchester Archdeaconry:		
1607	10188.5	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
1631	10189	Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin.
1633	10189.5	Plume Library, Maldon, Essex.

- FILMER, Sir Robert, An Advertisement to the Jury-Men of England, Touching Witches(1653).
- GAULE, John, Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcrafts(1646).
- " " The Mag-Astro-Mancer, or the Magicall-Astrological-Diviner Posed, and Puzzled(1652).
- GIFFORD, George, A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers(1587).
- " " A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts(1593).
- GLANVIL, Joseph, Some Philosophical Considerations Touching the Being of Witches and Witchcraft(1667).
- HOPKINS, Matthew, The Discovery of Witches(1647). The 1928 edition by M. Summers was used throughout.
- HUTCHINSON, Francis, An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft(1718)
- JORDEN, Edward, A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother(1603).
- LAMBARD, William, Eirenarcha: or of the Office of the Justices of Peace(1582).
- MORE, Henry, An Antidote Against Atheism(1655), book 3.
- PECK, Francis, Desiderata Curiosa(1779), ii.146-7.
- PERKINS, William, A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft (Cambridge, 1608).
- R.B., The Kingdom of Darkness(1688).
- SCOT, Reginald, The Discoverie of Witchcraft(1584). All page references are to the 1964 reprint; preface by H.R. Williamson.
- STEARNE, John, A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft (1648).
- STRYPE, John, The Life of Sir Thomas Smith(1820), pp.97-100.
- SWAN, John, A True and Breve Report of Mary Glovers Vexation(1603).

c) Other printed source material.

A number of witchcraft cases were discovered in the printed records of counties other than Essex. These are listed below, with page references, in the texts marked with an asterisk.

Acts of the Privy Council, 1542-1631.

- * ATKINSON, N.C., (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, 1605-1791 (North Riding Rec. Soc., 1884-92), i.58, 213; iii.177, 181; iv.20; v.259; ix.6.
- * BLAGG, T.M., (ed.), Nottinghamshire Presentments Bill of 1587 (Thoroton Soc., Records Series, 11, 1945), pp.22, 36.
- * BUND, J.W., (ed.), Worcestershire County Records: Calendar of Quarter Sessions Papers, 1591-1643 (Worcs. County Council, 1900), p.492.

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1547-1660.

- CLARK, A., (ed.), Shirburn Ballads, 1585-1616 (Oxford, 1907), p.153.
- " " Lincoln Diocese Documents, 1450-1544 (1914), pp.108-110.
- * COPNALL, H.H., (ed.), Nottinghamshire County Records: Notes and Extracts, 17th Century (Nottingham, 1915), p.45.
- * COX, J.C., (ed.), Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals (1890), ii.88-90.
- * CUNNINGTON, B.H., (ed.), Records of the County of Wilts (Devizes, 1932), pp.61-2, 70, 75, 82, 156, 219, 225, 227, 242, 247, 278-282.
- CUTTS, E.L., 'Curious Extracts from a MS. Diary of the Time of James II', Trans. Essex Arch. Soc., i(1858), pp.126-7.
- GILBERT, W., 'Witchcraft in Essex', Trans. Essex Arch. Soc., n.s.xi(1911), pp.211-216.
- HALE, William, A Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes, 1475-1640 (1847).

- * HAMILTON, G. H., and AUBREY, E. R., (eds.), Books of Examinations and Depositions, 1570-1594 (Southampton Rec. Soc., 1914), pp. 158-9.
- * HARBIN, H. E. BATES, and DAWES, M., (eds.), Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset, 1606-1677 (Somerset Rec. Soc., 1907-1919), xxiii. 96-7; xxviii. pp. lv-lvi, 206, 331-2, 362, 369.
- * HARDY, W. J., (ed.), Hertford County Records, 1581-1894 (Hertford, 1905-1910), i. 3-4, 13, 126-7, 137, 267-8, 275.
- * HARDY, W. Le, (ed.), County of Middlesex, Calendar to the Sessions Records, 1612-1618 (Middlesex Rec. Soc., n.s. i-iv, 1935-41), i. 190-1, 199, 264, 365, 372, 376-7, 409; ii. 20, 45, 242, 279-80; iii. 16, 265, 306; iv. 133, 303, 309.
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ii. SECONDARY SOURCES.

a) History of witchcraft.

The majority of the works cited are on English witchcraft. The material in Lea and Robbins listed below, and especially the comprehensive bibliography in the latter, serve as an introduction to European witchcraft. Undoubtedly the most useful accounts of English witchcraft are provided by Ewen, Kittridge, and Notestein. The history of witchcraft generates considerable emotion; scepticism is necessary when reading a number of the works listed, especially those by Murray, Parrinder and Trevor Davies. The work by K.M. Briggs not only provides a charming account of the literary background to prosecutions, but also includes an excellent bibliography on English witchcraft.

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b) History of Essex.

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PLACE INDEX OF ESSEX WITCHCRAFT REFERENCES.

Every witchcraft reference, prosecution or otherwise, where place is named is included. Each reference is marked on Map 1. The letter and number in brackets immediately after the place name refer to the square in which the village is located on Map 1. The numbers which follow the brackets are those assigned to cases in Appendix 1. A date followed by P. represents a reference in the witchcraft pamphlet of that year. The letters or numbers in brackets after the pamphlet date indicate the exact location of the reference within the pamphlet.

For example, if one were interested in Alresford the procedure would be as follows. In the place index one would find that Alresford was in square F3 on Map 1. On the map there are three crosses to represent the three witchcraft references in cases 648(b), 1078, and pages 15-17 in the 1645 Pamphlet. The full titles of pamphlets are given on pp. 387-8 above:

Only villages with witchcraft references are included.

- A Abberton(F3), 391, 392, 392(b), 1007, 1017-8, 1101-2.
 Aldham(E2), 417, (?865).
 Alhamstone(E1), 252, 497.
 Alresford(F3), 648(b), 1078, 1645P(15-17).
 Ashdon(B1), 330, 1091, 1098.
 Asheldham(E4), 924, 954.
 Aveley(B6), 341-3.
- B Baddow, Little(D4), 29-33.
 Bardfield, Great(C2), 267, 822, 1019, 1021, 1029, 1040, 1198.
 Barking(A5), 75-9, 126-8, 137, 754, 894-5, 920, 938-9, 943, 953, 955,
 1589P(A4^V).
 Barnston(C3), 679-680.
 Beaumont(G2), 1122, 1582P(F2).
 Belchamp, Water(D1), 83, 84, 424(a-d).
 Benfleet, South(D5), 959.
 Bentley, Great(G3), 296, 460-1, 835, 847, 848, 1054-6, 1095, 1097.
 " Little(G2), 648(b), 1645P(15-17).
 Berden(A2), 845-6.
 Billericay(C5), 837.
 Birdbrook(C1), 1117, 1184.
 Blackmore(C4), 970.
 Bocking(D2), 325, 498, 712(b), 840.

Boreham(D3), 357-8, 393, 794, 862-3, 889-90.
 Borley(D1), 115(c), 121, 129, 130-1, 518-20, 811.
 Boxted(F2), 996.
 Bradfield(G2), 337-9, 759-62.
 Bradwell-iuxta-Coggeshall(D3), 1089.
 Bradwell-iuxta-mare(F4), 220-1, 814, 888, 896-7, 1074.
 Braintree(D2), 301-5, 447-9, 585, 819, 831.
 Braxted, Great(E3), 851, 854, 1022-3, 1042.
 Brentwood(B5), 103-5, 416, 800, 838, 886.
 Brightlingsea(F3), 142, 146-8.
 Bromley, Little(F2), 1088.
 Broomfield(C3), 915, 917, 950, 952.
 Bulphan(C5), 874.
 Bures, Mount(E2), 1026-7.
 Burnham(F4), 214-9, 232-3, 814.
 Burstead, Great(C5), 171-3, 934, 974.
 " Little(C5), 1132.
 Buttsbury(C4), 963.

C Canewdon(E5), 141, 912, 933.
 Canfield, Great(B3), 573, 576.
 Chelmsford(C4), 481-6, 738, 809, 901, 1195, 1197, 1203.
 Chesterford, Great(B1), 222-3, 814, 998, 1000-1, 1015-6, 1024, 1114.
 Chich St. Osyth, see St. Osyth.
 Chishall, Great(A1), 64(b), 799, 1093.
 Clacton, Great(G3) } 159, 166, 367, 629-33, 634-6, 648(e), 1582P(C8-D3),
 " Little } 1645P(18-19, 32-4).
 Clavering(A2), 1090.
 Coggeshall, Great(D2), 23, 403(b), 487, 1044, 1062-9.
 Colchester(F2), 991-2, 1003-1010, 1064, 1096, 1164-1176, 1582P(D2).
 Colne, Earls(D2), 1002, 1037, 1129.
 " Engaine(D2), 299, 1083, 1106-7, 1183.
 " Wakes(E2), 499, 500.
 Creeksea(E4), 865-6.
 Cressing(D3), 797, 1060-1.

D Dagenham(B5), 296-7, 306, 320-4, 327-9, 818, 820-1, 1589P(B, B3).
 Danbury(D4), 1, 2(b), 55-7, 241, 247, 250, 253, 816, 839, 864, 867, 876, 1111.
 Dedham(F2), 136, 1197, 1203, 1645P(5).
 Doddinghurst(B4), 961, 1131.
 Dunmow, Great(C3), 20, 114, 115(d), 125, 344-6, 396-7, 767, 1120.
 Dunton(C5), 883.

E Elsenham(B2), 106, 677, 801-3, 841-3, 853.

F Feering(E3), 204-7, 224-5, 431-6, 436, 1083.
 Felsted(C3), 353.
 Finchingfield(C2), 231, 267-8, 326, 736.
 Fingringhoe(F3), 224-5, 814, 994.
 Fobbing(C5), 946.
 Fordham(E2), 1070-1, 1076-7.
 Foulness(F5), 553.
 Frating(F2), 1081.
 Fyfield(B4), 42.

G Gestingthorpe(D1), 803, 807, 108(c).
 Goldhanger(E4), 1100.
 Gosfield(D2), 389-90.
 Grays see Thurrock, Grays.

H Hadleigh(D5), 927, 932, 971.
 Hallingbury, Great(B3), 1181.
 Halstead(D2), 62-4, 101-2, 416(b), 462, 503-5, 553(b), 559-561, 827.
 Ham, West(A5), 107, 115(b), 1183.
 Hanningfield, East(D4), 935-6, 972-3.
 " South(D4), 210-1, 937.
 Harlow(B3), 564, 1207.
 Harwich(H2), 580, 580(b), 586, 588-9, 743, 1144-1163, 1645P(28).
 Hatfield Broad Oak(B3), 446, 598.
 Hatfield Peverel(D3), 16-19, 22, 50, 58-61, 97-99, 123, 203, 208-9, 272-3, 793, 1030, 1033-6, 1566P(passim), 1579P(A4).
 Havering-atte-Bower(B5), 881, 930.
 Hawkwell(E5), 263-5, 928, 983.
 Hedingham, Sible(D2), 270-1, 279, 354, 359-62, 832, 1589P(B).
 Hempstead(C1), 1025.
 Henham(B2), 841.
 Hockley(D5), 108(d), 960, 965, 980, 1123.
 Holland, Great(G3), 590, 615-6, 637-8, 647, 1645P(34-5).
 Horkesley, Great(E2), 403(c), 403(d).
 " Little(E2), 1206.
 Hornchurch(B5), 881, 893, 899-900, 924.
 Horndon-on-the-Hill(C5), 966, 1175.
 Horndon(C5), 884, 929.

I Ingrave(C5), 403.

K Kelvedon(D3), 21, 795-6, 1059.
 Kirby-le-Soken(G2), 599, 624.

- L Lambourne(B5), 120, 532-6, 1579P(B1^V).
 Langdon Hills(C5), 923.
 Langham(F2), 613-4, 648, 648(f), 1046.
 Laver, High(B3), 1207.
 " Little(B3), 1207.
 " Magdalen(B4), 1207.
 Lawford(F2), 193-5, 595, 607-9, 1096, 1130, 1645P(1-15).
 Layer-de-la-Haye(E3), 1013-4.
 Layer Marney(E3), 839.
 Leigh(D5), 621-3, 885, 1127.
 Leighs, Great(D3), 200-1, 555-8.
 " Little(C3), 545-6.
 Lexden(E2), 1028.
 Littlebury(B1), 1579P(A7).
 Loughton(A4), 300, 942.
- M Maldon(D4), 67-9, 119, 870, 947, 949, 1141-3, 1197, 1200, 1579P(Avi).
 Manningtree(F2), 400-2, 602-4, 625, 626-8, 649, 793, 1645P(1-15).
 Maplestead, Great(D2), 228-230, 1589P(A3).
 Mersea, East(F3), 212-3, 814, 1073.
 " West(F3), 1058, 1074-5.
 Messing(E3), 251.
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 Moulsham see Chelmsford.
 Mucking(C6), 976.
- N Navestock(B4), 528-30, 657-61, 1204.
 Nazeing(A4), 977-9.
 Nevendon(D5), 712.
 Newport(B2), 459, 675.
 Norton, Cold(D4), 981.
 Notley, Black(D3), 434-4, 456-8, 1124.
 " White(D3), 1206.
- O Oakley, Great(G2), 269, 1049.
 " Little(G2), 167, 1084, 1103, 1589P(E6-F4).
 Ockendon, North(B5), 197-9, 510-1, 809.
 " South(C6), 537, 904, 908, 910.
 Ongar, Chipping(B4), 898.
 " High(B4), 913.
 Orsett(C6), 745-6.
 Osyth, St. (see St. Osyth)

P Panfield(D2), 440.
 Parndon, Great(A4), 1134.
 Pattiswick(D2), 493-6, 1041, 1043, 1045.
 Purleigh(D4), 421-2, 829-30, 957.

Q Quendon(B2), 845-6, 1115.

R Radwinter(C1), 1182.
 Rainham(B6), 100, 882, 984.
 Ramsey(G2), 429-30, 642-6, 1012, 1104, 1582P(E6^V), 1645P(26-9).
 Rayleigh(D5), 872, 951.
 Rettendon(D4), 403, 982.
 Rickling(B2), 554, 846.
 Ridgewell(D1), 70-1, 650, 748(b), 798.
 Rivenhall(D3), 1645P(12).
 Rochford(D5), 64(b), 926, 928, 1137.
 Romford(B5), 880, 887, 906-7, 911, 944-5, 1204.
 Roothing(Roding),
 Aythorpe(B3), 1207.
 Beauchamp(B3), 956.
 High(C3), 95-6, 1207.
 Leaden(B3), 1207.
 White(B3), 8.
 Roydon(A4), 108(c), 834.

S Saffron Walden, see Walden.
 St. Osyth(G3), 155-7, 160-5, 169, 174, 196, 202, 226-7, 605-6, 639-41,
 648(c), 814, 1047, 1116, 1582P(passim), 1645P(29-33).
 Salcott(alias S. Wigborough)(E3), 1048.
 Saling, Great(C2), 450-1.
 " Little(alias Bardfield)(C2), 1112.
 Sampford, Great(C1), 245-6, 1053.
 " Little(C2), 242-4.
 Shalford(C2), 445, 567-8.
 Shenfield(C5), 133-5.
 Shopland(E5), 1128.
 Springfield(D4), 563, 868-9, 877-8.
 Stambourne(C1), 748, 748(b).
 Stambridge, Great(E5), 902, 909, 931.
 Stanford-le-Hope(C6), 985.
 Stanford Rivers(B4), 237-9, 815, 914, 956, 1113.
 Stapleford Tawney(B4), 754(b).
 Stebbing(C2), 189-191, 335-6, 347-8, 410, 711, 813, 823, 849, 1118-9, 112;
 Steeple(E4), 864-5.
 Stifford(C5), 958, 1108, 1126.
 Stisted(D2), 143-5, 285-291, 507, 840, 1089, 1105, 1589P(Aiii).
 Stock(C4), 108, 804-5, 891, 905.

Stondon Massey(B4), 986.
 Stow Maries(D4), 525.
 Stratford Langthorne(A5), 115, 118, 149-50.
 Sturmer(C1), 1184.

T Takeley(B2), 850, 852-3.
 Tendring(G2), 1086-7.
 Tey, Great(E2), 1007, 1020.
 Thaxted(C2), 80-2, 108(e), 308, 957, 1121.
 Theydon Garnon(B4), 292-4.
 " Mount(B4), 1204.
 Thorpe-le-Soken(G2), 158, 166, 168, 394-5, 398-9, 437-9, 610-12, 638,
 648(d), 1582P(C2, D5, E2, E5), 1645P(21-5).
 Thorrington(F3), 1047, 1050-1, 1057.
 Thurrock, Grays(C6), 969.
 " Little(C6), 975.
 Tilbury, East(C6), 962.
 " West(C6), 702-4, 879.
 Tollesbury(E3), 49, 828, 1094.
 Tolleshunt Knights(also Bushes)(E3), 1085, 1092.
 Toppesfield(D1), 514-6, 518, 836.
 Totham, Great(E3), 6, 726, 993.
 " Little(E3), 501-2.

U Ugley(B2), 1135.
 Upminster(B5), 538-41, 569-71, 918, 1133.

W Wakering, Little(E5), 45-8, 871, 873.
 Walden, Saffron(B1), 387-8, 995, 1579P(Avii).
 Waltham, Great(C3), 3-5, 283-4, 861, 919, 922, 948, 964, 1136.
 Waltham Holy Cross(A4), 280-2, 661(b), 713-4, 721-2.
 Walton-le-Soken(H2), 600-1, 1582P(F5-F8).
 Warley, Great(B5), 968.
 Weald, North(B4), 901, 967.
 Weeley(G2), 763, 997, 999, 1078-80, 1582P(A7).
 Wethersfield(D2), 565-6.
 Wigborough, Great(E3), 825-6.
 " Salcott see Salcott Wigborough.
 Willingale Doe(B4), 488-9, 1181.
 Wimbish(B1), 122, 810, 1579P(Avii).
 Witham(D3), 2, 261-2, 340, 1038-9, 1052, 1108.
 Wivenhoe(F2), 224-5, 617-20, 1072, 1082, 1173, 1645P(17-18, 20-1).
 Woodford(A5), 940-1.
 Woodham Ferrers(D4), 363-6, 753.
 Woodham Mortimer(D4), 855, 1202.
 Wormingford(E2), 1011.

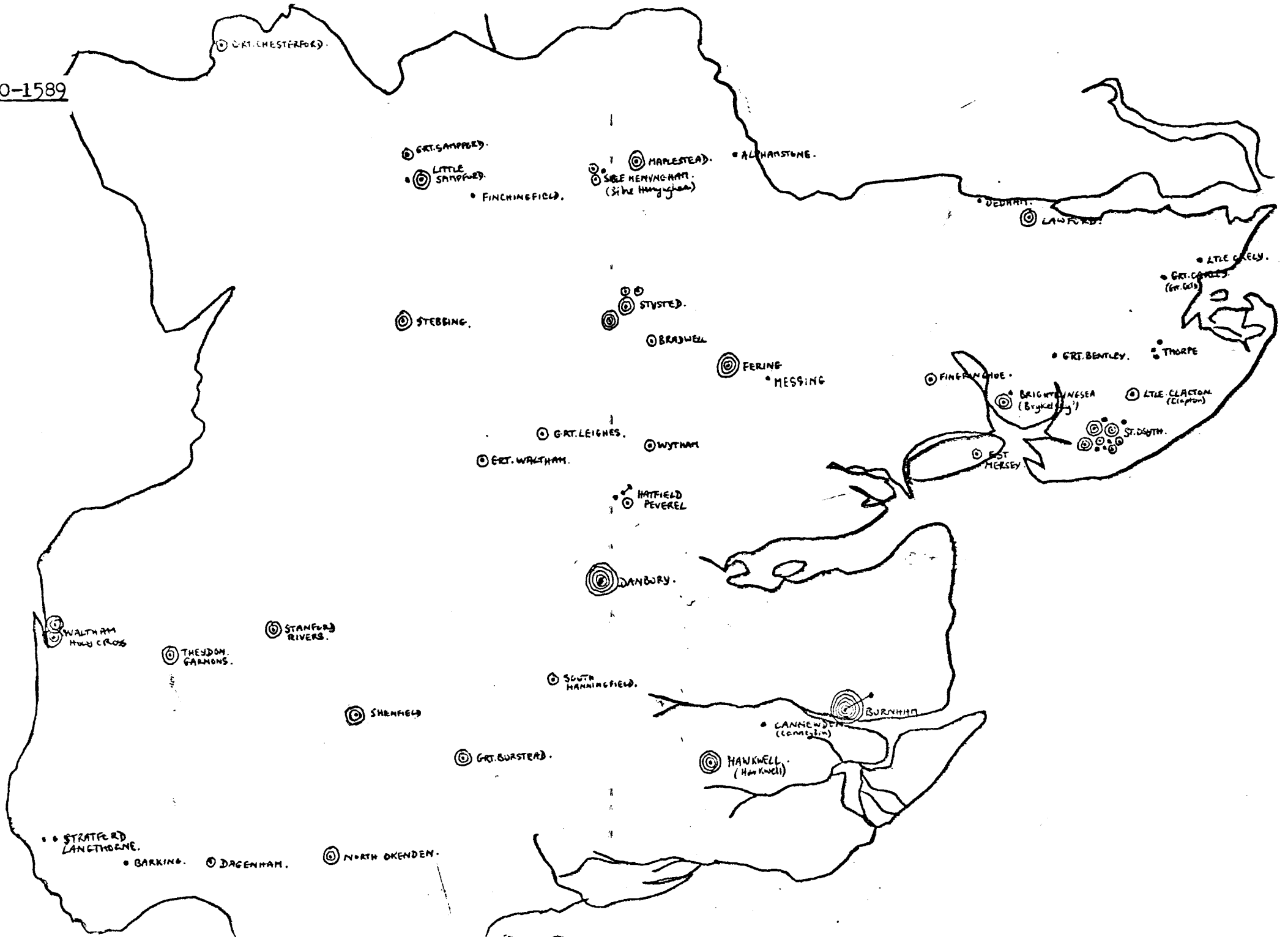
ASSIZES: 1560-1569



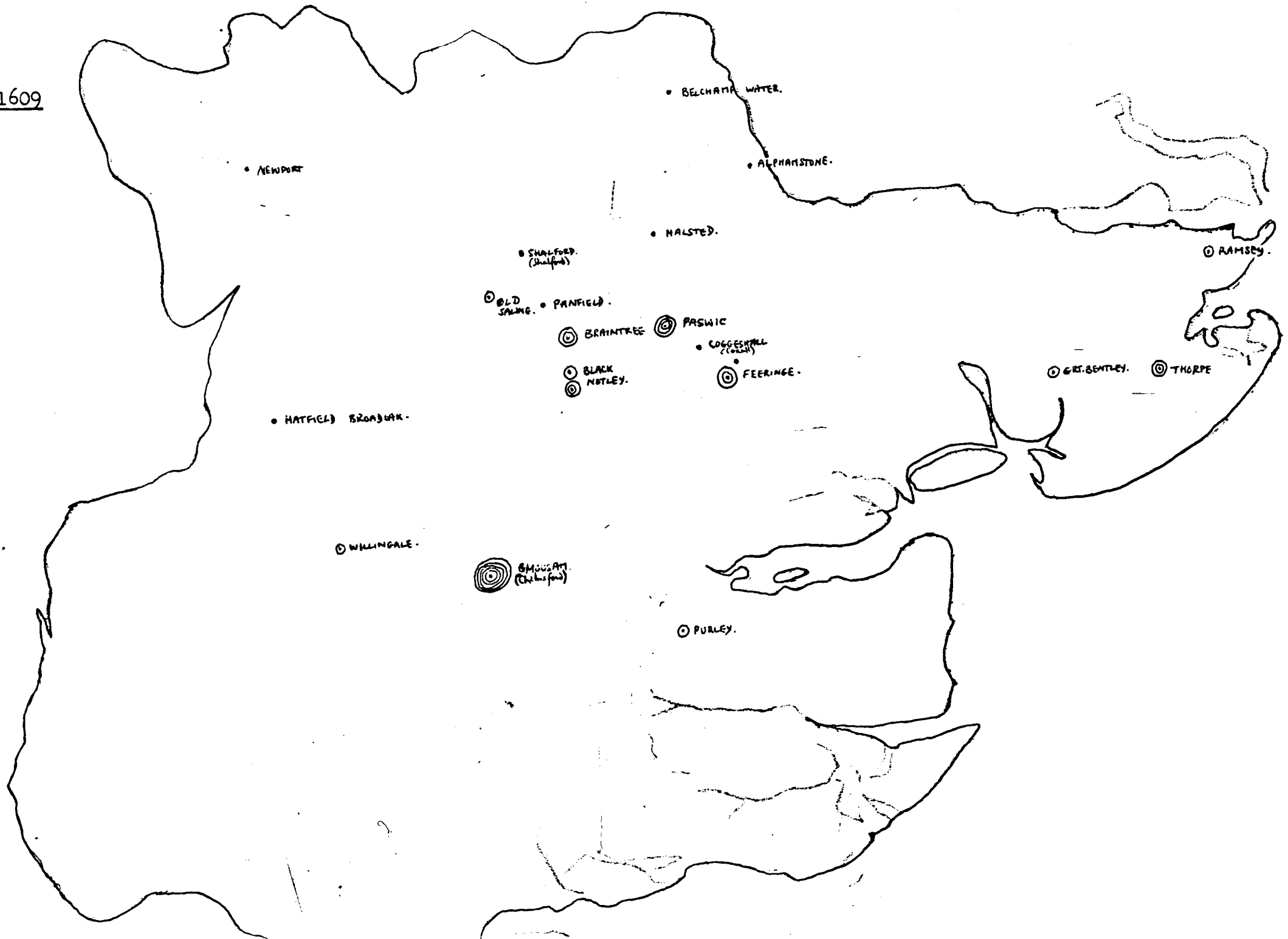
ASSIZES: 1570-1579



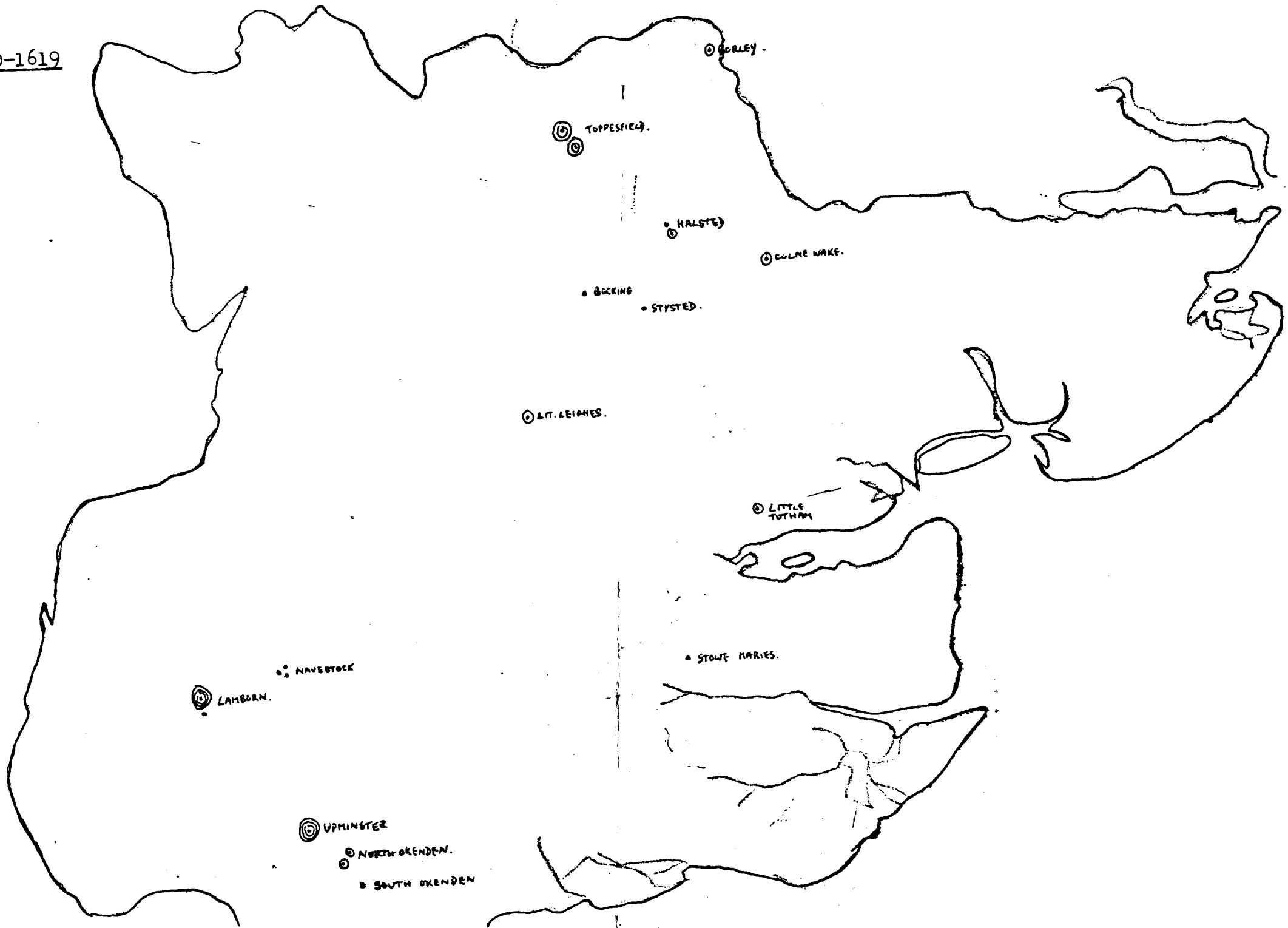
ASSIZES: 1580-1589



ASSIZES: 1600-1609



ASSIZES: 1610-1619



ASSIZES: 1620-1629



• RICKLYNG.

⊙ WEATHERSFIELD.

⊙ SHAULFORD.

⊙ HALSTED.
(SE. HALSTED)

⊙ GRT. LEFFNES.

• SPRINGFIELD.

• HARLOW.

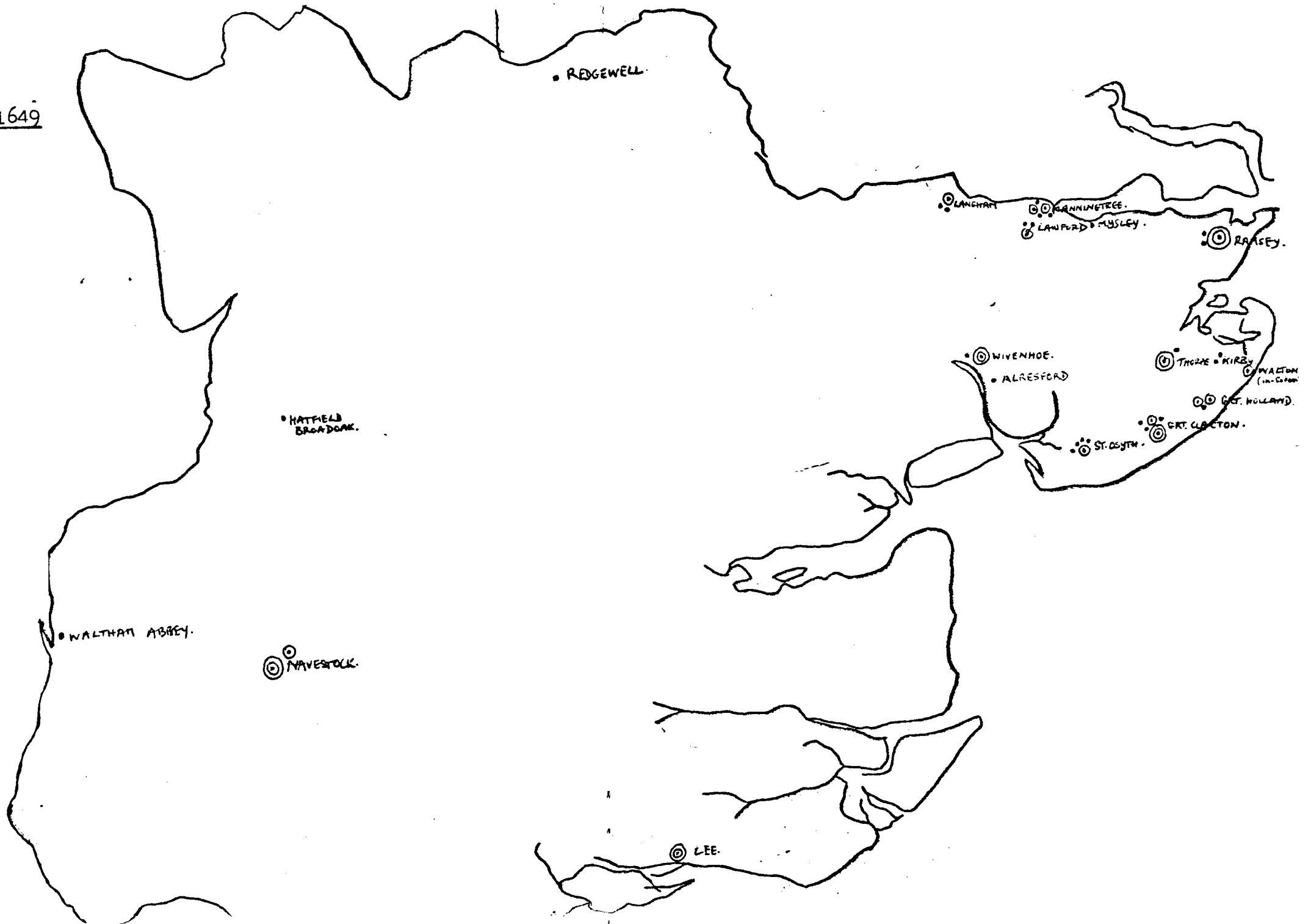
• FOUNES.

⊙ WPMINSTER.

ASSIZES: 1630-1639



ASSIZES: 1640-1649



1572 ASSIZES



⊙ HALSTEAD

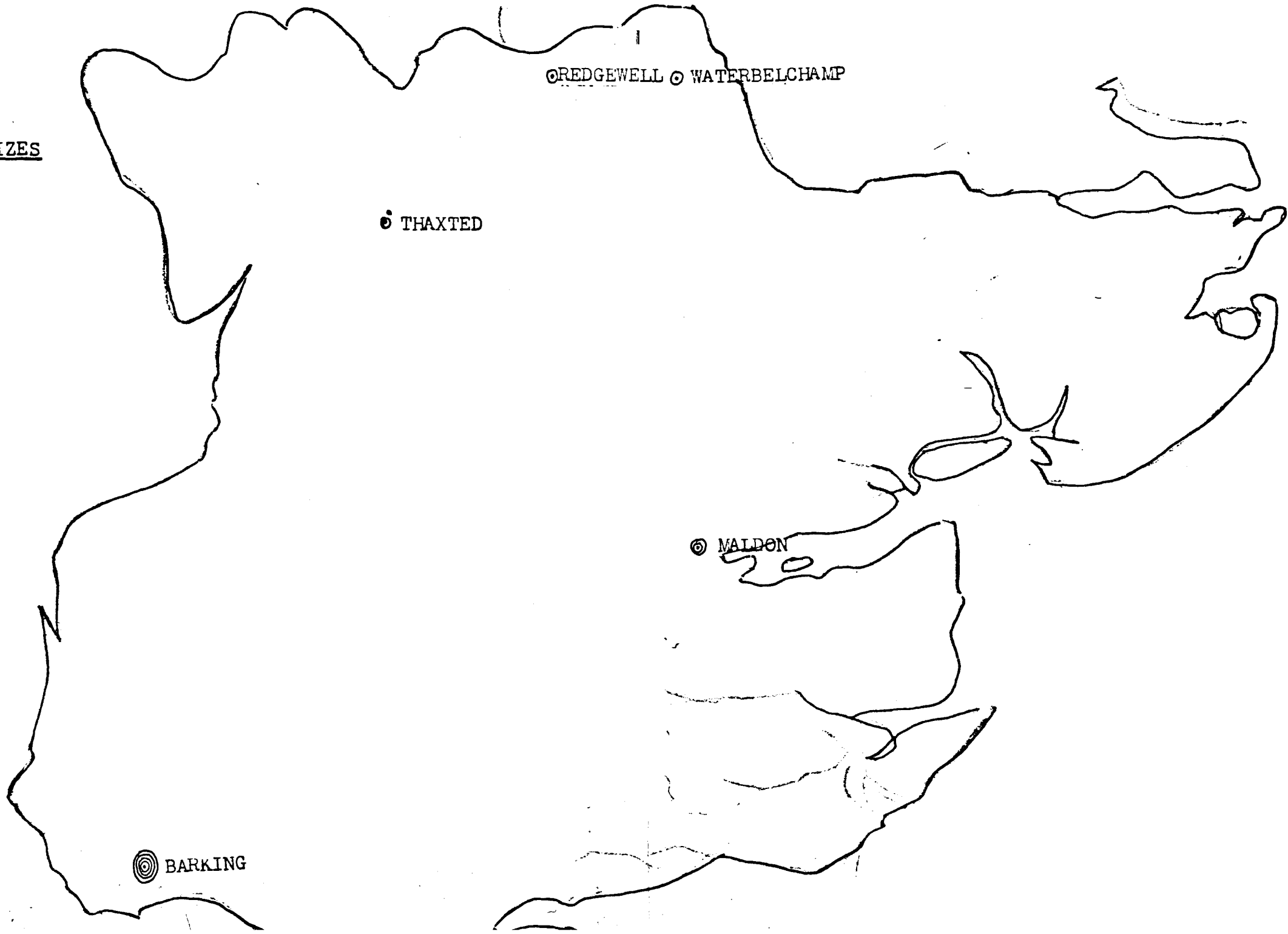
⊙ HATFIELD
PEVEREL

• TOLLESBURY

⊙ DANBURY

⊙ ⊙ LITTLE
WAKERING

1574 ASSIZES



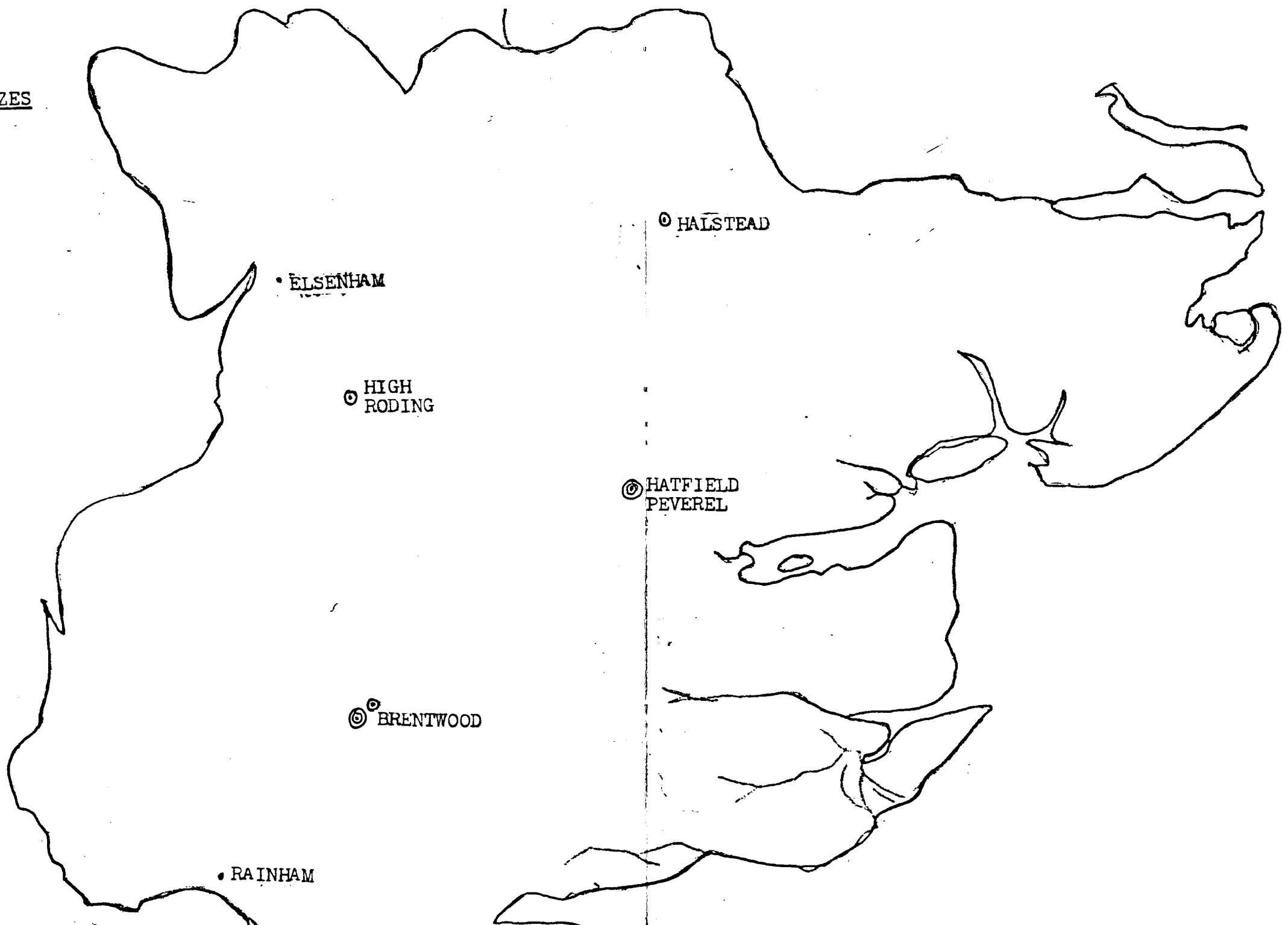
⊙ REDGEWELL ⊙ WATERBELCHAMP

⊙ THAXTED

⊙ MALDON

⊙ BARKING

1576 ASSIZES



• ELSENHAM

⊙ HALSTEAD

⊙ HIGH
RODING

⊙ HATFIELD
PEVEREL

⊙ BRENTWOOD

• RAINHAM

1579 ASSIZES



⊙ BORLEY

• WIMBISH

• GREAT
• DUNMOW

• HATFIELD
PEVEREL

• MALDON

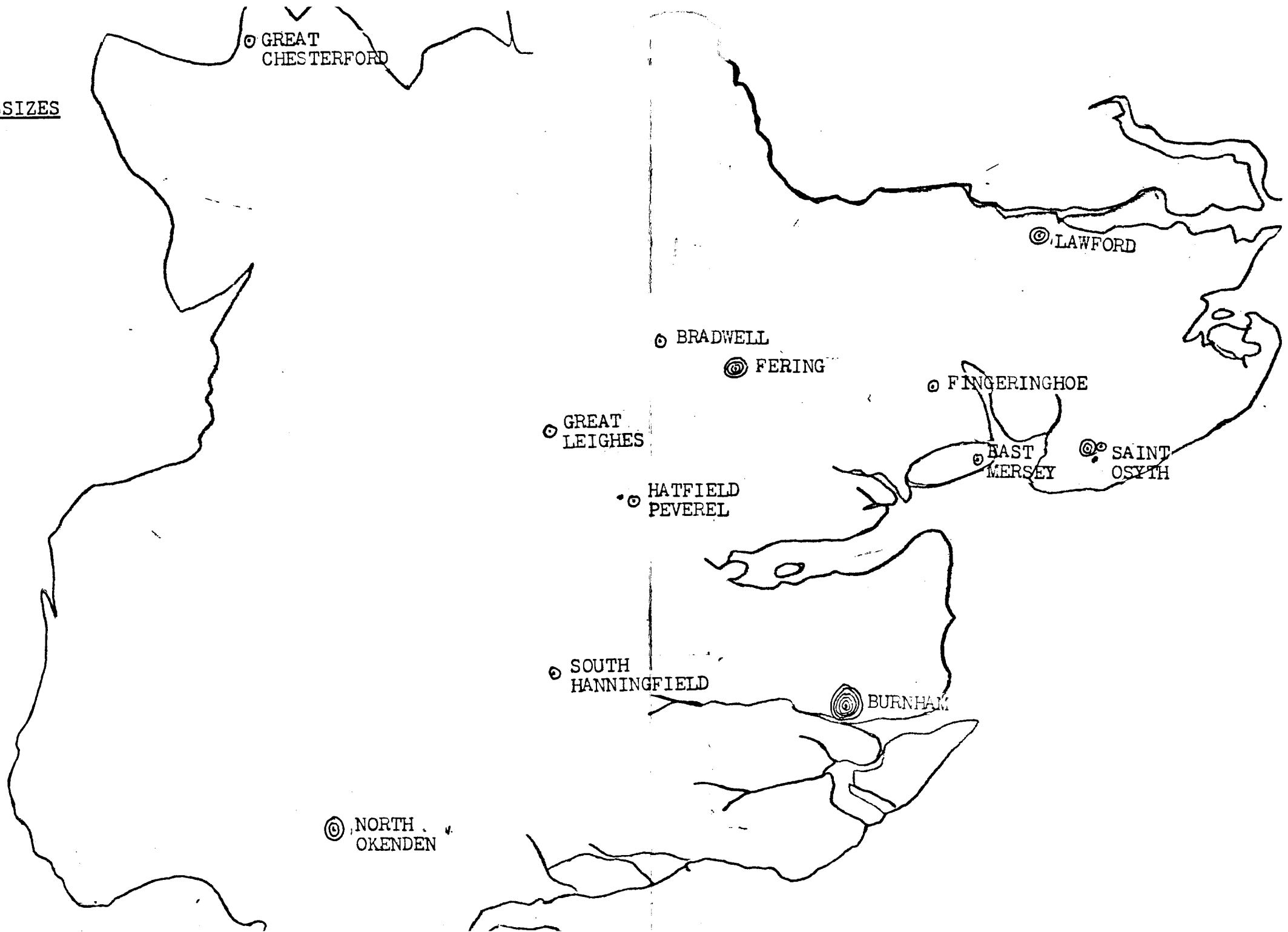
• LAMBORNE

⊙ BARKING
• STRATFORD
LANGTHORNE

582 ASSIZES



1584 ASSIZES



⊙ GREAT
CHESTERFORD

⊙ LAWFORD

⊙ BRADWELL

⊙ FERING

⊙ FINGERINGHOE

⊙ GREAT
LEIGHES

⊙ EAST
MERSEY

⊙ SAINT
OSYTH

⊙ HATFIELD
PEVEREL

⊙ SOUTH
HANNINGFIELD

⊙ BURNHAM

⊙ NORTH
OKENDEN

1589 ASSIZES

• SIBLE
HENNINGHAM

◎ STISTED

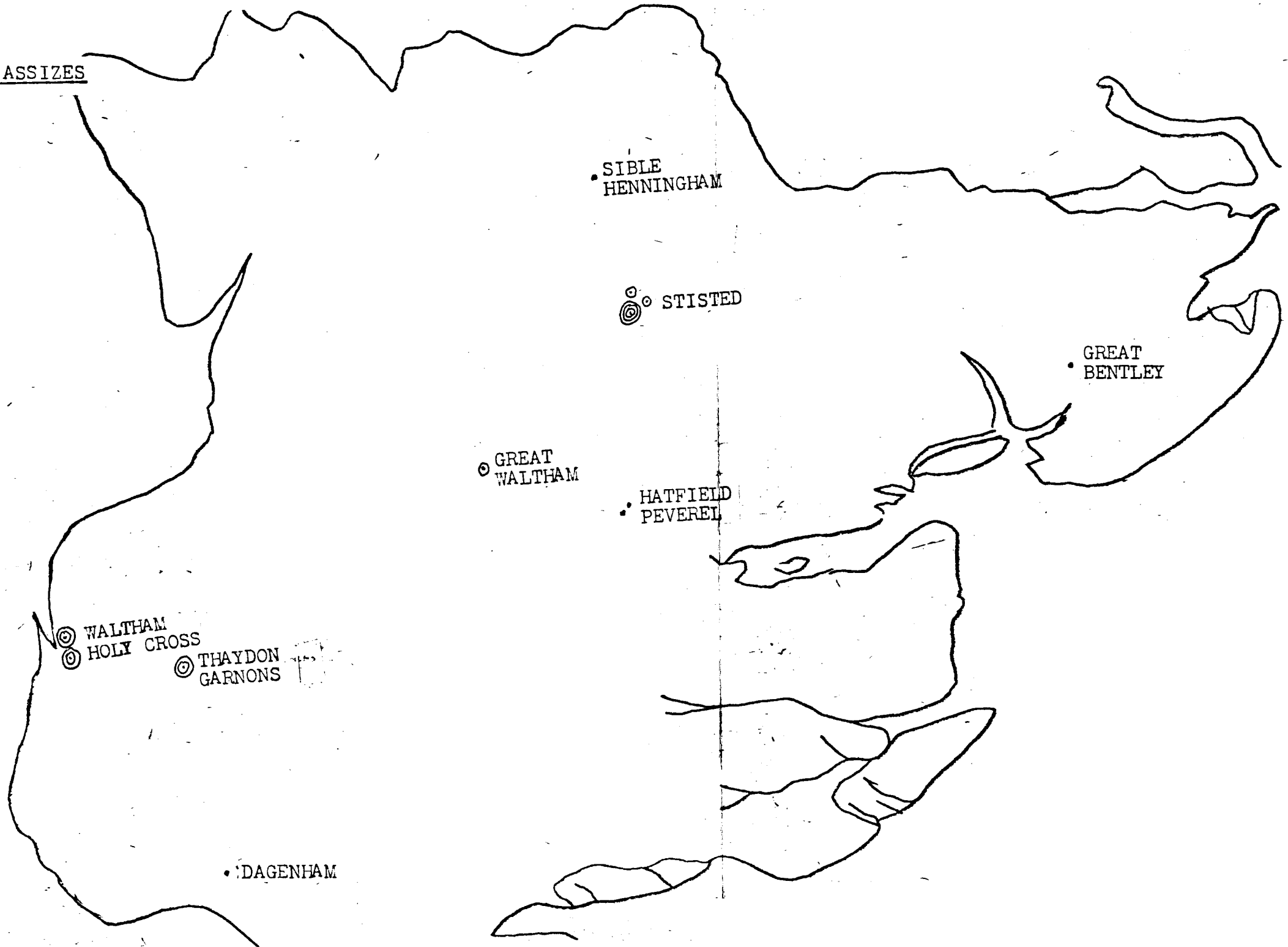
• GREAT
BENTLEY

◎ GREAT
WALTHAM

• HATFIELD
PEVEREL

◎ WALTHAM
◎ HOLY CROSS
◎ THAYDON
GARNONS

• DAGENHAM



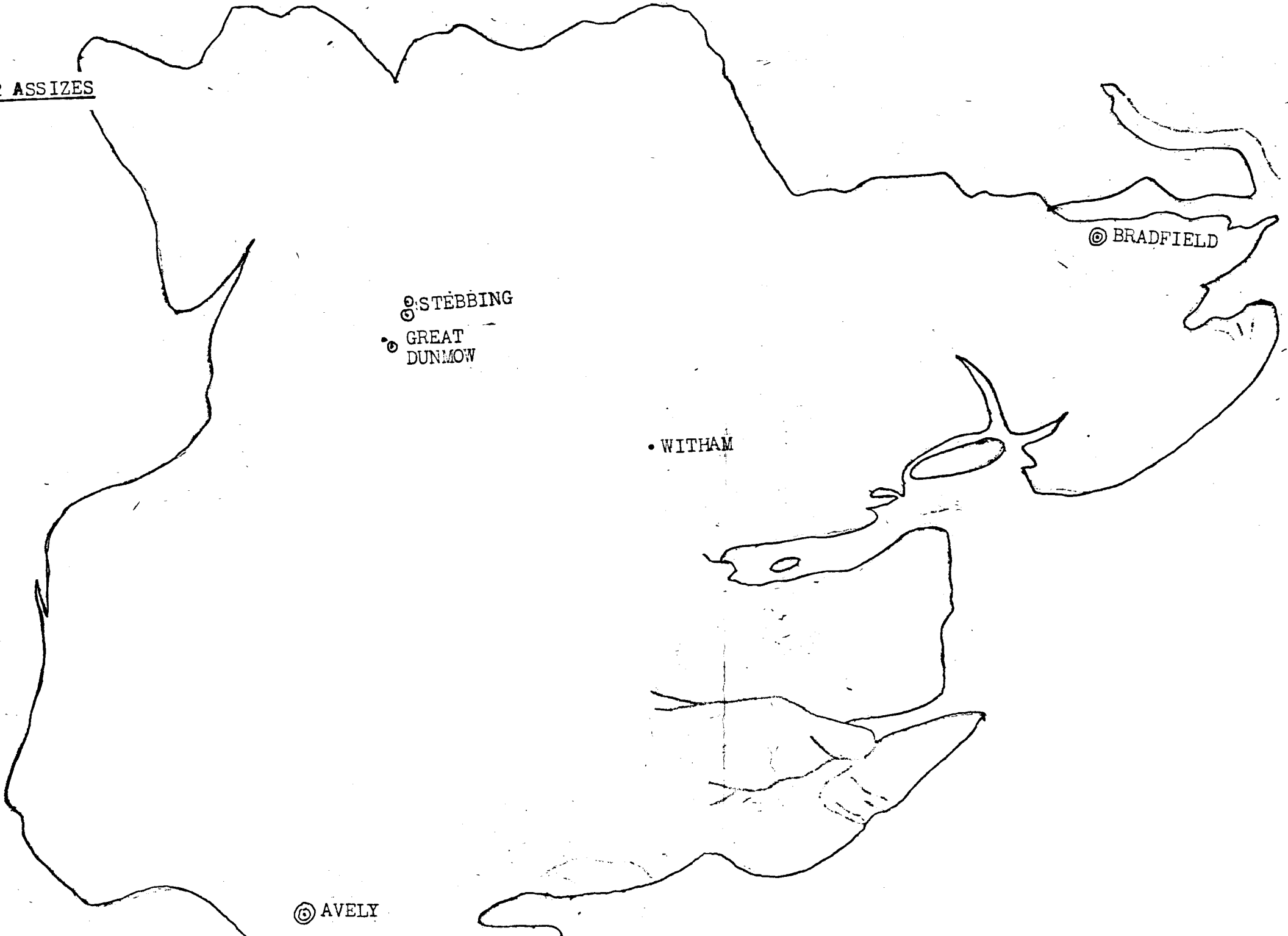
1592 ASSIZES

© BRADFIELD

© STEBBING
© GREAT
DUNMOW

• WITHAM

© AVELY



1593 ASSIZES

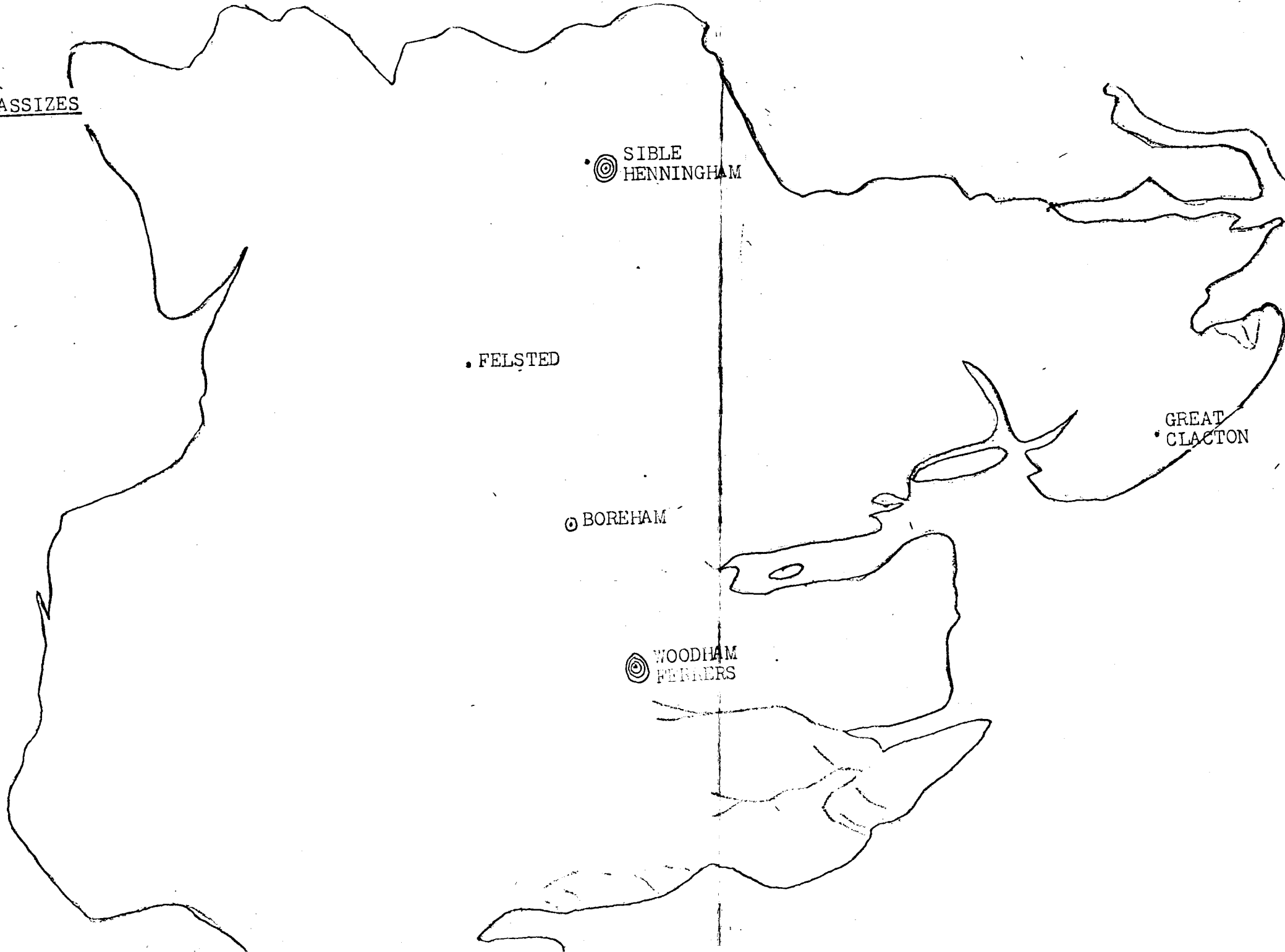
• SIBLE
HENNINGHAM

• FELSTED

• GREAT
CLACTION

• BOREHAM

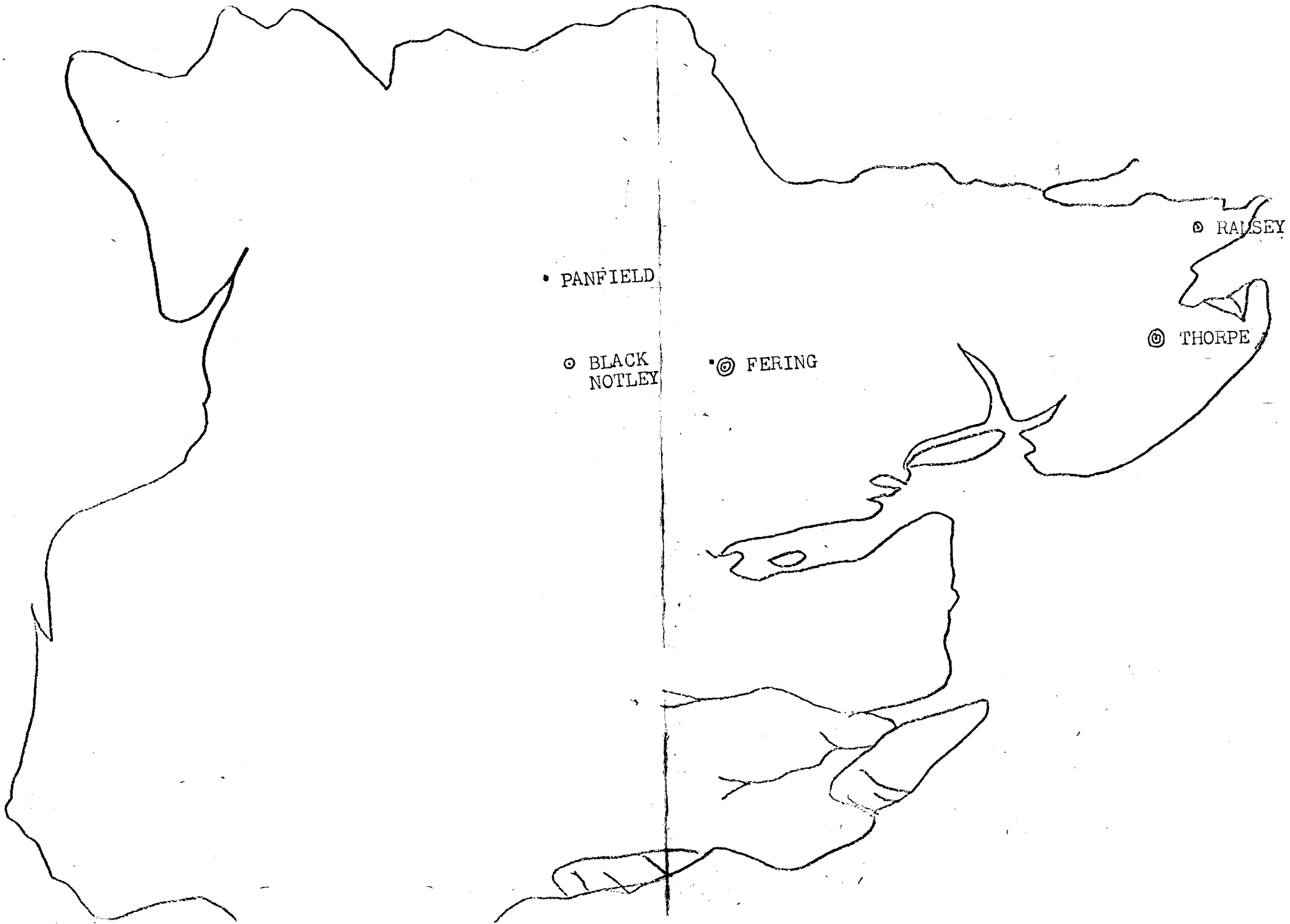
• WOODHAM
FERRERS



1594 ASSIZES



1601 ASSIZES



1616 ASSIZES



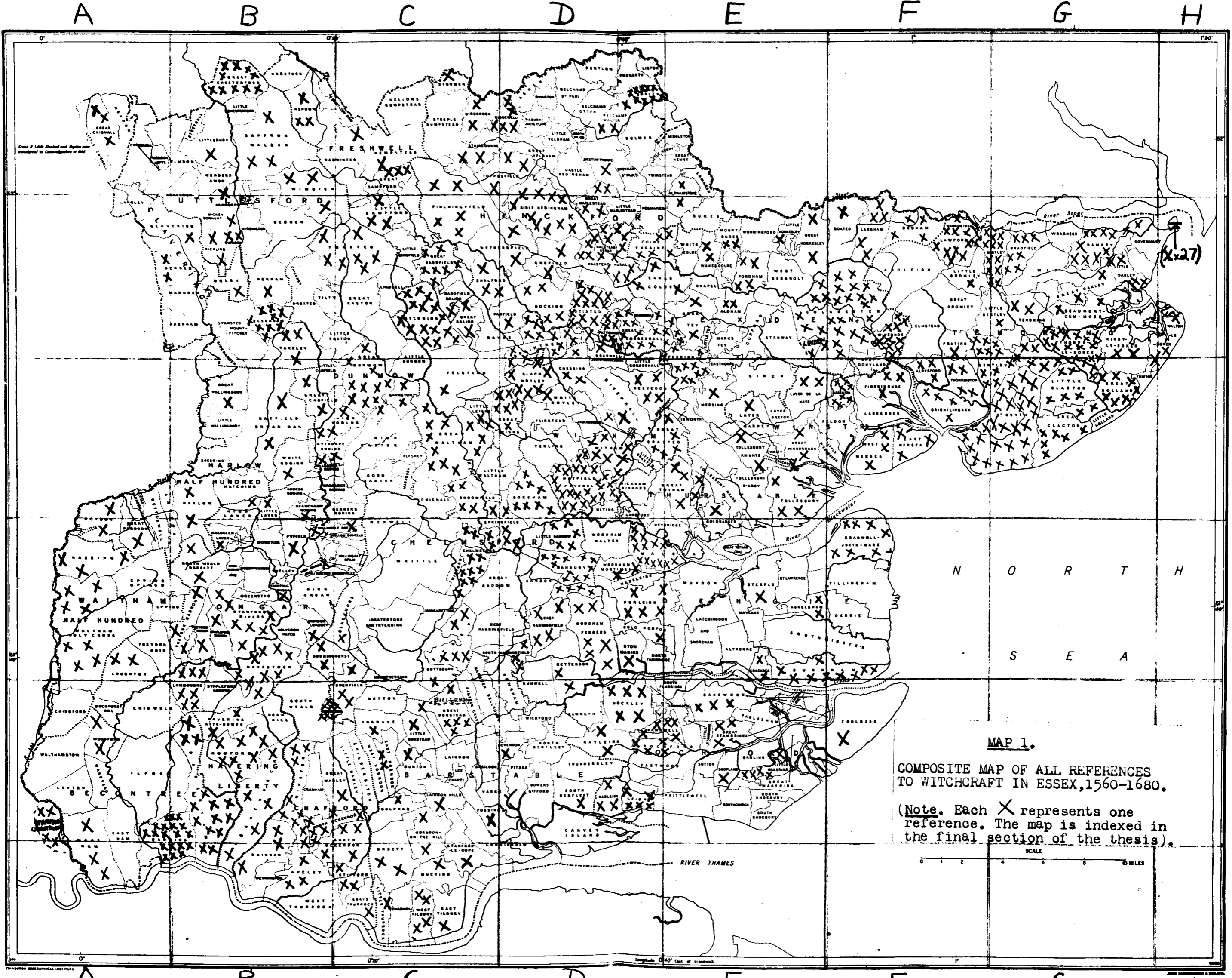
⊙ LITTLE
LEIGHS

⊙ LAMBORNE
••• NAVESTOCK

⊙ UPMINSTER

• SOUTH
OCKENDON

MAP 1.



MAP 1.

COMPOSITE MAP OF ALL REFERENCES TO WITCHCRAFT IN ESSEX, 1560-1680.

(Note. Each X represents one reference. The map is indexed in the final section of the thesis).

SCALE 0 2 4 6 8 10 MILES

(x27)

1
2
3
4
5
6

1
2
3
4
5
6

A B C D E F G H

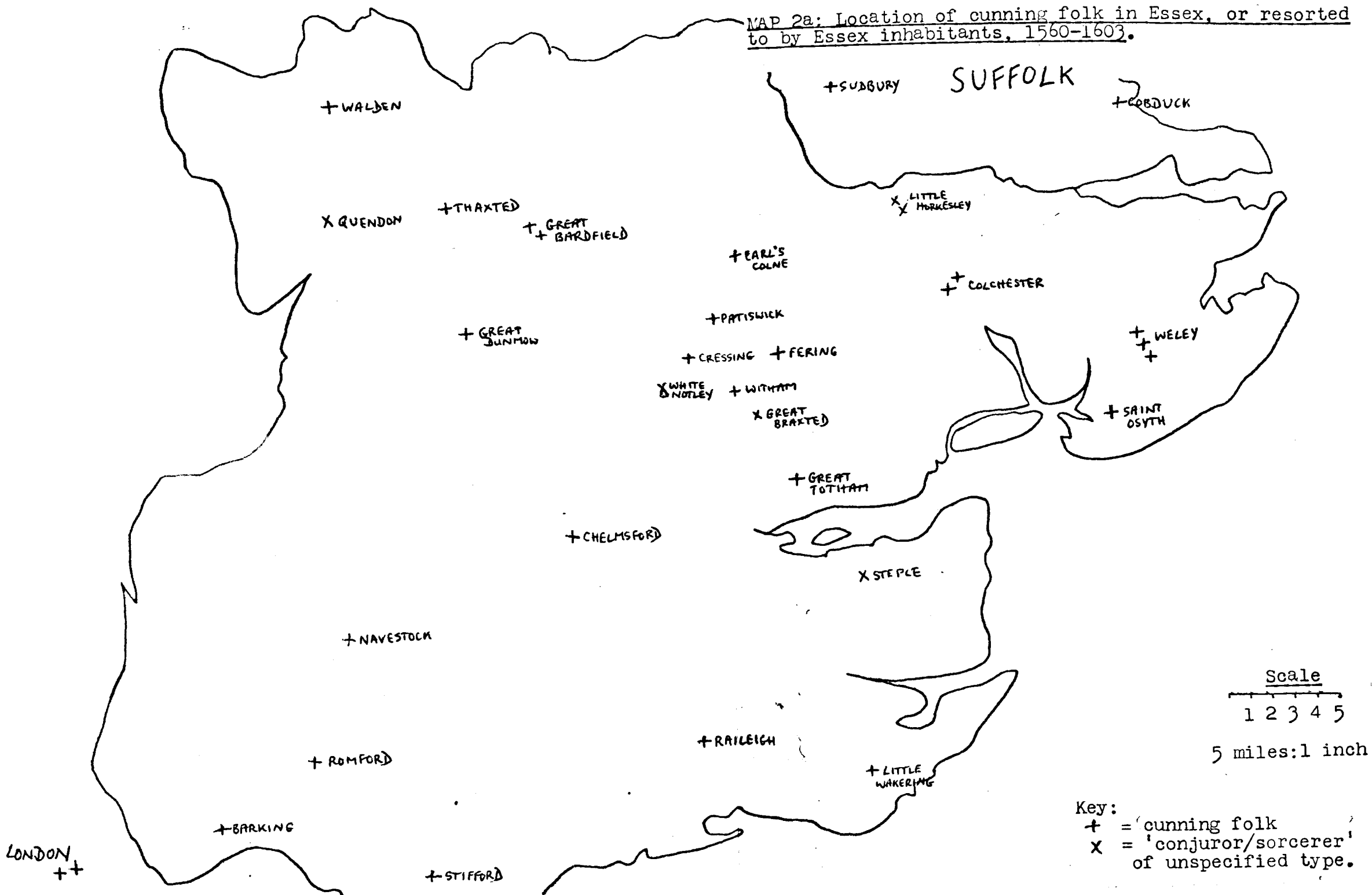
A B C D E F G H

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MAP 2a

before p.145

MAP 2a: Location of cunning folk in Essex, or resorted to by Essex inhabitants, 1560-1603.



MAP 4.

Witchcraft prosecutions at the Essex Assizes,
1560-1679; by ten-year periods.

Key:

- = one indictment.
- ⊙ = two indictments against the same person in one year.
- = two indictments against one person in different years.

(Map 4 comprises a series of 12 maps each covering a period of ten years.)

ASSIZES: 1670-1679



• GAT. JUNNOR •

• BRADFIELD •

ASSIZES: 1660-1669



• STANBOURNE.

• HARWICH

• BARKING.

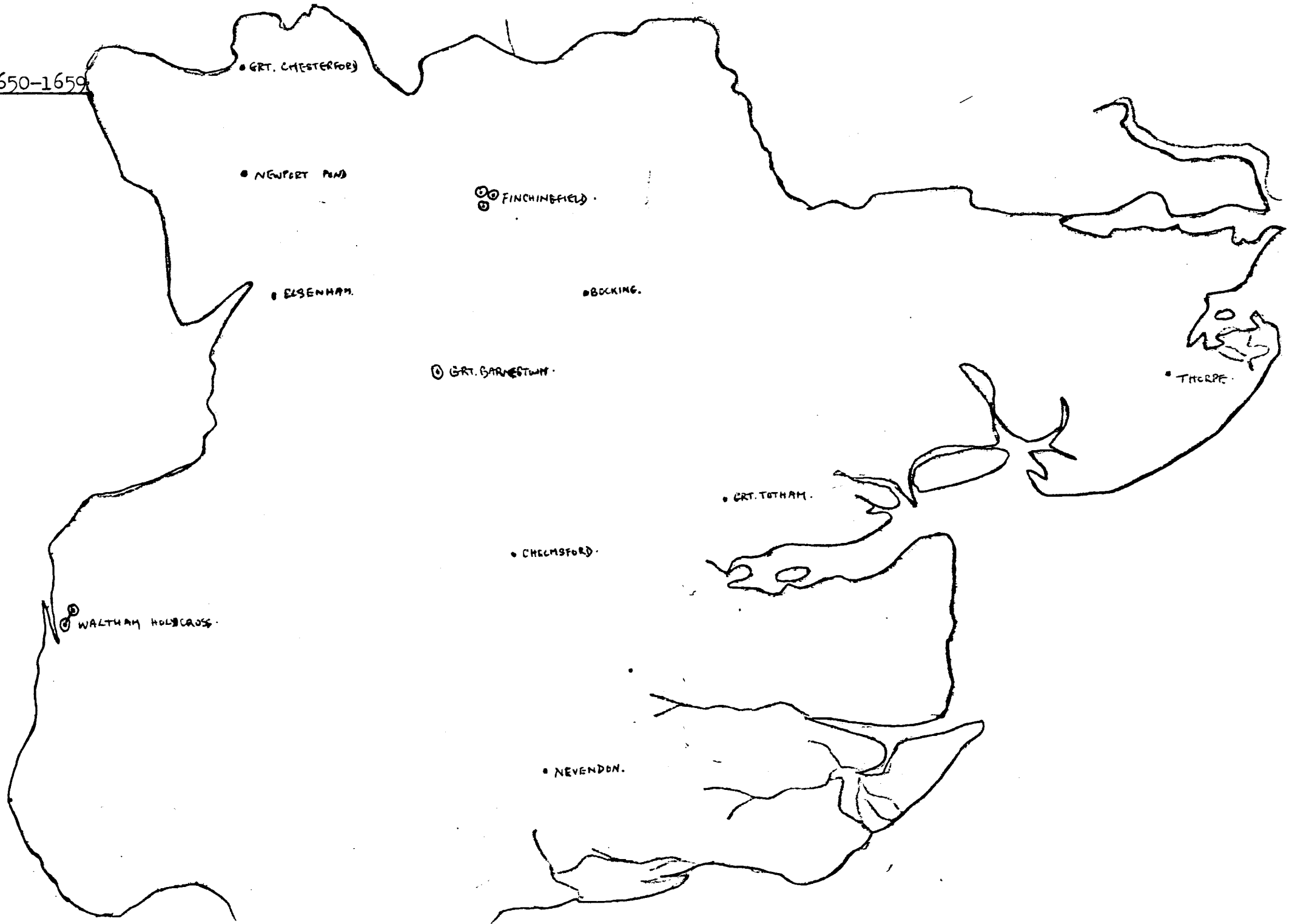
• CRSET.

• WOODHAM
FERRES.

ASSIZES: 1590-1599



ASSIZES: 1650-1659



• GRT. CHESTERFORD

• NEWPORT ROAD

• ELSENHAM

• FINCHINGFIELD

• BOCKING

• GRT. BARNSTOWN

• THORPE

• GRT. TOTHAM

• CHELMSFORD

• WALTHAM HOLBOURNE

• NEVENDON

MAP 5.

Years with more than twelve witchcraft
prosecutions at the Essex Assizes, 1560-1680.

key:

- = one indictment.
- ⊙ = two indictments against the same
person in one year.

(Map 5 comprises maps of 13 years in which there
were 12 or more witchcraft indictments.)

MAP 8: Population, farming, enclosure, forest and cloth industry in Essex, 1560-1680.

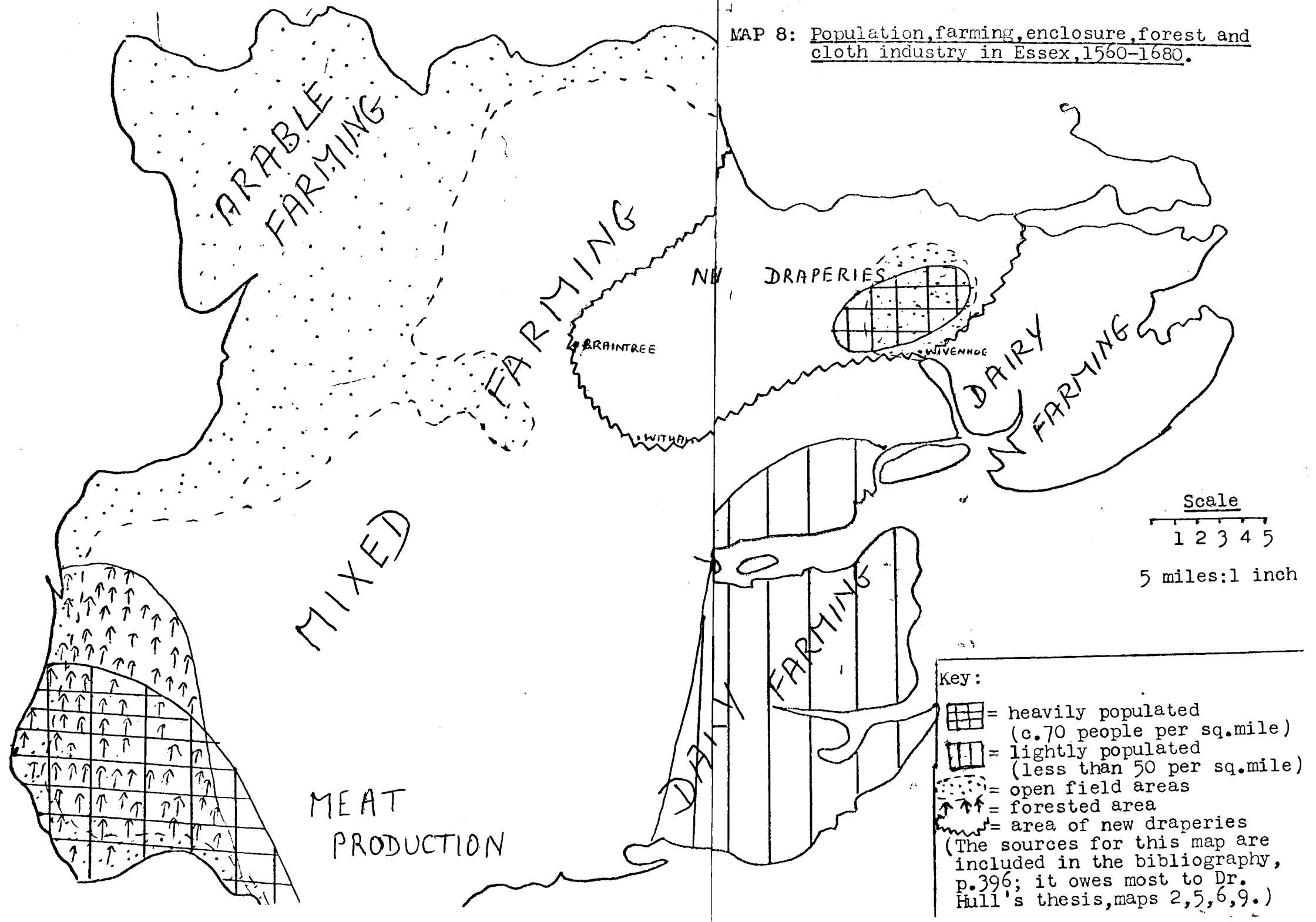


TABLE 6.

before p.142

TABLE 6: Cunning folk whose names are mentioned in Essex records, 1560-1680.

Name	Sex	Residence at	Type of activity	Occupation	Date	Case number
+ Margaret Hosie	F	Shopland	?	-	1561	1128
'one Richmond	M	-	soothsayer	-	1566	866
Mr. Hawes	M	Steple	soothsayer	cleric(?)	1566	866
Margery Skelton	F	Little Wakering	healer	-	1566	873
'Cobham'	M	Romford	anti-witch	-	1570	1204
Mother Humfrey	F	-	anti-witch	-	1573	992
+ Robert Wallys	M	(wandering)	soothsayer	-	1574	799
Alice Reade	F	Lawford	lost goods	-	1574	1130
(John Thomas	M	London Bridge	lost goods	astrologer	1575	886)
+ John Plummer &c.	M/F	Great Totham	divination	-	1576	993
Mother Persone	F	Navestock	anti-witch	-	1576	893
+ Henry Chitham	M	Great Bardfield	conjuring	-	1577	1198
+ Miles Blomfield	M	Chelmsford	lost goods	churchwarden	1578	809
+ Thomas Barker	M	Gestingthorpe	healing	surgeon	1578	807-8
Joan Michell	F	Walden	healing	-	1579	995
+ Humphrey Poles	M	Maldon	conjuring	-	1580	1200
Ursley Kempe	F	St. Osithes	anti-witch	-	1582	1582 Pamphlet A3
Mother Ratcliffe	F	-	anti-witch	-	1582	" " sig. A3
Cocke's wife	F	Weleigh	anti-witch	-	1582	" " sig. A7
('Herring')	M	Sudbery, Suffolk	anti-witch	'cawker'	1582	" " sig. C2V
Goodwife George	F	Abberton	anti-witch	-	1582	1007
Catherine Reve	F	Colchester	anti-witch	-	1582	1007
Henry Gower	M	Quendon	'sorcerer'	cleric(?)	1584	1115
William Asplin	M	Great Bardfield	healing/fortunes	schoolmaster	1585	1019
Edward Mason	M	Great Bardfield	healing	yeoman	1585-8	267, 1021, 1040
Father Parfoothe	M	Romford	healing	-	1585, 92/911, 944	
Thomas Smith	M	Earl's Colne	'sorcery'	schoolmaster	1574, 85/1129, 1037	
+ Mr. Fountayne	M	Great Braxted	'cast a figure'	cleric(?)	1588	1042
'one Brian'	M	St. Osithes	anti-witch	-	1588	1047
'Wilcocks'	F	Cressing	lost goods/fortunes	-	1589	1060
+ Mr. Shereman	M	Colchester	healing	doctor	1590	1064
('one Creek')	M	Cobduck, Suffolk	'help'	-	1591	1073)
'one Bryant'	M	Weleigh	healing	surgeon(?)	1591	1080
John Carter	M	Weleigh	lost goods	-	1591	1079
Anne Moore	F	Rayleigh	lost goods/soothsayer	-	1595	951
- Carter	M	Barking	lost goods	-	1595	953
Robert Browning	M	Aldham	lost goods	-	1598	417
Marcel Goodwin	M	Colchester	lost goods	physician	1598, 9	1096, 1173
(Anne Cryx	F	Newcastle	anti-witch	-	1599	1173)
George Tailer	M	Thaxted	lost goods/anti-witch	-	1599, 1602/957, 1121	
+ Thomas Maunde	M	Great Dunmow	'wizard'	-	1602	1120
'one Brite'	M	-	-	-	1602	1120
+ William Duffield	M	Great Waltham	'using witchcraft'	-	1605	1136
Richard Banckes	M	Earl's Colne	'sorcery'	-	1605	1138
Edwin Hadesley	M	Willingale Doe	conjurer	yeoman	1606	1181, 488
('Gressam' (Edward)	M	London	lost goods	astrologer	1610	974)
Giles Payson	M	Nasinge	soothsaying	-	1612	977
Gilbert Wakering	M	Halstead	lost goods	surgeon	1620	553b
+ (Dr. Francklin	M	Ratcliffe	anti-witch	'Dr'	1621	1183)
Alice Soles	F	Leigh	'sorcery'	-	1622	1127
Edmund Rowlande	M	Stifford	healing	physician	1631	1126
+ White family	M/F	(wandering)	fortune-tellers	-	1639	(Q/SR 304/152)
- Barnard	M	Danbury	lost goods	-	1641	839
('one Hoveye')	F	Hadleigh, Suffolk	anti-witch	-	1645	Pamphlet, p. 1)
William Hills	M	Berden	lost goods	miller	1651	845-6
(Mr. Ladland	M	London	lost goods	-	1651	846)
John Lock	M	Colchester	lost goods	labourer	1653	847-8
Benjamin Brand and wife	M/F	Stebbing	lost goods	comber	1653	849
+ Thomas White	M	-	conjuring	'gent'	1653, 4.	851, 854
Mr. Higgs	M	-	lost goods	-	1664	855

key: () is used when the cunning man lived outside Essex. + means that it is not absolutely certain that the person was a cunning man. The types of activity are explained in the text. M = Male, F = Female.