

# A 'Divellish' Woman Discovered: The Witch of Newbury, 1643



Sheilagh O'Brien  
University of Queensland

*During September 1643 a number of publications related the news that a witch had been found and killed by Roundhead soldiers just prior to the Battle of Newbury. This article will analyse the contents of the longest work on the Witch of Newbury, A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a VVitch, focusing in particular on aspects of the account which illustrate developments in early modern English witch beliefs. In ascertaining her identity, the soldiers relied upon popular beliefs about witches and their powers, and these beliefs informed their reactions to the witch. The discussion of the Witch of Newbury's powers ,and the soldiers perceptions of them, illustrates how ideas about witchcraft could and did change throughout the seventeenth-century, and in particular, during the English Civil Wars.*

In late September, 1643, a pamphlet was published in London which claimed to be *A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a VVitch: Being taken by some of the Parliament forces, as she was standing on a small planck-board and sayling on it over the river of Newbury: together with the strange and true manner of her death, with the propheticall words and speeches she used at the same time* (1643, hereafter *A True Discovery of a VVitch*).<sup>1</sup> This extraordinary title was accompanied by a striking woodcut, which portrayed the witch in question. She stands, barefoot upon a plank which she

appears to be steering using a simple stick she holds upright in her left hand. Two black birds hover attentively on either side of her, while her apron and skirt shift with the wind of her passage along the waterway. The woman herself has a disturbing countenance: her face is haggard, bearing an unpleasant expression beneath messy hair partially held up under a cap, and her figure is hunched forward menacingly, with huge hands held out to either side. The pamphlet which accompanies this image is no less extraordinary, for it is the first account in England of a woman killed for witchcraft near the site of a major battle.

The pamphlet itself begins with an introduction that establishes the scriptural basis of witchcraft, and rails against those who might be sceptical of the account that follows. It then describes how in September 1643 a group of foraging Parliamentary soldiers spied a woman they presumed to be a Royalist camp-follower. They were amazed to see her floating upon the surface of a river, and they rushed to the bank to watch her. '[T]hey did observe, this could be no little amazement unto them you may think to see a woman dance upon the water, nor could all their sights be deluded'.<sup>2</sup> Soon afterwards several officers also saw the woman and though they saw that she was standing upon a plank of wood, they were still 'much astonished as they could be, still too and fro she fleted on the water'.<sup>3</sup> She was either unaware that she was observed, or, unsurprisingly, didn't assume that they would interpret her skill at navigating the river on a plank of wood as a sign that she was a 'divellish woman' – a witch.<sup>4</sup>

The soldiers waited for her to reach the shore where they ambushed her and their commanders ordered that the woman be taken prisoner.<sup>5</sup> The pamphlet describes how they interrogated the woman, demanding to know 'what she was'.<sup>6</sup> The account describes her refusal to answer, and how they decided to shoot her, but 'with a deriding and loud laughter at them she caught the bullets in her hands and

chew'd them, which was a stronger testimony then [sic] the water, that she was the same that their imagination thought her so to be'.<sup>7</sup> After some consternation, one of the soldiers remembered that to draw her blood could break a witch's power, and scratched her face. She was then shot, and sank to the ground. As the author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch* put it, she left 'her legacy of a detested carcase to the wormes, her soul were ought not to judge of, though the evils of her wicked life and death can scape no censure.'<sup>8</sup>

The nature of the reports on the Witch of Newbury makes reconstructing the actual events that led to the Witch of Newbury's death impossible. Nor is it possible to identify if the woman really existed, and if she did exist in some form, who she was, or where she had come from. In fact, the different stories about the Witch of Newbury seem, at times, to be giving accounts about completely different events although they claim to be reporting the same incident. In brief, there was likely a woman killed by soldiers at Newbury, but the accounts of her death are so exaggerated they could be dismissed as merely fanciful stories. But in spite of the problematic nature of the evidence, the accounts of her death do provide details which allow an examination of the way propaganda shaped and re-shaped witch beliefs during the English Civil Wars (1642–1649).

The longest and best known narrative of the Witch of Newbury is found in the pamphlet *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which describes the discovery, testing and – from the perspective of the author of the pamphlet – 'execution', of the supposed 'witch' in autumn 1643. The episode was further described by reports in the parliamentary newsbooks *Mercurius Civicus* (21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September), and *Certaine Informations* (25<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1643); and was derided as superstitious fantasy in two Royalist newsbooks, *Mercurius Britanicus* (10<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October 1643) and *Mercurius avlicus* (14<sup>th</sup> October 1643).<sup>9</sup> All of these publications were attempting to

exert influence over public perceptions of the two sides in the English Civil Wars, using the 'witch' as a divisive figure. Both sides of the English Civil War saw or portrayed the war as a reflection of the Devil's presence disrupting the good order of society.<sup>10</sup> Royalists often quoted the Bible: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft",<sup>11</sup> while Parliamentarians pointed to Charles I's personal rule and religious reforms as a different form of rebellion against God's order.<sup>12</sup>

The English Civil Wars were a period of intense political and religious disorder, and publications of the period were saturated with religious, often apocalyptic, rhetoric.<sup>13</sup> It is unsurprising therefore that the period between the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642, and the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 was the most intense period of witch trials in seventeenth century England. The Witch of Newbury was not the only nameless woman attacked and killed by Parliamentary or Royalist soldiers near or on the site of Civil War battles.<sup>14</sup> But only this woman was explicitly 'proven' to be a witch, and 'executed' for her supposed crime.

However, two years after her death, in 1645, a three year witch panic in East Anglia would lead to at least one hundred executions for witchcraft in the Eastern counties of England, representing approximately an estimated fifth of all English witch trials.<sup>15</sup> For the Witch of Newbury there was no trial, so the details usually available through court records in witchcraft cases are absent. Evidence of her life, death and supposed crime cannot be found in the records of English courts; instead, the only accounts that remain were published as news and anti-Royalist propaganda in the weeks following her death. However, those available accounts indicate that some aspects of English witchcraft beliefs were influenced by the witchcraft pamphlets during the early years of the English Civil Wars.

This article will analyse the contents of *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, focusing in particular on aspects of the account which illustrate developments in early modern

English witch beliefs. In ascertaining her identity, the soldiers relied upon several popular<sup>16</sup> beliefs about witches and their powers, and these beliefs informed their responses to the supposed witch. They observed her floating, her power to survive physical attacks (including the catching and chewing of bullets), and they 'broke' her power through the scratching of her face. The presence of a range of beliefs, both old and new, allows a particular moment in the evolution of English witch beliefs to be examined outside of formal court proceedings.

Those accused of witchcraft during the English Civil Wars have received considerable critical attention from scholars, including R.T. Davies, Malcolm Gaskill, Diane Purkiss, James Sharpe, Mark Stoye and Frederick Valetta, although most of their attention has been focussed on women executed following trial.<sup>17</sup> Most analysis of the Witch of Newbury has focussed on the 'unreasonable terror'<sup>18</sup> of the roundhead soldiers, or on how it related to other witchcraft publications and propaganda during the Civil War.<sup>19</sup> The former emphasises motivations rather than methods or beliefs, and the latter is focussed on the description and deployment of witchcraft in propaganda during the Civil War.

The first significant attention paid to the Witch of Newbury was by R. Trevor Davies, who argued that 'so accustomed were the soldiers to the practice of floating witches and to the belief that water rejected the servants of the Devil, that the sight of her caused an immediate panic.'<sup>20</sup> Similarly Diane Purkiss focussed on the impact of the perceived dangerous and diabolic witch on the imagination of male Civil War soldiers.<sup>21</sup> She argues that 'the story of the witch of Newbury is a fantasy story [...] that expresses and manages the terrible anxieties created by war and battle'.<sup>22</sup> Certainly gendered concerns are evident in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which begins with a long introduction – around a quarter of the text – emphasising the links between the fall of Eve and women's contemporary susceptibility to the Devil.<sup>23</sup>

Mark Stoye has written in the most detail about the Witch of Newbury in recent scholarship.<sup>24</sup> He has analysed the incident as part of the context of the massacre following the Battle of Naseby in 1645; its links to the pamphlets on King Charles' nephew, Prince Rupert of the Rhine (1612–1682), and the exploits of his supposed witch-dog, Boy.<sup>25</sup> Stoye argues that witchcraft was an effective slander on a number of levels as it explained Royalist victories, and emphasised their illegitimacy by claiming that they were won by diabolic arts.<sup>26</sup> Stoye argues that the events recorded at Newbury suggest that at least some Parliamentarians had taken seriously one of the most innovative claims in *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*: that the Devil could render a witch or a witch's familiar 'shot-free' (or bullet-proof) which was a new development in English witch beliefs.<sup>27</sup>

Malcolm Gaskill's analysis is concerned with the echoes of the pamphlet in the witchcraft trials in East Anglia, 1645–1647.<sup>28</sup> Gaskill suggests that '[t]he idea that the devil recruited witches in the king's interest went beyond mere propaganda, enjoying serious popular currency'.<sup>29</sup> Gaskill points to *Signs and wonders from heaven* (1645) which claimed that the prosecution of witches in East Anglia would cause Prince Rupert to 'be no longer shot-free'.<sup>30</sup> Gaskill also points out that a small number of those prosecuted for witchcraft in East Anglia confessed to other crimes related to the war, including attacking a Roundhead recruiter, and sending their imps to assist Prince Rupert.<sup>31</sup> Gaskill is correct in seeing a link between the trials and earlier publications of witches and Royalism, but I would argue that what links the Witch of Newbury to the East Anglia trials is the use of popular testing and the atmosphere of diabolic threat created by the war.<sup>32</sup>

*A True Discovery of a VVitch* warrants further exploration because it presents the arbitrary execution of a witch by soldiers, rather than a formal legal proceeding. It presents a clear portrait of how ordinary Roundhead soldiers and officers

conceptualised witches and witchcraft. The accounts of the Witch of Newbury reveal how the soldiers apparently 'proved' the witch's guilt through physical tests that they understood as evidence of the apparent supernatural abilities of the witch. The pamphlet therefore illuminates popular beliefs about what witches could do, and what at least some Parliamentarians thought the Devil and his servants were doing to help the Royalist cause in late 1643.

The incident at Newbury was not, however the first attack on a female camp-follower by Roundheads, it is useful at this point to consider the earlier Brentford incident of 1642, where several women were drowned or executed.<sup>33</sup> In November 1642, nearly a year prior to the attack on the supposed Witch at Newbury, Parliamentary soldiers killed four women near Brentford. *The true proceedings of both armies* from 1642 is the first account of Parliamentary soldiers killing a woman they identified as a possible witch. The writer claimed that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November Roundheads had taken '3 women which fol-[ow] the cavaliers, that had used cruelty to our men, for they had cut the throates of many of our men that were wounded'.<sup>34</sup> As Mark Stoye has pointed out, this accusation of throat-cutting may link the Brentford incident to depictions of Celtic 'viragoes',<sup>35</sup> who had reportedly slit the throats and disfigured the remains of English soldiers in previous wars, as Welsh women had apparently done after the battle of Bryn Glas in 1402. This idea had been revived by accounts of the violence of Irish women during the Irish rebellion of 1641, and carried over into hysterical claims of Irish women arriving in force in England early in the English Civil War.<sup>36</sup> However the Brentford account also implies that the true evil of at least one of the women may not have been foreignness or violence. The soldiers had thrown the three women caught on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November into the water, and while two drowned, the third:

being throwne into the Thames, would not sinke, then they thrust her downe with a pike, but yet for all this she would not sinke, then they took her up againe, and layed her in the Stocks, and within a while after they killed her, before her death she confessed that they had two shillings a day for doing such horrid work.<sup>37</sup>

The implication of witchcraft may be present in her failure to sink, but the author of this account seems more concerned with her 'horrid work' in butchering wounded Roundhead soldiers than any apparent 'proof' of witchcraft. Another woman was caught and killed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November, about whom the pamphlet merely says she 'was another actor of villainy and tyranny which had done as the other, but our men put her to death'.<sup>38</sup>

This account of the killing of royalist camp-followers in November 1642 suggests that the causes of violence towards these women were not related to witchcraft, and in spite of her failure to sink and drown, the author makes no attempt to claim the third woman was in fact a witch. Nor do other accounts, such as the massacre of Royalist camp-followers at Naseby ascribe to the women any supernatural powers. *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, not only accuses the woman of being a witch, but appears to consciously imitate the structure of a witch trial pamphlet. This imitation is part of the process of proving the tale it tells is true, as it suggests a factual account of a witch's discovery and execution, complete with compelling witnesses and proof.

The Witch of Newbury had, like the woman of 1642, been seen to float upon the water, albeit on a piece of wood. The Witch of Newbury account also clearly drew upon pamphlets about Prince Rupert and his dog, Boy, who had been described facetiously as a 'witch-dog' by Royalist writers in Oxford.<sup>39</sup> In particular, the references to the Witch of Newbury being 'shot-free' draws directly upon accounts of Prince Rupert's dog protecting the Prince by catching assassins' bullets in

his mouth and chewing them.<sup>40</sup> It also claims that witches could, or at least believed that they could, alter the outcomes of major battles, like the Battle of Newbury.<sup>41</sup> Marion Gibson has described witchcraft publications as giving a 'privileged view of an element within the development of a very specific and enduring myth [...] which intersects in increasingly complex ways with what we perceive to be real.'<sup>42</sup> The Witch of Newbury encapsulates both long-established witchcraft mythology and the particular concerns of English Civil War soldiers, as opposed to the concerns of small communities suffering from unexplained and tragic events, such as illnesses and natural disasters.

However, the soldiers' frame of reference for how to deal with witches was one they had brought with them to Newbury. One of the soldiers at Newbury remembered the belief that to 'scratch' or draw blood from a witch would cancel her power:

[W]hereupon she began alowd to cry, and roare, tearing her haire, and making piteous moan, which in these words expressed were; and is this come to passe, that I must dye indeed? Why then his Excellency the Earl of Essex shall be fortunate and win the field, after which no more words could be got from her; wherewith they immediately discharged a pistol underneath her eare, at which she straight sunk down and dyed[.]<sup>43</sup>

The soldiers believed that the Witch of Newbury had, prior to her death, displayed a series of powers which were 'testimony' of her witchcraft.<sup>44</sup> The use of words like 'testimony' echoes the usual trial of a witch, but the violence of this interrogation and the suddenness of her execution bear little relation to the usual process of bringing a witch to trial in early modern England. While acts of communal violence against witches – in particular scratching – had been a part of popular witchcraft beliefs in England for at least the previous half-century, they had been problematic from a judicial perspective.<sup>45</sup> While some demonologists and

jurists were deeply opposed to their use, others either suggested or even participated in the popular use of unsanctioned procedures, like the swimming test.<sup>46</sup>

The most significant support for the use of the swimming test, and the likely origin of its use in England, is King James VI and I. King James's *Daemonologie* is particularly significant as it appears to be the first publication in England to argue in favour of the efficacy of 'swimming' suspected witches.<sup>47</sup> He argued that there were only two physical proofs of witchcraft: the finding of the Devil's mark, and the method of 'swimming':

there are two other good helps that may be vsed for their trial: the one is the finding of their marke, and the trying the insensiblenes thereof. The other is their fleeting on the water: [...] God hath appoynted (for a super-naturall signe of the monstrous impietie of the Witches) that the water shal refuse to receiue them in her bosom, that haue shaken off them the sacred Water of Baptisme[.]<sup>48</sup>

Like 'bleeding' or 'scratching' a witch, 'swimming' seems to have become a method of dealing with witches, known to a wide variety of people in seventeenth century England, in spite of there being no records for its use prior to King James' *Daemonologie*.<sup>49</sup> Although it was rarely admissible proof in court, or accepted by the majority of demonologists and jurists as definitive proof, it nevertheless continues to appear sporadically during the seventeenth century, with its popularity a significant feature of the Civil War trials in East Anglia, 1645–1647.

The pamphlet account of the Witch of Newbury does not appear to have been written as a satire like *Observations*, and the newsbook reports appear to have been independent accounts. The pamphlet does not describe how the witch came to be in the Devil's service as is the case in most individual trial pamphlets; however it does go to considerable lengths to suggest that her gender makes her susceptible to the Devil's temptation.<sup>50</sup> It does not ascribe to her any specific crimes of magic, although

her capacity for magic is perhaps suggested in the accusation that she was going to aid the King's forces in the upcoming battle, and that with her death the outcome would be altered.

There are no accusations of specific acts of *maleficium* in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which is significant as *maleficium*, or the use of harmful magic, was the foundation of the majority of witchcraft accusations in early modern England. Without 'proven' acts of *maleficium* accused witches were usually not executed, even during the height of the witch panic in East Anglia.<sup>51</sup> *Diabolism*, having made a pact with Satan and being given 'supernatural' powers or having a familiar, did not usually lead to prosecution, although it was an implicit part of every act of *maleficium*.

The author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch* claims that the account he gives is 'credibly related by Gentlemen, Commanders, and Captains, of the Earl of Essex his [sic] Army', but doesn't name any of his credible witnesses.<sup>52</sup> The implication that officers and credible gentlemen had been involved in the execution of the witch may be an attempt to forestall accusations that gullible or ignorant soldiers had wrongly killed an innocent woman due to their unreasoning fear and superstitious beliefs.<sup>53</sup>

The very first statement made by the author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch* addresses scepticism that magical powers could be used by the 'silly sex of women',<sup>54</sup> and goes on to assure the reader that women were indeed capable of descending to the same evil as learned male magicians. This assurance is echoed in other witchcraft pamphlets, including pamphlets on the East Anglian witch-hunt, published in 1645.<sup>55</sup> The authors set out historical and biblical examples – including other witch trials – of the Devil's temptation of people into sin and witchcraft as proof that witchcraft exists.<sup>56</sup> *A True Discovery of a VVitch* argues:

many ... are opposite in opinion against the same, that giving a possibility to their doubtings, that the malice, and inveterate malice of a woman entirely devoted to her revengefull wrath frequenting desolate and desart places, and giving way unto their wished temptation ... divers times been tried at the Assises...<sup>57</sup>

The newsbook accounts of the Witch of Newbury are briefer, but more damning.<sup>58</sup> The *Mercvrius Civicvs*, 21<sup>st</sup>–28<sup>th</sup> of September 1643, reported that an old woman had come to the Parliamentarian camp and said she 'came to speake with Essex',<sup>59</sup> and that when a soldier went to lay hands on her she caused his saddle to turn under his horse and throw him down.<sup>60</sup> As in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, *Mercvrius Civicvs* also claimed that as the woman died she cried out that 'Essex should have the day', and that there were many 'credible persons' who witnessed her demise.<sup>61</sup> The *Mercvrius Civicvs* also claims that the first shots did not kill her until they 'shot her in the eye'.<sup>62</sup>

The newsbook accounts agree with *A True Discovery of a VVitch* in declaring the woman killed by the soldiers to be a witch, but paint the woman as a far more immediate threat to Parliamentary forces than the pamphlet. The proofs of her diabolic allegiance in floating and being scratched are absent, her royalist allegiance is openly stated, and her primary act of witchcraft becomes her being shot-free. *Mercvrius Civicvs* goes into greater detail about what the Roundheads thought she was there to do. She had come from the 'enemies Quarters' and many credible persons who had witnessed her death 'conceive her to be sent by the Cavaliers to blow up the Magazine, or to effect some other devilish designe upon our army.'<sup>63</sup>

This account is somewhat corroborated by *Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome*, 25<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1643, which gives a more bizarre account of how she died:

being shot at, was so impenetrable, that no bullets would pierce her, whereupon a Captaine bid shoot her with a button, and one of the souldiers pulled a brasse button from his doublet, and therewith charging his pistoll, fired it upon her head, and slew her.<sup>64</sup>

The efficacy of brass or buttons against witches is a superstition that does not seem to appear in any other account of English witchcraft. Like being 'shot-free', it is possible this is a foreign belief that had been brought by overseas mercenaries, the origins of which are discussed briefly in *Certaine informations*: 'it will be thought ridiculous that any man should be shot free. Whereunto we answer, that we have heard some English Commanders that have been in the Swedes wars, credibly affirme, that it is an ordinary thing in those parts.'<sup>65</sup> *Certaine informations* describes the Witch of Newbury as violent, aggressive, sent by the Cavaliers with devilish designs.<sup>66</sup> The similarities and discrepancies between the accounts in *Certaine informations* and *Mercorivs Civicvs* and the narrative presented by *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, suggest that more than one soldier in Essex's army who had returned from the battle of Newbury told a story about a witch they had killed near the site of the battle.

The portrait given by the pamphlet and newsbooks of a disturbing woman approaching the Roundhead camp from the direction of the Cavaliers, and threatening their safety with her diabolic powers did not, of course, occur in a vacuum. The context in which the Witch of Newbury was killed is an important part of understanding why the soldiers believed they had encountered a Royalist witch.

The link between the descriptions of Irish or Celtic women, as desecrators of English corpses and throat-cutters, and the women killed in 1642 with the Witch of Newbury in 1643, is complex.<sup>67</sup> The Witch of Newbury's origins are uncertain in *A True Discovery*, with only newsbook accounts, *Mercorivs Civicvs*, and *Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome*, openly claiming she was a Royalist

spy, saboteur and/or assassin.<sup>68</sup> While *A True Discovery of a VVitch* is not as blatant, the implication of Royalist association is still present. Her alleged statement, as reported by the pamphlet, is profoundly Royalist: 'and is this come to passe, that I must dye indeed? Why then his Excellency the Earl of Essex shall be fortunate and win the field'.<sup>69</sup> The woman is here not only referencing apparent foresight (Newbury was an important Parliamentary victory), but suggesting that without her the Royalist army would be defeated,<sup>70</sup> implying that the Devil himself was waging war against Parliament on behalf of the King.

This implication drew upon the language of many Roundhead newsbooks and pamphlets, which had already associated the Royalist cause with diabolical power and Catholic subversion.<sup>71</sup> This may well have influenced how Parliamentary soldiers interacted with Cavalier women.<sup>72</sup> Accusations of witchcraft in the context of the Civil War, either serious or sarcastic, began in 1642, and by the end of that year the first implication that a Royalist witch had been found and executed appears, following the killing of the woman at Brentford who had floated.<sup>73</sup> Rumours of diabolic witches, particularly amongst the apparently large number of Irish women following the King's army, were reported and discussed in the popular press.<sup>74</sup> In one account from 1642 it was claimed that a church in Kingston-on-Thames had been used as a receptacle for 'the filth of 500 Irish and Welch women running after the army which are more cruell to those which lye on their mercy then any forraigne enemy whatsoever.'<sup>75</sup> In the same week another pamphlet claimed the same women had used skeans (Irish daggers) to threaten locals into revealing the location of their valuables. As Stoye remarked in discussing the impact of such reports on Roundhead attitudes to Royalist camp-followers, 'The emphasis which was laid [...] on the allegedly intimate connection between Irish- and Welshwomen, knives and throat-cutting can hardly have been lost on the writer's audience'.<sup>76</sup> However this

association of evil women was not yet blatantly diabolic, merely foreign and potentially Catholic.

During the Second Battle at Newbury, in October 1644, it was reported that the Catholics of the King's army had many witches amongst them, whom 'Cromwell's souldiers did plainly perceiue to fly swiftly from one side of the [K]ing's army to another'.<sup>77</sup> The account of the Witch of Newbury in *A True Discovery of a VVitch* a year earlier had not explicitly suggested that she was a camp-follower or Catholic, and neither did the newsbook accounts in *Mercvrius Civicvs* and *Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome*. But they do claim she is a Royalist which in their minds likely implied both Catholicism and witchcraft.<sup>78</sup> These accounts of the Witch of Newbury therefore suggest or directly associate her with other dangerous women on the Royalist side, including those Irish Catholic women who were particular sources of fear for Parliamentary pamphleteers throughout the Civil War. But these accounts also show how quickly new ideas could become part of the cumulative concept of witchcraft.<sup>79</sup>

Though the idea of being 'shot-free' had been in the public domain for less than a year, it is here used as a blatant sign of witchcraft 'which was a stronger testimony then [sic] the water, that she was the same that their imagination thought her so to be'.<sup>80</sup> *A True Discovery of a VVitch* can therefore be seen to be drawing upon the series of pamphlets on Prince Rupert,<sup>81</sup> which had alleged that his early successes against Parliament were owed to his *diabolism*. In *Observations* Prince Rupert had been described as being in league with the Devil, and having a familiar in the form of his poodle. Stoye has argued that at least the first two of these were satirical and probably written by members of the King's own camp, centred on Oxford.<sup>82</sup> However innocent and amusing such a satire may have seemed to the Royalist

author of *Observations*, it created an atmosphere which linked Royalists and strange diabolical powers.

Parliamentarian writers built upon the satire of T.B.'s *Observations* with their own works, which asserted the Cavaliers had a diabolic agenda. The woodcut image of the witch used on the title-page of the *A True Discovery of a VVitch* is used as a template for a further work linked to Prince Rupert and the killing of his dog, 'Boy,' at the Battle of Marston Moor.<sup>83</sup> Whatever the factual basis for it, *A True Discovery of a VVitch* deliberately links the woman killed at Newbury with the earlier claim that Prince Rupert was 'shot-free' because his devilish dog caught and chewed all bullets fired at him.<sup>84</sup> This idea was linked to the Witch of Newbury and satirised in *Mercurius Britanicus*: 'I am perswaded you are so superstitious, you thinke one tooth of such a grave, old woman may be the preservation of Prince *Rupert* [sic] himself, and His Majesties whole Army.'<sup>85</sup> The publications about Prince Rupert also brought the question of the relationship between the King's cause and diabolic forces at work in the kingdom to a wider audience.

The two extra-judicial killings linked to witchcraft (at Brentford in 1642 and at Newbury in 1643) were not the only violent acts towards women on or around battlefields, but they were the only ones justified in contemporary accounts by accusing the victims of witchcraft.<sup>86</sup> The causes of other acts of violence against women on and around battlefields have been explained in several ways: as part of the 'normal' ad hoc violence which occurs during wars when civilians find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time;<sup>87</sup> as the result of a propaganda campaign which demonised female camp-followers as violent foreigners, whores, and witches;<sup>88</sup> or as part of an ongoing struggle to maintain discipline and order, particularly in relation to unruly women.<sup>89</sup> Women accused of being immoral or damaging to good order and social harmony, including prostitutes, scolds, witches

and adulterers, were vulnerable to various communal punishments.<sup>90</sup> However, acts of public humiliation and shaming, such as 'rough music', which occurred in peacetime, did not usually endanger the lives of participants (even if they could cause nasty injuries), in contrast to the battlefield assaults.<sup>91</sup>

The pamphlet suggests that the Witch of Newbury was perceived as unruly and threatening. She appears to flout the laws of nature, by 'fleeing' upon the river, and then defies the authority of the officers who have ordered her to be seized, by refusing to answer their questions. She compounds her apparent supernatural acts with defiance and, according to the account given by the *Mercorius Civicus*, attacks a Roundhead soldier.<sup>92</sup>

While the immediate context of the Civil Wars suggests interesting intersections between gender, violence and propaganda, there is also a wider context to be considered. The presence and physicality of providence is central to the description of the Witch of Newbury's pursuit and death as recounted in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*: she is 'discovered' by God's intervention and her own devilish practices causing her to float and fleet upon the water, and destroyed by the superstitious practice of 'blooding' or 'scratching' a witch to break her power. Her discovery, confession and 'execution' conform to a longer, older tradition of witchcraft tracts in which the witch's crimes were 'proven', and confessed to before her demise.<sup>93</sup>

The form for discovery of a witch could vary greatly, and not all trial records make clear how a witch was first discovered. However publications based on trials and guides to finding witches often discussed a number of methods by which a witch might be exposed. Many of these methods were forms of physical testing, which usually occurred during the pre-trial phase of investigation. These practices, while not endorsed by the many demonologists, were part of popular practices and

beliefs at the village level and were often believed to be effective proof by both witch and accuser.<sup>94</sup> The catching of bullets, the scratching and floating of a witch, were seen as authoritative proof to those present of her evil, in part because their efficacy as tests was believed to be a sign from God.

While swimming was condemned by some jurists involved in the trials in Suffolk in 1645, some of those involved in the trials claimed that the accused witches themselves had requested the process, believing it would clear their names.<sup>95</sup> Although this may be a somewhat self-serving argument by those who had endorsed or undertaken such testing, it remains possible and even likely that many people in communities across England, believed in the efficacy of such direct, visible proof. It is likely that those involved with the Newbury incident came from similar backgrounds to those who approved of the use of the swimming test in communities across Essex and Suffolk in 1645, and therefore likely were familiar with the idea that God had given men the ability to perceive and discover a witch's guilt.<sup>96</sup>

One of the most important endorsements for such an idea came from James VI and I's *Daemonologie*, which was first published in 1597, and then re-published in 1604 in England after King James's accession to the English throne. The method of swimming endorsed by James may have been of continental origin, though there is little evidence of its widespread use there. Neither was it used frequently, or officially, in England, despite its discussion in the King's famous demonological work. It was first recorded as being used in England in 1612, and then appears sporadically until the English Civil War.<sup>97</sup> During the Civil War it seems to have been an important part of the popular lexicon as far as witches were concerned, being widely deployed in the East Anglia witch trials of the 1640s.

In Northamptonshire in 1612, the first woman known to have been subjected to the swimming test had 'her hands and feete bound'<sup>98</sup> and was thrown into the

water on the orders of the local Justice of the Peace – the only known Jacobean account of the test being deployed by the authorities.<sup>99</sup> The account of *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (1612), has several direct quotations from King James' *Daemonologie*, and repeats the relationship between this sign of a witch's guilt and the bleeding of corpses in the presence of their murderer.<sup>100</sup> The following year, in neighbouring Bedfordshire, the experiment was repeated without the intervention or instruction of any officer of the law, suggesting that either knowledge of the content of James' *Daemonologie*, or rumours were spreading the use of the test across England.<sup>101</sup>

Wallace Notestein and James Sharpe both point to James's approval of the test as encouraging its introduction into English witch trials; Orna Alyagon Darr has argued that while the majority of learned treatises on witchcraft argued against the use of the swimming test, it was still used and believed efficacious by a large segment of the population.<sup>102</sup> Sharpe notes that 'it was widely employed subsequently, although, as we have noted, officialdom was ambivalent or hostile towards it'.<sup>103</sup> Yet ordeals in general, while common in medieval legal cases, had become problematic in early modern England, and were, by and large, dismissed as superstitious tests.<sup>104</sup> However the account of the Witch of Newbury, and the arguments of James VI and I, point to the persistence of belief in such 'evidence' in the discovery of witches. In spite of the antagonism of demonologists and learned writers like Richard Bernard, William Perkins, and Dr. John Cotta,<sup>105</sup> the medieval test of *judicium aquae frigidae*, which had been banned in the thirteenth century, experienced a resurgence in popularity in England during the seventeenth century.<sup>106</sup> As Orna Alyagon Darr argued, despite 'its illegality, and a lack of ecclesiastical backing, the practice gained popularity. It took place at the fringes of the official proceedings at the pre-trial stage and was usually conducted by fellow villagers trying to bolster the case against the suspect.'<sup>107</sup> The similarity of these beliefs to

those of the soldiers who believed that the Witch of Newbury's skill in navigating the river on a board or plank of wood was a sign of her diabolic powers is unsurprising.

James VI and I argued that witches floated because they had denied their Baptism and had made a new covenant with the Devil. If the soldiers or officers present at the execution of the Witch of Newbury were familiar with King James's arguments, they could have assumed the woman had been 'proven' guilty by what they understood as the divine authority of physical ordeals or testing such as the swimming test. How much of the detail of King James's argument on why water rejected witches was known to those employing his method of swimming is debatable. Certainly the theological validity King James ascribes to swimming is not always commented upon by those deploying this method against suspects. However, not understanding the theological reasoning, and believing in its efficacy, are not mutually exclusive.

King James's assertion that floating witches was a 'secret supernatural sign'<sup>108</sup> given by God to allow witches to be identified and punished perhaps explains why they felt entitled to take immediate and violent action against the Witch of Newbury. It is interesting to note the author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, cites a different hand at work in allowing the Witch of Newbury's capture, claiming that 'he that deceived her always did so then, blinding her that she could not at her landing see the ambush that was laid for her'.<sup>109</sup> Perhaps this suggests the idea of the Devil not only as a liar, but as God's ape, leading his witch into being captured in imitation of God. It is also possible that this sentence suggests that God has the Devil blind the witch, though that is not clearly stated.

Even once she is upon the shore, *A True Discovery of a VVitch* emphasises the physicality of the supernatural, particularly in the methods her attackers use to kill

her. In spite of her diabolical powers, the act of an ordinary soldier, in scratching her, is able to bring about her end. It is telling that in spite of the witch's power she cannot harm her captors. This may reflect two beliefs commonly held about witches in contemporary demonological theory; first that once arrested a witch could not do further harm, and secondly that God could and sometimes would protect a witch's interrogators.<sup>110</sup> In her capture and demise, the witch is exposed by divine intervention, and her attackers are defended by the same power. The belief in God's power to expose and defeat witches, for example through scratching, the relief of the bewitched' symptoms following the witch's arrest, and swimming, crossed over between popular beliefs and demonological theorists.<sup>111</sup>

During the Civil War, being thrown into water and drowned seems to have been a recurring phenomenon, particularly for female camp-followers.<sup>112</sup> Stoye has pointed out that much of the violence against Royalist camp-followers was congruent with rumours of there being witches in the King's army.<sup>113</sup> To what extent incidents of drowning female camp-followers and soldiers, particularly Irish soldiers, might be related to attempted 'testing' is uncertain. Descriptions of the swimming test are not common in the early seventeenth century. However those that did exist in print detailed the complex use of ropes in the binding of the accused, which is absent from Civil War incidents where women were drowned.

While not usually admissible in court, the use of physical testing could, to a community, be powerful evidence of a witch's guilt.<sup>114</sup> Such 'proof' of a witch's power and apostasy was terrifying to those who believed or suspected the witch might turn her diabolic power upon them. For soldiers, experiencing the horror of battle and apprehension about future battles must have been deeply traumatic, and the added fear of diabolic intervention in the form of witches and witchcraft was part of the discourse of the Civil War. Female camp-followers experienced violence before and

after battles for a range of reasons, and those of the opposing camp were demonised as a threat and challenge to authority and godly order. Supernatural powers were perceived as a significant threat to God's authority, and to the bodies of the soldiers. Witches and witchcraft represented the worst subversions of the Devil himself, and by 1643 they were widely described by those sympathetic to the Parliamentarians' cause as being in league with the Royalist cause.

This article has sought to examine *A True Discovery of a VVitch* on its own merits, not as part of a wider survey of witchcraft beliefs during the period. It has tried to examine the narrative as a particular moment which can reveal, as Gibson has argued, the interaction of reality and myth in the discovery of a witch. *A True Discovery of a VVitch* cannot be understood as a simple reporting of the facts, but in building on Stoyles' work on the use and development of witch tropes in Civil War propaganda, this article has sought to discuss the narrative of action and response between witch and accuser in this singular case. The narrative of the pamphlet reveals important details about how people – in these case soldiers – understood the physicality of proving a witch's guilt. This case presents a different picture of witch beliefs because the account is not formalised or mediated by court proceedings; nor is it a theological, demonological or legal treatise by a learned author. Although *A True Discovery of a VVitch* is unrestrained by court procedure, it retains a legal flavour and seeks to emulate the language and form of earlier witchcraft tracts. For the author of the pamphlet, what the Witch of Newbury had done was a crime, proven by witnesses and tests which provided their own 'testimony' of her guilt. The pamphlet reveals a moment in which old and new ideas and methods relating to the discovery of witchcraft can be seen in action.

In conclusion, the main source for the execution of the Witch of Newbury based its structure on previous accounts of the trial and execution of witches, and on

propaganda levelled at Royalists like Prince Rupert. The Witch of Newbury would herself become part of the propaganda against Royalists, her image re-produced to celebrate the death of Prince Rupert's 'witch-dog' Boy in 1644 at the hands of another soldier, and allusions to her support of Royalism would be cited during the trials of 1645.<sup>115</sup> *A True Discovery of a VVitch* presented popular ideas about witchcraft, old and new, and mounted a strong defence of its arguments by citing both scripture and the evidence of contemporary trials, accounts of witnesses, and physical tests. For the Witch of Newbury there were no trial proceedings to give us her or her accuser's names, origins, or occupations, and no judge or jury to weigh the evidence against her. All that remains of the Witch of Newbury is the perceptions of her killers, and the narratives presented by sympathetic authors in pamphlets like *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which revels in the victory of the Roundhead soldiers over a diabolic foe. The narratives of the Witch of Newbury illustrate ably the way in which ideas about witchcraft could, and did, change and develop throughout the seventeenth century, and in particular, during the English Civil Wars.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Where possible dates are Gregorian Calendar rather than Julian Calendar, however it is not always clear which calendar is being used in the sources, or whether discrepancies in dating might be due to other causes. For the dates of pamphlets or newsbooks the original date stated has been used even if it is Julian Calendar. E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a VVitch. Being taken by some of the Parliament forces, as she was standing on a small planck-board and sayling on it over the river of Newbury: together with the strange and true manner of her death, with the propheticall words and speeches she used at the same time.* (London: John Hammond, 1643): p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, pp. 4–5.

<sup>3</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5. The author suggests that closer to the edge they saw she was not walking or dancing upon the water: 'they could perceive there was a plank or deale overshadowed with a little shallow water that she stood upon, the which did beare her up'. This plank of wood or 'deale' is not addressed further than the first mention, and her ability to navigate the river on the plank is viewed as a cause for alarm and suspicion by those who witnessed it. While from a modern perspective the plank of wood may suggest a natural explanation for the woman's ability to stand upon the water, *True Discovery of a VVitch* does not acknowledge that possibility. Indeed, on the cover of the pamphlet, the plank is represented under the witch's feet, and was certainly not seen as an impediment to the woman being perceived as witch.

<sup>4</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*; E. 69 (8), Thomas Bates *Mercorius Civicus*, (London: Thomas Bates, 21<sup>st</sup>–28<sup>th</sup> of September 1643), p. 4. E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercorius Civicus*, 4; E. 69 (17) 37, Ingler, William, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, (London: Henry Overton, 25<sup>th</sup> September–2<sup>nd</sup> October 1643); E. 71 (10); Thomas Audley, *Mercurius Britanicus, communicating the affaires of great Britaine for the better information of the people*, (London: G. Bishop and R. White, 10<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> October 1643); E. 72 (1); Peter Heylyn, *Mercorius avlicus*, (Oxford: Henry Hall, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1643).

<sup>10</sup> Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in early modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): pp. 213–14.

<sup>11</sup> Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 213; Braddick argues "There was an established connection for contemporaries between witchcraft and rebellion". See Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire*, (London: Penguin, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism*, p. 213

<sup>13</sup> Peter Elmer, 'Towards a Politics of Witchcraft in Early Modern England', in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 2001), p. 109.

<sup>14</sup> A large number of women were killed following battles or sieges, usually by the victors, according to Will Coster. See Will Coster, 'Massacre and Codes of Conduct in the English Civil War', in Mark Levine and Penny Roberts, eds, *The Massacre in History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 93–4. The first killing of a woman accused of witchcraft during the 1640s is a somewhat garbled account from the 1641 Depositions: 'the said Edmond had drowned the wife of Mr James Maxwell, & his wife demanding why he did it, the said Edmond answered that Sir Phelemie o Neile tould him that the said mr Maxwells *wife* was a Witch & that he neuer had good loocke after he once kissed her, & more sayth not.' TCD, 1641 Depositions Project, online transcript [<http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID=<?php echo 836228r120?>>]

<sup>15</sup> James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: witchcraft in England, 1550–1750*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996): pp. 125, 129–30; Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: a seventeenth-century English tragedy*, (London: John Murray, 2005): p. 283.

<sup>16</sup> This does not mean these tests were endorsed by all those who wrote on witchcraft, merely that they were widely perceived to be effective tests even though they were, by and large, not usually used as evidence in the actual trials of witches in this period, unlike in medieval ordeals. See Orna Alyagon Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch: evidentiary dilemmas in early modern England* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), pp. 278, 205–6.

<sup>17</sup> R. Trevor Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs: with Special Reference to the Great Rebellion* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2011), pp. 147–9; Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders*; Diane Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities: fantasies of witchcraft in the English Civil War', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27 (1996); Mark Stoye, *The Black Legend of Prince Rupert's dog: witchcraft and propaganda during the English civil war* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press); Frederick Valletta, *Witchcraft, magic and superstition in England, 1640–70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Christina Hole, *Witchcraft in England* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1945), p. 73; see also Valletta, *Witchcraft, Magic and Superstition*, pp. 147–8; Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', pp. 104–6.

<sup>19</sup> See Stoye, *The Black Legend*, p. 58; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, pp. 147–8.

<sup>20</sup> Davies describes the incident as casting 'a vivid light upon the mental anatomy of Parliamentary soldiers' and argues that this fantastical story is evidence of the 'growing credulity of the reading public under Parliamentary rule'. Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs*, pp. 147–8.

<sup>21</sup> Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', pp. 103–4.

<sup>22</sup> Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', pp. 105–6.

<sup>23</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>24</sup> Mark Stoye, 'The Road to Farndon Field: Explaining the Massacre of Royalist Women at Naseby', *English Historical Review* 208.503 (2008): pp. 895–923; Stoye, *The Black Legend*,

<sup>25</sup> See Stoye, 'The Road to Farndon Field'; Stoye, *The Black Legend*, pp. 145–8.

<sup>26</sup> Stoye, *The Black Legend*, pp. 32–9, 41–3.

<sup>27</sup> Stoye, *The Black Legend*, p. 143; E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy* (London: s.n., 1642), pp. 3–4.

<sup>28</sup> The most intense period of witch persecution in early modern England occurred between 1645 and 1647. Some estimates suggest that as many as a fifth of all executions for witchcraft in early modern England took place in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Ely and Huntingdonshire during these three years. James Sharpe and Christina Lerner estimate that there were approximately 500 executions in England for witchcraft in the early modern period. Sharpe and Malcom Gaskill further estimate that around 100 people were hanged in East Anglia between 1645 and 1647. 100 executions in East Anglia is possibly a fairly conservative estimate, therefore 1/5 of all executions in England is also likely to be a conservative percentage. See James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: witchcraft in England, 1550–1750* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), pp. 125, 129–30; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, p. 283.

<sup>29</sup> Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, p. 149.

<sup>30</sup> E. 295 (2) [Anon] *Signes and wonders from heaven* (London: I.H., 1645), p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials*, (London: Heath Cranton, 1933), pp. 309–11.

<sup>32</sup> Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism*, pp. 212–14.

<sup>33</sup> See E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*, (London Printed by T. F., 1642), p. 1. The pamphlet describes it as 'the Bataille of BRANFORD', but it actually refers to the Battle of Brentford in Middlesex on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November, 1642.

<sup>34</sup> E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> The depiction of Irish women as sexually depraved, violent, and diabolic whores, was an established part of anti-papist propaganda that was intensified by Irish insurrection and fears about Catholic infiltration through the Irish 'backdoor'. Irish Catholics were portrayed as the inverse of English Protestants – much as the witch was portrayed as the unnatural inverse of good motherhood. They were part of the binary that depicted the true church of England as the good wife of God, and the Catholic Church as the 'Whore of Babylon'. Mary O'Dowd, 'Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', in Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in Early Modern Ireland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p. 96. See also Alexandra Walsham, "'This Newe Army of Satan': The Jesuit Mission and the Formation of Public Opinion in Elizabethan England', in David Lemmings and Claire Walker (eds), *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> This was during the Welsh rebellion of Owain Glyn Dwr. As Stoye describes: 'The story of Bryn Glas may be swiftly told. At the height of Glyn Dwr's rebellion, a body of English troops under Sir Edmund Mortimer was surprised and defeated by the Welsh. Hundreds of English soldiers were killed, and, according to a contemporary account, once the fighting was over, swarms of Welshwomen descended on the battlefield and subjected their enemies' bodies to the grossest indignities: hacking off the genitals and noses of the slaughtered English soldiers and forcing these severed body parts into the mouths and anuses of the corpses. The veracity of this report remains open to doubt. What is important, for the purposes of the present paper, is that the story of the Bryn Glas atrocities was given "the widest possible currency" by subsequent generations of English chroniclers and was still being retold during the late Elizabethan period.' Stoye, 'The Road to Farndon Field', pp. 901–2; E. 127 (49) [Anon] *The true proceedings of both armies*, 5; See also, Christopher

Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Crisis in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 68, 101–3; O'Dowd 'Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*; See Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 218–219; STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, diuided into three bookes*. (Edinburgh, 1597).

<sup>38</sup> E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Stoye, *The Black Legend*, pp. 57–68.

<sup>40</sup> E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>41</sup> E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*, pp. 3–4; E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7; See also Stoye, *The Black Legend*, pp. 58, 148–151; Diane Purkiss argues that the story of the Witch of Newbury could only have been told after the fact, as it was contingent upon the defeat of Royalist forces at the battle. See Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', p. 104.

<sup>42</sup> Marion Gibson, *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (Routledge: London, 2000), p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 166, 170.

<sup>46</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 170–1.

<sup>47</sup> See Marcus Harmes's discussion in this volume on the contrasting dimensions of James's thought.

<sup>48</sup> STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue*.

<sup>49</sup> Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 159–160.

<sup>50</sup> Accounts of individual witches from early modern England share a number of features. They often begin by describing the crime of witchcraft generally as a fundamental evil and then describe the specific details of the alleged witch's crime, how the witch was lured into the Devil's service, their confession, trial and execution. They emphasise the evil of the Devil, his temptation of Christians, and often discuss scepticism of witchcraft, and reassure readers by citing the Bible and learned texts. While some accounts are narratives, others, like the Lancashire account of 1612, or the accounts about East Anglia, consist primarily of statements and confessions apparently recorded and printed by those actively involved in the trials, with some supplementary material or commentary. *True Discovery of a VVitch* follows this outline to some extent, beginning with an outline of the evils of witches, and why and how women, even poor and ignorant women, become witches. It also provides an eyewitness account of her discovery, testing, and confession prior to execution. Frances E. Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 53; See also STC (2nd ed.) 20138 Thomas Potts, *The vvonderfull discoverie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (London: W. Stansby, 1613); E. 296 (35), [Anon], 'H.F.', *A true and exact relation of the severall informations, examinations, and confessions of the late witches, arraigned and executed in the county of Essex* (London: M.S., 1645).

<sup>51</sup> Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, pp. 128–129.

<sup>52</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 4; the author of the *Mercurius Civicvs* seconds this claim to credible eyewitnesses. See E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, pp. 2–3.

<sup>54</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> E. 295 (2) [Anon], *Signes and wonders from heaven*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>56</sup> E. 295 (2) [Anon], *Signes and wonders from heaven*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>57</sup> E. 295 (2) [Anon], *Signes and wonders from heaven*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>58</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> E. 69 (17) 37 Ingler, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> E. 69 (17) 37 Ingler, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> E. 69 (17) 37 Ingler, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*; E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*.

<sup>68</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercurius Civicvs*, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Elmer, 'Towards a Politics of Witchcraft', p. 108; Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, pp. 214–15; Stoye, *The Black Legend*, pp. 41–2.

<sup>72</sup> Mark Stoye, *Soldiers and Strangers: an ethnic history of the English Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 4–6; see also Stoye, 'The Road to Farndon Field', pp. 922–3.

<sup>73</sup> E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> See Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Crisis in Ireland*, pp. 101–103; O'Dowd, 'Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', pp. 96.

<sup>75</sup> E. 127 (48), *The Effect of All Letters Read in the House of Parliament* (London: John Cave, 1642), p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> Stoye, 'The Road to Farndon Field', p. 907.

<sup>77</sup>The original pamphlet, which apparently made this claim, has not been found but it was quoted in the Royalist newsbook *Mercurius Avlicvs*. See E. 18 (11) [Anon], *Mercurius Avlicvs*, (27 October to 2 November, 1644). The *Mercurius Avlicvs* later mocked the witch-hunt in England, claiming that 'we have also multitudes of witches among us ... More, I may well say, than ever this Island bred since the

Creation. I speak it with horror. God guard us from the Devil, for I think he was never so busy upon any part of the Earth that was enlightened by the beams of Christianity; nor do I wonder at it, for there's never a Cross left to fright him away.' See E296 (33) [Anon], *Mercurius Avlicus* (July 13 to July 20 1645).

<sup>78</sup> E. 69[8] *Mercurius Civicus* (21– 28 Sept. 1643), p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> Brian Levack coined the term 'cumulative concept' to explain how medieval ideas, both elite and popular, contributed to the development of a relatively coherent series of witch tropes that were easily recognisable to both accused and accuser, and changed over time and in different localities. Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Harlow: Longman/Pearson, 2006), pp. 32–67.

<sup>80</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Ruperts White Dog called Boy*; E. 246 (23) John Taylor, *A dialogue, or, Rather a parley betweene Prince Ruperts dogge whose name is Puddle, and Tobies dog whose name is Pepper* (London: I. Smith, 1643); E. 92 (13) [Anon], *The Parliaments unspotted-bitch: in answer to Prince Roberts dog called Boy, and his malignant she-monkey* (London: R. Iackson, 1643); E. 93 (9) [Anon], *The humerous tricks and conceits of Prince Roberts malignant she-monkey, discovered to the world before her marriage. Also the manner of her marriage to a cavaleer and how within three dayes space, she called him cuckold to his face* (London: T. Cornish, 1643); E 90 (25) John Taylor, *An Exact description of Prince Ruperts malignant she-monkey, a great delinquent having approved her selfe a better servant then his white dog called Boy: laid open in three particulars 1. what she is in her owne-shape, 2. what she doth figuratively signifie, 3. her malignant tricks and qualities* (London: E. Johnson, 1643); E. 3 (17) John Taylor, *A dog's elegy, or, Rvper's tears, for the late defeat given him at Marstonmoore, neer York, by the three renowned generalls; Alexander Earle of Leven, general of the Scottish forces, Fardinando, Lord Fairefax, and the Earle of Manchester generalls of the English Forces in the North. Where his beloved dog, named Boy, was killed by a valiant souldier, who had skill in necromancy. Likewise the strange breed of this shagg'd cavalier, whelp'd of a malignant water-witch; with all his tricks, and feats. Sad Cavaliers, Rupert invites you all that does survive, to his dogs funerall. Close-mourners are the witch, Pope, & devill, that much lament ye'r late befallen evill* (London: for G. B., 1644); E. 546 (28) Prince Rupert, Count Palatine, *The declaration of His Highnesse Prince Rupert, Lord High Admirall of all the navy Royall, belonging to the Kings Majesty Charles the II. Wherein hee cleareth himselfe from many scandalous rumours which have bin cast upon his reputation* (London: s.n. 1649).

<sup>82</sup> Stoye, *The Black Legend*, pp. 57–68.

<sup>83</sup> See E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, 1; E. 3 (17) Taylor, *A dog's elegy*, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>85</sup> E. 71 (10) Audley, *Mercurius Britannicus*, p. 6.

<sup>86</sup> *The true proceedings of both armies*, was published in late November 1642, and related events that occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of November. See E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*.

<sup>87</sup> See Coster, 'Massacre and Codes of Conduct n the English Civil War', in Mark Levine and Penny Roberts (eds), *The Massacre in History* (New York: Berghahn, 1999), pp. 89–106.

<sup>88</sup> Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs*, pp. 157–158; Stoye, *Soldiers and Strangers*, pp. 139–141.

- <sup>89</sup> Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 218.
- <sup>90</sup> David Underdown, *Revel, riot, and rebellion: popular politics and culture in England, 1603–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 40.
- <sup>91</sup> David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain 1600–1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 26, 30–31.
- <sup>92</sup> E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrius Civicvs*, p. 4.
- <sup>93</sup> See Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*.
- <sup>94</sup> Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 194; Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 166, 170.
- <sup>95</sup> See E. 388[2] Matthew Hopkins, *The discovery of vvitches: in answer to severall queries, lately delivered to the judges of the assize for the county of Norfolk. And now published by Matthevv Hopkins, witch-finder. For the benefit of the whole kingdome* (London: R. Royston. 1647); S5365, John Sterne, *A confirmation and discovery of witchcraft* (London: William Wilson, 1648).
- <sup>96</sup> E. 388[2] Hopkins, *The discovery of vvitches*.
- <sup>97</sup> Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 218–19.
- <sup>98</sup> STC (2nd ed.)3907 [Anon], *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (London: Tho: Purfoot, 1612).
- <sup>99</sup> Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England*, p. 83.
- <sup>100</sup> See STC (2nd ed.) 3907 [Anon], *The Witches of Northampton-shire*, STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue*.
- <sup>101</sup> Wallace Notestein. *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Oxford: Benediction Classics 2012), p. 83.
- <sup>102</sup> Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England*, pp. 78, 83. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, p. 218; Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, p. 159.
- <sup>103</sup> Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, p. 218.
- <sup>104</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, p. 209.
- <sup>105</sup> STC (2nd ed.) 1943 Richard Bernard, *A guide to grand-iury men diuided into two books*, (London: Felix Kingston, 1627); William Perkins, *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft so farre forth as it is reuealed in the Scriptures, and manifest by true experience* (Cambridge: Cantrel Legge, 1610.); STC (2nd ed.) 5836 John Cotta, *The triall of vvitch-craft shewing the true and right methode of the discouery: with a confutation of erroneous wayes* (London: George Pvrslowe, 1616).
- <sup>106</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 158–9, 178, 195.
- <sup>107</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, p. 159.
- <sup>108</sup> STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue*.
- <sup>109</sup> E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Both these are also found in King James's *Daemonologie*. See Chapter VI in STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue*.

<sup>111</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 178, 195.

<sup>112</sup> For other examples of drowning see E. 133 (14) Richard Johnson, *Good and True Newes from Ireland* (London: H. Blunden, 1642), p. 6; E. 51 (15) William Jesop, *A More Exact and Full Relation of Many Admirable Passages* (London: Mathew Walbancke, 1644); A.R. Bayley, *The Great Civil War in Dorset, 1642 – 60* (Barnicot and Pearce: Taunton, 1910), p. 188; E. 284 (20), *Mercurius Avlicus* (Oxford: Henry Hall 20–27 April 1645); Peter Gaunt, *A Nation Under Siege: The Civil War in Wales, 1642–46* (London: HMSO, 1991), p. 44.

<sup>113</sup> Stoye, *Soldiers and Strangers*, pp. 59 – 60; See also Mark Stoye, 'The Road to Farndon Field', p. 916.

<sup>114</sup> Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 190–1.

<sup>115</sup> E. 3 (17) Taylor, *A dog's elegy*.