

## Drysdale & Witchcraft trials in 17<sup>th</sup> century Scotland

Ref: *The 1649-50 Scottish witch-hunt with particular reference to the synod of Lothian and Tweeddale* - Paula Hughes  
Phd thesis

### Eupham Drysdail of Caridne [Carriden, Bo'ness] - a confessed witch (probably executed)

39) 9 November 1649

*Commission for ministring Justice vpon Eupham Drysdail*

Commission to the Lairds of Dundas elder and younger, Medox, George Dundas of Duddingstoun, Mr William Sandieland of Hilderstoun, Robert Cuthbertsone in Lithgow, George Allan in Burrowstounesse and Florence Gardner in Grangepannes or to anie fflyve of them, To minister Justice vpon Eupham Drysdail in the Paroche of Carridne a confessinf witch, Her depositions revised and attested be the Presbetrie of Lithgow The Commission past in the ordinarie forme With the ordinarie clause subjoined Viz And the Committee of Estates doth ordane the said Commissioners or their quorum to take exact tryall and put vpon Inventor all the goodes geare debts soumes of money insicht plemshoing and vthers whatsoever pertening to the said Eupham Drysdail And bee whom the said soumes pertening to her are resting And in whose possession and Custodie the said goodes and geare are With power to the said Commissioner or thaier Said quorum To do everie thing necessarie for that effect And to report the same to the Lords and vthers of his Majesties Exchequer betuix and the tenth of December next. Sic Sub<sup>r</sup> Lothian, I.P.D.Com.

There is no mention of the fate of Eupham Drysdail in the source publication but the usual punishment for witchcraft was 'to be taken to the place of execution ..... and there to be strangled to death be the hand of the hangman, and thereafter her body to be

*burnt to ashes for her trespasses; and ordains all her movable goods and gear to be escheit and inbrought to his Majestie's use for the causes aforesaid...'*

Also, an additional reference occurs in the book: *Being Historical Sketches of Kinneil, Carriden, and Boness* there is a paragraph there which states:

.....On 27th January, 1648, the Council had before it a supplication by the Presbytery of Linlithgow, signed by Mr. Pa. Shiells, moderator, and Mr. Ro. Row, clerk. The supplication narrates that the Council had on a former occasion, also on the application of the Presbytery, granted a commission to several gentlemen for the trial of six witches in the Parish of Carriden, and that these (the witches apparently) had been duly executed.....

Ref: *Confessions of the Alloa Witches 10-6-1658* - one of the trial witnesses - William Dryisdall

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NOTE.—The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the opinions or statements of Contributors.

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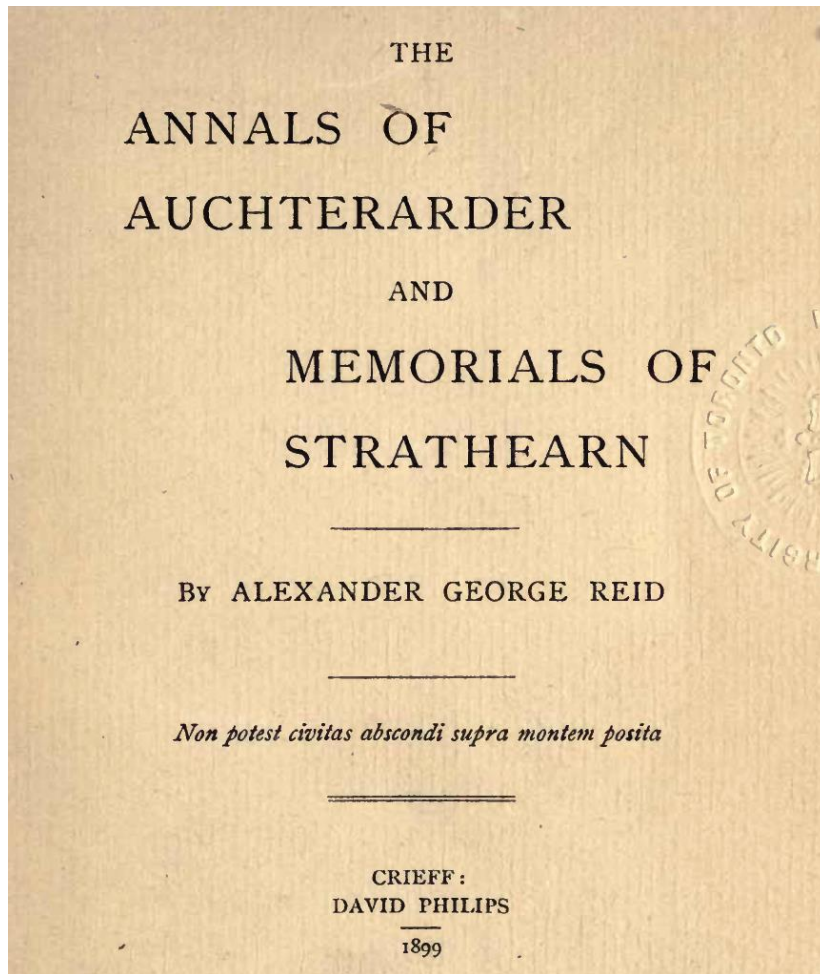
609. CONFESSIONS OF ALLOA WITCHES.—The following 'delationis, dittees, and confessions' of a number of Alloa witches is copied from the original manuscript in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The document has been written on one side of a large sheet of paper two feet nine inches in length by twelve inches in breadth, and afterwards divided into three smaller sheets. So far as I am aware it has never before been printed. It is a pity that the writer has not given us fuller details of the ceremonies performed, even though it should have taken 'ane great wolum to express.' For the benefit of some readers the following explanations of a number of the words occurring in the confessions may be added: *Cuningar*, a rabbit warren; *Cuving*, coven, a witches meeting, Latin *convenire*; *grang*, grange; *putches*, pouches, pockets; *quhinis*, whins; *skard*, alarmed, disturbed; *strawed*, strewed; *seardit*, buried in the earth. GEO. F. BLACK.

At Alloway the tent Day of Maji 1658 yeiris, The delationis, Dittees, and confessions of Umq<sup>n</sup> Margret Duchall and Margret tailzeor, Bessie VOL. IX.—No. XXXIV. D

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Kathren blak is delated be Besse Paton, and Kathren Renny, to be guiltie, and that scho was at thair meetingis, scho hes bein of ane ewill nam thir twentie zeiris bygain and upward, and many fearfull dittees and horrible presumptionis against her.		
James Hudston is delated be margret tailzeor, to be guiltie and that he was at ane meeting with tham in the cuningar, And ane great ditte given in against him besyd.		
Jonet Reid is delated be Besse Paton and Margret tailzeor to be guiltie, with sundrie great dittees against hir.		
James kirk is delated be Margret tailzeor to be guiltie, and that he was at ane meeting with tham in the cuningar, quhair the diwell and they war altogidder dancing and the said James kirk playing on the whistle to tham, with many great dittees and fearfull presumptionis against him, besyd ane ewer [ <i>sic</i> , ewel] name of ane warlok and ane great charmer all his lyftym.		
Barbara Erskin is delated be besse Paton to hawe bein at the casting away of the boat at the blakgrang, scho is lykwayis delated be Margret tailzeor, quho declairis scho was at ane meeting with tham in the cuningar, quhair they danced altogidder with the diwell, and James kirk quhisling to tham.		
Jonet Paterson in craigward is delated be margret tailzeor to be a great witch and if scho be not spedilie taken, margret tailzeor sayis scho will doe the toun of alloway ane ewell turne.		
Jonet Millar in tullibodie is delated be margret tailzeor to be guiltie, shoe [ <i>sic</i> ] hes the report of a great charmer, all hir lyftym, and many great dittees against hir.		
All thir abowe wrettin confessionis delationis and dittees exprest we wundersubscryweris testifie to be of trewth as witnes our handis at Alloway the said tent day of Junij 1658 zeiris, is followis		
Ale <sup>r</sup> Ritche	Johne Valke	Henry Towar
James Lindsay	Johne Arthour	Andro Thomsons
C. Inchlone (?)	James Cwninghame	Ro <sup>s</sup> Archibald
A. R.	J. Sinklar	Johnn Kirk, constable
James Mitchel, cowper	Kinhorne	Willam Symmer
John Murray	Walter Suord	Johne Hunter
John Short	William Dryisdall	Johne Mackenzie
610. 'STRANGERS.'—A body of men were known in England in the 16th and 17th centuries as 'Strangers' or 'Estrangers,' that is extranei, foreigners; the verse 'The Lord careth for the strangers' (Psalm cxlvi.) is rendered in the vulgate 'Dominus custodit advenas.' They are now better known as Huguenots a word about the derivation of which much		



Ref: The Annals of Auchterarder & Memorials of Strathearn - Agnes Drysdale of Coldrain, Kinross - stated to be a member of the Witches Coven at the crook of Devon - probably escaped execution



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the place called the Lamblaires, bewest the Cruick Miln, the place of their execution, to-morrow, being the fourth day of this instant month of April, betwixt one and two in the afternoon, and there to be stranglit to the death by the hand of the hangman, and thereafter their bodies to be burnt to ashes for their trespass, and ordains all their moveable goods and gear to be escheit and inbrought to his Majesty's use for the causes foresaids. Whereupon William Donaldson, dempster, gave doom.

*Sic subscribitur, J. ALEXANDER.*

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ROBERT WILSON, INDWELLER IN CRUIK OF DEVON; BESSIE NEIL, INDWELLER IN GELVIN; MARGARET LITSTER, INDWELLER IN KILDUFF; JANET PATON, INDWELLER IN CRUIK OF DEVON; AGNES BRUGH, INDWELLER IN GOOSELANDS.

Ye all five are indyted and accused for saemeikle as be devine law of the Almighty God, set down in his sacred word, especially in the 18 chap. of Deut. and 20 chap. of Lev., made against the

Thomas Dowie, in . . . ; and others mae, that ye cried there three several times to the devil to come, and that the devil appeared to you and gave you ane sair stroke on the right shoulder, but nane of the foresaid men saw him.

Likeways, that ye confessed ye had an meeting with the devil at the Stanriegate, bewest the Cruik of Devon, where the devil desired you to be his servant and renounce your baptism, whilk ye refused to do at that time; and that the devil was riding on ane horse with fulyairt cloathes and an Spanish cape, and that there was with you at that meeting, Bessie Neil, in Gelvin; Marget Hoggan, there, Christian Grieve spouse to . . . ; Andrew Beveridge, in Quhorlawhill; Marget Young, spouse to Wm. Beveridge, there; Janet Paton, in Cruik of Devon; Janet Brugh, spouse to James Moreis, there; Janet Paton, in Kilduff; Marget Litster, spouse to Finlay Ma, there; Christian Young, spouse to James Bennet, there; Agnes Beveridge, in Broughty; Marget Beveridge, there; her sister, Agnes Drysdale, spouse to John Blackwood of Coldrain,

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riding on an brown horse and an old black plaid about her. This ye said to be on Wednesday about Yule last, two hours before day, and that the devil appointed them to meet at the Bents of Balruddrie on Friday thereafter.

Likeways, ye confessed that they obeyed him, where ye and all the forenamed persons were present, and Sathan with them; and Sathan appointed them another meeting at Gibson's Craig within a fortnight

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##### THE CONFESSIONS AND DITTAYS OF THE SAID JANET PATON.

Ye, the said Janet Paton, are indyted and accused of the sin and crime of witchcraft. Ye confessed that ye was at ane meeting at Turfhill, where Sathan asked you gif ye would be his servant, whilk ye did, and Sathan took you be the hand, and ye said that his hand was cold, and he desired you to renounce your baptism, whilk ye also did; as also said that Sathan gave you a name, calling you Annas, and Sathan's name, Thomas Roy, and said there was there, at the said meeting, Robert Wilson and his wife, Janet Brugh, in Cruik of Devon; Agnes Brugh, in Gooselands; Christian Grieve, and Margaret Young in Quhorlawhill; Marget Hutton, in Gelvin; Janet Paton, in Kilduff; Agnes Drysdale, in Coldrain; and Gules Huttin, in Gartwhynnean.

#### 244 THE ANNALS OF AUCHTERARDER

An Court of Justiciary holden at the Cruik of Devon, the fifth day of May, sixteen hundred and sixty-two years, by Mr Alex. Colville of Blair, His Majestie's Justice Depute General over Scotland.

##### *Nomina Assize.*

William Henderson, David . . . James . . . Robert . . . James Alexander of Balruddrie; Edmund Mercer, Gavin Alexander, portioner of Blairhill; Adam Hutton, in Easter Downhill; James . . . Thomas Peirson, Robert Quhyte, in Gartwhynnean; James Blackwood, in . . . Adam . . . Archibald . . .

It is found and declared by the hail assize, all in one voice, that the foresaid Janet Paton is guilty and convict in three several points of witchcraft and sorcerie, according to her own free confession, and that she is convict be brute and fame as an sorcerer and an notorious witch, by the mouth of the said Edmund Mercer, Chancellor to the said assize.

*Sic Subscribitur, EDMUND MERCER, Chan.*

For the whilk causes above named, the General Justice Depute gives sentence, and ordains that the said Janet Paton shall be taken away to the place called the Lamblaires bewest the Cruik Miln, the place of her execution this day, being the fifth day of this instant month of May, betwixt four and five in the afternoon, and there to be strangled to death be the hand of the hangman, and thereafter her body to be burnt to ashes for her trespasses; and ordains all her movable goods and gear to be escheit and inbrought to his Majestie's use for the causes aforesaid; whereupon Alexander Abernethie, dempster, gave sentence.

*Sic Subscribitur, J. ALEXANDER, Clk,*

The subsequent fate of Agnes Drysdale is not known, but it is likely that she escaped execution.



The witches of Borrowstouness, 1679 - Alex. Drysdale, Skipper is mentioned as a witness

A  
**COPY**

OF THE

INDICTMENT OF THE WITCHES AT BORROWSTOUNESS

—THE PRECEPT FOR SUMMONING THE JURY AND  
WITNESSES—WITH THE WARRANT FOR THEIR  
EXECUTION.

*Copy of the Indytment.*

ANNAPLE THOMSONE, widow in Borrowstownes,  
Margaret Pringle, relict of the deceast John  
Campbell sive-wright there, &c.

Yee, and ilk ane of yow ar indytted and accwsed,  
that where, notwithstanding, be the law of God,  
particularlie sett down in the 20 chapter of Leviti-  
cus, and eighteen chap. of Dewtronomie, and be  
the lawes and actes of parliament of this kingdome,  
and constant practiq; thereof, particularlie be, the  
73 act, 29 parliament Q. Marie, the cryme of witch-  
craft is declaired to be ane horreid, abominable and  
capitall cryme, punishable with the paines of death  
and confiscatioun of moveables. Never the less it  
is of veritie, that you have comitted, and ar gwyltie  
of the said cryme of witchcraft, in swa far ye have  
entered in paction with the devill, the enemie of

100 WITCHES OF BORROWSTOUNESS.

November, ane thousande six hunder and seventie  
nyne yeirs.

(*Sic Subscribitur*) R. HAMILTON,  
J. CORNWALL,  
RICH. ELPHENSTONE,  
W. DUNDAS.

*Ane List of the Persones to be warned to passe  
upon the Assyse for Judging the Witches in  
Borrowstownes.*

*Barronie of Carridin.*

Robert Ballendin elder in Northbank,  
Alex. Brown in Bonhard,  
John Irwyne there,  
James Lamb there,  
George Storie in Mure-edge,  
Thomas Knox wiver in Littill Carridin,  
John Meldrum ther,  
George Yowng in Murrays,  
John Brown oversman ther,  
George Smyth ther,  
John Robertstone in Bonhard-panns,  
John Daviesone ther,  
John Pool ther.

*Town of Borrowstownes.*

George Bennet,  
James Cassilles elder, skipper,

WITCHES OF BORROWSTOUNESS.

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Alex. Drysdail skipper,  
James Hardie glover,  
Alex. Randie baxter  
Richard Carss,  
James Hamilton elder,  
James Hwtton baxter,  
Andrew Hamilton,  
Thomas Downie,  
James Mwnigill wiver,  
Rob. Downie.

*Order and Warrant for Burning the Witches of  
Borrowstownes, Dec. 19, 1679.*

FORSAMEIKLE as Annabil Thomson widdow in  
Borrowstownes, Margaret Pringle relict of the de-  
ceast John Campbell ther, Margaret Hamiltown  
relict of the deceast James Pollwart ther, William  
Craw indweller ther, Bessie Wicker relict of the  
deceast James Pennie ther, and Margaret Hamil-  
town relict of the deceast Thomas Mitchell ther,  
prisoners in the tolbuith of Borrowstownes, are  
found guiltie be ane assyse, of the abominable  
cryme of witchcraft committed be them, in maner  
mentioned in their dittayes, and are decerned and  
adjudged be us under subscrivers (commissioners  
of justiciary speciallie appoynted to this effect) to  
be taken to the west end of Borrowstownes, the  
ordinar place of execution ther, upon Tuesday the  
twentie-third day of December current, betwixt  
two and four a clock in the efternoon, and ther to

WITCHES OF BORROWSTOUNESS.

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be wirried at a steack till they be dead, and there-  
fter to have their bodies burnt to ashes. These  
therefor require and command the baylie principal  
off the regalitie of Borrowstownes, and his deputts,  
to see the said sentance and doom put to dew exe-  
cution in all poynts, as yee will be answerable.  
Given under our hands at Borrowstownes the nyn-  
teenth day of December 1679 yeirs.

W. DUNDAS,  
RICH. ELPHINSTONE,  
WA. SANDILANDS,  
J. CORNWALL,  
J. HAMILTON.