**Witchcraft in Exeter:**

**The Case of Margaret Clarke**

At the time of the Restoration, Exeter was a city in which the popular fear of ‘witches’ remained rife. As I have shown in previous articles in *DCNQ*, four local women had been tried for witchcraft in the Exeter quarter sessions court between July 1660 and June 1663.[[1]](#endnote-1) In early 1664, moreover, a fresh prosecution appears to have been narrowly averted when a widow named Susanna Markes went to see the mayor, John Butler, and complained to him that one William Pearse and Joan his wife had been verbally ‘abusing’ her: saying that she was a witch & hath byn the death of her husband with other scurrilous language’.[[2]](#endnote-2) There is no indication in the quarter sessions order book of whereabouts in the city Markes and the Pearses lived, but other documents suggest that both the widow and her accusers were inhabitants of the poor intra-mural parish of St Mary Steps, which lies in the west quarter of Exeter.[[3]](#endnote-3) Butler was an experienced local governor, who had been involved in investigating other cases of supposed witchcraft in the city in the past, and, having listened to Markes’s testimony, he evidently concluded that she was guiltless.[[4]](#endnote-4) On 21 January, Butler - in his capacity as one of Exeter’s justices of the peace, or JPs - ordered that the Pearses should be bound over to be of good behaviour, evidently with the implication that they should trouble Markes no more, and nothing further is heard of the case in the city sessions records.[[5]](#endnote-5) The scepticism which Butler had exhibited on this occasion should not be taken to mean that he was unwilling to entertain charges of witchcraft in principle, however. On the contrary, as this article will reveal, just a few months later, Butler and two of his fellow-JPs were prepared, not only to hearken to one of the strangest testimonies about witchcraft ever to have been unfolded to the Exeter magistrates but also to decide that that testimony was credible enough to warrant the drawing-up of a formal indictment against the alleged ‘witch’.

On 30 June 1664, a youth named Stephen Sparke appeared before Mayor Butler, Alderman John Martin and Alderman Alan Penny to testify to what had allegedly befallen him a few weeks before. Stephen’s deposition, reproduced in document I below, reveals that he was the son of Christopher Sparke, a locksmith from the suburban parish of St David’s, which lies just beyond the city walls to the north. At some time before this, however, Stephen had left his family home in order to lodge as a ‘servant’ - probably, in fact, as an apprentice cloth-weaver - with one Thomas Potter, weaver, who dwelt in St Sidwells, to the east of the city. St Sidwells was the largest and poorest of Exeter’s suburban parishes - and it was also one in which reputed ‘witches’ appear to have been especially numerous.[[6]](#endnote-6) Stephen began his testimony by telling the magistrates that ‘about three weeks before Whit-Suntide last’ - that is to say, in mid-May - his master had sent him on an errand. Unfortunately, it would appear that Stephen had forgotten to don the customary headgear before setting out, because, as he went on to relate, while ‘goeing in ye streete [perhaps Sidwell Street] w[i]thout his hatt, he tooke A Capp from the head of another boy then in the streete’. Not surprisingly the boy whose cap he had purloined, one ‘Smalridge’, was indignant at this cavalier appropriation of his goods, and he retaliated by throwing a stone at Stephen as he made off.[[7]](#endnote-7) Stephen immediately responded in kind, by picking up another stone and hurling it at Smalridge. Yet disaster now ensued, for - as Stephen feelingly went on to relate - ‘the said Smalridge avoiding the stone, one Margaret Clarke comeinge casually out of a dore there, the said stone lighted on the said … Clarke & stroke her in the foote, Whereuppon the [said] … Clarke came to this inform[an]t & shooke her sticke to him and gave him a blowe under the eare w[hi]ch made him ramble [i.e., which dazed him, or befuddled his wits]’.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Stephen’s testimony suggests that this unexpected physical assault had left him in a state of shock, but worse was still to come because, before she departed from the scene, Margaret Clarke had assured the cowering boy ‘that she would fit him a pennyworth before one month was ended’. Stephen had clearly interpreted these sinister words to mean that Clarke planned to further revenge herself upon him very shortly. By the time that he had returned to his master’s house later that day, moreover, the terrified apprentice appears to have convinced himself that Clarke’s revenge would assume a specifically occult form. This was almost certainly because his assailant already possessed a local reputation as a witch, and because - as we shall see - Stephen’s own mistress, Honour Potter, firmly believed that she herself had previously been bewitched by Clarke. That evening, while Stephen was downstairs in his master’s house, he had been alarmed to see what appeared to be ‘a black cat following him out of the shop into the kitchin’.[[9]](#endnote-9) The boy had at once grabbed a pair of tongs from the fireplace - perhaps because of the contemporary belief that iron rendered the servants of the devil powerless - but had been horrified, so he later told the JPs, when ‘the said catt seemed to this inform[an]t to growe greater and greater to the stature of a man w[hi]ch soe affrighted him that he went away to bed & left the candle burning in the kitchinge’. Stephen concluded this part of his testimony, by affirming that, as had run up the stairs, he had looked back into the kitchen and seen his terrifying visitor ‘slinke out’ of the house, having presumably been baulked of its prey.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Whether Stephen believed the apparition he had seen to have been Margaret Clarke herself in the shape of a black cat, or a ‘familiar spirit’ - that is to say, an devil in animal form - which she had despatched to do him harm is unclear. Yet what is transparently obvious, from the boy’s later testimony, is that, in the wake of his disturbing encounter with Clarke and of the nocturnal visitation which had followed it, he had become deeply troubled in his mind. Stephen next told the justices that, ‘on Whitsonday last’, he had returned to his home parish of St David’s - presumably in order to visit his family - and that while he was there, he had gone to church. Whitsunday fell on 29 May in 1664, and this was a highly significant date in the contemporary politico-religious calendar because it was also the anniversary of Charles II’s restoration to the throne four years before.[[11]](#endnote-11) In 1660, the so-called ‘Cavalier Parliament’ had passed ‘an Act for a Perpetuall Anniversary Thanksgiveing on the nine and twentyeth day of May’: an act which had ordered all of the king’s subjects to ‘resort with diligence and devotion’ to their parish church on that day, in order to give ‘publique … praises to God’ for Charles’s ‘happy return’.[[12]](#endnote-12) Stephen had presumably gone to the church in order to attend this compulsory thanksgiving service, therefore. But, as his subsequent testimony to the justices made clear, for him at least 29 May 1664 had turned out to be a day freighted with terror and despair, rather than with happiness and joy.

As Stephen was ‘goeing from the Church home to his fathers house neare by St Davids pound’, he told the magistrates, his nose had suddenly ‘fell a bleeding’. Disconcerted by this, the boy had stopped beside the pound - a building on present-day St David’s Hill, in which lost or stray animals were kept - and rested there for a moment.[[13]](#endnote-13) But then, ‘when he was leaning his head to the pound’, Stephen went on, ‘there [had] appeared unto him the shape of a great blacke pigg & held up one of his fore feet unto him & bid this depon[en]t to come after him’. At once, the boy’s nose had stopped bleeding, and then, Stephen later recalled, ‘this depon[en]t [had] followed the said pigg in over Lydes hedge downe towards the River but, being followed by severall p[er]sons, they overtook him & brought him backe againe, & the said visuage of the pigg then left him’.[[14]](#endnote-14) Evidently, Stephen had obeyed the commands of the strange porcine apparition which had confronted him, as he conceived, beside the pound: first scrambling through the hedge on the other side of the road from the church, and then running pell-mell down the steep hill which falls away to the fast-flowing River Exe beyond: presumably following roughly the same line of approach that Peep Lane does today. Meanwhile, several bystanders - conceivably, other members of the congregation who had themselves just emerged from the church - had seen the boy embark upon his frantic course, and, concluding that he was bent on drowning himself, had pursued him, overtaken him and dragged him back from the water’s edge. It is interesting to note that it was at this particular point in his testimony that Stephen later declared that the ‘visuage’ - or, as we might say, the ‘apparition’ - of the pig had ‘left him’. Was he implying here that, once his fleet-footed pursuers had caught up with him, the sudden urge which he had felt to destroy himself - personified in his account by the ‘great blacke pigg’ - had vanished? And, if so, did he believe the strange creature which he had witnessed to be either Margaret Clarke herself in animal form, or else a ‘familiar’ which she had sent to tempt him into committing suicide?

We will never know for sure, but what we can say for certain is that - in Stephen’s own mind - he had continued to be dogged by evil spirits. After his narrow escape at the river, the boy appears to have left the Potters’ house in St Sidwell’s and returned to the family home in St David’s: presumably so that his parents could keep a closer eye on their troubled son. He had evidently not been confined to the house, however, because, according to his own subsequent testimony, on Tuesday 21 June he had been at large and making his way in a hunched or crawling posture through ‘Little Berry Meade’. This was a field in St David’s parish, which lay to the north east of the church: roughly on the site of the present-day Bury Meadow Park.[[15]](#endnote-15) Here, or so Stephen later claimed, he had been affrighted by yet another apparition, when ‘he saw the appearance or shape of a pigg creeping on hands & feet like this inform[an]t & his face black like a pigg w[i]th a hatt behinde on his poll [i.e., on his head]’. Stephen evidently believed, that - like the ‘great blacke pigg’ which he had previously encountered at the pound - this curiously behatted apparition was bent on persuading him to drown himself. He later recalled that the figure in the shape of a pig had ‘seemed to draw this inform[an]t after him towards A poole in the said meade & [had] sate upon the brinke of the poole’ as it beckoned him onward. Fortunately for Stephen, he had once again been ‘p[re]vented’ from throwing himself into the water ‘by severall p[er]sons & … brought back againe to his fathers house’.[[16]](#endnote-16) And it was presumably from here that he had been conveyed to the heart of Exeter nine days later - one may guess by his worried parents - in order to tell his extraordinary story to the city justices.

That the JPs were prepared to take Stephen’s claims seriously may well reflect the fact that, on the same day that he appeared before them - and surely as a result of pre-arrangement on the part of the two families - the boy’s mistress, Honour Potter, also came forward to make separate allegations of witchcraft against Margaret Clarke. Potter deposed that, some ten years before, she had been ‘much payned in her limbes for divers weekes together’. Desperate for a cure, and evidently convinced that she had been bewitched, Honour had at length gone to consult a local ‘cunning man’ or ‘cunning woman’: in other words, a practitioner of white-magic. During the course of this consultation, Honour later affirmed, ‘the said p[ar]tie [had] told her that about the after end of the weeke the woman that had done her harme should come into her house in a sleivelesse [i.e., a pointless] errand, that was never there’. Honour had taken these mystical words to heart, and, she assured the JPs, had soon seen the cunning person’s prophecy fulfilled, when ‘in the Satterday in that weeke the said Margarett Clarke came into this depon[en]ts house trembling & sayd “Be not afraid, I will doe you noe harm” & sayd soe three tymes, whereupon this depon[en]t came out of the house, being afraid of her’. It is tempting to suggest that Clarke had come to the Potters’ house in the first place because she had heard rumours that Honour suspected her of being a witch, and was anxious to assure her that that was not the case. If so, her good intentions had completely backfired, for Potter had at once interpreted Clarke’s visit as the ‘sleivelesse errand’ which the white-magician had foretold. As Honour went on to stress to the JPs, moreover, the fact that ‘the said Clarke was never in this depon[en]ts house before or never since to this depon[en]ts knowledge’ meant that Clarke could be readily identified as the woman ‘who was never there’ against whom she, Potter, had previously been warned.[[17]](#endnote-17)

Having heard the testimony of Stephen Sparke and Honour Potter, the JPs next turned to examine Margaret Clarke herself. Whether Clarke had been physically dragged before the magistrates by the Sparkes and the Potters, or whether she had been sent for by Butler and his fellows after they had been presented with the initial allegations against her it is impossible to say. Her response to those allegations, in any case, was short and sweet. The order book simply records that ‘the said Margarett Clarke being examined & demanded whether she did not, about a moneth or Five weekes since, strike one Stephen Sperke w[i]th her hand sayth she did not, nor ever did see the said Stephen Sperke in her life to her knowledge’.[[18]](#endnote-18) Despite Clarke’s protestations of innocence, the magistrates clearly concluded that she had a case to answer, and we may presume that, in the wake of the initial examinations, she was either released on bail or committed to the city prison in the South Gate. Four months later, Clarke was arraigned on a formal charge of witchcraft at the Michaelmas sitting of the Exeter quarter sessions court, which was held, as usual, at the Guildhall in the High Street.

The indictment which was drawn up against Clarke on that occasion is transcribed and translated from the original Latin in document II below. This shows that she was charged with having used ‘witchcrafte inchauntments, charmes & sorceries’ against Stephen Sparke on 10 June 1664, ‘by means of which diabolic arts, the foresaid Stephen was then and there in all his body devastated, consumed and stupefied’. This is the first we hear of Stephen suffering from physical symptoms, as opposed to mental ones, and the wording of the indictment strongly suggests that, a fortnight or so after the incident at the church, the boy had claimed to have been stricken in all of his limbs as a result of Clarke’s supposed occult powers. No indictment appears to survive in relation to the other charges made by Honour Potter; presumably these had been dropped on the basis of insufficient evidence. On the back of the indictment appear the names of the several witnesses who had come forward to testify against Clarke. These included both Stephen Sparke and Honour Potter themselves, ‘Margery Sparke’, who was presumably Stephen’s mother, and five other men and women. Of these, at least one - Sidwell Lake - can be shown, like Clarke and the Potters, to have been a resident of St Sidwells.[[19]](#endnote-19) It is plain that the petty jury decided that the evidence against Clarke was strong, and that the case should proceed to trial, because the indictment is marked ‘*Billa Vera*’, or a true bill. But in the end, the trial jury clearly considered the evidence to be insufficient, for the indictment was subsequently endorsed ‘*non culpabalis’*, or ‘not guilty’.[[20]](#endnote-20) We must presume that Clarke was released and permitted to go home soon afterwards, therefore. And that she **did** go back to St Sidwells - if not to live happily ever after, then at least to spend her last few months in familiar surroundings - is made clear by an entry in the St Sidwell’s parish register, which records the burial of ‘Margarett Clarke, widdow’ on 19 December 1665.[[21]](#endnote-21)

Just why Clarke was found not guilty at her trial, we will never know. Her escape almost certainly reflected the increasingly sceptical attitude which judges across the entire country were by now taking to charges of supposed ‘witchcraft’ , while the fact that the chief witness against Clarke was a child - and a child, moreover, whose allegations were particularly bizarre and unusual ones - may also have played its part. It is possible that Butler and his fellow magistrates had at length concluded that Stephen Sparke had made up his stories about Clarke out of simple malice. It is even conceivable that they had come to suspect that the locksmith’s son had invented the tale of the ‘great blacke pigg’ which had allegedly accosted him on St David’s Hill on 29 May with the deliberate aim of subverting the celebrations of the king’s Restoration Day. There are hints that allegations of witchcraft may have been used for similar politico-religious purposes in Exeter a few years before.[[22]](#endnote-22) Be this as it may, it is fascinating to note that the examinations of Sparke, Potter and Clarke are the last witch-related examinations to be found in Exeter’s seventeenth-century quarter sessions order books. [[23]](#endnote-23) Indeed, the order books for the period 1665 to 1700 contain only a single further allusion to the subject of witchcraft (a note made in 1693 that a young Exeter woman named Mary Lisle had called her mother ‘old witch, and said to her that she should take the toads out of her bosome’).[[24]](#endnote-24) Until the sessions rolls for 1665 to 1700 have also been examined, of course, it will be impossible to state for certain that the city magistrates tried no more alleged witches during this period. But, for the moment at least, it does seem likely that it was with the trial of Margaret Clarke, in October 1664, that the long, dark history of witch-prosecution in the Exeter quarter sessions court finally drew to a close.

*I – The Depositions of 30 June 1664*

‘*Cor[am]* [i.e., in the presence of] John Butler Maiore, [and] John Martin and Alan Penny Ald[ermen] 30 *die* Junii 1664.

‘Stephen Sparke the sonne of Christofer Sparke of the parishe of St Davids locksmith informeth that about three weeks before Whit-Suntide last he beinge then a serv[an]t to one Thomas Potter of St Sidwells, weaver, he was sent by him An Errand & goeing in ye streete w[i]thout his hatt he tooke A Capp from the head of another boy then in the streete whereupon the said boy threw A stone att this inform[an]t then this inform[an]t tooke an other stone & threw [it] att the said Smalridge but the said Smalridge avoiding the stone, one Margaret Clarke comeinge casually out of a dore there the said stone lighted on the said Margaret Clarke & stroke her in the foote, Whereuppon the [said] Margaret Clarke came to this inform[an]t & shooke her sticke to him and gave him a blowe under the eare w[hi]ch made him [ramble?] & told him that she would fit him a pennyworth before one month was ended she would warrant him, And this inform[an]t further saith that shortly after, this depon[en]t being in the kitchin of his said maister, he saw the appearance of black catt following him out of the shop into the kitchin, whereupon this inform[an]t went to the Chimley to take a paire of tongs to take the catt, [Then] the said catt seemed to this inform[an]t to growe greater and greater to the stature of A man w[hi]ch soe affrighted him that he went away to bed & left the candle burning in the kitchinge w[hi]ch this inform[an]t goeing upp the staires p[er]ceived it to slinke out & then this depon[en]t went to bed.

And this inform[an]t further saith that Whitsonday last he goeing from the Church home to his fathers house neare by St Davids pound his nose fell a bleeding & when he was leaning his head to the pound there appeared unto him the shape of a great blacke pigg & held up one of his fore feet unto him & bid this depon[en]t to come after him & thereupon this depon[en]ts nose did forbeare bleeding & then this depon[en]t followed the said pigg in over [Lydes?] hedge downe towards the River but being followed by severall p[er]sons they overtook him & brought him backe againe & the said visuage of the pigg then left him.

And this inform[an]t further sayth that Tuesday last past was fortnight he being in little berry meade in the said p[ar]ishe of St Davids he saw the appearance or shape of A pigg creeping on hands & feet like this inform[an]t & his face black like a pigg w[i]th A hatt behinde on his poll [i.e. his head] & seemed to draw this inform[an]t after him towards A poole in the said meade & sate upon the brinke of the poole, then this informant being p[re]vented by severall p[er]sons & was brought back againe to his fathers house’.

[f.147r] ‘Honor the wife of the before named Thomas Potter deposeth that she being much payned in her limbes for divers weekes together the said Thomas Potter did repaire to some p[er]son that shee was adviced to seeke for some what for her ease; the said p[ar]tie told her that about the after end of the weeke the woman that had done her harme should come into her house in a sleivelesse errand that was never there, & this inform[an]t further sayeth that in the Satterday in that weeke the said Margarett Clarke came into this depon[en]ts house trembling & sayd be not afraid, I will doe you noe harm & sayd soe three tymes whereupon this depon[en]t came out of the house being Afraid of her, And that the said Clarke was never in this depon[en]ts house before or never since to this depon[en]ts knowledge, All w[hi]ch was about ten yeares since.

The said Margarett Clarke being examined & demanded whether she did not about a moneth or Five weekes since strike one Stephen Sperke w[i]th her hand sayth she did not, nor ever did see the said Stephen Sperke in her life to her knowledge’.

[Source: Devon Heritage Centre [hereafter: DHC], Exeter City Archives [hereafter; ECA], Exeter Quarter Sessions Order Book [hereafter: QSOB] 65 (1660-72), ff. 147-147r.]

*II – The Indictment of 3 October 1664*

1.Transcription of the original indictment.

‘Civitas Exon’ SS jur[ati] p[ro] d[omi]no Rege sup[er] sacram[entum] suum p[re]sentant q[ou]d Margareta Clarke nuper de Civit[ate] Exon[ie] p[re]d[icte] in Com[itatu] Civit[atis] Exon[ie] p[re]d[icte] vid[ua] decimo die Junii Anno Regni d[o]m[ini] n[ost]ri Caroli s[e]c[un]di dei gra[tia] Anglie Scocie Francie et Hib[er]nie Regis fidei defensoris &c decimo sexto deum pre oculis suis non h[ab]ens sed instigac[i]one diabolica seduct[a] ex malitia sua precogitate[a] quasd[am] malas et diabolicas Artes Anglice vocat[as] *witchcrafte inchauntments, charmes & sorceries* nequiter diabolice & felonice practizavit usa, fuit & exercuit in et sup[er] quand[am] Steph[an]um Sparke nup[er] de parochia S[an]c[t]i David’ in Com[itatu] Civit[atis] Exon[ie] pred[icte] textor’ ea intenc[i]one ad spoiland’, devastand’ & distruend’ usum member[um] d[i]c[t]i Stephen[i] Sperke, quor[um] quid[em] diabolicar[um] artiu[m] pretext[u] pr[e]d[i]c[t]us Steph[an]us adtunc & ib[ide]m in toto corpore suo devast[atus], consumpt[us] & stupid[us] fact[us] fuit contra pacem d[i]c[t]i d[omi]ni Regis nunc Coronam & Dignitatem suas &c necnon contra formam statut[i] in hu[ius] mo[d]i casu nup[er] edit[i] & p[ro]vis[i] &c’.

[In the bottom left hand corner of the indictment:] ‘1 Jac. 12’.

[In the bottom right hand corner:] ‘Izaacke’

[Subsequently endorsed: ‘po[nit] se non cul[pabalis]’

[On the reverse of the indictment:]

Stephen Sparke - jur

‘[Margaret’ – crossed out] Margery Sparke - jur

Elizabeth Tothill, jur

Honor Potter, jur

Bernard Hall, jur

George Vildue, jur

Sidwell Lake – not sworne

Thomas Soper – jur’.

[Endorsed:] ‘Billa Vera’

2.Translation

City of Exeter. The jurors for our lord the king present on their oath that Margaret Clarke, widow, formerly of the county and city of Exeter aforesaid, did on the tenth day of June in the sixteenth year of the reign of our lord King Charles the second, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, not having the fear of God before her eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, and by her own premediated wickedness, wickedly, diabolically and feloniously make use of certain wicked and diabolical arts, called in English ‘*witchcrafte inchauntments, charmes & sorceries’* in and upon one Stephen Sparke, formerly of the parish of St David’s in the county and city aforesaid, weaver, with the intention of spoiling, devastating and destroying the limbs of the foresaid Stephen Sparke, by means of which diabolic arts, the foresaid Stephen was then and there in all his body devastated, consumed and stupefied, contrary to the peace of our lord the king, his crown and dignity, and contrary to the statute in such case proclaimed and provided’.

[In the bottom left hand corner of the indictment:] ‘1 Jac. 12’.

[In the bottom right hand corner:] ‘Izaacke’

[Subsequently endorsed: ‘[She] pleads not guilty; [she is found] not guilty’

[On the reverse of the indictment:]

‘Stephen Sparke, jur

~~Margaret~~ Margery Sparke, jur

Elizabeth Tothill, jur

Honor Potter, jur

Bernard Hall, jur

George Vildue, jur

Sidwell Lake, not sworne

Thomas Soper, jur’.

[Endorsed:] ‘[We find this to be] a true bill’

[Source: DHC, ECA, Exeter Quarter Sessions Rolls [hereafter: EQSR]; box for 15-16 Charles II; roll dated 3 October 1664; indictment of Margaret Clarke.]

1. M. Stoyle, ‘Witchcraft in Exeter: The Cases of Bridget Wotton and Margaret Nightingale’, *DCNQ,* Volume XLI, Part VIII (Autumn, 2020), pp. 227-37; and M. Stoyle, ‘Witchcraft in Exeter: The Cases of Emlyn Bullar and Mary Sowden’, *DCNQ*, Volume XLIII, Part II (Autumn, 2022), pp. 33-40. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. EQSOB 65 (1660-72), f.130r. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. In the poll tax returns of 1660, both ‘William Pearse & wife’ and ‘Susanna Markes, widow’ were listed as residents of St Mary Steps, see W.G. Hoskins (ed.), *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century: Tax and Rate Assessments, 1602-1699* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, Volume 2, Torquay, 1957), p. 61. The fact that the names of the Pearses and of Markes were separated by just six other names on the list of payees – a list which had clearly been compiled on a street-by-street basis – strongly suggests that they were near-neighbours. It is interesting, too, to note, that Markes’s name was separated by just four other names on the list from those of Thomas Tool and his wife, who themselves appear to have been the parents of another woman who had been accused of witchcraft during the preceding year, see ibid; and Stoyle, ‘Bullar and Sowden’, pp. 35-36. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. For Butler’s role in examining two alleged witches in 1663, see Stoyle, ‘Bullar and Sowden’, p. 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. See also EQSR, Box for 15-16 Charles II, roll dated 18 April 1664, recognisance no. 21, relating to William Pearse of Exeter, ‘cook’, and Joan his wife, dated 21 January 1664; and recognisance no 36, relating to the same individuals, dated 13 April 1664. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. See M. Stoyle, *Witchcraft in Exeter, 1558-1660* (Exeter, 2017), p. 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. The fact that four individuals with the surname ‘Smaleridge’ are listed immediately before ‘Thomas Potter & wife’ in the list of poll tax payers in St Sidwells in 1660 again indicates that the boy whose cap Sparke stole almost certainly lived close to the Potters’ house, see Hoskins, *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 27. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. EQSOB 65, f.147. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. See R. Latham (ed.), *Samuel Pepys; The Shorter Pepys* (London, 1987), p. 387. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. J. Raithby (ed.), *Statutes of the Realm, Volume 5, 1628-80* (London, 1819, p. 237. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. The original pound had been demolished during the Civil War. It is interesting to note that, in June 1652, Stephen’s father, Christopher, had leased ‘the voide plot of ground’ on which the pound had formerly stood from the city ‘in consideration of the building of a house thereon’, see DHC, ECA, Exeter Chamber Act Book, 1/10 (1652-63), f.8 reverse. Another man had agreed to rebuild the pound itself in 1657, see ibid., f.89. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. EQSOB 65, f.147. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. For a helpful nineteenth-century sketch map showing the position of Little Bury Meadow in relation to St David’s church, see T. Shapter, *The History of the Cholera in Exeter in 1832* (London, 1849), p. 157. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. EQSOB 65, f.147. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., f.147, reverse. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. See DHC, 3429A/PR/1/1 (St Sidwell’s Parish Register), for a record of the burial on 13 December 1669 of ‘Sidwell, the wife of William Lake’. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. For the names of the jurors who tried Clarke’s case, see EQSR, Box for 15-16 Charles II, roll dated 3 October 1664. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. See P. Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 190-91. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. See EQSOB, 65, ff.148-393; EQSOB, 66 (1682-88), *passim*; EQSOB, 67 (1688-93), *passim*; and EQSOB, 68 (1698-1709), ff. 1-84. Sadly, the order book for the years 1672-1682 does not survive. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. EQSOB, 67, f.118 reverse. The perceived connection between toads and witches in the city went back a very long way, see Stoyle, *Witchcraft in Exeter*, pp. 18 and 44-47. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)