

The Witches of Hull

Being an Account of the Wytche Plague of 1637

in KINGSTON-VPON-HVLL

(also called Hull)

Worked by the Deuil through Sorcery

and how it was brought to conclusion by

Sir JOHN HOTHAM

The Royal Gouvernor in that City

In the Year of Our LORD 1637, an awful Plague did fall upon Kingston-upon-Hull, in the month of July, from which over two hundreds of burghers died unto the month of September, and more in the months which followed besides, and the suffering was such that special levies were imposed upon the North Riding for the relief of Hull and divers other towns of Yorkshire in the Richmond Sessions in January. And the plague did stretch far and wide across the County, and the people of Hull were made to suffer the most of all.

Through the diligence of the Gouvernor, Sir John Hotham, Knight Banneret, three Covens of Witches was uncovered, the which were muchly to blame for the working of the sorceries of Plague and Pestilence, granted them by the Deuil through that Demon they did call Bubonicka.

The First Coven was uncouered at its meeting place in Beverly, making sacrifice of a child for to inflict plague upon the children of their enemies, their fellow burghers who, holding to righteousness and believing in the Gospel, did shun them as miscreants and malignants. The whole of the coven was taken at once by town militia, and upon inuestigation of their persons, were found to bear such marks of the Deuil which are born by witches, and calling upon their demon, they were put unto the death by hanging.

A boat which carried divers books of superstition and idolatry was inspected and its goods duly seized, the which led the Gouvernor and his diligent men to discover the Second Coven. Eight witches, all women of outward respectability in the town, were apprehended intending to take deliuary of these books, and put to the question, confessed their sins and desired to be reconciled. Yet when asked to name those other members of their coven, they would not, and for this failing the court ordered that they be hanged too, except for one witch, whom, greatly fearing the flames of Hell, named her accomplices, and her sentence was thereby commuted merely to be confined and sustained on bread and water through her days. But when the Gouvernor made search for the last four witches, he found them fled, likely unto Virginia for a ship had left Hull for that colony that year. And he did write unto the Gouvernor of Virginia and inform him of those names, and those names were Mary Browne, Elizabeth Mawson, Catherine Emericke, and Susan Lourance.

Still the plague remained in Hull, until the Third and Final Coven was found. This coven was led by a sorcerer from the Low Countries, who masqueraded as a preacher by day, and led his band of witches in dark rituals at night. Their witchmarks being discovered through the efficacious use of pricking for to uncover those marks of the Deuil they contrived to conceal, the whole coven was put to death.