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Witchcraft and Magic in England, c. 1400–1920

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Explore magical practices and beliefs . . .

The practice of witchcraft is centuries old, yet we continue to live in a world fascinated by the potential of magic. Witches have existed in many eras, and in many forms—culturally significant and versatile figures who became the object of intense legal, religious, political, and social scrutiny. This fascinating collection charts the evolution of witchcraft and magic in England over five centuries.

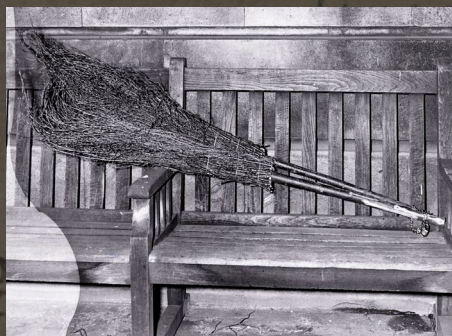
It hones in on the concept of the witch in late medieval thought, when longstanding beliefs in ritual magic, superstition, religion, and theories of health and healing tended to compete, but were nevertheless largely co-existent.

Changing attitudes towards witchcraft, driven by shifts in religious thought and the circulation of important publications, such as *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486), led to legal and secular changes, alongside an increase in accusations against, and persecutions of, those perceived to be witches.

A
DISSERTATION
UPON
SUPERSTITION
IN
Natural Things.

By SAMUEL WERENFELS,
Doctor and Professor of Divinity at BAZIL, in SWITZERLAND.

It incorporates a range of records and texts, thereby exploring key topics and themes, such as gender, medicine, politics, religion, and science.



The files are sourced from The National Archives (UK), British Library, University College London Special Collections, and The Folklore Society.

Interdisciplinary in ethos and expansive in terms of its chronological scope and the archival materials that it contains, *Witchcraft and Magic in England, c. 1400–1920*, will appeal to students, educators, and researchers working within a range of scholarly fields, including anthropology, literary studies, philosophy, sociology, and women's studies.

It will likewise interest those situated within branches of historical study, such as the history of ideas and the history of science, as well as social, cultural, and political history.

. . . in England across five centuries.



The collection features assize records from early modern witch trials and pamphlets portraying the accused, mainly women, as deviant social forces. Religious upheaval, political change, and social tensions in English communities stoked controversy, fear, and hatred, all of which were amplified by a growing print culture



The collection spotlights groups who escaped suspicion—elite figures and “cunning folk”, as well as medical practitioners who engaged in “respectable magic”.



The study of magic and witchcraft became a widespread scholarly pursuit in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such literature forms part of this collection.

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