

8. *Op. at.* (2) p. LXXXI.
9. *Place Names of Devon*, Pt. II, p. 472.
10. *Op. cil.* (3), Line 10486.
11. *Op. ri/*(3), Lines 10455-10468.
12. *Layamon's Bntt—Sir F. Madden*, Vol. III, p. 457.
13. *T.D.A.*, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 211.
14. *The Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, G.N. Garmanway, 1953, p. 132.
15. *Op. cil.* (5), p. 370.
16. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regiini Angloriini*—ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, Lib. II, p. 155.

Diana Woolner

98. Witchcraft in the Diocese of Exeter: Dartmouth, 1601 - 1602

Introduction

In 1905 Harvard University acquired a manuscript of depositions concerning alleged witchcraft in Elizabethan Dartmouth.¹ The majority of the depositions were made in 1601 and 1602 before Sir Thomas Ridgeway, later Earl of Londonderry, in his capacity as a Justice of the Peace. The accusations were given against Michael and Alice Trevisard and their son Peter. In 1929 selections were published.² The testimonies were written on sheets of paper which at some point have been incorporated together. There is a second version of most of the depositions and all differences have been noted. There are three versions of one particular deposition and because there are many marked differences between them all three have been printed in full. The testifiers were noted as both the 'examinant' and the 'examinee' and the abbreviation 'exam't' appears most frequently. These are noted as in the original documents. The spelling of Christian names has been modernised whereas surnames have been left as in the originals. Place-names and spelling have also been modernised as has punctuation been for the most part. Numbers have also been printed as in the original and thus appear either as numerals or in written form. The heading in latin which preceded several of the testimonies has been abbreviated to '43.Elizabeth'.

Devon The examination of Alice Butler³ of Hardness, in the county aforesaid⁴ widow, taken before ['me' crossed out] Sir Thomas Ridgeway, knight, the second⁵ of October 1601.

I.⁷ This examinee sayeth that she sitting at a door or bench in Hardness aforesaid about Christ-tide⁸ last was twelvemonth, with one Michael Trevysard⁹ of Hardness aforesaid, used¹⁰ these words: "I would my child were able to run as well as any of these children that run here in the street". Then said Trevysard,¹² 'it shall never run', 'No? that's hard', says" this exam't again, 'no, it shall never run', answered Trevysard, 'till thou hast another', repeating the same words, a dozen several times at the least, with great vehemence, whereupon this exaninant¹⁵ being much troubled in mind, especially upon a fear conceived by her before, through the general bad report that went of him, departed from him. And the very same week the same¹⁶ child sickened and consumed away, being well one day, and ill another, for the space of seventeen¹⁷ weeks or thereabout, and then died. 2.¹⁸ This examinee further" sayeth that Peter Trevyard, son of the said Michael Trevisard, came to this examinee's house to borrow a hatchet which ALice Beere²⁰ servant to this examinee²¹ denied, to whom the said Michael answered,²² 'shall I not have it? I will do thee a good turn, ere twelve months be at an end'. And shortly [after] the said Alice Beere²² sickened, continuing one day well and another day ill, for the space of²⁴ 11 weeks and then died. In which case both the husband of this exam't and a²⁵ child of their's fell sick and so continued²⁶ 17 or 18 weeks, and²⁷ then died.

[signed] Thomas Ridgway²⁸

Devon The examination of Johan Baddaford²⁹ of Hardness in the county aforesaid,²⁹ widow, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgway, knight, the 2 of October 1601.³⁰

3." This exam't³² sayeth that Alice Trevisard falling out on a time with³ - 1 John Baddaford, husband of this examinee,³⁴ said unto him that he should go to Pursever Wood and gather up his wits, and within three weeks after³⁵ the said³⁶ John Baddaforde³⁷ made a voyage to Rochelle, in the *Hope* of Dittisham, and returned home again out³⁹ of his wits, and so continued by the space of two years, tearing and rending his clothes, in such sort as 4 or 5 men were hardly able to bind him and keep him in order. Further [she], threatening this exam't [said] that within 7 years after she should not be worth a groat nor have a house to ['in' crossed out] dwell in, nor a coat to her back, whereas she had at that time the fee simple of a house worth one hundred pounds and now is she³⁹ worth nothing.

4. This exam't further sayeth that about Lent last past⁴⁰ was three years she,⁴¹ demanding of the said Alice Trevysard⁴² a penny for washing of clothes, the said Alice at last gave her a penny, and withal told her that it should do her little good. Immediately whereupon⁴³ this exam't bestowed the same penny in drink and when the drink came she had no power to drink thereof but the same night fell sick and continued so by the space of 7 weeks following.

5. This⁴⁴ exam't sayeth that within 12⁴⁵ months following she,⁴⁶ with divers of her neighbours, coming from Townstall, from the house of Sir Thomas Ridgway, knight,⁴⁷ where they had complained against the said Alice Trevisard, she, the said Alice, upon occasion of speech told this examinee⁴⁸ saying 'thou or thine may be burned before long be'. From which time, being Monday till the Thursday following, this exam't made no fire at all in her house, but then⁴⁹ beginning to make fire, laid⁵⁰ some few coals in the chimney, her child setting upon the hearth, and this exam't, turning about to break some wood to put into the fire, heard the child suddenly cry out, and saw the band burning about the child's neck and looking into his neck found his flesh burned to the bone, the child having not fallen into the fire, but sitting on the hearth as before, and the fire not kindled at all, but the coals lying there, as she put them in. All which this exam't presently⁵² showed to divers of the chief⁵² of Dartmouth and sought the best remedy she could but found neither salve nor anything else that did it any good but within three weeks after the child⁵⁴ consumed and died.

[signed] Thomas Ridgway⁵⁵

Devon The examination of William Tompson of Dartmouth in the county aforesaid, Mariner, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaye, knight, the 2 of October, 1601.⁵⁶

6.⁵⁷ This exam't⁵⁸ sworn and examined sayeth that about Michaelmas was six years now past,⁵⁹ or thereabout, this exam't⁶⁰ and one Robert Furseman of Dartmouth aforesaid,⁶¹ met Alice⁶² Trevisard upon the forse (*sic*) at Dartmouth, about midnight, with a greyish cape upon her down to her foot,⁶³ and a hood upon her head, which covered almost all her face so that⁶⁴ they took her for some seminary priest and examining her what she made in the street at that time of the night she fell out with them and they were no sooner gone from her, but this exam't fell and was in great danger of breaking his⁶⁵ neck. Whereat, the said Alice laughing, this exam't said to her 'doest thou laugh at a shrewd turn?' and then he struck her with a musket rod. Whereupon she *threatened*⁶⁶ this exam't, saying, 'thou shall be better thou hadst never met with me' and within three weeks after this exam't went in a voyage to sea. In which voyage the ship became on fire, they knew not by what means, and so sunk. There remaining alive⁶⁷ but 6⁶⁸ persons of 25. Whereof this exam't being one was taken at the same time by a [boat from] Portugal and imprisoned in Spain by the space of twelve⁶⁹ months. And at his return home the said Alice told Elizabeth Tompson, wife⁷⁰ of this exam't, saying 'is he come'⁷² home? He hath better luck than a good man, but it is no matter, he shall be there again within this 12 months', and within half a year following this exam't was again taken by the Spaniards, and imprisoned 25 months.⁷⁵ IP In this foresaid Elizabeth Tompson, being⁷⁴ examined upon these last speeches of her husband's oath, affirmeth⁷⁵ them to be true.

[signed] Thomas Ridgway⁷⁶

Devon The examination of Christian Webbar of Hardness in the said county widow, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaye, knight, the 2 October 1601.⁷⁷

8.⁷⁸ This exam't⁷⁹ sayeth that she did set unto Michael Trevisard a⁸⁰ tenement in Hardness for the yearly rent of 26s 8d. Whereof she received of him but 6s 8d, and when she demanded the residue Alice, the wi fe of the said Trevisard,⁸¹ said unto her that it should be the worse for her and within a while after the said Alice Trevisard, was seen by Isabel Tozar⁸² of Hardness to cast water upon the stairs of this exam't, which the said Isabel told this exam't, warning her that she should beware how she went up [th' crossed out] her stairs, which this exam't⁸¹ refrained accordingly for a space. In which mean space⁹⁴ the said Alice Trevisard herself happened to pass through some part of the same stairs and within one hour after the said⁸⁵ Alice and this exam't also fell grievously sick and part of the hands, fingers, and toes of the said Alice rotted and consumed away, as yet appears by her.⁸⁶ 9. This exam't⁸⁷ further sayeth that the said Michael Trevisard⁸⁸ did also threaten her this exam't,⁸⁹ that he would watch her a good turn.

[signed] Thomas Ridgway⁹⁰

The examination of Christopher Honywell, aged 13 years or thereabouts, taken as aforesaid the 2 of October 1601.⁹¹ 10. This exam't sayeth that about Whitsuntide last,⁹² he was⁹³ with Peter Trevisard, son of the said Michael Trevisard, at a place at Hardness where the fishermen use to hang their nets, where the said young Trevisard⁹⁴ did put off his father's boat, saying⁹⁵ 'go thy wayes to new quay, and go in between the 2 lighters and I will meet thee there'. And further this exam't sayeth that⁹⁶ he came with the younge(r) Trevisard to the new quay presently after⁹⁷ and found the boat there between the 2 lighters, the said quay being distant near two flight shoots from the place where the boat was so thrust of as aforesaid and not right against the same place but on⁹⁸ one side. The said 2 lighters also being so near together that there was but room enough for the boat to go in.
(signed) Thomas Ridgway⁹⁹

Devon The examination of Johan Davye, wife of George Davye of Hardness, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaye, knight, the 20th of January 1601 (1602).¹⁰⁰

10. "" This exam't¹⁰² sayeth that Michael Trevisard and the husband of this exam't¹⁰¹ were at variance and within a seven night after this exam't,¹⁰⁴ sitting by the fire with a young child in her arms, the young child did leap into the fire, and was ['wa' crossed out] very much scalded. The said Trevysard¹⁰⁵ then being in one Lovett's house at Hardness at cards ['on a Sunday' crossed out] at Evening prayer time, ['at Cards' crossed out] On a sudden one came¹⁰⁶ into the house and told him how¹⁰⁷ the said Davye's¹⁰⁸ child was scalded. Then Trevysard¹⁰⁹ said that he could (if he would)¹¹⁰ help it in 24 hours, and¹¹¹ being requested so to do by some there¹¹² present,¹¹³ he answered he would never do the said George Davye good, nor any¹¹⁴ of his, and that he might have made the said George Davye 20 nobles worse then he was, before that time, if he would. And the same voyage, and the very week after these threatening speeches, the said George Davye¹¹⁵ was hurt¹¹⁶ grievously in shooting off a piece for pleasure.¹¹⁷

[signed] Thomas Ridgway¹¹⁸

Devon The examination of William Cozen of Hardness in the county aforesaid, sailor; taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaye, knight, the 2 of October 1601.

11. This exam't sayeth that Michael Trevysard and he this exam't falling at variance, about a year and [a] half past, within one quarter of a year after, Joyce Willing, this exam'ts daughter-in-law, without any blow, fall, or ['ot' crossed out] any other outward means, her neck shrunk down between her 2 shoulders and her chin touched her breast, and so remaineth still, ['in a very strange manner.' added on]

12. Further, this exam't ['further' crossed out] sayeth, that Johan Cozen, wife of this examinee, being in her death bed, requested this exam't, that if Alice Trevysard, wife of the foresaid Michael Trevysard, did come to her grave he should beat her away.

r . . n ^ . n - j

[signed] Thomas Ridgway

The examination of Susan Tooker, wife of Walter Tooker, of Hardness taken as aforesaid the 2 of October 1601.¹¹⁹ 13. This exam't sayeth that Alice Trevisard about 4 years past said these words unto her, viz., 'I will not leave thee worth a grey groat'. Her husband going then in a voyage, lost both the ship and goods ['at' crossed out] in that voyage (the weather then being very fair).

14. This exam't further sayeth that upon a denial of drink, Peter, the son of the said Trevisard, said that it had been better to have delivered him drink and the next day following the said Susan sickened, continuing very sick by the space of seven weeks to her great hindrance.¹²⁰

15. Further, this exam't sayeth that Mr. Martyn,¹²¹ in the year of his Mayoralty, having set up a fold at Hardness to keep timber in, the said Michael Trevisard being near the place said 'Martyn, hast thou made a fold? Wind and weather shall tear up all' and in short space after it was torn up in deed, neither could he keep it up,¹²² - although it had been often times very strongly set up. Since that time it hath been set up in the Millpool where¹²³ no stormy weather can annoy it. Yet since¹²⁴ it hath been plucked up very strangely, for it easeth¹²⁵ up altogether being timber of an exceeding great weight and bigness.

16. Finally,¹²⁶ this exam't sayeth that John Peryn and divers others¹²⁷ [of] his servants, who made the said fold, were cast all away¹²⁸ in the next voyage.

[signed]Thomas Ridgway¹²⁹

Devon The examination of Johan Laishe, wife of John Laishe of Hardness in the county aforesaid taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaye, knight, the second of October 1601.

17. This examinee sworn and examined sayeth that about 6 years past Alice Trevysard, wife of Michael Trevysard, being denied a half penny worth of ale by this exam't, said that it should be a hard half penny worth of ale and that she would not leave her worth a groat. And two days after this examinee, having a full barrel of ale standing between two other barrels, the said middle barrel having been there by the space of 3 days before, on the sudden leapt up of itself out of the place and fell on the ground, and so lost all

[signed]Thomas Ridgway

[sheet torn where deposition 18 would have been, presumably that of John Galsworthie—see deposition 33.]

Devon The examination of John Venman of Kingswear in the said county taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaie, knight, the 13th of March 1601 [1602].

19. This exam't sayeth that the wife of Trevisard came to this examinee's house and inquired of his daughter for her mother, saying she had a letter for her, showing her therewithal a piece of paper, which she then held in her hands. The said wife of Trevisard, inquiring again for the maid's mother, she answered again, that her mother was not within. Then the said Trevisard's wife would have delivered the paper to the maid which she refused to receive, being fearful of her because she said she heard she was a witch. Presently after her departure one of the said John Venman his children sickened and himself seeking some medicine for the same, of one Mother Blachford of Bridgetowne, was told by the said Mother Blachford, that his child was bewitched, and that by the said Trevisard his wife, saying further, 'do you inquire when you come home, and you shall find, that at that time the said Trevisard's wife was at your house in the morning and said she had a letter'. Whereupon the said John Venman did inquire, and found it accordingly, and he also sayeth that he never after heard of any such letter.

[signed]Thomas Ridgway

[version b']

Devon 13 March 43 Elizabeth

20."° John Venman of Kingswear in the county aforesaid merchant examined the day and year above written before me Sir Thomas Ridgway, knight, one of her Majesty's Justices assigned for the Commission of the peace in this county of Devon. Sayeth that one Alice Trevisard, the wife of Michael Trevisard, came to his house and inquired of his daughter for her mother saying that she had a letter for her showing therewithal a piece of paper which she held in her hand. Whereat this examinee's daughter answered that her mother was not within. Then she would have delivered the paper which she had in her hand unto her, but she refused to take it being fearful of her because she had heard that she was a witch. Presently after her departure one of this examinee's children fell sick and this examinee seeking some medicine for his child of one Mother Blachforde of Bridgetown was told by the said Mother Blachford that his child was bewitched, and that by the said Alice ['Alice' crossed out] Trevisarde saying further, 'Do you inquire when you come home and you shall find that she was at that time at your house in the morning and said that she had a letter'. Whereupon when this examinant came home unto his house he did inquire whether that Alice Trevisard was there with a letter and it was told [to]him that she was there with a letter but this examinant never heard of any letter afterwards.

[signed]Thomas Ridgway

Devon The examination of John Galsworthie, of Hardness in the county aforesaid, husbandman, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgway, knight, the 7th of April 1602.

33. This examinant sayeth that about['five' crossed out]four years since his wife demanded certain money of Alice Trevisard, the wife of Michael Trevisard of Hardness, which she owed her, whereunto the said Alice Trevisard answered 'I pray God that thou never prosper in body nor goods' and never since did he this exam't or his wife prosper in body or goods, for in very short time after ['did' crossed out] that the said Alice Trevisard had spoken those words he was taken lame in all his body ['that' crossed out, and] went by two crutches twelve months after, and further this exam't sayeth that his wife was never well in her body since but consumed away and died at Christmas last past and also this examinee sayeth that he had a sow great with pigs. Which pigs rotted in the sow's belly within six weeks after his wife had demanded the money of the foresaid Alice Trevisard as foresaid. [at base 'Indictments for bewitching Galsworthie's wife' crossed out]

[signed]Thomas Ridgway

[version c]

Devon The examination of John Venman of Kingswear taken before ('Sir Thomas Ridgwaie knight the second' crossed out) Henry Heyward, Mayor of Dartmouth, a day of October 1601 [43 Elizabeth].

46. This examinee sayeth that the wife of one Michael Trevisard came to his house and inquired of his daughter for her father saying she had a letter for him, she answering that he was not within. The said Trevisard's wife inquired for her mother, (the) answer was likewise made that she was not within. Then the said Trevisard's wife would have delivered the paper she had in her hand to the maid which she refused, being fearful of her, because she said she heard that she was a witch. Presently after her departure one of the said John Venman his children sickened and himself, seeking help for the same of one Mother Blachford of Bridgetown, was told by the said Mother Blachford that his child was bewitched [and that crossed out] by the said Trevisard's wife saying further 'Do you inquire when you come home and you shall find that at that time the said Trevisard's wife was at your house in the morning, and said she had a letter'. Whereupon the said John Venman did inquire and found it accordingly and sayeth that he never afterwards heard of any such letter.

I would like to thank Professor Joyce Youings and Ms. Nancy Sitta for their help in the preparation of these depositions.

NOTES

1. Houghton Library, MS 84-0745, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.
2. G.L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England*. (New York, 1929), 7-22.
3. version b, 'Buttler'.
4. version b, 'in the said county'.
5. version b, 'second day'.
6. version b, '1601. [43 Elizabeth]'.
7. to left, 'Michael Trevisard', version b, numbered '36'.
8. version b, 'Christmas'.
9. version b, 'Trevisard'.
10. version b, 'spake'.
11. version b, 'words following, viz'.
12. version b, 'Trevisard'.
13. version b, 'said'.
14. version b, 'the' missing.
15. version b, 'exam't'.
16. version b, 'said'.
17. version b, '17'.
18. to left, 'Alice Beare'.
19. version b, 'Further this exam't'.
20. version b, 'Bere'.
21. version b, 'exam't'.
22. version b, 'and he answered'.
23. version b, 'Bere'.
24. version b, 'for the space of missing'.
25. version b, 'After the like manner the husband also of this examinee and another.'
26. version b, 'continuing so'.
27. version b, 'and' missing.
28. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
29. version b, 'in the said county'.
30. version b, 'the second day of October [43 Elizabeth]'.
31. version b, numbered '37'.
32. version b, 'examinee'.
33. version b, 'falling out with [her crossed out]'.
34. version b, 'exam't'.
35. version b, 'afterwards'.
36. version b, 'same'.
37. version b, 'Baddaford'.
38. version b, 'distracted'.
39. version b, 'to the value of £100 and is now'.
40. version b, 'past' missing.
41. version b, 'she this exam't'.
42. version b, 'Trevisard'.
43. version b, 'thereupon'.
44. version b, 'Further, this'.
45. version b, 'twelve'.
46. version b, 'she this exam't'.
47. version b, 'from the house of Sir Thomas Ridgway knight' missing.
48. version b, 'exam't'.
49. version b, 'house, and afterwards'.
50. version b, 'Maying'.
51. version b, 'examinee'.
52. version b, 'she presently'.
53. version b, 'chiefest'.
54. version b, 'following the said child'.
55. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
56. version b, 'the second day of October, 1601, [43 Elizabeth]'.
57. version b, numbered '38'.
58. version b, 'examinee'.
59. version b, 'last past'.
60. version b, 'examinee'.
61. version b, 'aforesaid' missing.
62. version b, 'the said Alice'.
63. version b, 'grey cape upon her down to the ground'.
64. version b, 'so that' missing, 'and' inserted.
65. version b, 'of his'.
66. version b, not underlined.
67. version b, 'on life'.
68. version b, 'six'.
69. version b, '12'.
70. version b, 'the wife'.
71. version b, 'examinee'.
72. version b, not underlined.
73. version b, numbered '39'.
74. version b, 'being' missing.
75. version b, 'hath affirmed'.
76. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
77. version b, 'Webbar, widow, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaye, knight, the second day of October 1601U3 Elizabeth]'.
78. version b, numbered '41'.

79. version b, 'examine'.
 80. version b, 'Trevysard, one'.
 81. version b, 'Trevysard'.
 82. version b, 'Tozer'.
 83. version b, 'said exam Y'.
 84. In the left margin is written 'this was done 7 years past'.
 85. version b, 'same'.
 86. version b, 'as appears by her at this day'.
 87. version b, 'examine'.
 88. version b, 'Trevisard, husband of the said Alice'.
 89. version b, 'her the said exam't the same time'.
 90. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
 91. version b, numbered '47', The examination of Christopher Honywell, taken before Sir Thomas Ridgway knight the second day of October 1601 [43 Elizabeth].
 92. version b, 'last past'.
 93. version b, 'he this examt was'.
 94. version b, 'the said Peter'.
 95. version b, 'and said'.
 96. version b, 'he sayeth that'.
 97. version b, 'with the said Peter Trevisard presently to the new quay'.
 98. version b, 'one'.
 99. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
 100. version b, 'the second day of October, 1601 [43 Elizabeth]'.
 101. This and the previous testimony are both numbered '10'.
 102. version b, 'examine'.
 103. version b, 'and this examine's husband'.
 104. version b, 'the said Johan Davye'.
 105. version b, 'Trevisard'.
 106. version b, 'in one Lovett's house at Hardness on a Sunday at evening prayer time at cards, one came'.
 107. version b, 'told him the' missing.
 108. version b, 'Davie's'.
 109. version b, 'Trevisard'. >
 110. version b, no brackets.
 111. version b, 'and' missing.
 112. version b, 'then'.
 113. version b, 'requested to do so'.
 114. version b, 'none'.
 115. version b, 'Davyes'.
 116. version b, 'very' missing.
 117. version b, 'Further, this examine sayeth that one Henry Oldreeve and the said Trevisard being at variance he the said Oldreeve had 20 fat weathers presently after died, in one week, and he himsell languished and died'.
 118. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
 119. version b, 'The examination of Susan Tucker taken before Sir Thomas Ridgwaie knight the day and year aforesaid'.
 120. version b, these two paragraphs missing.
 121. version b, 'This examine sayeth that Mr. Martyn of Dartmouth'.
 122. version b, 'up' crossed out, 'there' inserted.
 123. version b, 'Millpool a place where'.
 124. version b, 'since' missing.
 125. version b, 'riseth'.
 126. version b, 'Further'.
 127. version b, 'other'.
 128. version b, 'all cast away'.
 129. version b, 'Thomas Ridgeway'.
 130. in a different hand.
 131. version b, 'the said'.-

Todd Gray

With acknowledgment to Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries for making the above available.