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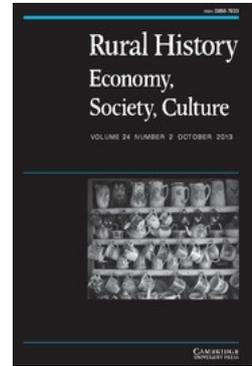
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Cunning-Folk in England and Wales during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

OWEN DAVIES

In a recent article Willem de Blécourt highlighted how little we really know about cunning-folk in the context of European witchcraft, and stressed the need for further substantial research.¹ The study of English cunning-folk in the early modern period has been well served by the work of Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane, but their respective chapters are, nevertheless, tantalising rather than conclusive.² Although in the last twenty-five years early-modern historians have continued to take a strong interest in the witch-trials, and the social dynamics of witch-accusations, cunning-folk have, by and large, been neglected.³ De Blécourt also remarked upon the paucity of relevant research on cunning-folk in the period after the trials. This observation is particularly applicable to British historiography, and it is the purpose of this present paper to begin to redress this imbalance. Most work on cunning-folk has tended to concentrate on what they did, rather than on who they were. The aim of this present discussion, therefore, is to focus less on the services cunning-folk provided, and more on their personal histories, how they generated a reputation, and how they were viewed by the society they lived in.

There were a variety of terms to describe cunning-folk throughout England and Wales, and some regionality can be detected in their usage. ‘Cunning-man’ and ‘cunning-woman’, and ‘wise-man’ and ‘wise-woman’ were the most popular titles, though the prefix ‘cunning’ was uncommon, if not unknown, in northern England. ‘Conjuror’ was more commonly used in Wales and Southern England, and pertained to male practitioners only. ‘Wizard’ was also a masculine title, and its use seems to have been fairly widespread. It should be noted that both ‘conjuror’ and ‘wizard’ were epithets also adopted by professional prestidigitators. ‘White witch’ was a term more frequently used in educated

discourse than in popular discourse during the period concerned. In Wales, the Welsh 'dyn hysbys' was commonly used, and in parts of Cornwall the Old Cornish word 'pellar' was used, as well as the more common Anglo-Saxon terms. Whatever their titles, these people all practised a similar range of skills. They were an amalgam of fortune-teller, astrologer, herbalist, medical doctor, veterinary surgeon, and witch-doctor. They could detect stolen property; identify witches, thieves, and future husbands; procure love; unbewitch the bewitched; dispense protective charms; and at least some could cast horoscopes.

It is impossible to draw up any reliable density patterns concerning the number of cunning-folk per head of the population, as can be done for qualified, licensed doctors. The only certainty is that throughout much of the period concerned, they were numerous enough for most people to have easy access to one. In 1712 the *Spectator* observed: 'It is not to be conceived how many Wizards, Gypsies and Cunning Men are dispersed through all the Counties and Market Towns of Great Britain, not to mention the Fortune-Tellers and Astrologers'.⁴ The all pervasive belief in 'wizardry' and witchcraft was remarked upon by John Dove nearly sixty years later:

He must be a very great stranger to the sentiments of the day, who thinks the doctrine of wizardry, omens, &c. is exploded; while we find, in almost every country parish, the inhabitants held under an intellectual slavery for fear of themselves and their cattle; making use of a variety of foolish artifices to secure against mischief merely imaginary.⁵

Writing in 1807, Robert Southey stated that 'A Cunning-Man, or a Cunning-Woman, as they are termed, is to be found near every town, and though the laws are occasionally put in force against them, still it is a gainful trade'.⁶ Kathryn Smith found references to at least thirty-nine cunning-folk practising in Yorkshire during the nineteenth century, but this undoubtedly represents only a fraction of the actual number.⁷ Even by the early twentieth century it was said that in the West Country there were 'few towns or villages of any consequence' which did not boast a conjuror.⁸

Keith Thomas observed that in the early modern period cunning-men were usually artisans: 'a miller perhaps, or a shoemaker, or cordwainer, and practised sorcery only as a sideline'. Nine persons arrested for magical practices in a swoop in 1561, consisted, for example, of a merchant, an ironmonger, a salter, a goldsmith, a miller, a yeoman, and three clerics. Alan Macfarlane found from his Essex survey that of the twenty-three male cunning-folk with recorded occupations seven were connected with the medical profession, three were probably clerics, two were schoolmasters, two astrologers, two yeomen, two labourers, one a churchwarden, one a 'gent', and three were artisans (a miller, comber, and shoemaker).⁹ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the majority of cunning-men seem to have been artisans or tradesmen. From a sample of forty-one cunning-men, twenty-seven were either tradesmen or artisans, five were herbalists, four were schoolmasters, two were farmers, one a parish clerk, one a dentist, and one an apothecary. A whole range of crafts were represented amongst the artisans: stocking-maker, stone-dresser, butcher, blacksmith, bookbinder, tanner, tinker, chainmaker, miller, weaver, wheelwright, iron moulder, and several shoemakers. What is perhaps

most striking about the occupational status of cunning-folk was the total absence of the labouring classes amongst their numbers. The poorest and least influential group in society, which held little social or economic power in the community, was also excluded from exploiting supernatural power as well. This may partly be explained in terms of education. Kathryn Smith stated that the belief in cunning-folk 'was not founded on respect for acquired knowledge and training', but on 'innate ability and inherent knowledge'.¹⁰ This was not actually the case. Perceptions of inherited knowledge and innate ability (being a seventh son for example) certainly helped generate respect, but so did literacy and 'book learning'. The magical books of cunning-folk were held in great awe, and over and over again it is recounted how cunning-folk impressed their clients by poring over large tomes. The profitable production of written charms also required some degree of literacy, as did the reading and writing of the postal consultations many cunning-folk conducted. The evidence points to the fact that an illiterate cunning-person was unlikely to go very far. As one dissatisfied farm foreman remarked, after consulting the son of a cunning-woman, in 1889: 'he "was not scholar enuf" to be able to help'.¹¹ Barry Reay's work on literacy in nineteenth-century rural Kent, indicates that during the first half of the last century the majority of craftsmen and tradesmen possessed some degree of literacy while three-quarters of labouring men were still illiterate.¹² This is undoubtedly reflected in the occupational make-up of cunning-folk. Considering that many of the people who consulted cunning-folk were from the farmer/tradesman/craftsman group in society, there might also have been some prejudice about consulting someone who, in social terms, was beneath them in the rural hierarchy.

A noticeable trend in the changing occupational status of cunning-folk from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries was the disappearance of the conjuring clergyman and schoolmaster by the mid nineteenth century. They were often the most learned men within rural communities, and by dint of their education were often thought to possess knowledge of occult arts. Thus, William Thomas, the schoolmaster of Michaelston-super-Ely, Glamorgan, recorded in his diary (1762–94) that the Reverend Samuel Richards (d. 1740), rector of Barry, schoolmaster, and renowned classical scholar, was 'a Reputed Conjuror, very much dreaded by ye vulgar'. In the eighteenth century, the popular attribution of arcane skills to educated men was sometimes not far from the truth. Mathematics, astrology and herbalism were not uncommon interests amongst such men.¹³ William Thomas also mentioned, for example, that George Morgans (1713–83), a former exciseman, who 'Acted in Several Branches of the Mathematics but without Effect', was consequently a 'reputed Conjuror'.¹⁴ Such reputations were not always welcome, particularly when they were unfounded, but, for some, a magical reputation also helped uphold a sense of respect and authority. William Oughtred the seventeenth-century mathematician and Rector of Albury, Surrey, was regarded as a conjuror by the country folk, and was happy for them to believe so.¹⁵ Clearly, though, some well-educated countrymen who pursued such interests did make their services available to others. In the eighteenth century, Cadwaladr Davies, a schoolmaster of Llanycil, practised as a medical astrologer.¹⁶ Timothy Crowther (1694–1761), a well educated parish clerk, one of whose brothers became master of the Clerk's School at Skipton, was a cunning-man of considerable repute in Yorkshire during the mid eighteenth century, practising

astrology, medicine and unbewitching.¹⁷ Early in the following century 'Fiddler' Fynes a respected school manager of Kirkstead, Lincolnshire, set up as a cunning-man.¹⁸ Around the same time, a North Devon rector, popularly known as Parson Joe, practised as a consulting astrologer, and was also 'credited with the power of laying evil spirits and of possessing supernatural powers'.¹⁹

The general impression gained from the source material is that the majority of cunning-folk were male, but not overwhelmingly so. Of the four cunning-women whose additional occupations are indicated in the sources, two were ostensibly herbalists, and two were midwives. Although some cunning-women seem to have been married or lived with partners, quite a few were also spinsters and widows, and most were at least middle aged at the time of their being recorded in the source material.

Some cunning-women, with their unusual appearance, old age, strange pets, and social isolation, conformed to the stereotypical image of the witch, though they certainly were not considered as such. Kilnsey Nan was one such character, familiar to the inhabitants of the Craven district of Yorkshire during the early nineteenth century: 'This old hag travelled with a Guinea pig in her breast, which she pretended solved questions, and used at times to open a witchcraft shop in Bag's-alley, Skipton: her stock of spells was not very large, for it only consisted of her Guinea pig, and about half a pack of dirty cards'.²⁰ During the latter half of the nineteenth century a wise-woman known as 'Mother Hearn', latterly as Mrs. Wills, lived in a lone mud-hut two miles from Milborne Port, Somerset. Like Kilnsey Nan, she also shared her life with a guinea-pig, as well as a dog, and a number of fowls.²¹ The majority of cunning-women, like their male counterparts, were not poor, lonely isolated figures, however, but shrewd, calculating entrepreneurs, who could compete with cunning-men in terms of both popularity and income. In a rural society where women, especially of low status, had little chance of being independent due to social, legal and financial restrictions, being a cunning-woman was one of the few outlets for a woman to gain significant social influence and personal prosperity. For women, there was, perhaps, no more attainable position of power in the community than that of wise-woman. There were certainly few other rural occupations in which women could generate the same level of personal wealth. It was estimated that Hannah Green, of Yeadon, Yorkshire, left a fortune of £1000 when she died in 1810.²² Another Yorkshire wise-woman, who died in the early 1870s bequeathed her considerable wealth to her young childhood companion and servant: 'Every drawer in her house was crammed with rich and costly dresses and shawls; and the cupboards contained over three dozen silver or silver-gilt tea and coffee pots, with a vast number of silver cups and silver spoons'.²³ Susanna Gore (1736–1826) of Drifffield, Yorkshire, also 'accumulated a considerable amount of property' in her lifetime.²⁴

Although there were undoubtedly fewer cunning-women than cunning-men, the more simple rural fortune-teller was usually a woman. They often practised little more than cutting the cards, and certainly ranked lower in social status than cunning-folk, but they were nevertheless popular, and it brought in an extra income. One such woman was Mary Evans, who was familiarly known as 'Pal-y-geiniog' because of the small charge of one penny she levied, though she charged 'upper-class' clients half-a-crown. She used to read fortunes from the tea leaves.²⁵

A little known aspect of the personal histories of cunning-folk are the circumstances which led them into their profession. The rewards were obviously tempting – good enough to risk prosecution – and could substantially supplement income derived from more mundane occupations. The ‘conjurer’, Richard Morris, for example, amassed considerable property, most of which he bequeathed to charity. His estate was left in trust for the use of the Manchester and Salford lying-in hospitals. James Baker (b. 1777), of Morden, Dorset, was able to buy a house and accumulate a few acres of land from his earnings. James Tuckett, of Exeter, Devon, was wealthy enough in 1841 to be leasing three properties from an architect named Henry Winsor.²⁶ Thomas Atkinson, a wise-man of Kirby Lonsdale, Cumbria, whose wife kept a small sweet shop, died early this century leaving ‘quite a fortune’ from his activities. During the same period William Thomas of Exeter, Devon, was making £300 a year on average, though some of this came from his legitimate herbal business as well.²⁷ In fact, one gets the impression that for those who were not full-time cunning-folk, their mundane trade was more of a secondary occupation which provided both a front for their ‘illegal’ practices, and a secondary income on which to fall back.

Some cunning-folk, particularly full-time ones, inherited their titles and reputations. In such cases, cunning-folk already had an established clientele which made conjuring a viable permanent occupation, whereas those who became cunning-folk by circumstance or opportunity had to build up a reputation from scratch. The Harries’ of Cwrt-y-cadno, the most famous *dyn hysbys* in nineteenth-century Wales, provide a good example of how some cunning-folk inherited their profession.²⁸ The Harries tradition began with Henry Jones, ‘Harry Shon’ (1739–1805), a mason by trade, and later a substantial yeoman farmer, who lived at Pantcoy farm, Cwrt-y-cadno, during the second half of the eighteenth century. Jones apparently dabbled a little in medicine and astrology, but it is around his son, John Harries, that the Cwrt-y-cadno reputation began to form. John Harries was born in 1785, and seems to have had a good education. He was highly literate and at the age of sixteen possessed a copy of *Synopsis Medicinae* (1685), in which he inscribed ‘John Harry, his book, 1801’. John adopted the title of doctor and ostensibly practised medicine in a professional fashion. He had medical bills printed which concluded with the following dark threat: ‘Sir, Unless the above amount is paid to me on or before the ___ day of ___ next, adverse means will be resorted for the money. Your humble servant’. His grave-stone describes him as a ‘surgeon’, and it seems that although probably not formally trained, he had a working knowledge of medicine and medical practice.

John Harries had two sons, Henry (1821–1849) and John (1827–1863). Henry was educated at the local Commercial Academy in Caio, and was rumoured to have gone to London for a while as a pupil of ‘Raphael’, the pseudonym for several consecutive astrologers who published popular fortune-telling works. This story may not be unfounded. A letter has recently been unearthed from Henry to ‘Raphael’ which confirms that he wished to receive instruction on occult arts. The letter is dated 25 April, 1840. Henry was eighteen at the time:

Sir,

Being a constant purchaser and peruser of your works “entitled Raphael’s Works.” Having in Prophetic Messenger for this year read the history related by the Farmer of Middlesex which happened in the neighbourhood of Brentford; condescendingly I prostrate myself at your Venerable feet and beg would you deliver Lectures unto me on the occult science that will without any ambiguity make Spirits appear; as what I had seen and read on that science I doubt their reality, and I assure you that you will be amply rewarded for your trouble on any reasonable terms, and furthermore I extremely solicit you will favour me with your opinion and charge for such lectures.

I am with due submission yours highly respectable

Henry Harries.

address

Henry Harries

Pantycoy Cayo

To be left at the Post Office

Llandovery

Carmarthenshire.²⁹

This letter certainly refutes the writer John Rowland’s mean opinion of Henry: ‘I never met a more ignorant man. He was not educated and could hardly speak English’.³⁰

Both Henry and his father practised together at Pantcoy until the latter’s death in 1839. Henry seems to have been more interested in the occult rather than the strictly medical aspect of the cunning-man’s office. It was Henry who wished to be instructed ‘on the occult science’, and who had advertising cards printed entitled ‘Nativities Calculated’ which listed all the fruitful applications of astrology: ‘All letters addressed to him or his father, Mr. John Harries, Cwrt-y-Cadno, must be post-paid, or will not be received’.³¹ In 1842 Henry married Hannah Marsden, a miner’s daughter, and thus offended his family by marrying beneath himself. After Henry’s premature death in 1849, his brother, John, continued to trade on the Harries reputation until his own early death in 1863. John was the last of the Cwrt-y-cadno *dyn hysbys*. Of Henry’s two sons, one left for the United States, and the other also moved away. John’s children continued to live at Pantcoy but professed no knowledge of either medicine or the occult arts.

Richard Morris (1710–1793), popularly known as Dick Spot because of a large black spot near his nose, was also brought up to be a wise-man.³² Morris was born in Bakewell, Derbyshire. His father was a soldier, who died before Richard was six. He was subsequently brought up by his aunt, Deborah Heathcote, who was a fortune-teller. Heathcote obviously taught Morris the ins and outs of her trade, and by his twelfth year he was already being consulted for the recovery of strayed cattle, stolen goods, and marriage prospects. Heathcote died when he was about seventeen, and he presumably then took over her practice for a while. He subsequently extended his services to unbewitching and writing protective charms. Morris was now no longer just a fortune-teller but a cunning-man. A cousin of his, George Heathcote, also set up as a fortune-teller

in Chesterfield, and apparently had handbills printed in which he denounced Morris as an impostor. During the summer of 1747 Morris was residing in Buxton Wells, obviously taking advantage of the tourists who went there for the spa water. He was apparently consulted by 'a flood of people' who had had valuables stolen. For some unknown reason, Morris removed to Shrewsbury, Shropshire, during the 1760s, and stayed in the area until his death in Oswestry at the age of 83.

Other cases of the mantle of conjuror being passed on from one generation to another include the Yorkshire wise-woman, Hannah Spence, who succeeded her more famous mother Hannah Green, 'The Ling Bob Witch'.³³ It seems that one of Timothy Crowther's sons took over from him.³⁴ After the death of John Wrightson, his nephew, William Dawson, a farmer, attempted to fill his position. Although Dawson inherited Wrightson's books, he apparently inherited little of the latter's cunning: 'no long time elapsed before he died a wretched death, that of a drunken, miserable, beggarly outcast, "like a dog by the roadside"'.³⁵ The grandson of Edward Savage (1759–1849), a *dyn hysbys*, gun-smith and farmer of Llangurig, successfully maintained the Savage's magical reputation in the region. Edward's brother-in-law, John Morgan, was also a popular *dyn hysbys* of Llangurig, and one of Morgan's family, Evan Griffiths, of Pant y Benni, also practised in the same locality.³⁶

Some cunning-folk were also 'born' into the profession because they were seventh sons or seventh daughters. Mary Cox (1819–93), a wise-woman of Plymouth, Devon, when interviewed by two members of the Plympton Board of Guardians, defended the legitimacy of her trade by explaining that she was the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter.³⁷ John Wrightson also claimed to be a seventh son. Seventh sons and daughters were popularly believed to have a natural healing gift, and were often called 'doctor' because of their abilities. Many, however, did not take advantage of their birthright to exploit their gift for financial gain.

It is possible that some cunning-folk learnt their trade through some form of apprenticeship, but there is little evidence for this. During the nineteenth century several London occultists and astrologers advertised that they were willing to instruct people on the occult 'arts'. The self-styled 'Rosicrucian' Francis Barrett advertised in his *Magus, or, Celestial Intelligencer* (London, 1801), that he gave 'private instructions and lectures' on the 'choicest operations of Natural Philosophy, Natural Magic, the Cabala, Chemistry, the Talismanic Arts, Hermetic Philosophy, Astrology, Physiognomy, etc.'. The first 'Raphael', R. C. Smith, also taught astrology and the occult arts, and, as we have seen, Henry Harries apparently went to London as a pupil of a later incarnation of 'Raphael'. It seems very unlikely, however, that the majority of rural cunning-folk, who were generally less educated and as financially well-off as Harries, were trained in this way.

A less expensive, and more likely channel of learning the necessary skills and techniques to become a cunning-person, was through self-instruction. The content of the libraries of some nineteenth-century cunning-folk have been recorded, and from these we can see that they owned a mixture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century occult works, and late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fortune-telling chapbooks and astrological manuals. Of the former group of works the most popular was Cornelius Agrippa's *Three*

Books of Occult Philosophy, and the bogus *Fourth Book*. ‘Owd Rollison’, a wise-man of Roe Green, Worsley, Lancashire, owned the 1651 edition of Agrippa’s work translated by J. Freake, and the cunning-men, George Wales, of Barmby, Yorkshire, and James Morris, of Cwmbelan, Montgomeryshire also possessed copies.³⁸ In terms of practical application, though, it was the fortune-telling manuals which were, perhaps, the most useful tools for the aspiring cunning-person. Considering that a large portion of cunning-folk’s business consisted of various forms of divination, it is not surprising that almanacs and fortune-telling books such as *Napoleon Bonaparte’s Book of Fate*, the *New Universal Fortune-Teller*, Raphael’s *Prophetic Alphabet*, and Zadkiel’s *Tables for Calculating Nativities*, were all found amongst the possessions of cunning-folk.³⁹ It is also quite likely that some cunning-folk mimicked some of the techniques and magical rituals they had formerly seen as clients of other cunning-folk.

When it came to generating a reputation, presenting a distinctive personal appearance was one basic way of attracting attention, and a theatrical flourish helped to present an air of the unusual. John Wrightson’s pre-eminence as a wise-man was confirmed after a sensational appearance at the Stokesley Trinity Fair in 1808. He had moved to Stokesley in the previous year, and professed to practice the veterinary ‘art’, while also keeping a small shop for the sale of gingerbread and the like. He confirmed himself as a wise-man, however, after presenting himself at the market place on fair-day, theatrically dressed in a red coat, white waistcoat, black small clothes, white stockings, and a drab hat: ‘his face slightly coloured with vermilion, and his long brown hair streaming over his face, which he ever and anon kept rubbing down with his hands, looking much more like a maniac than the term applied to him. From this time his impositions were practised on the public’.⁴⁰ When in his consulting room he dressed in a long robe or gown, held in by a noticeable girdle, and wore a peculiar head-covering.⁴¹ Mother Arthurs, an Exeter wise-woman, caught the eye by dressing eccentrically in ‘attire of many hues, principally scarlet’.⁴² George Wales (1786–1860) was remarkable for his long antique coat and very tall chimney-pot hat.⁴³ An old wise-woman of Weymouth wore a black gown, a little shawl, and a very high cap with a frill all round her face and under her chin. One woman remembered going to her with her son, who ‘was so frightened at the sight of her that he would not go into her room’.⁴⁴ James Murrell (1780–1860), an Essex cunning-man of considerable repute, also frightened children because of the unusual iron goggles he wore.⁴⁵ Billy Brewer was ‘a familiar figure about the streets of Taunton’, wearing a long Inverness cloak and sombrero hat, his hair falling in dishevelled grey locks. He also wore numerous gold and silver rings on his fingers.⁴⁶ The often conspicuous appearance of cunning-folk belies any notions that they were secretive people, constantly fearful of prosecution.

The use of simple legerdemain tricks could also help impress customers. One nineteenth-century *dyn hysbys*, Ellis of Carreg-y-fran, had learnt ‘sundry tricks of legerdemain’ and also the art of ventriloquism, which his ‘natural cunning prompted him to magnify’ by acquiring knowledge of the ‘black art’.⁴⁷ Another Welsh conjuror, James the Wheeler (c.1709–69), a carpenter of Llanharry, Glamorgan, also ‘made Several Legerdemain Trickes’.⁴⁸ Another ruse used to generate a reputation was attributed to William Pryse of Pen-cin-coed, near Llanidloes. He once employed a man to steal a

neighbour's pot. The latter, on discovering his loss went to see Pryse, who consulted his books and told him that he would make the thief return the stolen property. That night Pryse had the pot returned to the neighbour's house, and thereby hoped to confirm his supernatural powers. However, the existence of the story itself shows that Pryse's ruse backfired.⁴⁹

For a client visiting a cunning-person there was, perhaps, no greater proof of the latter's occult power than to be told the purpose of their visit before they had divulged such information. To foretell the client's problem immediately invoked a sense of confidence in the cunning-person, and by providing such an impressive display of magical powers, enabled the cunning-person to accordingly set a higher value on their subsequent dealings. Fortunately, in several instances we know exactly how cunning-folk were able to exhibit such foresight. 'Old Robinson' a wise-man of Stalybridge, Lancashire, during the first half of the nineteenth century, when lying sick in bed, confessed his deception to the Methodist pastor James Brooks:

There was a large field sloping from the house. When a person was seen coming up this field, Robinson went into a back room, where he could hear what was said in the front room. His wife asked the person to sit down, saying her husband would be in soon, and she then questioned the person about his errand. When Robinson thought he had heard sufficient, he went out at the back door, took a circuit, and came up the field; and when he came in and seemed to know everything about the matter the person was astonished, and went away fully convinced that he was really a wizard.⁵⁰

The Reverend Brooks 'found him very penitent. He acknowledged that he knew no more than other persons, and repented of the deceptions he had practised'.⁵¹ Almost exactly the same procedure was adopted by George Clegg, a wise-man of Whitworth, Lancashire. From his house there was a good view of the approaching roads, and when he saw a likely customer coming he would hurry into a back room. Clegg's wife would answer the door, and inform the client that George was out but would be back soon. The client was invited to be seated on a chair placed near the closed door of the back room, and Mrs Clegg would then question them about their visit. George would listen at the other side of the door, and then make his escape out of the back door and enter through the front door, pretending he had just walked a considerable distance.⁵² Visitors who came to consult Henry Harries were also, initially, loudly questioned for the same purpose by a woman who sat by the fire.⁵³ When circumstances made this trick difficult, more complex methods were sometimes devised. James Tuckett, paid a servant in livery to answer the door and question visitors in his waiting-room. The servant would then communicate the general particulars of the customer's grievance by certain pulls of a bell connected to Tuckett's inner sanctum.⁵⁴ John Wrightson similarly developed a code of signals through which his accomplices could secretly communicate with him.⁵⁵

Keeping well informed of personal histories and local gossip also enabled cunning-folk to foretell clients' problems, at least when they lived in the locality. John Wrightson had a small spy network which consisted of his elderly housekeeper, an odd-job man, and an ostler at one of the local inns.⁵⁶ Better than having an informant at the local inn, was for the conjurer to run their own drinking establishment, where local gossip flowed

as freely as the beer. The west part of Henry Harries home was apparently used as a public-house where 'good home-brewed' was sold,⁵⁷ and three other cunning-men, Charles Curtis, the 'Marnhull cunning man', Thomas James (d. 1781) of Trevethin, Monmouthshire, and James Tunncliffe, of Newborough, Staffordshire, also kept alehouses.

Reputations were not only made through the demonstration of occult powers, but also through advertising. This could be done by word of mouth. At the trial, in 1858, of Sarah McDonald, a London wise-woman, for example, a police-constable stated that he suspected that McDonald had bribed several people to report her fortune-telling abilities.⁵⁸ However, the use of newspaper advertising and handbills could spread a cunning-person's name much further afield. It has already been noted that Henry Harries distributed printed bills advertising his astrological abilities. John Wrightson also had a trade card printed in which he described himself as a 'cow doctor', and seventh son. He stated that people could be relieved of their 'inward disorders' by 'sending their water, likewise any cattle that do not thrive he can be of service to them'.⁵⁹ In general, though, rural cunning-folk did not exploit the printed medium to the same extent as urban astrologers, and quack doctors during the same period. Unlike the itinerant quacks who toured rural areas, and had to drum up trade quickly before moving on, cunning-folk were usually firmly rooted to one area, their whereabouts being known for miles around. Their permanence generally precluded the necessity of adopting the quack's saturation advertising techniques. Established reputations were better accrued by deed, and word of mouth, than by printed puffs.

In order to accommodate those potential customers who lived too far away to visit them, and also to drum up new trade, some cunning-folk conducted periodic tours to capitalise on their reputations. John Bostock toured periodically through the streets of Exeter.⁶⁰ Another Exeter cunning-man, James Tuckett, apparently wandered much further afield. He once stopped for a time at the Bell Inn, Parkham, a village on the other side of the county, where he held a surgery.⁶¹ Conjuror Savage, who lived near Llangurig, Montgomeryshire, received distant clients 'regularly at appointed places of meeting' in other towns in the region, namely Newton and Welshpool.⁶² A wise-man of Addingham, Yorkshire, 'a tall fat man, in a blue sparrow-tailed coat, the picture of health and ignorance', a weaver by trade, visited all over the Craven district, with carpet-bag in hand.⁶³ Billy Brewer, the Taunton cunning-man, would tour around the villages of the Somerset Levels for weeks at a time: 'Wherever he went he was always made welcome, and the best bed in the house was invariably given up to him. It was thought to be exceedingly lucky to sleep with him, and consequently young farmer lads used to actually quarrel over obtaining the privilege of retiring to rest in the same apartment'.⁶⁴ The spread of railways enabled greater access to cunning-folk, and the railway station also became a convenient meeting place. During a case of assault upon a suspected witch, heard before the Retford Petty Session, Nottinghamshire, October 1866, the defendant stated that he had obtained a charm against witchcraft from a wise-man named Ranby, whom he had met at the local railway station.⁶⁵ Sabine Baring-Gould also recounted how a tenant farmer of his was cured by 'Old Snow', a cunning-man of Tiverton, Devon. The Farmer had consulted Snow on the platform of Tiverton station.⁶⁶

Although cunning-folk were occasionally referred to as *white* witches because of their beneficial social role as unbewitchers, healers and thief-finders, some were also feared for the harm they could do with their magical powers. Unlike the witch, though, when cunning-folk were accused of having bewitched someone, it was not usually thought to have been done out of spite or revenge or for anti-social purposes, but rather for straightforward financial reward. One such scenario involved clients who went to a cunning-person to have a spell taken off. The cunning-person would unbewitch them and take their fee. The client would go away, feel better for a while, and then the same witchcraft inspired ailment would return. At this point the sufferer reached the conclusion that the cunning-person had put a spell back on them so that they could charge to unbewitch them again. Now the source of the problem lay not with the witch who had originally cast the spell, but the cunning-person who had removed the first bewitchment, and who had then re-bewitched the client. Such was the accusation made by an elderly woman named Jemima Maxted of Bilting, Kent, against William Cotton, the 'cunning-man of Rolvenden', in 1851.⁶⁷ Maxted believed that a Mrs Tollest of Lenham Heath had put a spell upon her, and was advised by several people to visit Cotton. She saw him twice and paid him about 25s. to 'drive the evil spirit out of her'. She felt better after each visit, but as she always relapsed into her former state, she came to the conclusion that Cotton 'only drove the devil out of her a time, and then let him in again' so that his services should again be periodically required. Maxted subsequently applied to a police superintendent, and requested him to either 'take the devil out of her' himself, or to compel Cotton, by law, to do it more effectually. Cotton was, in fact, arrested for fraudulent pretences and committed to the House of Correction for two months as a rogue and vagabond. William Henry Hillman, a wise-man of Ottery, Devon, found himself in court twice under similar circumstances, appearing as a defendant in one case and a complainant in the other. In 1881 Hillman prosecuted a farmer's son named Thomas Parsons, of Harpford, for assault. Parsons had consulted Hillman several times for an ailment which the latter told the court he believed to be indigestion. However, in evidence Parsons' father stated that he, his wife, and his son had all been ill, and that Hillman had said that a neighbour named Preston had 'hurted' (bewitched) them. Since then, the Parson family had given Hillman a pistol, a silver watch, £3, some butter, and some potatoes in payment for medicine which gave them no relief. Thomas Parsons came to the conclusion that Hillman had 'swindled' them by overlooking them himself. To break the spell, Parsons drew blood from Hillman by scratching him with a wooden dart. Parsons was fined £1 including costs.⁶⁸ Some years later, in 1892, Hillman appeared as a defendant at the same petty sessions, charged with obtaining 12s. by false pretences. A woman had paid Hillman 10s. for a box of pills to cure her ailing husband. A few days later he gave her a piece of paper with a mark on it, telling her to sew it in a piece of black silk and put it inside her husband's belt. He told her that she must also wear the same 'protection', instructing her to sew it inside her stays. Within a fortnight she swore she had lost several inches, was continually excited, and could not sleep. She went to Hillman again and accused him of making her as ill as could be, and bringing her down with sorrow to the grave. Hillman gave her another paper to wear in her band, and told her that even he would not be able to hurt her then. The woman told the

magistrates that it was the band with the paper in it that had brought her down. Hillman's reputation in the neighbourhood does not appear to have been too good, since the woman declared that 'she had known Hillman 25 or 27 years, and had put him down as a very bad man'.⁶⁹

For those looking for revenge on neighbours or acquaintances, cunning-folk also claimed to be able to bewitch people for a fee. John Wesley recounted in a letter, dated 13 August 1746, how a woman of Cwmdauddwr, Radnorshire, told him that seven years earlier she had offended a man who subsequently paid fourteen shillings to the conjuror, Francis Morgan, to bewitch her.⁷⁰ In 1896 the cook and housemaid of the Reverend F. W. Crick, of Litton Cheney, Dorset, quarrelled, and the latter threatened to go to a wise-woman of Bridport to get the cook 'overlooked'. The distraught cook implored Mrs Crick to deny the housemaid any leave to go to Bridport.⁷¹ It seems that some cunning-folk also used the threat of bewitchment to set up supernatural protection rackets. 'Wise Man Wilkinson', of Darrington, Yorkshire, was given a small annual payment to protect fields, and all were afraid of him lest he bewitch their cattle.⁷² During the mid nineteenth century, a Cornish cunning-man used to call upon the prominent farmers gathered at the Bodmin Assizes. Dressed in a long white shirt, he would make his entrance just before dinner: 'He was at once hailed by the farmers present as the "Wizard of the West," and each in turn paid him a sum of money to keep "witchcraft" off their farms during the ensuing twelve months'. After one such levy he was found so drunk that someone tried to set light to his shirt.⁷³

Not all cunning-folk were willing, perhaps, to trade in bewitching and cursing, since it could damage their reputations, and that, of course, meant less business. Also, as William Hillman found out, it carried with it the risk of being handled in the same way as witches by those who thought themselves bewitched. As one Dorset farmer told the folklorist E. A. Rawlence: "'These wise 'oomen be all very well zo long as they does good; but if they has an evil eye on yer I'd burn 'em, that I would,'" and he wrung his fist in the air'.⁷⁴

Popular attitudes towards cunning-folk were certainly somewhat ambivalent. They were both feared and respected. Feared, because they could be employed as bewitchment agents by people who wanted revenge but had no power themselves. Respected, because they were the only medical practitioners who had the power to heal both naturally and supernaturally inspired illnesses. It seems to have been the case that attitudes towards cunning-folk also depended on peoples' proximity to them. The saying about the prophet never being recognised in his own land was often true. It was said of William Pryse that his fame 'was greater among strangers than among his neighbours, although he made many efforts to obtain a professional footing in their estimation'.⁷⁵ Although some cunning-folk were never able to establish a good local reputation, others ruined well-founded esteem by miscalculation. A conjuror of Yardington, Shropshire, a tinker by trade, lost local confidence in his abilities after badly forecasting the whereabouts of a missing man. He stated that the man was 'quite comfortable and with his friends'. Shortly afterwards the man was found dead in a nearby canal.⁷⁶ That cunning-folk were not always respected, or their powers believed in, is also evident from the tales – probably not unfounded – which tell how cunning-folk were unable to find their own

missing property. One such story relates how Hannah Green could not find her strayed pig one day, which led a local quaker to declare ‘if thee can’t find thy own pig, thou art the last person I should consult concerning a pig of mine’. William Pryse’s reputation suffered from the story of his inability to find his own watch.⁷⁷ Mocking pranks were also played upon cunning-folk. Old Jenkins, the Conjuror of Tregare, a wheelwright by trade, was put to the test, for instance, by a shoemaker’s apprentice who wanted to pay Jenkins back for ‘fooling’ so many people. The shoemaker stole a wheel Jenkins had just made, and rolled it into a bush some distance away. Jenkins failed to find it, and it was discovered later by a passer-by.⁷⁸ Such tales were sometimes cautionary, however, and reinforced respect for cunning-folk, in that the doubting pranksters got their comeuppance. Richard Morris, when pestered one market-day by some wags at the White Horse Inn, Shrewsbury, decided to prove his powers by causing an earthenware-seller and his wife, pitched outside the inn, senselessly to break their pans and pitchers. When the earthenware-seller was asked what had induced him to break his goods, he replied, with tears in his eyes: ‘he thought he saw a great bear striding over, and pissing upon his goods, which afterwards changed to a white cat, which he lost in the pursuit, and could not help lamenting that he was under the delusion of the Devil’.⁷⁹

It may have often been the case that the closer people’s daily proximity to a cunning-person, the more they saw the ordinary man or woman, with all their possible character defects, such as William Dawson’s apparent drink problem, rather than the extraordinary powers they assumed. When it came to choosing which cunning-person to consult, reputation usually mattered more than distance. Over and over again we find that people travelled tens of miles to consult a cunning-person when there were undoubtedly several others much closer to home. As Alan Macfarlane observed, ‘the distance travelled cannot be used to measure the availability of cunning folk’.⁸⁰

Most educated commentators were highly critical of cunning-folk, and held them partly responsible for perpetuating ‘superstitious’ beliefs. As one nineteenth-century Norfolk magistrate explained in *The Times*: ‘They minister to roguery . . . they darken the mind for general higher purposes . . . they fasten on the minds of children, and thus perpetuate, “from generation to generation little schemes” and great delusions lamentably inconsistent with “Committees of Council” and other educational display’.⁸¹ The most extensive and damning critique of cunning-folk was published in 1808 in the form of two sermons written by the Reverend Thomas Hawkins, vicar of Warley, Yorkshire.⁸² Hawkins had previously connived at his parishioners’ recourse to cunning-folk, but in 1807 several instances of presumed bewitchment in his parish, and the ensuing involvement of a local cunning-man, disturbed him greatly. After delivering two sermons on the evils of consulting cunning-folk, he felt obliged to suspend several of his flock from the privilege of communion. According to Hawkins it was ‘certain that Jesus Christ came into the world to “destroy the works of the devil.” Now, it is equally certain, that every species of witchcraft – conjuring – fortune-telling – and necromancy, are pre-eminently such. These evils are more prevalent in this and in other kingdoms than many are aware’.⁸³ While such practices were morally injurious ‘to the *cunning* ones themselves’, Hawkins was more concerned about their influence on their clients: ‘All those who turn from the bible, and listen to conjurors, wizards, and fortune-tellers, may

expect to be fed up with lies till they become strangely bloated with superstition and folly'.⁸⁴

Cunning-folk could be prosecuted under the Witchcraft Act of 1736 (9 Geo. II., c.5), the fourth clause of which allowed for the punishment of all those who pretended 'to exercise or use any kind of witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration, or undertake to tell fortunes'. During the eighteenth century the clause was rarely invoked, and little effort was made to suppress cunning-folk. During the early nineteenth century, however, attitudes began to change. Hawkins's published attack on cunning-folk was symptomatic of increasing concern over the continued, widespread belief in witchcraft and magic. This was translated into a further strengthening of the legal code against occult practitioners. Section four of the Vagrancy Act of 1824 (5 Geo. IV., c. 83, s.4) stated that 'persons pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device, by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive and impose' were to be considered as 'rogues and vagabonds'. It was under this Act that most cunning-folk were subsequently prosecuted. Following the compulsory establishment of county police forces in 1856, prosecutions against cunning-folk seem to have risen, but the threat of prosecution was not particularly effective in suppressing the trade. Cunning-folk apparently considered it as just one of the hazards of the job, and put up with it. For example, Maria Giles, a midwife, also known as the 'Newbury Cunning Woman', was prosecuted for an amazing tenth time in 1871, and was finally given a heavy five-year prison sentence. Obtaining firm evidence of deception was not easy, and the police rarely took it upon themselves to pursue cunning-folk. Most prosecutions resulted from private prosecutions brought before the petty sessions. The difficulty of bringing prosecutions against cunning-folk was remarked upon by the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould early this century; and, as he noted, 'on this immunity' they traded. He went on to express the hope that: 'some day certain of these gentry will be tripped up, and then, though magistrates can no more send them to the stake, they will send them to cool their heels in gaol, and richly they will deserve the punishment'.⁸⁵

The impression gained from the sources is that the relative sincerity or insincerity of cunning-folk came in various shades. Old Robinson, for example, confessed his deceptions to the Reverend James Brooks, but he salved his conscience by claiming he 'took care not to say anything that would injure or cast suspicion on a neighbour'. From evidence given during prosecution cases, though, it seems that the majority of cunning-folk had few qualms about deceiving their clients, particularly in relation to the diagnosis and treatment of witchcraft, and the identification of witches and thieves. However, it should not be extrapolated from this conclusion that because cunning-folk exploited the popular belief in witchcraft and magic, they themselves did not believe in it. With regards to the practice of herbalism and astrology, it should also not be doubted that many cunning-folk were genuinely skilled in both subjects and conscientious in their application. Cunning-folk were opportunist entrepreneurs, whose basic motivation was usually to squeeze as much money out of a client as possible, whenever possible, whether it involved deception or not. They were not the benign, altruistic figures which the modern witchcraft movement often portrays white witches as. From both the historian's

viewpoint, and that of the clients of cunning-folk, they were neutral agents of magical power, whose actions were influenced by money, and in this sense it is a distortion to consider them as the antithesis of 'black' witches. They were 'cunning' not only because of their knowledge of occult matters, but also in relation to their clever manipulation of peoples' fears, hopes and misfortunes.

Notes

1. Willem de Blécourt, 'Witch doctors, soothsayers and priests. On cunning folk in European historiography and tradition', *Social History* 19 (1994), 285–303.
2. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), pp. 252–301; Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1970), pp. 115–35.
3. One significant exception being Doreen G. Nagy, *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ohio, 1988).
4. *The Spectator*, 9 October, 1712.
5. John Dove, *A vindication of the Hebrew scriptures; with animadversions on the mark set on Cain, the giantship, wizardry, and witchcraft, mentioned in the Pentateuch and the Prophets . . .* (London, 1771), p. 50.
6. Robert Southey, *Letters from England* (London, 1807), p. 295.
7. Kathryn C. Smith, 'The Wise Man and His Community', *Folk Life* 15 (1977), 24–35; 27.
8. Arthur H. Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall* (London, 1911), p. 45.
9. Thomas, *Religion*, p. 295; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft*, p. 127.
10. Smith, 'The Wise Man', 32.
11. *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries* 1 (1889), p. 131.
12. Barry Reay, 'The context and meaning of popular literacy: some evidence from nineteenth-century rural England', *Past and Present* 131 (1991), 89–129; table 1.
13. For example, the Reverend William Barnes dabbled in astrology; Lucy Baxter, *The Life of William Barnes* (London, 1887), p. 125.
14. See Brian C. Luxton, 'William Jenkin, the Wizard of Cadoxton-juxta-Barry', *Morganwg* 24 (1980), 31–59; 35.
15. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Clark (Oxford, 1898), vol. 2, p. 109. For a discussion of the magical reputations of clergymen in the nineteenth century see Owen Davies, 'Methodism, the Clergy, and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic', *History*, forthcoming.
16. His miscellany book of medicine, magic, and astrology, compiled between 1733 and 1745, is held in the College Library in Bangor, MS 3212 ff 181, 191; Glyn Penrhyn Jones, 'Folk Medicine in Eighteenth-Century Wales', *Folk Life* 7 (1969), 60–75; 64.
17. W. Harbutt Dawson, *History of Skipton* (London, 1882), pp. 390–94. In 1826 the Cornish clergyman, the Reverend Polwhele, noted that there had been 'cunning' clerks within his memory; R. Polwhele, *Traditions and Recollections* (London, 1826), vol. 2, p. 605.
18. Cited in James Obelkevitch, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825–75* (Oxford, 1976), p. 290.
19. J. F. Chanter, 'Parson Joe and his Book', *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries* 8 (1914–15), 87–8.
20. William Hone (ed.), *Table Book*, vol. 2 (1831), p. 781.
21. *Somerset County Herald*, 3 July, 1926.
22. William Wheater, 'Yorkshire Superstitions', *Old Yorkshire* 4 (1883), 265–72; 271.
23. 'Anecdotes of English Rural Life. By an English Clergyman', *Chambers's Journal*, 25 September, 1880, 616–20; 618.
24. Mrs. Gutch, *County Folklore: East Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1912), p. 65; John Nicholson, *Folk Lore of East Yorkshire* (Driffield, 1890), pp. 92–3.

25. Edward Hamer, 'A Parochial Account of Llangurig', *Montgomeryshire Collections* 3 (1870), 270.
26. Devon Record Office, D7/1311/4. The properties were 6 Melbourne Place, 15 Centre Street, and 3 Collaton Grove.
27. *The Life and Mysterious Transactions of Richard Morris, Esq. Better known by the name of Dick Spot, the conjuror, particularly in Derbyshire and Shropshire, Written by an Old Acquaintance* (London, 1799), p. 45; *Somerset County Herald*, 15 May, 1858; Alexander Pearson, *Annals of Kirby Lonsdale* (Kendal, 1930), p. 85; *Western Morning News*, 11 May, 1903.
28. The following account is based on: Arthur Mee, *Magic in Carmarthenshire. The Harrieses of Cwrt-y-cadno* (privately printed tract, 1912); *Cymru Fu*, 10 March, 1888, pp. 117–8; 'Penardd' [J. H. Davies], *Rhai o hen Ddewiniaid Cymru* (privately printed, 1901); Evan Isaac, *Coelion Cymru* (Aberystwyth, 1938), pp. 136–7; National Library of Wales, MS. 6791B, pp. 23–7. For some of the many stories surrounding John and Henry Harries see Jonathan Caredig Davies, *Folk-Lore of West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911), pp. 230–64; Marie Trevelyan, *Folk-Lore and Folk-Stories of Wales* (London, 1909), pp. 214–18; Mary L. Lewes, *Stranger than Fiction* (London, 1911), pp. 196–8.
29. I suspect that at this period Raphael was the occultist Frederick Hockley. For the background to this letter and Raphael see Owen Davies, 'The Decline in the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic', unpublished PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 1995, pp. 321–33. *The Prophetic Messenger* was an almanac published from 1827 to 1858; see Ellic Howe, *Urania's Children* (London, 1967), pp. 31–3.
30. *Carmarthen Journal*, 23 April, 1886.
31. For examples of some of the horoscopes drawn up by John Harries see National Library of Wales, MS. 11716c.
32. *Life and Mysterious Transactions*.
33. Wheater, 'Yorkshire Superstitions', 271.
34. Dawson, *Skipton*, p. 393.
35. J. C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish* (London, 1923; first published 1891), pp. 114, 124; William Brockie, *Legends and Superstitions of Durham* (Sunderland, 1886), pp. 25–7; William Henderson, *Folklore of the Northern Counties* (London, 1866), pp. 218–19.
36. Hamer, 'Llangurig', 267–70; Edward Hamer and H. W. Lloyd, *History of the Parish of Llangurig* (London, 1895), p. 114; Isaac, *Coelion Cymru*, p. 138. For folk stories relating to Savage and Morgan see also Davies, *Folk-Lore of West and Mid-Wales*, pp. 235, 264.
37. *Western Morning News*, 17 June, 1876; *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 26 (1894), 83.
38. J. Harland and T. T. Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folklore* (London, 1882), pp. 123–4; Gutch, *East Riding*, p. 68; J. H. Davies (ed.), *The Life and Opinions of Robert Roberts* (Cardiff, 1923), p. 51.
39. For further discussion of the libraries of cunning-folk see Davies, 'The Decline', 189–94.
40. G. H. Wilson, *Wonderful Characters: comprising Memoirs and Anecdotes of the most Remarkable Persons, of every age and nation* (London, 1842), pp. 9–10.
41. Atkinson, *Forty Years*, p. 115.
42. *Western Daily Mercury* 28 January, 1875.
43. J. Fairfax-Blakeborough, *Yorkshire East Riding* (London, 1951), p. 162.
44. Henry Colley March, 'Dorset Folklore', *Folklore* 11 (1900), 108.
45. Eric Maple, 'Cunning Murrell: A Study of a Nineteenth-Century Cunning Man in Hadleigh, Essex', *Folklore* 71 (1960): 37–43; 42.
46. *Taunton Courier*, 31 December, 1890.
47. Davies, *Robert Roberts*, p. 51.
48. Luxton, 'William Jenkin', 36.
49. Edward Hamer, 'A Parochial Account of Llanidloes', *Montgomeryshire Collections* 10 (1877), 254.

50. From a manuscript book of memoirs by the Reverend James Brooks; cited in the *Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 54 (1939), 20.
51. *Ibid*, 19–20.
52. William Robertson, *Rochdale and the Vale of Whitworth* (Rochdale, 1897), pp. 392–4.
53. *Carmarthen Journal*, 23 April, 1886.
54. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 11 (1879), 105.
55. Atkinson, *Forty Years*, p. 114.
56. *Ibid*, p. 114.
57. *Carmarthen Journal*, 23 April, 1886.
58. *Somerset County Herald*, 4 September, 1858.
59. Smith, 'The Wise Man', 29.
60. *Folklore Record* 5 (1882), 174.
61. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 57 (1925), 115.
62. Hamer, 'Llangurig', 269.
63. Frederick Montague, *Gleanings in Craven* (London, 1838), pp. 8–9.
64. *Taunton Courier*, 3 December, 1890.
65. *The Times*, 27 October, 1866.
66. Sabine Baring-Gould, *Devonshire Characters and Strange Events* (London, 1908), p. 81.
67. *The Times*, 24 April, 1851.
68. *Somerset County Gazette*, 9 July, 1881.
69. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 26 (1894), 82–3.
70. W. H. Howse, *Radnorshire* (Hereford, 1949), p. 197.
71. March, 'Dorset Folklore', 112.
72. J. S. Fletcher, *Recollections of a Yorkshire Village* (London, 1910), pp. 102–3.
73. William H. Paynter, 'Tales of Cornish Witches', *Old Cornwall* 9 (1929), 28–33; 33.
74. E. A. Rawlence, 'Folk-Lore and Superstitions still obtaining in Dorset', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club* 35 (1914), 86.
75. Hamer, 'Llanidloes', 254; and 'Llangurig', 268.
76. Charlotte Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore* (London, 1883), p. 172.
77. Edmund Bogg, *Lower Wharfedale* (York, 1904), p. 401; Hamer, 'Llangurig', 268.
78. T. A. Davies, 'Folklore of Gwent', *Folklore* 48 (1937), 41–59; 45. See also the trick played on Edward Savage by a group of young men; Hamer, 'Llangurig', 267–9.
79. *Life and Mysterious Transactions*, pp. 30–31. See also the tale of two men who tried to fool John Wrightson; Atkinson, *Forty Years*, pp. 117–19.
80. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft*, p. 121.
81. *The Times* 27 April, 1857.
82. Thomas Hawkins, *The Iniquity of Witchcraft, censured and exposed: Being the substance of two sermons delivered at Warley, Near Halifax, Yorkshire* (Halifax, 1808).
83. *Ibid*, p. iii.
84. *Ibid*, pp. 17, 20.
85. Baring-Gould, *Devonshire Characters*, p. 83.