

Press Release:

Newly released Court records reveal a bewitching array of crimes.

[TheGenealogist](#) adds to its Court & Criminal records with a new collection of **Quarter Session Registers** covering a period from 1590 – 1839.

Search these records to find your miscreant ancestors brought before the local court quarter sessions. They even include those accused of practising witchcraft!



Session House, Clerkenwell c.1810

The **Quarter Session Records** were produced by the local courts that were traditionally held at four set times each year. These courts, presided over by two or more justices of the peace plus a chairman, would sit with a jury at Epiphany (in January), Easter (March/April), Midsummer (June/July) and then at Michaelmas (September/October).

- Find the names of indicted persons, witnesses, and the Justices of the Peace
- Search records as far back as 1590, in the reign of Elizabeth I
- Discover indictments including Assaults, Riot, Running Unlicensed Alehouses, Not Going to Church on Sunday and even being a witch!
- Unearth Poor Law matters dealt with by the Justices including Bastardy, Compensation for Maimed Soldiers and Removal of people to their parish of settlement

1653.

DEVIZES WITCHES.

April 19th.—Joan Read the wife of Robert Reade of the Devizes, broadweaver, complains that two persons have reported her as being a witch, and in consequence two of the bakers in the town have forbidden her to come into their bakehouses for dough. She prays that the Justices will issue a warrant that her accusers may be brought before them to prosecute her.

At the same Sessions Elizabeth Beeman, of Devizes, is indicted for bewitching Margery Bowman. This case was transferred to the Assizes.

Extract from the Quarter Sessions in Wiltshire, 19th April 1653

Read TheGenealogist's featured article: Up before the Justices of the Peace – Quarter Session records reveal everything from licencing ale houses to dealing with Witches
<https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/featuredarticles/2023/up-before-the-justices-of-the-peace-6816/>

About TheGenealogist

TheGenealogist is an award-winning online family history website, which puts a wealth of information at the fingertips of family historians. Their approach is to bring hard to use physical records to life online with easy to use interfaces such as their Tithe and newly released Lloyd George Domesday collections.

TheGenealogist's innovative SmartSearch technology links records together to help you find your ancestors more easily. TheGenealogist is one of the leading providers of online family history records. Along with the standard Birth, Marriage, Death and Census records, they also have significant collections of Parish and Nonconformist records, PCC Will Records, Irish Records, Military records, Occupations and Newspaper record collections amongst many others.

TheGenealogist uses the latest technology to help you bring your family history to life. Use [TheGenealogist](https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk) to find your ancestors today!

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For more information on TheGenealogist, please contact Nick at nick@thegenealogist.co.uk