

# Court Depositions of South West England, 1500-1700

## Case 14: Lime Burning and Sedition

Case type: Sedition

Summary: A response to the Oath of Engagement: Christopher Rowswell gives a colourful account of the seditious words spoken by lime burner and disgruntled Royalist, Thomas Furze.

Source: Somerset Heritage Centre, QSR82

### Original Spelling Transcription

#### Deposition 1

Som[er]sett

The Informac[i]on of Christopher Rowswell of West Hatch taken before mee upon oath <sup>1</sup>the 5th day of Aprill 1650 /

Who sayth that hee this informant was (about one weeke, or fortnight since) in the Company of one Thomas Furze of West hatch afores[ai]d, lime burner<sup>2</sup>, which said furze, as hee was burneing of Lime, att his Lyme kill, att Mary Stocke: was speakeinge against the takeinge of the Engagement<sup>3</sup>, sayinge that there were none but whores birds that did either take the s[ai]d Engagm[en]t<sup>3</sup>, or enforced others to take it, And this informant farther saieth, that he, the s[ai]d Tho: Furze did then likewise say, That if the Lord Fairfax<sup>4</sup>, and lieft[enant] Gen[er]all Cromewell<sup>7</sup> were burneing togeather in his lime kill, as the Coale, & stones were, hee the s[ai]d Tho: Furze would keepe them in, with his Iron Barr<sup>5</sup>, till they were burned to ashes, & in case that did Faile, then the s[ai]d Tho: Furze would use some other meanes

Edw. Caly<sup>6</sup>

## Modernized Spelling Transcription

### Deposition 1

Somerset

The information of Christopher Rowswell of West Hatch taken before me upon oath  
<sup>1</sup>the 5th day of April 1650.

Who says that he this informant was (about one week, or fortnight since) in the company of one Thomas Furze of West Hatch aforesaid, lime burner<sup>2</sup>, which said Furze, as he was burning of lime at his lime kiln at Stoke St Mary, was speaking against the taking of the Engagement<sup>3</sup>, saying that there were none but whore's birds that did either take the said Engagement<sup>3</sup>, or enforced others to take it. And this informant further says that he, the said Tho: Furze, did then likewise say that if the Lord Fairfax<sup>4</sup>, and Lieutenant General Cromwell<sup>7</sup> were burning together in his lime kiln, as the coal and stones were, he the said Tho: Furze would keep them in, with his iron bar<sup>5</sup>, till they were burned to ashes, and in case that did fail, then the said Tho: Furze would use some other means.

Edw. Caly<sup>6</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> (technicalities of the court) When witnesses and examinants came before the court, they were required to swear upon oath the truth of their testimony.

<sup>2</sup> (technicalities of the court) Occupational or social status descriptors (e.g. baker, joiner, yeoman) were typically recorded for men.

<sup>3</sup> (gloss) Oath of Engagement: this was an act passed in January 1649/50 which required all subjects to swear an oath of loyalty to the new Commonwealth regime following the English Civil War. See <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp325-329>

<sup>4</sup> (gloss) Lord Fairfax was a Parliamentary commander-in-chief during the English Civil War. His military successes, particularly in the West Country, led to the collapse of the Royalist cause and the establishment of a Commonwealth republic.

<sup>5</sup> (interpretation) Iron bar: incidental evidence of the equipment used in lime burning.

<sup>6</sup> (technicalities of the court) Signature of the Justice of the Peace.

<sup>7</sup> (gloss) General Oliver Cromwell later became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, set up by the Parliamentarians upon the defeat of the Royalist cause in the English Civil War.

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Prepared as part of the Womens Work in Rural England project.