

Witchcraft Field Notes Starter

A cabinet for your questions

A short introduction, source checklist, story-versus-record guide and research card. A pencil and a question are enough.

What is inside

4 designed pages in this file. Also supplied in the other paper size: A4 and US Letter have the same content. Print at 100% using the matching file. Try one sheet first; print only the pages you need.

Before you begin

A research guide to stories and the evidence around them. Historical allegations are not demonstrated events. Reported beliefs are not promises of protection, healing or luck. Respect the people in the record and the privacy of people you encounter today.

This notebook belongs to

My first research question

A source worth checking

Name the access point

A manuscript, a transcription, a catalogue entry and a modern overview are different layers. Write down what you consulted before deciding what it establishes.

A worked example

A trial record may show that an allegation was made. It does not show that the alleged transformation happened. Identify the statement, response and decision separately.

- ☐ Author or institution named
- ☐ Publication, event and encounter dates separated
- ☐ Original versus later commentary distinguished
- ☐ Permission considered before sharing

My source and access layer

One claim supported / one claim still open

Story / record / interpretation

Three spaces, three jobs

Story: what is told. Record: the material that preserves a claim or event. Interpretation: what someone concludes from that material. A familiar story can have a valuable cultural life without proving a historical origin.

Try the Witches Mill

The building research quotes accounts of a new windmill in 1828. An undated souvenir gives a much earlier date; its annotation identifies confusion with a watermill. Keep the souvenir claim separate from the building evidence.

The story or representation

The source and what it records

My interpretation and next check

A small research card

Keep the question attached

Fill this in after one encounter. Leave uncertainty visible. Do not include private addresses, sensitive details or another person's account without permission.

Title / date encountered

Source / edition / page / reference

Claim / evidence checked / limit

Next check

Manx Notebook: Castletown windmill research
<https://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/towns/castltwn/omill.htm>

Library of Congress: cultural documentation guidelines
<https://www.loc.gov/folklife/edresources/ed-trainingdocuments.html>