

# Pendle Witches

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is simple and folk-like, with lyrics written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the staff to indicate accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Pen - die Hill, high, bare and wind - swept, Far too bleak for trees to grow. On - ly shep - herds on its sum - mit Cur - sing sheep which up there go. Lo - cal peo - ple min ding their bus' ness, Try - ing hard to make ends meet, Weav - ing cloth to make warm gar ments, Til - ling the ground for - food to eat. Pen - die Witch - es cur - sing neigh bours, Pen - die Witch - es hung till dead."

Pendle Hill, high, bare and windswept,  
Far too bleak for trees to grow.  
Only shepherds on its summit  
Cursing sheep which up there go.  
Local people minding their business,  
Trying hard to make ends meet,  
Weaving cloth to make warm garments,  
Tilling the ground for food to eat.

*Ch: Pendle Witches cursing neighbours,  
Pendle Witches hung till dead.*

Whalley Abbey in rack and ruin,  
The Abbot, now, without his head.  
Catholic teachings soon forgotten,  
Witchcraft shaping minds instead.  
John Law, Pedlar, seller of sharp pins,  
Accosted by a harridan,  
Stops her taking some of his products -  
Soon falls ill, and is bedridden.

Then the rumours start to increase,  
Spells and curses terrify.  
Healthy people suddenly ailing,  
Some improve, but others die.  
Judges come from distant cities  
To delve into the goings on,  
Find there is a case to answer  
And issue summonses thereupon.

In the dock stand ten defendants  
(Only one will be set free),  
Charged with causing death by witchcraft,  
Staring hard at judiciary.  
Evidence is hard to come by,  
Hearsay is manifold,  
Until the daughter of a suspect  
Tells her tale - aged nine years old.

One more witch is tried in Yorkshire,  
Her turpitude soon all to know,  
For when she touched her victim's body  
Fresh, warm blood from it did flow.  
All the guilty thrown in dungeons  
One last night alive to spend,  
Next day they're led to the gallows  
To don a noose, their lives to end.



*Pendle Hill (1,827ft/557m) is well worth a wander up given the fine view from its summit.*

*Recently, the BBC reported the unearthing of a 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage near the village of Barley - "complete with cat skeleton" - during a construction project. It is believed the cat was buried alive to protect the cottage's inhabitants from evil spirits, and I really can't think of a better use for it.*