

NEWS

» Ancient book

An ancient book describing the trial of two of women accused of witchcraft - which provided a legal precedent at the infamous Salem Witch Trials in America - is set to go under the hammer.

A Tryal of Witches at the Assizes Held at Bury St. Edmunds for the County of Suffolk was printed in London in 1682.

It's a rare eyewitness account of a case heard by judge Sir Matthew Hale 18 years previously in March 1664. It was written by "a person then attending the court".

It will be offered up for sale on November 29 at Chiswick Auctions in London.

The two accused widows - both from Lowestoft - were found guilty and condemned to be hanged.

Sir Matthew died in 1682 - the same year the book was published.

The book - which has an estimated guide price of £3,000 to £4,000 - describes the trial of Rose Cullender and Amy Duny (or Denny) after their neighbours accused them of witchcraft.

Rose came from a property-owning family, while Amy was a labourer's widow.

Their trial took place at Bury St Edmunds and they were found guilty of 13 charges of using malevolent witchcraft and sentenced to be hanged.

They were accused of bewitching several young children - from a baby just a few months old to an 18-year-old - and faced 13 charges.

Their alleged "victims" were the two daughters and aunt of a local merchant called Samuel Pacy.

They were tried at the assizes under the 1603 Witchcraft Act, found guilty of all 13 charges of using malevolent witchcraft and sentenced to be hanged.

The evidence centred on visions and dreams - and the hearsay evidence of children.

The judge - who believed wholeheartedly in witchcraft - asked the Bury St Edmunds jury to consider "first, whether or no these children were bewitched, [and] secondly, whether the prisoners at bar were guilty of it".

The question of whether witchcraft was real was not up for discussion, since its existence was recognised in the Bible and by Parliament, he said.

His opinions were studied by judges of New England during the infamous witch trials held in colonial Massachusetts between early 1692 and mid-1693.

It led to more than 200 people from Salem standing accused of practising witchcraft and 20 executions.

In Britain and across East Anglia, witch hunts reached their height during the Puritan era - when the trial took place. Between the 15th and early 18th century around 500 are believed to have been executed for witchcraft - most of them women.

» Indulge at chocolate and wine event at Suffolk vineyard this winter



Catherine Scarff, owner of Burnt House Vineyard, where the chocolate and wine event will be held.

Image: NEWSQUEST

Those looking to indulge this November should look no further than this one-off event that will be held at Burnt House Vineyard this weekend.

The vineyard, set in the countryside in Little Finborough near Stowmarket, has a reputation for producing its own wines, a business

growing in popularity in Suffolk. Now they have announced an event that unites two of the most indulgent luxuries: wine and chocolate.

On Sunday, November 12, customers will be served a glass of Burnt House Vineyard wine with their lunch, as well as a platter of locally cured meats and cheeses,

before embarking on a chocolate workshop.

The event announcement, posted on social media, said: "Learn from award-winning chocolate makers, Tosier, what it takes to transform roasted cocoa beans into chocolate, making your very own hot chocolate puck."

Tosier Chocolatemaker is an

independent, family-run business launched in 2016 and based in Suffolk which specialises in bean-to-chocolate that is fairtrade.

Burnt House Vineyard opened its doors in August 2022 and serves a range of its own wines, including Bacchus and English fizz.

Tickets are available on the Burnt House Vineyard website.

Professional organiser launches new decluttering business

An expert in organising and decluttering homes has launched her own business.

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Professional organiser Kim Steer - who lives at Bentley, near Ipswich - is a member of the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers (APDO) and the Home Staging Association.

She has created a new business called Style Your Home Happy which is offering services to clients in Ipswich and Colchester.

She gives "practical and emotional support" with decluttering and

organising homes "to create space and improve wellbeing".

She is also offering a staging service to help clients to sell or rent their properties faster or for more money.

Her services range from wardrobe makeovers and pantry clearouts to full houses - and offers styling and design tips.

She is targeting a range of customers including parents,

downsizers, home movers, and people wanting to create space for guests.

"Choosing a new home is one of the most important decisions we can make and prospective buyers often fall in love with a home from the feeling it gives them. It's these positive feelings I create when staging," she explained.

Kim - who lives with her husband and two children and has previously worked with architects to help redesign and fit out homes to suit the new occupants - said she has always loved transforming spaces.

"From a child I styled and decorated my room myself and displayed the things I loved. This passion for interiors grew and when I owned my first home I created spaces that reflected my personality and met my needs.

"I have continued to do this in each home and as my family has grown my tastes have changed over the years, but my love of home hasn't."

She has a Diploma in Interior Design and while raising her children studied to become an Integrative Counsellor.

"Now having re-evaluated what I want from life and with an Advanced Diploma in Life Coaching and training in decluttering, organising and staging, I am blending my lifelong love of interiors and supporting people," she said.

"It's as much about transforming minds as it is transforming homes. I love helping people to feel happy in their homes and empowered to lead a life they love or to get moving onto the next stage in their lives, in their new home."

