

= Malkin Tower =

Malkin Tower (or the Malking Tower or Mocking Tower) was the home of Elizabeth Southernns , also known as Demdike , and her granddaughter Alizon Device , two of the chief protagonists in the Lancashire witch trials of 1612 .

Perhaps the best @-@ known alleged witches ' coven in English legal history took place in Malkin Tower on 10 April 1612 . Eight of those attending were subsequently arrested and tried for causing harm by witchcraft , seven of whom were found guilty and executed . The house may have been demolished shortly after the trials . The only firm evidence for its location comes from the official account by the clerk of the court , Thomas Potts , who places it somewhere in the Forest of Pendle . Archaeological excavations in the area have failed to discover any confirmed remains of the building .

Several explanations have been suggested for the origins of the word Malkin . Despite its name , Malkin Tower is likely to have been a simple cottage .

= = Toponymy = =

The name Malkin has several possible derivations : it was a familiar form of the female names Mary or Maud , and a term for a poor or shabby woman ; the similar mawkin was a word used to describe a lower @-@ class woman or slut . Malkin was also used as a term for a cat , particularly an old cat , as in grimalkin or grey malkin , and was an old northern English name for a hare , into which witches were said to be able to transfigure . It has also been suggested that the name was a combination of mal and kin as a slight to the residents of Malkin Tower , which local historian Arthur Douglas considers unlikely owing to the poor education of people in the area at that time . Another possibility is a corruption of malt kiln , which is supported by a claim made by Alizon Device that the family of Anne Whittle , also known as Chattox , had broken into their fire house .

Authors have speculated on a range of buildings that could account for the Tower appellation . Malkin Tower may have incorporated a Norman peel tower , built as a defence against Scottish raiders or might have been a disused poacher 's lookout , but it is more likely that despite its name Malkin Tower was a simple cottage . Historian W. R. Mitchell suggests that it was originally a small farm building , perhaps a shelter for fodder or livestock , which was converted into poor @-@ quality living accommodation . Poverty was not uncommon among the residents of the Forest of Pendle , hence the building may have been no more than a hovel , and tower may have been a sarcastic name given by local residents . It is almost certain that Southernns and Device did not own Malkin Tower but were tenants .

Malkin Tower is sometimes alternatively referred to as Malking Tower , or Mocking Tower .

= = Association with witches = =

On Good Friday , 10 April 1612 , Malkin Tower was the venue for perhaps the best @-@ known alleged witches ' coven in English legal history . The house was home to Elizabeth Southernns , also known as Demdike , and her granddaughter Alizon Device , two of the alleged Pendle witches .

On 21 March 1612 Alizon had a chance encounter with John Law , a pedlar from Halifax , who refused to sell her some pins . Law collapsed shortly afterwards and his son accused Alizon of being responsible . She and her grandmother were summoned to the home of local magistrate , Roger Nowell , on suspicion of causing harm by witchcraft . Both were arrested and detained in Lancaster Gaol , along with two other women . Friends of the Demdike family met at Malkin Tower on 10 April 1612 , allegedly to plot the escape of the four gaoled women by blowing up Lancaster Castle . Nowell learned of the meeting and , after interrogating Alizon Device 's " mentally sub @-@ normal " brother , James , concluded that Malkin Tower had been the scene of a witches ' coven , and that all who had attended were witches . Eight were subsequently accused of causing harm by witchcraft and committed for trial , seven at Lancaster Assizes and one at York .

= = Location = =

The location of Malkin Tower is uncertain . It may have been demolished shortly after the 1612 trials , as it was common at the time to dismantle empty buildings and recycle the materials . The building may also have been destroyed to eradicate the " melancholy associations " of the place . The official account of the trials written by Thomas Potts , clerk to the court , in his *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* mentions Malkin Tower many times , but only describes it as being in the Forest of Pendle , a former royal forest that covered a considerable area south and east of Pendle Hill , extending almost to the towns of Burnley , Colne and Padiham .

One contender is in the civil parish of Blacko , on the site of present @-@ day Malkin Tower Farm ; since the 1840s claims have been made that old masonry found in a field wall is from the remains of the building . In *The Lancashire Witch @-@ Craze* , Jonathan Lumby conjectures that the building was situated on the moors surrounding Blacko Hill , near to an old road between Colne and Gisburn . Local folklore in the parish holds that the remains of Malkin Tower are buried in a field behind the nearby Cross Gaits Inn public house ; the tower used to be featured on the inn 's sign . The primary evidence supporting this location seems to be that a hollow in the hillside east of the farm is known as Mawkin Hole . It has been suggested that this is the same place mentioned in the 16th @-@ century halmote court records for the manor of Colne as Mawkin Yarde , described as being " in the north of Colne " , but anywhere inside the manor of Colne would have been outside the Forest of Pendle , and the first Ordnance Survey map of the area , created in the 1840s , identifies the farm as Blacko Tower . The site is also several miles from any of the traceable locations mentioned at the trial .

In 1891 local grocer Jonathan Stansfield constructed a solitary tower on the nearby summit of Blacko Hill . Today this is also commonly known as Blacko Tower , and is often confused with Malkin Tower . Although he claimed at the time that he wished to see into neighbouring valleys , historian John Clayton suggests that , aware of the story , he may have wished to provide the area with his own version .

Another possible location is somewhere near the village of Newchurch in Pendle . Douglas claims there is " persuasive " evidence that an area near Sadler 's Farm (now known as Shekinah Christian Centre) was the site of Malkin Tower ; there were numerous reports of alleged witchcraft in the area , and it was in the vicinity of other locations named during the trial such as Greenhead , Barley and Roughlee . Others involved in the trials were known to have lived in the area ; alleged witches Jane and John Bulcock resided at Moss End Farm in Newchurch , and John Nutter , whose cows were claimed to have been bewitched , lived at the neighbouring Bull Hole Farm . Southern 's son Christopher Holgate also lived nearby . But neither the deeds of Sadler 's Farm , which date back to the 17th century , nor contemporary maps of the region mention Malkin Tower or any fields in which it may have stood .

Archaeological excavations have been undertaken in several locations in the Pendle Forest area , including Newchurch , but nothing has been found . A potential candidate for the lost Malkin Tower was announced in December 2011 , after water engineers unearthed a 17th @-@ century cottage with a mummified cat sealed in the walls , close to Lower Black Moss reservoir near Barley .