Catholic family tradition. One surmises that in his co-operation with Nowell he had the Protestant passion of an anxious convert.

We now turn to Roger Nowell, who pre-eminently promoted the trial of the Pendle witches. Nowell, acting as magistrate, questioned the emotional Alizon Device, old Demdike and Chattox, cross-eyed Elizabeth Device, the unpredictable James Device and the nine-year-old Jennet Device. All that was in 1612. Had anything in his life prepared this landowner to become a witch-hunter?

Roger Nowell of Read Hall was connected through his family with leaders of rigorous Protestantism. The half-brother of his grandfather was the redoubtable, long-lived Alexander Nowell, exiled in Strasbourg and Frankfurt in Mary's reign, Dean of St Paul's throughout Elizabeth's reign. Amongst Roger's second cousins were John Wolton, Bishop of Exeter, also a former exile, and Dr William Whittaker, of a Pendle family, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and an inflexible Calvinist. Hence Nowell was well-placed to retail to Lancashire the theology which on the continent had inflamed and inspired those crazes of witch persecution of which the exiles were well aware. On Nowell's desk may well have been the *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witches*, published in 1608 by William Perkins, a Cambridge colleague and friend of William Whittaker and the leading Puritan writer of his day. Within the cool idiom of Calvinism, Perkins expressed the notion of witchcraft which a century earlier had been engendered by Catholic inquisitors in the Holy Roman Empire. Witchcraft, in Perkins's view, was no simple playing with occult powers. Perkins wrote:

> The ground of all witchcraft is a league or covenant made between the witch and the devil, wherein they do mutually bind themselves the one to the other ... The devil ... for his part promises to be ready to his vassals command, to appear at any time in the likeness of any creature, to consult with him, to aid and help him.[14]

Witchcraft was the Faustian compact with the prince of darkness, the ultimate, unforgivable heresy of those who had enlisted in the Devil's secret army. Perkins, admired for his Puritan wisdom and goodness, advocated death for all witches. In the pages of Perkins and (as Stephen Pumfrey's chapter elsewhere in this volume shows) in King James's *Daemonologie*, Nowell found his interpretative model, and in the spring of 1612 he conveyed it to Lister and to other gentry around Pendle.

Nowell's family too had suffered a commotion. His mother, before he was born, had first been married to Laurence Starkie of Huntroyd, who had died. So their son, Edmond Starkie of Huntroyd, was Roger Nowell's older half-brother, and Edmond's son, Nicholas Starkie, his half-nephew, though close in age. Neighbours and blood relations, the Nowells and the Starkies were a

close family group. We can follow the nephew's strange family life.

Nicholas Starkie in 1577 married Anne Parr, who inherited Cleworth Hall in south Lancashire. At Cleworth, near Leigh, they lived until Nicholas inherited Huntroyd, and at Cleworth they raised a young family, the fame of whose turmoils reached London where society discussed them and playwrights wrote of them.

The events began in 1595, just thirteen years before the strange death of Thomas Lister, seventeen before the trials of the Lancashire witches. Uncle Roger Nowell would be about forty-three years old, an anxious observer. In that year at Cleworth Nicholas Starkie's two children, John and Ann, aged about twelve and ten, began to convulse. Their father, alarmed, spent £200 on the fees of doctors. Desperate, he consulted a Catholic priest, who, alas, claimed not to be carrying his book of exorcism. Starkie, convinced that the children were possessed by the Devil, then engaged a wise man, Edmund Hartley, to cure the children. For about a year Hartley had some success, using 'certain popish charms and herbs'. Then things fell awry. Hartley believed he was underpaid at £2 per year, the children's fits became more furious, and three other girls in the Starkie house acted with similar abandon. So did a maid aged thirty, and a spinster relation aged thirty-three. The house became bedlam. The children romped, screamed, howled, and held their breath until they were blue in the face. They delighted in 'filthy and unsavourie speeches', especially during sermons in church. Perhaps there was method in their madness, for as a result they were rarely taken there. John Starkie, now aged nearly fourteen, himself began to deliver wild, apocalyptic addresses. The parents believed them all to be bewitched, but we can see indications of sexual hysteria like that which ignited the accusations at Salem eighty years later. Hartley bewitched the girls by kissing them, it was alleged later, and lay on the maid's bed. Freudian imagery abounded in the girls' tittering talk about the furry devil which entered little holes. Hartley now was denounced by Nicholas Starkie and brought by him to the Lancaster Assizes in March 1597. Poor Edmund Hartley, who had come to Cleworth to cure, was himself found guilty of witchcraft. Like his trial, his execution was muddled. The rope broke. Hartley, amazed to be alive, 'penitentlie confessed'. He was then hanged successfully.

Starkie now consulted Dr John Dee, the famed master of the occult, then Warden of Manchester College, and on his advice invited to Cleworth two Puritan ministers from Derbyshire, John Darrel from Ashby-de-la-Zouche and George More from Caulk. At Cleworth Darrel spent the night in prayer, then assembled the troubled household. According to Darrel's published account, widely read, he and More, armed with the word of the scripture, confronted the demons. The seven possessed bellowed, blasphemed and convulsed, lay unconscious for a long time, and then rose freed from their possession; all of them except the maid continued in good health thereafter.[15]

There the matter might have rested had not John Darrel, the exorcist, previously exorcised in Burton on Trent Thomas Darling, the 'Boy of Burton' who like a ventriloquist had spouted out conversations between his angelic self and devils; and had Darrel not subsequently in Nottingham exorcised at great public displays the musician's apprentice William Sommers who suffered from contortions, who had an egg-shaped lump that moved around his body, who vomited extraordinarily, and who acted with gross obscenity. After controversies in Nottingham and the confession of 'pretense' by those exorcised, Darrel was tried by the Commission for Ecclesiastical Affairs and imprisoned for deceit and counterfeiting.

Darrel's Puritan supporters did not desert their imprisoned champion. A pamphlet war ensued. Opposing Darrel's claims were Bishop Bancroft of London, soon to be Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bancroft's chaplain Samuel Harsnett, later Archbishop of York, who wrote ironically and intelligently. They, of the Anglican party, were not inclined to believe in magical or devilish agencies nor, as a consequence, in purported exorcisms. In the inflamed atmosphere when parties of the civil war were beginning to coalesce, to believe in the reality of possession and exorcism became a shibboleth for the emerging Puritan party (just as it is for some charismatic Christians today), while the liberal Anglican party could be identified by scepticism about witchcraft. The issue became political and would not subside. 'The Seven in Lancashire', the Starkie household, are mentioned in Ben Jonson's play *The Divell is an Asse* years later in 1616. A character in the play is urged to pretend to be bewitched. It is easy, he is told:

> Did you ne'er read, Sir, little Darrels tricks
> With the boy o' Burton, and the 7 in Lancashire,
> Sommers at Nottingham? All these do teach it,
> And we'll give out, Sir, that your wife has bewitched you.[16]

By 1612 Nicholas Starkie's family were living in Huntroyd, close by Roger Nowell. Nowell, by his discovery of witches in 1612, by giving evidence of their malign activity, and by pursuing them to the gallows, aligned himself with the Starkies in the public debate, championed the Puritan stance, and followed the line of John Darrell who was perhaps his role-model.

It is natural to consider the sufferings of the victims of persecution. Yet when we view closely the lives of the persecutors we see within them also periods of anguish and wounding traumas, distorting experiences, which make us reflect on the tragedy more deeply. As W. H. Auden wrote:

> I and the public know
> What all schoolchildren learn,
> Those to whom evil is done
> Do evil in return.[17]