

Witch 065C, Georgette Brihey 1

Witch 065C: B 3801 no 3, Georgette fille Jean Brihey, d'Aydoilles

10 October 1619; informations preparatoires

Taken at Bruyeres by prévôt George Milot, at request of partie formelle Jean de Cugney.

(1) Demenge Mengin, 60

Widespread suspicion against her, as against mother and sister. His garden adjoined theirs, and 6 weeks earlier had been angry because the mother and Marie were taking his fruit; then a cow fell ill, so he said some things against them, talking of need to empty house and burn them. Neighbours persuaded them to visit his cow, and Georgette said it had fine eyes and would recover, as it did, although it had been so sick after not eating for a fortnight that he would have taken a sol for it.

(2) Clement Baget, now living at St Ogier, 36

3 years earlier Georgette had been among workers he hired for hay harvest, and as he took cart to meadow she asked him to let them ride on it, which he refused. On return journey with load it was upset twice for no apparent reason; used another one without incident, but when he took the first again the same thing happened. In view of reputation suspected she might have caused this after his refusal.

(3) Mongeote femme Nicolas Hubert Gugney, 40

Around last Assumption had been to visit sick daughter of Jacot Doron. Found Marie and Georgette there, one on each side, who seeing 'qu'elle se demenoit et avoit une espee de foiblesse' put a scarf over her eyes and said 'Arrier mauvais, arrier, nous n'avons que faire de toy icy'. Marie added some other words in a low voice; witness was so frightened that she had to be helped home, and was ill for a long time afterwards.

(4) Jacot Doron, 50

General reputation. Around last St George she had asked him to plough a field, which he refused to do, then he lost a bull which died suddenly; would not have suspected her if herdsman had not reported that the animal took sick when passing her house.

(5) Demenge Duc, 50

Had quarrel 18 months earlier when he refused to do some ploughing for her, and she told him he might repent - then lost 3 or 4 oxen, and as many cows. Believed this was her doing; had the last animal inspected by a man 'experimenté en maladie ordinaire de bestail', who said it was witchcraft.

(6) Didier fils Jean Creuchat, 22

Said that on occasion when he was returning from feast at one in the morning he saw Georgette and Marie by the stream which ran through the village; did not know what they were doing, gave them good evening but received no reply. 3 or 4 times in evening when bell sounded for Ave Maria had noticed that the sisters were in company of other women, but suddenly went back to their house.

(7) Jannon veuve Jean Tiriot, 75

Another witness to illness of small daughter of Jacot Doron. According to her the child was at point of death, and what was said was 't'arrier mauvais, que le bon vienne icy', then they asked for a hen, allegedly to make an offering to a saint. Marie cut off end of tail and threw it to child saying 'tien voila ta parte'. This 'esmerveilla' those present, and an older sister of child said that if her father were there he would not be happy about it.

(11 October)

(8) Jean Valhey, 34

General reputation; had lost animals, but did not think they had been cause.

(9) Didier Marie, 40

3 weeks before St Jean he had lost a heifer carring first calf, and suspected Georgette because of reputation and because she was helping to guard the herd at that time. Asked if he had quarrelled with her, he said he had not.

(10) Pierat Colas Pierat, marchal, 36

Some 10 years earlier had allowed veillée in his house, and there was dispute about places; told women off generally, but specially Marie and Georgette who 'se portoient plus fierement' threatening to expel them. Stayed away for two nights after this, then returned; Georgette went to kitchen and gave large apple to his small child, saying he should not eat it, but it was for his father. When he suggested to his wife that she cook it for him she said he should beware, in view of their reputation for witchcraft, so he cut it up and gave it to their two goats. One died 2 days later, other was lost for 3 days and died after it was found.

(11) Curien Coitoux, 40

Said he had lost many large animals in 10 years he had lived at Aydoilles. 7 weeks earlier had sick cow which seemed to be improving after treatment, but he brought back some wheat for Georgette from Bruyeres on his cart, for which she paid him 10 deniers (1 blanc), and next day cow died unexpectedly - thought this might have been her doing because he asked for payment.

(12) Jean Demenge Colin, 36

Had been married for 8 years, and had lost animals every year, most recently a pregnant cow and a small bull; had come to think this was witchcraft, not least because neighbours were similarly affected. Suspected those now held at Bruyeres

in view of long reputation, while he had had several quarrels with Marie over small matters.

(13) Jannon femme Demenge Duc, 50

Had lost many animals without knowing cause, although they had various quarrels with Marie, so that she and husband sometimes thought it might be witchcraft by someone from their household. Also told of affair with Jacot Doron's sick child.

(14) Jannon femme Blaison Demengeon, 38

Some 15 years earlier her sister-in-law from Remiremont had a quarrel with Georgette, who was already suspected, and immediately fell ill for 18 weeks - thought this had been her witchcraft.

(15) Adeline veuve Colin Cugney, 30

3 weeks earlier Georgette had come to ask for a load of manure, which she did not dare refuse, then offered her a franc in payment. Objected that it was worth at least 15 gros, and person who carted it said it should have been 18. Georgette then offered 17, but she held out for the 18 and finally received them, with comment 'qu'elle ne vouloit pas tant de paroles'. Same evening first cow to enter stable became sick, as it still was, and she though Georgette was the cause.

(16) Blaison Demengeon, 40

The accused and their parents had always been reputed witches; story of his sister's illness 15 years back, after she had refused Georgette some bread at veillée.

(17) Claudon Andreu, 50

Two years before two of his foals escaped into their garden and were brought back by Georgette; in view of their reputation he expected trouble, and two days later a horse broke its thigh in stable and had to be destroyed.

(18) Georgette fille Didier Gohery, 18

Previous winter, when they were spinning at common poisle, Georgette gave her a cooked apple. She became ill immediately after eating it and had to go home; when she told her mother what had happened the latter 'luy deffendit d'en parler, crainte de pire'. Illness lasted 3 weeks.

19 October 1619; confrontations

Agreed to having been to see Didier Mengin's cow, which she had previously denied, but had neither harmed nor healed it. On occasion when she was seen out at night was looking for a shirt they had lost. Otherwise denied all significant charges.

30 October 1619: PG des Vosges asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

31 October 1619; Change de Nancy approves.

7 November 1619; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews and rack, but denied she was a witch, calling on her patron saint St George, St Nicolas, God and the Virgin for help. Was then placed on strappado, with 25-30 pound stone attached to legs. Still denied, and said her mother had paid her very ill for way she had cared for her and supported her for so long.

8 November 1619; interrogation

On news that she was now willing to confess, prévôt and others went to château. She said that when her brother-in-law was ill and out of his wits he caused various disorders, such as scattering kitchen fire, so they were obliged to seek help from mayor and neighbours. Upset her so that she was ill for a fortnight, then after another visit she encountered a black man on her way home who told her it was just an illness - did not know what became of him because of darkness.

Around previous St Jean was up before dawn to go to market at Bruyeres one Saturday, with Demenge Mengin, Mengeon Bessot, and others. She had to stop behind, then as she followed them a black man approached her and spoke of her difficulties with Jean Creuchat over the sharing and division of their adjoining gardens - the masons were due to arrive next week to build wall giving him an extra foot of land and also to put up a building, in anger about which she had told him 'qu'il feroit ses fiebvres quartaines.' Man told her she would do well to take action to prevent this, but she replied that she did not have enough money to maintain her own house. Man then offered to lend her money, but she refused, saying matters had not yet gone so far, but if she needed it she would see. He then offered to bring money to her house on Sunday if she wished, but she again refused, saying she did not know him - he replied that she would know him well if she wished, and when she asked his name said it was Jaulne. As she went to catch up with others thought he was still with her, but when she looked round he had disappeared.

On Sunday thought about what had happened, 'alors elle entra en creance que ce n'estoit chose qui vaille, et en eust tant d'apprehension et scrupule, que n'osant s'en deceler au sieur son curé, elle proposa en elle mesme et resouldit d'en conferer à la premiere occasion avec quelque bon pere minime du couvent d'Espinal, ce que neantmoins elle n'a effectué jusques a present. et que quand en cela il y auroit du mal, il ne viendroit d'aulture chose, que des fascheries alleguées cy dessus et autres.'

Despite pressure to confess more, would not do so.

9 November 1619; interrogation

Now said that around last hay harvest had been angry because her brother-in-law was cutting hay in harden recently divided between them, and wanted to move one of the posts marking the boundary, and over insults he gave her, also over dispute with Jean Creuchat (some of building seems to have been an oven). Was visited by evil spirit, named Poirson. who promised that if she gave herself to him 'il ne la laisseroit jamais, et feroit qu'en tout et par tout elle prevadroit contre ses haineux, mesme luy fourniroit argent pour ses necessitez.'

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Renounced God and his church, but when he wanted her to renounce father, mother, godfather and godmother, she refused and was beaten so badly that she had headache for fortnight, which was like fire. Later refused to go to banquet, so he threw her out of bed and dragged her into kitchen.

12 November 1619; interrogation

Confirmed earlier statements, but would add nothing to them; said she did not know if sister Marie was a witch, and had never seen her do anything of the kind.

16 November 1619: PG des Vosges suggests that despite refusal to confess to malefices she is sufficiently condemned by her own confession, and asks for death sentence.

17 November 1619; Change de Nancy orders reiteration of torture.

No further documents, but known to have been sentenced to death on 26 November.