

John Fox
Actes and monuments, 4th edition
London
1583

ACTES

and Monuments of matters most
speciall and memorable, happenyng in the
Church, with an Vniuersall history of the same,
wherein is set forth at large the whole race and course
of the Church, from the primitiue age to these lat=
ter tymes of ours, with the bloody times, horrible trou=
bles, and great persecutions agaynst the true Martyrs
of Christ, sought and wrought as well by Heathen
Emperours, as nowe lately practised
by Romish Prelates, especially in this
Realme of England and
Scotland.

Newly reuised and recognised, partly also
augmented, and now the fourth time agayne
published and recommended to the studious
Reader, by the Authour (through the helpe of
Christ our Lord) IOHN FOXE, which
desireth thee good Reader to helpe him
with thy Prayer.

APOC. VII.

Salus sedenti super thronum & agno.

An. 1583. Mens. Octobr.

...

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... that shee neither allowed the deitie of theyr Sacra=
ment, nor the absurdity of their masse. For the which, sen=
tence was read against her about the beginning of Iune,
and she condemned for the same. But because her death fo=
lowed not vpon the same, we wil therfore defer the tracta=
tion therof to the due place and time, first setting downe in
order of historie, the execution of Christopher Waide aboue
mentioned.

The execution and Martyrdome of
Christopher Waide.

Christopher Waide of Darford, in the Countie of Kent,
Linnen weauer, was condemned by Maurice byshop
of Rochester, and appoynted to be burned at Darforde a=
foresayde. At the day appoynted for his execution, which
was in the moneth of Iuly, there was betimes in the mor=
ning carryed oute of the Towne in a Carte, a Stake, and
therewith many bundles of Reedes, to a place a quarter of
a mile out of the Towne, called the Brymthe, into a Gra=
uell pitte thereby, the common place of the execution of fe=
lons. Thither also was brought a loade of Broome fagot,
with other fagots and talwood. Vnto which place resorted
the people of the Countrey in great number, and there ta=
ried his comming. In so mucche that thither came dyuers
Fruiterers wyth horse loades of Cherries, and sold them.
About x. of the clocke commeth riding the Sheriffe, wyth
a greate manye of other Gentlemen and their retinue, ap=
poynted to assist him therein, and with them Waide riding
pinioned, and by him one Margerie Polly of Tunbridge,

both singing of a Psalme: whyche Margerie, as soone as she espied a farre off the multitude gathered aboute the place where *she shoulde suffer, waiting his comming, she sayde vnto hym very loude and chearefully: You maye reioyce Waide, to see suche a companie gathered to celebrate youre marriage this day.

And so passing by the place, whych ioyned harde to the hie way, they were caried streighte downe to the Towne, where shée was kepte vntill the Sheriffe returned from Waids execution. And Waid being made ready, and stripped out of his clothes in an Inne, had broughte vnto hym a faire long white Shirte from hys wife, which being put on, and hee pinioned, was led vppe on foote againe to the foresayde place. And comming straite to the stake, tooke it in hys armes, embracing it, and kissed it, setting hys backe vnto it, and standing in a pitche Barrell, which was taken from the Beacon, being hard by: then a Smith brought a hoope of yron, and wyth two staples made him fast to the stake vnder hys armes.

As soone as hee was thus setteled, hee spake wyth hys handes and eyes lifted vp to heauen, wyth a chearefull and loude voyce, the laste verse of the lxxxvi. Psalme: Shewe some good token vppon me, O Lord, that they which hate me, may see it, and be ashamed, because thou Lord hast helped me, and comforted me. Neare vnto the stake was a litle hill, vpon the top wherof were pitched vp foure staues quadrangle wise, with a couering round about like a pulpit, into the which place, as Wade was thus praying at the stake, entred a Frier wyth a booke in his hand, whom when Wade espied, he cried earnestly vnto the people, to take hede of the doctrine of the whore of Babilon, exhorting them to imbrace the doctrine of the gospel preached in K. Edward his daies. Whom the sheriffe, thus speaking to the people, often interrupted, saying, be quiet Wade, and die paciently, I am (sayde hee) I thanke God, quiet, Maister Sheriffe, and so trust to die. All this while the Frier stode still looking ouer the couerlet, as though he woulde haue vttered somewhat: but Wade very mightily admonished the people to beware of that doctrine: whiche when the Frier perceived, whether he were amased, or coulde haue no audience of the people, withdrewe himselfe oute of the place immediately wythoute speaking anye woorde, and went awaye downe to the Towne. Then the Reedes being sette about hym, he pulled them and imbraced them in his armes, alwayes with his handes (making a hole against his face, that his voyce might be heard, which they perceiuing that were hys tormentours, alwaye caste fagottes at the same hole, whych notwithstanding hee still as he coulde put off,

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his face, being hurte with the ende of a fagotte cast thereat. Then fire being putte vnto him, he cried vnto God often, Lorde Iesus receiue my soule: wythout any token or signe of impacencie in the fire, till at lengthe, after the fire was once throughly kindled, he was hearde *no man speake, still holding hys handes vp ouer hys head together towardes heauen, euen when he was dead and altogether rosted, as though they had bene stayed vppe wyth a proppe standing vnder them.

Thys signe did God shewe vppon hym, whereby his very enemies might perceiue, that God had according to hys prayer, shewed such a token vppon hym, euen to their shame and confusion. And this was the order of this god=

ly Martyrs execution, thys was his ende. Whereby God seemed to confound and strike with the spirit of dumbnes, the Frier that Locuste which was risen vp to haue spoken against hym: and also no lesse woonderfully sustained those handes which he lifted vp to him for comfort in his torment.

Spectatores præsentes Richardus Fletcher pater, nunc Minister Ecclesiæ Crambroke, Richardus Fletcher filius, Minister Ecclesiæ Riensis.

...

<colophon>

Imprinted at London by Iohn Daye,
dwellyng ouer Aldersgate beneath
S. Martins.

Cum Gratia & Priuilegio Regiæ Maiestatis.

An. Dom. 1583.

<This report of an execution at Dartford in July 1555 is one of the additions made in the fourth edition of Fox's book (for him, the last edition – he died in 1587). It was supplied by two people who had been present, Richard Fletcher (d. 1586), vicar of Cranbrook since 1561, and his son Richard Fletcher (d. 1596), town preacher of Rye since 1574, who, at the time, was only about ten years old. (It was he who remembered the cherries, I should think.) The sheriff's other prisoner, Margery Polley, was also under sentence of death. Her execution took place at Tonbridge, presumably just one day later. Despite what Fox says here, there is no further 'tractation' of her case; but there is a small picture, 'The Martyrdome of Margery Polley', first made for the second edition (1570), with a note in the margin alongside it, 'The Martyrdome of Margery Polley, at Tunbridge. An. 1555. Iuly.' The book is as big as a bible; this is just a sample excerpt. I have marked two misprints: one was corrected, the other miscorrected, in the next edition (see below). – C.F. December 2012.>

* she 1583 : hee 1596 : he 1641 and later editions

* no man 1583 : by no man 1596 : by no man to 1641 and later editions (but the context requires 'no more to')

<Postscript – On searching further, I find that Thomas Brice gives exact dates for both of these executions. According to his information (a list of martyrs supplied to him by some 'good gentleman'), the facts were (i) that somebody named Wade was burned at Dartford on 12 July, (ii) that Joan Polley was burned on 23 July (Brice 1559, sig. C2v). Robert Crowley seems also to have thought that John Wade was burned (at Dartford) in about the middle of the month, Joan Polley (at Tonbridge) towards the end of it (Lanquet, Cooper and Crowley 1559, sig. 4G4r); so I take it that Brice's dates are likely to be correct, or at any rate not far wrong. (In that case, however, I do not see why the sheriff would have wanted to take Mrs Polley with him to Dartford.) As happens in other cases too, the martyrs' christian names are variously reported. These writers both say that Mrs Polley's name was Joan. Fox started out by calling her John Polley (Fox 1559, p. 510), then corrected that to Joan (Fox 1563, p. 1249). By 1570 he was better informed: he identifies her (correctly, I suppose) as 'Margery Polley wydow, wife sometyme of Richard Polley of Pepyngbery', i.e. Pembury (Fox 1570, p. 1859). – C.F. May 2013.>

- Arber 1882 E. Arber, *An English garner*, vol. 4 (privately printed, Birmingham, 1882). <http://archive.org/stream/anenglishgarneri04arbeuoft#page/142/mode/2up>
- Brice 1559 Thomas Brice, *A compendious register in metre, conteinyng the names, and pacient suffrynges, of the membres of Iesus Christ, afflicted, tormented, and cruelly burned, here in Englande, since the death of our late famous kyng, of immortall memorie Edwarde the sixte: to the entraunce and beginnyng of the raign, of our soueraigne & derest Lady Elizabeth, of Englande, Fraunce, and Ireland, quene, defender of the faithe, to whose highnes truly and properly, apperteineth next and immediatly vnder God, the supreme power, and authoritie of the churches of Englande and Irelande* (London, 1559). STC 3726. – Reprinted in full, with modernized spelling, by Arber 1882, pp. 143–72
- Fox 1559 John Fox, *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum, quae postremis et periculosis his temporibus euenerunt, maximarumque per Europam persecutionum, ac sanctorum Dei martyrum, caeterarumque rerum si quae insignioris exempli sint, digesti per regna et nationes commentarii. Pars prima: In qua primum de rebus per Angliam et Scotiam gestis, atque in primis de horrenda, sub Maria nuper regina, persecutione, narratio continetur* (Basel, 1559). http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10143730_00005.html
- Fox 1563 John Fox, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perillous dayes, touching matters of the church* (London, 1563). STC 11222
- Fox 1570 John Fox, *The second volume of the ecclesiasticall history, conteynyng the actes and monumentes of martyrs* (London, 1570). STC 11223
- Lanquet, Cooper and Crowley 1559 Thomas Lanquet, Thomas Cooper and Robert Crowley, *An epitome of cronicles* (London, 1559). STC 15217.5