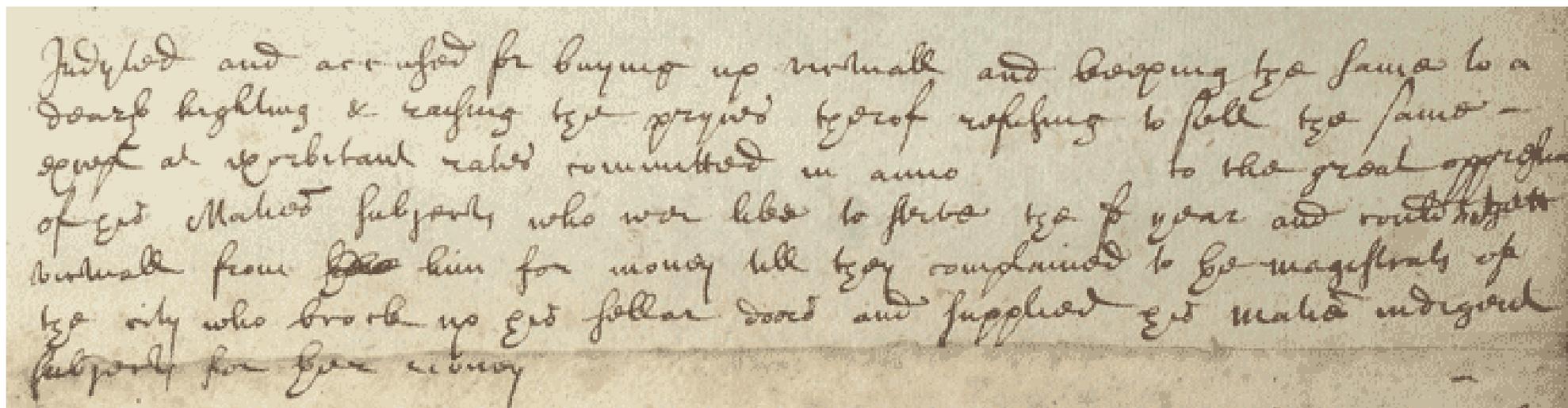


## Weekly Poser (312) – Porteous Roll for Edinburgh, 1679

This week's poser is an excerpt from the Porteous Roll for Edinburgh, contained in the High Court of Justiciary process papers. It dates from 1679 (National Records of Scotland, JC26/51/5 page 2) and deals with an accusation against James Gilchrist, merchant in Edinburgh. A Porteous Roll was a precursor of a criminal indictment; a list of accused persons to be tried before the High Court of Justiciary, with information about the offence and the location of the accused.

The passage mentioned the words *victuall*, *dearth* and *indigent* which, according to the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* mean “provisions, foodstuffs, staple goods, necessities, grain”, “high prices” and “needy, poor” respectively. Watch out for the letter *thorn*, phonetic spellings, abbreviations and descending strokes interfering with letters in the line below.



**This week's question:** What had James done and how did the City magistrates relieve the situation?

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**Answer:** James had been creating an artificial shortage of food by refusing to sell his supplies and so forcing up prices. The Magistrates broke down his cellar doors and sold the stored food to the citizens.

**Transcription**

*Indyted and accused for buying up victuall and keeping the same to a dearth highting & raising the pryces therof refusing to Sell the Same except at exorbitant rates committed in anno [] to the great oppresion of his Ma[jes]ties subjects who wer like to sterve the s[ai]d year and could not gaett victuall from him for money till they complained to the magistrats of the city who brock up his sellar doors and supplied his ma[jes]ties indigent subjects for their money*

This poser was devised by Alan Laurie, a researcher with an interest in 17<sup>th</sup> century High Court of Justiciary cases.