# Witches of Scotland founders unveil How to Kill a Witch ahead of crowdfunded tartan launch



## How to Kill a Witch: A Call to Remember the Past and Empower the Present

In a striking blend of historical reflection and modern advocacy, Dr Zoe Venditozzi and Claire Mitchell KC, founders of the Witches of Scotland campaign, are set to release a pivotal new book, *How to Kill a Witch*, on May 15, 2025. This work comes in the wake of significant developments in Scottish history, particularly the formal apology issued in March 2022 by then First Minister Nicola Sturgeon for the injustices suffered by those accused under the Witchcraft Act of 1563. That apology acknowledged the persecution of over 2,500 individuals, predominantly women, highlighting the deep-rooted misogyny that fuelled centuries of brutal witch hunts.

The duo, described as “quarrelsome dames,” have captured widespread attention, particularly given their participation in events such as the inaugural Tartan Parade on the Royal Mile, designed to launch a crowdfunded Witches of Scotland tartan. This tartan, a vibrant testament to both remembrance and resilience, was crafted to serve as a living memorial for those who suffered during this dark chapter of Scottish history. It features black, grey, and red hues, with the years 1563 and 1736 woven into its design, symbolising the duration of the Witchcraft Act and the bloodshed that ensued.

In an evening video call following a visit to Prickly Thistle mill, where the tartan began production, Zoe remarked on the “mind-boggling” experience of seeing the fabric come to life, stating, “We knew it would be popular,” reflecting on the tartan’s viral reception not just in Scotland but across the Atlantic, where supporters have embraced the design in creative ways, such as nail art.

The forthcoming book promises to deliver an “accessible” non-fiction narrative aimed at shedding light on the motivations behind the witch hunts and the disproportionate targeting of women. The authors, adeptly blending factual rigor with their signature wit, are committed to making the history of these persecutions understandable for a wide readership. Zoe, a seasoned writer, is keen on creating a resource that galvanises readers, while Claire, whose career involves legal writing, emphasizes the importance of drawing in those who might shy away from dense academic texts. Their differing backgrounds in fiction and law serve to enrich their narrative and broaden its appeal.

As the authors delve into the harrowing accounts of trials and executions, they juxtapose these chilling stories with humour, an element they view as essential for survival as women. Zoe has remarked, “To survive being a woman, you need a sense of humour, cause otherwise you would just implode with rage.” Such insights aim not only to engage but also to provoke thought and inspire action in contemporary discussions about women’s rights, which remain compellingly relevant today.

Claire articulates the book’s purpose as a “rallying cry” for modern feminism, noting that the persecution of “witches” echoes through time, with similar dynamics at play in parts of Africa and even within Western societies. "In the States, women’s rights are under attack, and everywhere humans try and find vulnerable people to blame when things go wrong," she notes, underscoring the necessity of remaining vigilant against historical patterns of scapegoating.

The Witches of Scotland campaign has also called for a full legal pardon for those wrongfully accused, alongside the establishment of a national monument to memorialise the victims of such deep-seated oppression. This movement not only seeks to address historical injustices but also aims to educate future generations about the consequences of misogyny and scapegoating throughout history.

As the launch date approaches and the authors prepare for appearances at events such as Toppings in St Andrews and the Dundee Book Festival, the anticipation surrounding *How to Kill a Witch* grows. This work stands as a powerful reminder of the past while simultaneously advocating for a future where the lessons of history are heeded, and the rights of all women are fiercely protected.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/08/nicola-sturgeon-issues-apology-for-historical-injustice-of-witch-hunts), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-60667533)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/), [[4]](https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/02/26/a-living-memorial-witches-of-scotland-tartan-honours-the-victims-of-witch-hunts)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/), [[5]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/witchhunt-victims-scotland-nicole-sturgeon-b2034835.html), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/13/calls-scotland-pardon-witch-hunt-victims-gather-pace)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/13/calls-scotland-pardon-witch-hunt-victims-gather-pace)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/), [[5]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/witchhunt-victims-scotland-nicole-sturgeon-b2034835.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/08/nicola-sturgeon-issues-apology-for-historical-injustice-of-witch-hunts), [[7]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19978020.nicola-sturgeon-issues-formal-apology-persecuted-witches-mark-international-womens-day/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/5237870/how-to-kill-a-witch-dundee-witches-of-scotland-book/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/08/nicola-sturgeon-issues-apology-for-historical-injustice-of-witch-hunts> - In March 2022, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon issued a formal apology for the historical injustices of the witch hunts, acknowledging the persecution of over 2,500 individuals, predominantly women, under the Witchcraft Act of 1563. She emphasized that these individuals were not witches but victims of deep-seated misogyny, highlighting the need to confront such injustices to build a better society. The apology was part of a broader recognition of historical wrongs and a commitment to addressing ongoing issues of misogyny in Scotland.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-60667533> - In March 2022, Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, offered a formal apology to those accused of witchcraft between the 16th and 18th centuries, many of whom were executed. She acknowledged the 'egregious historic injustice' and noted that parliament could choose to legislate to pardon those convicted under the Witchcraft Act of 1563. The Witches of Scotland campaign had urged the government to offer a public apology, saying it would send a 'powerful signal'.
4. <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/02/26/a-living-memorial-witches-of-scotland-tartan-honours-the-victims-of-witch-hunts> - In February 2025, the Witches of Scotland campaign introduced a new tartan as a 'living memorial' to honor the victims of the Witchcraft Act of 1563. The tartan, predominantly black, grey, and red, symbolizes the dark chapter of history and the bloodshed endured by those persecuted. The design encodes the years 1563 and 1736, representing the duration of the act, and aims to raise awareness of historical injustices and the deep-seated misogyny that led to the persecution of women.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/witchhunt-victims-scotland-nicole-sturgeon-b2034835.html> - Following Nicola Sturgeon's public apology in March 2022, campaigners, including the Witches of Scotland group, have called for a full legal pardon for the thousands of people persecuted as witches in post-Reformation Scotland. The apology acknowledged the deep misogyny that motivated the 'colossal' injustice and highlighted the need to confront such historical wrongs to build a better society. The campaign seeks to educate a new generation about this historical campaign of femicide and create a national monument to honor the victims.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/13/calls-scotland-pardon-witch-hunt-victims-gather-pace> - Following Nicola Sturgeon's formal apology in March 2022, calls for a legal pardon for the thousands of people persecuted as witches in post-Reformation Scotland have intensified. Campaigners, including the Witches of Scotland group, are advocating for a pardon and the creation of a national monument to honor the victims. The apology acknowledged the deep misogyny that motivated the 'colossal' injustice and emphasized the need to confront such historical wrongs to build a better society.
7. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19978020.nicola-sturgeon-issues-formal-apology-persecuted-witches-mark-international-womens-day/> - In March 2022, Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, issued a formal apology to those persecuted under the Witchcraft Act of 1563. Speaking on International Women's Day, she acknowledged the 'egregious historic injustice' and extended a posthumous apology to all those accused, convicted, vilified, or executed under the act. The apology highlighted the deep misogyny that motivated the persecution and emphasized the need to confront such historical wrongs to build a better society.