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Mr Jupp, author of *Methods of*

Each venture will deal with a ... in the Northumbria area.

take more respect
their children are doing."

Hysteria of the witch hunts

By **CHRISTOPHER GOULDING**

WITCHCRAFT returns to Newcastle this week — more than 300 years after “witches” were hanged on the Town Moor.

The People's Theatre in Heaton is marking the 300th anniversary of the infamous American witch hunts — and the lesser known Newcastle hangings — with a production of Arthur Miller's witch hunt chronicle *The Crucible*.

The play, first staged in 1953, tells the story of the 19 witches of Salem, Massachusetts, who were hanged during a Puritan campaign against paganism in October 1692.

The witch hunt hysteria had swept Europe

earlier in the century and reached Newcastle in 1649.

A petition was put before the council by the city's military governor, Sir Arthur Hazelrigg, who was also head of the government's Commission of the Propagation of the Gospel in the Northern Counties.

Two town sergeants were sent to Scotland to buy the services of a witchfinder and they came back with John Kincaid.

He was a charlatan responsible for the deaths of

hundreds falsely branded as witches, for whom he was paid 20 shillings a head.

More than 30 unfortunate souls were paraded on trial at the Newcastle Guildhall.

Kincaid's test involved an intimate body search during which any marks or blemishes were pricked with a needle. Lack of bleeding proved the subject was a witch and Kincaid is thought to have used a trick needle to trap his victim.

As a result 14 “witches” and one “wizard” were hanged on the Town Moor.

The Crucible runs nightly at the People's Theatre in Heaton, Newcastle, until Saturday, October 17.