

## CHAPTER 17 – INNS AND ALEHOUSES

“Bake and brew and cook and sew”; necessary accomplishments for any housewife in bygone days. But as time went on there arose in a community those who would, either as a trade or as an adjunct to their staple employment. Concentrate much of their efforts, and sometimes skills, on one of these trades and so evolved the brewers, tailors and bakers. Those of them who sold bread or ale, and of these there appears to have been plenty for a small place like Stapleford then was, had to abide by the Assize; i.e. to sell by any other weight or measure than that laid down, and the offender was hauled before the appropriate Court and fined. The appropriate Court before which Stapleford offenders were brought was the Peverel Court and in Queen Elizabeth I’s time the presentments before this were mainly of this nature. (See Chapter on the Honour of Peverel.)

Any innkeeper had to have a licence and before this was granted two responsible people, who were not alehouse keepers, were required to stand as sureties. The Justices held special Brewers sessions for reviewing the licences but at any Sessions an alehouse keeper could be suppressed for an infringement of the law such as selling ale above the lawful price, harbouring a vagrant or allowing disorder in his house.

### **Brewing without a licence**

Not all those who brewed necessarily kept an inn or alehouse. On 13th July 1612 John Towle of Stapleford, described as a labourer, appeared at the Quarter Sessions on a charge of Brewing without a licence.<sup>1</sup> At the next Sessions (5th October 1612) Towle was still in trouble as was George Clark the then Constable. Both had to answer a Warrant to appear at the following Sessions for Clark, being in possession of a warrant for the apprehension of John Towle, “contemptuously refused to execute same”.<sup>2</sup> The Law eventually caught up with the offender and John Towle was fined 12d at the January Sessions 1613.<sup>3</sup>

### **Offences**

In 1621 John Fawkner, victualler, was brought before the Justices for allowing illegal games in his house.<sup>4</sup> Two years later he was back there again when the charge was “Disorder at inn”.<sup>5</sup> He was fined 6d at the following Sessions,<sup>6</sup> and the year afterwards he made a return visit when he was charged with allowing “unlawful company”<sup>7</sup> and was fined 4d at the Sessions in April 1625<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> NQS Vol.3,p93

<sup>2</sup> NQS Vol 3 p.113

<sup>3</sup> NQS,Vol.3 p126.

<sup>4</sup> NQS Vol.6 p.151.

<sup>5</sup> NQS Vol.7 p30

<sup>6</sup> NQS Vol 7.p51

<sup>7</sup> NQS ol.7 p127

<sup>8</sup> NQS Vol.7 p.168

By 1627 George Butler is one of the victuallers in Stapleford (there is evidence that there were at least two in the village but whether Butler succeeded Fawkner or was an additional one is not clear). He was before the Justices at the Quarter Sessions in October of that year charged with unlawful games on his premises,<sup>9</sup> and in January of the following year was fined 12d<sup>10</sup>

In 1719 “the Boares Head” at Stapleford was suppressed by the Justices for being a disorderly alehouse. This is perhaps the earliest mention of an alehouse or inn by specific name.

Although not actually described as victualler or alehouse-keeper etc. John Greasley was fined 6d in 1640 for harbouring vagrants.<sup>11</sup> At the time of the original hearing, 18th July 1629, Gervase Teverey was one of the Justices of the Peace to sit in judgement and this would be the last occasion that that gentleman attended the Quarter Sessions for he died a month later.

### References in the Constables’ Accounts

All sorts of business, legal and otherwise, was transacted at the “local”; Constables’ Accounts were audited and “allowed” as were those of the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor. Meetings were held therein for choosing the officials (of all degrees) for the parish, get up petitions, discussing levies, and no doubt deciding on the management of the three fields. Discussion of parish matters was thirsty work and at such gatherings liquid refreshment was well to the fore, especially as the parish was playing.

From the Constable’s Accounts one deduces that during at least part of the period which they cover there are three alehouses in regular use; none is referred to by any particular sign etc. only by the landlord’s name. Because of this it is not possible to be absolutely certain which of them were really inns, as the many travellers and soldiers at that time were often lodged in barns etc. and private accommodation.

### First alehouse

After George Butler’s death in 1640 this widow, Mary, continued in the trade:

1652		
Oct.	Paid to Mary Buttler for lodging for a wench & her victuals”.	3d

But by 1660 all references to that lady had ceased and, in that year, a new name appears to suggest her successor.

1660

---

<sup>9</sup> NQS Vol.8 p.100

<sup>10</sup> NQS Vol.8. p121

<sup>11</sup> NQS Vol.10 p.201

Nov.	“Spent at “Will Mabbats Wth George Jackson Will. Attenborrow. Henry Oldershaw. Gervase Treese and ye soldiers and others	1s 8d
------	--	-------

An early successor to William Mabbat would seem to be Matthew Langford whose name first appears in 1668 and suggests connections with alehouse keeping. In 1675 he was one of the two alehouse keepers to be granted a licence.

“Mathew Langford de Stabelford vict	£10
George Jackson de eadem gener.’	£5
Willm. Stillington de Trowell Agr’	£5

### Second alehouse

Alongside the Butlers, the second alehouse keeper of the Cromwellian period was Thomas Henfrey.

1650	“paid to Tho. Henfrey for quartering of Cave the soldier two nights and one day	1s 8d
------	---	-------

Sometimes the payments etc. were made to Ann Henfrey (Thomas’s wife, when possibly Thomas was absent) and in 1664 Thomas is referred to as “Old Henfrey” and again as “Thomas Henfrey” in 1670. As he died in 1673 this would account for the fact that his name does not appear along with Matthew Langford’s and Thomas Jackson’s in 16785.

### Third alehouse

The third alehouse was kept by John Jackson.

1652	Aug. 5th Spent at John Jacksons wth Mr. Falkner and Thos. Brasegirdle	1s 0d
------	---	-------

After John’s death in 1669 his widow, Susanna, carried on the business but appears to have handed over to her son, Thomas, about 1675 when he was granted a licence along with the forgoing Matthew Langford.

“Thom. Jackson de Stableford vict’	XXli
George Jackson de eadem gen’	X
Willm. Stillington de Trowell Agr’	X

After Thomas’s death in 1679 his widow, Grace, carried on-at least for a while. The Jackson’s inn was the largest of the three; it has 3 hearths according to the Hearth Tax Return for 1670 whilst that of Thomas Henfrey had 2 and Matthew Langford 1.

### **Warren Arms**

Just where these early inns were situated there is no knowing. The present day ones are not particularly old-as some inns go-and claim to the title of oldest in Stapleford must go to the Warren Arms (at the time of writing these notes displaying an erroneous coat of arms), shown on the Award Map of 1772 but not names. By whom and when it was originally built cannot be determined; when the Hall and its lands etc. came up for sale in the mid-19th century it was clear that it had once been in the possession of the Warren family and at that time was occupied by Elizabeth, widow of Thomas Barton who died in 1855. A unique feature of this inn at the turn of the last century was a clubroom on the south side built around one of the great trees of the park and so having the bole of a tree rising up through its middle and out through the roof.

### **Nags Head and Plough**

The “Nags Head and Plough” was perhaps the next oldest. It was known as the “Plough” in 1789 when its owner is referred to as “Thomas Greasley-Plough”. Thomas Greasley died in 1803 when the property passed to his son John, then to John’s son, Thomas, who died in 1839 and thereafter has had sundry owners. It was rebuilt c.1930.

### **Horse and Jockey**

Next: “The Horse and Jockey” – once known as “Old Careless” – seems to have come into being c1800 and was once upon a time in the occupation of the Attenboroughs, Towles, George Draper, and others. It later found its way into the estate of Thomas Smedley who died in 1862 and whose trustees sold the premises to Charles Bown; thereafter to divers owners until, like all the other inns in Stapleford, it became part of the empire of one of the larger breweries.

### **The Chequers**

“The Chequers”. When this establishment first opened its doors cannot be determined for, like many other properties belonging to the last of the Jacksons, no early deeds or documents were allowed to survive. When sold in 1866 it was purchased by N.Tarr for £720 and included six cottages with their yards gardens, stables etc. and has now become part of Bass-Charringtons properties.

### **The Old Cross**

“The Old Cross”. One would assume that because of its position, this inn would naturally be the oldest in Stapleford. Not so, however for there appears to be no records extant which suggest that an earlier building one stood on the site. The “Old Cross” started out as one of 3 cottages built by Vincent Barton on land originally

purchased by William Barton, his father, from Sir John Borlace Warren in 1803. Vincent was cousin to Thomas of "The Warren Arms". It was soon after 1869 that one of the three cottages became "The Old Cross" and was then in the occupation of a John Rogers. From the latter person it passed into the Shipstone family and later into the company of the same name. It is an unpretentious building but of pleasing appearance; a distinct and delightful feature is the outside steps by which one enters the front door. The "Horse and Jockey" also has this type of approach but lacks the croft which also distinguishes the "Old Cross" inn.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Feathers**

"The Feathers". This tavern "developed" perhaps a little later than the "Cross". Here again there were, originally, 3 cottages, plus a shop, all once part of the Hall estate and put up for sale in 1856. These, together with an additional piece of land, were then purchased by Thomas Oldershaw -- a few years previous he was described as "lace maker and grocer". By the time of Thomas's death in 1874 he is referred to as a "Beerhouse-keeper" and as a Beerhouse-later to be known as the "Burton Ale Stores" -- it continued in the family of Thomas and while still in its possession was re-named "The Feathers Inn" in 1908 and it was not until 1925 that the premises were parted with to the present owners, soon after which transaction the present building was erected.<sup>13</sup>

The other public houses of Stapleford have no pretence to history

During the 18th and 19th centuries there were probably many houses or cottages set aside for the selling of ale and which never quite reached the dizzy heights of being called an Inn, let alone an Hotel, and whose existence lasted for perhaps one generation or maybe two at the most. One such short-lived premises was the "Rose and Crown" beerhouse situated opposite Wesley Place Chapel and once part of the Manor House Estate. It was sold in 1866 to Augustus Wallis for £330 along with two cottages. Fifteen years before, it was run by Joseph Sills.

---

<sup>12</sup> Jas, Shipstone's Records.

<sup>13</sup> Jas. Shipstones Records.