

## **CHAPTER 23 – HOUSE INTERIORS 1709-1741**

### **Information found in inventories**

Houses through the ages, and their interiors, could be a matter for a comprehensive and specialised study not in place in this history. However, I feel that some mention of these subjects should be made and the period for which reasonably adequate information is available extends, roughly, from 1709-1741. This information is mainly to be found in certain inventories accompanying their respective wills and which, when given in detail, enable us to formulate in the mind some idea of the living standards of our ancestors, sufficient to illustrate the varying degrees of affluence-or lack of it-and to describe houses which must be typical of many in Stapleford at that time.

### **Cottage construction**

No examples of these buildings are now available for inspection and therefore in order to get some idea of their construction one must draw upon information regarding domestic architecture from a little further field. Cottages in the periods under construction could have been built, as for many years before, in bays with a timber frame, mud walls and thatched roof, later on perhaps retaining the timber frame and replacing mud with bricks and the thatch with slates. Brick houses there were; the most notable being the Manor House, rebuilt in 1689. Brick-making in Stapleford had been undertaken for many years; George Brown in his will dated 1783 refers to “Old Brick-kiln Close” - an indication of the industry long before that date and which continued well into the 19th century.

### **Use of local stone for foundation layers**

In Stapleford a feature of cottages, houses etc. as well as perimeter walls, was the use of local stone for the foundation layers. It is difficult to place a date on the beginning of the use of this method but buildings which one could safely say were at least mid-18th century was built in this manner. Many have gone but at least two which I can recall were (a) a house that stood on ground which is now part of the garden of No. 40 Frederick Street, and was demolished c 1930, and (b) the cottage in Church Lane, demolished c1971 to make way for a Youth Centre. A remaining illustration of this feature is the perimeter wall of the cottages now used as the Co-op Funeral Parlour on Nottingham Road.

### **Extension of existing houses**

Extending existing old houses and other buildings by the addition of bays must have been quite common. John Greasley, nailer, (d1707) declared that if “his son John come home and settle there he shall have liberty to build a house against his brother Gervas his Barn end to save him charge of an end wall”. Henry Hooley (d.1711) ordained “that there shall be a place at the west end of the house for a bay of building with a garden and all other necessary privileges .....for my daughter Mary, provided she keep herself unmarried; and if my said son Robert should come over unmarried, that the bay of building may be divided that if he have occasion he may have a conveniency for a place to work in at his trade”.

### **Basic rectangular outline**

Before, and to some extent. during the period under consideration house and cottages were usually built on restricted sites within the village but there were at least two exceptions, the Manor House and Atkin’s farm on March Lane. The basic plan for most houses was rectangular, with two ground floor rooms only – the “house and parlour” type. Additions, such as kitchen, dairy or brewhouse, could be made according to the lie of the house i.e. it either faced the street or lay at right-angles to it; in the case of the former the addition involved building at right angles to the back of the original house, usually on to the “hall” or “house” end, so converting a rectangular house into an “L”-shaped one; in the other instance, where the “parlour” end of the house probably lay nearest to the street, with the “house” beyond, a kitchen could be added by building on to the house, backwards along the croft, and any other domestic offices then added in the same way.

The houses to be considered are mainly those which come within the foregoing description, but as there are, inevitably, variations I am placing them into four categories.

### **Four categories**

Category One comprises three dwellings which do not conform to the basic outline.

In Category Two are those with two rooms down and two up, and whilst the upper chambers could have been achieved by boarding over the hall and parlour and n partitioning the result, it is probable that this type was a completely new construction.

Category Three embraces a similar arrangement with the two ground floor rooms but with only one upper chamber, created at some time by flooring over one of the lower rooms, usually the parlour as it was the furthest away from an outside door, thus still leaving the “house” open to the thatch. On the other hand, of course, both lower rooms could have been floored over and not partitioned, thus making one

large upper chamber. Such cottages suggest a development from the two upper room type rather than a completely new building.

In the Fourth Category are those dwellings with only the two ground floor rooms and which, for some reason, no attempt had been made to floor over.

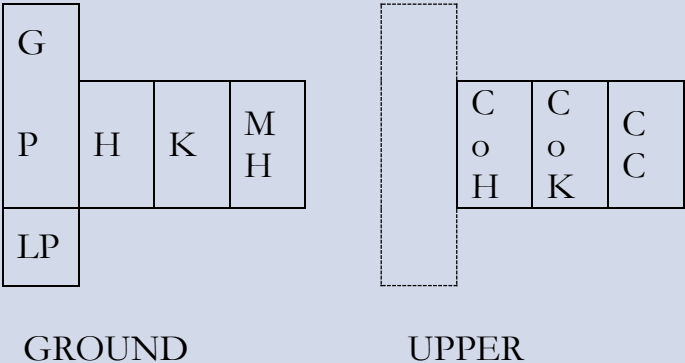
The following is a list of the twelve inhabitants whose inventories will be considered in more detail; the names provide a fair cross-section of the community.

	Name and Occupation	Date of Inventory	Description of Property
1.	Moses Atkin. Yeoman	28 <sup>th</sup> July 1709	Great Parlour, The House, Little Parlour, Chamber over the House, Chamber over the Kitchen, Kitchen, Plus Cheese chamber, Milk House and the Barns
2	Gervas Greasley Nailer	25 <sup>th</sup> February 1711	The House, Parlour, Chamber over the Parlour, Chamber over the House, Plus Shop, Dairy and Barn.
3.	Henry Hooley Yeoman	22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 1712	House, Parlour, Chamber over the House, the other Chamber, Plus Brewhouse.
4	John Oldershaw Yeoman	30 <sup>th</sup> May 1716	House, Parlour, Chamber. Plus Dairy.
5	Israel Jackson Yeoman	15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1724	House, Kitchen, Parlour, Best Chamber, Next Chamber, the other Chamber.plus Cellar and Dairy (no Barns?)
6	John Greasley Yeoman	31 <sup>st</sup> May 1728	House, Parlour, Chamber.
7.	George Stokes Framework knitter	12 <sup>th</sup> July 1734	House, Parlour and Workshop, Upper Chamber, Plus Dairy and Pantry
8.	William Attenborrow Husbandman	5 <sup>th</sup> May 1737	Parlour next the 'stairs', Parlour next the Street, House, Parlour Chamber, Chamber over the House, Chamber over the Entry, Plus Kitchen, Cellar and Stables
9	Henry Hooley farmer	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 1737	House, Parlour, Chamber over the House, Chamber over the Parlour plus Brewhouse.
10.	Gervas Greasley Yeoman	6 <sup>th</sup> June 1738	House, Parlour
11.	John Towle Tailor	7 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1741	Kitchen, Parlour, Chamber over the Kitchen, Chamber over the Parlour, Plus Back Kitchen or Brewhouse.
12.	Richard Ingleton Husbandman	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 1764	House, Parlour.

Ignoring such appendages as Brewhouses, Dairies and Kitchens where they are not obviously part of the main dwelling, there are two houses which fall into Category Four (Nos. 10 and 12), three which come into Category Three (Nos.4,6 and 7), four within Category Two (Nos. 2,3,9 and 11, although No.9 is probably the same house as No.3; Henry Hooley d.1737 was the son of Henry Hooley (d.1712); and in Category One there are three houses of a larger type (Nos. 1,5 and 8) which do not conform to the basic pattern; these are the dwellings of Moses Atkins, Israel Jackson and William Attenborrow and are the first to be commented upon.

**Category One houses**

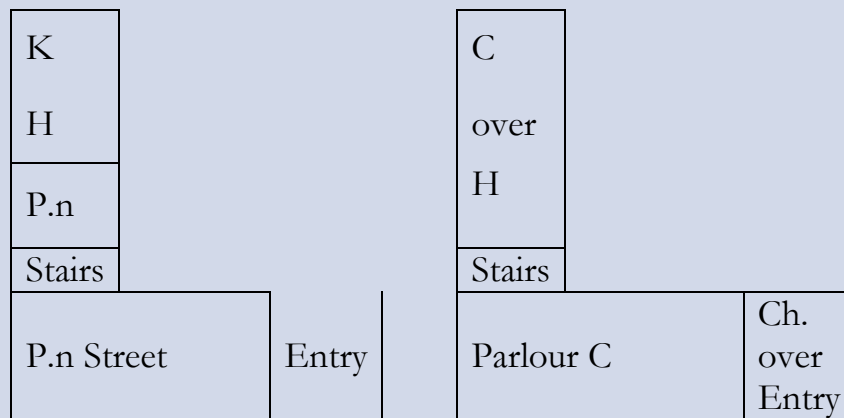
In the house of Moses Atkin (No.1) we see that no rooms are mentioned lying above the Great Parlour or Little Parlour and it is therefore possible that these were open to the roof. the “Cheesechamber” suggest an upper-room – possibly over the “Milkhouse” although it could be over the Little Parlour, in which case the Milkhouse was probably a lean-to. I suggest a plan something like this: -



Israel Jackson’s (No.5) was the “Manor” House – so we presume-but the inventory does not coincide with the layout of the building as we knew it, even allowing for the “wing” in lean-to form at the rear, which would be added sometime after Israel’s death, and the four attic. The inventory gives a total of six rooms only whereas there were actually eight in the main structure (4 down, 4 up) before the creation pf a bathroom; twelve if the attics are included.

William Attenborrow’s house (No.8) was that of another prosperous farmer. It is not clear whether or not the property was his own, but is unique in so far as this is the only inventory which mentions any stairs. (The usual method of reaching the upper chamber of a house or cottage was by means of a ladder, movable or fixed, in the house placed against the edge of the boarded upper floor. Perhaps this implies a

completely new house rather than an improved older one. Perhaps the plan of William’s house was something like this:-



The “chamber over the house” also going over the “parlour next the stairs”.

### inventory of Moses Atkin’s house

To arrive at some idea of the material comforts of these three houses let us take a closer look at the relevant inventories. Heading the list is Moses Atkin whose inventory shows the comfort and well-being of a substantial yeoman of Stapleford. Out of personal estate (which included cattle, crops, implements of husbandry) to a total value of £174:5:0, his household articles plus “purse and apparel” amounted to £24:5:0, only a small part of the total sum. In the Great Parlour stood a bedstead with a set of red curtains and valance, a feather bed, “bowlster” and 2 pillows: 3 “blankets”, a coverlid, chest, oval table and carpet (for the table, not the floor), 9 chairs and 2 stools. In the Little Parlour were a bedstead with curtains and valance, a feather bed, “bowlster” and pillows, 3 blankets, a coverlid, chest, coffer, and a trunk. The chamber over the house contained 2 bedsteads with 2 sets of curtains and valance, 2 flock beds, 6 blankets, a coverlid, coloured blanket, flock bolster, feather bolster, 2 feather pillows, a press and a chest. In the chamber over the kitchen were a bedstead with curtains, a trundle bed, two flock beds, 2 flock bolsters, 2 pillows, 8 blankets, a table, coffer and a little table. In the “house” stood 2 tables, 2 forms, a “dresser with drawers in it”, 7 chairs, a stool, 6 cushions, a land iron, a pair of frogs, a fire shovel and tongs, an iron dripping pan, a “chafindish”, a pair of pot-hooks and 2 hangers, a pair of bellows, a lanthorne, 5 wooded kitts (small tubs) and 3 gawns. There was very little in the remaining rooms. In the Kitchen, a great dropper, a kneading tub, 5 tubs, a churn, 6 barrels and a cheese press. In the Milk House, 6 cheese “fatts” (vats), 2 dozen “trenches” with some “panchons” and shelves; and in the Cheese chamber were 2 tables, a form, a great wheel, 3 little wheels (one is never sure whether or not “wheels” refers to spinning wheels-most probably- or simple “wheels” – spare ones.) a powdering tub, a parcel of wool and some cheeses. There was a great deal of pewter and brass (invariably valued as a separate item) including a chamber pot and a warming pan, all to the value of £5:10:0, the same figure put on

the contents of the Great Parlour. Quite some measure of comfort and no sign of any peas, barley, implements of husbandry cluttering up the parlours and chambers, a tendency still prevalent.

### **Inventory of William Attenborough's house**

Inferior to Moses in some ways but superior to others was William Attenborough, a very well-off husbandman the total value of whose inventory was £329:9:6 whereof £88:6:6 was owed to him and approximately only £28:0:0 was the value of the household goods. Compared with the house of Moses, William's was an untidy one; old habits die hard and mediaeval usage shows itself here: 12 bottles of sorts and a well-drag amongst the furnishings of the Parlour next the 'Stairs'; 3 scythes a maund (a wicker basket) and a whip in the Parlour next the Street; the Parlour Chamber was nothing but a store room and the Chamber over the House, although accommodating a bed and a chest, was the repository for 2 strikes of peas, 4 strikes of barley, 9 bags, 2 forms, 7 cheese vats and some cheese boards. The Chamber over the entry contained 2 beds etc. but also housed a saddle, a hand basket, a wagon chains, 2 wagon ropes and a mustard ball. Despite the lack of any sense of orderliness or tidiness William's house contained one or two luxuries and sophistications which were lacking in Moses'; a looking glass, a clock, a silver cup, and a gold ring and a locket.

### **Inventory of Israel's Jackson's house-the Manor House**

The interior of the house we knew as the Manor House-with all its connotations of substantiability- is surprisingly disappointing in the light of Israel Jackson's inventory: the Appraisers saw fit to give only the value of the contents of some rooms thus denying us a complete picture of its furnishings. Of the £98:14:9 value of his personal possessions £23:12:6 represented the contents of the dwelling. The "brass and other things" in the Kitchen were valued at £3:0:0. In the Parlour were 2 tables, a bed, chest and 4 chairs. The value only (£5:10:0) is given for the contents of the Best Chamber. In the "Next Chamber" were a bed with a form and "odd things" (£2:0:0). and "some goods" in the Other Chamber (£3:2:6). The "house" contained "some chairs". a table, fire-irons, dresser, clock, and "pewter on the shelves". Even allowing for the lack of detail, one is left with the impression of a rather ordinary household, inferior in many ways to others in the village. One items in the inventory which raised a smile is "Ducks, Hens, and a Gun – 10s 0d "- shades of "There was a little man who had a little gun". Israel, like some of his contemporaries was not averse to using his chambers as store places.

### **Category Two houses**

Next, a look at Category Two and the four which are to be considered are those of Gervas Greasley (No.2), Henry Hooley, father (No.3), Henry Hooley, son (No.9) and John Towle (No.11).

### **Inventory of Gervas Greasley's house**

Gervas Greasley was a nailer by trade, (as his father before him). but also carried on a certain amount of husbandry. His is not an outstanding inventory and there is nothing that would not be found in any other ordinary household. In the "house" were the usual fire-irons, 4 Chairs, a table 2 "buffitts", 4 brass pans, 3 pewter dishes, a plate, a porringer and an iron put. The contents of the parlour consisted of a cupboard, 3 coffers, a press, a box of drawers, a bed with all the furnishings, and some linen. In the chamber over the parlour – used as another bedroom – were 2 beds with the bedding, and a chest. The chamber over the "house" was purely a storeroom and contained such items as corn, cheese, bacon, feathers, the usual "lumber", bags and a window sheet; this last item suggests that not all the windows in Gervas's house were glazed. (A similar item appears in the inventory of John Hooley 1757) In the 'shop' were the tools of his trade and in the dairy, as well as "all thereto belonging-whatever is intended by that phrase – a fall table, bassock, and shelf. The barn houses 2 spades and a fork, 2 stone "trows", four wheels and some coal. No plough, no harrow, nothing in fact to help prepare his land or reap his small crops; such implements he would borrow, for some consideration, from a neighbour.

### **Inventory of the Hooleys' house**

The inventories of the two Hooleys are very similar and one opines that the house is one and the same and that they Henry the younger – bachelor – lived in the house of his father after the latter's decease. In Henry the elder's "house" stood a table, 3 chairs, fire-irons with other irons, 4 pewter dishes with other pewter, 2 brass pots, 1 copper with other brass and 4 wheels with woollen yarn. In the parlour were only 2 tables and a chair. Both upper rooms were bedrooms; in the chamber over the "house" were 2 bedsteads, a chest and a box, whilst in the other chamber – the one over the parlour – were 2 more bedsteads, this time with the bedding and some lumber. The home in young Henry's day contained much the same things but with a few additions: a clock, a dresser and a long settle in the "house"; the parlour was now a bedroom and contained, amongst other things, a feather bed "with appurtenances". The value of Henry the father's goods was £4:8:0 – Henry junior's, £27:3:0 of which some £15 were owing to him as well as having £5 worth "purse and apparel" as against the 5 shillings of his father. A house of bare essentials for both generations although of Henry the younger it could be said that he had improved his lot somewhat especially in the field of husbandry.

### **Inventory of John Towle's house**

The fourth, and most interesting inventory in the group is that of John Towle. No items of husbandry here; no crops; no cattle etc. John was a tailor by trade (like his father before him) although his employment would seem to have been mainly, possible solely, with Borlase Warren, and his economy was evidently such that it

depended on him as a wage earner although, unlike the others in this category, he owned a second house which was let at rent. Here is a higher standard of comfort, due no doubt to a firmer and more regular income (the impression one gets is of Borlace Warren as a good master), although association with the Warrens could account for some of the refinements. There are several items in this inventory not encountered before, (this does not mean to say that there are others in Stapleford not on a par with John, but his is the inventory which brings out these points, also, his family was a young one. John, the eldest son, was 7 ½ when his father died, Samuel 2 ½ and little Thomas 9 months – hence the cradle. In the kitchen (herein the “house” is so called) were a dresser with drawers, 2 tables, 6 chairs, a child’s chair, a cradle, a wooden mortar with iron pestle, a clock, a small looking glass, 9 pewter dishes, 1 pewter salver, 6 plates, 5 porringers, 12 spoons, a warming pan, hearth-grate with shovel and tongs, potrack and hanger, toasting fork, basting ladle, iron candlestick, tin kettle, small brass kettle, saucepan, two smoothing irons, a salt box and some earthenware. In the parlour, (which was still used as a best bedroom), a bedstead with printer linen curtains and valance, a feather bed, bolster and 2 pillows, 2 blankets, a quilt, a chest of drawers, small looking glass, little box, 2 tables, 6 chairs, a pair of tongs and a fender, (here is evidence of a two-hearth house as opposed to the one hearth of the others in this group), 7 prints in frames and some glasses and earthenware. In the chamber over the parlour, a bedstead, feather bed and bolster, a blanket and a coverlid, an old chest, 3 boxes, 2 stools and an old twiggen chair. In the chamber over the kitchen, a bedstead, one flock bed, a blanket and a coverlid, two wheels, a kneading tub, a chopping block, a pair of fine sheets, 2 pairs of ordinary sheets, two pillow “beers” and an iron to keep children from the fire. The back kitchen, or brewhouse (a lean-to) housed an iron pot set in brick, a brass kettle, part of an old cupboard and an old spade- seems as though John was no gardener. Total value of the effects, £44:0, £30 of which was money out upon Bond to his sister Hannah.

### **Category Three houses**

In Category Three are the houses of John Oldershaw (No.4), John Greasley (No.6) and George Stokes (No.7).

#### **Inventory of John Oldershaw’s house**

The inventory of John Oldershaw reveals a comfortable dwelling and a more substantial husbandry than that of the two Hooleys and the Greasley in Category Two. The “house” contained 3 tables, a form, 7 chairs, stool, cupboard, 8 pewter dishes, an old dish, 2 plates, posset pot, chamber pot, tankard, flagon, candlestick, salt-cellar, a dozen spoons, a tin pan, pewter cups, a dozen and a half of trenchers, 3 brass pans, skillet, 2 pots, warming pan, brass ladle, skimmer, fire irons, shovel and tongs. In the parlour-the best bedroom-one bedstead with curtains and valance, feather bed, bolster, and two pillows;2 blankets, 2 chairs, chest, 2 trunks, 2 boxes, 7



sheets, 8 napkins and other linen. The chamber contained two bedsteads, 2 flock beds, 3 blankets, a rug, 2 bolsters, coffer, brand-iron, bacon, cheese and corn. In the lean-to dairy were 2 barrels, a loom, pansions, kitts, bowls etc.. He was better equipped for husbandry than some of his neighbours for in the yard were a cart, “plow”, harrow, ladder, iron gears, “and other implements of husbandry”. Like John Towle, John Oldershaw owned a “cottage-house” let at rent, decidedly a contributing factor to a better standard.

### **Inventory of John Greasley’s house**

The other two examples in this group indicate a much lower standard. John Greasley, although described as a yeoman ( a loose term really at that point in time), had household goods (unfortunately grouped room by room) to a total value of only £2:9:2. plus purse and apparel of £2:2:6 which, when added to the value of his stock, cart, plough, cord etc. made a total of “12:8:0. This seems a surprisingly low amount when one realises the fact that John owned two additional houses with their crofts, as well as land in the three fields.

### **Inventory of George Stokes’ house**

George Stokes lived in a similar house and his inventory does, to some extent, itemise the contents, the value of which exceeds that of John Greasley. In the house were the usual fire-irons, a clock (it’s amazing how many households possessed one), pewter, a table and other lumber. In the parlour, which was also a workshop for George was a framework knitter, stood two frames, a flock bed, and the inevitable “lumber” (a convenient phrase for half-hearted appraisors.) In the dairy, or pantry, a leaven tub. Amongst the “lumber” would be the “dozen of napkins and a table cloth” which George bequeathed to his daughter Elizabeth. Purse and apparel amounted to £2:0:0 which was also the value put upon his only livestock, a cow. Sum total, £14:12:0.

## **Category Four houses**

### **Inventory of Gervas Gresley’s house**

In Category Four is the cottage of Gervase Gresley (No.10) who describes himself as yeoman, possible because he owned his own house with its accompanying land although the inventory shows that he was also a framework knitter. The “frame” was his most valuable piece of personal property-£5- and stood in the “house” along with a dresser, 7 pewter dishes, a warming pan 2 tables, 5 chairs, a pot and a pen, fire-irons, and other “lumber”. In the other room, not referred to by any particular name but identified as the parlour by its contents, was the bed stead with “bedding of all sorts”, a chest, coffer, 2 boxes and lumber. Like George Stokes Gervas’s purse and apparel was entered at £2:0:0 which, with an only cow to the same value, meant that, excepting the value of the stocking frame, his household goods amounted to

£3:6:6. It is interesting to note that Gervas's widow (there were no children of the marriage) Deborah (Attenborrow) married again, taking as her husband one of the John Jacksons (a FWK) of the village and when she died in 1803 at the age of 90 was remarkably well off. Her keen attention to detail was on a par with that of Lady Warren, and her will is a masterpiece for the genealogist.

### **Inventory of Richard Ingleton's house**

Included in this category is the cottage of Richard Ingleton (No.12), husbandmen. Although falling a few years outside the period under consideration it is a further example of the two-roomed cottage. In his "house" were the "fire-irons in the chimney nook", a table, 4 chairs, 3 pans, 2 shelves and a "Tobe"(?). The parlour contained the bed with its bedding, a chest, table, 3 chairs and 2 boxes. Richard's household effects came to a value of £5:13:0, a higher figure than that which would have been taken some 25 years earlier. A cow worth £3 and a horse at £2:10:0 completed his personal estate. He probably worked solely for another, owned no land, raised no crops, and lived in a cottage which was rented.

### **Cost of building a house**

The cost of building a house or cottage in Stapleford during the years under review is open to speculation, and it is not until some eighty years or so later that I have found a specific mention as to the cost of such an undertaking. According to Lady Warren's Accounts for the year 1827 £33:17:0 was the sum involved to build "a new house in Mould's orchard".

Very, very few really old dwellings have been allowed to survive in Stapleford. Such that remain and are still used for the purpose originally intended i.e. homes, include the row of framework knitters cottages on the south side of Nottingham Road facing West Avenue which, according to Pevsner, date from around 1826: the cottage (a shop) at the end of Hickings Lane overlooking the Hemlock Stone; one near to the Old Mill (until a few years ago, Lazenby's shop); "Godber's Cottage", No. 54 Nottingham Road (c1836) (between what was Top Hat Chapel and Vernon's Paint and Wallpaper Shop (another example of an older house); this latter once owned by the Towles and at one time a Berlin wool shop run by Millicent and Sarah Towle, sisters to Thomas, to whom reference has already been made); and the cottage to the east of Sail Bros. shop on the south side of Nottingham Road. Oh, Stapleford what you have lost!

R. Penniston Taylor

17th April 1975

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