

CHAPTER 12 - THE VILLAGE CONSTABLE

Duties of office

Every parish or township had its constable, the holder of an office of very ancient origin dating from the 13th century at which time it was manorial but as the years went by and things changed the constable became answerable to the Justices of the Peace and to the Chief or High Constable of the Hundred. He was the for-runner of our own present day P.C. on the beat (or in a Panda car) and like him, his main responsibility was the maintenance of law and order; but, unlike his present day counterpart, he was also called upon to co-operate with the church-wardens, the Overseers of the poor, the Bailiff or any other official of the Hundred or Shire and, particularly during the Commonwealth period, was answerable to many others for dues and demands made upon the parish from the higher echelons of power; he had an unenviable job and was the servant of many masters. He was also required to keep an account of his income and expenditure and this factor, due to the preservation of such accounts for Stapleford for the years 1650-1685, provides us with so much interesting details of daily happenings in the parish during that eventful period of history.

Earliest known constable

Of the early constables we know nothing at all; the first one of which I have found mention is William Aubreysone who went to Nottingham with Thomas de Birton and Richard Balle on 1st May 1378 to pay to John del Ker the Poll Tax of 27 shillings for the 81 lay men and women in Stapleford. E 170/159/27. His duties would be, in principle, much the same as his successors' allowing for the fact that parliaments then, as now, gradually were making life more complicated.

Appointment of constable

How a man came to fill the office of Constable in Stapleford is not apparent. In some places he was nominated by the Leet (for Stapleford this would be the Court of the Honour of Peverel), or by the freeholders. In some townships a definite order was kept, the office being filled in turn from house to house or held in connexion with the occupation of some particular dwelling or farm, or could even have been an hereditary charge on a certain family. To consult the list of constables who held office during the period 1650-856 shows no pattern whatsoever.

It was not "any Tom, Dick or Harry" who could hold this office. The Articles of the Petty Constable of Houghton Conquest in 1616 called upon him "to sertiffye if any

be admitted to the offuese off a petie Constable Excepte shal bee Subsicimen (those in the income bracket to pay subsidies) and off Good understanding". The person chosen was compelled to serve or else find a suitable deputy, and it certainly wasn't everyone's "cup of tea" as witness our old friend – "John Broadbent, though appointed Constable did not appear at the Sessions to take the oath, he is therefore ordered to serve in the office till the next sessions and then to be at liberty to serve the office by deputy during the period of office".¹ Of course, it may have happened that, due to the prevailing custom, the office fell to the lot of a woman, in which case she would most certainly have found a deputy; there is nothing to suggest that this dilemma ever affected Stapleford.

The constable's duties

The constable's duties were strenuous and a man of vigour was essential. His term of office may have varied from parish to parish but here in Stapleford his term ran from early January to the following new year. His appointment was made during the month of December and the retiring constable accompanied the incoming one to the Christmas Quarter Sessions (early January) to have him sworn in.

Christmas Sessions		
1653/4 (early January)		
My (Robert Wilde) Charges and Francis		
Hughson	2s 0d	
paid to Mr Hackitt for Francis Hughson oath	1s 0d	

Upon relinquishing office, the old constable handed over the accounts, with any surplus cash, to the new constable. This took place at one of the "locals" in company with "the neighbours" who regaled themselves on liquid refreshment at the town's charge"

1658/9		
Jan 18	"Spent when John Greasley delivered up	
	his accounts"	1s 6d

Accounts date from 1650

The Accounts from which the following examples are taken are in the custody of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire and open in 1650 soon after the beginning of the Cromwellian period. They are full of varied details appertaining to life during that time but as they progress, especially after the Restoration, and things became more normal, the information given is of a more repetitive nature and nowhere nearly so colourful.

¹ NQS Vol.3 P.127

Writing up the accounts

Of course, it was necessary for the Accounts to be written up in a suitable book and this cost the town 2s.0d, Francis Hughson and Thomas Brasgirdle each received payments in 1650 for writing letters and warrants, but not until 1652 is there any mention of payment for writing up the accounts. Thomas Henfrey, the constable for that year, paid to Francis Hughson for “writing these accounts and copyinge all ye warrants for this year 1652 5s.0d.” This sum of money then becomes the standard payment for this task, whether done by the constable himself, in which case he paid himself, or whether by another.

Taxation

Under the Commonwealth the method of taxation had changed drastically. The King had financed the country out of the revenues from the Crown lands etc. and the various subsidies granted from time to time by parliament; in this way the poorer classes, except on certain occasions, escaped much direct taxation. This method “went by the board” under the Roundheads who introduced an Assessment, paid quarterly, ostensibly for the support of the Army and Navy. This was fixed at a certain rate and each unit was then allotted its quota. How that quota was raised was left to the village itself and the constable had the responsibility for collecting and handing it over to the High Constable or Treasurer. More people had now become taxpayers.

1651	“My charges for gathering up ye Assesment”	1s 0d
1653	“paid to Mr Hanford the first 3 months of the six monthes assessment for ye armys from the 25th December last.”	£13 19s0d
	“paid to Mr Hanford the first 3 months of the six monthes assessment for ye armys from the 25th December last.”	2s 0d
	“Aquittance”	4d

In May of the same year Mr. Hanford, for some unknown reason, came to Stapleford and collected the Assessment himself; a most unusual procedure.

1653		
May 1st	“Spent yt day that Mr Handford came for the Assesment”	3s 0d
	“Item for horse-meat & mans meat at ye constables house”	6d

However, all was still not well. On December 12th following this visit the constable paid the last quarter’s assessment but was 10s 8d short. This was paid later in the month when Mr Hanford sent soldiers for it - or rather, for the constable:

“paid to and spent upon the soldiers that came for it”	5s 2d
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My Charges going to pay it

1s 0d

(Expensive time for the village!)

No one likes paying taxes and Staplefordians of yester year were no different. Francis Hughson, the constable for the ensuing year 1654, experienced difficulties in levying the Assessment by the due date.

1654

April 17th "Spent with Mr. Hanford by Gervase
Treese Tho. Henfry & my selfe at
Papplewick intreating him to spare us a
weeke for ye Assesment

4d

Mr Hanford was evidently in a lenient frame of mind for the requested period of grace was granted.

At times a villager would be particularly obstinate in withholding his tax and it became necessary for the constable to resort to stern measures and obtain an order from a local JP before he was able to collect.

1651 "For an order for Tho: Burton to pay his
Assesment

1s 0d

To meet the National demand, as well as his other commitments, the constable, in consultation with his "neighbours", would work out a monthly assessment of his own. This was merely a unit of accounting and in no way did it follow that there would be 12 such levies in a year-far from it. It was a convenient method of raising the necessary monies to meet his expenses etc. as they came along. For instance, in 1650 (a particularly expensive year) twenty one "monthly assessments" were levied; in 1651-twenty; 1652-fourteen plus two weeks; 1653-seventeen, and so on.

During the term of office of Gervase Treece his "monthly assessment" on the parish was fixed at £3:13:7 or £11:0:9 for three months, and it is fortunate that he saw fit to list the names of the persons on whom the levy fell and the amounts each had been apportioned to pay. Although levies varied yearly none of the later constables has left such a record.

Gervas Treece Constable:1650

For the first three mnths Assessment for the Armie
after 90,000 li p mensam

Imprimis
Mrs Tevery
Mr Fawkner

li	s	d
£3	0s	0d
		18s0d

Rodger Wilkinson	16s 0d
Henry Wild	16s 0d
George Jackson	16s 0d
John Treece	14s 0d
William Attenborrow	9s 0d
Henry Cant	9s 0d
Gervas Attenborrow	8s 0d
Thomas Henfrey	8s 0d
Robert Wild	2s 0d
Gervase Meire	2s 0d
Thomas Burton	7s 0d
John Greasley Junior	1s 0d
Valentine Jackson	2s 0d
John Addams	4s 0d
Robert Smeadley	4s 0d
Francis Hughson	2s 0d
John Cockin	9s 0d
Mr Charleton	4s 0d
Miles Farrand	2s 0d
William Garner	9d
John Hallam	6d
Richard Willows	6d
Henry Toule	6d
William Biddles	3d
Thomas Smyth	3d
Richard Rodgers	6d
Edward Lacy	3d
John Rivit	9d
Marie Butler	1s 0d
George Mugge	6d
William Lockan	6d
George Willson	6d
William Rabye	6d
Robert Barton	6d
Summ? totall	£11 0s 9d

Just how these figures were arrived at I do not know. At first it would appear that it was a charge on land alone:

1653	Received of Sentley Pinckney (of Trowell) and Robert Higham this whole yeaeres Assessment for a pcell of ground neere moore bridge Called ye hoilme	2s 0d
	"Received of Widdow Cockinge the residue of the foure last months Assessment	10s 8d

In the accounts proper this is referred to as ;

"the three last months Assessment: behinde for 4 oxgangs of land 10s.0d.

This is, therefore, 2s 8d per oxgang for 4 months, i.e. 8d per oxgang for a month.

In 1655 a levy was made “for the townes use, by lands and goods after ye rate of a penny an oxgang of land, a penny a horse, a penny a beast and fourpence a score of sheep”.

By 1662 the method had changed again and levies raised as much in the pound.

The Excise

Another form of taxation, which had first been introduced in 1642, was the Excise; a system whereby duties were imposed on articles made in the country for sale and which included ale, cider, soap, cloth, flesh, salt and many other items. As the collection of such moneys for the excise would naturally fall on parish shoulders, particularly the constable's, Stapleford (and probably other parishes too) evolved a scheme whereby the affected parties paid a fixed sum quarterly; the following is a list of the contributors for the year 1650.

“A Coppie of the Excise and how it is paid quarterly”

	l	s	d
Imprimis			
Mr Fawkener		1s	6d
Henry Wild		1s	4d
George Jackson		1s	4d
Rodger Wilkinson		1s	3d
John Treese		1s	1d
William Attenborrow			9d
Gervas Attenborrow			9d
Henry Cant			9d
Robart Wild			6d
Gervas Meyre			4d
John Greasley Junior			6d
John Greasley Senior			3d
Robart Smeadley			6d
John Addams			6d
Fra: Hughson			3d
William Garner			3d
John Rivit			3d
George Mugge			3d
Widdow Locckoe			2d
Valentine Jackson			3d
Miles Farrand			3d
			<u>13s0d</u>

How long this arrangement continued we do not know. It will be noticed, however, that all those who contributed to the Assessment did not necessarily do so towards this fixed Excise. The names of three inn and ale-house keepers, John Jackson, Thomas Henfrey and Mary Butler are also absent from this list; by the very nature of their business the duty on their victuals was accounted for separately;

1650	"my charges for going two daies to you Excise	1s 0d
1651	"my charges for gathering he Excise	1s 0d
1659	Sept 23rd "for my Charges at Nott'ham in putting in a bill to Mr.Hanford of what ye Alemen payd quarterly to the Excise to be sent to ye parliament	1s 4d

And there were those who sought to avoid paying the Excise:

1668	"Spent with the excise man when he came to streaned (distrain) at John Jacksons and searcht at Boardmans for ale	4d
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Evidently Boardman's evasion was serious for later on:

"spent when I saured (served) the warrant on Boardman	2d
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And later still, the law taking its course:

for my charges for going before a Justice with William Bordman	1s 0d
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Fasting in Lent

Closely linked with the Excise was the enforcement of a measure introduced in Tudor times—that of fasting in Lent. This had not come about through any religious zeal but rather as a practical way of encouraging more people to eat fish and so help keep a reasonable fishing fleet at sea; in this way an easy transition could be effected, if necessary, from fisherman to sailor. The Puritans had supported this measure but it is not until after the Restoration that there is mention of these restrictions still being imposed.

1603		
Mar 3	My charges at Nottingham and my bill with the Brewsters to be bound from Eating of flesh during Lent	1s 4d

The Militia

Another part of Cromwellian life which occupied the constable's time and took the villagers' money was the Militia. It was customary for the constable to be directed by warrant to find the required number of men from the parish to serve and attend the

musters. He also had to equip them with arms and horses, all of which was paid for out of a rate levied for the purpose!

In 1650 two such levies were imposed; the first was “one month’s pay raised for the Militia - £3:13:7; and paid to Mr Edmund Richards ye 11th July” (£3:9:2). The second was purely parochial but much more severe: “ foure Months’ pay for ye raysing of the horse & Rider with furniture for ye Militia whereof Mrs Teverey paid not anything - £10:14:6. (Her contribution would have been £4). This was to defray the cost of many items:

“for going to Nottingham about the towne business & the rest of the Neighbours	6s 0d
“paid for a sword	9s 0d
“paid for a saddle & a bridle and all things belonging to them	12s6d
“A fire locke peece	10s0d
“A belt	2s 0d

The accounts speak of “a horse and rider”; was this all Stapleford was called upon to provide? A later entry, however, suggests that there were more:

“Spent upon the soldiers when they went to ye first muster	1s 10d
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For some inexplicable reason the horse was kept at Wollaton and Valentine Toule’s involvement with it suggests that he was the “rider”,

1650	“Paid to Vallentine Toule for fetchinge the horse to go to yo muster	4d
	“Item for shewing him	1s 0d
	“Item for shewing him at Nott’ at the muster It’. For two nights hay	2s 0d
	“Paid to Vall’ toule for going to Wollerton again with the horse	6d
	for going to Wollerton & paying for the horse grasse	2d
		6s 6d

And then the poor thing died and they skinned it!

“paid to George Willson for taking ye skinne from off the horse back at Wollerton	1s 0d
“for carrying the horse hide to Nottingham and selling it	1s 0d
“Received for ye horse hide	4s 6d

It appears that the original levy for the horse and rider for this year was deemed excessive and more than enough to cover the costs. Some of the money was “Returned back to Mrs. Teverey tenants ordered by the Justices two partes of the foure months assessment concerninge ye raising of the horse”

Imprimus	
Rodger Wilkinson	14s 2d
William Attenborrow	8s 0d
Henry Cant	8s 0d
Gervase Attenborrow	7s 1d
John Treece	10s 8d
Thomas Henfrey	7s 1d
Robert Wild	1s 9d
John Hallam	5d
William Garner	8d
Robert Barton	5d
Edward Lacy	2d
	£2 8s 5d

The following year (1651) a “dragoon mare” was bought of Robert Wild for £4 and off they went again. Another levy was made but this time a much more modest one:

1651

"My charges George Jackson & Henry Wild when wee went to Nott' about horse and man	3s 0d
Aug 14th "Spent when the Assessment were made concerninge the horse and rider	4s 6d
Aug 14th "A leavye for the towards the rysinge of the horse Rider & furniture	£5 16s 0d

After the Restoration a new Militia was formed and a general feature of this was a yearly levy towards its maintenance, payable to the chief constable.

1660

June 16 "Paid then to Mr. Handford for the first moyetie of an assessment for ye militia beinge towards ye buyinge of Drummes couloers and other Emergencies	13s 7d
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This continued to be paid once a year for many years; sometimes it was called “the weeks pay” sometimes “the months pay” and varied but slightly in amount

1661

Easter "Paid for two belts for ye soldiers	6s 6d
Paid to the trayne souldiers for two days at Nottingham	6s 0d
"My charges there two days	2s 0d
"paid for match & powder those two daies at Nottingham	1s 8d

As a soldier's rate of pay was 1 shilling a day, this entry suggests that Stapleford provided three men for this new militia, with the constable in attendance.

The year 1651 saw Stapleford infested with Cromwell's soldiers; whatever the reason for their presence it cost the town a pretty penny!

1651			
April 3rd	"Spent upon ye soldiers that belonged to Captaine Jan	2s 0d	
	"Spent when wee tooke a byll of ye souldiers	8d	
	"Spent with the Captaine at Derbie	4d	
	"Spent when Captaine Jan was at towne with us for the souldiers	1s 0d	
	"Paid to George Jackson for quarteringe souldiers	7s 4d	
	"Paid to John Treece for quarteringe	10s0d	
	"Miles Farrand pro consimile	8d	
	John Addams p consimile	4s 8d	
	"Robert Smeadly idem	5s 4d	
	"Robert Wilkinson idem	10s0d	
	"Henry Wild idem	11s4d	
	"Mr Fawkner idem	10s0d	
	"Gervas Attenborrow idem	3s 4d	
	Henry Cant p consimile	6s 8d	
	"Tho: Henfrey p consimile	£1 2s 8d	
	"to Joh: Jackson idem	12s0d	
	"Robert Wild p consimile	2s 8d	
	"William Attenborrow idem	5s 4d	
	"paid to Mary Butler p consimile	4d	
	"paid to Jo. Jackson for quarteringe a soldier	1s 0d	
	"Spent with Captaine Richards & Lieutenant	1s 6d	
May 31st	"Spent when wee quartered ye souldiers	1s 0d	
June	"Spent when ye Souldiers paid their quarters	1s 8d	

This last entry suggests that there was reimbursement to some degree for what they had cost the town, and in the "receipts" side of the accounts is the entry "Received of Captain Jan £3 .0. 0 "

Disturbance of the peace

When a disturbance took place in the village and the King's peace was threatened, the constable was the first to be sent for. The subject of the disturbance may have been one of his own villagers or it may be that his services were to be enlisted in the interest of good neighbourliness to assist some other local constable. In many cases it would involve calling upon others in the village to come to his aid, and if need be, to give chase in a hue and cry or perhaps to watch over an apprehended miscreant until such time as he be hauled before a Justice. Whatever the reason, it meant that the daily task had to be abandoned for a precious space of time; there was no choice in the matter, for anyone who refused to co-operate or lend a horse, if necessary, was liable to a fine.

1651

"Spent that day the theefe was taken to Stapleford	6d
"Spent at Chilwell before we went to Justice	1s 0d
"for our suppers	2s 0d
"for ale in ye night bread & cheese & a posit in ye morninge	2s 6d
"Spent at Nottingham ye next day	1s 10d
"To Will: Attenborrow, George Butler and John Cowlishaw for watching the theefe and going before a Justice with him	3s 0d

On this occasion the JP would be Thomas Charlton of Chilwell and the thief was not a Stapleford man. The fact that the constable and his helpers went to Nottingham after the thief had been before the JP suggests that he was committed to prison for his offence.

1652/3 "To Rodger Hallam for carrying a hue & cry
away by night 2d

Minor offences were dealt with summarily by a local Justice who might be inclined to be lenient if the offence was not of too grave a nature. The following is an instance where three Stapleford men were the transgressors and what their apprehension entailed.

1660

Nov	"My Charges before Justice two daies Wth Will. Biddles George Muggs & John Wallis	2s 0d
	"paid for ye mittiams (mittimus(& hueancrye	1s 6d
	"paid for ye ferrilaw (fare for the ferry) for 2 dayes passage	1s 2d
	"paid for bread and drinks to Mary Butler that night when wee came from Clifton	3s 0d
	paid to George Butler for 2 days and one night waiting on Geo. Muggs Will: Biddles & Jo: Wallis	2s 6d
	"to Matthias Gray one day and one night	1s 6d

On this occasion the J.P. was Sir Gervase Clifton of Clifton.

Sometimes the appearance before Justices had more serious consequences:

1666

May 7th	May 7th "For going with Will: Dennes and Hen: Wild before a Justice	1s 0d
	for Henry Gadsby CVcharges and myne for going with William Dennes to the Goale	2s 0d
	given to the under gaoler for receiving him	6d

(William had been before a Justice on at least two previous occasions)

Repair of the stocks

Whilst the more serious offences were reserved for the Quarter Sessions and even the Assizes, drunkenness, swearing and hooliganism were usually punished by a spell in the stocks and in order that the devices of village discipline should always be ready to receive their “customers” they needed to be kept in solid working order. Compared with the pinfold their maintenance incurred much less expenditure.

1653		
May	Paid for mendinge ye Stocks	1s 0d
	“To Richard Rodgers for yron worke about ye stocks	4d
	“Paid to George Jackson for wood to mend the stocks	4d

They were mended again in 1661, with minor attention in 1675 and 1677. In 1682 it had become necessary for them to be re-made and John Sheepy who did so much work on the pinfold was the carpenter.

1682		
April 24	“My charges for the Stocks: buying and fetching	1s 0d
	“John Sheepy for sawing the planks	1s 0d
	“For the square planks	6s 0d
	“John Sheepy & his son for making them up	2s 0d
	“Iron for the Stocks done by Richard Wild	6d
	“All given to them workmen	5d
	“in all belonging to ye Stocks	<u>10s 11d</u>

NB John Sheepy was a Sandiacre man.

Attendance at meetings

As well as putting in an appearance at the Quarter Sessions the constable was also required to attend the monthly meetings of Justices for Broxtowe Hundred held at Papplewick, Hucknall and elsewhere, and the Special or Petty Sessions for the Hundred. In addition to all these he was required to attend the Statute, or Petty Sessions of the Chief Constable, held apparently once a year around November.

1652		
Nov 1st	Nov 1st “My Charges at ye statutes at Sturley (Strelley)	1s 0d
1660		
Nov	“My Charges at ye Statutes	1s 0d

1652

Collection of county and local rates

The constable was also responsible for collecting county as well as local rates. These were not imposed generally, but piece meal for some particular expenditure. Bridges, over the larger waterways, like Muskham and Kelham as well as the less important Leene Bridge were of more than parochial concern and were maintained in this way.

1650	"paid to Mr. Leek for mending ye leene bridges "my charges	10d 6d
1652/3 Jan	"Paid to Mr. Newton & Mr. Handford towards the building of Muskham Bridge My charges & George Jackson for goinge to Nott# about Muskham Bridge	18s 4d 2s 0d

(I wonder if it was to lodge a protest?)

The raising of the required sum had involved a visit from the Bailiff of the Hundred.

"Spent upon Baillife Borrows that day ye Assessment was made for is service about muskham bridge	1s 0d
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It looks as though a protest was made and did not fall on deaf ears:

1653 May	"Received of Mr. Hanford of yt money wch was paid towards ye Buildinge of Muskham bridge: I say received My acquittance concerning the receipt of ye money returned back for Muskham Bridge	6s 0d 4d
1672	"Paid to Mr. Jackson for the Repairing of Kelem bridge "for paying that money to Mr. Jackson for the Repareing of kelam bridge & for aquitance	6s 3d 1s 2d

And nearer home:

1673	"paid Mr Jackson towards the repair of Zoutch Bridge and a quittance	1s 1d
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And right on our doorstep:

1671	"paid Mr. Jackson towards repairing St Sithe Bridge	2s 6d
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Both Muskham and Kelham Bridges had been destroyed during the Civil War. For the repair of the latter Mr. Sutton of Kelham hall was held responsible, but for some

time he refused to undertake the work and became involved in a lengthy law suit in consequence (c 1655). The whole county seems to have been required to pay towards the cost of maintaining the suit against him.

1657

"Paid to Mr Hanford towards the manteyninge of a suit dependinge betwixt Rob: Sutton Esqr.plent' & ye county of Nott; defend'

6s 8d

Repercussions were still felt as far away as Stapleford and as late as 1675 for twice in that year the parish was called upon for money.

March "paid Mr. Jackson towards the suite of Kellam Bridge

6s 3d

April "paid Mr. Jackson towards the suite of Kellam Bridge

6s 3d

Also maintained out of county rates were the houses of correction. A new one was built in 1652 at Southwell when £200 was levied on the whole county to defray the cost.

1653

April 18th Paid to Mr.Handford towards the bulding of an house of Correction
12 3

12s3d

As well as the House of Correction there was the County Gaol where prisoners of means were expected to pay their own expenses. Those who could not afford to do so were kept out of public funds from a rate imposed for the purpose.

1652

March 3 "Paid towards the relief of the poore prisoners in the county goale at Nott' after ye rate in the pound: to Mr Newston at Papplewick

1s 8d

The number of times this contribution was made in a year varied and of course the county footed the bill.

1660 "Paid to Mr.Hanford for and towards the repayringe of ye goale at Nott'

£1 0s 3d

Disabled soldiers too, though sometimes maintained by the parish in which they retired, were, more often than not, pensioned out of county funds.

1653

April 18th "Paid to Mr. Hanford for ye relieve of the maimed souldiers

2s 2d

This was paid quarterly, usually at the same time as the monies' to the Master of the House of Correction. In addition to these many rates the Hundred of Broxtowe was responsible for certain poor people living in Brewhouse Yard in the shadow of Nottingham castle

1654		
Oct 17th	"paid then to Mr Handford towards ye reliefe of Margaret Sawood and Robart Chapman living under Noltingham Castle	1s 8d

Like the payment towards 'poor prisoners' this, also, appears to have been paid only when so ordered.

Taxes raised

Now let us see just what Stapleford had to find in one year by way of taxes, at the height of the puritan pre-restoration period, for both national and county expenditure.

1653			
	The Assessment for the Army (National) 4 x £13:19:0	£42	16s0d
	House of Correction (County) 4 b 8d	2s	8d
	Relief of poor prisoners (County)	1s	8d
	Maintenance of maimed soldiers (County) 4 x 2s 2d	8s	8d
		£43	9s 0d

The total amount laid forth by Constable Robert Wilde for that particular year amounted to £62:16:9, one of the highest sums in the period for which we have records. Authority's demands accounted for 69% of this sum and even so, the remainder did not wholly represent a sum expended on parish commitments.

Assistance to travellers

One of the almost daily problems with which the constable in the 17th century had to deal was the large number of travellers on the roads. There were the well-to-do people who could travel at will and at their own expense-such persons were not infringing the law and so were no concern of the constable. Secondly, there were discharged soldiers and sailors returning from the wars at home and beyond the seas and had to be helped on their way. Thirdly, the unfortunates who had fallen upon evil days, through no fault of their own, and were returning to their place of settlement or to relatives and friends and were armed with a pass permitting them to ask for assistance on the way. Lastly, there were the vagrants who had no right to the roads and were the special concern of the constable. The Elizabethan Poor Law had forbidden unlicensed begging and the tramp who begged without eave was a

criminal. If caught he was whipped by the constable and sent with a pass to where he belonged or to the nearest house of correction. When travelling in groups vagrants could be a potential menace to peaceful village folk and the old Nursery Rhyme serves to illustrate the reactions to this branch of society.

“Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town.....

1652/3		
Jan 4	given to a soldier & his wife with a passé that came from Berwick to 4 soldiers disbanded from Berwick	4d
1653		
June	“given to a souldier yt had his arme shott off	2d
1650	“given to 4 soldiers that camne forth of Germany	3d

(Doubtless veterans of the Thirty Years War in Germany which had come to an end in 1648. One of many such entries).

In 1650 Prince Charles (later to be King Charles II) made a last stand at Worcester against Cromwell's army. There are many entries testifying to the plight of the participants.

1651	“given to two lame Souldiers yt came from Worcester	6d
1652		
May 4	“given to a lame souldier & a boy that came from Worcester	6d

Some entries are most pathetic and show the great distress affecting so many in those troubled times.

1650	“given to a man wch had beine sould in to Fraunce	2d
1652	“given to 10 Travellers of one company yth lodged all night in Mary Butlers barne shewinge they had sustained great losse by fire in water paid to Mary Butler for lodginge a wench & her victuals	1s 2d
1653		
Dec	“to a gentlewoman her mayd and 4 orphans going towards Lincolnshire	8d

Do we see here a kind hearted woman taking pity on these orphans in the winter and comforting them in adversity?

Some of the constables took the trouble to find out the names of the travellers.

1657	"given to Tho: Younge and James Younge their wives & children being 14 in number being Dissinhabited in ye Ile of Waight and their goods taken by Turkish man of warre	8d
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What a picture of misery that conjures up!

1674	"given to a poore ladd that had ye pox 1	1d
1682	"Mr. Jackson laid down for me to poore people with a pass on Goose faire day	6d

Even after the travellers had passed on their way they left behind evidence of their visit.

1678	Given to seaven with Passe Paid Mary Smedley for washing the Clothes that seaven poore people fouled them with lying in them	6d
		2d

(Robert Smedley was constable in 1678; Mary was probably his wife.)

Amongst the wayfarers of the time were to be found even the inform who had sought a cure from the spa waters at Buxton.

1660	April 30th "given to two Sicklye and Diseased women & 3 children commynge from ye bath at Buckstones	4d
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And of vagrants there were many

1653		4d
May	"given to a vagrant yt was stockt & whipt	
1656		
May 2	"given to George Jackson for makinge a pass for a vagrant	2d
	"to Gervas Attenborough for whippinge yt said woman	
	"for a penny loaf (small consolation for the punishment inflicted)	2d
		1d
1667		
March	"given to 2 boys that was Stockt and whipt	2d

No travelling was allowed on the Sabbath and even the most uncaring constable would not break the law. Whether they be vagrants who arrived late Saturday or felons newly apprehended on Saturday with no chance of getting rid of them, they had to be lodged until Monday.

1662			
Sept 22	"paid for meate for one John Birde who was Taken upon suspition of felonie: and for drink and other charges from Saterday at night unto Monday morning for himself and his keeper	5s 0d	
	"paid to 3 men to guard him to Nottingham	3s 0d	

Gypsies and refugees from Ireland

Falling into one or the other of the forgoing categories were the gypsies and the refugees from that perpetual trouble spot, Ireland; both were frequently seen in Stapleford in the 17th century, perhaps the Irish more so.

Gypsies had first come to England during the Middle Ages, and although they had been formally banished in the reign of Henry VIII many remained: their descendants were to be found wandering the countryside in the 1650's.

1650			
	"given to a company of Gypsies	6d	

Ireland at this time was the scene of almost incessant civil strife (they do say history repeats itself) and the constable's accounts bear record of the large number of Protestant refugees who flocked across the sea and travelled about England often in companies of a considerable number; just one more problem to be coped with by the overworked parish factotum.

1652			
Feb.	"given to twelve Irish people	1s 0d	
Oct.	given to 4 Irish people to. were lame	4d	
1653			
May 28	"to an Irishman his wife and 5 childdren	4d	
1654			
Oct 21st	"given to two Distressed gentlemen with Eighteene of their company commynge forth of Ireland beinge prissened by ye Enimye and their goods ataken	1s 0d	

Cripples

Cripples tended to band together: they were all incapacitated in some way and would therefore proceed at a pace comfortable to the whole company.

1658	"given to a company of Cripples	3d
1659		
May 8th	"given to 6 Cripples with a passe	6d

If they were so bad that transport is some form was necessary the constable had the power to commandeer help to carry them to the next village.

1650	"Given to a lame man that was carried away on horseback "given to Vallentine toule for going to trowel wth the said man	4d 1d
1651/2		
Feb	"given to a poore woman and 2 lame children "paid to Tho. Smith wife & Ann Crampton for carrying ye: said lame children to Trowell	4d 4d
1653		
Dec	"given to a company of (5) Cripplles sent from Bramcote In a wayne "paid George Jackson for carryinge the 5 Cripplles to Toaton	5d 1s 0d

In 1652 no less than 270 persons passed through Stapleford and had to be helped on their way and of this number 73 were Irish-just a little over 25 per cent of the total; the sum disbursed from parish funds on these people amounted to £2:14:3.

Parish responsibility

A birth in a parish might qualify a person for settlement there, it was in the interest of the village that any women travellers who were "near their time", and therefore likely to provide such an embarrassment, should be moved-on as quickly as possible.

1653		
Dec.	"given to an Irish woman big bellied and 2 sisters	4d
1665		
July	given to a woman which said shee was in Labour heare and 5 more of her company	4d

On one occasion there was no escape for the parish. Whatever may have been the woman's circumstances she was treated fairly well, being lodged at Henry Wilde's house (one of the more substantial villagers) until her time was over.

1682/3		
Jan	"for Esther Stone to be at Henry Wilde from Friday night until munday morning	2s 11d

What happened to her immediately after that we do not know, but her child was baptised in the church here on February 11th – "Buntin, son of Esther Stone, who was basely begotten and the supposed child of William Buntin". Little Buntin was buried a month later, on 17th March.

Another entry in the Accounts which can be tied up with the Parish Registers is a pathetic one relating to a small child, probably a foundling.

1662		
Aug 19th	"Paid George Mugge for going to find out a mother for Diana	1s 0d
1663		

July	"paid George Butler for going to Nottingham last yeare about the childe	1s 0d
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and in the Register – “Diana, a child was was kept at ye townes Charge was buried 29th April 1663”.

It must be remembered that in the 17th century, when crops were not so abundant as they are today and when livestock had to be killed—off in winter for want of fodder, lean times for the village folk were not very far away and a community could not afford to harbour in its midst anyone who was not prepared to make, or was capable of making, his contribution to its economy. Anyone with no claim to domicile, with only tenuous means of support, or was likely to become a liability was not welcome; it would then be the duty of the constable to see that the person returned from whence he came.

1676	"for an order to remove Francis Biddels and his wife to Sandiacre	2s 0d
	"and for going to Sandiacre with them	1s 0d
	"for having the Overseers and Bidels before a Justice	1s 0d

It rather looks as though the Biddels had their champions in the Overseers and that the constable had the Law on his side—temporarily at least—for the following year saw them back in Stapleford when their first child, of four in number, was baptised in the church. Francis died in 1685 and was buried in Stapleford.

For its own aged and inform the village acknowledged its responsibility.

1652		
April 5th	"Given to Robert Rivett towards ye payinge the cure for his boy	£1 0s 0d

(This boy was young Robert aged 14, son of Robert and Margaret. This Margaret must not be confused with the Margaret Rivett mentioned below who was probably grandmother to young Robert).

1656		
Easter	"Spent at the Sessions concerning sessions Wm.Byddles and Margaret Rivitts	1s 0d
April 22	"Given to Margaret Rivitte	4s 6d

This is only a fore-runner. More details are given in the Michaelmas Sessions held the same year (6th October) when:-

“order By this Court of Margaret Ryvall (erroneously for Rivitt) of Stapleford being a poor old woman and past her work and not able to maintain herself without relief of the said towne that therefore the Churchwardens and Overseers of the poore of Stapleford aforesaid shall immediately upon sight hereof allow and pay therefore of

Sixpence a week weekly to the said Margaret least for want she become a vagrant contrary to Law".

1656		
Oct 7th	payd then to Margaret Rivitte	6d

but by October 21st the amount seems to have been reduced to a weekly rate of four pence.

Oct 21st	"paid to Margaret Rivitte	8d
1656/7		
Jan	"given to Margaret Rivitte since 7th October last 1656 until the 19th of this Instant January after the manner of weekly Collection by foure pence the week	5s 6d

(The 6d and 8d mentioned above are included in this total: the constable must have been 1s 2d in pocket on the deal)

Poor Margaret! – her weekly allowance of 6d was soon reduced to 4d. Lawrence Kifton was another for whom a weekly collection was made; he did received 6d a week and in addition was given free coal.

1656		
Dec 5th	"paid to George Jackson for for fetchinge a load of coals for Lawrence Knifton	1s 10d

There were others too, who benefited from loads of coal.

The Hearth Tax

It will be readily noticed that the constable had many masters and all manner of things on which to keep a watchful eye. After the Restoration the quarterly assessments were retained-they were noticeably smaller-but in addition certain other taxes were inflicted on the people not least of which was the most unpopular Hearth Tax. This was imposed by Act of Parliament in 1662 at a rate of 2 shillings for each fire hearth or stone and levied upon all houses unless the occupier was exempt from paying church – or poor-rates, or was certified as living in a tenement under the value of 20 shillings a year, did not have land to that value nor possessed goods to the value of £10. This tax was repealed in 1689 but while it was in being it caused the constable a great deal of extra work.

1662		
July 28th	"for my bill which I putt up to the Justices about the giving an account of all the fire harths in our Towne	6d
Nov 2nd	"my Charges for paying in the harth mones and acquittance	1s 2d
1662/3		

Jan	"paid for the Acte Concerning the harth moneys	6d
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In July 1663 constable Thomas Jackson had to undertake a journey to Newark of all places!

July 15th	"my charges for going to Newarke about giving in a new bill of all the fire harths and my bill	1s 6d
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Later that year: -

"my charges for paying the harth money "payd for Ale when the Nighbors met to make a new bill of the Fire harths	1s 0d
	2s 6d

It must have been thirst work or else the whole village turned up!

"my charges then before the Justices 2 days	2s 6d
--	-------

Could our forebears have been guilty of trying to evade payment?

1664		
Oct	"Spent when the man searched the harths	1s 0d

(Not many of the Hearth Tax Returns remain for Stapleford, but comparing the 1670 with that of 1674 a number of chimneys seem to have "disappeared" in the later return.)

On three occasions after this event someone from the Revenue came to collect the tax.

1665		
Mar 29	"my charges with the man that gathered the harth money	1s 0d

(In another entry he is referred to as "the chimney man")

Well after it has lost its novelty there was resistance to the tax:

1660	"Spent when the Chimney men Strayned at Mrs. Mabbots	2d
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The following is the Hearth tax return for 1674: thee are not many houses with more than one hearth, also the mill is not shown (which it was in the return of 1670).

Stableford

Wm. Palmes esq	9
Mr George Jackson	5
Robt Smedley	1
Mr. Jackson	1
Hen. Gadsby	1
Gvs. Farrand	1
Ger. Treese	1
Wm Attenborow	1
Tho. Henfrey	2
Geo. Mugg	1
Tho.Jackson	1
John Towle	1
Math.Langford	1
John Reavitt	1
Willm. Glew	1
Gerv. Attenborow	1
Wm. Dennis	2
Tho. Eldershaw	1
Fran. Bamford	3
Wid. Smith	1
Fran.Hewson	1
Fran. Wilkinson	1
Geo. Goodman(Gooding or Goodwin)	1
John Greasley	1
Mr Wilford	2
Robert Crampton	1
Hen. Eldershaw	1
Tho.Bower 1	1
John Clarke 1	1
	<u>47</u>

Dishcharged by certificate

Alice Willows	1
Widow Jackson	2
John Shelton	1
Wid.Mears	1
	<u>5</u>

(It is strange that Widow Jackson should have been discharged. She continued to run one of the inns in Stapleford after her husband John's death in 1669 until her son Thomas took it over in 1675)

Watch and ward

In addition to collecting and paying over taxes and chasing hither and thither to some meeting or other, the constable had to look to the safety of the village and the guarding of its property. Hence his duty to see that "watch and ward" was kept.

1652			
June 11th	"My charges to Papplewick concerninge the watch and ward with other matters		1s 0d
1653			
May	Paid for a watch byll		1s 4d
1660			
May	"Paid to Richard Rogers for a Wardbyll		1s 9d
1684	"Paid to Gervas Jackson (the Blacksmith) for a wachbill		10d

Edward I, in the Statute of Winchester, declared that the whole Hundred must make amends if a robbery should take place within its boundaries and the robbers escape free. This Statute still held good in the 17th century and anyone who had the unfortunate to be robbed within the Hundred had the prospect of redress for their losses. Each parish within the Hundred had to make a contribution and naturally it fell to the lot of the constable to collect and pay over monies.

1656			
July 10th	"Paid to Mr. Hanford concerninge ye robbery towards ye losses wch Mr. Field of Mansfield sustained	£2	4s 4d
1661	"Paid to Mr Hanford concerninge ye robbery of ye woman in Nottingham parke being within the Hundred of Broxtowe	4s	6d

Another, but not so frequent duty of the constable, was to attend, sometimes with others, Juries and Inquests.

1650	"Paid to Mr. Edge for discharging ye Crown office for the death of William Greasley	17s 8d
1651		
May 28th	"given to John Jepson for goinge about Peeter Willows	6d
	"Spent when ye Crowners wher here concerning Peeter Willows	3s 6d
1660/61		
Feb	"ourCharges to Toton being called upon a Jury concerning Peeter Shaw wife	3s 0d

We have seen how levies were made when necessary, for the upkeep and repair of county bridges carrying the King's Highway-St. Sithe Bridge in Stapleford is such an instance. There were two more bridges in Stapleford for the upkeep of which county rates were not available. These were Long Bridge (where the Derby Road crossed the Erewash into Sandiacre) and Moore Bridge. In the 1650's the latter was very much to the fore in the affairs of Stapleford and was in need of some attention with some minor repairs being made in 1651.

31st May "My charges & Henry Wild goinge to
Stanton about Moore Bridge 8d
(The bridge was partly in Stanton by Dale parish)

1651			
Jun 6	"paid William Blake for Moore Bridge	10s 0d	
	"for time	2s 8d	
	"spent wth ye workmen	1s 0d	

It seems that this was only a temporary measure and that something really had to be done about it. Perhaps there was dissention as to responsibility, we don't know; the villagers got their heads together for on July 13th the constable paid "for a petition concerninge Moore bridge 1s 0d, which was duly presented at the Quarter Sessions "My charges about The same at ye sessions. 1s 0d. Thrice in November 1651 the constable went to Stanton, once with Henry Wild and twice with George Jackson; and that is all that happens for nigh on twelve months, when, it seems that the petition had at last been taken notice of, for at the Michaelmas Sessions, 4th October 1652 Ann Teverey, George Jackson and Gervase Hollingworth-the three principle landowners in Stapleford-appeared and pleaded not guilty to the presentment against them for not repairing Moor Bridge. Matters were postponed until the next sessions, 10th January 1653, when it was "ordered by the court that Mrs Ann Teverey and George Jackson (Gervas Hollingworth is not mentioned, he evidently managed to free himself from the responsibility-maybe on health grounds for he died a few months later) shall sufficiently amend and repair the said bridge called Moore Bridge before midsomer day next and shall bring a true certificate thereof to this Court at the General Sessions of the peace to be holden next after the said midsomer day upon payne of five pounds to be forfeited to the Keeper of the liberties of England etc."

Very little was done by way of repairs, but probably they were sufficient to meet the requirements of the Court order

1652/3			
17 th Jan	"paid George Jackson concerninge the moore bridge	6s 4d	
	"spent at ye meeting about Moore bridge	6d	
Feb	"To George Jackson & Gervas Treece their charges at the Sessions (in January) concerning the bridge	2s 0d	
1653			
May	"Spent at Stanton by Ger: Meire, Ger: Treece and my self when we went to look fir stone concerning ye Moore bridge	6d	
1653	"Paid to Thomas Smith for getting stones forth off the water neare moorebridge	3s 0d	

With such a lot of effort put into so little expenditure one wonders just what was necessary to accomplish the repairs. However, they held good for the whole of 1654,

1655 and much of 1656, then without any ado-no meetings (at least none is mentioned) no journeys to Nottingham to the Justices or Sessions etc., the village fell-to and made a concerted effort in repairing the bridge once more. Trees were uprooted, willows lopped, gorse gathered in scores of bundles and nearly all the village involved in some way or another.

1656		
Sept 6th	"Paid to Gervase Rice & John Trowell for kiddinge gorse towards making the water works at Moore bridge	2s 8d
Sept 15th	"Paid to Mr Leigh (the Vicar) for an Ashtree to make piles towards the water work at moore bridge	3s 4d
	"Spent in alle (ale) at ye cleeninge uppe of the said tree (Thirsty work!)	6d
	"Spent in three days at ye worke at moore bridge	1s 6d
	"Spent at Tho: Henfrys that nyght ye work was finished at moore bridge (A celebration?)	1s 0d
	"Paid to Mrs. Teverey for leadinge three load of thorns	4s 0d
	"Paid to Roger Wilkinson for leadinge two loade of thornes	2s 8d
	"Paid to George Clarke for six willow heades	4s 0d
	"Paid to William Byddles for 3 days worke	3s 0d
	Paid to John Cowllishaw for foure days worke	4s 0d
	Paid to Rodger Hallam for 3 daies work at ye moore Bridge waterworke	3s 0d
	"Paid to Gervas Treese for his man at ye same work 4 daies	4s 0d
	"To Robert Smedley pro consimile	2s 0d
	"To George Henfrey p consimile opus	2s 0d
	To William Attenborrow for his man p consimile	1s 6d
Oct 7	"paid to George Jackson for an Ash tree to make piles for ye water work at moore bridge	4s 6d
	"Item. Paid to George Jackson for his man & his draught (a pair of horses) for worke done at the moor-bridge	4s 2d
	"to Gervase Attenborrow for his worke at ye moore-bridge	3s 0d
	to Gervase Attenbolrrow for his draught leadinge 3 load of thorne and one load of gorse	4s 10d
	"Paid to Henry Oldershaw for 3 daies work at ye moore-bridge	3s 0d
	"to him for his draught for leadinge two load of piles & 3 load of willow heades	2s 10d
	"paid to William Leaper for leadinge a load of Thornes	6d
	"paid to William Leaper for leadinge a load of Thornes	6d
Oct 21st	"Spent at John Jacksons that mornings ye stone was brought to meyre orchard end	4d

	"paid to George Jackson for leadinge one load of stone	6d
	"paid to Edward Slater for three days worke	3s 2d
Dec 5th	"Paid to Gervas Attenborrow and Henry Oldershaw for serving Edward Slater with stones at Meire Orchard side	6d

(Edward Slater would seem to be the stone-mason.)

The total sum this expended on the bridge in 1656 amounted to £3-5-8 and a special levy of one months “pay” was made on September 6th and amounted to £3:12:10 “for and towards the water worke at Moore Bridge”. The work undertaken was to last for thirteen years. In 1669 further repairs were necessary needing more supplies of gorse, willing bindings, piles, pins for piles and stones, amounting to £3:16:2 which included £1:18:0 “for seaven and fifty days worcke at the bridg.” Presumable this put the bridge in goon enough shape to last for the next 16 years at least, as no further expenditure thereon is recorded. An amazing thing which is revealed is these Accounts is the vast amount of gorse which must have been growing in Stapleford and was readily available for road works, fencing etc.

The Pinfold

A piece of well-used parish property which was constantly receiving attention was the Pinfold, the place to which all strays were taken until such time as they were claimed by their owners.

1651/2		
Feb 18th	"Paid to George Jackson for wood for and to mende the Pinfould	2s 0d
	"Paid to ye workmen for mendinge the pinfould	1s 4d

and to help them in their task:-

for Drinke for the said workmen	4d
for nayles to mend the pinfould	2d

The pinfold received attention in 1655, 1857, 1658, 1669, 1661, 1553 and 1664 on which occasion the workmen involved were all Stapleford men, with one exception.

It looks as if the pinfold had been continuously botched-up over the years and that eventually something had to be done about it. In November 1665 the villagers met to discuss the matter, to the accompaniment of the usual liquid refreshment.

Nov 2	"Spent when the Levey was mad for the pinfole	1s 6d
	"Paid John Sheepy for making the pinfole	14s6d

(So far as I am aware, John Sheepy was not a Stapleford man; he was hired to repair the pinfole in 1670, 1675 and 1678)

"paid for Ale for him	1s 4d
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(Strange how "Ale" is nearly always spelled with a capital "A" in the Accounts)

"Paid to Mr Wilfod for wood	£1 0s 0d
"Paid to Tho.Henfrey for carring the wood	1s 8d
"My charges about the pinfole	1s 0d
"Paid then to the smith	3d

A total sum of £2.0.3 for which the leyy of 2d in the pound produced £2.17.0. From the wording of the entries and the expense incurred it looks as if the pinfole was completely rebuilt on this occasion. Despite this, hardly a year went by without some expenditure being necessary. In 1683 it is Joseph Shippey who mends the pinfole- John's son? And is also paid for "making of a Turnstile in ye town 1s 8d" The following year it is a local who is employed to mend it:

"Paid to William Tow (Towle) for the pinfole mending	2s 9d
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Repair of bridges and highways

Every parish was responsible at Common Law for the repair of the highways within the boundaries and such work was carried out by compulsory labour. All inhabitants were liable to partake in the work and had either to appear in person at the time and place appointed by the Surveyor; or else find a substitute. All persons occupying plough land or keeping a draught or plough had, if so required, to send to that place a wain or cart with oxen or horses. Every other householder, cottager, or labourer, with certain exceptions, was liable to give six days labour on such undertakings and was expected to bring with him such tools in his possession which would be necessary. Like so many laws of the land there were those who resented it, for at the Michaelmas Sessions in 1629 George Barker, George Cook, John Renford, Francis Hughson, Thomas Smyth, George Wilson, John Man, John Porter and Gervas Jackson, all of Stapleford were indicted for not performing Common Work.²

At times individuals were called upon for their services and received pay proportionate to the amount of work done.

² NQS Vol 8 p250 [C/QSM/1/8]

1656			
July	"Paid to Henry Wilde for gorsse to mend ye highway		5d
1662			
Jun 7	"Paid Robert Crampton for scouring the sick at pasture End		2d
1663			
May	Paid to Robert Crampton for mending the hedg at Towle-lays		8d
1667			
Dec	"paid for mending Smithey banke and besils forde	1s 0d	
1671			
	"My charges Henry Oldershaw and Gervas Treece for going before the Commissioners for mending the pinfould lane	6d	
	"paid Robert Smedley for mending Toton gate	7d	
1673	"for mending kerkgate	1s 0d	
	"paid for mending the way against Gervas Attenborrows house	6d	
1676	"paid William Glew for mending Stonilgate	4d	
1683	"pd. for: hacking in of Cartt Rutts half a day	4d	

The village seems to have had at least one permanent employee. It is difficult to determine with any accuracy his precise appointment, but it is probably that he was the herdsman, or neatherd, for which he was paid the yearly sum of 5 shillings. William Rabye was the first (in the Accounts) to hold this position in 1653 and through to 1659, as well as performing other useful tasks in the parish for which he received extra remuneration.

1656			
July 10	"paid to William Rabye towards mending(?) his wages	5s 0d	
	To him for watchinge ye fields Anno 1655	1s 6d	
	Paid to William Rabye for mending the way at Trowell Gate	6d	
1659			
Dec 21	"Paid to William Raby for opening the Comon Eishew at ye brigge	1s 0d	
	"Payd him for his wagges	5s 0d	

(The Common issue was the open sewer: "ye brigge" in all probability was the "long Bridge" the new name for St Sithe bridge and so called because of its necessary length to cross the marshy ground near to the river.

1670	Spent when wee went about te waterweas at the long-brigg	1s 0d
	Paid to William bidels and Richard buitler for the waerweass ath the long brigge	3s 0d
	given to them all	1s 0d

)

Then followed Roger Hallam, William Greggory and, again, William Rabye.

1665		
May 11	"paid to William Biddles boy for tenting the beasts	5s 0d
1668	"paid to William Cliff his sons wage	5s 0d

(If this was William's son William he would be only 8 or 9 years old.)

1675	"paid to th heardsman	5s 0d
1678	"Paid to frances Biddles for tenting the bease	5s 0d
1679	"paid to Will', Greasleu for earnest about the beasts	1s 0d
1682	"paid to William Grealey May day last 1682	5s 0d

Visits of the Bailiff of the Hundred

A yearly-and occasionally more frequent- visitor to the town was the Bailiff of the Hundred, Jonathan Burrows; his name appears at regular intervals throughout the 35 years covered by the Accounts; he must have taken office as quite a young man for his "reign" to span at least three and a half decades

1650	"Spent upon the bailiffs of the hundred when hee cvame to straine concerning ye greentree	1s 0d
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and later the same year: -

"for stopping a presentment at Michaelmas Sessions paid to the Clarke of the peace	3s 0d
"paid to the under Sheriffe	2s 0d
"paid for the fine of the said presentment concerninge the greenetree	1s 0d
"paid to the bailiffe of the hundred	1s 0d

A costly business and one wonders what it was all about.

1660/1		
Jan 10	"Spent with Mr Borrows & others when hee came for barley	4d
1667	Dec "given to Balife Borros and spent when I fetycht the coals for Ro. Rivvit & Peeter Greasly	4d
1668	"paid att John Jacsons for ale which was spent when bely borrows came for his hadland	2s 0d

From 1669 until 1685 Bailiff Burrows made eleven yearly visits to Stapleford on five of which he is described as coming to collect his “hadland”.

Payments on behalf of other parish officers

As parish officers alongside the constable were the Church Wardens and the Overseers of the Poor, sometimes the latter officers were combined and the churchwardens were, ipso facto, Overseers of the Poor; whichever custom was the case they would keep their own accounts, (unfortunately no longer in existence), but in spite of this it is surprising how much money the constable paid out on items for what one would have thought to be their responsibility.

1653/4

Feb 14th	“paid for five skinnes of parchmyne to make a register book	3s 0d
March 10	“paid for making a Register booke	1s 0d

The earliest parish Register commences Jan 1656/6 and is, more than likely, the one for which these payments were made.

1656

Apr 22nd	“A warrant for they new Churchwardens and new Overseers	1s 0d
July 10th	“Paid to Southwell offeringe: Behind in Areeres	£1 3s 9d
	“My Charges & George Jacksons to pay Southwell offeringe	2s 0d

1657

July	“paid for ye acte conserninge ye Sabbath	9d
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1658

(early)	“my bill at Pappalewick	6d
	“paid there for a warrant concerning the Lords day	1s 0d

1658

	“Given to the minister that preached at the request of Mr. Leigh (the vicar)	5s 0d
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1660

Nov 3	“Paid to Gervas Attenborrow and Henry Oldershaw in ye year 1659 concerninge their office for mendinge ye Church Leades & other thinges about ye Church	£1 4s 4d
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1661

(C Easter)	“Dusburshed or layd forth concerninge the Churchwardens accounts as by the Books appears by particulars more at large	10s 8d
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1662

Jun 7	“payd for Ale when the man soujld amended he Steeple	3s 0d
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1664

Aug 13	“My charges for going to Nottingham to fech the books Entitles god and the king	1s 0d
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1673

Aug 13	My charges for going to Nottingham to fech the books Entitles god and the king	1s 0d
	“my charges for paying the moneys for the books	1s 0d

1673	paid Richard Wilde for a piece of wood the Churchdore key and for the pinfould gate mending	2s 0d
	"paid to Gervas Attenborrow upon the Overseers accompts	3s 4d

Papists were not looked upon with any particular favour and Authority always thought it best to know just who they were:

1657		
July	"My Charges to Nott to deliver y byll of popish recusants	1s 0d

As far back as the reign of Elizabeth I, when religious toleration was practised more than in that of her sister Mary I, the position of the popish recusant was not an enviable one. They were known to the authorities and on occasions their estates were enquired into and a certificate rendered accordingly; one such certificate reads:

-

"An Inquisition taken 28th day of October 1577 of such as do absent themselves from Divine Service in the County of Nottingham by Mr. Louth, Archdeacon there, by virtue of my L. graces's Commission etc.."

In goods. Stapleford. John Quincye. Husbandman £10.³

Vermin

Throughout the whole period of the Accounts there are numerous entries showing payment made to both villagers and 'forreigners' alike for killing moles and other vermin. From 1650 until his death in 1669 John Jackson virtually had a monopoly of moles (mouldes, mole-warpes). In the first year of the Accounts, he took toll of 602 of the little perishers for which he was paid one penny each, plus two pence (the standard rates) for a hedgehog; a total of £2:10:4 and a tidy little sum to add to his ale-house takings.

1659		
Dec 15	"paid to John Jackson for 3 Fullimarts (polecats) and 3 moales	9d
1659/60		
Jan 13th	yegiven to three men of Stanton for killinge a foxe with in ye liberty	1s 0d
1663		
July	"Paid for 6 hedhogs that Mr Palmes haymakers kilde	1s 0d

³ DSP Eliz. I Vol. CXVIII Nov 1st 1577 211 B

1674	"paid Richard Attenborrow for an hedge hogg	2d
	paid a man of Sutton Bonington for killin an hedge as hee went to ye coales. (Pits)	2d
1682	"paid for powder & shot for ye crow keeper	7d
1683	"Item. For shuteing of Crows	1s 6d

Miscellaneous payments

In addition to the “regular” payments there were some items which, by their very nature, would be made, perhaps, once only.

After the civil war was over Colonel Hutchinson obtained an order to dismantle Nottingham Castle; a most lamentable decision and an undertaking for which the labour must have been sought from over a wide area: -

1651		
July first	"It: paid to 7 men for helpinge to pull down Notting: Castle	14s0d
	"It: spent on the same men	1s 0d

Whatever else Stapleford had or had not, it had a clock! Where? Who can say?

1650		
Dec 15th	"paid to Richard Rogers for mending ye clocke	4d

On one occasion misfortune overtook a traveller passing through Stapleford- his horse died!

1670	"paid for berring of a mare that died in the march lane	1s 0d
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To mark the coronation of King Charles II, and possibly as an expression of relief from the cramping, compulsive commonwealth, Stapleford celebrated in time honoured fashion:

1661	"Spent at the bonfire in the hall leas	2s 6d
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In 1665 no less a personage than the future king, James II, passed through the village on his way to Rufford.

1665		
July 7th	"spent when we hired the carridg to remonte the Duke of Yorkes goods to Rufford	6d
	"paid Towards the carridg of the Dukes goods to Rufford	3s 6d

From the Accounts it is evident that coal pits were worked within the parish during the post Cromwellian period

1666		
Aug 10th	"paid for Ale when the pits were filde	1s 2d
1669	"spent when the pitts was filled up	2s 0d
1674		
Nov 24th	"paid for ale that was drunke upon Cliffs bank when the colepitts were filled upp	6d

On two occasions the town made levies on the pits: -

1680	"Resseved for the Cole piyt	1s 5s 0d
1683	"Receuved of the colman	5s 0d

In 1660 Parliament voted a tax, partly on social rank, partly on wealth, and partly a poll tax which covered all persons above the age of 16 years. This was something more than the usual levy and its gathering-up involved three others as well as the constable:

1660	"paid to George Jackspone for Ingrosinge ye byll of poll money	6d
	"his Charges to Nottingham two days	2s 0d
	"his Charges to Nottingham two days	2s 0d
	"an for a warrant to gather ye poll money	1s 0d
	"paid to Will: Attenborrowe for 3 daies charges concerninge ye poll money	3s 0d
	"to him for aquittance	6d
	"paid to Francis Wilkinson p consimile	3s 0d
	"paid to Myles Farrand p consimile	2s 0d
	"paid to Will: Attenborrowe for 3 daies charges concerninge ye poll money	

Bearing in mind that the offices of constable, churchwarden and overseer were each held for the period of one year it follows that eventually all capable men would serve in one capacity or other. For those who were not eligible for those offices, their involvement in some other aspect of parish matters was such that all would have a good knowledge of the simple machinery of local government in the 17th century.

Constables Levy of 1760

Stapleford is fortunate in having such an interesting record concerning much of the Cromwellian and Restoration periods; no others of this type are extant for the parish and the only document of a similar nature which has come to light is the Constable's levy for 1760. This is the actual assessment on the parish and shews no disbursements of the money collected. Perhaps its most interesting feature is the many names it gives of the inhabitants of Stapleford for that year, many are new ones but there are also quite a number which have already been mentioned in that earlier period.

"Constable's Levy 24th December 1760"

"Nottinghamshire, to wit an assessment or Levy made this Twenty fourth day of December 1760 for John Ouldershaw Constable of Stableford in the said County to be raised after the Rate of twelve pence in the pound, to wit: -

John Borlace Warren Esq	£2	0s 6d
Marmaduke Atkin for his farme	£2	5s 6d
Do for his own land		2s 0d
Moses Atkin for his own land		18s0d
Do for his farm		14s0d
Do for his Tythe		7s 0d
Do for Gregory's farme		4s 0d
Do for late Ingleton's farme		12s0d
John Taft for his farm	£1	11s0d
Do for Mr. Tompson's land		1s 6d
Do for Edming's land		8s 0d
Do for is other house		1s 0d
Wm Butler for his farm	£1	0s 0d
Do for Taylor's land		3s 0d
John Baggaley	£1	8s 0d
George Browne	£1	3s 0d
Do for his own land		7s 0d
John Lambe	£1	6s 0d
Thomas Greasley for his farme		15s0d
Do for Bridge-end Close		3s 6d
Do for Hodge's land		6s 0d
Thomas Taft		12s0d
Henry Taft for Mills's land		11s8d
John Ouldershaw		15s0dd
John Ingleton		11s0d
Francis Hooley for his own land		3s 0d
Do for Pinckney's land		5s 0d
Do for Rice's land		3s 0d
Do for Hodges's land		1s 0d
John Rawlinson		1s 6d
Henry Sills		1s 0d
Robert Greasley for his house		6
Do for Wood's land		4s 0d
Mary Ouldershaw for her own land		2s 6d
Do for Mills's land		5s 0d
Samuel Calladine for his house		6d
Do for Hall's land		6s 0d
Nathanial Cockin		4s 6d
William Moore		4s 0d
Elizabeth Felkin		3s 0d
William Farrands for his own land		2s 6d
John Jackson		3s 0d
John Hubbard		2s 6d
John Greasley		2s 6d
Thomas Atkin		2s 0d
John Godber		1s 0d
Sarah Trueman		2s 0d
John Langford		1s 0d
William Barrowcliffe		1s 0d
Moses Greasley for his own land		1s 0d
Do for Wood's land		2s 0d
Ann Stocks		1s 0d

James Ellston	1s 0d
John Smedley the elder	1s 0d
Thomas Henfrey	6d
William Daykin 6	6d
William Wallis the elder 6	6d
William Wallis the younger	1s 0d
John Smedley the younger	1s 0d
William Greasley	6d
George Hooley	1s 0d

£22 2s 0d

"We have perused this Rate or Assessment and do approve of the same as Witness our hands.

George Browne
 Marmaduke Atkin
 John Taft
 John Ouldershaw Churchwarden and
 Constable

Nottinghamshire to wit Decr 30th 1760.

We two of His Majestiy's Justices of the Peace for the said County do allow the abve rate and assessment.

Henry Sherbrooke
 W. Bilbie."

Some notable names are missing from this list, in particular John Jackson of the manor. (The John Jackson here mentioned was a member of the lesser Jackson family and a framework knitter); neither does the name of Towle nor Attenborough appear.

Known Constables of Stapleford.

William Aubreysone	1378	William Glew	1669
George Clarke	1612	Henry Oldershaw	1670
John Broadbent	1613	Gervas Attenborrow	1671
Gervas Treece	1650	Thomas Oldershaw	1672
William Attenborrow	1651	Francis Bamford	1673
Thomas Henfrey	1652	Francis Wilkinson	1674
Robert Wilde	1653	Edward Straw	1675
Francis Hughson	1654	George Gooding	1676
Henry Oldershaw	1655	George Jackson	1677
Gervas Attenborrowe	1656	Robert Smedley	1678
Francis Hughson	1657	Gervas Farrand	1679
John Greasley	1658	Gervas Treece	1680
Richard Jaques	1659	William Attenborrow	1681

Francis Hughson	1660	Henry Hibberd	1682
Francis Hughson	1661	William Glew	1683
Thomas Jackson	1662	John Oldershaw	1684
Thomas Jackson	1663	John Attenborrow	1685
Thomas Jackson	1664	John Oldershaw	1760
Thomas Jackson	1665	John Lambe	1780
Thomas Jackson	1666	Samuel Fearfield	1828
Thomas Henfrey	1667		
Francis Burton	1668		