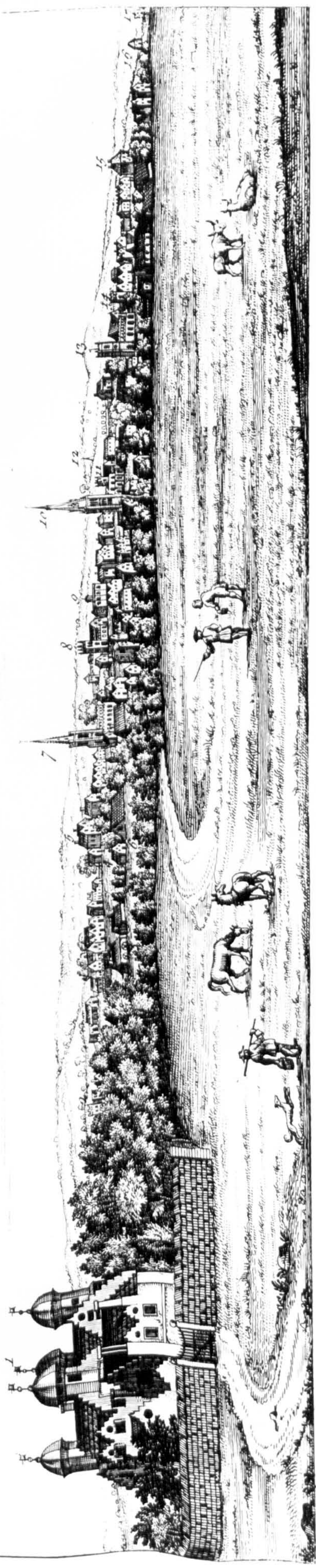


To the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Will<sup>m</sup> Pitt Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Mayor of Stamford this p<sup>re</sup>sent  
Year 1720. One of the kind  
summers of this Work, This  
Place is m<sup>ost</sup> thankfully  
Inscribed.

Prospect of the Town of STAMFORD from a Corner of Worthorp Warren



- Page 1.
1. Worthorp house.
  2. St Peter's gate.
  3. Finas Mill.
  4. St Peter's Hill.
  5. M<sup>r</sup> Avels house.
  6. The Minnery.
  7. All Saints Church.
  8. St John's Church.
  9. Browns Hospital.
  10. St Maries Church.
  11. St Michaels Church.
  12. Chahal Sceptle.
  13. St Martins Church.
  14. St Georges Church.
  15. Binzen-Hill College.
  16. The Grey Friars.
  17. The White Friars.



Stamford in 1726



The Corporation and Tradesmen  
of Stamford  
1461 - 1649

(with an indication of developments until 1750)

Thesis submitted by

Dennis Gordon Teall of Priory College, Stamford

For the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Leicester

December 31st 1975



This thesis is dedicated to my supervisor Professor Everitt whose guidance enabled me to develop an analytical approach to local history; to my secretary Mrs. Christine Weekes, whose assistance was invaluable; and to my wife Eleanor who, by undertaking numerous extra tasks, provided me with additional time for study.



C O N T E N T S

Preface	p(i)
Introduction	p.1
 <u>SECTION I, 1461-1558</u>	
Chapter I    The Charter of Incorporation of 1461/2 and Letters Patent of 1481 (together with Inspeximuses of 1485, 1504, 1510, 1547 and 1554/5) and special Letters Patent of 1542 and 1549 (bis).	p.34
Chapter II    The Regulation of Trade within the Incorporated Borough, 1461-1558.	p.95
Chapter III   Administration of the Town, 1461-1558.	p.123
Chapter IV    Corporation Administration, 1461-1558.	p.147
Chapter V     The Tradesmen of Stamford, 1461-1558.	p.167
 <u>SECTION II, 1559-1649</u>	
Chapter VI    The Royal Charters, The Inspeximus of 1558/9 and Letters Patent of 1593 and 1605.	p.234
Chapter VII   The struggle to promote trade and combat poverty within the Borough, 1559-1649.	p.283
Chapter VIII   The relationship of the Corporation with the County, the Aristocracy, the Crown and Parliament, 1559-1649.	p.359
Chapter IX    Challenges to the Sanctity of the Freeman's Oath, 1559-1649.	p.414



Chapter X	Three Aspects of Town Government; the Dignity of the Corporation; Disorderliness amongst the "town dwellers" and Charitable Assistance for the Poor, 1559-1649	p.466
Chapter XI	The Regulations of Trade within the Borough of Stamford, 1559-1649	p.527
Chapter XII	Administration of Town and Corporation, 1559-1649	p.546
Chapter XIII	The Tradesmen of Stamford, 1549-1649 (extended in specific instances to 1674)	p. 603

SECTION III 1650-1750

Chapter XIV	A General Indication of Develop- ments concerning the Corporation, 1650-1750	p.660
	Conclusion	p.703

Appendix following page 706.



P R E F A C E

This thesis is concerned with the corporation and tradesmen of Stamford,<sup>1</sup> Lincolnshire. It is divided into three sections: the first relates to the period from 1461/2 (when the Charter of Incorporation was granted) to 1548; the second to that from 1549 to 1649 (being extended in specific instances to 1674); the third from 1650 to approximately 1750. Each section, however, has a different emphasis. The first seeks to look at the aspirations of the burgesses of Stamford in relation to those of their peers in other towns; the second examines the inter-relationship between the formal legal structure of the corporation and the problems with which it had to deal; the third may be regarded as a conclusion to particular matters discussed in the earlier sections.

---

1. See Frontispiece: Stamford in 1726.  
See Appendix, Plate, Stamford c. 1788, p. (62).



The Charter of Incorporation is examined in close detail in Chapter I. A comparative study between it and subsequent letters patent is common to all three sections of the thesis. In order to facilitate a closer understanding of the complex technicalities of the various royal grants, and their relationship with one another, a comprehensive system of cross-references has been adopted. This has been extended also to other aspects of the thesis.

The manner in which Stamford corporation used its rights and privileges is critically examined with special reference to the making and application of bye-laws. Some of the problems with which it had to deal are examined closely, for example the fight against poverty in the town, efforts to promote trade, and the making of the river Welland navigable. The length of service on the council of individual members is analysed and their duties and status in the community considered. The role of corporation officials is examined.

In order to provide a better understanding of the working of the corporation a look is taken at the body



of tradesmen for the benefit of whom it had come into existence. An analysis is made of the freemen rolls to determine the principal trades within the borough. A further analysis is made of the names of these tradesmen in order to ascertain the leading families of the town. As far as extant records allow, the personal wealth of the townsmen of Stamford has been analysed from inventories and wills. The way of life of a number of individuals has been looked at in detail.

The sources used are various but centre around the records of the town council and probate courts. The original documents relating to the former are housed mainly in the Stamford town hall and to the latter, in the Lincolnshire Record Office, the Northamptonshire Record Office and the Public Record Office.

In short, this thesis seeks to illumine with the help of contemporary material the working of the corporation and the lives of the tradesmen of the borough of Stamford over a period of two, and in particular instances, three centuries.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his sincere thanks to all those who made material available for use in this thesis, in particular -

Stamford Corporation  
Stamford Town Council  
The Rev. D.A.G. Hampton Davies  
J.D. Dolby Esq., J.P.  
A.J. Hales Esq.  
Welland & Nene River Authority  
Alderman A.S. Ireson  
J.C.P. Langton Esq.  
Burghley Estate Office  
Dr. G.H. Martin  
Dr. A. Rogers  
N. Scholes Esq.  
Chairman of Stamford Freeman  
L. Tebbutt Esq.  
Dr. E.C. Till  
Canon E.F. Wright

The staffs of -

Leicester University Library  
Lincolnshire Record Office  
Northamptonshire Record Office  
Public Record Office  
Stamford Library  
Stamford Mercury  
Stamford Town Hall

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

C.C.R.	Calendar Charter Rolls
C.P.R.	Calandar Patent Rolls
C.S.P.	Calendar of State Papers
C.I.	Charter of Incorporation
H.B.	Hall Book
L.A.O.	Lincolnshire Archives Office
L.P.	Letters Patent
L.R.S.	Lincoln Record Society
N.R.O.	Northamptonshire Record Office
P.C.C.	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
Rogers, <u>op. cit.</u>	The Making of Stamford.
Rogers, <u>op. cit.</u> (TWTW)	This Was Their World
Rogers, <u>op. cit.</u> (MBS)	Medieval Buildings of Stamford
S.C.R.	Stamford Corporation Records
Stevenson, <u>op. cit.</u>	Records of Nottingham
Weinbaum, <u>op. cit.</u>	British Borough Charters
Weinbaum, <u>op. cit.</u> (IEB)	The Incorporation of English Boroughs



## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Sources

Of the printed sources available for the study of Stamford's past, the most authoritative work is The Making of Stamford, published in 1965 and edited by Dr. Alan Rogers of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Nottingham. This is based upon a series of lectures delivered in Stamford on the occasion of the quincentenary celebrations of the borough in 1961, which commemorated the granting of the charter of incorporation of Edward IV. Each of the lecturers was an authority in his own field and included Professor W.F. Grimes of the University of London (Archaeology); H.R. Loyn of University College, Cardiff (Anglo Saxon period); Dr. Joan Thirsk of the University of Leicester (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); John Harris, Curator of the Drawings Collection at the library of the R.I.B.A. (architecture of Stamford); and J.M. Lee of the University of Manchester (modern Stamford). The lecture on medieval Stamford was delivered by Dr. W.G. Hoskins of Oxford University but the published version

was written by Dr. Rogers. Dr. Rogers has also contributed a chapter to Perspectives in English Urban History, a work edited by Professor Alan Everitt of the University of Leicester, and published in 1973. Dr. Roger's contribution contains a study of Stamford Town Council from 1465 to 1492 and provides a different viewpoint of some of the aspects of the working of the corporation discussed in this thesis. Dr. Rogers has also made several significant references to Stamford in his book This was their World, published in 1972. Mention must also be made of The Medieval buildings of Stamford published in 1970, a report of the Stamford Survey Group edited by Dr. Rogers and of two pamphlets, The Mayor's Chain of Office and Stamford Civic Regalia by A.S. Ireson published in 1968 and The Archaeology of Stamford by Christine M. Mahany published in 1969.

Prior to this date, there had been a number of local histories published, all of which contain much of interest, but also much that is at the very least highly suspect. The first of these was The Survey and Antiquity of the Town of Stamford<sup>1</sup> by Richard Butcher, a former town clerk

---

1. See Appendix, Plate 2 (portrait), p. (63)



at Stamford, published in 1646 and subsequently revised. It was reprinted in The Antiquarian Annals of Stamford by Francis Peck, published in 1727. Both of these volumes, however, contain material which is most valuable when read in conjunction with contemporary documents. Subsequent histories of the town quoted extensively from Butcher and Peck, in most cases without carefully examining the latter's sources. In particular mention must be made of the two volumes of The Antiquities of Stamford and St. Martin's by W. Harrod, published in 1785. Other books of this period are Howgrave's History of Stamford published in 1726 and William Stukeley's Designs of Stamford Antiquities, published in 1735. Drakard's History of Stamford, published in 1822 is a later book which also contains useful information, providing that it is used critically and in conjunction with original sources.

Other printed sources include Domesday Book which has a comprehensive entry for Stamford, containing information of relevance to its subsequent development as an incorporated borough. Valuable, too, are the various calendars and published texts of state documents,

---

1. See Appendix, Plate 3 (portrait), p. (64)

in particular the Calendar of Charter Rolls, the Calendar of State Papers, the Lords Journals and Commons Journals and the Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Several of the reports published by the Lincoln Record Society contain items of interest, for example Volume 54, The Records of the Commissioners of Sewers, published in 1959 and edited by Dr. A. Mary Kirkus. The Municipal Corporation's Report of 1830 also throws light on the gradual decline of the system of local government by the freemen. There are several literary sources which contain items of importance, such as the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, the Itinerary of J. Leland<sup>1</sup> and Britannia by W. Camden (1586).

Of the contemporary sources consulted the most important are those preserved in Stamford itself at the Town Hall and adjacent municipal offices. Those relevant to this thesis include the charters of Stamford, the first being that of 1461/2, together with nineteenth century transcripts. Records of the proceedings of

---

1. ed. T. Hearne (1710-12)  
ed. L.T. Smith (1905-10)



the council, administration of bye-laws and admission of freemen are to be found in the five volumes of the Hall Book, 1461-1657, 1657-1721, 1721-1772, 1773-1805, 1806-1835, each of which is in an excellent state of preservation. Certain bye-laws are also set out in a portfolio of 1631.

Various records consulted at Stamford Town Hall, although not directly relevant to the major *part* of this thesis, have provided interesting background information. These include three volumes of admission of freemen from 1663-1940 and the bonds of freemen from 1676-1751. A number of documents concerning the income and expenditure of the corporation have also been studied. Thus there are portfolios of leases and conveyances dating from the fourteenth century onwards. There are also three volumes containing the register of leases from 1576-1813. The accounts of the mayor, chamberlains and bailiffs from 1697-1835 occupy four volumes in which is also included a report of the committee which inspected corporation property at the

end of the seventeenth century. Bundles of vouchers of the chamberlain survive from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Other records refer to the administration of charities. There is a deed dated 1593 referring to the granting of Trigg's money and a set of accounts for the same charity from 1664 to 1742.

The lease books contain much other interesting information including lists of apprenticeship indentures from 1560 to 1602; the assessment of the second fifteenth, 1581/2; the muster certificates, 1580-3; records of the sealing of hides, 1563; proceedings in two paternity cases, 1560 and a list of armour in the chamberlain's custody. Other miscellaneous records include papers relating to weights and measures, 1626-1846 and a register of boats on the river Welland dated 1795.

The court rolls of the manor of Stamford survive from 1695 to 1916 and those for the manor of Stamford Baron from 1769 to 1916. There are also copies of



enclosure awards for Stamford Baron St. Martin's dated 1795 and 1796 respectively. The Poll Books for 1734 and 1809 are likewise preserved.

For the demographical aspects of this thesis, use has been made of the Hearth Tax Returns in the Public Record Office and the parish registers for the parishes of St. Mary's 1573-1812, St. Michael's 1562-1812, All Saint's and St. Martin's 1562-1700 and St. John's with St. Clement's 1562-1812. The bishop's transcripts in the Lincoln Archives Office have also been examined. A total of some 300 inventories for the period have likewise been scrutinized at this office and wills of selected freemen have also been looked at in detail. The archives of the College of Arms have been consulted under the auspices of the Richmond Herald for information on the early corporation arms and regalia.

Finally, mention must be made of the Phillips Collection at the Town Hall. In addition to some of the publications already mentioned, this includes many others which provide information incidental to a study of Stamford Corporation.

## 2. The Situation and Topography of Stamford

The relationship between one of the principal topographical features of Stamford, namely the river Welland which flows through the town, and the complexity of its local government and diocesan administration is discussed below.<sup>1</sup> It is first necessary, however, to enquire into the probable reason for the establishment of Stamford on its present site. The name of the town, itself a corruption of the Saxon 'Stanford'<sup>2</sup> (stony ford), virtually supplies the answer. The river now is dammed but when the sluices are opened and the river drops to its natural level, it is still possible to ford the river just east of the present bridge which links the two parts of Stamford. At this point the moderately steep sides of the Welland almost meet, for the floor of the valley is but one hundred and fifty yards wide. To the east and west the flood plain widens out such that in earlier times its alluvial bed would have greatly hindered travel. It is now generally agreed that this crossing formed part of

---

1. See below pp. 28-33.

2. E. Ekwall, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names, Fourth Edition, 1960, pp. 436-437.



the pre-Roman Jurassic Way.<sup>1</sup> As its name implies, this ancient trackway, or perhaps more correctly a corridor, followed the belt of jurassic rocks which straddle England from north east to south west. Its influence upon the subsequent development of Stamford is examined further below.<sup>2</sup>

The river Welland itself has occupied a significant place in the life of the town. Rising near Market Harborough, it flows through Stamford to the Wash. Upstream it is comparatively narrow, being often no wider than five yards, whilst at Stamford it is approximately forty yards. Eastwards it soon enters the fens, where it is now canalised and embanked. Undoubtedly Vikings, Danes, Saxons all made use of its plain to penetrate the heart of England.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to say whether or not it was navigable in the earlier part of the period covered by this thesis. Certainly by 1570/71, the borough corporation of Stamford was petitioning Queen Elizabeth for an act of parliament to make the river navigable 'as beforetimes it hath been'<sup>4</sup> The subsequent efforts of the corporation and burgesses to

- 
1. W.F. Grimes, Aspects of Archaeology in Britain and Beyond, 1951, pp. 144-71. See Appendix Map I, p.(59).
  2. See p. 11 below.
  3. See pp. 12-17 below.
  4. See p. 339 below.

improve the navigation are a tale of disappointment and frustration.<sup>1</sup> When at last success was achieved, it was to be relatively short-lived on account of the improvement in other forms of transportation. The river has also influenced the town in other, though less significant ways. In times of flood its rising waters have caused considerable damage;<sup>2</sup> its water meadows, still for the most part undeveloped, have brought the countryside almost to the centre of the town.<sup>3</sup>

Finally mention must be made of another feature that has an important effect upon the architecture and visual amenities of Stamford. This is the limestone rock that is to be found beneath the town and its surrounding villages. Stamford freestone, Ketton freestone and Barnack rag, together with other distinctive stones from neighbouring villages have all contributed to the history of the borough.

---

1. See pp. 341-356 below.

2. W. Harrod, The Antiquity of Stamford and St. Martins, 1785, pp. 152, 226.

3. See Appendix, Map II, p. (60)& Map III, p. (61)



### 3. Early History of Stamford to 1461

When the Romans drove Ermine Street northwards from London, it was to meet the probable course of the Jurassic Way just south of the site of Stamford, at the point where the latter turned sharply westward along the scarp of the Welland valley. Instead of following the line of the Jurassic Way across the ford, however, the Romans made a crossing approximately half a mile upstream. Some one and a half miles north west of the ford, Ermine Street again met the Jurassic Way to follow it northwards to Lincoln.<sup>1</sup> About one mile from this junction, alongside the road, the Romans were to construct their military station near the present village of Great Casterton. Of Roman settlement on the site of Stamford itself, however, there is no trace, though there may have been the isolated villa.

With the end of the Roman era, the river crossing near Great Casterton fell into disuse. Once again the north-south route passed across the ford. The Roman station at Great Casterton itself was abandoned and the principal inhabited site moved south east to

---

1. A. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, 1965, pp.3,4.  
See Appendix, Map I, p. (59).

banks of the ford.<sup>1</sup> Of the original Anglo-Saxon settlement there is little known that is precise.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of references to Stamford in the extant manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In defining the limits of land granted by king Wulfhere to the newly consecrated monastery at Medeshamstede<sup>3</sup> in 656<sup>4</sup> reference is made in the Peterborough version (F) to the boundary running "from Easton to Stamford and from Stamford even as the water runneth to . . . Northborough".<sup>5</sup> Subsequently the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle refers to the invasion of England by the Danes in the ninth century.<sup>6</sup> Stamford was to become one of the five boroughs of the Danelaw, the others being Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.<sup>7</sup> In the years that followed his accession to the throne in 900, Edward the Elder

---

1. Rogers op. cit., pp. 12-13.

2. Ibid., p. 15

3. i.e. Peterborough.

4. Bodleian MS. Land. Misc. 636.

5. D. Whitelock, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 1961, p. 20.

6. Ibid., p. 41.

7. Ibid., p. 71 c.f. F.M. Stenton, The Danes in England, 1927.



gradually established Anglo-Saxon supremacy

over the Danes.

During May and June he

took his army to Stamford where he ordered a

borough to be built on the south side of

the river.<sup>1</sup>

At this time "all the people

to the more northern borough submitted to him

and sought to have him as their lord".<sup>2</sup>

For

more than a century, therefore, Stamford was to

witness Saxon-Danish conflict.

In 940

Olaf Guthfrithson entered the land of the five

boroughs eventually coming to terms with Edmund,<sup>3</sup>

the English king, such that Mercia north of Watling

Street was in the hands of the Norse King

seated at York.

This agreement

was short lived for Edmund in 942 was to

regain the five boroughs<sup>4</sup> although they were to

1. i.e. St. Martin's Stamford Baron.

2. Whitelock, op. cit., p. 66.

3. Ibid., p. 71.

4. Ibid., p. 71.

keep their own customs. In the last decade of the tenth century further Danish raids caused great damage in the coastal areas and in 1013 Swein, King of Denmark, landed in the Humber. Once again the five boroughs submitted to the Danish king,<sup>1</sup> but in the following year Swein died.<sup>2</sup> Etheldred re-established English rule, but was soon at war with Swein's son Cnut. Following the battle of Ashington in 1016, Cnut and Edmund, who by now had succeeded his father, divided England between them, Cnut taking London and the lands north of the Thames.<sup>3</sup> Shortly afterwards Edmund died and in 1017 Cnut became sole king.<sup>4</sup> When Cnut died in 1035 he was to be succeeded first by his sons Harold I and Hardacnut<sup>5</sup>, and subsequently in 1042 by the elected king, Edward the Confessor.<sup>6</sup> Edward's death in January 1066 brought the succession of Harold II<sup>7</sup> whose reign was terminated at the Battle of Hastings by the Norman invaders.<sup>8</sup>

Evidence of the joint occupation of the Stamford area by Danes and Saxons, virtually as a double community, is still to be seen in the place names of the surrounding

---

1. Whitelock, op. cit., p.92.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

5. Ibid., pp. 102,103.

7. Ibid., p. 139.

3. Ibid., p. 94.

6. Ibid., pp. 106,107.

8. Ibid., p. 145.

4. Ibid., 97.



villages.<sup>1</sup>

That the town itself was a centre of considerable importance in this era is evident from the coinage that was minted there.<sup>2</sup>

For the period from Ethelred to Harold II (979-1066) there were 52 moneys in Stamford compared with 13 in Derby, 21 in Leicester, 95 in Lincoln, 141 in London, 38 in Norwich, 13 in Nottingham, 29 in Oxford, 75 in Winchester and 91 in York. 403 different varieties of coins were issued in Stamford during the period from Etheldred II to Edward the Confessor. The corresponding figures for other towns were Cambridge 174, Lincoln 1045, London 2517, Norwich 260, Oxford 177, Winchester 628 and York 1020. Dr. Rogers has suggested that since these figures are indicative of the relative importance of each community they have some relevance to possible estimates of Domesday population. On the basis of the figures for Stamford therefore it appears likely that in the first generation after the Norman Conquest, Stamford had a population of approximately 3000.<sup>3</sup>

Other evidence of the commercial importance of Stamford comes from pottery finds.<sup>4</sup> 'Stamford ware'

---

1. Rogers, op. cit., pp. 17, 18. Thus Wothorpe (of Danish origin) adjoins the south-western boundary of Stamford, whilst to the north-east is the English Uffington and to the north-west Empingham.

2. Ibid., pp. 22-24.

3. Ibid., p. 24.

4. Ibid., pp. 25, 26.

is the name given to Anglo-Saxon pottery with a distinctive form of glazing. It is made of middle Jurassic estuarial clay of the type found along the west and south margin of the fens and in an outcrop at Stamford itself. Such pottery has been found in many parts of England, where presumably it was carried by traders.<sup>1</sup>

It may be assumed, therefore, that Anglo-Danish Stamford was a prosperous middle sized town, a conclusion borne out by the entry for the town in Domesday Book. Herein, reference is made to the six wards of the borough, five in Lincolnshire and one in Northamptonshire on the opposite side of the Welland. The latter ward nevertheless paid the same dues as the others except for Landgable and toll which belonged to the Abbot of Peterborough.<sup>2</sup>

In the reign of King Edward the Confessor, in the five wards north of the river, there were one hundred and forty-one messuages which paid all customary dues. At the time of Domesday five had been destroyed on account of the building of the castle. In addition at Domesday there were also at least two churches and a mill.

---

1. Rogers, op. cit., pp. 25-26

2. Chas. Gowen Smith, Domesday Book, Lincolnshire and Rutland, 1870, p.4.

Certainly Stamford was a substantial town in the eleventh century. There must have been within the town an element approximating to the burgess population of the late medieval period. Domesday refers to seventy-seven messuages belonging to sokemen who held their own lands in demesne and who "could choose lord or patron wheresoever they will".<sup>1</sup> In addition there were twelve lawmen in Edward's reign (nine at Domesday) who had "sac and soke over their own houses and their inhabitants; except as to taxes, heriots, or forfeiture of their bodies for murder and for theft to the value of forty ores of silver".<sup>2</sup> and over whom the king had no other right than that of inflicting pecuniary punishment for their faults and crimes and that of heriot and toll.

Of the period which followed the Norman Conquest, Dr. Rogers, has commented -

"...during the Middle Ages, Stamford was at the height of its glory. Economically it was both a trading and a manufacturing centre of great repute. Politically it played a considerable part in the events of the period. And the ecclesiastical history of medieval England would be very much poorer

---

1. Gowen Smith, op. cit., p. 5.

2. Ibid.



if Stamford had not made its contribution. And yet in each of these spheres the Middle Ages saw the decline of Stamford as well as the peak of its achievements".<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view most relevant to this thesis, namely the administration of the town, the Middle Ages were a period during which the burgesses appear to have lost ground for a time in their desire for independence. It is apparent from Domesday that in 1086 Stamford was not under a direct lord as was nearby Grantham where the king held the land.<sup>2</sup> During the following century, however, a change took place at Stamford which itself was to become a "seigneurial" town.<sup>3</sup>

In 1155, Henry II granted Stamford to Richard de Humet, constable of Normandy and sheriff of Rutland, in whose family it remained until 1204 when it was confiscated on account of their support of the French. In 1205, King John gave his cousin William earle Warren, the town and castle of Stamford together with Grantham and other estates.<sup>4</sup> This grant was made in recognition

---

1. Rogers, op. cit., p. 34.

2. Ibid., pp. 34, 35.

3. Ibid., p. 36.

4. Butcher, The Survey and Antiquity of the Town of Stamford 1646 (in Peck) p. 5.

of the latter's help during the French wars, and as some compensation for the loss of his estates in France. On Warrene's death in 1240<sup>1</sup> Stamford reverted to the crown and Henry III gave it to his eldest son Edward, who settled it on his wife Eleanor of Castile.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after his succession to the throne in 1272, Edward gave a life interest in the town to William earl Warrene's son John, who according to Butcher held it till his death in 1347.<sup>3</sup>

Such dating, however, raises certain questions in that it would seem that John earl Warrene held Stamford for some seventy years or so.<sup>4</sup> Edward III then gave the town to William de Bohun, earl of Northampton on whose death in 1360 it reverted to the crown.<sup>5</sup> In 1363, together with other lands formerly held by the Warrenes, it was settled by Edward III on his second son,

- 
1. Butcher, op. cit., p. 5. Rogers, op. cit., p. 36.
  2. Rogers, op. cit., p. 36.
  3. Butcher, op. cit., p. 6.
  4. c.f., Rogers, op. cit., p. 36.  
" . . the (Warrene) family held it (Stamford) until the death in 1347 of the last of the Warrenes".
  5. Butcher, op. cit., p. 6. Rogers, op. cit., p. 36.

Edmund Langley, earl of Cambridge and later Duke of York.<sup>1</sup> It was still in the York family, when the Yorkist king, Edward IV succeeded to the throne in 1461. In that year he granted it for life to his mother Cicely duchess of York.<sup>2</sup>

This association of Stamford with the house of York has been used to explain the often repeated legend that in 1461 the town was "destroyed with fire and sword by the soldiers of the rival house of Lancaster".<sup>3</sup> Since the supposed destruction of the town took place during the period in which discussions concerning the granting of the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 were presumably taking place, it is necessary to examine the available evidence.

---

1.F.Peck, The Antiquarian Annals of Stamford, 1727, Lib, XI, p. 62. Rogers, op. cit., p. 36.

2.Butcher, op. cit., p. 6. C.P.R., Edward IV 1461-67, p.131.

3.Peck, op. cit., Lib., XIV, p. 63.



#### 4. The Lancastrian Assault 1461

It has been asserted that Stamford was devastated by the Lancastrians. Dr. W.G. Hoskins, who gave one of a series of lectures on the history of Stamford as part of the borough corporation quincentenary celebrations in 1961 referred to "the destruction of the town by the Lancastrians".<sup>1</sup> Likewise Dr. Rogers who reproduced Dr. Hoskins' lecture as an essay in The Making of Stamford refers to "the bitter blow of the sack of 1461".<sup>2</sup> though he observes that the destruction of 1461 has often been exaggerated.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Rogers looks for his evidence in turn to Leland and Camden, who lived from 1506 to 1552 and 1551 to 1623 respectively. Leland had relatively little to say of Stamford, the relevant passages being -

"...the northern men in one of the three first king Edward's days did ill to the town of the Stamford, and burned many writings of their antiquities and privileges."<sup>4</sup>

"...the northern men burned much of<sup>5</sup> Stamford town. It was not since fully re-edified".

Camden is more emphatic -

---

1. Ex. inf. W.G. Hoskins, 19th October 1961.

2. Rogers, op. cit., p. 51.

3. Ibid., p. 52.

4. J. Leland, op. cit., fo 29, Part VIII, Vol.4., p. 89. edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith, London.

5. Ibid., fo. 109, Part IX, Vol. 5, p. 5.

"Trade itself supported the Town, till, in the heat of the Civil war between the houses of Lancaster and York, the northern soldiers stormed and utterly destroyed it with fire and sword. Since that, it could never perfectly<sup>1</sup> recover and come up to its former glory"

The observations were made by Leland some eighty years after and by Camden more than one hundred and twenty years after the alleged event. It is necessary, therefore, to question their accuracy.

If indeed the town was destroyed with fire and sword then there is no contemporary documentary evidence to prove it in the borough archives. In the first Hall Book, entries in which commence with the granting of the 1461/2 charter, there is no mention at all of any damage to the town. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose, however, that if the damage had been as complete as has been suggested above, there would have been at least some reference to the consequences arising therefrom.

But what of the visual evidence remaining in the town today? The great church of St. Mary's has a tower in the early English style (13th century) surmounted by a spire in the Decorated style. The main body of the church was built in the 13th century, and it is generally assumed that the later Decorated and Perpendicular work

---

1. W. Camden, Britannia, 3rd Edit., I. 1753, p. 555.

is proof of its destruction in 1461.<sup>1</sup> There is little real evidence for this supposition however. On the contrary it is doubtful whether the tower could have survived if destruction had taken place on the scale supposed.

In Red Lion Square stands All Saint's (referred to in the fifteenth century as All Hallows). Much of this is thirteenth century work, including the arcades in the nave and chancel. During the fifteenth century, however, the tower and spire, of high quality, were added, together with the upper parts of the church. This rebuilding was financed principally by two merchants William and John Browne in about 1470.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise the church of St. Martin's, situated in Stamford Baron, outside the town walls, was extensively rebuilt in the perpendicular style in about 1480.<sup>3</sup> Restoration was also carried out in St. George's during the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Finally, reference must be made to St. John's, which was rebuilt in the perpendicular style during 1450 before the Lancastrians passed through the town.<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. N. Pevsner & J. Harris, The Buildings of England, Lincolnshire, 1964, p. 662.
  2. Ibid., pp. 657-658.
  3. Ibid., pp. 660-661.
  4. Ibid., pp. 658-659.
  5. H. Wright, St. John's Church, Stamford, 1968, p. 1. Pevsner & Harris, op. cit., pp. 659-660.



It was knowledge of the extensive rebuilding of the principal churches that survived the medieval period during the latter part of the fifteenth century which led historians to deduce that they had been destroyed by the Lancastrians. Indeed Peck goes much further and states that the Lancastrians were responsible for the destruction of many churches which were known to have existed in Stamford at one time.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite possible, however, that these churches disappeared because they fell into disuse. Thus, of the parishes Peck mentions, although the last presentation to St. Mary's Bennewerk was in 1456, just before the Lancastrians entered the town, it was too poor to pay its pension of 20s to St. Leonard's Priory in 1440;<sup>2</sup> St. Michael's Cornstall was united to St. George's in 1308;<sup>3</sup> St. Stephen's last presentation was not until 1533;<sup>4</sup> Trinity had disappeared by 1428.<sup>5</sup> All Saints' in Water Street, Stamford Baron, where the last presentation was in 1435,<sup>6</sup> like St. Mary's Bennewerk above, could have been destroyed by the Lancastrians, but it equally could have disappeared because it was redundant. The principal church in Stamford Baron, referred to above,

---

1. Peck, op.cit., XIV, p. 63

2. L.A.O. Register 20, folio, 126d; L.R.S. 3, p.72, *ibid.* 21, p.346.

3. L.A.O. Register 2, folio 24.

4. L.A.O. Register 27, folio 26, Statutes 2/3 Edward VI, CII.

5. L.A.O. Register 14, folio 281 Feudal Aids, VI, pp. 364-5.

6. L.A.O. Register 17, folio 36; Cat. Anc. Deeds, III, p. 455  
(D427)

is very large and was probably quite adequate for the relatively small population resident on the south side of the river.

There has been a significant change in informed opinion in Stamford concerning the Lancastrian assault during the last five years. Thus, in a report on the medieval buildings of Stamford by the local survey group based upon a list compiled by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for statutory scheduling, Dr. Rogers comments "the destruction wrought by the Lancastrian army in Stamford in 1461 has been greatly exaggerated and not all the rebuilding in the latter fifteenth century can be attributed to this cause".<sup>1</sup> It seems possible that the rebuilding referred to above is evidence of a flourishing town rather than of destruction by the Lancastrians. The fifteenth century was a time when principal churches were being rebuilt, and in 1475 the same William Brown a Calais Stapler, erected what must be one of the finest medieval hospitals in the country, now known as Browne's Hospital.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to date much of the rebuilding precisely. If it took place before 1461, then damage is unlikely to have taken place on the scale earlier writers

- 
1. A. Rogers, The Medieval Buildings of Stamford, Stamford Survey Group Report I, 1970, p. 13.
  2. N. Pevsner & J. Harris, op. cit., pp. 664-665.  
See Appendix, Plate 3 (engraving of Wm. Browne & wife), p. (65).

have maintained. On the other hand if it was undertaken after 1461, it is unlikely that the fine craftsmanship apparent in the execution of the detail of the perpendicular architecture could have flourished in a town that had been destroyed by fire and its population put to the sword. It seems much more likely that the great building works of the fifteenth century were due to increased prosperity in the town after a period of depression, probably associated with the Black Death.

The absence of documentary evidence concerning the government of the town prior to the granting of the charter requires investigation. Butcher, a former town clerk, writing in the seventeenth century commented upon the dearth of documents. In his view it was caused by "records being ill-kept and rebellious and troublesome times happening (by which means the town was consumed by fire and consequently many of the ancient records lost and embezzled)" <sup>1</sup>

It may well be that his first observation is the more likely explanation for the lack of records. Until the granting of the charter as is explained below, the

---

1. Butcher, op. cit., p. 26.



government of the town was by prescription rather than formal ordinance. It is possible, therefore, that it was considered unnecessary to keep written records appertaining to its government. Apart from the Royal Letter of 1257 and the Warenne charter of 1313 referred to below there is little evidence that many other documents had existed. Butcher's anger, therefore, concerning "mean men. . .purloining. . .ancient records, charters and muniments; tending to the death and destruction of this corporation<sup>1</sup>" had little substance. He assumes, as do many subsequent writers, that the reference in the 1461/62 Charter to the confirmation of more ancient privileges points to the existence of earlier charters. This is not necessarily so, however, in a community which has gradually evolved, such as the town of Stamford.

Thus it is possible to trace the legend of the Lancastrian assault from the present day through Peck and Butcher to Camden and Leland. Just how slender the evidence is, however, must never be overlooked. It might be reasonable to conclude, therefore, that although there may have been some damage wrought within the town by the Lancastrians there is little cause for asserting that it amounted to almost total destruction.

---

1. R. Butcher, op. cit., p. 7.

5. Stamford and St. Martin's

It has already been noted above<sup>1</sup> that King Edward the Confessor ordered a borough to be built on the south side of the river Welland and that subsequently the Danes living in the borough on the northern bank submitted to him. The distinction created at this time between the principal borough to the north of the river, and the newer inhabitation to the south has not entirely disappeared to this day. It has been observed that at the time of Domesday there were six wards in Stamford, five, in Lincolnshire (north of the river) and one in Northamptonshire (south of the river). At that time the Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire wards paid the same customary dues to one another, except that the latter paid Landgable and toll to the Abbot of Peterborough. However, no details are given of the Northamptonshire ward and this in itself tends to suggest that there was a distinction between the two parts of the town. The town wall, the line of which can easily be followed to the present day, was entirely to the north of the river

---

1. See p. 13 above.

and throughout the medieval period the southern borough remained unfortified.

The precise status of the Northamptonshire ward remained ill-defined until comparatively recent times. During the medieval period it appears to have been taxed by the same assessors as the borough proper. As is discussed in Chapter I below,<sup>1</sup> this procedure became a matter of dispute during the reign of Henry VIII, when letters patent were issued concerning it. These letters patent, dated June 30th, 1543, indicate from an examination of the relevant taxation rolls that in 1336/37 when Edward III levied "a fifteenth and tenth" the position was as follows -

"The town of Stamford in the Parts of Kesteven in the said County of Lincoln is there taxed among the Boroughs for the Tenth at £35.17s.8d. and that Stamford Baron within the Wapentake of Ness in the said Parts of Kesteven in the said County of Lincoln is there taxed at £10". 2

Similarly in 1382/83 in the reign of Richard II reference was made in the taxation rolls to "the Borough of

---

1. See pp. 81-83 below.

2. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 115.



Stamford with Bradcroft. . .and. . .Stamford Baron in the said Wapentake of Ness in the Parts of Kesteven", the former being taxed at £35 17s.8d. and the latter at £10. Thus it would appear that although Stamford Baron in the fourteenth century was regarded as part of Lincolnshire at least for taxation purposes nevertheless a distinction was being drawn between it and the borough proper.

The use of the name Stamford Baron in the taxation rolls is of interest in itself. The origin of the terminology "Baron" is somewhat obscure. Harrod<sup>1</sup> suggests that it may have been because it was part of the lands that the Abbot of Peterborough held "per Baroniam" as opposed to Stamford borough proper which was a "burgus regis". As has been observed above, however, his statement that it was first used in 1455 is not borne out.<sup>2</sup> In contemporary records at the Stamford Town Hall relating to the period of this thesis, however, this part of the town is usually referred to as St. Martin's, after the parish

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., p. 261.

2. Ibid., p. 261.

church there. Originally, however, there were two churches on the Northamptonshire side, the other being All Saints where the last presentation was in 1435.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Domesday placed the southern borough in Northamptonshire, whilst the medieval taxation rolls included it in the parts of Kesteven. The status of St. Martin's was further complicated in 1541 when the Archdeaconry of Northampton in the Diocese of Lincoln was split off ~~to~~ ~~from~~ the Diocese of Peterborough.<sup>2</sup> This transfer included the parish of St. Martin's. The rest of the town, that is the borough, however, remained in the Diocese of Lincoln. It was not surprising, therefore, that there were many disputes, not only concerning taxation, but also various aspects of trade. Many of the difficulties are discussed in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The situation at the present time is still anomalous. The ecclesiastical parish of St. Martin's-cum-Wothorpe on the south bank is in the Diocese of Peterborough and the five parishes of Stamford,

---

1. L.A.O. Register 17, fol.36: Cat. Anc. Deeds,iii,p.455.

2. Northamptonshire Record Office, Wills & Other Probate Records, 1971, p.1

north of the river, namely All Saint's, St. George's, St. John's, St. Mary's and the former parish of St. Michael's<sup>1</sup> are in the diocese of Lincoln. For local government purposes, however, that part of St. Martin's parish (excluding Wothorpe) nearest the river was at the time of the local Government Act of 1972 within the area administered by the Stamford Borough Corporation, and for that reason had come to be known in recent years as St. Martin's Within.<sup>2</sup>

At that time Stamford Borough was in the County of Lincoln (Parts of Kesteven). The Corporation of Stamford, thus abolished in 1972, has been superseded by Stamford Town Council. Stamford Town Council is a constituent local council of the Kesteven District Council in the county of Lincolnshire. The remaining south easterly part of the St. Martin's ecclestial parish has its own local council, Stamford Baron St. Martin's Without Council, which is now under

- 
1. On November 1st 1971, St. Michael's Parish was dissolved and divided between St. Mary's, St. John's and St. George's (London Gazette, October 28th 1971).
  2. Dolby's Directory of Stamford, 1967.



the overall jurisdiction of the City of Peterborough District Council in the County of Cambridgeshire. Before the passing of the Local Government Act of 1972 Stamford Baron St. Martin's Without was in the area of the Barnack Rural District Council in the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough and prior to that in the Soke of Peterborough, which was separated from Northamptonshire proper by the Local Government Act of 1888.<sup>1</sup> Thus it can be seen that the status of St. Martin's is extremely complex. In general terms, however, the evidence suggests that it should not be included directly in this study of the corporation of Stamford.

---

1. W. Page, Victoria History of Counties of England, Northamptonshire, II, 1906, p. 424.

Section I 1461-1558Chapter IThe Royal Charters and Letters Patent

The granting of the Royal Charter of Incorporation to "George Chapman, alderman . . . and the burgesses"<sup>1</sup> of Stamford on February 12th, 1461/2 no doubt marked the culmination of the aspirations of the leading tradesmen of the borough. The legal severing of the umbilical cord between town and county was regarded as the final act in the gradual development of the town from its conception as a community. It marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. As Lipson has pointed out "the town," not the State, represented the vital principle of medieval economy"<sup>2</sup> during the Middle Ages.

The charter itself is preserved in the Town Hall at Stamford, and a photograph of it is given in the appendix.<sup>3</sup> A translation of this and subsequent charters was made during the nineteenth century by a former town clerk and is contained in the manuscript Charter Book, which also forms part of the municipal records. Of special interest

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 1.

2. E. Lipson, The Economic History of England, I, 1962, p. 265.

3. See Appendix, Plate 5, p. (66).

is the contemporary paraphrase of the charter which is contained in the first Hall Book of Stamford.<sup>1</sup> This is written in concise English and lists its main points in a clear, itemised form. A contemporary translation such as this is indeed rare, if not unique.<sup>2</sup> The charter sets out the "liberties, franchises, quittances and immunities"<sup>3</sup> granted to the town, the first being that -

"the said town or borough shall hereafter be a free borough corporate in deed and name of alderman and burgesses and that the same alderman and burgesses and their heirs and successors shall be free burgesses and shall have a gild merchant and shall use the same liberties and free customs in the same borough which the burgesses or inhabitants of the town or borough<sup>4</sup> aforesaid have heretofore used and enjoyed."

The precise meaning of the terminology "free borough corporate" has been a matter for considerable discussion by scholars. Examination of the earlier borough charters indicates that the privileges inherent in the "liber burgus" were established before the notion of formal incorporation had crystallized.<sup>5</sup> The earliest extant charter to include a clause relating to "liber burgus" is that granted to Dunwich in 1199 by King John, who subsequently conferred similar privileges on a

---

1. S.C.R., Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 2.

2. Ex. inf., G.H. Martin, 1972.

3. A. Ballard & J. Tait, British Borough Charters, II, 1923, pp. 2-7.

4. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 1.

5. C. Gross, Gild Merchant, I, 1890, p. 5.



number of other towns.<sup>1</sup>

Under Henry III and Edward

I there was a considerable increase in the number of towns to receive the status of "liber burgus".<sup>2</sup>

Associated with this development was the more general use of the phrase "free burgesses" liberi burgenses.<sup>3</sup> Gross found it difficult to define "liber burgus", regarding it as a "variable generic conception" which comprised a "vague aggregate of franchises, whose number was gradually increased in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries".<sup>4</sup>

Maitland when writing of new boroughs, defined a "free borough" as one in which the lord had substituted burgage tenure for villein tenure.<sup>5</sup>

Ballard

concluded, with reference to the town of the twelfth century that "two features only can be predicated of every borough, the application of burgage tenure to all tenements within its borders, and the possession of a law court with jurisdiction over all the inhabitants of these tenements".<sup>6</sup>

In this respect, he saw no difference between a borough and a free borough.<sup>7</sup>

The reconciliation

of these opinions, as attempted by Professor Tait, is

---

1. J. Tait, The Medieval English Borough, 1936, p. 197

2. Ibid., p. 201

3. Ballard & Tait, op. cit., pp. 132-133.

4. Gross, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

5. F.W. Maitland, History of English Law, 2nd ed. 1898, p. 640.

6. A. Ballard, The English Borough in the Twelfth Century,

7. Ibid., p. 76. 1941, p. 30.

probably the most satisfactory definition of "liber burgus" so far achieved.<sup>1</sup> In his view, Gross was correct in thinking that "liber burgus" was a variable conception, but had failed to make clear that the grant of such status to a mesne borough seemed to exclude those privileges that only the king could grant. On the other hand Maitland and Ballard missed the full implication of "liber burgus" in the case of the greater town. By the time that Stamford's charter of incorporation was granted in 1462, the meaning of "liber burgus" was fairly clear; only those boroughs with the more comprehensive privileges were to retain this status. The smaller mesne boroughs, the privileges of which extended little beyond burgage tenure, gradually lost their burghal status during the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup> For the remainder, from the accession of Edward II in 1307, the ultimate goal was to obtain from the king a charter of incorporation, regarded "as the most comprehensive statement of all attainable privileges".<sup>3</sup>

The principle of formal incorporation had developed gradually, and in its early stages implied

1. Tait, op. cit., pp. 211-213.

2. Ibid., p. 205.

3. M. Weinbaum, British Borough Charters, 1307-1660 1943, p. XXI.

mainly perpetuity and only sometimes the possession of the symbol of corporateness, the common seal.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, by Edward I's reign, the great boroughs had "already in substance attained to all or almost all" <sup>2</sup> of the five characteristics which, during the fifteenth century, came to be associated with incorporation:

"perpetual succession; power of suing and being sued as a whole and by the specific name of the corporation (e.g. mayor, alderman and burgesses of this or that town), power to hold lands, a common seal and authority to issue bye-laws".<sup>3</sup>

By the second half of Henry VI's reign incorporation was much sought after.<sup>4</sup>

The last twenty years of his reign, together with the first decade of that of his successor, Edward IV, have been described as the "classic age of incorporation".<sup>5</sup>

The reference to the "gild merchant" must next be examined. In many towns this body and the town corporation were originally distinct entities, even though the members of each were often the same individuals.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. 90

2. F.W. Maitland, Constitutional History of England, p.54.

3. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. 18. (IEB)

4. Ibid., p. 90.

5. Ibid., pp. 62-96.

6. For a fuller discussion of this point see C. Gross, op. cit., I. Chapter V.



The earliest reference to the gild merchant occurs in a charter granted by Robert Fitz-Hamon to the burgesses of Burford (1087-1107).<sup>1</sup> During the fourteenth century, however, there is an increasing tendency for burgesses and gildsmen to become identical. Membership of the gild conferred the exclusive right to buy and sell within the borough without the payment of toll. In Stamford, at least from the hall books commencing in 1461/62, there is no evidence of the existence of the gild merchant as an organised body apart from the town corporation. As these hall books indicate, and as is discussed below, the regulations for the conduct of trade, were made by the corporation.

It is pertinent to examine the meaning of the clause "to have a gild merchant". Dr. Rogers, commenting upon it states, "It is difficult to assess how far the lack of a gild merchant, not granted until 1462, hindered the burgesses in their attempts to regulate their own economy".<sup>2</sup> It is debatable, however, whether the wording of the 1461/62 charter is to be interpreted as

---

1. Gross, op. cit., p. 5.

2. Rogers, op. cit., p. 46.

meaning that no gild merchant existed prior to the incorporation of the town; or whether the gild merchant was one of the "liberties" already enjoyed. In this respect Dr. G.H. Martin is of the opinion that 1461/62 is an improbably late date for the first foundation of a gild merchant.<sup>1</sup>

Before considering further the matter of a gild merchant at Stamford, it is appropriate to enquire what other "liberties and customs" the burgesses had "used and enjoyed" before the granting of the charter of incorporation. Certain of these are set out in the royal grant usually referred to as the 1257 charter. A letter was sealed by Henry III on July 25th in that year, at the instigation of Edward his son, in favour of the burgesses of Stamford granting them the privileges which he had bestowed on the burgesses of Oxford on March 26th 1256/57.<sup>2</sup> This provided that -

"through all the king's land and power they and their goods, wherever found, shall not be arrested for any debt, whereof they are not sureties or principal debtors, unless the debtors be of their commune and power and have wherewith

---

1. Ex. inf., G.H. Martin, 1972.

2. C.C.R., I., 1903, p. 472.

to discharge the debt in whole or in part  
and the said burgesses have failed to do  
justice to the creditors . . . . ."<sup>1</sup>

A further provision was to ensure that burgesses' goods could not be distrained for any "trespass or forfeiture of their servants". Moreover, should a burgess die, whether testate or intestate, their goods should not be confiscated but should pass to their heirs.

Medieval towns were most anxious to secure protection for their burgesses in this way from action taken against them when passing through other places, for the recovery of debts incurred by fellow citizens. Indeed, it was a practice which seriously interfered with the free conduct of trade. For example, for a time, the men of Hereford refused to pass through Wales on this account.<sup>2</sup> Other towns had secured this freedom from distraint, the earliest being Bristol, concerning which it was decreed in 1188 that ". . . no burgess be distrained anywhere in my land or dominion for any debt, unless he be the debtor or a surety".<sup>3</sup>

---

1. C.C.R., I., 1903, p. 471.

2. Lipson op. cit., p. 288.

3. Ballard and Tait, op. cit., p. 229.



Some towns, however, were less privileged and were obliged to accept communal responsibility for the debts of individual defaulting burgesses. When the community failed to remedy matters distraint could still take place. Such was the case with Stamford and indeed many other towns which received grants at about this time. For example, the reservation was included in the charter of the following towns within a fifty mile radius of Stamford: Lynn (1255), Northampton (1255), Nottingham (1255), Cambridge (1256), Derby (1256), Leicester (1269).<sup>1</sup> It has been stated that this conditional proviso was the bequest 'of Henry III's municipal policy'.<sup>2</sup> In 1275 the first statute of Westminster provided that ". . . in no City, Borough, Town, Fair or Market, there be any foreign person which is of this realm distrained for any debt wherefore he is not debtor or pledge".<sup>3</sup> It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this statute superseded the rights and obligations set out in the King's letter of 1257 and confirmed in the 1461/62 Charter. It has been asserted that the Statute of Westminster

---

1. Ballard and Tait, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

2. Lipson, op. cit., p. 289.

3. Statutes of the Realm (Ed. 1810), I.33.

failed in its purpose and where it was carried into operation "it was rather by virtue of its incorporation as part and parcel of the town custumal, as at Leicester in 1277".<sup>1</sup>

The position in Stamford may be compared to that of Grantham, with which it has many associations. In 1312 John, fifth earl Warrene, gave the people of Grantham a charter.<sup>2</sup> The original has been lost, but an eighteenth century transcript by Peck survives. Amongst other privileges it authorises the appointment of an alderman. In the following year Warrene, who was also Lord of Stamford, granted a charter to the burgesses of Stamford giving them the right to elect one of their number as alderman. The date of this charter is given, apparently incorrectly, by Peck as 1275/76.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately its text no longer survives. The Grantham charter also states that the burgesses

"...shall be quit of Tronage in our said Town of Grantham, so that they may buy and sell, bring and carry, at their pleasure, all manner of wares and merchandise, without Troner and without peser, or without any other charge or challenge of Tronage or of pesage, or of bringing or of carrying by us<sup>4</sup> or by our heirs or by our assigns for ever".

- 
1. Lipson, op. cit., pp. 292-293.
  2. Martin, op. cit., p. 11.
  3. Peck, op. cit., IX p. 3.
  4. G.H. Martin, op. cit., p. 237.

It might well be that the Warrene charter granted to Stamford used the same phraseology, but there is no proof.

The question must now be asked whether there are any more indications that would support the tentative suggestion that there was a gild merchant in existence in Stamford at the time of the incorporation. Is it reasonable to suppose that Butcher might have gleaned any valid information concerning the government of the town before the granting of the charter of Edward IV? He writes -

"The Government of Stamford was (long before their written charter) held and used amongst themselves by an ancient prescription, which was called the aldermanry of the gild; as strong and as large (if not more strong) than now the same is settled by the charters of the first and fifteenth of Edward the fourth".<sup>1</sup>

Butcher gives a list of the "aldermen of the gild" from 1402 onwards; this he had copied from a roll belonging to a friend of his by the name of George Hill, a former "steward of the town".<sup>2</sup> Peck, however, somewhat

---

1. Butcher, op. cit., p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 26.



contemptuously pointed out that "there were divers gilds in Stamford, each of which . . . were governed by its alderman".<sup>1</sup>

He could see no connection between aldermen of the gilds and aldermen of the town, though he conceded that on occasions the same individual might serve in both offices simultaneously. In his view, had Butcher studied the roll of aldermen carefully, he would not have used the phrase "aldermen of the gild" when the roll itself referred to Garvis Wykes as the first "alderman of Stamford", the year being 1401.<sup>2</sup> This reference is somewhat confusing when one considers the wording of the Warrene charter, referred to above. No records exist concerning the names of aldermen during this earlier period, although Peck observes that there appeared to have been at one time another section attached to the head of the roll commencing 1401. Moreover the suffix "bis" is added to the name of some of the aldermen listed indicating that they had served in the office at an earlier, but now unknown, date.<sup>3</sup>

The designation of the chief citizen of the town as

---

1. Butcher, op. cit., p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Ibid., p. 26.

alderman prior and indeed subsequent to incorporation could in itself be of significance. This name was given to the chief official of a gild merchant<sup>1</sup> and could perhaps explain Butcher's references to the "Alderman of the Gild". One of the primary duties of a gildsman was to pay scot and lot<sup>2</sup> with the burgesses. Though, unlike certain other charters of incorporation,<sup>3</sup> such as that of Norwich in 1256, the words do not occur in Edward IV's charter to Stamford, although they are to be found frequently in the hall books. Indeed, admittance to scot and lot appears to be synonymous with admittance to the freedom of the borough.<sup>4</sup> It is possible therefore that their use in Stamford derived from earlier usage in a gild merchant. In Leicester, for example, the oath sworn by gildsmen included the obligation to "scot and lot".<sup>5</sup> In many towns the gild merchant gradually merged with the town government, until the two became indistinguishable. Such was the case in Leicester.<sup>6</sup> This could have been what happened in Stamford; it would certainly justify Butcher's assertion that the

---

1. Gross, op. cit., pp. 24-28.

2. Lipson, op. cit., p. 275.

3. Ballard and Tait, op. cit., p. 139.

4. G.H. Martin, ex. inf., 1972.

5. M. Bateson, The Records of Leicester, I. 1899, p. 1.

6. Lipson, op. cit., p. 277.

aldermanry of the gild was as strong as, if not stronger than, the incorporated council. It is not possible to pursue further this postulation concerning the possible existence of a gild merchant before the incorporation of the Borough of Stamford. If it existed, however, the granting of the 1461/62 charter confirmed those privileges already in being.

The second clause of the charter sets out four of the five characteristics of incorporation enumerated by Weinbaum<sup>1</sup> namely perpetual succession, the power of suing and being sued as a whole, power to hold lands and a common seal. It begins -

"the alderman and burgesses and their successors . . . of the town or borough . . . shall be one perpetual community (commonalty) incorporated in deed and in name<sub>2</sub>. . . and shall have perpetual succession".

The possible significance of the term alderman in relation to the gild merchant has been discussed above. The alderman of Stamford had his counterpart elsewhere and, as has been noted above, the

---

1. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. 18.

2. C.C.R., VI, p. 164; S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 1-2.



charter granted to the neighbouring town of Grantham in 1463 had much in common with that of Stamford. It, too, is addressed to the alderman and burgesses. It permitted them also to have a gild merchant<sup>1</sup> amongst other privileges. Many towns granted charters at this period, however, have their chief citizen designated as "mayor", for example, Norwich (February 12th, 1462)<sup>2</sup>; Bristol (December 14th, 1462)<sup>3</sup>. Others had bailiffs, for example, Colchester (March 1st, 1462)<sup>4</sup>; Ludlow (December 7th, 1462)<sup>5</sup>. It is difficult now to assess the subtleties of these various titles. Subsequently, however, in 1638/9 the Corporation of Stamford petitioned the crown for permission to call its chief citizen "mayor",<sup>6</sup> this privilege eventually being granted by Charles II in 1664.<sup>7</sup> Ironically, in 1972, when the Borough Council was considering the implications of the local government act of that year, it was proposed that the chairman of the new local (town) council should be given the courtesy title of "alderman".<sup>8</sup> In the event, however, the later designation "mayor" was retained when the corporation

---

1. Martin, op. cit., p. 29.

2. C.C.R., VI., p. 144.

3. Ibid., p. 162.

4. Ibid., p. 148.

5. Ibid., p. 154.

6. See p.370 below.

7. See p. 665 seq. below.

8. Stamford Mercury, 5.5.72., p.1.

was abolished in 1974.

The remainder of the second clause of the charter of 1461/62 sets out the manner in which the corporation could act in law, in particular with regard to the purchase of real estate and in the prosecution or defence of law suits. A similar clause is included in the 1483 charter of incorporation for Grantham.<sup>1</sup> Since they were the basis of corporate existence, clauses to the same effect are to be found in a large number of borough charters.

The extent to which the Corporation of Stamford availed itself of these privileges will become apparent in subsequent chapters. Certainly the ownership of real estate was in the succeeding centuries to occupy much of the time of the Hall; furthermore it provided the town with much of the income required to finance its corporate activities. Such was the case, of course, in most other incorporated towns throughout the country.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the second clause of the charter empowered

1. Martin, op. cit., p. 29.

2. For a fuller discussion, see W. Savage, The Making of Our Towns, 1952.

1

the corporation to have its own seal. An original impression of this survives on a parchment setting out a civil judgement, now known as the Casewick Document and preserved at Stamford Town Hall. It was found some fifteen years ago in the private archives of the Hon. Mrs. Trollop-Bellew of Casewick Hall, near Stamford, and dates from the ninth year of the reign of Edward IV. The content of the document is in itself of interest and is referred to below.<sup>2</sup> The seal shows on its face the arms of the Corporation of Stamford, the blazon of which reads -

"Party per pale the dexter side Gules three lions passant guardant in pale,<sup>3</sup> Or and the sinister chequy Or and Azure".

These arms depict those of the king impaled upon those of the Warrene family, to which reference has already been made.<sup>4</sup> The wax on which the seal is impressed is attached to the judgement by a strip of parchment of the same material as the document itself passing through it. This original impression includes two supporters to the

---

1. See Appendix, Plate 6, p.(67) (Borough seal in 1634, from Peck).  
 2. See p. 165 below.  
 3. As recorded at the College of Arms, London.  
 4. See pp. 18-19 above.



arms, which appear to be wyvernes and form part of the Warrene arms. The College of Arms, however, does not recognise the validity of these, regarding them merely as decoration. The original die of this early seal has now vanished and was probably destroyed when it undoubtedly became defaced and worn after many years of use. On the reverse of the seal is depicted the Virgin Mary, seated with child, with a burgess of Stamford before her. This part of the town seal was used until the reformation and the die is now with the Society of Antiquaries in London.<sup>1</sup>

The second clause of the charter decrees that it is the alderman and burgesses that shall be "one perpetual commonalty" which shall be the corporate body. This is in contrast, for example, with the 1468 charter for Wenlock<sup>2</sup> which treats the burgesses and commonalty as separate entities. When such is the case, the term commonalty may be taken to mean the non-burgesses of the town.<sup>3</sup> From this it would appear that non-burgesses were to have no official status within the

- 
1. ex. inf., Alderman A.E.S. Ireson, 1972.
  2. C.C.R., VI, p. 205.
  3. Savage, op. cit., p. 73.

incorporated town of Stamford.<sup>1</sup> As for the precise definition of the word "burgess" itself, this is open to some discussion. Originally it implied the acquisition of a burgage tenement within the town; subsequently, however, it was regarded as being a personal qualification, based on "birth, apprenticeship, purchase, gift or marriage".<sup>2</sup> As the hall books indicate, and as is discussed below<sup>3</sup>, such was the case in Stamford.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, there was a steady increase in the number of townsmen who had not been admitted to the freedom of the town. Indeed, when the Municipal Corporations Act was passed in 1835, the proportion of freemen had fallen to such an extent that the town deservedly earned the description of "rotten borough".

The third clause of the charter sets out the manner in which the government of the corporation is to be conducted. It is worth while to quote this clause verbatim from the translation from the Latin of the original charter; its legal phraseology forms a striking contrast with the

- 
1. The relationship between the townsmen and the "town dwellers" during the period 1559-1649 is discussed in Chapter X below.
  2. Savage, op. cit., p. 118.
  3. See pp. 97-103 below.



simplified version transcribed into the first hall book by the clerk in 1462. The direct translation reads -

"the same now Alderman and Burgesses and their heirs and successors Aldermen and Burgesses from year to year at a certain day among the same Burgesses of old time used shall be able to elect from themselves thirteen Co-burgesses of which Co-burgesses one shall always be elected to the Alderman of the Town or Borough aforesaid and he shall be Alderman of the said Town or Borough for one year next ensuing that election which said Co-burgesses so elected and every of them shall remain and be in such Offices of Co-burgesses of the Town or Borough aforesaid during their life unless they or any of them at their special request made to the Alderman and the residue of the said Co-burgesses Aldermen of the Town or Borough aforesaid for the time being or by reason of any extraordinary cause shall be amoved from the said Co-burgesses by the Alderman of the Town or Borough aforesaid and the residue of the Co-burgesses of the said Town or Borough for the time being and that such Co-burgesses desiring to be removed dying or being amoved from the Office of Co-burgess the Alderman for the time being and the Burgesses of the Town or Borough aforesaid and their heirs and successors for ever shall have full power and authority by tenor of these presents of electing one other Burgess from themselves to be a Co-burgess of the Town or Borough aforesaid in the place of the said Co-burgess so desiring to be removed dying or being amoved and so from time to time for ever".<sup>1</sup>

It will be noted that the charter specifies that the number of comburgesses chosen shall be thirteen, including

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p3.



the alderman. The contemporary English translation in the hall book, however, states that the alderman shall be "one of the first twelve". Subsequent entries in the hall book indicate, however, that when used in its collective sense, "first twelve" implies a total of thirteen individuals, including the alderman.<sup>1</sup> The entries in the hall book for the first meeting held after the granting of the charter of incorporation, namely on the feast of St. Jerome, September 30th, 1462, indicate that, though not specifically authorised by the charter, in addition to the first twelve (*duodecim pro aldermani*) a second twelve (*duodecim pro commitat*) were also elected by the "hall commons". It is possible that the practice of electing both a first twelve and second twelve was well established in Stamford before the granting of the charter of incorporation. It could have been another of the liberties and customs formerly "used and enjoyed".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the terms "twelve" and "twenty-four", meaning the governing body of a town, began to appear in town records during the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, the phrase of

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.105. See Appendix, Plate 7, p.(68).
  2. See p. 35 above
  3. J.H. Thomas, Town Government in the Sixteenth Century, 1933, p. 18.

"old time used" in this third clause can be interpreted as implying that the first twelve at least existed prior to incorporation. This could be consistent also with the tentative suggestion above, that the Stamford corporation developed from a gild merchant as was the case at Northampton, for example.<sup>1</sup> The effect of this clause was to ensure the government of the town remained in the hands of an oligarchy, the ramifications of which are discussed in subsequent chapters.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, its precise meaning became the subject of controversy during the reign of James I.<sup>3</sup>

The fourth clause<sup>4</sup> of the charter of incorporation grants the right for the alderman and burgesses of the town to elect from amongst themselves either one, or two, sergeants to carry daily one, or more, silver maces in the company of the alderman. These maces, regarded as the symbol of authority, were to be engraved with the king's arms. Amongst the Stamford civic regalia now displayed at the town hall, there is a silver wand dating from the fourteenth century. It is engraved with the royal arms, and is, in all probability, the original mace used, following

---

1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 18.

2. See below Chapter VI.

3. See pp. 258-259 below.

4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 4.

the incorporation of the borough.<sup>1</sup>

The fifth clause<sup>2</sup> of the charter of incorporation decrees that the alderman and comburgesses, together with one learned in the law, shall be justices of the peace within the borough, with the duty of keeping the peace there. It provides also that any two or more comburgesses, together with the alderman and the legal adviser, shall have full power of examination and punishment concerning "felonies, trespasses, misprisons and extortions" within the town. The powers of the justices within the borough were to be no less than those of their counterparts in the parts of Kesteven in the County of Lincoln. The fifth clause also provides that the county justices shall not execute their office within the borough. Justices of the peace are first mentioned in borough charters during the late fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In the words of Weinbaum -

"The municipal justice of the peace represents a constant link of an executive and judicial character between crown and town, whereas, before his time, and especially once a borough charter had clarified the

- 
1. c.f. A.S. Ireson, The Mayor's Chain of Office and Stamford Civic Regalia, 1968, n.p.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 4.
  3. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. XVIII.



position, the crown had restricted itself to a general control by interpreting rights and, of course,<sup>1</sup> safeguarding its financial interests".

The sixth clause<sup>2</sup> of the charter of incorporation asserts that no alderman, burgess, town constable, or other person dwelling within the town shall be compelled to appear concerning matters arising within the borough before any guardians of the king's peace in the Parts of Kesteven, nor before the king's justices assigned there to hear "felonies, trespasses and other misdeeds", nor before any other justices either within or outside the town limits, other than the alderman and burgesses of the borough. Moreover, any townsmen so called, who shall refuse to give evidence to the justices of the county, shall incur no penalty on this account. The right for a townsman to be tried by his own peers was much valued in the fifteenth century. Then, and in the following century, "society at large was not yet an agglomeration of individuals but a federation of local communities, owing obedience to the commanding power of the Crown but by no means sacrificing their

---

1. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. XVIII.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 6.

own sense of identity or their own group interests in doing so".<sup>1</sup> If they had offended against the law within the borough, the townsmen wished to be tried by those who themselves were members of their community, and who understood their way of life.

The seventh clause<sup>2</sup> of the charter of incorporation relates to the disposal of "fines, issues, forfeitures and amercements" arising from the administration of justice within the town. These were to be used for the upkeep of the walls and other "heavy burthens daily . . . happening" in the town. Likewise the goods and chattels of residents of the town, who had been outlawed by any court in the land, were to be used for similar purposes. The seventh clause is the only one in the charter of incorporation which specifically refers to the monies which were necessary if the corporation was to fulfil its purpose. The numerous grants of murage in charters from the fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth century "confirm the view that only vitally important matters like defence questions moved the state to allot one particular form of taxation to the borough

---

1. W.T. MacCaffrey, Exeter, 1540 - 1640, 1958, p.1.  
2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 7.

for a limited purpose".<sup>1</sup>

The eighth clause<sup>2</sup> of the charter of incorporation is comparatively short and stipulates that the steward and marshal of the king's household and the clerk of the market of the king's household shall not enter the town, nor exercise authority therein, nor request residents to appear elsewhere before them concerning matters arising within the town. This clause, and its counterpart in the Grantham charter, is important as both towns are situated on the Great North Road. The officials who cared for the king's personal needs normally bought supplies for the royal household at their own valuation. Their powers were often abused and widely resented.<sup>3</sup>

The ninth clause<sup>4</sup> of the charter of incorporation refers to the choosing by the alderman and burgesses of one of the thirteen comburgesses to be coroner with the same powers as the king's coroner had exercised in the past and as was possessed by other coroners elsewhere in the kingdom. None of the latter was to have any

- 
1. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. xx.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 8.
  3. Martin, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
  4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 9.



jurisdiction within the borough of Stamford. The duties of the coroner are not referred to in the Stamford charter of incorporation, although they are defined in several charters granted to other boroughs. For example, in the charter granted to Northampton in 1227, the king authorised the election of four burgesses to "keep the pleas of the crown and the other matters which pertain to us and our crown in the same borough, and to see that the reeves of the town justly and lawfully treat both poor and rich".<sup>1</sup> During the thirteenth century coroners were not very common, if the charters are anything to go by, and even by 1307 there were only fifteen in England and Wales.<sup>2</sup> According to the tables<sup>3</sup> prepared by Dr. Weinbaum, only nine more boroughs were granted the privilege of electing a coroner between 1307 and the date of the granting of the Stamford charter of incorporation (excluding Ipswich which appears to have been permitted a coroner in 1256,<sup>4</sup> whereas the date given by Dr. Weinbaum is 1317).

---

1. Ballard and Tait, op. cit., p. 357.

2. Ibid., p. lx.

3. Weinbaum, op. cit., pp. xxx-lx.

4. Ballard and Tait, op. cit., p. 358.

In this connection, however, some caution appears to be called for since Dr. Weinbaum does not include in his tables the authorisation of a coroner at either Stamford or Grantham, and such omission must cast some doubt upon the accuracy of the former. He states that "as the charters of incorporation usually re-affirm the legal contents of all former grants, it has not been thought fit to specify their clauses in this index".<sup>1</sup> With regard to Stamford and Grantham, however, this is certainly not so, although many practices had apparently developed by prescription. The same may probably also be said of other boroughs. However, the general effect of the appointment of a coroner may be compared to that of the justices of the peace referred to above,<sup>2</sup> or the subsequent appointment of recorders in many boroughs.<sup>3</sup> In the words of Dr. Weinbaum "the crown secures only a foothold, if an important one, in the ranks of municipal officials. It strengthens the relationship between central and local government, but it does not rob the municipalities of their tasks and responsibilities".<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Weinbaum, British Borough Charters, 1307-1660, p.xxviii

2. See pp. 56-57

3. As at Stamford. See pp. 248-250 below.

4. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. xix.

The tenth clause<sup>1</sup> of the charter of incorporation is comparatively short, but is one which was to lead to a good deal of litigation in subsequent centuries. For this reason it is given below in full -

"And by these presents for us and our heirs do grant to the said now Alderman and burgesses and to their heirs and successors that they are and every of them shall be quit of toll, pannage, pontage, carriage, murage, passage, payage, lastage, stallage, talliage, carriage, barbicage, tarriage, scot and guild hidage and scutage in all cities, boroughs, towns, or hamlets, lordships and other places as well by land as by water throughout<sup>2</sup> our whole kingdom and dominion of England".

Similar privileges were possessed by other chartered boroughs and this tended to impair the monopoly of trade sought by tradesmen within their own town. There is evidence in the Leicester borough records, for example, that Leicester merchants had a stall in Stamford market,<sup>3</sup> having secured general freedom from toll in the charter granted to Leicester in 1416.<sup>4</sup> Without doubt, "no mercantile privilege was valued more highly than that which released local traders from all local customs in town, fair, and market, outside the walls of their own borough".<sup>5</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

3. Rogers, This Was Their World, 1972, p. 125.

4. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. xlii-xliii.

5. Lipson, op. cit., p. 279.



The eleventh clause<sup>1</sup> of the charter of incorporation states that the alderman and burgesses shall have the return of all the king's "writs, precepts, mandates and bills" and "the executions thereof" even though they might concern the king, alderman or burgesses. Furthermore no "sheriff, escheator or justices of the peace or any king's minister shall enter the town for this purpose under heavy penalty to the king".<sup>2</sup> The desire to exclude the sheriff from acting within a borough was a privilege much sought by townsmen. The reasons for this were of long standing, for throughout the kingdom many abuses of the sheriff's power occurred. "He had unnumbered occasions for oppression and used his position to serve his own ends and to fill his own purse".<sup>3</sup>

The twelfth clause<sup>4</sup> of the charter of incorporation can be regarded as a corollary to the eighth clause. It decrees that no purveyors of the king's household may acquire the "goods and chattels" of burgesses without payment within the town, or elsewhere in the kingdom, whether they be required for the king himself, for the queen,

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 11.
  2. Ibid., p. 11.
  3. Lipson, op. cit., p. 213.
  4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 11.

for the king's sons, for magnates or for other persons. Further this privilege was to be extended to all people within the town. Moreover, the king agrees to take the alderman and burgesses into his "special protection" so that his officers shall not take from them without payment and without their permission "corn, hay, horses, oxen, cows, hogs, sheep, lambs, pigs, pullets or other victuals . . . carts, waggons, carriages or other goods and chattels".<sup>1</sup> This privilege was also to be extended to any other people within the town. The legal phraseology of this particular clause is especially verbose. This may well be because the townsmen of Stamford, when petitioning for their charter, were particularly anxious that the meaning of this clause should be beyond doubt. It is not difficult to imagine the apprehension and resentment that the arrival of royal purveyors would cause in a town in which protection such as this twelfth clause offered had not been obtained. In such towns the purveyors and officers of the king's household "levied provisions on all townsfolk" and

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 12.

"seized what they needed of their corn and bread and salted meats. . .in fact governed at their own will any town through which the king passed".<sup>1</sup>

The thirteenth clause<sup>2</sup> of the charter of incorporation stipulates that the alderman and burgesses should not be "impanelled upon any assises, juries, inquisitions and recognitions" which were to be held outside the town and were touching matters arising outside the limits thereof. The alderman and burgesses were also to be exempt from service outside the borough as collectors of taxes or quotas granted to the king. Furthermore, they could not be required to serve as bailiff, constable or in the office of coroner outside the borough against their will. This clause emphasises the determination of the burgesses, when petitioning for their charter to make sure that they were not involved in the affairs of the county. Not only did the burgesses wish to have no brook with county officials

- 
1. Mrs. J.R. Green, Town Life in the Fifteenth Century, I, 1894, p. 210.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 13.



within the borough, but they also wished to have as little as possible to do with them outside its limits.

The fourteenth clause<sup>1</sup> of the charter of incorporation is concerned with the "survey correction and punishment of the assise of bread, wine and ale, and all victuals sold within the town". This duty was to be the responsibility of the alderman, who was required to save all fines and amercements arising therefrom for the "lords of the fee" of the town. It was considered that "food and necessities of life, both good and cheap" should be within the reach of every man.<sup>2</sup> Prices were, therefore, regulated at the assise of bread, wine and ale, taking into account the cost of raw materials,<sup>3</sup> and "sellers of all food were closely watched lest they should take 'excess lucre from them' ".<sup>4</sup>

The fifteenth clause<sup>5</sup> in the charter of incorporation granted to the alderman and comburgesses the power of mustering the king's subjects within the borough and of causing them "according to their estate to be well and sufficiently armed, arrayed and trained"

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 14.

2. Green, op. cit., p. 35.

3. Thomas, op. cit., p. 81.

4. Savage, op. cit., p. 125.

5. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 15.

for the defence of the town by day or by night. The sixteenth clause<sup>1</sup> of the charter of incorporation similarly concerned military matters. It empowered the alderman and comburgesses to hold a muster of the king's subjects residing within the town, and to punish, by imprisonment, all those who refused to take part. It further prohibited the commissioner assigned to take muster in Kesteven from acting within the borough. The fifteenth and sixteenth clauses may be regarded as part of the price exacted by the king for the granting of the charter. As Sir William Savage succinctly commented: "A ready response with good and well armed men was appreciated by the king and sometimes lubricated the passage of a coveted grant".<sup>1</sup>

The study of the individual clauses of the Stamford charter of incorporation may at first appear to be tedious. Yet, as Dr. G.H. Martin pointed out, when writing of the later clauses in the Grantham charter of incorporation -

"They touched matters of such importance to the town and to the government that they deserved the most painful efforts to phrase

---

1. Savage, op. cit., p. 15.

their meaning exactly. Those efforts reflect the clients anxieties quite as much as the lawyer's zeal: an intent preoccupation with future rights and responsibilities as much as a concern with professional standards".<sup>1</sup>

This comment is particularly appropriate since Grantham's charter of incorporation, which was granted on March 8th, 1463, is virtually identical to that of Stamford upon which it appears to be based. Indeed, Stamford's charter of incorporation, together with Letters Patent issued in 1481, referred to below, was used as the guide for the charter of incorporation granted to Pontefract on September 9th, 1484. The burgesses of that town were to "enjoy in the said borough the liberties and free customs, which the burgesses and inhabitants of the town or borough of Stamford have used and do use".<sup>2</sup> The actual phraseology of the Pontefract charter, however, varies considerably from that of the Stamford charter.

The Letters Patent granted by Edward IV to the alderman and burgesses of Stamford in 1481 set out additional privileges, some of which were more in the way of confirmation or modification of existing rights rather

---

1. Martin, op. cit., p. 15.

2. C.C.R., VL, 1927, pp. 262, 263.



than innovations. The first four clauses of the patent relate to the holding of sessions, the establishment of a gaol, the execution of justice and the holding of a market and fairs. They are very similar to those contained in a patent granted to Grantham in 1484 by Richard II.<sup>1</sup> The fifth and final clause of the Stamford Letters Patent of 1481 is unique in that it relates to a specific area of land within the borough.

In order to discuss the implications of the first clause of the 1481 Letters Patent, it is necessary to examine it in full. It states -

"the said Alderman and Burgesses that they and their successors, Justices of the Peace of us and of our heirs and also of felonies, trespasses, misdeeds and other things whatsoever by them or any of them as Justices of the Peace within the said town or borough for the time being together with one learned in the law at the nomination of the Alderman of the said town or borough aforesaid for the time being shall hold within the same town or borough from time to time sessions to inquire for us and our heirs as often as need shall require by mandate or warrant of the alderman of the said town or borough for the time being to be made and to the Bailiff of the Liberty of the said town or

---

1. Martin, op. cit., pp.50-57.

borough or to any Serjeant at Mace of the Alderman of the Town or Borough aforesaid for <sup>1</sup> the time being to be directed or made".

The use of the terminology deserves comment in that it appears to include only those burgesses chosen as comburgesses under the terms of the fifth clause of the charter of incorporation. The principal purpose of the first clause of the 1481 Letters Patent was apparently to lessen the demands upon the time of the alderman and comburgesses in the administration of justice within the borough. Under the charter of incorporation a court had to be presided over by at least two comburgesses, the alderman and "a man learned in the law".<sup>2</sup> Providing a lawyer nominated by the alderman was present the minimum requirement by way of justices was now reduced to a single (com)burgess. Conversely, by implication it would appear that when the comburgesses sat as a body the presence of a lawyer was not required, as it was under the charter of incorporation.

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 19.

2. C.C.R., Vol. vi, p. 165, cf. S.C.R., Charter Book, p.4.

The second clause of the 1481 Letters Patent required the alderman and burgesses to have their own gaol in which to keep felons and others taken into custody pending their sentences.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was not an innovation for, as might be expected, the town already had a gaol. Thus it is recorded in the hall book that on the 15th December, 1464, William Brown, merchant, gave to the commonalty of the town for the "prison and gaol" a number of items such as iron collars, irons for arms and legs, locks and chains.<sup>2</sup>

Further requirements relating to the holding of the sessions were set out in the third clause of the 1481 Letters Patent.<sup>3</sup> The bailiff and sergeant at mace were required to make and execute all the precepts and warrants prior to the sessions. During the sessions they were charged with the taking of inquisitions and of doing "all things needful". It was their responsibility too to execute the judgements and mandates of the justices "as the sheriff of Lincoln or other sheriff would do in the like case elsewhere in England", but "to the exclusion of the sheriff of Lincoln" from the town. This specific

---

1. C.C.R., Vol vi, p. 353. S.C.R. Charter Book, p. 20.

2. S.C.R., Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 9.

3. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 20.



reference to the exclusion of the sheriff of Lincoln is a further indication<sup>1</sup> of the antipathy of borough corporations to the power of this local representative of regal power. Emancipation from his prerogative in the borough courts was a highly valued privilege.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the first three clauses of the 1481 Letters Patent helped to clarify and modify the provision for the administration of justice within the borough as set out in the fifth, sixth and seventh clauses of the charter of incorporation of 1461.

The fourth clause<sup>3</sup> of the 1481 Letters Patent set out the privileges relating to a weekly market and two annual fairs -

"The alderman and burgesses . . . shall have a weekly market on Monday and two yearly fairs . . . one at the Monday after Corpus Christi<sup>4</sup> and the three days following, and the other on the feast of St. Simon and Jude<sup>5</sup> and the two days before that feast and the three days after it . . . " <sup>6</sup>

"All liberties, rights (and) jurisdictions appertaining" to the markets and fairs were vested in the alderman and

---

1. See p. 63 above.

2. c.f. Lipson, op. cit., p. 201, pp. 213-216.

3. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 21.

4. i.e. a fortnight after Whit Monday.

5. October 28th (held on November 8th after the calendar revision of 1752).

6. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 21.

burgesses so that the latter "be not to the nuisance of other, the neighbouring fairs and markets".<sup>1</sup>

The alderman and burgesses were also charged with the responsibility for the "ordering, governing and assigning of the stalls and places" and for "the rule of the market and fairs".<sup>2</sup> The responsibility for carrying out these tasks was given to the alderman and "two or three of the more honest and discreet co-burgesses of the . . . borough". It is difficult to assess the importance of this grant of a market and two fairs to the corporation of Stamford. The town already had a Friday market and midlent fair, but these were under the jurisdiction of the Lord of the Manor<sup>3</sup>, though subsequently the rights were acquired by the corporation. Indeed, there are various references to a pre-1487 market and fair. Thus, as is discussed in subsequent chapters bye-laws relating to market day in Stamford were enacted in 1478/9. It has already been noted too that in 1313 the Earl of Warrene granted certain privileges in relation to Stamford Market.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p 21.

2. Ibid.

3. W. Harrod, The Antiquities of Stamford & St. Martins, 1785, Vol. I., p.207.

4. See p.106 below.

5. See pp. 43-44 above.

Much earlier still, King Edgar, in his charter to the Minster of Peterborough, ordained that there should be no other market between Stamford and Huntingdon<sup>1</sup> implying that there were markets jealous of their privileges in the latter towns. The reference to "neighbouring fairs and markets" in the 1481 Letters Patent was indicative of this same concern, although by this time the phraseology had become somewhat of a "stereotyped formula".<sup>2</sup> It was first used when King John granted charters to Llandaff and Highworth in Wiltshire.<sup>3</sup> Likewise it occurs in the Grantham charter of 1483.<sup>4</sup> References to the midlent fair are to be found in Peck who quoting earlier sources describes the waylaying and robbery of merchants on the way to Stamford fair from Northampton in 1194.<sup>5</sup> He also refers to the midlent fair when describing anti-Jewish demonstrations which took place in Stamford in 1189,<sup>6</sup> and again when referring to regulations of trade made in 1197.<sup>7</sup> Further mention of the Stamford fair is made in the corporation records of Leicester.<sup>8</sup>

- 
1. W. de Grey Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, iii, 1893, pp 543  
580
  2. Lipson, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
  3. Records of Cardiff, III, 8.Hist.MSS., Com. Rutland IV, 55
  4. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
  5. Peck, *op. cit.*, vi, p. 13.
  6. *Ibid.*,
  7. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
  8. Records of the Borough of Leicester, Vol 1. p. 79.



A bye-law of that town made in 1258, relating to merchants who visited Stamford fair with cloth or wool or with fells, decreed that their goods were to be carried "to the shops in which the merchandise of Leicester is usually kept".

If it is assumed that the market referred to in the Stamford bye-laws of 1468 is the Friday market, it would then appear that the borough corporation exercised a degree of control over it even though the rights and privileges thereof were vested in the Lord of the Manor.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as has been pointed out by E. Lipson, "the lord of the fair was not completely master within his own house".<sup>2</sup> It would appear that in 1481 the corporation sought the use of the royal prerogative to enable it to hold a market and fairs for which it would have the entire responsibility. It is interesting that only the Friday market and midlent fair have survived to the present day.

The final clause of the 1481 Letters Patent related to the granting of property by the king. It comprised a shop, thirty acres of land, three acres of meadow and four acres of pasture in Stamford and yielded an annual rental of twenty-five shillings. The corporation were charged with using the money from this property for

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., p. 207.  
 2. Lipson, op. cit., p. 257.

"building and fortifying the walls of the . . . town . . . under the supervision of the alderman".<sup>1</sup> The responsibility for ensuring that the work was carried out was vested in two or three comburgesses, appointed by the alderman. They were also required each year to render an account on oath of monies received and expended to "the alderman and four, five or six of the burgesses . . . assigned as auditors by the said alderman".<sup>2</sup>

Thus together with the charter of incorporation of 1462 the letters patent of 1481 provided a legal framework for the administration of the town. Many of the privileges conferred had already been enjoyed by prescription, but these were not embodied in formal documents that would be consulted whenever the need arose. The granting of a charter by one king, however, was not considered as an absolute guarantee that the privileges conferred would be repeated by his successor. Thus there followed in Stamford a series of confirmations, the first being in 1485 during the reign of Richard III. Richard's *inspeximus*<sup>3</sup>, re-affirmed to the alderman

---

1. C.C.R., p. 254. c.f. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 22.  
 2. Ibid. Ibid., p. 23.  
 3. Martin, op. cit., p. 17.

and burgesses both the charter of incorporation of 1462 and the letters patent of 1481, reiterating all the clauses contained therein. The cost involved in seeking King Richard to "ratify and confirm" the earlier grants was not inconsiderable.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion five pounds<sup>2</sup> was paid to the hanaper compared with ten marks (£36s.8d.) for the 1481 letters patent. Richard III's letters patent were sealed on the 16th August 1484 just over a year prior to his death on 22nd August 1485 at the battle of Bosworth. His successor, Henry VII granted a further inspeximus when William Ratcliffe was alderman, worded in an almost identical manner to that of 1484 on the 11th May 1504 in the nineteenth year of his reign.<sup>3</sup> It made no reference, however, to the letters patent of Richard III, which are also ignored in all subsequent grants.

Henry VIII's accession in 1509 was soon followed by the addressing of letters patent on the 12th July 1510 to John Dyatt, alderman and the burgesses of Stamford, confirming the inspeximus of Henry VII and once again reciting the clauses of the charter of incorporation and

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 50.

2. Ibid., C.C.R., p. 254.

3. Ibid.,



letters patent of 1481.<sup>1</sup> A generation later, when Nicholas Wyles was alderman, Edward VI granted another inspeximus which was dated 22nd November 1547.<sup>2</sup> This comprehensive document set out the inspeximus of Henry VIII (1510) and in so doing included the inspeximus of Henry VII (1504) and the letters patent (1481) and the charter of incorporation (1462) of Edward IV. The last inspeximus granted during the period 1461-1558, covered in section I of this thesis, was granted in 1555 by Philip and Mary.<sup>3</sup> This is a very lengthy document which sets out in full details of all the previous confirmations, the letters patent and charter of incorporation, excluding as pointed out above, the inspeximus of Richard III.

This renewal of charters during virtually every reign was indeed a method used to ensure allegiance to the crown. Few towns wished to jeopardise their valued privileges and the inspeximus was a means by which loyalty to a sovereign could be given legal expression. In this respect the preambles to royal charters are worthy of note in that they set out the titles of the monarchs, and in so doing comment on their

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, pp. 79-104.

2. Ibid., pp. 121-149.

3. Ibid., pp. 177-204.

aspirations. Thus, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VII and Henry VIII (in the inspeximus of 1510) are described as king "of England and France and Lord of Ireland".<sup>1</sup> In a letters patent of 1542, relating to St. Martin's and discussed below, Henry VIII was described as ". . . of England, France and Ireland, king, defender of the faith and on earth supreme head of the church of England and Ireland".<sup>2</sup> Of special interest however is the description of the titles of Philip and Mary in the preamble of the inspeximus of 1555. It is not difficult to imagine that the implications thereof would have caused concern to the local burgesses, who no doubt took pride in being English. To such men the phraseology of the introductory phrases must have aroused hostility to the crown and strained their loyalty to the utmost.

"Philip and Mary by the grace of god King and Queen of England France, Naples, Jerusalem and Ireland, defender of the faith, Princes of Spain and Sicily, Archdukes of Austria, Dukes of Milan, Burgundy and Brabant, Earls of Haspury, Flanders and the Tirol".<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., Charter Book, pp. 1, 27, 53, 79.
  2. Ibid., p. 107.
  3. Ibid., p. 177.

The charter and letters patent referred to above, however, do not represent the total of documents sealed by the crown during the period from 1461 to 1558 and which are included in the records of the borough corporation. Thus, as has previously been referred to in the introduction to this thesis,<sup>1</sup> letters patent concerning St. Martin's were issued on June 30th, 1542, by Henry VIII.<sup>2</sup> These throw further light on the anomalous position of the urban area south of the river Welland since they record details of various records at the Exchequer. During 1540/1 Sir John Thymolby and John Hasilwood with others, were assigned by letters patent to "tax and assess all and singular persons within liberties as without in the County of Lincoln for the first payment of a certain subsidy granted to the . . . king".<sup>3</sup> Included in their assessment were eight residents of St. Martin's who between them were charged to pay a total of £5 15s.0d. However, Richard Cecil and Thomas Brudnell, assessors for the County of Northampton levied a further demand

- 
1. See p. 29 above.
  2. S.C.R., Charter Book, pp. 107-119.
  3. Ibid., p. 107.



for £5 10s.0d. upon the same residents of St. Martin's on the grounds that this parish was a "parcel of the hundred of Naseborough in the County of Northampton". This second assessment caused the latter to become "grievously vexed and disquieted" since they had already paid the subsidy. They petitioned to the king on the matter through their Attorney Edward Skelby. The grounds of the petition were that -

"they and every of them at the time of the taxation of them and of every of them were and yet residents and inhabitants of the said parish of St. Martin and within the said town of Stamford, parcel of the said county of Lincoln". 1

The proof of their case is of special interest since it rested upon the status of St. Martin's for taxation purposes from the reign of Edward II onwards. As well as reciting the position during the fourteenth century<sup>2</sup> the letters patent of 1542 record that "one entire fifteenth and tenth" was granted to Henry VII in 1488/49 and Henry VIII in 1512/13. On these occasions, however, the sums demanded were

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 110.  
2. See Introduction pp. 29-30 above.

£35 17s.8d. for Stamford with Bradcroft and £9 3s.4d. for Stamford Baron.<sup>1</sup> Likewise in the subsidy payments of 1521/22 certain "inhabitants within. . .

St. Martin's in the said Town of Stamford" were taxed by the assessors for the parts of Kesteven.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it was concluded that -

"in no place is it found by the . . . scrutiny that the . . . parish of Saint Martin in the . . . town of Stamford or any of the inhabitants with the same parish of Saint Martin or within Stamford Baron . . . ever was or were taxed to any . . . subsidy tax or talliage heretofore granted to the Lord the King or his Progenitors by any commissioner of the said County of Northampton or with the inhabitants of the same County of Northampton".

As a result of this adjudication, therefore, the aggrieved residents of St. Martin's were discharged from paying taxes to the commissioners for Northamptonshire. Nevertheless the ruling does not mean that there was no distinction at all drawn between St. Martin's and the town north of the river. Its separate assessment implies some degree of differentiation. What

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 116.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

exactly the latter was was not very precise but several references are made to it in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Contained also in the Stamford Charter Book are copies of two letters patent sealed by Edward VI in 1549. The first, dated May 16th, is concerned with the unification of ecclesiastical parishes within the borough and the establishment of a free school there; the second, dated May 29th, was concerned with the acquisition by the corporation of lands appropriated by the crown under the Chantry Act of Edward VI.<sup>1</sup> Both are of special interest in that they help to give an insight into the general conditions of the town of Stamford during the last decade of the period covered in Section I of this thesis (1462-1558). Thus, the letters patent of May 16th 1549, in the words of a private act<sup>2</sup> unifying certain parishes within the town of Stamford, passed during the second session of Edward VI's parliament, November 1547 - November 1548, set out the reasons for the legislation -

● " . . . within the borough and town of Stamford . . . there is dyvers parish churches which heretofore the same being well inhabited and replenished with people was good and honest livings

---

1. Edward VI, C. 14 (1547).

2. 1 & 2 Edward VI, Cap. 50. L.R.O.



for learned incumbents by reasons of the privy tythes of rich merchants and of the offerings of a great multitude which living is now so much decayed by the ruin and decay of the said borough and town and of the trade of merchandise. . ." 1

This was the Stamford, therefore, that John Leland saw during his ~~itinerary~~ of 1535 to 1543.<sup>2</sup> The ruined appearance of Stamford by the middle of the sixteenth century must have been marked. The implication of Edward VI's act is that it was caused by the "decay. . . of the trade of merchandise". This seems a more credible suggestion than Leland's contention that it was due to much of Stamford being burned by the Lancastrians. In this respect, as has also been observed above, Camden realized in 1586 that there had been a decline in trade, but there is little evidence to support his attribution of this to destruction wrought by the Lancastrians. What does seem fairly certain, however, is that the severe decline of Stamford economically must have taken place over a relatively short period. It has already been observed<sup>3</sup> that extensive rebuilding took place

---

1. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 153.

2. See above p. 21 above

3. See p. 22 above.

during the middle years of the fifteenth century, yet within some two generations a great slump had occurred in the fortunes of the town. The decline of the wool trade had certainly exacted its price.<sup>1</sup> Moreover inflation had debased the value of investment incomes.<sup>2</sup>

The letters patent of May 13th, 1549 in setting out the purpose of the relevant Act of Parliament referred to therein, point out that the total revenues of "divers parishes" within the town did not exceed forty shillings a year. Consequently they did not provide a "competent and honest living for a good curate". This in turn had led to the appointment of "unlearned persons" who were accused not only of keeping the population in ignorance of their duties to God but also of those to king and commonwealth. Although it is perhaps unwise to attach too great an importance to these comments upon the spiritual health of the town, they do perhaps indicate a certain disarray in the community which must have had a bearing upon the working of the

1. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, pp. 43-6.
2. See below p. 196.

corporation.

The task of remedying matters was not vested in the Borough Council as a corporate body, although as is explained below the town's administrators were involved in what took place. Thus the committee charged with dealing with the problem consisted of the ordinary, the alderman and two justices of the peace from the county. It was their task to reduce the number of parishes so that each of those remaining would provide a living for "one honest incumbent" with a yearly value not exceeding twenty pounds. In the event eleven parishes<sup>1</sup> north of the river (three had disappeared prior to 1547)<sup>2</sup> were reduced to five, which according to Harrod corresponded with the five wards of Domesday.<sup>3</sup> St. Paul's, with an income of £1 13s.4d. was amalgamated with St. George's (with an income of £3 10s. 8d.).<sup>4</sup> The special status of St. Martin's is indicated in instructions given to the reorganising committee in the relevant letters patent, namely that -

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., I, p. 83.

2. See above p. 24.

3. Harrod, op.cit., I. p. 83.

4. Instrument, c.1551, St. George's (Stamford) Parish Chest.



"neither this act [of parliament] nor anything herein contained shall extend, to touch, unite, pluck down or otherwise to meddle with the church of St. Martin upon the south side of the bridge of Stamford".<sup>1</sup>

As well as the duties undertaken by the alderman referred to above, the corporation was involved in the amalgamation of the parishes in other, albeit indirect, ways. Thus the reorganising committee were authorised to pull down superfluous churches and to use the materials for the repair and enlargement of the churches and bridges within the town and for the repair of highways. Surplus monies for the sale of materials were to be used for the relief of the poor.<sup>2</sup> In the example given above the "walls, stones, timbers, glass, iron, doors, windows, bells, belfry, books chalice, jewels and other ecclesiastical ornaments" of St. Paul's were to be placed at the disposal of St. George's and for the purposes outlined above. In the event, not all of St. Paul's was demolished, the south aisle being retained for use as a school,<sup>3</sup> and now forming part of the chapel of Stamford School.<sup>4</sup> It is possible

- 
1. Instrument, c. 1551, St. George's (Stamford) Parish Chest. cf. B.L. Deed, History of Stamford School, 1954, p. 15.
  2. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 155.
  3. See below pp. 89-91
  4. Deed, op. cit., p. 77.

that material from the demolition of the churches was also used in the repair of the town walls since in 1552 two bye-laws were passed concerning their upkeep.<sup>1</sup>

The final section of that part of the letters patent of May 13th 1549 relating to the amalgamation of parishes in Stamford is concerned with the rearrangement of patronage, payments to displaced incumbents and the stipends of future parish priests. Since this aspect of the reorganisation has no bearing upon the work of the corporation of the town it is not discussed in this thesis. The second principal section of the letters patent, which relates to the establishment of a school within the town is relevant however. Not only were duties with regard to the school imposed upon the alderman but in subsequent years disputes were to arise between the corporation and a schoolmaster concerning the alleged misappropriation by the former of part of the school's income.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. See p. 145 below.

2. See pp. 579-580 below. c.f. Deed, pp. 23-24. c.f. Deed, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

Thus, the letters patent set out the text of a private act passed during the second session of parliament<sup>1</sup> in the reign of Edward VI<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of this act had been to regularize the position which had arisen with regard to the will of William Ratcliffe,<sup>3</sup> who had served on the second twelve from 1489 to 1490, and on the first twelve from 1491 to 1530, having been alderman in 1495, 1503, 1512 and 1523. Ratcliffe, who appears to have died in 1532<sup>4</sup>, had placed his estate in the hands of feoffees during his lifetime. In his will, he charged them with expending the income from his lands upon immediately appointing "an honest and able person, being learned, to teach scholars within the . . . town of Stamford freely without taking any reward of the same scholars or their parents".<sup>5</sup> He also

- 
1. 4th November 1547 to 24th November 1548.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 159.
  3. See Appendix Table 2, p.2. (Radclyf).
  4. Deed, op. cit., p. 117.
  5. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 160.



stipulated that within 21 years of his death, his feoffees or executors should obtain a licence from the King for the admortisement of the lands for the use he had specified. If they failed to do so, then the money was to be used for such deeds of charity as they considered expedient. However, even after the passage of some seventeen or eighteen years following Radcliffe's death, during which time a schoolmaster had been employed, no licence for admortisement had been obtained from the crown. Accordingly, it was felt that possibly the feoffees and executors had no intention of carrying out Ratcliffe's wishes and were instead planning to sell his lands after the expiration of the 21 year period stipulated in his will. Such an event, it was considered, would have been "greatly to the hindrance of the poor inhabitants of the town".<sup>1</sup> To prevent such an occurrence the private act of parliament referred to above was passed. Under its terms the alderman of Stamford, and his successors in office, were to hold the Ratcliffe lands in perpetuity for the purpose of

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 162.

paying a schoolmaster a quarterly salary. It was further enacted that the alderman, with the advice and consent of the Master of St. John's College at Cambridge should be responsible for the appointment of such a schoolmaster, with the power to dismiss him for poor attendance or other reasonable cause. The "trade, form and manner of instruction"<sup>1</sup> in the school also had to be approved by the master of St. John's. These letters patent of May 13th 1549 formed the basis upon which the free school of Stamford was run for many years. As is noted in chapter XII however<sup>2</sup> many disputes were to follow concerning the application of its provisions.

The other letters patent sealed by Edward VI in 1549, were those dated May 29th and were drawn up, with the advice of Edward, Duke of Somerset, the "Protector".<sup>3</sup> They were concerned with the transfer to the corporation of properties appropriated by

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 163, 164.
  2. See pp. 575-577 below.
  3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 167.

the crown, under the 1547 Chantry Act of Edward VI, from two Stamford foundations, the guild of St. John and Julian the Virgin and the guild of the blessed Mary and Corpus Christi. The possessions of the first named guild listed in the letters patent comprised two tenements in St. John's parish,<sup>1</sup> and a third in St. Peter's<sup>2</sup> together with a barn<sup>3</sup> and cottage<sup>4</sup> in St. Clements.

The properties of the Corpus Christi Guild were defined merely as being in the "town of Stamford" and were listed in three groups; 16 tenements and a barn (17 tenements); 5 tenements and 7 barns (10 tenements) and two barns (2 tenements). Five of the tenants were members of the first or second companies.<sup>5</sup>

The price fixed by the crown for the sale of the properties to the corporation was £145 16s<sup>6</sup>, a figure which seems to have been arrived at by regarding

---

1. Tenants John Ryder, William Baggot

2. Tenant Thomas Marshall.

3. Tenant William Campanett.

4. Tenant Thomas Gedney

All but the last named were members of the 1st or 2nd twelve. See Appendix Table A, p.(1)-(10).

5. Tenants John Jackson, John Ruffutt, Thomas Marshall, Maurice Johnson, Maurice Langton, John Oldnall, William Wytton, William Holme, Richard Holand and Thomas Lister.

See Appendix Table A, p. (1)-(10).

6. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 167.



the annual rent of £14 11s 8d<sup>1</sup> as representing 10% of the value. The tenure was to be "in free burgage as. . . [the] Manor of Stamford. . . by fealty only and not in capite".<sup>2</sup>

An annual rent of £2 3s 4d<sup>3</sup> from the confiscated lands was excepted for the disposal to the corporation. It comprised £1 6s 8d due to Robert Cecil, 6s 8d to Lord Russell and 5s each to the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough and the Earl of Rutland.<sup>3</sup> No charge was made by the crown for the letters patent themselves and their provisions were to take effect from the preceeding 29th September.

The principal interest of the letters patent of May 19th, 1549, lies perhaps in the light they shed upon the local disposal of lands under the Chantry Act. The transfer of many of them to the corporation must have made the dissolution of the Stamford guilds more acceptable to many of those who regretted the passing of the old order.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 172.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

Thus is concluded this survey of the Charter of Incorporation of 1461/2 and the nine subsequent letters patent relating to Stamford sealed by the crown between 1481 and 1554/5. A close study of these documents is essential if the ramifications of local government in Stamford, discussed in subsequent chapters, are to be fully appreciated. The Charter of Incorporation, the Letters Patent of 1481, and the inspeximus of 1485, 1504, 1510, 1547 and 1554/5 set out the legal structure of the formal government of the town. The Letters Patent of 1542 help to illumine the complex position of St. Martin's, and those of 1549 give an insight into certain aspects of the working of the corporation, namely the manner in which it derived part of its income and its relationship with the free school. Finally, it should be observed that throughout this thesis constant reference is made back to the royal grants, discussed above, since they form the foundation of a study of Stamford Corporation.

Chapter IIThe Regulation of Trade within the Incorporated Borough

The question must now be posed whether the granting of the charter of incorporation to the town of Stamford on February 12th, 1461/62 had any immediate effect upon the government of the town. As has been observed above, the earliest extant records of transactions of the hall are contained in the first hall book of the Stamford corporation. The first entry therein sets out in English the clauses of the charter of incorporation.<sup>1</sup> This entry appears to have been made in 1465. Immediately following is an account of the business conducted at a meeting held on the feast of St. Jerome, September 30th, 1465. It is recorded that Robert Hance was elected alderman, according to the provisions of the charter, together with twelve comburgesses, the first twelve. In addition the hall commons elected a second twelve to assist the first twelve, although this was

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 1-2.  
See p. 35 above.



not specifically authorised under the charter.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that both the first and second twelve had been elected annually prior to the incorporation and, as has been suggested above, may have originated as the governing body of a gild merchant. Indeed, it seems likely that in general, for the three 'missing years' from 1462 to 1465, the government of the town proceeded in the same manner as it had done prior to the granting of the charter of incorporation. The opportunity was probably taken during this period to examine the existing rules of government within the town and to consider any changes thought to be necessary.

Thus, the principal transaction of the meeting held on September 30th, 1465 was concerned with the issuing of bye-laws covering the conduct of trade within the borough. In this respect, it is of interest that the power to make such bye-laws, which Weinbaun regards as the fifth characteristic of incorporation,<sup>2</sup> is not specifically referred to in the Stamford charter of incorporation. An examination of the contents of the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 2.  
See p. 54 above.

2, M. Weinbaum, The Incorporation of English Boroughs,  
1937, p. 18.

charters granted to boroughs between 1261-1307 indicate that only one<sup>1</sup>, that of the mesne borough of Oswestry (1263) refers to the making of local ordinances, and that subsequently during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this power was assumed to be inherent in the act of incorporation.

As might be anticipated, in view of the overriding importance of the admittance to the freedom of a medieval borough, the first bye-laws issued referred to the fines to be paid for this privilege by "all manner of men of crafts, victuallers, husbandmen, or labourers, that will set up and occupy for himself". In this respect, the whole body of burgesses seems to have been involved in such an important matter since the regulations discussed below were ordained and established by the "alderman and his brethren, the first twelve, and all the whole commons of the said town". Fines were agreed for admittance of "foreigners", that is those neither "born nor apprentice" in the town.<sup>2</sup>

#### Two methods of payment for enfranchisement

- 
1. Ballard & Tait, op. cit., pp. lxxxvii, 240.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 3.

were adopted for those who wished to "set up craft and occupy a shop for himself". The first of these required that the foreigner should pay a sum "yearly to the common hall till such time as he be franchised and sworn". The second manner of payment required a single payment "at once for his franchising for ever". As will be seen from table B in the appendix<sup>1</sup>, the rate for the annual payment by instalments was high, usually half that of the amount due when the freedom was purchased outright. It is not clear how many annual payments had to be made before freedom was secured, or whether indeed the full fine still had to be paid when "freedom for life was eventually obtained. It is possible that it was left to the discretion of the hall commons."<sup>2</sup>

The amounts specified as fines for each trade give some indication of its relative status. As a class, the most wealthy of the tradesmen were considered to be the drapers and mercers, whose yearly rate for freedom was 6s8d and single payment rate £1. They

---

1. See p. (11).

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 3.



were followed by the shoemakers, whose yearly rate was 5s and single payment rate 13s 4d. Tailors, hosiers, clothiers, glovers, bakers, brewers and innkeepers came next, with a yearly rate of 3s 4d and single payment rate of 6s 8d. These were followed by the flaxchapmen or other chapmen at 2s 6d and 5s respectively. Next were the ironmongers, hammermen, husbandmen, weavers, walkers, slaters and handicraftsmen at 2s and 4s. Fishers paid 1s 8d and 3s 4d. At the bottom of the social scale were the labourers, servingmen, wrights and masons at 1s and 2s.<sup>1</sup> A full analysis of the fees payable to secure the freedom of the borough in 1465 is given in the Appendix.<sup>2</sup>

Steps were also taken to ensure that "foreigners" did not set up as tradesmen within the borough without securing their freedom by one of the ways specified above. It was decreed that whenever a foreigner entered the town in order to practise his craft, he should be "examined by the alderman or deputy" at the end of six months. It was their duty to ascertain whether the foreigner intended to remain within the town and, if he did, to ensure that he purchased his freedom

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp.3-4.  
 2. See Appendix, Table B, p. (11).

for life or paid the yearly rate whilst practising his trade within the borough.<sup>1</sup>

The financial privileges granted to those who had served their apprenticeship within the town, set out more specifically below, were valuable. Hence it was important that admission to apprenticeships be controlled. It was required that every tradesman taking an apprentice, should, within the year, bring him before the alderman to see "his name and time enrolled" and that the apprentice himself should take an oath "to do his master's due service according to his commanding". The cost of enrolment was fixed at eight pence, half of which went to the hall and half to the clerk. Masters who failed to enroll their apprentices were called upon to forfeit half the fine of their craft. On completion of his apprenticeship, an apprentice who wished to practise his craft was required to pay twenty pence yearly until he was franchised. Alternatively, he could appear before the alderman with his master, who was required to affirm his

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.3 v.

"good guiding and rule". On the payment of two shillings he would receive his freedom for ever.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of craft guilds in England, the practice of enrolling apprentices appears to have been unregulated.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, much greater importance was attached to enrolment. In Ipswich, for example, any apprentice who was not enrolled <sup>not</sup> could later claim the freedom of the town.<sup>3</sup> Enrolment would certainly have facilitated the granting of privileges to apprentices, such as obtaining their freedom, and would have assisted in the prevention of fraud by the falsifying of indentures.

The permitting of payment for enfranchisement by yearly instalments probably had a dual role. In the first place apprentices setting up on their own account, or foreigners entering the borough, would initially be short of capital. Secondly, the system would give both classes time to consider whether they intended to remain permanently within the borough. At the same time the system protected the

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.4.
2. Lipson, op. cit., p. 322.
3. N. Bacon, Annals of Ipswich, 1884, p. 195.



long-established tradesmen from unfair competition.

The most favoured class were those born within the borough. They were admitted to the freedom without payment of fine, except a small fee of two pence to the alderman's serjeant and a further two pence to the common clerk.<sup>1</sup> It is of interest to note that the hereditary freemen still have a few remaining privileges in Stamford at the present time. In 1975, however, there were only nine left comprised of three families.<sup>2</sup> They receive a small income from the town meadow.<sup>3</sup>

The tradesmen themselves within the borough appear to have been organised in pageants, each of which embraced a number of crafts. The general surveillance of the pageants was clearly accepted by the hall commons at a meeting held on the feast of St. Luke, October 18th, 1465. There were eleven pageants, each of which elected wardens to "search and oversee all manner points [be] longing to the same craft. . .for the welfare and worship of . . .the town and borough".<sup>4</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 4.

2. Barlowe (2), Scholes (3), Yates (4).

3. ex. inf. N.J. Scholes, Chairman, Stamford Freemen.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 5v.

It was the warden's duty to correct any default within his pageant, whether it be by master or servant. If he was unsuccessful in his task he was charged with reporting the matter to the alderman and his council so that they could take the necessary corrective action. Under a further bye-law of July 22nd, 1466, goods which were faulty were to be searched out by two wardens from each pageant and brought "before the alderman and his council as forfeit".<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Rogers has stated that the existence of the pageants "indicates the lack of craft guilds" in Stamford.<sup>2</sup> It is necessary, therefore, to consider the significance of the word "pageant", particularly in the light of the important role played by the guilds elsewhere in the history of medieval stage.<sup>3</sup> At Norwich, for example, the crafts were divided into twelve groups, each of which was required to produce an annual pageant.<sup>4</sup> The guilds of Norwich were ruled by a common council composed of the wardens and twelve members of the craft, by whom the new wardens

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.5 v.

2. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 49.

3. Lipson, op. cit., p. 340.

4. W. Hudson & J.C. Tingey, Records of Norwich, 1906/10, II, 230, No. ccc.

were appointed.<sup>1</sup> Thus there might be ground for supposing that the "pageants" of Stamford came about through a grouping of crafts for social and religious purposes. The appointment of wardens, with the power to search, seems to indicate that there was some sort of gild structure within Stamford, even if it was rather ill-defined. It is possible that if the government of the town, prior to the granting of the charter of incorporation, was vested in a gild merchant,<sup>2</sup> this latter body stifled the growth of individual gilds of the type which existed elsewhere in such towns as Norwich, Nottingham, Northampton and York.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately there are no records to show to what extent these regulations concerning the pageants were enforced or whether or not they succeeded in their aim of maintaining high standards of craftsmanship.

Other regulations of the hall commons refer to various aspects of the conduct of trade within the borough. It was ordained on July 22nd, 1466 that

- 
1. Lipson, op. cit., p. 353.
  2. See above pp. 38-40. pp. 44-47..
  3. c.f. J.T. Smith, *The English Gilds*, 1870,  
S. Kramer, *The English Craft Gilds*, 1927.



"no manner of man of any craft or victualler or any other whatsoever he be shall from this day afterward show or open any shop window on a Sunday to buy or sell. . ."<sup>1</sup> Any person breaking this regulation was required to pay 12d to the hall. The bye-law did not apply, however, to the month of August or to travellers. How strictly this bye-law was enforced in subsequent decades it is difficult to assess. There must have been some departure from it, however, for in November 1557, a special ordinance was issued in respect of those who sold "pudding and pies".<sup>2</sup> The sale of such foodstuffs was expressively forbidden on Sundays "before high mass be done". Offenders were to forfeit their wares which were to be confiscated and given to the poor.

Restrictions on trade on Sundays are

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 6.
  2. Ibid., p. 167.

to be found elsewhere. For example, in 1441 the bishop of Worcester forbade shoemakers in Gloucester to ply their trade;<sup>1</sup> in 1503, the mercers of York permitted no shop to be kept open;<sup>2</sup> in 1562, the corporation of Leicester prohibited the sale of flesh by butchers from 7 a.m. until after divine service on penalty of 12d.<sup>3</sup> By comparison with other towns, however, the prohibition of 1466 on Sunday trading by Stamford shopkeepers was exceptionally comprehensive.

A set of bye-laws concerning the regulation of trade within the borough was agreed at a meeting of the hall held in March 1478/9.<sup>4</sup> Many of these

- 
1. W.H. Stevenson, Gloucester Corporation Records, 1893, p. 394.
  2. M. Sellers, York Mercers & merchant Adventurers, 1918, p. 105.
  3. M. Bateson, Records of the Borough of Leicester, III, 1905, p. 102.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25.

were concerned with the regulation of trade and were designed to protect the consumer by securing the control of prices of essential commodities, by maintaining a proper system of weights and measures, by the prevention of unfair trading and by restricting the freedom of purchase of foreigners entering the borough. Similar sets of ordinances were issued in other towns and of particular interest are those confirmed at Leicester at a meeting of the hall on October 22nd, 1467.<sup>1</sup> At Stamford the price of corn was strictly controlled. It was decreed that every man bringing corn to the market should not sell at a greater price than in adjoining markets, otherwise he was to be "assised" accordingly.<sup>2</sup> Control of the sale of bread was effected by further regulations concerning both price and weight. It was required that the weight of bread had to be kept "perfitely". "No baker was to sell less than four ordinary loaves, or

---

1. Bateson, op. cit., II, pp.287-295.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.24 v., paragraph 3.



less than two white loaves for a penny. Failure to comply was to be punished by "grievous amercement and corporal punishment".<sup>1</sup> The severity of the penalty reserved for bakers who broke this ordinance is a further instance of the medieval attitude of mind. The records of a number of towns indicate that the baker was regarded with suspicion. A complaint was recorded in London that bakers "make nought bread after the assize",<sup>2</sup> whilst at Nottingham it was observed that the bakers took excess.<sup>3</sup> Punishments for offences by bakers were severe elsewhere, too, and there is evidence that they remained so over a period of several hundred years. In 1352, for example, it was noted at Leicester that for the first default, bakers were amerced 1s.4d., for their second 2s.8d. and their third 5s.4d. and for the fourth 40s. or placed in the pillory.<sup>4</sup> Nearly two centuries later, in 1520, the penalties imposed on bakers at Leicester for bread not made of proper paste were 3s.4d. for the first offence, 6s.8d. for the second,

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.25 v.

2. Chronicle of London from 1089-1483, 1827, p. 25.

3. W.H. Stevenson, Records of Nottingham, 1882, I, p.317.

4. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 87.

and "so to double as often times that penalty as they make default".<sup>1</sup> For those of the trade who failed to make good and wholesome rye bread, an additional penalty made provision for "their bodies to be punished according to the law".<sup>2</sup>

A further bye-law at Stamford, made in 1478/9<sup>3</sup> decreed that every baker should sell horseloaves at the rate of four to the penny, at a weight according to the assize, and with twelve to the dozen and "no more". The penalty for infringing these regulations was the forfeiture of every farthing horseloaf which had been baked. The price of horseloaves was also fixed at four to the penny at Leicester.<sup>4</sup> The terminology "horseloaf" throws an interesting light upon the diet of the period. One must turn again to the records of the borough of Leicester to learn of its composition, namely "clean peas and beans".<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, nearly eighty years later, in December 1557<sup>6</sup> it was agreed at a general meeting of the hall that all bakers should make their bread "according to the form of the statute" and that they should sell it at "13 to the dozen and no other way". The penalty for default was fixed to be the forfeiture of every batch baked and offered for sale, otherwise a fine of 6s 8d.

In addition to that of corn and bread, the

---

1. Bateson, op. cit., III, p.1.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25<sup>v</sup>.

4. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 287.

5. Ibid.

6. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 167.

sale of certain other foodstuffs was controlled. The sale of fish in the market was regulated in 1478/9 with regard to both quality and price.<sup>1</sup> It had to be "wholesome" and could not be sold until the alderman or his assignes had "overseen it and set thereon assize". Failure by fishers to comply was punished by the "forfeiture of their fish". Similarly, every butcher or other person selling meat, was to ensure that it be "wholesome flesh, not corrupt".<sup>2</sup> The price was to be according to the season. Failure to comply brought a "grievous punishment". The quality of the meat sold was, of course, a constant problem to other towns also. At Leicester in 1467, it was decreed that "no butcher bring no flesh to sell within the town that is corrupt with any manner of sickness" upon pain of forfeiture of the flesh and committal to prison.<sup>3</sup>

Control was also exerted over particular commodities other than foodstuffs. Innkeepers were ordered in 1479 to "keep perfectly the assize of their fagot in length

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1675, p. 25 v., paragraph 12.  
 2. Ibid.  
 3. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 289



and space" otherwise they were to be punished.<sup>1</sup>

Chandlers were to make "sufficient and durable candles of clean and pure tallow". These were to be sold by the pound, at true weight. Failure to comply was punished by corporal punishment and a fine.<sup>2</sup>

This further reference to corporal punishment for offences against the trading bye-laws in Stamford is in contrast to the situation at Leicester during the latter years of the fifteenth century. Here too, chandlers were subject to control, being ordered not to "sell at any assize nor price but as shall be commanded by the mayor for the time being". Punishment for infringement of the bye-law, however, was by imprisonment and a fine of 3s.4d.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, none of the bye-laws issued at Leicester in 1467 specifically prescribe corporal punishment for offenders. Furthermore, at Stamford, every artificer and craftsman was also ordered not to be "excessive" and to charge "according to reason and conscience so that no complaint be made

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.25 v.

2. Ibid.

3. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 294.

and openly proved".<sup>1</sup> This safeguard for the consumer was to be enforced through the imposition of fines on the offenders.

Thus in 1479, prices were controlled in respect of corn, bread, fish, meat, faggots and candles, or in other words regarding staple foods, heating and lighting. In addition, an attempt was to be made to prevent excessive charge being made by the tradesmen. Further protection against dishonest trading was incorporated in the 1479 bye-law which prohibited the use of unauthorised measures. It was decreed that "every man, having any measure, as well as strikes, gallons and metwands and all other, that they see them sealed according to the king's standard; pain of forfeiture of the measure and corporal punishment".<sup>2</sup>

The reference to the "king's standard" is an illustration of the efforts that were made in England from the time of King Edgar to establish a uniform system of weights and measures in England.<sup>3</sup> Subse-

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 26.

2. Ibid., p. 25 v.

3. ~~F. L.~~ F. L. Hermann, Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen, 1898, I, p. 204.

quently in 1197, Richard I decreed that weights and measures should be uniform<sup>1</sup>, as did King John in the Magna Carta of 1215.<sup>2</sup> Further measures to the same end were enacted during the reign of Edward I, and throughout the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The above bye-law indicates that the corporation of Stamford had accepted the principle of a national system of measurement as decreed by the king. The records of the borough of Leicester show how this town, too, had agreed in 1521 to buy in London "one lawful strike of brass, with a gallon of brass, a yard of brass by the standard and all other weights and measures needful to be had within the town of Leicester."<sup>4</sup> It is of interest to note that subsequently, in 1578, the clerk of the market of the queen's household visited Leicester to inspect the standard measures of the borough.<sup>5</sup> He was to find that though those for the strike and gallon were lawful, that for the yard was too long as it had apparently been broken and pieced together with tin. However, the standard strike, made from the brazen strike, was too large by a pottle.

- 
1. Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Honedine (Rolls Series) IV, p. 33.
  2. W.S. McKechnie, Magna Carta, 1914, Chapter 35.
  3. Statutes of the Realm, 1810, I, pp. 254, 285, 321, 337, 350, 365.
  4. Bateson, op. cit., III, p. 17.
  5. Ibid., pp. 175-176.



Both defects were apparently remedied, but by 1584 the clerk of the market was complaining that the wooden strike at Leicester was again too big by a pottle, and the records of that borough show that further criticisms were to be made of the town's standards of measurement by the representative of the queen.<sup>1</sup>

Further bye-laws made in Stamford in 1478/9 set out specific instructions with regard to certain aspects of trading in corn, fish, poultry, eggs, butter and cheese. No person was permitted to "open their sack or set their corn to sale" until the hour of ten or until the "undernoon bell" has been rung. Thereafter no foreigner was allowed to enter the corn market for the space of one hour. The penalties for infringing these regulations were a fine and corporal punishment.<sup>2</sup> This regulation prohibiting free access to the corn market by foreigners was intended to ensure that the townspeople of Stamford had an adequate supply of corn; it was similar to the ordinances of other towns, for example York,<sup>3</sup> Norwich,<sup>4</sup> Bristol,<sup>5</sup> Chester,<sup>6</sup> Southampton<sup>7</sup>

- 
1. Bateson, op. cit., III, pp.243-345, 404-405.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p.25 v., paragraph 4.
  3. F. Drake, Eboracum, 1736, p. 213.
  4. Hudson & Tingley, op. cit., p, 181.
  5. F.B. Bickley, The Little Red Book of Bristol, 1900, I.pp 38-39.
  6. R.H. Morris, Chester pp.395-396
  7. J.S. Davies, History of Southampton, 1883, p. 149.

and Beverley.<sup>1</sup>

At Leicester, men from both the town and country were prohibited from trading at the Saturday market until the hour of ten had struck, on pain of imprisonment.

Although no buyer was allowed to purchase more than the needs of his own household, there does not appear to have been any preference given to townsmen when the market first opened.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the sale of fish at Stamford there was a rather curious addition to the bye-law referred to above.<sup>3</sup>

This referred to purchasing by "any lord's caterer". If such a servant were to go to the market, he was permitted to "take to his pleasure reserving the town served, satisfied and content after the assize thereupon set".<sup>4</sup>

The precise meaning of this bye-law is somewhat obscure, but it appears to imply that a lord's representative was allowed to purchase as much fish as he required before the assize was set on condition that subsequently he paid the controlled price for his purchase. A further bye-law concerned the sale

of poultry, eggs, butter and cheese.<sup>5</sup> Men

- 
1. A.F. Leach, Beverley Town Documents, 1900, p. 38.
  2. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 291.
  3. See p. 110 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25 v.
  5. Ibid., p. 26.

and women having these commodities for sale were not permitted to offer them for sale in any place other than the market on pain of forfeiture. Moreover women who sold butter, other than in dishes or cakes, did so "at their peril". The general prohibition on street trading in poultry, eggs, butter and cheese other than in the market, under this last named bye-law is a further example of the desire of the corporation for well ordered trade within the borough. The reason for requiring butter to be sold either in dishes or cakes is not particularly obvious but presumably it was to enable purchases to be made by size.

Other bye-laws at Stamford referred to forestalling (the buying up of goods on the way to market); to regrating (the purchase of goods at a market for resale at higher prices); and to engrossing (the withholding from sale until the price had risen of goods purchased at wholesale rates in advance of the market).<sup>1</sup> Certainly these activities violated medieval concepts

---

1. Green, op. cit., II, p. 39.



of commercial morality,<sup>1</sup> since "the aims of medieval legislators were permeated by conceptions of a just price that was fair alike to producer and consumer".<sup>2</sup> Efforts were made nationally to restrict forestalling, regrating and engrossing by statute.<sup>3</sup> At

Stamford it was ordered that "no man of the town or of the country forestall or regrate the market, neither of corn nor of victual upon pain of the statute therefor provided".<sup>4</sup>

Examples of the concern caused by regrating and forestalling are to be found in relation to other towns. At Leicester, the relevant ordinance of 1467 reads -

"Also that no man of the town or of [the] country neither forestall nor regrate no manner of corn, victual, hides, nor no manner of things<sub>5</sub> that come to be sold in pain of imprisonment".

Further references occur in the records of Norwich (1375),<sup>6</sup> Coventry (1498)<sup>7</sup> and Bristol.<sup>8</sup> At Stamford engrossing was also specifically prohibited in respect of fish, poultry, eggs, butter and cheese. It was decreed that "every fisher that bring any panniers

---

1. Lipson, op. cit., I, p. 300.

2. Ibid., p. 299.

3. Statutes of the Realm, 1810, IV, part I, p. 148.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25 v., paragraph 5.

5. Bateson, op. cit., p. 292.

6. Hudson & Tingley, op. cit., I, pp. 181-183.

7. M.D. Harris, Coventry Leet Book, 1907-13, iii, p. 589

8. Bickley, op. cit., I, pp. 38-39.

or fish to this market . . . keep a sale in the market and retail it himself and not to sell at any gross".<sup>1</sup> Offenders forfeited their fish.

Confiscation, with a fine in addition, was similarly ordered for any "man of the town or of the country" who tried to "engross or buy up any such poultry, eggs, butter, or cheese but in the plain market".<sup>2</sup>

The question must now be posed of how the corporation of Stamford sought to enforce the above bye-laws concerning the conduct of trade within the borough. Searchers were appointed to every market to note every default so that it could be brought before the alderman. Furthermore, any other person who was aware of any infringement of the ordinances was considered to have a duty to report it to the alderman, so that the necessary punishment could be administered.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, no records of the Court Leet have been preserved prior to 1695.<sup>4</sup>

No further bye-laws concerning the regulation of trade within the borough of Stamford appear to have

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25 v.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Ibid., p. 26.

4. See p. 6 above.

been enacted until 1491, during the reign of Henry VII. During this year an ordinance was issued that is indicative of the relationship which existed at this time between the borough of Stamford and the parish of St. Martin's on the south bank of the Welland.<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants of the borough of Stamford were forbidden to buy any victuals or merchandise from any dweller in St. Martin's, or lend any of their money there. Moreover, inhabitants of the borough were forbidden to employ any resident from St. Martin's unless he had been first sworn before the alderman. The penalties for infringing this latter regulation were severe. Members of the first twelve were liable to a fine of one pound; members of the second twelve 13s 4d and commoners 6s 8d.<sup>2</sup> It is possible the corporation felt this regulation to be necessary because residents of St. Martin's may not have been paid the customary dues levied upon the inhabitants of the borough proper.

The differential fines for members of the first

---

1. See pp. 28-33 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 49.



twelve, the second twelve and commoners is of interest in itself. It appears to suggest that member<sup>ship</sup> of each of these sections of the community was conditional upon their local standing. No doubt a higher degree of responsibility was also demanded from those who were responsible for governing the town.

In the reign of Philip and Mary, a number of additional regulations concerning trade were introduced. In 1556 it was ordered -

"by the alderman and his brethren with the whole consent of the hall commons that no chandler hereafter shall take any more gains whether they sell by the pound or half pound or<sup>1</sup> by the penny-worth, then after iiid the pound".

It was also decreed that a chandler must sell candles to those local residents who needed them. If such sale were to be refused, the chandler was liable to a fine of 3s.4d. and to be imprisoned in the "Bridge Foot". The efforts made by municipal authorities to ensure that there was an adequate supply of candles available for rich and poor alike, at a reasonable price, was

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.165 v.

widespread at this time, since the national supply of tallow was only just sufficient for requirements.<sup>1</sup>

Several additions were also made at the same hall to those bye-laws which controlled the manner in which trading in certain commodities could be conducted within the borough.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it was forbidden for any man to buy hides in the Friday market in any place other than at the stocks adjacent to All Saints Church, or in the butchers' shambles in the fish market, where the butchers sold their meat. A fine of twelve pence was to be levied on any buyer who transgressed this ordinance immediately after the offence had been committed.<sup>3</sup> This is an interesting regulation since it was directed at the buyer rather than the seller, as was the case in the majority of ordinances issued by the corporation. A further regulation was also made at this time with regard to Sunday trading. It was ordained that all those people who sold pudding and pies should not do so on Sundays until High Mass was finished. If they disobeyed this rule

---

1. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 95-103.

2. See p. 104 seq.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 165 v.

the pudding and pies would be immediately taken and given to the poor folk of the town.<sup>1</sup>

The bye-laws confirmed during the reign of Philip and Mary, can be regarded as supplementary to those issued in 1479 and in 1557 it was -

"ordered and agreed by the alderman and his brethren with the consent of the commonality in this hall assembled, that all good old orders, laws and statutes made heretofore in the hall and so regarded in the town book, shall stand and be good and<sub>2</sub> effectual till further order be taken".

Specific reference was also made at this meeting to the continuance of the order concerning the selling of candles by chandlers which seems to indicate that special importance was attached to it.

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these bye-laws concerning the regulation of trade in Stamford during the period covered by Section I of this thesis. It is worth observing the comprehensiveness of the regulations, however, and the care with which they are entered in the hall books.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 167.

2. Ibid., p. 169 v.



Chapter IIIAdministration of the town

Most of the bye-laws enacted by the Stamford corporation in 1478 were concerned with the regulation of trade within the borough and have been discussed in the preceding chapter. Four further ordinances, however, issued at this time relate to the day-to-day administration of the town, in particular to public order. Thus, every man coming to the town was ordered to "keep the king's peace, pick no quarrels, give no occasion" on pain of corporal punishment. The carrying of weapons was strictly controlled, the relevant ordinance stating that -

"No man denizen nor other nor none artificer, no journeyman bear no gleve, pollax, long staff, clubbed staff, sword, woodknife, baslard, no hanger except a gentleman to have a weapon born after him, pain of forfeiture of all such weapons born to the contrary". 1

A similar ordinance was issued in Leicester in 1467, by which the Mayor of that town, on the king's

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25 v., paragraph 2.

behalf, commanded that "all manner of men keep the peace of our sovereign lord the king, that no man disturb it within the franchise of this town as by armour or weapon bearing . . . save in support of the mayor".<sup>1</sup>

A knight or squire was, however, permitted to have a sword borne after him. The penalty for carrying weapons unlawfully at Leicester was forfeiture of the weapon and committal to prison.

Another bye-law made at Stamford in 1478, which was concerned with the keeping of the peace, forbade the playing of cards, dice and bowls, or other unlawful games, within the town. The penalty for infringement was the forfeiture of "such as they play for" and committal to prison.<sup>2</sup> This was in accordance with the statutes of the realm which outlawed tennis, football, quoits, dice, casting the stone, koiles, closh, half-bowl, hand-in, hand-out and queck board.<sup>3</sup> A bye-law in the same tenor at Leicester also made imprisonment (together with a fine of 6d), the penalty for those playing unlawful games. Here, the

---

1. Bateson, *op. cit.*, II, p. 287.

2. S.C.R., *The Hall Book*, 1461-1657, p.26, paragraph 7.

3. Statutes of the Realm, II, Stat.12, Ric.II, c.6, p. 57.

" " " " " " 11, Hen.IV, c.4, p.163.

" " " " " " 17, Edw.IV, c.3, pp.462-3

owner of the house, garden, or other place where the games were being played was also fined 4d.<sup>1</sup> At Norwich, no man within the city was permitted to play tennis, quoits, dice or "other dishonest plays" upon pain of imprisonment, being exhorted instead to indulge in "shooting as the king's commandment is".<sup>2</sup> The records of the borough of Nottingham, amongst others, also contain several references to the enforcement of the statutes against unlawful games.<sup>3</sup>

So determined was the corporation of Stamford to preserve public order within the town that a bye-law was passed to curb the presence of strangers within the borough. It was decreed, again in 1478, that "no manner of stranger unknown nor no vagabond or other calling themselves shipmen nor no common beggars, strangers abide or continue in this town over a day and a night". If they did so they were to receive corporal punishment.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this particular ordinance has probably much to do with Stamford's position on one of the principal routes from North to South.<sup>5</sup> It would appear that though

---

1. Bateson, op. cit., p. 290.

2. Hudson & Tingey, op. cit., II, p. 317.

3. Stevenson, op. cit., II, pp. 216, 260, 262, 264, 330, 332, 348.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 26.

5. See pp. 8-10 above.



the corporation were prepared to allow the town to be used as a stopping place, they were equally determined to keep it clear of those visitors considered to be undesirable. A somewhat similar regulation applied in Norwich, where no stranger could "be entertained in the city beyond one day and one night", unless his host was answerable for him.<sup>1</sup>

This bye-law concerning people considered undesirable had indeed been anticipated by a decree issued nearly a decade earlier in 1469, which related to tapsters and the women who associated with them. "Every woman soggerant . . . , every woman vagabond, every woman inhabitant given to idleness", together with the tapsters themselves were ordered to leave the town. If they did not do so, the penalty prescribed was that they should be led about the town with hoods upon their heads, soused on the 'enkestole'<sup>2</sup> and therefore driven 'shamefully' out of the town. Thereafter they were to stay in the town no longer than one day or night unless they were "amended of living and able to

---

1. Hudson & Tingey, op. cit., p. 188.

2. i.e. cuckstool or stool for ducking scolds, etc.

find sufficient surety for their abiding to be of virtuous disposition". To ensure the enforcement of this bye-law, "every innholder, every burgess and every commoner" was ordered to avoid the tapsters and women upon pain of a fine of 6s. 8d. and to refrain from inviting them into their houses upon pain of forfeiting 13s. 4d. Whether or not this ordinance was effective, or the punishment for infringing carried out, it is impossible to say.<sup>1</sup>

Further bye-laws were enacted with the object of ensuring that the day-to-day life of the town was not hampered by a lack of consideration by some people for the well being of others. Thus in 1468 it was decreed that no horse coming to the town on market day be tied up within the market or anywhere else in the town other than in a house. A horse found in infringement of this rule was to be taken by the bailiff, and a fine of 1d. (half of which went to the bailiff himself) levied on its owner before it could be retrieved.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.13 v.

2. Ibid., p. 10.v.

This bye-law was confirmed in 1478, though in somewhat different wording, which amplified its purpose, namely to ensure that no peril befell children and no annoyance was caused in the king's highway. The penalty was this time fixed at one half penny (ob).<sup>1</sup> A comparable bye-law was issued in Leicester in 1467 when it was ordered that men and women, having unladen their horses by which they had brought corn or other victuals to market, should lead them out of the market place to the inns, upon pain of a fine of two pence.<sup>2</sup> Other towns, too, for example Bristol, forbade the leaving of horses in the street by people attending market.<sup>3</sup>

The desire of the corporation to ensure that the streets were free from encumbrances, whether living or inanimate, is shown by other ordinances. Thus in 1465, it was decreed that any man who had timber lying in the highway or any thing that caused annoyance was to remove it upon penalty of one shilling. Indeed, any man who brought timber into the town and had not removed it from the streets by Michaelmas,

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 25.
  2. Bateson, op. cit., pp. 291-292.
  3. Savage, op. cit., p. 108.



was not only to be fined one shilling, but was to forfeit the wood as well.

It was towards the butchers and fishmongers, however, that numerous directives concerning the depositing of trade refuse in the streets were made. Thus, in 1465 it was ordained that no butcher or fisher should "put any entrails of flesh or fish or bowels in any place within the town but make them to be carried into the delves without the town".<sup>1</sup> upon pain of a penalty of 2d. This was not merely a matter of keeping the streets clear of obstruction but one of hygiene also for the rotting flesh no doubt smelled obnoxious and was a source of infection. It would appear that it was necessary to remind the townsmen of this ordinance for in 1466 it was again decreed that "if any butcher or other person lay any entrails, bowels or carrion within the town at any place but within his own place [they] shall pay to the hall as often as they be found faulty, four pence".<sup>2</sup>

Other bye-laws at Stamford relating to the cleanliness

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 4 v.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

of the town were concerned with the dunghills. In July 1466<sup>1</sup> it was forbidden to "lay stone, earth or timber, entrails or bowells or dead carrion" on the dunghill, nor indeed anything else but dung. The penalty for infringement was one shilling. In November 1466<sup>2</sup> the alderman and the "twenty-four" assigned certain places for use as "muck hills and dung hills" within the said town and without". This bye-law is of special interest for reasons apart from its primary purpose. Firstly, it indicates that the corporation considered that its authority extended outside the town walls at least as far as the disposal of refuse was concerned. Secondly, it makes references to parishes, namely, St. Peter's, St. Clement's and St. Paul's,<sup>3</sup> which were subsequently to be dissolved. Some parishes were to make their muckhills inside the walls, some outside, whilst others were permitted both alternatives. Of those confined to the walled town St. Michael's had allocated to their use the "mid-way from the market cross and 'cusse' place or in the castle dyke", and St. Peter's had one site between the "callis"<sup>4</sup> and the churchyard" and another "within the corner next to the house of Robert Barker".

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

3. See Appendix, Map II, p. (60). (Speed c 1600)  
The town in 1466 would have been very similar.

4. Meaning obscure (possibly corruption of 'cusus').

On the other hand, the residents of St. Paul's were ordered to carry their muck "without the town wall", those of St. George's "without the town wall at Caleby gate", those of St. Mary's "without the water gate" and those of St. Clement's "in the delve without Scotgate".<sup>1</sup>

The penalty for depositing muck inside the town walls other than those specified was a fine of fourpence for every infringement.

The practice of allocating specific places outside the town for the tipping of rubbish was usual for larger towns, and people were ordered to carry and deposit their rubbish there.<sup>2</sup> The specific nature of the Stamford ordinances, in that the precise location of every muckhill is defined, is perhaps worthy of note. The records of several other boroughs examined for comparative purposes indicate a considerable concern for cleanliness within the town, but except for Leicester, do not specify in the same way exactly where the muck was to be taken. At Leicester, however, an ordinance of 1508 decreed that "no manner of Muck" should be

---

1. S.C.R. The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.7. See Harrop, op. cit.  
 2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 49. I, pp.10-11.



deposited within the town walls, but only outside in places which had been assigned for the purpose.<sup>1</sup>

The cleanliness of the streets continued to be of concern to the corporation and in 1557 every man was ordered to cleanse the area in front of his own property. This was to be done before St. Thomas's day, December 29th, upon pain of a fine of 3s.4d.<sup>2</sup> This practice of requiring townsmen to cleanse the street in front of their own property was widespread during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and continued until the eighteenth century in some towns. Thus, in 1467 it was enacted at Leicester that all men and women who were inhabitants of the town should sweep the streets in front of their property, whether it was within the walled area or in the suburbs.<sup>3</sup> This bye-law was strengthened in 1582 by an ordinance requiring owners of empty property to sweep the street in front of it.<sup>4</sup> Likewise in Norwich in 1467 "every occupier, owner and farmer" was required to clear away "all the filth in the streets opposite his dwelling to the middle [of the street]".<sup>5</sup> Similar bye-laws

- 
1. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 380.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1567, p.167v
  3. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 291.
  4. Ibid., III, p. 191.
  5. Hudson & Tingey, op. cit., II, p. 97.

were made in Ipswich (1541),<sup>1</sup> Coventry (1552),<sup>2</sup>  
and Cambridge.<sup>3</sup>

The water supply also came under the scrutiny of the corporation. In 1551, people were forbidden to wash clothes in the conduits or within the walls of St. John's and St. Peter's wells. The penalty for infringement was four pence and another two pence payable to the person who reported the matter to the alderman. Brewers were forbidden to extract water from the conduits before six o'clock in the morning, upon pain of a penalty of 12d., presumably to ensure that there was no shortage of water for the ordinary townspeople.<sup>4</sup> This ordinance may indicate that the water supply in Stamford may not have been as plentiful as it appears to have been at Leicester.<sup>5</sup> The restriction placed on brewers at Stamford may be compared with those imposed at Coventry. Here the use of the conduits by brewers was strictly controlled. For example, in 1448 they were prohibited from using this source,<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Bacon, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

2. M.D. Harris, op. cit., p. 804.

3. C.H. Cooper, Annals of Cambridge, 1842, II, p. 332.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 155 v.

5. Thomas, op. cit., p. 59.

6. Harris, op. cit., p. 232.

but later, as is indicated in the borough records 1483<sup>1</sup> and 1493<sup>2</sup>, they were permitted to do so on payment of a special levy towards the upkeep of the conduits. However, by 1548,<sup>3</sup> use of the conduits for trade purposes, except the meat, was again forbidden and in 1553<sup>4</sup> and 1555<sup>5</sup> further bye-laws were enacted specifically forbidding brewers to use the conduits upon pain of a penalty of twenty shillings.

Further ordinances issued at Stamford serve as a reminder that the town like most other medieval boroughs, was not merely associated with the countryside as a market town, but was an integral part of it. Such ordinances were concerned with keeping livestock, the control of fish and the proper management of the arable land. During the period under discussion, rich meadow land stretched to within a few hundred yards of the town centre. Indeed, even today, much of this countryside is preserved as a public open space.<sup>6</sup> Under a

---

1. Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 517.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 548-549.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 788.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 808-809.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 812.

6. See appendix, map III, p. (61).



regulation issued by the Stamford corporation on July 22nd, 1466, no one was to bring sheep into the folds before Martinmas (November 11th). The folds had to be clear of sheep again by low Sunday. The penalty for infringement was a fine of one penny for each sheep.<sup>1</sup>

During the reign of Edward VI in 1548, an additional ordinance was issued concerning the keeping of sheep. This set limits upon the number of sheep that should be kept by various groups of townsmen. Members of the first twelve were allowed up to sixty sheep; members of the second twelve up to forty sheep; farmers who paid "great rents" and had "much land in the fold", up to sixty and every other commoner up to twenty sheep. The penalties for infringing this rule were two pence for every sheep or three shillings and four pence for a score thereof. A further clause of this bye-law strengthened the regulations issued in 1466 concerning the bringing of sheep into the town folds. The number permitted

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 6.

was not to exceed the number assessed for summer grazing. No sheep were to be brought into the folds before November 11th or kept there longer than low Sunday or within two days thereafter. The penalty for infringement was ~~assessed~~ at four pence for each sheep (as opposed to one penny in 1466).<sup>1</sup> A further clause of the 1548 ordinance authorised butchers to keep thirty sheep to be fatted and killed. For every sheep kept above this number a fine of four pence was to be imposed. In the following aldermanic year, 1549/50, an ordinance decreed that "at no time hereafter was any man to keep above the number of sheep as is rated by the old book", the inference being that the 1548 ordinance had not been strictly adhered to.<sup>2</sup> Also in 1550, it was enacted that no sheep should be brought to be washed or clipped before Michaelmas. The penalty for infringement was fixed at fifteen shillings.

In the reign of Philip and Mary, in 1554, further bye-laws concerning sheep were enacted by the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 149.

2. Ibid., p. 152

Stamford corporation. In that year the butchers were ordered to provide a shepherd to keep all their sheep together. Furthermore, no butcher was permitted to keep a byeherd<sup>1</sup> after St. Andrew's Day, November 30th, 1554; none were to keep more than thirty sheep a piece in the flock under the control of the shepherd. The penalty for infringement was fixed at forty shillings, a severe penalty at the time. An additional clause of this byelaw that "no man shall presume to keep more than their number and old rate and that there shall be no flocks of sheep under the number of one hundred in a flock, pain of forty shillings"<sup>2</sup> presumably refers to the earlier regulation of 1548. This series of ordinances concerning sheep issued during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was no doubt intended to prevent overgrazing of the available pasture land. It also shows that certain privileges, as well as liabilities, accrued to members of the first and second twelve.

---

1. See p.144 below.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 161v



Another bye-law was concerned with swine.

Every man who kept swine at home, after being warned to put them in the herd was liable to be punished.

It would appear that offending pigs were removed from the home of the offender by someone employed on behalf of the corporation, probably the pinder.

The offender was required to pay a fine of a half-penny to the "taker of the swine" and a further half-penny to the hall.<sup>1</sup>

In 1557, a further ordinance was issued at Stamford concerning pigs found in the streets. It was decreed that the pinder, after the neatherd and swineherd had gone into the fields, should within the hour go about the town to round up stray pigs. These he was to impound and to have for every pig or beast so impounded one penny. Likewise, the pinder was to go around the town again after the pigs were turned from the fields.<sup>2</sup>

Bye-laws concerning pigs were enacted in many towns, for they appear to have been regarded, with good cause as a danger to health unless

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 167.

strictly controlled.<sup>1</sup> No doubt too they were liable to cause considerable annoyance by rooting up the roads unless steps (such as ringing) were taken to prevent their doing so.

In Leicester, for example, as early as 1335, an ordinance was issued requiring pigs loose in certain streets to be ringed. By a further decree, issued twenty years later in 1355, they were prohibited from wandering in the four main streets leading to the main gates, whether ringed or not.<sup>2</sup> That these regulations at Leicester were enforced is evident from the records of penalties inflicted upon offenders.<sup>3</sup> At Coventry over a century and a half later, in 1517, the keeping of pigs within the walls of the city was forbidden and in 1552 under a further ordinance it was decreed that even those pigs in the suburbs could not be kept within sixty feet of the highway.<sup>4</sup>

A bye-law issued in 1550 relates to the keeping of cattle and horses. The keeping of cows

---

1. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

2. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 21-22.

3. Ibid., pp. 104, 164, 165, 168.

4. Harris, op. cit., p. 652.

in the fields of Stamford was forbidden except upon a person's own ground. Even then they were to be tethered to stakes. A similar regulation applied to oxen and horses. The penalty for infringement was 3s.4d.<sup>1</sup>

In 1551 further regulations concerning oxen and horses were introduced. It was agreed that everyone having twenty acres of arable land in the fields of Stamford could have common grazing for four oxen and one horse or else five horses for one draught. Those exceeding this limit could be fined ten shillings. Those in excess of the stipulated number at the time the ordinance was issued were required to remove their animals within twelve days, upon a like penalty, except for chapmen, having no draught, who could have three horses (according to the old rate, which is not specified).<sup>2</sup> Also no man not having in excess of thirty acres of arable land was to be allowed to keep oxen within the folds (unless upon his own ground) upon pain of a fine of eight pence for every yoke of oxen taken there.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 152.

2. Ibid., p. 153.

3. Ibid., p. 155.



A bye-law issued in 1491 concerned fishing in the town. Every inhabitant of the borough was forbidden to "fish in the water in any place in the night" upon pain of forfeiting half his net to the common hall and the other to the man who "taketh him in the night fishing".<sup>1</sup> As with the taking of the swine to the herd, it would appear that citizens were encouraged by promise of reward to apprehend their fellowmen for infringement of the bye-laws. This regulation was presumably intended to prevent over-fishing in the Welland, which at Stamford is a comparatively small river. Examples of the involvement of borough corporations in fishing are to be found elsewhere. At Nottingham, for example, the borough records for the first half of the sixteenth century indicate that fishing rights in local waters were let by the corporation.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, in Norwich, as early as 1382, detailed bye-laws concerning fishing in the king's river were issued by the corporation.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 49.

2. Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 66, 70, 280, 370, 390, 391.

3. Hudson & Tingey, op. cit., p. 85.

Finally, amongst those ordinances which may be described broadly as relating to the agrarian interests of the town, are those concerning the fallow fields. On July 22nd, 1466, it was decreed that there should be a fallow field in 1467 and so continuing for three years. The first field was to "begin in the middle field from Holgate Way to the stile that goeth to Ryhall". No man was permitted to "sow any corn in any fallow fold of the three fields" during the three years, or longer if the hall agreed. The field "to stand and lie (?) as it had done before time".<sup>1</sup> This might be interpreted as implying that the fallow field had only just been introduced in Stamford. Three years after this ordinance was issued on December 6th, 1469, it was agreed that there was to be a fallow field yearly as had been the case of the previous three years. The penalty for infringement was a fine of twelve pence and forfeiture to be all the corn grown in the fallow field.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.6.

2. Ibid., p. 13 v.

These references to the three field system are of interest in so far as the three course rotation appears to have been regarded in some places as advanced farming, even as late as the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

The necessity for maintaining the fertility of the land also required the control of compost and dung and in 1551 those classes of persons referred to in the bye-laws concerning rights of common<sup>2</sup> were forbidden to cart compost and dung from anywhere other than the places assessed by the alderman and his brethren upon the penalty of 20d for every load taken.<sup>3</sup>

In 1534 a further step to assist local agriculture was taken when it was decreed that a dyke should be made between the meadows of Easton and Tinwell and the meadows of Stamford. The pasturage thereof, after the hay had been removed was to be used for the benefit of the local inhabitants and commonalty of the town of Stamford, who were permitted to graze their cattle or

---

1. Lipson op. cit., p. 68

2. See p. 140.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 155.



horses there. No sheep nor oxen, or byeherds, were to be kept there, however, upon pain of forfeiture.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps fitting that this chapter should conclude with those ordinances which concern the town wall. Perhaps nothing emphasises the idea of a "state within the state"<sup>2</sup> more than this physical barrier of stone separating the town from the countryside, which as has been seen above, nevertheless extended into the town itself. Thus, in 1466 it was enacted by the alderman and the twenty-four burgesses comprising the first and second twelve that the taxes be levied upon themselves for the building of the West gates and "to the gift of my Lord Cromwell". The amounts paid vary considerably. The alderman himself, William Brown, contributed 40s, John Brown 20s, George Chapman 13s.4d., William Hyckham and Robert Hance 10s and Thomas and John Gregory 6s8d each. These presumably were the wealthiest of the burgesses.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 123 v.

2. Green, op. cit., I p. 1.

See Appendix, Plate 7, p. (69).

Photograph of extant bastion of town wall, Stamford.

Others, namely Thomas Kesteven, Robert Naylor, John Gybbs and Alexander Tyard gave 5s; John Nele, George Coke, Thomas Holton, Thomas Middleton, Robert Skynner and David Hovye 3s.4d; William Merchant contributed 2s, whilst others appear to have given nothing.<sup>1</sup> A second list of contributions to the gift of "my Lord Cromwell" show that William Brown paid 3s.4d, John Brown, George Chapman, Thomas and John Gregory, William Hyckham and Robert Hance 2s. Thomas Kesteven, Robert Naylor, John Gybbs and Alexander Tyard 1s.8d; John Nele, Thomas Holton, Robert Skinner, William Merchant and David Hovy 1s.<sup>2</sup>

Further ordinances concerning walls were issued in 1552 when all men having back-gates were required to repair the walls as often as necessary upon pain of 100s. Furthermore anyone who had such walls "in decay" and had not repaired them by the feast of the Nativity of St. John the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657 p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 7.v.

Baptist, namely June 24th 1552, was to be fined 100s.<sup>1</sup>  
These penalties were quite severe for the time.

Thus it can be seen how the daily life of the townspeople of Stamford was closely regulated by the ordinances issued by the corporation. Virtually every aspect of community life was covered; public order, cleanliness of the streets, the water supply, the keeping of livestock, the efficient use of the land, the upkeep of the walls. This was local government in the fullest sense of the word, for those comprising the law-making body lived and worked amongst those to whom the regulations applied.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 155.



Chapter IVCorporation Administration

In the preceding chapters, the powers of the corporation of Stamford, and the enactments which proceeded therefrom, have been considered in detail. It is now appropriate to examine more closely the duties of those charged with carrying out the administrative work of the corporation. Firstly, it is pertinent to consider where the real power lay within the borough during this period. This question has already been referred to in Chapter 1<sup>1</sup> during a discussion on the third clause of the charter of incorporation. This, it will be recalled, refers to the election of the alderman and to the first twelve, each of whom was chosen for life, unless there was a good reason to the contrary. It has been observed, however, that notwithstanding the charter of incorporation, a second twelve was also elected.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. See pp. 52-55.

2. Ibid.

The names of those elected to the first and second twelve were recorded annually in the hall book from 1465 onwards, apart from 1492 and 1493 for which years no records exist.<sup>1</sup> An analysis has been made of these records of elections and this is set out in tabular form in the appendix.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Table A indicates the original date of election of every member of the first and second twelve, together with the date of cessation of service. The precise years spent as a member of the lower and upper councils is also given, together with the length of service on each. The table shows which members of the first twelve were elected as aldermen and the number of occasions on which they held this position. Information is also given concerning breaks in service by members of the first and second twelve, together with particulars, when known, of such matters as dismissal from office. In considering these tables, it should be borne in mind that there is evidence that certain members of the first and second twelve were engaged in the government of the town prior

---

1. See pp. 95-96 above, p. 78 below.

2. See Appendix, Table A, pp. (1)-(10).

to the granting of the charter of incorporation.<sup>1</sup>

The length of service of the 172 members of the first and second twelve referred to above is summarised<sup>2</sup> in Table C in the form of a block graph. This shows that only 10 (5.8%) held office for a single year, and only 37 members (21.5%) served for less than five years, 32 members (18.6%) served more than five but less than eleven years, 32 members (18.6%) served more than ten years but less than sixteen, 30 (17.4%) for more than fifteen years but less than twenty-one, 13 (7.5%) for more than twenty years but less than twenty-six, 16 (9%) for more than twenty-five years but less than thirty-one and 6 (3.4%) for more than thirty but less than thirty-six. A few members appear to have had exceptionally long periods of service; 1 (.5%) held office for forty-one years, 3 (1.7%) for forty-two years, 1 (.5%) for forty-eight years and 1 (.5%) for fifty-three years.<sup>3</sup> When examining these figures, however, it should be noted that whilst every effort

- 
1. Butcher, *op. cit.*, p. 26. See p.
  2. See Appendix, Table C, p. (12).
  3. To one decimal place, total 99.3%.



has been made to avoid confusion between members with identical surnames, an error could occur if a freeman on giving up office, was succeeded by, for example, a son with exactly the same Christian name. Such an error, however, is not likely to have occurred so many times as to invalidate the general conclusion that may be drawn from Table A<sup>1</sup> namely that the majority of members of the first and second twelve held office for many years. This in itself must have given a considerable sense of continuity and stability to the administration of the town. Table D<sup>2</sup> in the appendix indicates this continuity in another form, since it is an analysis of the number of new members elected to the first and second twelve for the 93 years from 1466 to 1558. In 29 years of these there was no change at all, in 19 of the years there was 1 change, in 16 years 2 changes, in 18 years 3 changes and in 6 years 4 changes. Only in 3 years did the number of changes exceed 4 when in each case there were 6.

---

1. See Appendix, Table A, Pp. (1)-(10).

2. See Appendix, Table D, p. (13).

In evaluating these tables, two further points are perhaps worthy of mention. Firstly during this period, election to the first and second twelve appears to bear no correlation to national events, such as rivalry between Yorkists and Lancastrians. Secondly, whilst some individuals served for many years on the second twelve before being elected to the first twelve, others were appointed directly to the higher council. Moreover, a number remained for the whole of their service on the second twelve. The implications of this are discussed more fully in Chapter V of this thesis, "The tradespeople of Stamford".

By their very nature, however, meeting but periodically, councils cannot deal with day-to-day matters. Thus, since there were no permanent employees equivalent to the modern chief executive officers, it fell to the alderman virtually to govern the town. It should be noted that in Stamford the annual choice of an alderman (who was required to be a member of the first twelve) was made, according to the charter of incorporation<sup>1</sup>

---

1. See p. 53 above.

by the commonalty as a whole rather than by the first twelve themselves. In theory, therefore, it would have been possible for the first twelve as a body to have found that the commonalty had chosen a person from their number as alderman, whom they themselves would not have regarded as the most suitable candidate. In practice, however, it seems unlikely that such a situation ever occurred at Stamford during the period now under discussion since there are no references to difficulties at election time. This was certainly not true in every borough, however. During the latter half of the fifteenth century, for example, there was considerable discord at the time of election of the mayor and the officers at Northampton and Leicester. This was "by reason of the multitude of the inhabitants being of little substance and of no discretion, who exceed in the assemblies the other approved, discreet and well disposed persons".<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in respect of Leicester and Northampton a special act of parliament was passed controlling the manner in which elections were to take place.

---

1. Bateson, op. cit., II, p. 319.



Upon enfranchisement, all freemen were required to take an oath,<sup>1</sup> in which they pledged themselves to "be true and true faith bear" to the alderman "to stand by" him and "maintain" him in his office.<sup>2</sup> It was thus clearly required of all townsmen that the authority of the alderman be regarded and obeyed. The oath also contained a promise to "be ready at scot and lot and duly pay it". Hence it is implicit that all freemen were required to pay scot and lot. Though the converse, that all who paid scot and lot were freemen, cannot be assumed, the records in the hall book appear to indicate that it was so. The freeman's oath is of interest in other respects, too. An undertaking was required that he would attend the common hall whenever he heard the "common bell" and at all other times when he had received warning from the alderman. To this was added a promise not to absent himself without a reasonable and true explanation. The duty of a freeman was to give counsel and in order to prevent his being unduly influenced by wealthy employers, he was ~~forbidden~~

---

1. See Appendix, p. (56); p. 446 below.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 4.

to take neither "clothing, livery nor badge from any gentleman for maintenance". Indeed, even the seeking of maintenance was prohibited, which emphasises the abhorrence of this form of employment to the medieval townsmen.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, a freeman was required to give an undertaking not to seek action against third parties without first obtaining permission from "the alderman and his brethren".<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the duties of the freemen is emphasised by the fines levied upon those who neglected them. The higher the position of the offender in the hierarchy of the town the more severe the punishment.<sup>3</sup>

Thus offending members of the first twelve were fined 13s.4d, of the second twelve 6s.8d. and of the commons 3s.4d. All offences involved

liability for imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, offences committed against members of the first twelve were regarded in a more serious light than those committed against unsworn men or strangers.

The duties of the alderman himself, have to be inferred for the large part. He must certainly have

---

1. c.f. Green, op. cit., I, p. 221.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 3 v.

3. See pp. 119-120 above.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 4.

presided over the meetings of the hall. He was the chief magistrate and was assisted in his judicial capacity by the remainder of the first twelve, all of whom, under the charter of incorporation, held the office of Justice of the Peace.<sup>1</sup> References occur in the hall book from time to time concerning more specific duties. Thus, in 1465 it was ordained that the alderman for the time being or his deputy should keep Thursday each week for the enrolling of apprentices and dealing with other things authorised under the charter of incorporation.<sup>2</sup> His principal duty, however, was to co-ordinate the work of the servants of the corporation, each of whom swore a personal oath of loyalty to him. The office of alderman was indeed an onerous one and a further analysis of the information given in Table A indicates that approximately two thirds of those elected to the first twelve became alderman at least once. In this respect it will be recalled that there is some evidence that the title of alderman in Stamford originally applied to the chief officer of a gild merchant.<sup>3</sup> Reference has been made also to the existence of records

---

1. See pp. 56-57 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 6.

3. See pp. 44-47 above.



of the names of the alderman from 1402,<sup>1</sup> and of those elected to the first and second twelve from 1465.<sup>2</sup> From the date of incorporation of the borough in 1461 to 1558, 60 freemen were chosen as alderman, of whom possibly 4 had served as alderman prior to the granting of the charter. Of these, 35 held the office only once, 13 twice, 11 thrice and 1 four times. If the years succeeding 1558 are taken into account the respective figures are 39, 14, 12 and 2. During the period 1465-1558 inclusive 95 freemen were elected to the first twelve. In this respect it is not possible to say whether they were elected to the first twelve during the years 1461-1464, but if they were, the total of 95 would not be greatly increased, if at all. The role of the servants responsible to the alderman must now be considered.

The charter of incorporation gave the alderman and commonalty the power to choose annually "one or two serjeants to attend the alderman and observe the commandments as he or they be commanded by the said alderman".<sup>3</sup> The precise duties of the serjeants

1. See p. 45 above, pp. 167-168 below.
2. See p. 92 above.
3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 1.

are not specified in the charter, but may be deduced in part at least, from subsequent entries in the hall books. In 1465, at the first recorded meeting of the hall commons following the granting of the charter of incorporation, two serjeants were chosen. One William Tavenor by name, was appointed serjeant "for the alderman"; the other John Bushe, serjeant "for the office of the bailiffship of the said franchise".<sup>1</sup> In the corporation records the alderman's serjeant is usually referred to simply as the "serjeant" and the serjeant for the office of the bailiffship as "the bailiff". In general, it appears that the former was concerned with civil matters and the latter with criminal ones. This is borne out by the oaths required of each officer before taking office.

The serjeant was tasked with ascertaining the names and occupations of all strangers coming into the town to live. This was to ensure that the fines for newcomers, as agreed by the corporation, "were duly paid". It was his duty to hand over all such monies, together with

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 2.

"all other profits that may prevail in the town" to the chamberlain. It must have been recognised that there was a possibility of corruption taking place, for in his oath, the serjeant pledged himself to carry out these duties "without any concealment".<sup>1</sup> It was also the responsibility of the alderman's serjeant to assist with the admittance of tradesmen to the freedom of the borough. This is apparent from a bye-law issued in 1465 which stipulates that although men born in the borough were admitted to the freedom thereof without charge, they were required to pay 5d. to the alderman's serjeant and 2d. to the common clerk.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, he was charged with collecting 6d. from every townsman who was "sworn to the hall", of which he was permitted to retain 2d. for himself.<sup>3</sup> The stipend of the common serjeant was assessed in 1465 at 26s.8d. per annum. He also received a gown "after the ancient custom of the town".

The duties of the bailiff are likewise indicated in the oath which he took on admission to office. He was required to execute writs, warrants

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 12a v.

2. Ibid., p. 3 v.

3. Ibid., p. 4 v.



and precepts directed to him and to make returns of the receipts of these and other fines and amercements. His duties also included the receiving and delivering of prisoners and in this respect he was required to declare that he would not permit any "wilful escape" by the accepting of a "special favour".<sup>1</sup> There are no references in the hall book of this period to a stipend being paid to the bailiff but there are, however, several to the proportion of certain fines which he was permitted to keep for himself. Thus, he was required to take from every freeman arrested by writ the sum of 20d., of which he kept 8d., the remaining 12d. going to the hall. For freemen arrested by warrant the penalty was 8d., shared equally between the bailiff and the hall. For "strangers" arrested by writ or arrested for surety of the peace, the bailiff received 2s. and the hall 16d.<sup>2</sup> Non-burgesses, or strangers, committing unspecified offences against the law were required to pay 8d. to the hall and 4d. to the bailiff. For causing an affray against freemen, however, the respective payments were 2s8d.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 12a v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 4.

and 8d. and upon a member of the first twelve 5s.4d. and 1s.4d.<sup>1</sup>

It seems possible that the bailiff may have come to regard himself as being in a somewhat different category from the alderman's serjeant, particularly in his relationship with the alderman himself. This may be inferred from a bye-law issued in 1465 under which it was "ordained, statuted and by the hall established that the bailiff stand and occupy in the office of a serjeant and when he is commanded shall bear his mace before the alderman and wait upon him and do his commandments". To facilitate the performance of his duties the "said serjeant" was allowed a livery gown at the cost of the town.<sup>2</sup>

The manner in which the monies collected by the alderman's serjeant and the bailiff were spent is unfortunately a matter for conjecture for, as indicated in the introduction to this thesis,<sup>3</sup> no chamberlain's accounts for the borough of Stamford during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries appear to have survived. There are a number of references in the hall books to rents

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 4 v.
  2. Ibid., p. 4 v.
  3. See pp. 5,6 above.

levied in respect of corporation properties. Though these are of interest, little can be assumed from them with regard to total rental income. Thus in 1468 the rents and the names of tenants of thirteen corporation properties are listed but there may have been others which are not mentioned.<sup>1</sup> This list represents a total annual income of 14s.3d., as given in the appendix.<sup>2</sup> The rent in respect of the land taken over by Robert Hance was apparently assessed at 1s.4d. by William Gaywood, a tax collector for St. John's parish and Thomas Phillips, a tax collector for St. Mary's parish. The "place" in St. Peter's parish vacated by J. Tuffe and taken over by T. Cokestole was assessed by John Dycon, a member of the second twelve and Robert Crane. The chamberlains of whom there appear to have been two, held office from the day of taking their oath to the next election, being responsible partly for the receipt of "escheats, fines amercements, rents and other dues". Likewise, they were responsible for arranging for the collection of "all manner[**of**] taxes, fifteenth [**im**]press, aids or grants charged to the town".

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 12a.

2. See Appendix, Table E, p. (14).



These they repaid to the collectors of the shire, being required to duly account for any surplus. Within one month of acceptance of office, the chamberlains were required to submit their accounts to the alderman.<sup>1</sup>

The tax collectors were charged with assessing every man in the town "according to his ability" to pay. To the better performance of this difficult task, the collectors pledged themselves to be guided by their conscience, without favour, hatred or fear.<sup>4</sup> Moreover they were obliged to assess themselves and pay their own taxes in the same way as everybody else.<sup>2</sup>

The precise procedure for dealing with the annual audit of corporation accounts is not usually referred to in the hall books, but special mention must be made of a detailed entry made in 1489. A meeting was held in the gild hall before "Thomas Phillip, alderman, Christopher Brown, Robert Hance, John Gregory, Thomas Kesteven, John Dycon, John Frebarne, John Stede and all the substance of the first twelve and the second twelve with twelve men chosen in the name of the commoners."<sup>3</sup> This meeting of the principal tradesmen of Stamford must have been of

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 11a v.

2. Ibid., p. 11a v.

3. Ibid., p. 47.

special significance for it was charged with examining the accounts of all those whose names have been entered in the "common book" from the beginning of the book to the date of the audit. Unfortunately, it is not clear precisely what the "common book" was, nor when it commenced. It might be expected that there was a book other than the hall book since such items as rents recorded therein are too infrequent to provide reliable financial records. On the other hand, the entry concerning the audit in the hall book states that the names of certain debtors, referred to below should be "written hereafter in the book" which apparently refers to the hall book itself. The auditors' brief was comprehensive and involved an examination of the accounts, payments and allowances of such officers as the alderman, chamberlains, bailiffs, serjeants, collector of taxes and receivers, including where applicable, the receipts from fairs, rents, fines and other amercements. It was agreed by all those present that all debts to the town had been discharged except for thirteen debtors whose names were listed and whose liabilities ranged from 4d. to 4s.

---

The chamberlain, William Bullocke and John Goylyn, elected for the following year, were instructed to endeavour to secure payment of the amounts due. They also produced at the audit £6 6s. in ready cash, the reason for which is obscure.

The alderman's serjeant, the bailiff, the chamberlains and tax collectors represented, therefore, the administrative staff of the borough. In addition, there were the common clerks, who though not apparently required to take an oath, must have been regularly in attendance. In 1465 it was decreed that the common clerk should receive 2d. whenever a native of the town was admitted to the freedom thereof.<sup>1</sup> A similar payment was made on each occasion, such as the granting of freedom, or a man's name written in the records. For the writing of a warrant, the clerks received 4d.<sup>2</sup> Nothing is recorded, however, concerning the writing of the minutes of the meeting in the hall books, during the period in Section 1 of this thesis. There is also no indication concerning the precise number of clerks nor indeed tax collectors within the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 4.



borough. It can be seen, however, that the day-to-day administration of the town rested upon a relatively small number of individuals and it seems likely that they did not exceed ten in number.

Many of the matters which concerned both the elected members of the corporation and the servants thereof have been discussed in detail in preceding chapters. A further function of the town administration is worthy of note since it emphasises the status of the incorporated borough in medieval and early modern times. This relates to the affixing of the borough seal to documents unconnected with the corporation in order to guarantee their authenticity. It has already been noted above<sup>1</sup> that an early impression of the seal of the Stamford corporation is to be found on a parchment now known as the "Casewick Document". This relates to the settling of a law suit by four arbitrators, John Sapcote, John Dale, George Chapman and Robert Hance, the latter two of which were freemen of Stamford. Their judgement ends with the words -

---

1. See pp. 49-51 above.

"And because our seals are unknown to many we have procured the Common Seal of the Alderman and Corporation of the town of Stamford to be affixed to these presents holding it in greater faith and testimony". 1

A further example of the certification of a private document by the affixing of the town seal is a letter of attorney dated January 14th, 1495/6 sent to Calais by William Warren, a merchant of the Staple of Calais. Since his own seal was unknown to many, he asked the corporation to counterseal the letter, which request was duly granted.

Thus it is possible from the albeit fragmentary evidence to gain an insight into the administration of Stamford for the period 1461-1558. Once a year the freemen were called to the common hall, elected their alderman and filled any vacancies in the first and second twelve. The alderman whom they elected had much responsibility and loyalty to him was demanded from both freemen and servants alike. Assisted by his serjeant, the bailiff, the chamberlains, the tax collectors and the common clerks, it fell to him to ensure that the bye-laws were obeyed and the decisions of the hall carried out. In all that he did, however, he knew that he had the support of the solid phalanx of members of the first and second twelve, the majority of whom had much experience in local government. This system in this era must surely have given a feeling of great stability to the townspeople of Stamford.

I Casewick Document.

Chapter VThe Tradesmen of Stamford

An examination has now been made of the royal charters which set out the privileges of the corporation of Stamford, of the bye-laws which the corporation issued and of the manner in which the day-to-day administration of the borough was carried out. Passing references have also been made to certain individuals, and in this chapter further consideration is given to the tradesmen who lived and worked within the borough, and for the benefit of whom the corporation existed. Thus an analysis is made of the occupations of the freemen of Stamford and their total numbers related to the estimated population of the town. A further analysis is made of their surnames; firstly with a view to providing evidence that there was a considerable movement of population into and out of the town; secondly to establish whether or not there were dynasties within the borough. A look is also taken at certain aspects of the lives of those individuals about whom personal information is available, in particular of those who served upon the first and second twelves. Details

---



of the admission of freemen have been extracted from the hall books together with a number of references to particular individuals. Use has been made of the inventories and wills at the Lincolnshire Record Office and the wills at the Northamptonshire Record Office and the Public Record Office in London.

Before proceeding further, however, it is necessary to enquire whether an estimate can be made of the population of Stamford during the period under discussion. Without such knowledge, it is impossible to appreciate fully the significance of much of what follows in the main body of this chapter. It has already been observed that Stamford was a substantial town at the time of the Domesday survey<sup>1</sup> but as Dr. A. Rogers has pointed out it is impossible for many reasons to make any real assessment of the rise and fall in the population of Stamford during the medieval period.<sup>2</sup> In 1563, however, 213 families were recorded in Stamford during a survey of the Lincoln Diocese.<sup>3</sup> This survey did not, however, include the parish of St. Martin's in Stamford Baron which, though formerly in the Diocese of Lincoln, was transferred to the Diocese of

---

1. See pp.16-17 above.

2. A. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 49

3. B.M. Harl, MS 618.

Peterborough when it was founded in 1541.<sup>1</sup> It has already been observed above, however, that there are good reasons for excluding St. Martin's from any discussion on the corporation of Stamford.<sup>2</sup> If it is assumed that in 1563 the average number of heads per family was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  then the total population at that time was about 958.<sup>3</sup> Certainly this seems consistent with a further diocesan survey carried out in 1603, which indicates that at that time there were 748 communicants.<sup>4</sup> On the assumption that communicants comprised two thirds of the population, it may be inferred that the population at that time was marginally under 1,000.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in the forty years from 1563 to 1603 the population appears to have increased only slightly which leads one to suggest that the ~~the~~ **it** was fairly static during the sixteenth century. This seems a reasonable assumption since there were 1218 contributors to the poll tax in Stamford (excluding St. Martin's) in 1377.<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. Wills and other Probate Records, N.R.O., 1971, p. 1.
  2. See pp. 28-33 above.
  3. A. Rogers, This was Their World, pp. 16, 17.
  4. L.R.S., 23, pp. 325, 442-443.
  5. Rogers, op. cit., p. 16. (T.W.T.W.)
  6. Ibid., p. 49.

It is possible also that the estimates of population based on the number of families and of communicants are a little on the low side, for it is difficult to determine the correct multiplying factor. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for an examination of the lives of the tradespeople within the borough during the period 1461 to 1558 to assume that the population of the town (excluding St. Martin's) remained fairly constant in region of one thousand inhabitants.

An exposition of the tradespeople of Stamford may usefully begin with an examination of their occupations. For the period now under discussion such an analysis has been made for the years 1475-1574. The starting point 1475 has been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, before that date many of the entries in the hall book relating to admission to the freedom of the borough do not always specify the trade of the individual concerned. Secondly, it has been considered desirable throughout this thesis to analyse the occupations of the freemen in periods of

---



twenty-five years. Thus Table F<sup>1</sup> in the appendix contains an analysis of the occupations of the freemen from 1475 to 1499, 1500 to 1524, 1525 to 1549 and 1550 to 1574. The last named period has been included so as to form a link between Section I (1461-1558) and Section II (1559-1640) of this thesis. During the hundred years from 1475 to 1574 there were 1341 admissions to the freedom of the borough. The numbers in respect of each calendar year varied considerably as can be seen from Table A in the appendix, which gives the annual totals from 1475 to 1574. The reasons for these fluctuations are usually not discernible though in particular instances it is possible to hazard a guess. Thus, in 1494 there were 67 admissions recorded, yet none at all in 1491, 1492 and 1493. A note in the hall books gives a clue however. It states "that there is another book ordained in which shall be written the names of all the sworn men with [the]

---

1. See pp. (15)-(20).

fines, . . . for the year following".<sup>1</sup> One is tempted to suggest, therefore, that the use of this separate book was abandoned after 3 years and all the admissions therein entered in the main hall book in 1494. The number of freemen admitted for each period of 25 years was as follows: 1475-1499, 359; 1500-1524, 281, 1525-1549, 375 and 1550-1574, 326. These figures indicate that there was no marked expansion in the trade of Stamford during the period covered by Section I of this thesis which is in keeping with the postulation above that the population of the borough was fairly static also. This comparative lack of change, however, may disguise a considerable movement in the population and this is discussed further in more detail below.

For the purpose of this analysis those admitted to the freedom of the borough were divided into twelve groups namely gentry, professions, armed forces, innkeeping and wayfaring, processing trades, retail trades, crafts, landwork and servants. Certain of the main groups were then sub-

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 50.

divided into individual trades as can be seen from Table F in the appendix.<sup>1</sup>

The largest number of admissions relating to a particular group of tradesmen was in respect of craftsmen. In each period of twenty-five years the total admissions were 155, 140, 160 and 158 respectively. The grand total for the century, 613, represents 45.71% of the number of freemen admitted for the period. Of those admitted to the craft trades between 1475 and 1574, the clothiers predominated. Numbering 264, they represented 43.07% of the craftsmen, or 19.69% of the total number of freemen admitted. Next in numerical strength amongst the craftsmen were the leather workers, 105 in number (17.13% of the craftsmen; 7.83% of the freemen), followed by the metal workers, 71; (11.58%; 5.29%), the building workers, 69 (11.26%; 5.15%), the woodworkers 52 (8.48%; 3.88%) and the fine crafts, 15 (2.45%; 1.12%). The remainder, numbering 37 (6.04%; 2.76%) have been classified as miscellaneous. A striking feature of the craft trades during the century is the growth in the number of admission of leather workers from 16 in the first quarter to 26 in the second and to

---

1. See pp. (15)-(20).



30 and 33 in the last two quarters. Of the industrial craft trades the largest number of admissions during the century was in respect of tailors, 103 in number; 16.80% of the craftsmen; 7.68% of the freemen; followed by the shoemakers and cordwainers 88 (14.36%; 6.56%) and the glovers, 69 (11.26%; 5.15%). As will be seen from Table F<sup>1</sup> no other group of craftsmen approached these three crafts in numerical strength, the closest being the smiths, 38 in number. In this respect it is of interest that in the last quarter of the century the number of smiths admitted dropped to 4, having been 11, 9 and 14 respectively in the preceding three quarters.

Following the craftsmen in numerical strength, were those who could be classified as servants. The number of admissions in each quarter of the century were 73, 51, 109 and 79 respectively, that is 20.33%, 18.15%, 29.07% and 24.23% of the total. Numerical strength, however, was not in itself an indication of the degree of influence, as can be observed from a study of the occupations of those who served upon the first and second twelves.<sup>2</sup> Thus many councillors were retail traders, who comprised the next largest group of admissions, 206 (15.36%) after those in service. In their case,

---

1. See pp. (15)-(20).

2. See Appendix, Table A pp (1)-(10).

however, the number dropped significantly from 69 for the years 1475-1499 to 48 and 49 respectively each of the two middle quarters and then to 43 for the years 1550-1574. It is difficult to place an interpretation upon these figures. It is possible that they indicate reducing purchasing power by the community as a whole during the sixteenth century. Alternatively, they could indicate a growth in the size of each retail trade outlet which in a static population would bring a reduction in the total number. The retail trades, as might be expected, were dominated by the bakers, butchers, mercers and drapers, the admissions for whom totalled 52, 39, 34 and 24 respectively during the century under discussion; followed at some distance by the barbers who numbered 16.

Between them the craft trades, servants and retailers accounted for 1131 admissions or 84.34% of the total. Significantly the processing trades were responsible for 59 admissions during the century, the numbers for each quarter being 13, 14, 19 and 13. This represented only 4.40% of the total. Those engaged in the processing of wool numbered only 17 during the whole of

---

the period from 1475 to 1574, a mere 1.27% of the total. Certainly there is evidence here of the demise of the one time international trade in wool. Indeed, there were more workers in leather admitted to the freedom, a total of 38, (2.83%). Of the other processing trades there were only one miller, one flaxman, one chandler in the whole of the hundred years under consideration.

Few of the townsmen admitted to the freedom were engaged in landwork and those that were declined from 18 in the first quarter of the century to 8 in the last. The total number of admissions in this group was 48 (3.58% of the total). The great majority of the landworkers, 42, were husbandmen.

Somewhat surprising, perhaps, in view of the position of Stamford on the Great North Road, was the relatively small number of admissions to the innkeeping and wayfaring trades. These totalled 20 (1.49%) of the total admissions. It is of significance, however, that there was only one such admission in the first half of the century (in 1481), the remainder being in the second half. Thus this may be some indication of a greater use of the trading routes which passed through

---



Stamford.

The remaining group of tradesmen represent only a small percentage of the whole. There were 12 gentlemen (.89%) admitted during the hundred years from 1475 to 1554 and 6 (.45%) entries into the professions. To these must be added the 47 tradesmen whose occupation is not given, 2 specifically referred to as apprentices, 4 whose occupation is indecipherable and 11 others.

A further matter concerning those newly admitted to the freedom of the borough requires consideration, namely the proportion of self-employed men to employees. Between 1475 and 1574 94 of the 1341 freemen admitted were described as journeymen in the hall books and in all but five cases their specific occupation was given as well. As will be seen from Table G in the appendix,<sup>1</sup> 7 journeymen were admitted in the first quarter of the century, 33 in the second, 39 in the third and 15 in the fourth. Whether these numbers represent the total number of journeymen is a matter for conjecture since there is no means of telling how much care was exercised by the town clerk in classifying this group of tradesmen. For example, though 1 journeyman was recorded as being admitted in 1475, no further mention is

---

1. See p. (21)

made of this category for a further nineteen years, namely until 1494. There is a further gap of 13 years between 1498 and 1511. Thereafter, until 1566, entries were made with great regularity, in the majority of cases yearly. There are no entries at all for the years 1566-1574. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the records between 1511 and 1566 are accurate, but that some doubt exists for the period 1475-1510. From 1567 there is no further reference to journeymen until 1581. In this respect, from the difference in the style of handwriting, there appears to have been a change of clerk in 1476, 1490, 1502 and 1566 and of course there were probably others. These changes not only cast some doubt on the numbers of journeymen as referred to above, but would also account for the fact that there was an alteration in the method of recording the admissions to the freedom of the borough from 1491 to 1494.<sup>1</sup>

The occupations of the 98 journeymen, as shown in Table G<sup>2</sup> in the appendix, are of considerable interest. Thirty-two were glovers and 33 shoemakers. Apart from 11 bakers no other specific occupation counted for more than 3 journeymen. The number of glovers admitted to the

---

1. See pp. 95-96, 148 above.

2. See p. (21).

freedom during the century, other than journeymen was 36 and of shoemakers 56. It may be assumed that the raw material used by the glovers was in the main leather. Consequently, it would appear that there was a leather industry in the town able to employ a considerable number of journeymen, since the great majority of employed tradesmen were either glovers or shoemakers. During the century, 1475-1574 there was a shift in emphasis from the manufacture of gloves to that of shoes, the year 1544 being the watershed.

What conclusions can be drawn from this analysis? Certainly Stamford was a town in which craftsmen and retailers were dominant employing a considerable number of servants. There was little by way of processing trades, there were only a few land workers and the number of gentry and professional workers was small. This is the picture of a market town, supplying the needs of its own townspeople and those of the neighbouring

---



villagers. The growth in the number engaged in innkeeping and wayfaring may indicate an increase in the number of people visiting Stamford.

It has already been noted that in respect of admissions to the freedom of the borough, it was decreed in 1465 that natives were to be admitted without charge, apprentices by payment of a reduced fine and only "foreigners" by the imposition of the full fine appertaining to each trade. An analysis has, therefore, been made of the fines levied in respect of yearly admissions from 1465, when the records begin, to 1575<sup>1</sup>. These show, for example, from 1465 to 1475 7 natives were admitted to the freedom without charge, no apprentices at the reduced rate, whilst 75 tradesmen paid the full fine. For the years 1475-1499 the numbers were 27, 2 and 330 respectively; for 1550-1524, 19, 2 and 274; for 1525-1549, 33, 3 and 330; for 1550-1574, 51, 7 and 265.

These figures must, however, be subjected to careful scrutiny since various interpretations are possible. One is that few natives remained to work

---

1. See Appendix, Table H, pp. (22)-(25).

within the borough, apprentices left upon completing their training and that their places were taken by foreigners. A second possibility is that the bye-laws appertaining to the three categories of admission were never fully enforced, possibly because of a need to provide the corporation with revenue. Thus it could be that exemption from payment, or a reduced fine, was only granted when specifically asked for. A third possibility, which would make all the statistics quoted in this chapter suspect, is that proper records were not kept with regard to natives and apprentices completing their time and that there were in fact more freemen than would appear from the table in the appendix.

In order to assess the relative merits of these various possibilities, it is necessary to analyse more closely the available records. To facilitate this, a card index has been prepared of the names and occupations of townsmen entered in the hall books at the time of

---

their admission to the freedom of the borough.

Additional entries have been made with regard to those freemen who can be identified from the hall book as having served upon the first or second twelve and of those in respect of whom a will or inventory has been examined. Thus, if there was little population movement, one would expect to find many surnames repeating themselves generation by generation. By means of the index cards, an analysis has been made of the frequency of surnames occurring in respect of the 1442 freemen admitted between 1465 and 1574.<sup>1</sup>

In this respect it is worthy of note that the surnames of the upper classes, and of many of intermediate status, had become fixed roughly between the Norman Conquest and 1200 and those of the great mass of the proletariat between 1200 and 1360<sup>2</sup>. The spelling of surnames still varied widely however, and in this analysis surnames have been classified according to apparent pronunciation. Thus, for example, Waren, Warren and Waryne have been treated as the same name. On the other hand

---

1. See Appendix Table I, p. (26).

2. C.M. Matthews, English Surnames, 1966, p. 66.



Lynn and Lyon have been regarded as separate families as they have a different origin.<sup>1</sup> Problems of classification arise, however, in the case of names which though probably of the same root appear to have evolved separately. In such cases somewhat arbitrary decisions have had to be made. Thus Willinson and Willyson have been regarded as one family and Williamson and Willeamson as another. On the other hand, Lyttester, Lytteser and Lyster have been treated as being the same. Sometimes a decision concerning classification has been made when the later of two similar names has been marked "native" in the hall books. For this reason the names Wytham and Wytton have been regarded as the same family even though they appear to conflict with the rule referred to above concerning origins of names. Fortunately the number of such cases is not sufficient to affect the general conclusions.

Of the 1442 surnames referred to above 686 appear only once and a further 123 only twice. Thus 809 families can be regarded as being transient, since a continuity of a family line during a period of one hundred years would involve at least three or four generations. This analysis tends to

---

1. C.M. Matthews, op. cit., p. 81.

support, therefore, the view that there was a considerable movement of tradesmen into the town. This must have been balanced either by emigration or by deaths exceeding births since it has been shown above that the population was fairly constant. A closer look at those names occurring three times between 1465 and 1574 is further evidence of population movement.<sup>1</sup> There are 42 such families of which 11 span less than 30 years and only 6 more than 60 years. A similar analysis applied to those in which the same or like surname occurs four times during the period shows that in 3 cases this repetition took place in a span of 30 and under and in 9 cases under 60 years and in a further 9 cases in 60 years or more. Where a surname recurs at intervals over 60 years or more, there is good reason to suppose that, in the majority of cases, this is evidence of a continuous dynasty. This supposition becomes more apparent when the distribution pattern over the years is examined with regard to names occurring five times during the period. In 10 such families 5 survived for more than 60 years, 4 for more than 30 and only 1 - the Castells - for

---

1. See Appendix, Table J, p. (27).

under 30. The evidence of established families forming, as it were, a rock amongst the shifting sands, is to be found in those surnames which occur 6 times or more during the period. There are 25 such families of which all but 4 - the Allens, the Marshalls, the Pitts and the Yates - were living in Stamford for more than 60 years during the period under review. It is of interest that members of the Yates family are still to be found in Stamford. Four are at present freemen (out of a total roll of nine).<sup>1</sup>

Few families could be described as numerous especially as it does not follow that all tradesmen with the same surname were related. Of the 25 surnames referred to above, only 10 occur 10 times or more in the period, these being Brown, Clark, Harrison, Jackson, Johnson, Smith, Taylor, Thomas Wilson and Wright. All these are common English names and might be expected to occur more frequently than others. By way of comparison, all but Harrison and Jackson are included in the list of leading London surnames taken from the London telephone directories for 1960-65.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. See p. 102 above.

2. Matthews, op. cit., pp. 336, 337.



In the case of these most frequently recurring surnames, the number of occasions in which the note "native" appears by the name is remarkably low, thus Brown (3), Clark (3), Harrison (0), Jackson (3), Johnson (0), Smith (1), Taylor (2), Thomson (2), Wilson (0), Wright (1). It seems likely, therefore, that either the clerk failed to record all those who were native born, or alternatively that not all the natives were granted exemption from a fine when admitted to the freedom of the borough.

Of these most frequent surnames 6 are to be found amongst those who served upon the first and second twelves between 1465 and 1558<sup>1</sup>. In this respect the name Brown occurs 7 times during the period, Jackson 3 times, Clark and Smith each twice and Johnson and Wright once. Before drawing final conclusions, however, from this evidence, it is first necessary to be satisfied that there were no large numbers of tradesmen admitted to the freedom of the borough whose names were not recorded in the hall books. Thus

---

1. See Appendix, Table A, pp (1)-(10).

if half the estimated population of 1,000 were women, there would be some 500 males, on average throughout the period from 1465 to 1574. If 50% of the population was under 21 years of age there would be 250 males at any one time who might be eligible for the freedom of the borough, providing they had the necessary qualifications. In this respect it is difficult to assess what proportion of the male population were freemen. Judging by the relatively large number of labourers, 290, admitted during the century 1475-1574 it is unlikely that there were many townsmen who did not obtain their freedom. What correlation, therefore, is there between this estimate of the male population and the number of freemen known to have been admitted?

As has been observed above, there were, 1341 admissions to the freedom between 1475 and 1574, an average of 13.43 per year. If it were possible to determine the average length of service of the freemen, the approximate total number at any time could be worked out. There are no records in the hall book of the date of

---

the death of freemen as such. There is, however, a group of townsmen whose length of service as freemen can be calculated with reasonable certainty. These are those men who served upon the first and second twelve and whose date of admission to the freedom of the borough can be extracted from the hall books. It has already been noted that members of the first and second twelve retained their office for life, unless they were dismissed or left the town. It may be assumed, therefore, that in most cases the date of cessation of office was also that of death. Sometimes the death of a councillor is also specifically referred to in the hall book at the time of the appointment of his successor, or may be confirmed from a will or inventory. It is possible, therefore, to ascertain the length of time individual members of the first and second twelve enjoyed the status of freemen and then arrive at an average for the whole group. Leaving aside those councillors who were dismissed from office, such evidence is available in respect of 88 councillors during the period 1465-1558.<sup>1</sup> Their collective service as freemen amounted to 2223 years

---

1. See Appendix Table A, pp (1)-(10).



or an average of 25.85 years each. For the purpose of this analysis, John Andrew, a labourer, has been omitted. He apparently obtained his freedom prior to 1465 but was not elected to the second twelve until 1514, and he remained a member of the second twelve until 1536. His will was dated 1538. Seventy-three years would have been an exceptionally long time to have served as a freeman and although there is no evidence to support the supposition, one is tempted to assume that there were two individuals of the same name. If, however, John Andrew did serve for 73 years this would increase the average period of service to 26.69 years.

This average length of service as freemen of those who served on the first and second twelve may be compared with that of a few freemen who did not serve upon the council. These are townsmen whose date of admission to the freedom is known and for whom a will or inventory established the date of death, as will be seen from Table E in the appendix.<sup>1</sup> There are 19 such freemen with a combined length of service of 458 years giving an average of 24.10 years. It will be

---

1. See Appendix Table J, p. (27).

observed that one townsman, Thomas Brown, a tailor, appears to have been a freeman for 70 years. As in the case of John Andrew, referred to above, this seems to have been an exceptionally long period for one individual. If, therefore, there were two individuals of the same name, even though this cannot be substantiated, the average length of service would be 22.90 years.

It cannot be stated with absolute certainty that all these townsmen obtained their freedom at the age of 21, but it is probable that most of them did. In any case they would represent the most long lasting part of the population since their whole working life was spent in the town. The figure correlates well with that for members of the first and second twelves, 25.85, who, as has been observed above,<sup>1</sup> were also a very stable element in the community. But what of the remainder of the freemen? It seems reasonable to suppose that many freemen entered the town over the age of 21 years probably just before or just after their marriage, say at about 23 or 24. Others in all probability left before death. It is almost certain, therefore, that the average length of service as freemen in general was

---

1. See pp. 148-151 above.

considerably lower than that in respect of those classes discussed above. What it was, however, can only be a matter of guesswork. There are too many other uncertainties, besides those referred to above. For example, what was the average age of death? It has been calculated that the average death rate between 1570 and 1630 was 32 per thousand.<sup>1</sup> Yet even if all those townsmen who served as councillors were originally admitted to the freedom at 21 their average age of death would be 46, since their average length of service as a freeman was 25 years and for the second group discussed, 43 years. What is likely to have been the average length of service of the freemen as a whole. Twenty years? If it was, the total number at any one time would have been approximately 287. Perhaps it was less, say, 17 years, in which case there would have been some 226 townsmen simultaneously enjoying the privilege of freedom. Whatever the exact figures, the conclusion must be that there would not have been many freemen whose names were omitted from the rolls in the hall books. Indeed, the correlation between the numbers of freemen and the estimated male population over 21 years (namely 250) is reasonable.

What conclusions, therefore, are to be drawn from these

---

1. J. Brownlee, The History of the Birth Rates of England and Wales. . . from 1570. . .  
Public Health, July 1916, p. 236.



analyses of the freeman rolls from 1465 to 1574? Firstly, that the estimate that the population during the period was approximately 1,000 appears to be substantially correct since there is a reasonable correlation between the probable numbers of adult males and the number of townsmen known to have been admitted to the freedom of the borough.

Secondly, it would appear that much of the population was constantly on the move as is borne out for example by the

fact that <sup>of</sup> more than half of the freemen, neither their fathers nor their sons, were freemen also.

Thirdly, there were within the town some 41<sup>1</sup> dynasties but there is little evidence that these exercised any special power on that account.

Probably the most influential, though not the largest, was the Brown family whose wealth was originally acquired from the wool trade and who are remembered for their benefactions to the town.

These statistics, valuable as they are in helping to determine generalities regarding the tradespeople of Stamford, tell but little of the lives of the individuals to which they relate. Is it indeed possible to gain any insight at all into the personalities of the townsmen of the period? Certainly the records that remain refer to no more than a

---

1. See Appendix Table J, p. (27).

handful of those admitted to the freedom of the borough. Of these however, it is possible to select a number of individuals who have left behind sufficient evidence for a glimpse to be taken at the lives which they led and the material benefits which they enjoyed. To this end information has been extracted from inventories, wills, the hall books and other relevant documents.

There are only seven pertinent inventories deposited in the archives of the Lincolnshire Record Office which can be positively attributed to the period covered in Section I of this thesis, 1461 - 1558, and none in the Northamptonshire Record Office. The earliest of these is dated 1515, but apart from one of 1525 the remainder are between 1552 and 1558. There are two further inventories for 1559 and thereafter none until 1563. It has been deemed advisable to include these 1559 inventories with the seven referred to above particularly as comparative figures have been ascertained by Dr. A.D. Dyer in respect of Worcester for the periods 1529-1549 and 1550-1559.<sup>1</sup> There is also an undated inventory in respect of Robert Walton

---

1. A. Dyer, op. cit., p. 475

who appears to have been elected as a freeman in 1532. Whether or not it falls within the period under discussion it is impossible to say and consequently it has been ignored in the text below though included in certain tables in the appendix.

A comparison between Stamford and Worcester is interesting because the two towns lie roughly equidistant from the geographical centre of England, the former to the E.N.E. the latter to the W.S.W. Both were centres of trade in their respective areas, although Worcester was a considerably larger town at the time of the 1563 census. As has been stated above<sup>1</sup> at the time the estimated population of Stamford (excluding St. Martin's) was marginally under 1,000; that of Worcester however was approximately four times as great.<sup>2</sup>

With such a small number of Stamford inventories available any conclusions arrived at must be treated with considerable caution. Nevertheless, some general indication of the level of personal wealth can be arrived at. In this respect the gross values taken are the

---

1. See p. 169 above.

2. A. Dyer, op. cit., p. 30.



totals given on the inventories. As is often the case, these do not always agree exactly with those arrived at by adding together the individual items listed. The average value for the two inventories of 1515 and 1525 was £19 4s 5d and for the six between 1550 and 1559 £36 1s 6d.<sup>1</sup> In Worcester, by way of comparison, 296 inventories survive for the period, 1529-1559. The average wealth of the citizens in that city, calculated from 78 probate inventories for the period 1529-1549, was £22 14s 0d and from 118 inventories for 1550-1559 was £41 4s 0d.<sup>2</sup> The nine Stamford inventories for the period 1515-1559 lie in value between £10 and £99. At Worcester, however, only 51% were within this range both from 1529 to 1549 and from 1550 to 1559. Furthermore, of the nine Stamford inventories the values of all but one (£83 14s 0d) lay between £10 and £39. In Worcester from 1529 to 1549 only 39% fell into this range and from 1550 to 1559, 31%. Of the remainder, from 1529 to 1549, 46% were below £10 and 3% above £100 and from 1550 to 1559, 37% and 11% respectively. The full detailed analysis

---

1. See appendix Table L, p. (29).

2. A.D. Dyer, op. cit., p. 475

for Worcester, as made by Dr. A.D. Dyer is given in the appendix.<sup>1</sup>

In considering relative degrees of wealth as indicated by inventories, it is necessary to take into account the effect of inflation. This can be gauged from an examination of the tables prepared by E.H. Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins.<sup>2</sup> These refer, inter alia, to the price of a sample of industrial products, to which in general inventories relate. If the index for the period 1451-1475 is regarded as 100 this had risen to 102 for the years 1511-1520 which included the first Stamford inventory referred to above, and to 110 for the period 1521-1540. By 1541-1550 the index was 127 and by 1551-1560 it had risen steeply to 186. Thus, a considerable proportion of the rise in the average value of the inventories during the period under consideration is due to rising prices rather than to an increase in the standard of living.

It is hazardous to use the averages above to make any comparison between the comparative wealth of the tradesmen of Stamford and Worcester on

---

1. See Appendix, Table M, p. (30).

2. E.H. Phelps Brown & Sheila V. Hopkins, Wage rates and prices: Evidence for Population Pressure in the Sixteenth Century, Economica, Vol XXIV, p. 306 Table N, p. (31).

account of the small number of inventories for the former town. One hesitates to suggest, therefore, that wealth might have been more evenly distributed in Stamford than Worcester. There are a number of other indications that there were not excessive differences in the estate of the principal townsmen of Stamford during the period. For example, the size of the houses which survive from the period 1461 to 1558/9 is fairly uniform. Even when houses have been rebuilt in more recent times, the size of the plots on which they stand indicate that the original sixteenth century buildings were probably similar in size to those of the earlier period which have survived.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of this thesis, perhaps the principal value of a study of the Stamford inventories lies in the insight they give into the everyday lives of those to whom they refer. A look can be taken into the homes of at least a few of the tradesmen who

---

1. A. Rogers, Medieval buildings of Stamford, 1970, pp.7-8.



had been admitted to the freedom of the town. Six of the nine townsmen to whom the inventories above appertain can be identified on the freemen rolls with reasonable certainty. Their occupations included that of leather worker, mercer, corvisor, pewterer and fuller. Of particular interest are the material possessions of those who served upon the first and second twelves since they were the leaders of the town community. One, Peter Symond (d. 1559) served on the second twelve from 1541 to 1553 and on the first twelve from 1554 to 1558. Another Martin Smyth (d. 1559) was a member of the second twelve from 1550 to 1558/9. A difficulty arises, however, in the case of Robert Crane (d. 1515). It would be of particular interest if one could positively identify him with the Robert Crane who served on the second twelve from 1472 to 1493, on the first twelve from 1494 to 1503 and who was alderman in 1498. There is no other tradesman by that name on the freemen rolls for the period, though a Joseph Crane was admitted to the freedom as a labourer in 1497. The problem is, as has been observed above, that members of the twelves were elected for life and it is therefore not easy to account for the years from

---

1503 to 1515, unless there was some reason why Robert Crane relinquished his position on the first twelve long before his death. If such a reason existed it is not possible to identify it from extant records.

What can be said, therefore, of the standard of living of these Stamford tradesmen? The inventories give an indication of the lay-out of the houses to which they relate in all but two cases. The houses vary in size, the smallest being that of John Stokton<sup>1</sup> (d. 1525) with two rooms and the largest that of Richard Potter<sup>2</sup> (d. 1552) and Peter Symond<sup>3</sup> with eight. The furniture within these rooms was simple and unsophisticated.<sup>4</sup> The lack of comfort by modern standards is perhaps best illustrated by the paucity of chairs. For example, Robert Crane<sup>5</sup> had none at all, there being two stools and four forms in his house. John Stokton (d. 1525) possessed two chairs, one stool and two forms, whilst the later inventories from 1552 to 1659 show that the number of chairs in each household ranged from one to a maximum of five. They would have been reserved for the owner of the house and his guest, for a hard stool or bench was the poor man's seat until the early seventeenth

- 
1. L.A.O., Inventory No. 30.
  2. L.A.O., Inventory No. 98.
  3. L.A.O., Inventory No. 37/123.
  4. See Appendix, Table O, p. (32).
  5. L.A.O., Inventory No. 68.

century.<sup>1</sup> Indeed all the inventories list stools and forms and in one case (Tyming) benches as well.

It is worthwhile looking in some detail at one particular home of the period. That of Robert Crane's has been chosen because it was of medium size and was occupied during the middle part of the period 1461-1558. It consisted of five rooms and a barn. The former comprised a parlour, his chamber, a second chamber, buttery and great hall. The parlour was sparsely furnished, containing two cupboards and a little table. Seating was provided by two stools and two forms. There was little to give the feeling of comfort, a few cushions, an old carpet, possibly used to drape the cupboard, and some hangings. Two old tankards and a billhook completed the scene apart from two items which are indecipherable on the inventory. His own chamber contained bed boards, three pillows of fustian and one of linen. There were four chests, varying in size from the 'great coffer' to the 'little coffer', an aumbry and a form. In these presumably were stored the household linen and the clothes of the occupier. Bed coverings listed include three flaxen sheets, worth

---

1. Francis W. Steer, Farm and Cottage Inventories of Mid-Essex, 1635-1749, Essex County Council, 1950, p. 13.



five shillings, three pairs of lesser value, six pillowcases, a coverlet, two older coverlets and two pairs of old blankets. Other linen included three table cloths, the most valuable of which was worth one shilling, a diaper towel, a smaller towel and three napkins. Apart from his personal clothes, which are referred to below few other items are mentioned as being in his chamber, though one, a picture of St. John is worthy of special mention. By comparison, the other chamber contained little by way of furniture, merely two bedsteads, a cupboard and a little form. It is possible the room was little used, for apart from an old mattress, the other items in the room consisted of two pitchforks, a fire fork, picks, axes and some iron rakes. The great hall, typical of many medieval town houses, was no less stark in its furnishing. It contained a long 'sedyll' probably a settle, a form, an aumbry and a pair of bed boards. Only the hangings valued at 2s 8d provided relief from the severity of the furnishings. In the hall there were two 'coterakes' (probably coat racks) and a pair of scales and six small weights. There was also a number of tools including an axe, an old saw, rakes and other

---

articles of iron. Of special interest perhaps was the 'old window cloth' valued at fourpence, which may have been used instead of glass.

In the buttery were to be found the majority of those household items used in the preparation and serving of food and drink. Only a few utensils appear to have been earthenware, namely half a dozen pottingers, two wine pots and two basins. The remainder were of pewter and included eight plates, four dishes, three saucers, a basin and a pot with a total weight of thirty and a half pounds appraised at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pence a pound. Three pans, two kettles, two brass pots and other utensils with a combined weight of  $79\frac{1}{2}$  lbs were valued at 9s 10d. Other items included two knives, a ladle, skimmer, tubs spits, pot hooks and a caldron for sugar. Cutlery as is known today was non-existent, apart from half a dozen silver spoons weighing 6 ounces and valued at 18s. In the barn there was a mortar and pestle, pans and a furnace.

Robert Crane's possessions included £6 3s 4d in ready gold and silver. His clothes valued at 9s 2d comprised three doublets, two gowns, two cloaks, a petticoat and an old pair of stockings. His debts amounted to

£10 13s 0d, less £1 5s 0d owing to him, whilst his funeral charges were £1 13s 1d. His wealth at death was £26 9s 5d. In terms of the currency of 1558 his assets were probably worth about £50, which may be compared with the estates of the two members of the council referred to above, namely Peter Symond<sup>1</sup> (£36 6s 0d) and Martin Smyth<sup>2</sup> (£83 4s 0d). The value of a man's estate, however, is not necessarily a guide to his way of life. Thus, although Peter Symond's house contained eight rooms, that of Martin Smyth was more rudimentary, having only three, a hall, chamber, and shop. The latter tradesman was a pewterer, and much of his wealth was invested in the goods of his trade. On his death the items in his shop included five hundredweight of pewter valued at £10, five and a half hundredweight of brass valued at £5, three hundredweight of brass pots at £7 and three hundredweight of pans and kettles at £9. In addition there were three chaffing dishes and candlesticks.

Articles of trade are, of course, mentioned in other inventories too. Peter Symond, a fuller, had a pair of

---

1. L.A.O., Inventory No. 37123.  
 2. L.A.O., Inventory No. 643.



tenters; Robert Laughton<sup>1</sup> (d. 1558) a leather merchant possessed ten stone of tallow, five pair of butts (the thick end of a tanned hide), eight hides, ten dozen shoes as well as weights and scales and other implements. The shop of Richard Pootter (d. 1552) contained hats, caps and linen cloths. John Stokton (d. 1525) another leather merchant had a considerable stock in trade; a dozen cut out doublets, three and a half gross of gloves, calf skins, three dozen sheep skins, one dozen lamb skins, three horse skins, 1 dozen pelts, one dozen calf skins, three dozen women's purses, and a foal skin.

Much other information of interest can be obtained from these inventories, which is indicative of a way of life. For example, the majority of the tradesmen concerned kept some form of livestock. Peter Symond for example had a sow with three young, a cockerel and five hens, two cows and a horse; Robert Laughton, a cow and twenty sheep; John Stokton, a sow and four pigs, two old horses, four sheep, ten sheep and lambs; William Tymyng<sup>2</sup>, a cow and ten sheep; Richard Pootter, a cow; Martin Smyth<sup>3</sup>, six horses, four cows and twelve sheep and Steven Leye<sup>4</sup>, a horse, two cows, a little "cub" and a sow.

- 
1. L.A.O., Inventory No. 319.
  2. L.A.O., Inventory No. 206.
  3. L.A.O., Inventory No. 643.
  4. L.A.O., Inventory No. 37.

There is evidence too that certain of the tradesmen had agricultural holdings in or near the town. Thus, Robert Laughton had two acres of rye and Peter Symond twelve acres of corn, whilst both had threshed corn and malt. Peter Symond indeed seems to have used at least part of his crops for the brewing of beer and his belongings included four ale tubs and a brewing vat.

On the personal side, as has been observed above, in the case of Robert Crane, the inventories give an indication of the clothes of the period. His wardrobe, sparse though it was in modern terms, was elaborate compared with those of other tradesmen. William Underwood, for example, only had a pair of hose, a doublet, a coat and a cloak. There is only one mention of headwear, namely William Tyming had a silk hat. Weapons are scarcely referred to. John Stokton had a sword and a dagger whilst Richard Pootter's armoury included arrows, a poleaxe and "shoes of mail" amongst other things.

In conclusion it can be seen that the Stamford

---

inventories, sparse though they are, give an indication of a number of aspects of the lives of certain tradesmen: the type of house in which they lived; the nature and value of their personal belongings and to a limited extent their way of life. They tell nothing, however, of the ownership of property either of the family home or elsewhere. Nor do they give an indication of an individual's philosophy of life. It is to the wills of the period, therefore, that one must look for further knowledge. From these can be gleaned information concerning material assets other than the contents of the principal residence. Insight can be gained also into attitudes of mind in personal matters. Light is thrown for example upon religious beliefs, the relative status of wives, sons and daughters and the bonds between servant and master.

In the context of this thesis, it has been deemed appropriate to examine the extant wills of certain tradesmen who were members of the first and second companies during the period now under discussion. Such wills

---



fall into two categories. The first of these comprises those wills which are preserved at Lincolnshire Archives Office and which were formerly deposited in the Lincoln District Probate Registry of the High Court of Justice.<sup>1</sup> The second category consists of those wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and are now in the Public Record Office.

At the Lincolnshire Record Office, there are only five wills preserved which were made by tradesmen who served on the first or second twelves during the period 1461/2 - 1558. The earliest of these, is that of Hugh Heppell,<sup>2</sup> who died in 1536; the others relate to John Addewe<sup>3</sup> (d. 1538), William Beryge<sup>4</sup> (d. 1540), William Marshall<sup>5</sup> (d. 1545) and Thomas Marshall<sup>6</sup> (d. 1552). To these may be added, for convenience, one other, that of Peter Symond<sup>7</sup> who died in 1559, and in respect of whom, as has been observed above, an inventory also survives.<sup>8</sup>

- 
1. C.W. Foster, Lincoln Wills Registered in the District Probate Registry at Lincoln AD 1505 - May 1539, Lincolnshire Record Society, 1918, p. XIII.
  2. L.A.O., Will No. 184.
  3. L.A.O., Will No. 141.
  4. L.A.O., Will No. 421.
  5. L.A.O., Will No. 90.
  6. L.A.O., Will No. 251.
  7. L.A.O., Will No. 97.
  8. See p. 198 above.

Hugh Heppall, John Addewe and William Beryge resided in St. Michaels Parish and William Marshall, Thomas Marshall and Peter Symonds in All Saints Parish. The former were elected to the second twelve in 1531, 1514 and 1532 and the latter 1532, 1547 and 1541 respectively. Subsequently, William Beryge was elected to the first twelve in 1536, and Peter Symond in 1554.

All appear to have remained members of their respective companies until their deaths or shortly before. In their wills

all six tradesmen bequeathed their souls to God.

Though this was customary at the time, the manner in which they did so is of interest in that it gives an indication of their religious beliefs, and might well have been influenced by the attitude of their priests.

A particularly comprehensive statement of doctrine was contained in the will of William Beryge who commended himself to "God almighty the father, the son, the holy ghost, three persons, and one God and to our blessed lady and to all the holy company of heaven". The

inclusion of the Virgin Mary is indicative that Henry VIII's

---

break with Rome in 1534 had not shifted the emphasis of the old religion for some at least. Indeed, Catholicism in the modern sense of Roman, is evident also in the will of John Addew who bequested his soul to "God Almighty to his blessed mother and lady Saint Mary and to all the company of heaven".

Not all the tradesmen, however, include in their wills references that have a distinct implication of Catholic beliefs. For example, Thomas Marshall refers only to "almighty God and his son Jesus Christ". It is interesting to speculate that this was due to the progressive effect of the reformation, which apart from the letters patent of Edward VI sealed on 29th May 1549<sup>1</sup> is scarcely referred to in the contemporary records relating to Stamford Corporation or to individual tradesmen. Indeed, one of the few other references is to be found in the will of William Marshall, who was possibly related to Thomas Marshall referred to above. His will was made "in the year and reign of Henry the eighth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland, King defender of the faith and in earth of the Church of England and also of Ireland the Supreme head".

---

1. See pp. 91-93 above.



The six burgesses also indicated clearly where they wished to be buried: Hugh Heppall in the south aisle of St. Michael's, as near as possible to his former wife; John Addewe "in the high grove of St. Michael's"; William Beryge "in the parish church of St. Michael's"; William Marshall "in the church of All Hallows, in the middle aisle before the rood"; Thomas Marshall "within the church of All Hallows"; Peter Symond "in the church or church yard of All Hallows". That the majority of these tradesmen expected to be buried within the church, rather than in the ground outside, is probably indicative of their status in the town community.

Except for Thomas Marshall, each man made a bequest to the high altar of his parish church. To St. Michael's, Hugh Heppall left 4d; John Addewe, 12d; and William Beryge, 6d "for tythes and obligations forgotten". To All Saints, William Marshall bequeathed 4d "for tythes not remembered"; and Peter Symond, 8d. William Beryge also left 6d to the high altar of St. John's church. The cathedral church of Lincoln received legacies of 4d each from Hugh Heppall, William Marshall and Peter Symond and one of 6d from William Beryge.

---

The references to unpaid tithes are, of course, illustrative of the quite common practice of neglectfully or perhaps deliberately depriving the parson of his due.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, the townsmen of the period felt a sense of obligation towards their church. Often, however, as in the case of Hugh Heppall for example their bequests were not large in relation to their total wealth. There are references in the wills to the paying of mortuaries to the priest of the parish. These were controlled by a statute of Henry VIII<sup>2</sup> which became law in 1530. It had become necessary because mortuaries were often "over excessive to the poor people and other persons of the realm".<sup>3</sup> Thus, William Beryge paid his mortuary "according to the King's act thereof made in his high court of Parliament; that is according to a scale laid down in the act". In the will of William Marshall there is not only a reference to the act but also to the older custom of leaving the priest a "principal", which comprised the best hose, best beast, best garment or other chattels -

- 
1. Foster, op. cit., p. XI.
  2. 21 Henry VIII, Cap. 6.
  3. Foster, op. cit., p. XXIII.

"I bequeath my best gown to Sir William Higdon Vicar upon this condition, that if he will claim anything concerning the King's act for the probation of my will that then the said vicar should not have the said gown but only the duties belonging to the will".

Hugh Heppall, William Beryge and William Marshall all expressed anxiety for their continuing life after death. Hugh Heppall requested that mass be said at church when the "seventh day be come". William Beryge showed even more concern -

"I bequeath to an honest priest, a year service to be sung and said in the church of St. Michael . . . for my soul . . . also I will and ordain that there be paid yearly to the brethren of the chapter in Stamford, out of my house where I dwell 4s for to keep my obitt in St. Michael's church and the obitt of John Sell".

He bade his wife and executors to a "sufficient evidence and writing" to ensure that these rites were offered "forever". To the parson of St. Michael's he left 5s to pray for his soul. William Marshall bequeathed 6s 8d to All Hallow's "for my lying in the church" and "to the bells, as the custom of the church".

Legacies to the church, however, were not the only form of charitable bequests. William Beryge left £5 for his "soul and all Christian souls" to be distributed

---



on his burial day, the seventh and thirteenth days.

To give to "poor maidens at their marriage day" he left, at the discretion of his executors, 3s 4d each.

Although these gifts to the church and charity give some indication of the testator's wealth, it is the remainder of the bequests which help to throw light upon their material possessions. In this respect the disposal of their houses and land is of particular interest, not merely because of its value, which in any case is not stated in precise monetary terms, but on account of its situation both in Stamford itself and elsewhere. Furthermore, the nature of the bequests in certain cases gives an indication of contemporary attitudes towards the provision for widows.

Hugh Heppall left his principal house to his son William. To his wife he bequeathed another occupied by one Henry Bromefield for her life time after which it was to pass to his son. John Addewe on the other hand, appears to have had little by way of property. Apart from his legacy to the church he bequeathed the rest of his goods to his executors, John Fenton, a fishmonger

---

Isabell, a widow, to dispose of "for the wealth of my soul and all Christian souls". Had he been a man with landed property it seems probable that he would have given specific instructions for its disposal in his will.

William Beryge owned several houses. One, situated in Cheyne Lane and occupied by his brother Geroyce Creeke, he left to his son Thomas. Another, which he himself occupied, he left to his son William, with the proviso that his wife Elizabeth could remain there, rent free, until the former was twenty years old and on condition that she kept it in good repair at her own cost. A further house in All Hallow's parish, occupied by one John Ledall, together with an acre of land adjoining the "whytte wing", was left to his daughter Katherine. To his daughter Elizabeth, he gave two "copies", presumably copyhold property. One was situated in All Hallow's parish next to the vicarage; the other was in St. Clement's parish, behind the Corpus Christi barns and had belonging to it three acres of land to the west field. Elizabeth also received a further two acres in the west field concerning which her father

---

commented "which I have of my own" indicating perhaps that the tenure was freehold rather than copyhold.

Not all William Beryge's property was in Stamford, however, for he left to his daughter Grace his "copy. . .both in town and fields" which he had at Uffington, a village some two miles from Stamford. A further "copy" was situated at Oundle, a market town some eighteen miles from Stamford, also bequeathed to Grace.

William Marshall also appears to have been a man of property. He left his house to his wife Marjorie, together with the one adjoining it, for her life time "if it so be she marry not". However, should she take a husband again his own house was to go to his son Richard, when he came to the age of 21 years, and the house next door to his son William, if he was still living. In the event of William being dead, however, both houses were to go to Richard and "his heirs forever"; indeed William Marshall senior was determined to cover all eventualities. If Richard had no issue both houses were to go to his son William and to "his heir of his body lawfully begotten".

---



Failing such issue, the two houses were to be divided equally between his daughters Isabell, Agnes and Emie. William Marshall had other property, however, besides these three houses. Thus, he left twenty acres, one rood of land in the west field to his wife Marjorie for her use, provided she did not remarry. If she did so, fifteen acres and three roods were to go to Richard and his heirs, or in default to William and his heirs, or failing that to his three daughters. To William, his son, he gave six acres and four and a half of arable land of which four and a half acres were situated "overtharte" the dike in the west field, one acre adjacent to St. Augustine's Friary, and another, called Sparrow Acre, near St. Peter's Gate.

By contrast, the will of Thomas Marshall makes no reference to land or property and it is probably safe to assume that he lived in rented accommodation. Peter Symond on the other hand, though not seemingly owning his own house, was in possession of meadow ground and arable land which he bequeathed to his daughter Rose.

The question must now be asked whether or not these testators possessed much ready cash at the time of their deaths. Certainly they all made small monetary

---

bequests to the church. Hugh Heppall left 20 marks (£3 6s 8d) in ready cash to his son William in addition to the house referred to above. His three daughters received 20 nobles (£6 13s 4d) each. To his unborn child, being carried by his wife, he left 5 marks (16s 8d) if it "be born and christened". If it died, however, the bequest was to be divided between the remaining children. It would appear, however, from the latter part of the will which is rather obscure, that his children were to receive their money "at the day of their marriage . . . at the church door". To his apprentice, William, he left £1 and to his supervisor, Henry Lacy 13s 4d. These monetary bequests alone in Hugh Heppall's will amounted to £25 17s 8d.

William Beryge bequeathed £10 to each of his five children with a proviso that if one or more should die the £50 should be divided equally amongst the remainder. That such bequests were made does not necessarily indicate that the testators had liquid assets as is illustrated by the case of Peter Symond who left

---

£6 to his wife Margaret. As has been noted above, however, the inventory in respect of his goods does not make any reference to ready cash so presumably his wife's legacy could only have been paid by the realisation by his executors of other assets.

Property and money apart, what can be ascertained about the material possessions of these sixteenth century members of the town "twelves"? Concerning John Addewe there is virtually nothing that can be added to that which has been observed above. Little specific, other than his horses and personal belongings referred to below, is mentioned in the will of Hugh Heppall. He left all his "goods both moveable and immoveable" to his wife with instructions that his debts be paid. It was also his wish that when she died, if she had not remarried, the goods should be distributed amongst their children, after payment of her debts.

William Beryge, William Marshall and Thomas Marshall all owned flocks of sheep. William Beryge left twenty sheep to each of his five children, indicating that he must have owned at least a hundred. This was

---



a considerable number for one individual. In nearby Nassington, for example, in 1550 there were 800 sheep, of which almost half were owned by fifty-two cottagers.<sup>1</sup> William Marshall left ten ewes to his son Richard, ten ewes to his daughter Agnes and twenty sheep to his daughter Emie and ten to his daughter Isabell and ten to his son William and an ewe and lamb to Margery Sharpe, which shows a substantial flock of at least 60 sheep. Thomas Marshall left to his son Richard twenty ewes. For flocks of such size to have been kept by individuals indicates that during this period the wool industry of Stamford must still have been considerable though it is impossible to estimate the total number of sheep kept by townsmen.

Other livestock mentioned are few in number. Hugh Heppall left his horse, with its saddle and bridle, to his apprentice William and a skewed foal to one of the witnesses to his will, Richard Strollax. William Marshall left his black horse to his daughter Elizabeth Baggot and four oxen and three horses to his son Richard. Most probably the latter were draught horses, since they formed part of a legacy which included a plough, with the

---

1. W.G. Hoskins, Provincial England, 1963, p. 9.

"team" belonging to it, and a shod cart. Thomas Marshall also possessed a horse, a dun nag, which he left to his son Richard together with twenty "welhars" or small pigs, the only other animals mentioned in the five wills now under consideration. Peter Symond's livestock mentioned in his inventory is not referred to in his will.

The wills also reveal those goods considered by the testators most worthy of special mention and this in itself gives an indication of their wealth. Silver spoons are referred to by both William Beryge and Thomas Marshall, the former leaving three to each of his five children and the latter five of the best to his son Richard. Peter Symond left three silver spoons to his wife "which were her mother's" and three to his daughter Rose. Brassware, too, is mentioned by Thomas Marshall who bequeathed to his wife, Margaret, his "best brass pan". His son Richard received "the best brass pan but one" and four of his best brass pots.

Personal clothing and accoutrements are mentioned in several wills. Thus, Hugh Heppall left to his

---

apprentice William, in addition to the horse, saddle and bridle and twenty shillings referred to above, his sword, buckle and best coat. He added a proviso that if William refused to have the horse, he was to receive instead of the gifts specified above, 20s, a cap, doublet, cloak, boots and spurs, together with instruments of his trade. He also bequeathed a worsted doublet to Richard Strollax, a witness to his will and to whom, as has already been observed, he also left a foal. It has already been noted above that William Marshall left his best gown as a principal to his vicar. No doubt considerable value was placed upon the better garments and for this reason they received specific mention in several wills. William Beryge for example left a black gown to Richard Beryge, the parson of Little Casterton, who was one of the supervisors of his will. By way of contrast the other supervisors, Thomas Marshall and Garvice Creche, were each to receive twenty shillings for "their pains". William Marshall left his "buckskin doublet" to his brother in law, Sir Richard Shipe. Peter Symond bequeathed his black jacket and russell doublet to his

---



son in law, John Smith; his black gown to his daughter Rose and "her own raiments" to his wife.

Bedding receives mention in the will of Thomas Marshall whose legacy to his son Richard included two of his best feather beds with their bolsters. Peter Symond left the "best bed" with all things belonging to his wife together with "half the linen in the house".

Concern for the welfare of their families is evident in the wills of several testators. William Beryge willed that his brother, Thomas Beryge, of Laxton should have the government of two of his children, Katherine and Thomas "with their two parts", presumably of their inheritance. Thomas Beryge Senior was also to have the "oversight" of his brother's other two daughters, Elizabeth and Grace with their parts. It would appear, however, that these two daughters were to be in the care of his wife Elizabeth providing they were "well kept and ordered". Peter Symond was particularly anxious about his wife. He asked that his son John should provide for her "her board, her parlour and her fire" during her life "as a woman ought to have". Perhaps doubting that his son would agree he added that "if he do not his duty, as I trust he will, then she to choose two or three honest men to limit her a portion of the goods as they shall think sufficient to keep her with all where-

---

ever she please to go". Peter Symond also refers to the borrowing that took place between himself and his son in law, John Smith, whose debts he forgave.

The wills now under consideration cast some light also upon the attitude of the employer to his employees. It has been observed above how Hugh Heppall remembered his apprentice. William Marshall left 8d each to his three menservants and an unspecified number of women servants "beside their wages". Neither John Addewe, William Beryge, Thomas Marshall nor Peter Symond mention employees. Whether or not this is because they had none is a matter for conjecture.

Finally mention must be made of the manner in which the wills were executed. Executors were appointed, together with one or more supervisors. The former, in the wills discussed above, were two in number, except in the cases of William Marshall who nominated his wife alone and Peter Symond, his son John. The testator's wife, indeed, was made executrix in all the remaining wills, save in that of John Addewe. As the second executor, Hugh Heppall and Thomas Marshall each chose a son, and William Beryge a brother, presumably because his sons were not of age. John Addewe, whose bequests make no mention of relatives appointed John Fenton and Isabell Stow.

The choice of supervisors is of considerable interest in that they were usually persons of standing in the

---



community. Henry Lacy, Hugh Heppall's supervisor, for example served on the second twelve from 1512 to 1513, the first twelve from 1514 to 1564 and was Alderman on three occasions. John Addewe, however, appointed Hugh Lancaster, the parson of St. Michael's who also witnessed his will, together with William Amys, John Holdren, priests, Thomas Warren and Thomas Browne with others. Hugh Lancaster also witnessed William Beryge's will some two years later. William Beryge's supervisors were Richard Beryge, parson of Little Casterton, Thomas Marshall and his brother Gervice Creche. It is of interest that in his case the supervisors were all witnesses to the will, together with Richard Pootter and were presumably present when it was made. William Marshall states the duties of the supervisor in his selection of Edmund Browne: "I make Edmund Browne my supervisor whom I pray to give my wife his counsel and help in all such matters as she shall have to do and to have for his labour five shillings". William Marshall's will was witnessed by his supervisor and also by William Higdon, vicar; William Tymyng and Thomas Marshall. When Thomas Marshall made his will a few years later, his supervisor was Peter Symond. He also witnessed the will.

---



together with Ebias Byarde, clerk, and Robert Tagle Thomas.

As has already been observed above in the case of William Beryge and William Marshall the executors and supervisors received payment for their services under the terms of the will. John Addewe also left three shillings and four pence to each of his executors and his supervisor. Peter Symond's executor was his son John and his supervisor Nicholas Beryge curate, who received six shillings and eight pence "for his pains".

Thus the wills of six men throw some light upon the lives of those who served upon the first and second twelves. during the years from 1536 to 1559. Sometimes supplementary items of interest relating to tradesmen mentioned in the Lincoln wills can be gleaned from the hall books. For example, John Fenton who was one of the executors of John Addewe, appears to have been a man of considerable personality who caused the Council a good deal of trouble. He was elected a member of the second twelve in 1527 and to the first twelve in 1541. He must have supplemented his income from selling fish by either growing food or keeping livestock since he rented a close from the corporation annually from Candlemas to Lammas.<sup>1</sup> In 1552 he appears to have applied to retain it in his sole occupancy during the year in which it lay fallow, as well as at other times. His request

---

<sup>1</sup> S.C.R. The Hall Book, 1461-1558, p. 156

was granted on the understanding that he paid rent every third year at Lammas time, which incidentally, is also of interest since it appears to suggest that rents for land were paid in arrear.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, however, he was later to become involved in an acrimonious dispute with certain fellow members of the first twelve. The affair began on 28th May 1553 at the Queen's court at Westminster.<sup>2</sup> Here a process at the court of John Alleyn, was awarded against John Fenton to William Campinett. All three were members of the first twelve and, of course, well known to one another. William Campinett, who was also alderman of Stamford at the time, ordered the process to be served upon John Fenton by James Caseny, the bailiff. Fenton, however, refused to go to the alderman with the bailiff, or to find surety for his appearance and would not pay him the appropriate fee upon his arrest. Indeed, he taunted the bailiff, saying that "he would make him trot to London for serving of process upon him". This behaviour was suffered by the alderman for more than a week after the arrest, apparently because Fenton had a reputation for being unreasonable. However, during that week, Fenton would not present himself before the alderman to give the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1558, p. 156

2. Ibid., p. 159.

necessary assurance for his appearance, presumably at a subsequent hearing. On the contrary, he went daily by the door of the alderman, with the intention, it was thought at the time, of "mending the quarrel rather than otherwise". Eventually the alderman went to John Fenton's house to ask him personally to find security for his appearance and to pay the appropriate fees to the bailiff. This Fenton again refused to do "giving the alderman very opprobrious words". Subsequent events are of special significance, because they illustrate the vital importance of obedience by all citizens to the alderman. John Fenton had caused what was virtually a constitutional crisis. His utter defiance was regarded as a "perillous example to all ill-doers within the town to know which might hereafter take bold(ras) by the same to contempt and disgrace the Queen's Highness High Officer within the same town".

John Fenton's will, dated 1556, was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and provides a good illustration of this series of wills. It is apparent from the text that he was a mercer at the time of his death, though as has been noted above, earlier records

---



describe him as a fishmonger.<sup>1</sup> The religious preliminary of his will is similar to those discussed above, with a specification that his mortuary should be paid according to the King's act. His bequests themselves show that he had considerable wealth for a tradesman. Of itself, this could give him the pride that is apparent in the incidents described above. He left forty pounds to each of his sons and twenty pounds to each of his daughters; a total of Two hundred and forty pounds. The sons were to receive their inheritance when they reached the age of twenty one and the daughters when they married. In the event of the death of any of his children their share was to be equally divided amongst the rest.

His silverware was divided amongst his children: the best goblet to his eldest son, John; another to his son William; six spoons to his son George; salt cellars to his son William and his youngest son John and ten silver spoons to each of his daughters. This plate was to remain in the custody of his wife Margaret, his executrix and his eldest son until the children came of age. In the event, however, of his wife remarrying the custody of the silverware was to pass to his supervisors. These were

---

1. See p. 225 above.

Henry Tampion alderman and William Mylles Justice of the Peace who were each to have a pound "for their pains" and their expenses.

John Fenton was a man of property. He left his house, which he bought from John Garves and a lime kiln yard to his wife for her lifetime, together with the contents of his mercers shop. The residue of his properties, namely "free land, copies and lease", he left to provide for the maintenance of his children till they came of age after which all were to be divided equally amongst his sons. His supervisors were charged with the task of valuing his property and enquiring what each of his sons desired.

Certain charitable bequests were included in the will. The rent of five shillings a quarter from a tenanted house was left during the lifetime of the occupier Robert Dycon, to the poor of the parish of St. Nicholas's<sup>1</sup> at the discretion of his executors and supervisors "where the most need is". His wife was also instructed to provide four black gowns and sixpence a piece, for four honest, poor men of the parish, on the understanding that they accompanied

---

1. The altar of St. Nicholas was in St. Mary's church.  
(See will Richard Dycon 1543)

the deceased's body to church with torches and candles. On the day of his burial thirty shillings was to be distributed to the poor and a further thirty shillings on the seventh day. Other bequests included two shillings to each of his maidservants, Agnes and Alice, and twenty sheep, a mare and foal to his youngest son. The remainder of the estate was used to help provide the money for the legacies. Thus, the will of John Fenton gives an insight into the character of one of the more notorious of the members of the first and second twelves.<sup>1</sup> Similar studies could also be made of other burgesses but in the context of this thesis the space would not be justified.

What may be said in conclusion concerning this discourse upon the tradesmen of Stamford during the period from 1461/2 to 1575? To begin with perhaps it is worthwhile to reiterate the purpose of the chapter, namely to look at the subject in two ways; the first from an analytical and statistical stand

---

1. e.g. Canterbury wills - John Allen, 1554, Richard Wymond, 1508, Wm. Brown 1489, Wm. Elmes 1504, etc.



point; the second from the point of view of an enquirer into the home background of a few of those who served upon the first and second twelves. The analytical approach, as has been observed above,<sup>1</sup> reveals a number of significant facts. Thus, the freeman's roll from 1475 to 1574 show that the processing trades played only a minor role in the life of the town as also did the landworkers. The dominant tradesmen were the craftsmen and retailers. It was they who must have employed the considerable number of servants, for there were few gentry or professional men. Stamford was clearly a market town meeting the requirements of its own inhabitants and those of neighbouring villages. Nevertheless, if the growth in the number of those engaged in innkeeping and wayfaring can be used as a measure, there was an increase in the number of visitors to the town during the period under discussion. The analysis of the numbers and names of the freemen from 1465 to 1574 indicates that the estimate of a relatively static

---

population of 1,000 is substantially correct. It reveals also that there was no marked expansion of trade during this period. Much of the population was constantly on the move, although there were some 41 dynasties in the town. These, however, apart from the occasional exception do not seem to have exercised any special influence upon borough affairs. With regard to the wealth of the freemen, the paucity of inventories available, means that any conclusions have to be treated with considerable caution. The indications are, however, that there were not excessive differences in the wealth of the principal townsmen during the period, although Fenton may be regarded as one of the rising class of mercers discussed more fully in the next section.<sup>1</sup>

Of the enquiry into the home background of certain of the tradesmen who lived in the town during the first half of the sixteenth century, general conclusions are scarcely called for, except perhaps for a comment upon the comparative simplicity of their households. It

---

1. See p.        below.

is perhaps worthwhile, however, to bear in mind the realities of the every day life of the townsmen, however, trivial they may seem, when considering the broader issues discussed elsewhere in this thesis.



SECTION II 1559 - 1649Chapter VIThe Letters Patent of Queen Elizabeth I,  
1558 & 1593 and James I, 1605.

Within four months of her accession in November 1558 Queen Elizabeth I granted letters patent, dated February 28th,<sup>1</sup> to the alderman and burgesses of Stamford. These confirmed the *inspeximus* of Philip and Mary, and set out once again all the previous confirmations and grants contained therein. Undoubtedly, however, the townsmen must have felt that a new era had begun, epitomised perhaps in the letters patent by Elizabeth's style which, unlike that of her immediate predecessors, was simply that "of England, France and Ireland, queen defender of the faith".<sup>2</sup>

In the years that were to follow Elizabeth's *inspeximus* the corporation of Stamford appears to have become dissatisfied with the provisions made in the charter of incorporation of 1461 and the letters patent of 1481 for the administration of justice within the town. Thus, representations were made to the queen by the

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 234.

2. Ibid., p. 205: c.f. p. 79.

alderman and burgesses of the town concerning "divers  
inconveniences and ambiguities"<sup>1</sup> which had arisen from  
the charters of Edward IV, on three counts: firstly  
the alderman and comburgesses of the town could not officiate  
as justices of the peace without the presence of one  
"learned in the law";<sup>2</sup> secondly the wording of the  
charters did not appear to furnish sufficient authority  
for the alderman and burgesses "to deliver the prisoners  
from time to time being with the gaol of the town";  
thirdly no one was afforded "the certain power of exercising  
the office of clerk of the market within the town".<sup>3</sup>

It is pertinent to examine the probable reasons for  
these representations to the queen. The Elizabethan  
era is generally accepted as being one in which litigation  
was widespread. Indeed, "the organs of Tudor government  
were courts: from the High Court of Parliament to the  
petty sessions of the Justices of the Peace".<sup>4</sup> It  
is possible, therefore, that defending lawyers in the  
courts of Stamford had been seizing upon the  
ambiguities of the charter of incorporation of 1461/2  
and the letters patent of 1481 to challenge the authority of

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 238-239.

2. Ibid., p. 239.

3. Ibid.

4. B.W. Beckingsale, Burghley, Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598, 1967,  
p. 21.

the alderman and corporation.

A record of the burgesses petition to the crown is contained in Letters Patent sealed by the queen on November 22nd, 1593. In these, further privileges were granted to the corporation in order to strengthen its powers. Before discussing them, however, it is necessary to examine in detail the form in which the letters patent were drawn up. Following on from the customary preamble referred to above,<sup>1</sup> there is an introductory section. This contains a resumé of clauses 5, 7 (first part) and 8 of the 1461/2 charter of incorporation and clause 2 of the letters patent of 1481. It will be recalled that clause 5 of the former is divided into two parts: the first stipulates that the alderman and any two of the comburgesses, together with one "learned in the law" should administer justice within the town;<sup>2</sup> the second that the county justices should not execute their office within the borough<sup>3</sup>. The first part of clause 7 quoted in the 1593 letters patent, gives the alderman and burgesses the right to retain all fines imposed upon offenders.<sup>4</sup> The 8th clause

---

1. See pp. 78-79 above.

2. See p. 56 above.

3. See p. 56 above.

4. See p. 58 above.



stipulates that the steward should not "enter or abide within the town" or "intermeddle" there.<sup>1</sup> Clause 2 of the letters patent granted by Edward IV in 1481 relates to the maintenance of a prison within the borough.

This introductory section is followed by the previously quoted summary of the petition of the burgesses which concluded with requests to the queen to "remove and elucidate the inconveniences and ambiguities" to which they had referred;<sup>2</sup> "to strengthen and confirm the liberties, franchises, privileges and immunities" previously granted to them; and "to add and grant to them certain other liberties and privileges".<sup>3</sup>

As a result of the petition, the queen reaffirmed that the "alderman and burgesses, and their successors, should "enjoy . . .for ever . . .the gifts, grants, liberties, exemptions, privileges, franchises, quittances, immunities, articles and customs" <sup>4</sup> previously granted by the crown in letters patent, or established "by reason of any lawful custom or prescription".<sup>5</sup> The proviso was added that such rights should still be valid even if they had not

---

1. See p. 59 above. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 8.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 239.

3. Ibid.,

4. Ibid., p. 240.

5. Ibid.,

been made use of or had been misused or abused.

There is a hint here that such neglect or malpractice had occurred. This was not very surprising since it is doubtful whether all the burgesses fully understood the precise nature of the letters patent granted to the corporation. Thus at a meeting of the hall held on October 26th, 1583, it was recorded in the minutes that -

"The . . . alderman (Richard Shute) did openly read to the commons the points of their charter, in such sort as the same been mentioned and set down in the beginning of this book, which within living memory of none was done before. And this was very well taken of the whole commons, considering the benefit that might grow toward them by some points of their charter (as the discharge of tolls, etc.) which in former time they never understood".<sup>1</sup>

Eight years later in 1591, it was noted in the hall book that the alderman had read the charter "to ensure the burgesses of their privileges and liberties, the which thing never was heretofore done (in the memory of man) but once before when the said Mr. Shute was also alderman, at which the said burgesses greatly rejoiced".<sup>2</sup> It would appear, therefore, that during the decade preceding the granting of the 1593 letters patent there had been

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 225.

2. Ibid., p. 244.

discussion within the hall about the phraseology of the charters already granted. Unfortunately, however, there is no record in the hall book of the manner in which the petition to the queen discussed above came to be drawn up. As is considered below,<sup>1</sup> however, it might well be that the prime initiator was the Chancellor, William Lord Burghley, who was Lord of the Manor of Stamford.<sup>2</sup>

Following the preliminaries discussed above, the 1593 letters patent set out the matters on which clarification or amplification was deemed necessary by the petitioners. The first clause is a general confirmation of "all . . . gifts, grants, liberties, exemptions, privileges, franchises, quittances, immunities, articles and customs" previously enjoyed by the alderman and burgesses, whether by reason of the grant of letters patent or by "lawful custom or prescription";<sup>3</sup> and whether or not they had been "misused, abused or neglected".<sup>4</sup>

The second clause specifies those people who were not permitted to interfere with these privileges

---

1. See pp. 254-257 below.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 253.

3. Ibid., p. 240.

4. Ibid.



of the corporation.<sup>1</sup> They included the monarch herself and her successors, together with "justices, sheriffs and all other bailiffs or ministers" of the crown.<sup>2</sup>

The third clause of the 1593 letters patent specified those who were to have the "power and authority within the town . . . and the liberties and precincts thereof. . . of taking recognizances and securities for keeping the peace and for good behaviour and also manucaptions and bails and of doing, examining all other things which any justices of the peace . . . ought to examine and oversee".<sup>3</sup> Such power was to be vested in the alderman and any one of the comburgesses for "all times to come",<sup>4</sup> with one proviso, namely that they did not hold any sessions of the peace within the town or determine any judicial matters there without the presence of the recorder.<sup>5</sup>

The fourth clause of the 1593 letters describes in more detail the powers, as justices, so vested in the alderman, recorder and any one of the

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 241.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

comburgesses. These included the right to "deliver all the prisoners within the town . . . and precincts of the same . . . for any felonies, trespasses, misprisions, extortions, other causes, complaints and misdeeds . . . (high treason and misprisions of such treasons only excepted)".<sup>1</sup> It was emphasised that such powers could be exercised as often as necessary without further "royal letters, warrants or precepts"<sup>2</sup> from the crown. Moreover they were to be no less than those elsewhere by justices in other parts of England. Towards this end, therefore, the justices of Stamford were given specific authority to "erect a gallows within the liberties of the town to hang felons, murderers and other malefactors" sentenced to death within the town.<sup>3</sup>

The fifth clause of the 1593 letters patent stipulates that the alderman and burgesses should receive all "fines, issues, redemptions and amercements" which had been imposed when those in gaol were fined.<sup>4</sup> This is, in effect, a repetition of the first part of the seventh clause of the charter of incorporation.<sup>5</sup> The proviso, however, that this right was to be enjoyed

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 242.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 243.

4. Ibid.

5. See p. 58 above.

"without the impediment, molestation or disturbance"<sup>1</sup> of the crown, escheators, sheriffs, bailiffs or ministers seems to imply that in spite of clause five<sup>2</sup> of the charter of incorporation such interference had taken place.

The sixth clause of the 1593 letters patent rectifies an omission in the 1481 letters patent by stipulating that the Clerk of the Market in the town should be the alderman. Such an office is not specifically mentioned in the fourth clause of the 1481 letters patent, which refers to the establishment of a weekly market and two annual fairs and of their government by the "alderman. . .and two or three of the more honest and discreet comburgesses".<sup>3</sup>

To avoid ambiguity, the duties of the Clerk of the Market at Stamford were clearly defined. He was to have the power of the "correction and punishment of all offenders within the town in the assize or in the abuse of bread, wine, ale, weights, measures, fuel, wood or other victuals".<sup>4</sup> Much importance was attached to

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 244.

2. See p. 56 above.

3. See p. 72 above. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 21.

4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 244.



duties<sup>1</sup>, as is evidenced at Stamford by the requirement in the 1593 letters patent that the alderman should take a specific corporal oath before the comburgesses to faithfully execute the office of Clerk of the Market.<sup>2</sup>

The seventh clause of the 1593 letters patent is of considerable length and is concerned with the making of bye-laws within the town and with the general administration of local government there. As has been noted in chapters II-IV of this thesis, the issuing of bye-laws had long since been regarded as a legitimate and important function of the corporation. Nevertheless, the power to do so was not specifically defined either in the charter of incorporation of 1461/2<sup>3</sup> or in the letters patent of 1481<sup>4</sup>. Presumably in the view of those responsible for the framing of the bye-laws discussed in section I of this thesis the authority to do so was one of the "liberties and free customs" which the burgesses had "used and enjoyed" before the granting of the charter of incorporation.

Reference has been made in chapter I <sup>5</sup>

- 
1. cf. J.G. Pease and H. Chitty, The Law of Markets and Fairs, 1899, pp. 10-13.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 245.
  3. See pp. 34-68 above.
  4. See pp. 68-76 above.
  5. See p. 38 above.

to Weinbaum's view that the power to make bye-laws was the fifth characteristic of incorporation. The letters patent of 1593 granted to the borough of Stamford give legal expression to this concept. "The alderman, comburgesses and twelve others of the more discreet burgesses" were granted full power in "framing, constituting, ordaining, making and establishing from time to time such laws, institutions, rights, ordinances and constitutions" as seemed to be "good, wholesome, useful, honest and necessary for the good rule and government of the alderman and burgesses. . .and. . .of the merchants, officers, ministers, artificers, inhabitants and residents of the town".<sup>1</sup> Implicit in this phraseology is an insistence on ethical local government giving substance to Sir John Neale's view that Elizabethan borough corporations were neither "corrupt, nor, be it added, blessed with much chance of gross corruption".<sup>2</sup> "Corruption began in the seventeenth century and reached the lengths with which we are familiar in the eighteenth century."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, as will be seen below, one individual,

---

1. S.C.R., *The Charter Book*, p. 245.

2. J.E. Neale, *Essays in Elizabethan History*, 1958, p. 217.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 221.



Lord Burghley, was to secure a privileged position through the 1593 letters patent which was to lead in the nineteenth century to charges that the house of Burghley exercised a "corrupt influence".<sup>1</sup> In addition, in the later 1580s and early 1590s, as is discussed in Chapter IX, there is evidence, if not of corruption, of intrigue during the "Stamford troubles".<sup>2</sup>

The corporation of Stamford, as envisaged by the authors of the 1593 letters patent, was to be an omnipotent body charged not only with framing the bye-laws but also of making use of them to keep a watchful eye upon the overall activities of the townsmen. The alderman and twelve comburgesses were empowered to declare -

"In what manner and order the aforesaid alderman, burgesses and all and singular other ministers, officers, artificers, inhabitants and residents of the town. . . and their factors, servants and apprentices shall employ, behave and conduct themselves in their offices, functions, ministries, arts and businesses within the town. . . and the liberties thereof. . . for the further public benefit, common profit and good rule of the town<sup>3</sup> . . . and the victualling of the same town. . ."

It is doubtful whether the townsmen themselves shared such a view of the paternal functions of the corporation; nevertheless in the late sixteenth

- 
1. J. Drakard, History of Stamford, 1822, p. 163, quoting minutes of meeting held 1st April 1809, at the Swan & Talbot Inn, Richard Clay in the chair.
  2. See p. ~~448~~ 452 below.
  3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 245, 246.



century "the range of obligations on the individual resident was wide".<sup>1</sup>

A third sub-division of the seventh clause of the 1593 letters patent specified that the powers granted to the corporation were to be used also for "the better preservation, government, disposition, leasing and demising of the lands, tenements, possessions, revenues and hereditaments given and granted or assigned . . ." to the corporation.<sup>2</sup> This was an important provision in that, as has been observed above in section I,<sup>3</sup> Stamford, like many other boroughs, derived much of its income from the ownership of property.

To help to ensure that any bye-laws made were enforceable, a fourth sub division of the seventh clause referred to above<sup>4</sup> stipulated that there should be penalties for infringement. Thus the "alderman and [con] burgesses . . . together with . . . twelve more discreet burgesses".<sup>5</sup> were empowered to "impose, limit, inflict and assess and the like reasonable pains, punishments, penalties and imprisonments of the bodies, or by the

---

1. Neale, op. cit., p. 216

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 246.

3. See pp. 91-93 above.

4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 246, 247.

5. Ibid.

expulsion and deprivation of all offenders. . . from all the use and benefit of the liberties and franchises of the borough. . . or also by fine and amerciaments".<sup>1</sup> Monies collected by way of fines were to be used for the benefit of the town, without obstruction from the crown, a right which was, therefore, a restatement of a similar privilege contained in the seven clauses of the Stamford charter of incorporation.<sup>2</sup> The conclusion to the clause concerning the making and implementing of bye-laws stipulates that such ordinances should "not be repugnant or contrary to the laws and statutes of . . . England",<sup>3</sup> a further reminder of the Tudor's philosophy that local administration required "vigilance and firm control by the central government".<sup>4</sup> The provision whereby offenders could be deprived of all civil liberties within the town was indeed Draconian. As will be seen below<sup>5</sup> it was omitted from the letters patent granted by James I in 1605.

One general aspect of the seventh clause required discussion, namely the use of the term "burgess" to mean in some cases the burgesses at large and in others the twelve comburgesses, to whom special reference is sometimes made. It would appear that the intention of the 1593 letters patent was to vest the power of making and enforcing bye-laws in the alderman and first twelve assisted by the twelve other burgesses. It will

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 246-247.

2. See p. 58 above.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 247.

4. Neale, op. cit., p. 218.

5. See p. 263 below.



be recalled, however, that neither the charter of incorporation nor subsequent letters patent specifically authorised a second twelve. It could be argued that in 1593 letters patent did not actually admit the existence of the second twelve, since the twelve burgesses chosen to assist the alderman and comburgesses could have been variable. The evidence in the hall book, however, is that burgesses during the period of Section II of this thesis, 1559-1649, continued to be elected to the second twelve, as was the case during the earlier period from 1461-1548.<sup>1</sup> The precise status of the second twelve, however, was destined to become a matter of controversy which led to the granting of a further letters patent in 1605. The provisions contained therein are discussed in detail below.<sup>2</sup>

The eighth clause of the 1593 letters patent is concerned with the offices of recorder and clerk of the peace. The alderman and comburgesses were permitted to nominate and appoint "one skilful man. . .

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 256v.  
 2. See Pp.259-260 below.



learned in the law" to this position.<sup>1</sup> The clerk of the peace was to be "skilful, sufficient and honest". It was to be his duty to "keep all the rolls, recognizances and other records" appertaining to matters heard before the justices of the peace in the borough or before the justices assigned to deliver the gaols therein.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, he was "from time to time . . . to execute all other things which to the office of clerk of the peace pertains to be done within the borough".<sup>3</sup> The letters patent of 1593 emphasise that in the case of both the office of recorder and clerk of the peace, those appointed held their position "at the will and good pleasure of the alderman and comburgesses".<sup>4</sup> That this rider was considered necessary is possibly an indication of a fear that these officers, once appointed, might consider that they would thereafter act independently of the wishes of the alderman and first twelve. In this respect it has already been observed in chapter I that the office of recorder, like that of justice of the peace, was an important link between crown and municipality.<sup>5</sup> It was necessary

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 248.

2. Ibid., p. 249.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. See p. 61 above.

therefore, that the recorder and clerk of the peace obeyed the alderman and comburgesses in the latter's judicial capacity as justices of the peace. Indeed, a strong emphasis was laid by the later Tudors upon the office of recorder in towns. Clauses relating to it are contained in nearly all borough charters of that period.<sup>1</sup>

The ninth clause of the 1593 letters patent relates to an entirely different matter, namely the keeping of a further annual fair or mart.<sup>2</sup> This was to begin on the eve of the Feast of St. James the Apostle, of July 25th<sup>3</sup> and continue throughout the feast day itself. A court of pie powder was to be held at the time of the fair. All "liberties and free custom" appertaining to the court were to be the prerogative of the corporation to which also were to accrue the "tolls, stallage, piccage, fines and amerciements and all other profits, commodities and emoluments" from the fair.<sup>4</sup> The alderman (or his deputy) was empowered to receive

---

1. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. xix.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 249.

3. Held on August 5th after calendar revision of 1752.

4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 249-250.

by himself the "lawful and due customs and tolls" in respect of "all manner [of] merchandises, wares and chattels" sold at the fair.<sup>1</sup> This right was to be enjoyed free of interference from the crown, although it was stipulated that the fair might not be "to the nuisance of any neighbouring fairs or marts".<sup>2</sup> Such a condition, it will be recalled, was also imposed upon the two fairs granted under the letters patent of 1481.<sup>3</sup> The legal establishment of a pie powder court at Stamford was, of course, to enable the immediate transaction of legal business and settlement of disputes without having to wait for the sitting of a regular court. Its name is a corruption of 'pieds poudres'; the dusty feet of the wayfaring merchants.<sup>4</sup> Though not specifically mentioned in earlier charters and letters patent, it is most likely that a similar institution to the pie powder court had been in existence at Stamford for a long time, since it is generally accepted that the franchise of a market or fair carried with it without any grant the right to hold a court.<sup>5</sup> Certainly,

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 250.

2. Ibid.,

3. See p. 74 above.

4. Lipson, op. cit., pp. 250-251. C. Gross, The Court of Pie powder, in the Quarterly Journal of Economics, XX p.231

5. E. Coke, The Second Part of the Institutes, 1671, p. 220.



as has been noted in Chapter I above,<sup>1</sup> the 1481 letters patent granted to the alderman and burgesses all "jurisdictions" relating to the fairs authorised therein. It is of interest too that the 1593 grant is couched in general terms with regard to goods to be sold at the St. James's fair. By 1785, however, it was principally concerned with horses and stock.<sup>2</sup>

The tenth clause of the 1593 letters patent<sup>3</sup> is a complex one relating to the acquisition of property by the corporation following the dissolution of the monasteries. It will be recalled that section I of this thesis<sup>4</sup> contains an account of how a similar matter became the subject of a private act of parliament during the reign of Edward VI. The queen in the 1593 letters patent "pardoned, remised and released"<sup>5</sup> to the corporation "purchases and acquisitions of . . . all manner of Lordships, messuages, lands, tythes, rents, reversions or other hereditaments,

- 
1. See p. 72 above.
  2. Harrod, *op. cit.*, P. 408.
  3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 250.
  4. See pp. 91-93 above.
  5. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 250.

whatsoever"<sup>1</sup> (not held by the crown "in chief nor of any other by knight service".)<sup>2</sup> made contrary to certain acts of parliament, by the alderman and burgesses and their predecessors. The acts infringed were stated to be: the statute "concerning lands and tenements not to be put in mortmain"<sup>3</sup>; and acts "prohibiting the alienation of lands and tenements to religious men and bodies politic".<sup>4</sup> The crown also undertook to forego the right "of entering, possessing and retaining" such properties that had been acquired by the corporation without a royal licence.<sup>5</sup> In consequence of these dispensations therefore the corporation was permitted to retain any illicit acquisitions without interference from the crown.

The eleventh clause of the 1593 letters patent also related to the acquisition of property by the corporation.<sup>6</sup> The alderman and burgesses were granted "special licence and free and lawful faculty power and authority" to acquire from both crown and subjects

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 251.
  2. Ibid., p. 251.
  3. Ibid., p. 251.
  4. Ibid., p. 251.
  5. Ibid., p. 252.
  6. Ibid., p. 252.

without special authority from the former "manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rectories, tythes, rents, reversions, services and other possessions, revenues and hereditaments" not held in chief by the crown or by knight service by crown or subject.<sup>1</sup>

Such acquisition, however, could only be made if their yearly value did not exceed twenty pounds, in which case the statutes concerning land not to be put in mortmain, or any other act which might prevent such acquisitions by the corporation, would not apply. It was also stipulated by the queen that any such transactions entered into by the corporation should "not be in any wise prejudicial to our right trusty and beloved chancellor William Lord Burghley High Treasurer of England, Lord of the Manor of Stamford" or of his heirs.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it was further decreed that Lord Burghley, together with his heirs and assignes, as Lords of the Manor of Stamford, should be able

"for ever hereafter to have, enjoy, take and retain such as so many franchises, liberties and free customs as and which he and his heirs by reason of their aforesaid manors by virtue of

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 252, 253.

2. Ibid., p. 253.



any the grants, confirmations or ratifications of us or of our progenitors, Kings of England, to the said Lord Burghley or his heirs and to any other or others heretofore being Lords of the Manors aforesaid and to their heirs or by reason of any use, custom or prescription heretofore lawfully made or<sup>1</sup> enjoyed or ought or shall be able to use or enjoy".

The significance of this eleventh clause of the 1593 letters patent is two-fold. Obviously, it gave to Lord Burghley a royal licence to exercise great influence in the borough of Stamford, particularly as it safeguarded privileges acquired by prescription. Furthermore it allowed a very wide interpretation by the inclusion of the future tense in the ultimate phrase of the above quotation. One is tempted to suggest that the whole of the 1593 letters patent have the hall mark of Lord Burghley's legal training at Gray's Inn.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it could be suggested that he had reached an informal understanding with the corporation. He would endeavour to strengthen the hand of the corporation in the issuing and enforcement of bye-laws; he would also see that their unlawful acquisition of property was legalised. In return the corporation

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 253, 254.

2. Drakard, op. cit., p. 142.

would agree to his own privileges in the borough of Stamford being not only confirmed but strengthened. Indeed, a cynic might consider the 1593 letters patent to be an example of Cecil's "artful and circumventive conduct"<sup>1</sup> so bitterly attacked in later years by such writers as Drakard, the one-time editor of the Stamford News.

The twelfth and final clause of the 1593 letters patent is of interest in that no charge was made by the crown in respect of the grant, the relevant passage being -

"We . . . do grant . . . these our letters patent under our great seal of England . . . without fine or fee, great or small, to us in our hanaper or elsewhere to our use to be . . . paid . . . ." 2

This exemption from payment was furthermore to be granted even though there was no express mention therein of the true annual value of the grants made by the crown, and irrespective of any laws that might be to the contrary.

- 
1. Drakard, op. cit., 1822, p. 146.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 254.

In conclusion it can be seen that by clarifying ambiguities the 1593 letters patent strengthened further the position of the alderman and the first and second twelves. Their power to enforce their bye-laws was virtually unlimited, the offender being faced with a fine, imprisonment, deprivation of civil liberties, expulsion from the town or even death. At the same time, however, the corporation was obliged to acknowledge the unique and powerful position of Lord Burghley. It was in these letters patent that the ground was prepared for the domination of the town during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century by the Cecil family.<sup>1</sup>

The third letters patent granted to Stamford corporation during the period covered by section II of this thesis was sealed by James I on July 2nd 1605. The introduction thereto recalls the granting of the charter of incorporation of 1461/62 and repeats virtually verbatim the third clause thereof.<sup>2</sup> The latter is quoted in its entirety in chapter I of this thesis

- 
1. The 1593 Letters Patent were first read to a meeting of the Hall held on the 19th November 1593 (before their formal sealing on the 22nd November). S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 251v.
  2. See pp. 52-53 above.



and it will be recalled that it relates to the election of thirteen comburgesses, one of whom was to be alderman.

It is then explained in the 1605 letters patent that

"certain questions, controversies, variances, discords lately arose and were moved for and concerning the manner, form and order of election of the alderman and other officers eligible within the town or borough aforesaid and concerning the government of the said town or borough and the making of the acts, grants, deeds, elections, ordinances and constitutions within the said town or<sub>1</sub> borough of Stamford make or to be made".

It was, according to the 1605 letters patent, the wish of the crown that "amity and true peace and concord unity and good rule" should be "daily more and more nourished" within the town.<sup>2</sup>

By removing the controversy

it was hoped that the burgesses would not only attend better to their "proper businesses"<sup>3</sup> but also serve better the king.

It is not really surprising that such controversy should have arisen. It has already been pointed out in chapter I above<sup>4</sup> that the hall book indicated that after (and probably before) the granting

---

1. S.C.R. The Charter Book, p. 258.

2. Ibid., p. 259.

3. Ibid.

4. See pp. 54-55 above.

of the charter of incorporation the burgesses elected both a first twelve and second twelve, even though the latter was not specifically authorised.

The manner in which the matter was to be resolved is set out in the first principal clause of the 1605 letters patent. Under this clause the alderman and twelve comburgesses, together with twenty-four honest men (the capital burgesses) from the town (or the majority thereof) were empowered to "elect and nominate" the alderman from one of the comburgesses, providing that this was done according to specific rules.<sup>1</sup>

The second clause of the 1605 letters patent set out in detail the procedure to be adopted.<sup>2</sup> William X) Salter was made "modern" alderman from the date of the royal grant, July 2nd, until Thursday in the first week after the feast of St. Michael the archangel, September 29th, and thereafter until a new alderman was chosen from amongst the comburgesses and had taken the oath.

The third clause of the 1605 letters patent begins by reiterating what is implicit in the first clause.

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 259.

2. Ibid., p. 259.

Twelve of the "more honest and discreet burgesses"<sup>1</sup> are to be named comburgesses and twenty-four capital burgesses. It is further stated that the twenty-four, which were virtually successors to the second twelve established by prescription, was to be called "the common council".<sup>2</sup> The function of this now formally constituted body is defined as follows -

"To treat with the . . . alderman and comburgesses of, and for, all things, causes, matters and businesses touching or concerning the town . . . and to be assisting and aiding to the said alderman and comburgesses . . ." <sup>3</sup>

There follows, in the fourth clause of the 1605 letters patent, the names of those who were to be members of the "modern twelve comburgesses".<sup>4</sup> The list contains only nine names to which must be added that of William Salter who, on relinquishing his position as alderman, was to be a comburgess. It is not clear why this should be so. It is worthy of note, however, that one of the members, John Wingfield, is described as "knight" and another, John Elmes, as "esquire"<sup>5</sup> indicative of the status of the first twelve. Those so nominated to the first twelve were to continue in

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 260.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., p. 261.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.



office "during their natural lives" unless in the meantime they were removed therefrom on account of "misgovernment or for any reasonable cause".<sup>1</sup>

Those nominated to the common council as the "first and modern twenty-four capital burgesses" are listed in the fifth clause of the 1605 letters patent.<sup>2</sup> Like the comburgesses, the capital burgesses were required to serve for life unless removed from office on the grounds of "misgovernment or bad conduct in this behalf or other reasonable cause".<sup>3</sup> The necessity of distinction between the grounds for dismissal of the two classes of burgesses is revealing. Possibly comburgesses were considered to be above "bad conduct". Similarly it is clearly stated that offending capital burgesses were to be dismissed from office by the "alderman, co-burgesses and the residue of the capital burgesses, or the major part of them".<sup>4</sup> It is not stated who was to judge offending comburgesses. The distinction was important, however. It was clear that the common council was to be of lesser importance than the first twelve.

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 261.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

The sixth clause of the 1605 letters patent may be regarded in general terms as a repetition of the seventh clause of the 1593 letters patent granted by Elizabeth I, which it will be recalled, relates to the making and enforcing of bye-laws within the town.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, a number of significant changes in the text of the patent of James I. Firstly, whereas the earlier patent placed the responsibility for the framing of bye-laws on "the alderman and comburgesses . . . and 12 others of the more discreet burgesses . . . assembled together",<sup>2</sup> the later grant specified that this power was vested in "the alderman and twelve comburgesses and twenty four capital burgesses. . . or the major part of them (of whom the alderman of the town. . . we will to be one)."<sup>3</sup> This is, of course, in accordance with the alterations to the town's constitution set out in clause three of the 1605 patent. The specific mention of the necessity for the alderman to be present, repeated many times in the 1605 patent, has an important implication. Decisions could only be made when the comburgesses and capital burgesses were sitting with the alderman, the absence of

---

1. See p. 243 above.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 245.

3. Ibid., p. 263.

whom (or his deputy) would presumably invalidate the proceedings. A minor difference in the text of the two patents occurs in the list of classes of people<sup>1</sup> to whom the bye-laws were intended to apply. "Merchants and their factors"(agents) were included in the Elizabethan patent but not in that of James I. This could indicate that merchants as a class were less numerous in 1605, or that those that there were felt that they ought not to be classed with other residents of the borough. The most significant difference, however, between the text in the two patents is that in the later one all references to the power of the alderman and council to expel offenders from the town, or to deprive them of privileges therein, are omitted.<sup>2</sup>

The seventh clause of the 1605 letters patent is concerned with the procedure to be adopted for the annual election of the alderman. Once a year, on the Thursday following the feast of St. Bartholomew (August 24th) the existing alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses, or the major part of them, were to meet together in the common hall. Two "discreet men of the comburgesses"<sup>3</sup>

---

1. See p. 245 above.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p.265: c.f. p.246, 247.

3. Ibid., p. 266.



who had not served as alderman during the previous two years, were to be nominated as candidates. A month later, on the Thursday following the feast of St. Michael the Archangel (September 29th)<sup>1</sup> one of these was to be chosen as alderman for the ensuing year. Following his election, the alderman was required to take a "corporal oath. .well and faithfully to execute the said office in the like manner and form as of old time"<sup>2</sup> had been used. Thereafter he took office. Richard Butcher gives an interesting account of the election of the alderman in his Survey and Antiquity of the Town of Stamford (first published in 1646).<sup>3</sup>

The new procedure for election of the alderman could be regarded as less democratic than that set out in the charter of incorporation of 1461/2. Under the third clause of the latter it seems to have been the intention that the alderman should have been elected by the burgesses as a whole rather than by the comburgesses. There is, however, a degree of ambiguity in the phrasing; "the burgesses . . . shall be able to elect from themselves

- 
1. According to Butcher (in Peck) op. cit., p. 11, this means the Thursday in the first clear week after the feast of St. Michael.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 267.
  3. Butcher, (in Peck), op. cit., pp. 10-11.

thirteen comburgesses of which comburgesses one shall always be elected alderman".<sup>1</sup>

Further rules concerning the office of alderman are set out in the eighth clause of the 1605 letters patent. These concern the procedure to be adopted if the alderman should die during his year of office or if he were to be removed from office. In such an eventuality the comburgesses and capital burgesses, or the major part of them, were required to meet together within fifteen days to nominate two of the former as candidates for the office of alderman.<sup>2</sup> The rules were to be as in an annual election of the alderman, namely, neither of the candidates must have been alderman within the previous two years and the successful comburgess would be required to take a corporal oath.

Similar provisos are made in the ninth clause<sup>3</sup> of the 1605 letters patent for dealing with the situation when one of the comburgesses died, or was removed from office. The procedure then to be adopted was for the alderman and comburgesses, or the major part of them, to choose one of the twenty-four capital burgesses to

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 2. C.C.R., p. 165.

2. Ibid., p. 268.

3. Ibid., pp. 268-269.

join the ranks of the comburgesses. This was an important provision which established legally the two tier system of local government in the borough. It was developed further under the provision of the letters patent granted by Charles II in 1664, only to be eventually abolished under the local government act of 1972.

Likewise provisions were made in the tenth clause of the 1605 letters patent for the replacement of a capital burgess who should die or be "amoved from his place".<sup>1</sup> The latter eventuality would, of course, occur whenever a capital burgess was chosen to replace a comburgess, as well as in the case of death or misconduct. The appointment of a new capital burgess was vested in the alderman, comburgesses and remaining capital burgesses (or the major part of them) who were charged with making the choice of a suitable candidate from amongst the burgesses of the town.

The significance of the ninth and tenth clauses referred to above is that it strengthened further the oligarchical government of the town. Whereas in the charter of incorporation<sup>2</sup> the comburgesses were to be

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 269.

2. See 53 above.



elected by the burgesses, now they were to be chosen by the existing comburgesses. Likewise the capital burgesses were to be chosen by their peers, together with the alderman and comburgesses.

The eleventh clause of the 1605 letters patent is concerned with the election of a deputy to act "during the absence or sickness of the alderman"<sup>1</sup>. That it had been the practice in the past to elect a deputy alderman is evident from references in the hall book.<sup>2</sup> Now, under the eleventh clause, the alderman and burgesses were given "special authority"<sup>3</sup> for the former to choose his own deputy from amongst the comburgesses. In the absence of the alderman, this deputy was to "enjoy full power and authority within the town. . .of using and exercising all and singular the things which to the office of alderman. . .do in any wise pertain. . .".<sup>4</sup>

The twelfth clause of the 1605 letters patent is intended to clarify the concept of incorporation which was discussed in chapter I above.<sup>5</sup> It will be recalled that the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 was

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 269.

2. See p. 155 above.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 270.

4. Ibid., p. 271.

5. See pp. 35-38 above.

granted to the "alderman and burgesses"<sup>1</sup> of the borough and that provision was made in the third clause thereof for the election of thirteen comburgesses.<sup>2</sup> The charter of incorporation is fairly explicit in the distinction between burgess and comburgess. The corporation consisted of the alderman and burgesses at large; the comburgesses were particular burgesses chosen to attend to the administration of the town's affairs. This distinction is maintained in subsequent letters patent, though occasionally the prefix 'com' seems to have been inadvertently omitted before 'burgensis' for example in the seventh clause of the 1593 letters patent of Queen Elizabeth quoted above.<sup>3</sup> It is not difficult to see, however, that with the ultimate authority vested legally in the burgesses as a whole, decisions made by the comburgesses and the second twelve in the name of the corporate body could be challenged.

The twelfth clause begins by stipulating that the "modern alderman, modern comburgesses and capital burgesses"<sup>4</sup> shall assume authority in their respective

---

1. See p. 35 above.

2. See p. 53 above.

3. See pp. 247-248 above.

4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 271.

offices from the date of the patent and continue therein as provided under the rules discussed above. Thereafter all actions taken by them or the major part of them as the common council of the town were to "stand and be good, sufficient, firm and effectual in law as the deeds and acts of the whole incorporation and body politic of the alderman and burgesses of the town".<sup>1</sup> This ruling was to apply notwithstanding any thing to the contrary in other letters patent granted to the corporation. Thus the first twelve clauses of the 1605 letters patent gave Stamford what was in effect a written constitution for the government of the town. Even then an ambiguity remained in the precise meaning of the term "common council". The third clause of the patent under discussion, as has been noted above,<sup>2</sup> states clearly that the "twenty-four capital burgesses shall from time to time constitute and be and for ever hereafter shall be called the common council".<sup>3</sup> In the twelfth clause, however, as is referred to above, the terminology "common council" is intended to include not only the capital burgesses, but the comburgesses and

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 271.

2. See pp. 260-261 above.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 260.



alderman as well.

The thirteenth clause of the 1605 letters patent deals with a completely different matter. Its purpose was to provide for "the better relief, sustentation and maintenance of the poor and infirm inhabitants residing within the . . . town."<sup>1</sup> The alderman and burgesses were empowered to hold a wool market within the town "for the sale and purchase of wools, woollen yard and skeyn yarn"<sup>2</sup> subject to certain provisos enumerated below. All profits from the market were to accrue to the corporation, unless it "be to the nuisance of the neighbouring markets"<sup>3</sup>. Only "free burgesses" of the town could buy at the market such "wools, wodlen yarn andskein yarn" as had been brought into the town on and at the "constituted and accustomed days and times".<sup>4</sup> A further priviso to this proposed trade in wool, was that only sufficient of the items specified above should be bought as was sufficient to provide work for "men, women, boys and girls. . . residing in the. . . town".<sup>5</sup> Such work was to be

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 272.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.,p273.

at the direction of the alderman and corporation and consisted of converting the wool and yarn to other though unspecified uses. A stock of wool was to be built up for this purpose. The work so provided was to help the poor to "avert loitering and idleness, the beginning and cause of all evil".<sup>1</sup> Furthermore by their own "industry and honest labour of their hands" the poor could relieve their poverty. Any residue of wool so acquired could be sold or bought with the consent of the alderman and comburgesses out of the town providing it did not exceed five hundred tods per year<sup>2</sup>, any acts or ordinances to the contrary notwithstanding. It was further ordained that all income from the wool market by way of tolls, fines, etc., or from the sale of the residue out of the town, should be used to discharge "the public burdens" of the town and for the "public benefit. . . towards the relief and sustentation of the poor" within the town.<sup>3</sup> Similar provision concerning the establishment of a wool market had been made at the nearby borough of Grantham in

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 274.

2. Ibid., p. 274. One tod of wool weighs 28 lbs.

3. Ibid., p, 275.

letters patent issued in 1604.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, these seem to have been used as a model for the grant made to Stamford in the following year as the phraseology is so similar. There is, however, one marked difference; only 50 tods of the surplus yarn at Grantham could be sold outside the borough; at Stamford the amount allowed was 500.<sup>2</sup> The references to the poor of Stamford are in themselves important in that the early seventeenth century appears to have been a time of depression in Stamford. There are a number of references in contemporary records to poverty in Stamford during the period covered by section II of this thesis and these are discussed in chapter X.

The fourteenth clause of the 1605 letters patent is unrelated to the preceding one. It is concerned with the establishment of a Court of Record. This may be compared with the modern county court in that it was established to deal in the main with civil disputes. The court was to be held "on

1. Martin, op. cit., pp. 110-117.

2. Unless there is an error in transcription.



Thursday in every week throughout the year before the alderman. . .or his deputy. . .or before any two or more of the comburgesses".<sup>1</sup> They were empowered to hear "all manner pleas, actions, suits and personal demands of. . .personal trespasses"<sup>2</sup> including trespasses "with force and arms", providing of course these had occurred within the borough. In addition the court was concerned with "all manner debts, pleas upon the case, deceptions, accounts, debts, covenants, detinue (detention) of duty, writings and muniments and of chattels and detinue of beasts and chattels and other contracts".<sup>3</sup> A proviso stipulated that any sum of money involved in a case must not exceed £40. Actions were to be tried "according to the laws and customs"<sup>4</sup> of England as in other courts of record in the cities and boroughs of the country. A further proviso stated that no trial was to be held by the justices referred to above without the advice of the recorder of "other discreet man learned in the laws of England".<sup>5</sup> A similar provision establishing

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 275.

2. Ibid., p. 276.

3. Ibid.,

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 277

a court of record was made in respect of Grantham by means of the letters patent issued in 1604 and referred to above.<sup>1</sup> As in the case of the wool market, the Stamford grant appears to have been modelled upon that for Grantham.

The fifteenth clause of the 1605 letters patent granted to Stamford corporation is particularly obscure.<sup>2</sup> Couched in pedantic legal phraseology it must have presented a challenge that would have baffled the majority of the burgesses. Indeed, the format of these Stuart letters patent is such that it is doubtful whether many of their provisos were really comprehensible to those charged with implementing them, at least without the help of a lawyer. The gist of the clause, however, was to reconcile the terms of the 1605 letters patent with rights previously enjoyed by the corporation whether by virtue of charters, letters patent or prescription. However, such rights (for example, concerning the ownership of property, the holding of markets, etc.) were to be confirmed so as to ensure that

---

1. Martin, op. cit., pp. 112-115.

2. See Appendix, pp (57)-(58) for text of this clause as an example of the terminology of the 1605 letters patent. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 277-278.

they would not be contrary to the terms of the 1605 letters patent, subject to any dues to the crown still being paid. A somewhat similar, though less complex clause, is contained in the 1604 letters patent granted to Grantham referred to above.<sup>1</sup>

The following clause of the 1605 letters patent, the sixteenth, is a corollary to the above. The crown acknowledges therein that such rights and privileges that accrue to the corporation as a result of the granting of the aforesaid letters patent should be enjoyed "without let or impediment"<sup>2</sup> by itself. Indeed it is emphasised that the crown was unwilling for the alderman and burgesses to be "molested, vexed, agrieved, or in any wise disturbed"<sup>3</sup> by either of his heirs, justices, sheriffs, escheators or other bailiffs or ministers.

The seventeenth clause of the 1605 letters patent stresses the independence of the corporation even further. It is commended that the

---

1. Martin, op. cit., pp. 114-117.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p.279

3. Ibid.



"Treasurer, Chancellor and Barons of the Exchequer" together with the "Attorney and Solicitor General"<sup>1</sup> and unspecified officers and ministers should not "prosecute or continue or make or cause to be prosecuted or continued any writ or summons of Quo Warranto or any other [royal] . . . writ or process"<sup>2</sup> against the corporation on account of "matters, offences, claims or usurpations" made prior to the granting of the 1605 letters patent. The letters patent granted to Grantham in 1604 contain virtually identical provisions<sup>3</sup> to the sixteenth and seventeenth clauses of the Stamford grant discussed above.

Both the Stamford<sup>4</sup> and Grantham<sup>5</sup> letters patent conclude with clauses couched in almost identical terms to the final clause of the 1593 patent granted to Stamford.<sup>6</sup>

The main provision of the latter, it will be recalled,<sup>7</sup> was that no fee was to be charged by the crown for the letters patent.

As a conclusion to this chapter on the three

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p.279.
  2. Ibid., p.280.
  3. Martin, op. cit., pp. 116-119.
  4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 280.
  5. Martin, op. cit., pp. 118-119.
  6. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 254.
  7. See p.256 above.

letters patent granted during the period covered by the second section of this thesis, namely 1559-1649, a summary of the main points is given below. The first sealed on February 28th, 1589, by Queen Elizabeth I was merely an inspeximus in which various grants discussed in chapter I above were confirmed.

The second Elizabethan patent, dated November 22nd, 1593, set out to remedy the ambiguities contained in earlier grants. Following confirmation of existing privileges in the first principal clause, supplemented by a reiteration of the corporation's freedom from interference by the crown in the second, the 1593 letters patent deal with three distinct matters, namely the administration of justice, the establishment of a further annual fair and the ownership of property by the corporation. Thus the third clause makes it clear that the administration of justice within the town should rest firmly with the alderman and comburgesses, provided the recorder was present. The appointment of the recorder himself, together with that of the clerk of the peace, is dealt with in clause eight.

---

The fourth clause authorised the alderman and comburgesses to deal with all offenders by fine, imprisonment or even hanging; the fifth stipulated that fines were to be used for the benefit of the town; the sixth that the markets were to be the responsibility of the alderman in the capacity of clerk of the market. The administration of justice is referred to again in the seventh clause, in that the power to make and enforce bye-laws is clearly vested in the alderman, comburgesses and twelve of the remaining burgesses. Such was the power of the justices that infringement of the bye-laws could be punished by expulsion from the town.

The establishment of a further annual fair - to begin on the eve of the feast of St. James the Apostle (August 5th old style) was the subject of the ninth clause. It was to be controlled through a pie powder court. Finally part of the seventh clause, and the tenth and eleventh clauses, deal ..

---



with technicalities concerning the ownership of property by the corporation, in particular that acquired without regard to various acts of parliament. The final clause refers merely to the sealing of the letters patent without fee. Thus the 1593 letters were intended to strengthen the powers of the corporation. In so doing they added also to the power wielded by the alderman and comburgesses, the self perpetuating oligarchy who controlled the town. Though undemocratic in the modern sense of the word, such an arrangement favoured efficient local government in which corruption seems to have played little part. Nevertheless, by granting special privileges to Lord Burghley in the eleventh clause the 1593 letters patent opened a door which was to lead to bitter charges of corruption in later centuries.

With regard to the 1605 letters patent, these were intended to make the government of the town more efficient by removing controversy and discord. Towards

---

this end the patent, in its first clauses, provided virtually what is a written constitution for the borough of Stamford. The control of the town is to be vested in the alderman, twelve comburgesses and twenty-four capital burgesses (clause one).

The date that the "modern" alderman and the "modern" comburgesses and capital burgesses were to take office is specified (clauses two and three). The names of the comburgesses and capital burgesses as indicated are given (clauses four and five). The procedure for the election of the alderman is set out (clause seven) together with that of his deputy (clause eleven). Such eventualities as the death or removal of the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses are included (clauses eight, nine and ten). The concept of incorporation is dealt with (clause twelve), power being clearly vested in the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses. Their power to make bye-laws is confined (clause six) and their existing rights are ratified (clauses

---

fifteen and sixteen). To help deal with problems of poverty within the town a wool market was authorised (clause thirteen); to assist in the settlement of civil disputes a court of record was established (clause fourteen). Finally, all these privileges were to be granted without payment of a fee to the crown (clause seventeen).

Thus, it can be seen that the 1593 letters patent gave almost unlimited powers to the alderman and comburgesses. Their theoretical control over the town was virtually absolute. Though the establishment of a common council of 24 capital burgesses in 1605 seemingly lessened this authority, the manner of their election meant the preservation of a ruling oligarchy. In general it may be added that a detailed examination of these later Tudor and early Stuart charters, though tedious, is essential if there is to be a proper understanding of the legal basis on which the corporation rested. So often the predantic clauses do not receive the careful attention which they deserve. Dr. Martin Weinbaum, for example, notes two grants

---



Stamford, 1559 and 1594, as confirmations.<sup>1</sup> These undoubtedly refer to the letters patent of 1558 and 1593, but as has been seen above the latter was far more than an inspeximus. (His reference to a charter of 1605<sup>2</sup> dealing with borough finances refers to a release of arrears).

It is not an exaggeration to say, however, that without giving the closest attention to the text of the charters, a study of a borough corporation cannot be complete. It is important to realise that the charters set out only what it was hoped would happen. What eventually took place can only be gleaned from the hall books and contemporary records. Indeed, as is discussed fully in Chapter XIV, by February, 1638/9, the corporation was again seeking a new charter which would confirm former privileges and grant additional ones.

---

1. Weinbaum, op. cit., pp. lii-liii.

2. C.S.P., Domestic Series 1603-10, p. 202.

Chapter VIIThe struggle to promote trade and  
combat poverty within the Borough1559 - 1649

It will be recalled that in chapter II, the regulation of trade within the borough was discussed in respect of the period from 1461 to 1558. The emphasis in the hall book during that period was upon the technicalities of the conduct of trade, for example: rules relating to the admission to the freedom of the town; the organisation of the trades into pageants, each with its wardens charged with the searching out of faulty goods; bye-laws in respect of weights and measures, forestalling, regrating and engrossing, Sunday trading and so forth. The importance attached at least to the majority of the bye-laws does not appear to have significantly declined by the beginning of the Elizabethan era. Indeed, it is appropriate to begin the discussion of the regulation of trade during the period covered by Section II of this thesis (1559-1649) with the following extract from the minutes of a council meeting held in November 1558 during the final days of the reign of Philip and Mary:

"It is ordained and agreed by the alderman and his brethren with the consent of the whole commonalty at this hall assembled that all good old orders, laws and statutes made heretofore in the hall and so recorded in the town book should stand and be good and effectual till further order be taken. . ." 1

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 169v.

As is discussed below, the records of the corporation during the period from 1558-1649 reveal an over-riding concern for the problems arising from what appears to have been a time of great depression in the fortunes of the town. In order to safeguard the interests of the freemen of Stamford, bye-laws were repeatedly enacted to control the number of foreigners entering the town. Other regulations were made to deal with the poor. Several attacks of the plague further compounded the difficulties of the council. Efforts were made to alleviate the situation by proposals to stimulate trade by establishing new industries and by making the Welland navigable from Stamford to the sea.

The desire not to aggravate the difficulties of the local tradesmen by allowing their trades to be diluted by foreigners, prompted numerous bye-laws. The first of these virtually coincided with the beginning of the Elizabethan era. Thus in October 1559, it was enacted that no tailor, who was single and who was neither a native of Stamford, nor had served his apprenticeship there, should practise his craft within the town until he was either married or sworn as a freeman.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 171 v.



The penalty for infringement was £2, a fairly substantial penalty. This order is of additional interest in that it apparently implies that, in the tailoring trade at least, married foreigners did not at that time necessarily have to be freemen of the town before being permitted to follow their trade. In turn, this emphasises that there might possibly have been a failure to enforce strictly the bye-law of 1465 which stipulated that whenever a foreigner entered the town in order to practise his craft, he should be "examined by the alderman or his deputy" at the end of six months.<sup>1</sup>

A further regulation concerning trading within the town by foreigners was enacted in 1563. This stipulated that no saddler, or indeed, other person residing outside the town should occupy a shop within the town. The penalty for infringement was fixed at 6s 8d. To ensure compliance householders were forbidden to let premises to outsiders under the threat of a more severe penalty of £1.<sup>2</sup> As might be expected legislation against foreigners occupying property was enacted during the Elizabethan era in other towns also. At Nottingham, for example, there are a number of references

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 3-4.

See p. 99 above.

2. Ibid., p. 182v.

in the Mockleton Jury Rolls of 1588 to cases involving the unlawful letting of properties to non-burgesses.<sup>1</sup> Also in 1564, it was stipulated by Stamford corporation that no one should practise the act of a dyer without first paying 13s 4d for his freedom. Dyers coming into the town, not being sworn, were required to pay a yearly fee of 6s 8d until they were admitted to the freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Such bye-laws as those discussed above indicate a growing anxiety felt by the townsmen of Stamford at the coming of foreigners to the town. The question of control, therefore, was important. Thus in 1565 it was decreed that once a year two persons out of the Common Hall should be appointed to enquire every month throughout the year into the number of people coming to dwell within the town<sup>3</sup>. The council representatives had first to enquire from whence the strangers came and to learn as much

---

1. Stevenson, op. cit., p. 222.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 184.

3. Ibid., p. 185.

as they could about their "quality, condition and properties". Secondly, they had to present the newcomers to the alderman within a month of the latter's arrival so that he could decide whether or not they could remain in the town. If the council officials, who for the initial year were to be petty constables, defaulted in presenting the strangers to the alderman, they were to be committed to prison, there to remain until they had paid 3s 4d for the use of the town.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later in 1566, there is yet more evidence of the concern of the corporation at the arrival of newcomers in the town. It was ordered that all drapers, mercers, tailors and tradesmen on arrival in the town should present themselves to the alderman.<sup>2</sup> Unless they could find surety to pay their fines at the first hall

- 
1. In December 1570, on the appointment of four petty constables this bye-law was reenacted (S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 200.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 188.



following their coming, they would not be permitted to trade within the town and would incur a fine of twice the amount stipulated for the purchase of freedom in the "old book", i.e. tailors 26s 8d, shoemakers 26s 8d and so on.<sup>1</sup>

The desire to restrict the number of tradesmen moving to Stamford may have influenced the decision made by the corporation in 1574 to revise the schedule of fines payable by those admitted to the freedom of the town.<sup>2</sup> The terms upon which freedom might be secured were closely related to the problems of preventing strangers entering the town unlawfully and in consequence also to the level of poverty there. These aspects are discussed in detail below.<sup>3</sup>

Also at the same meeting in 1574, the lack of work within the town prompted the making of a bye-law which decreed that after Easter no inhabitant of the town should employ any strangers, whilst there were men within the town without work.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the townspeople were ordered not

- 
1. See p. 99 above (note shoemakers fine, 1465, 13s 4d: tailors 6s 8d).
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 206.
  3. See pp 313-319 below.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 206v.

to employ foreigners to thresh their corn but to make use of the services of local labourers. The town council were apparently somewhat apprehensive of the result of protecting the local workmen at the expense of the foreigner. It was felt necessary to discourage the former from taking advantage of the situation. Thus, if local labourers refused to work at a "reasonable price" or to "perform their work in due time", the employer was permitted to lodge a complaint with the alderman, who was empowered to deal with offenders. It was ordained that the punishment so meted out should include not only imprisonment but the rendering of further labour under the supervision of the constable of the ward in which the labourer lived. If the labourer still refused to work satisfactorily the alderman was empowered to commit him again to prison to be punished further until he was prepared to carry out his appointed task.

Provision was also made to cover the position arising from a change in the supply of local labour. Thus in the event of foreigners being employed on account of there being no local labour available, rules were made to safeguard the interest of local workmen who subsequently might become unemployed. In such circumstances, the local workman, or an officer

---

acting on his behalf, could give notice to the employer of foreign labour that he wished to have a job at a wage to be assessed by the alderman. If an employer declined the offer of work or to pay the agreed wage, the alderman could order the employer to dismiss the foreign employee and to offer his job to the local labourer. Should he refuse to obey this injunction, he would be committed to prison without bail being allowed until such time as he was prepared to carry out the alderman's instructions. Moreover, before his release from gaol he was required to pay the local labourer a sum equivalent to the wages the latter had lost on account of being refused work.

To enable these rules concerning the engaging of labourers to function properly, those who sought work were required to go to the fish market in St. Michael's parish at 5 a.m. in the summer and 6 a.m. in the winter.<sup>1</sup> They were to remain there

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 207.



for at least half an hour. Whilst labour was so available, inhabitants were forbidden to employ foreigners. Local unemployed labourers failing to present themselves for hire were liable to be arrested by the constable and taken to the alderman for correction. If the constable failed to search for such offenders, he himself became liable for punishment for negligence, with the prospect of a fine at the alderman's discretion. At the same meeting in 1574, specific measures were introduced with regard to buttonmakers. They were forbidden to sell within the town unless they were freemen and had served an apprenticeship for seven years, or unless they were journeymen employed by a buttonmaker who was a freeman. The penalty for infringement was levied at 10s with the prospect of imprisonment until this had been paid.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting, however, that the freemen rolls show that only one buttonmaker was admitted in each of the periods, 1550-1574 and 1575-1599.<sup>2</sup>

One aspect of the regulation of trade within the borough at this time is in contrast to the many

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 207v.

2. See Appendix, Tables F, (15)-(20) & S, (36)-(41).

regulations, discussed above, intended to restrict the activities of foreigners within the town.

Thus, in 1575/6 it was agreed by the "whole commonality" that the ordinance prohibiting the buying of goods in St. Martin's<sup>1</sup> - renewed in Mr. Lacy's time (1573/4) should be "utterly abrogated" so that all men could "intermeddle" there. Presumably, it was felt that either it was impossible to enforce this bye-law, or that it would benefit the town proper to promote trade within St. Martins.

By February, 1580/1<sup>2</sup> the corporation had reached the conclusion that it might be possible to prevent foreigners entering the town by making it difficult for them to find accommodation there. It was agreed that no one should allow any "house, messuage, tenement or cottage" to be occupied by more than one tenant, whether married or single.<sup>3</sup>

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 212v.  
See p. 119 above.
2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 219.
3. Ibid., p. 219.

Indeed, the principal tenants of houses were ordered to evict sub-tenants by 25th March 1580/1.<sup>1</sup> It would appear, therefore, that probably one of the principal obstacles to the prevention of foreigners entering the town was the attitude of some of the townsmen themselves who no doubt saw the taking in of tenants as a means of supplementing their incomes.

Indeed, it is pertinent to enquire whether or not the bye-laws concerning strangers, discussed above, achieved their objectives. Certainly some of them must have presented considerable practical problems in their enforcement. For example, in 1586 it was reported that the "divers good laws and constitutions made for the not receiving of strangers" into the town and for their ejection therefrom had been neglected.<sup>2</sup> This was apparently because the petty constables who had the duty of presenting offenders to the alderman had been "remiss and negligent in their

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 219v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 213.



duties". It was agreed, therefore, that two "honest and substantial men from every parish" should be sworn to search out those who had newly come to live in the town. The names of the newcomers were to be presented to the alderman once a month in order that such further action could be taken as might be considered necessary by him and the comburgesses. Those appointed to make these enquiries were subject to a fine of one pound for every default in the performance of their duties.<sup>1</sup> Certainly subsequent records indicate that legal action was initiated against those who practised a trade within the town without first securing their enfranchisement. In 1590 for example, three tailors, probably recently arrived foreigners, were ordered to pay four marks each for the purchase of their freedom, or to provide sufficient surety in respect thereof, failing which they were to be expelled from the town. Indeed, a fourth tailor, who refused to pay the necessary fine for admission was ordered to leave the town.<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for this anxiety over the dilution of tradesmen in the town had been briefly referred to at the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 231.  
 2. Ibid., p.232 v

beginning of this chapter. In 1567 references are made in the hall book to the "poor estate" of the town. The clerk lamented that there were "divers idle and poor people within this town of late days".<sup>1</sup> A subsequent entry in the hall book emphasises the great poverty<sup>2</sup> of the town. Undoubtedly, the influx of strangers contributed to the difficulties. For many years at least, the problem was virtually intractable. Thus, in 1593, it was agreed in hall that all those poor persons who had come to live in the town within the previous three years should be expelled. Those who had been there longer than that space of time were required to have in their yards by Michaelmas, two loads of wood, or else they too were to leave the town.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this latter regulation was presumably to place some of the onus of looking

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190v.

2. Ibid., p. 225v. (in connection with the enclosure of Tenter Meadows in 1583 and their subsequent letting by tender to meet the cost of the "fifteenth").

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 246v.

after the poor during the winter months on themselves, and in consequence to lighten the responsibilities of the corporation. At the same meeting of the hall a further official, one Robert Timham, was appointed to watch over every house in the town for the purpose of "keeping out of the same all rogues, vagabonds and beggars".

It is unfortunately not possible to ascertain from the existing borough records the extent to which these regulations against newcomers, the poor in particular, were enforced. The presence within the town of those who had not secured their freedom continued to cause concern for many years. Such men presumably took to casual work, which seems to be borne out by a bye-law enacted in 1594. Under this regulation no one who had not taken the freeman's oath was permitted to carry dung or compost within the town, on penalty of 6s 8d for every load, with the prospect of imprisonment for non-payment.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of ensuring that newcomers did not enter the town, however, remained. Thus in 1602 it was agreed that

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 252.



the alderman, together with two of the burgesses, one of the oldest and one of the youngest, two of the second twelve "as they be in antiquity" and four constables should walk about the town once a month in order to ascertain what newcomers had arrived and to ensure that they did not become a charge to the town or cause annoyance.<sup>1</sup> There is an implication that violence might possibly ensue in the discharge of these duties since by the same resolution the constables were forbidden to walk in the streets without their staves, on pain of 4d for every default.

The concern over newcomers entering the town continued into the reign of James I. In 1617 it was ordained that the constables of every parish, together with the sergeants, should give notice to the alderman monthly of all newcomers to the town in order that instruction might be taken concerning their future.<sup>2</sup> A further regulation stipulated that no townsman should invite a stranger to live in his house without first acquainting the alderman, who was tasked with deciding whether or not the newcomer was fit to be a freeman.<sup>3</sup> This ruling seems to indicate that the bye-law enacted in 1580/1<sup>4</sup> forbidding the taking in of sub-tenants may not have been effective at this period.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 269.

2. Ibid., p. 325v.

3. Ibid.

4. See pp. 292-293 above.

At the same hall three burgesses were ordered to expel strangers from their houses before Christmas on pain of a fine of one pound.<sup>1</sup> It would appear, therefore, that a determined effort was made by the corporation to ensure that these bye-laws were enforced.

Many other examples of such orders are to be found in succeeding years. In 1620 a bye-law<sup>2</sup> was introduced which epitomised the link between the arrival of foreigners and the level of poverty within the town. It related to the presence of strangers within the homes of townsmen, already regulated by a bye-law, discussed above, made in 1617. All such foreigners had to be evicted by Christmas or alternatively made freemen. In default the offending townsman was required to pay to the poor of the parish in such he dwelt the sum of 6d weekly until either the stranger left or paid a fine for securing his freedom.

This rule, however, must have proved ineffective because a few years later in 1629, even more stringent bye-laws were enacted. Townsmen were specifically forbidden to allow foreigners "to dwell . . . in any of their houses, barns, messuages or tenements" without the permission, not only

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 326.

2. Ibid., p. 331 v.

of the alderman, but of the comburgesses and capital burgesses sitting formally in the common hall.<sup>1</sup> In addition a record of any permission granted was to be entered in the hall book. The penalties for non-observance of the edict were fixed at 5 marks for the first offence and 6s 8d for every month thereafter that it continued. A rider to the bye-law forbade the splitting of existing dwellings, or conversion of barns, to allow more families to occupy them by providing additional accommodation. In 1630, landlords who accepted a stranger were required to be one of the sureties against his becoming a charge upon the town.

Ordinances, I-VI, of a comprehensive set of bye-laws enacted on March 15th, 1631 were all designed to limit the settlement in the town of those likely to become a charge to the town.<sup>2</sup> In these bye-laws, a distinction was drawn between those who were eligible for assessment on the subsidy roll at 20s in land (or £3 in goods) and those with fewer financial resources. Thus, the first of the above bye-laws ordained that no

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 353v.

2. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 8.



new house<sup>1</sup> could be erected unless it were for the use of such a "subsidy man"; contravention of the order would result in a fine of 10s for every month the house was unlawfully occupied. A similar restriction was placed, under the second bye-law, on the conversion of barns, outhouses, and on the sub-division of existing tenements. Should such a conversion be illegally occupied, the builder was to be fined 10s monthly and the tenant 5s. The third bye-law stipulated that those who took in tenants should forfeit 10s monthly; the fourth placed restrictions upon the letting of existing properties to those without the subsidy qualification. Unless the tenants of such properties were freemen who, together with their families, had not been absent from the town more than a year, then the landlord was obliged to enter jointly with the tenant into a bond, or other surety for £40, so as to safeguard the corporation from any financial responsibility. The fifth bye-law reaffirmed that byelaws I-IV excluded those with the necessary subsidy roll qualification unless they were

---

1. Excepting gaols and hospitals.

lodgers. Finally, under the sixth bye-law, the alderman and two of the "next comburgesses to the place"<sup>1</sup> (providing they themselves were not offenders), were to judge whether or not habitations were fit for "subsidy men". A further bye-law, No. IX, in the same series reiterated that no tradesman whatsoever (unless he be a freeman by birth or service) should "presume to open any shop, or sell any wares unless he had first been made free, on pain of a penalty of 10s per month for infringement.

Some four years afterwards, in 1635, it was agreed in hall that ". . . according to the new constitution there shall be none suffered to continue in this town unless they shall by general consent of the hall be admitted to Scot and Lot and be made free of this corporation".<sup>2</sup> Certainly by the number of detailed entries in the hall book concerning admissions to the freedom of the borough, this bye-law was strictly enforced for many years thereafter. Moreover the threat of expulsion from the town was made much use of.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. An obscure phrase. Possibly senior burgesses recently, or shortly to be, alderman.  
 2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 377v.  
 3. Ibid., p. 393v.

In 1641, the burgesses of Stamford were considering petitioning parliament for further powers, one of which was that they might "have the privilege which other corporations have to keep out foreigners".<sup>1</sup> By now, however, national events were such that no action was taken by the crown. It is fitting, therefore, to conclude this discussion on the problem of strangers entering Stamford with an extract from the minutes of a council meeting some two years after the end of the period now under discussion -

'Whereas divers strangers have come to inhabit in this town (not being free by birth or service) and receive the benefit of common and trading belonging to the freemen of this corporation contrary to the constitution lately made and allowed to the great prejudice of the corporation and whereas there be divers of them have been many several times lawfully summoned (by the sergeant thereunto appointed) to appear at the common hall at several general assemblies or meetings there to make their compositions for and evil example of others, have neglected and refused to make their appearance. It is therefore at this hall ordered that not only the aforesaid strangers now in town but all other strangers who shall hereafter come to inhabit in this corporation and take the benefit of common and trading from the freemen of this corporation shall have their cattle impounded and detained and their shops shut up until they shall appear at the common hall or at Mr. Alderman's house and make their compositions for their freedoms according to their several trades or callings. 2

It would, therefore, appear that in spite of all the efforts of the corporation, the rising tide of freedom of movement into towns was becoming irresistible.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406.

2. Ibid., p. 437.



It can be seen, from the above discourse, that there is substantial evidence in the hall books that Stamford was a town in which there was severe poverty during the period from 1559 to 1649. As is discussed below, confirmation of this is to be found in other records, such as the Calendar of State Papers and the Cecil Manuscripts. The degree of poverty is somewhat surprising because in general the Tudor period, as Dr. Joan Thirsk points out, was a prosperous age for town dwellers.<sup>1</sup> It has been observed above,<sup>2</sup> however, that by the middle of the sixteenth century Stamford had become a place where "ruin and decay"<sup>3</sup> afflicted both the town itself and its trade.

The coming of the plague compounded the problems arising from the decline in trade. Thus, concerning the first visitation in 1574, it was reported that -

"The town is so rudely governed, they have so mixed themselves, that there is none that is in any hope of being clear. It is in seventy houses, and the town is in great poverty; but that the good people of the country send in victuals there would be many die<sup>4</sup> of famine. St. Martin's parish is clear".

---

1. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 59.

2. See p. 84 above.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 153.

4. Letter to Cecil, Cal. Cecil MSS, II, 106.

c.f. C. Creighton, History of Epidemics in Britain, I, 1965, p. 339.

This attack of the plague, considered by Creighton to be a 'severe one' led to forty being buried of it between 8th August and 7th September 1574.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, there is evidence of severe disruption in the meetings of the council during a period of more than a year. Following a meeting of the hall on the 30th September 1574, little is recorded until a full meeting took place on the 19th February 1576. In the interim, business only appears to have been transacted briefly for the purpose of the swearing in of freemen, apprentices and tax collectors, on four occasions, January, April, May and June.<sup>2</sup> John Hawkins, who had been alderman in 1574/5 and two other members of the first twelve, Robert Parsons and Christopher Loveday died in 1575, very likely of the plague.

The next visitation, in 1580, however is referred to in detail in the first hall book. It is reported therein that many freemen left the town for the country on account of the "infection of the plague, shutting up their doors and windows" during their absence.<sup>3</sup> The corporation considered such action to be greatly detrimental to the town and its remaining inhabitants, particularly in that it gave rise to rumours. Concerning those who had fled from the town, the minutes explain -

---

1. Creighton, op. cit., p. 339.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 202-211.

3. Ibid., p. 220.

'By reason of their flying, it is given forth in places a great number be dead, more than is. And further, the travellers through the town, spying the doors and windows shut up, give forth abroad that the whole household is dead by reason whereof mens livings are taken away for the time".<sup>1</sup>

In consequence, therefore, the alderman, comburgesses and entire commonality "decreed that all freemen who had left the town should come again to their houses and to set open their doors and shop windows daily."<sup>2</sup> Those who failed to return between  
7th  
the date of the meeting (September 1581) and St. Matthew's Day (21st September) were to be disfranchised. Furthermore, it was agreed that if the plague should return no freeman was to leave the town and shut up doors and windows without a special licence from the alderman.<sup>3</sup> Any ignoring this bye-law were to be disfranchised "without any further warning".<sup>4</sup>

In the event the plague did not return until the last year of Elizabeth's reign. It is recorded in the hall book that in 1604, soon after the accession of James I it was decided that a cabin should be erected "wherein persons infested with the sickness called the plague should be

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 220.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.



kept and maintained".<sup>1</sup> This was situated at Whitefriars<sup>2</sup>. It was to be maintained by the collection of a fourth part of a fifteenth.<sup>3</sup> At a subsequent meeting of the council, on the 12th April 1604, fears were expressed that because of the plague many townsmen, including members of the first and second twelves, would leave the town to dwell elsewhere. It was considered that if this was allowed to take place, as it had in the 1574 visitation, those who remained in the town would be "greatly impoverished in maintaining, nourishing and relieving the poor people...with sickness" and "the market altogether defamed, disgraced and forsaken".<sup>4</sup> It was concluded that travellers and other persons, seeing doors and windows shut up, would imagine the whole household dead, and would therefore "neither lodge nor buy any necessaries or wares within the town". It was, therefore, agreed that any member of the first twelve who fled from the town should be fined £20 during the month following his departure, dismissed from the council, disinfranchised and barred from "all liberties and privileges of the corporation".<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 277.
  2. Parish Registers, St. George's and St. Michaels.  
cf Notes and Queries, 6th series, II, 524.  
cf Creighton, op. cit., pp. 360 and 496.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 277.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.

The penalty for members of the second twelve was similar except that in their case the fine was reduced to £10. For ordinary freemen the penalty was assessed at £5, together with disfranchisement. This decision of the council is of interest also in that it is a further instance of the conception that the higher the position of the offender in the hierarchy of the town the more severe his punishment for offending against the rules.<sup>1</sup>

This attack of the plague must have been severe since in the parish registers of the five Stamford parishes north of the river 442 deaths were recorded, as compared for example to 26 in the following year, and an average of 51 over the 15 years from 1588 to 1602 inclusive (excluding 1594 and 1598 for which the records examined were incomplete).<sup>2</sup> When it is considered that the total population of Stamford

---

1. See p.154 above.

2. L.A.O. Bishop's Transcript Parish Registers for St. Mary's, St. Michael's, All Saints, St. George's and St. John's.

in 1603 has been estimated only as just under one thousand individuals<sup>1</sup>, it appears at first sight that the total number of deaths in 1604, namely 442, represents some 45% of the population. Such a conclusion calls for comment, especially as only four members of the first and second twelves were amongst those who died, a relatively small proportion of their total numbers. Possibly, being better off, some of the councillors had left the town. Secondly, of course, as has already been observed, Stamford was extremely impoverished at this time. Because of the habits of the carrier flea, the plague usually struck most severely at the poor and ill-nourished, and the better fed less so. It seems likely that many of those who died may have been the very poverty stricken foreigners the corporation was trying to keep out of the town and were not, therefore, part of the permanent population. Nevertheless, the death roll was very great. This was the price Stamford had to pay for being on the main north to south route, a position which made it an easy prey to infection. The number of deaths must certainly have aggravated the financial difficulties of the town. Indeed a release was granted to the alderman and burgesses for £80 left unpaid out of £339 ls 4d

---

1. See pp. 169-192 above.

c.f. Rogers, This was their world, p. 16.



due to the king for fifteenths and tenths. This relief of tax was given because the town had "been much visited with sickness".<sup>1</sup>

"The plague of 1625 was a great national event" severely affecting London where "it stopped all trade in the City for a season and left great confusion and impoverishment behind it".<sup>2</sup> There is little concerning it, however, recorded in the Stamford hall book apart from the strengthening of the watch during "this dangerous time of visitation".<sup>3</sup> In spite of its own poverty, however, the corporation collected £15 5s 4d for the benefit of visited persons in other towns. Out of this money £5 was given to the town of Grantham and the remainder for "London or some other town as occasion is offered".<sup>4</sup> The parish registers confirm that on this occasion Stamford was not severely attacked by the plague, 69 people died compared with an average of 56 over the fifteen years

- 
1. CSP, Domestic Series, Vol. XIII, p. 202.
  2. Creighton, op. cit., p. 511.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 343 v.
  4. Ibid., p. 344.

from 1610 to 1624. The death roll in 1622, 1623 and 1624 was 65, 52 and 64 respectively and for 1626, 1627 and 1628, 83, 80 and 60. It is possible that the higher figures for 1626 and 1627 however were attributable to the plague. In 1630, when there was another attack of the plague in London, the Stamford corporation again decreed that the watch should be strengthened "in the time of the visitation".<sup>1</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this comment refers to Stamford itself or the country at large. The London plague of 1630 was a small affair although in the following year in Lincolnshire the town of Louth was severely affected.<sup>2</sup> In 1637 it was reported in the hall book that "the infectious sickness called the . . . plague . . . at this time diversely dispersed in many parts of this kingdom. . . doth put this town both in fear and danger".<sup>3</sup> Accordingly the watch was again strengthened.

In 1642 the plague certainly came to Stamford, it being reported in the hall book in July that some of the

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 359.
  2. Creighton, op. cit., p. 527.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 389.

houses were infected.<sup>1</sup>

Once again fears were expressed of an exodus from the town, causing a decline in trade. Indeed, the wording of the minutes expressing the concern of the corporation with regard to the flight from town, the shutting of windows and doors and its effect upon travellers is identical with that discussed above in relation to the 1604 attack and appears to have been copied ad verbatim from the earlier records. In 1642 it was agreed, however, that the punishment for those who did leave the town should be different and in effect less severe than in 1604. Offenders were to pay double the assessment rated upon other men remaining in the town.<sup>2</sup> This double assessment was to remain in force as long as the alderman thought fit. Nevertheless in August 1642, it was reported to the hall that "by reason of the visitation. . . .very many people are departed of the town".<sup>3</sup>

As a result the system of watch keeping - intended to keep stricken inhabitants in their own homes - was placed in jeopardy since many of those who fled were supposed to undertake such duties. It was agreed, therefore, that whenever townsmen were not

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 411.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 411v.



present in the town to perform the service of watch and ward, and had not arranged for someone else to undertake their duties, the alderman or his officers should arrange for a substitute to be provided. The costs so incurred were to be reclaimed from the fugitive, who if he refused to pay, was to be subjected to legal proceedings for their recovery.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it can be seen how during the period from 1559 to 1649 Stamford corporation's efforts to alleviate the decline of trade within the town were severely hampered by the visitation of the plague. The poverty of the town must have been very great. Indeed, in a letter to Secretary Conway, the Lord Keeper Lincoln refers to the "poor decayed town of Stamford"<sup>2</sup> confirming from personal experience that having lived in the neighbourhood he knew it to be "decayed and the inhabitants poor".

These observations had indeed been prompted by a petition to the king by the inhabitants of Stamford for exemption from the payment of fifteenths. In a letter, dated August 1624, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Conway commented -

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 411 v.

2. C.S.P., Domestic Series, James I, 1623-1625, Vol.CLXX, p. 317.

"The King says that if the petition. . .  
for exemption from payment of fifteenths  
be a new thing, he sees no cause to grant  
it; but if, as alleged, the town is in  
such a condition as procured for its release <sup>1</sup>  
in former times, he will continue it now".

Subsequently, the Chancellor spoke to the king, who gave a  
favourable answer.<sup>2</sup> The reference to an earlier

concession presumably relates to that of 1604 discussed  
above.<sup>3</sup> No doubt inflation had a considerable

bearing on the matter. It has already been noted in

chapter 5 <sup>4</sup> that an index relating to the price of a  
sample of industrial products, taken as 100 for the years  
1451-1475 had risen to 186 for the years 1551-1560. For

the decade 1571-1580 the index stood at 223.<sup>5</sup> The index

based on the price of a composite unit of foodstuffs is

even more revealing. During the decade from 1461 to 1470,

in which both the charter of incorporation was granted

(1461) and the first schedule of fines for the admission

to the freedom of the town entered in the hall book (1465)

---

1. S.C.P. Domestic Series, James I, 1623-1625m Vol CLXXI, p. 319.

2. Ibid., p. 343.

3. See pp. 308 and 309 above.

4. See p. 196 above.

5. See Appendix Table N, p. (31).

according to Table N in the Appendix,<sup>1</sup> this stood at 105, but by 1574 had risen to 341. In view of this high rate of inflation it seems surprising that there are no references in the hall book to all-round increases in fines between 1465 and 1574. In this respect it has been observed above<sup>2</sup> that in 1566/7<sup>3</sup> the fine for both tailors and shoemakers was 13s 4d. By comparison the amounts for 1465 were 6s 8d and 13s 4d respectively. This seems to indicate that although there may have been specific changes in respect of certain trades between 1462 and 1574, there was no overall increase prior to the major revision now under discussion. A number of questions are posed by the delay in carrying out a general review of the schedule of fines appertaining to the admission of freemen. Did the council deliberately hold down charges in order not to aggravate the poverty of those already resident in the town? Did this policy encourage strangers to enter the town in large numbers? Was the council forced finally to drastically increase charges, not only because of the effects of inflation but as is suggested above<sup>4</sup> to deter strangers coming to the town? The fine payable by mercers, drapers and vintners was set at £5, whereas in respect of the two former trades it had been assessed in 1465 at £1. Ironmongers were now required to pay £3 instead of 4s,

---

1. See Appendix, Table N, p. (31).

2. See p. 287 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 188.

4. See p. 288 above.



tailors 53s 4d instead of 6s 8d, slaters £1 instead of 4s, chapmen 13s 4d instead of 5s, labourers 4s instead of 2s.<sup>1</sup> These examples show also that the relative status of certain trades, as indicated by the amount of fines levied in respect of them, had changed. A further alteration in the schedule of fees for admission to the freedom was probably intended to deter casual workers.

A revision was made of the method by which annual payments, lower than those required to secure absolute freedom, could be made by tradesmen wishing to practise in the town. Now periodic payments had to be made monthly until enfranchisement was secured; for example 13s 4d per month in respect of mercers, drapers, vintners; 6s 8d in such trades as bakers, brewers and innkeepers; 3s 4d for skinner, carriers and fletchers; 2s for labourers.<sup>2</sup> It is of interest, however, that the monthly payments were not always in direct proportion to the fine required to secure absolute freedom. For example, although upholsterers, hosiers, saddlers, fullers and weavers were all required to pay 6s 8d monthly their respective fines to secure absolute

---

1. See Table P Appendix for full list, p. (33).

2. See Table P Appendix, p. (33).

freedom were £3, £2 13s 4d, £2, £1 6s 8d and £1. On the other hand shoemakers were required to pay 10s monthly or £2 for absolute freedom. For joiners and carvers the charges were 10s and £1 6s 8d respectively. Such high monthly payments in respect of these last mentioned trades were undoubtedly meant to severely restrict the numbers entering the town on a short term basis. For those wishing to remain, however, the fines payable for absolute freedom were less severe. By contrast mercers, drapers and vintners, as has been referred to above, could only become permanently enfranchised by paying a substantial fine of £5. Such a rule must have strengthened the relative status of this class of tradesman.

Other bye-laws made in 1574 concerning admission to the freedom of the town related to apprentices who had served their time. Whereas formerly they had been admitted to the freedom without charge they were now required to pay a tenth part of the charge levied upon foreigners.<sup>1</sup> This ruling does not seem to have been applied, however, to apprentices who were born in the borough. It will be recalled that in 1465 it was agreed that they should be admitted without payment of fine, except for fees of two pence each to the alderman's sergeant and common clerk.<sup>2</sup> Certainly there are numerous instances during the latter part of the period from 1558 to 1649 of native apprentices

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 206v.

2. See p. 102 above.

being admitted without charge. For example, in 1643, one John Butcher, a wheelwright, was admitted to Scot and Lot without having to pay a fine because he was "born free"<sup>1</sup> in the borough. In 1579 a partial relaxation of the stringent rules for admission to the freedom was made in respect of shoemakers. Their fine for securing freedom was reduced to 13s 4d whilst they were serving only as journeymen, the full fine of £2 became payable only if and when they set up shop on their own account.<sup>2</sup>

In July 1597, the corporation again considered the matter of fines payable for admission to the freedom of the town. Inflation was rampant. The index based on the price of a sample of industrial products had increased from 223 to 238 since the last revision of fines and from 341 to 530 in respect of the price of a composite unit of foodstuffs.<sup>3</sup> In the opinion of the council the fines agreed in 1574 were "for divers causes. . . too small";<sup>4</sup> a contemporary admission that the problem was complex. Accordingly, it was agreed to double the charges, a drastic enough remedy indicative of the urgency of the situation. No doubt one of the "divers causes" was the continued

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 413v.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

3. See Appendix, Table N, p. (31).

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 260.



need to keep out foreigners. Nevertheless, it seems to have been anticipated that as a consequence of the decision to raise charges a number of potential and possibly worthy freemen might have difficulty in paying their fines. In consequence it was agreed that an extended period of payment should be granted "as shall be thought meet by the alderman and comburgesses." <sup>1</sup>

No further major revision of the schedule of fines took place until 1617, by which time the industrial index referred to above had risen to 274 and the food index to 583. <sup>2</sup>

As will be seen from Table Q <sup>3</sup> in the appendix, however, this revision was more by way of reclassification of trades than a drastic increase in the fines levied. For example, at the top level of fines, that for mercers, drapers and vintners, remained at £10, the level fixed in 1597. In respect of other trades, however, the changes varied. At the lowest level labourers' fines were increased from 8s to £1. A few trades changed their relative position on the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p.  
 2. See Appendix Table N, p. (31).  
 3. See Appendix, Table Q, p. (34).

scales of fines; for example apothecaries and grocers from £4 to £10; bakers, brewers and innkeepers from £2 to £6 13s 4d. The fines for shoemakers on the other hand were increased from £4 to £5 only, whilst those for upholsterers actually went down from £6 to £5.

The measure taken by Stamford corporation to alleviate the depression within the town so far discussed may be regarded as preventive in that they were primarily intended to prevent a dilution of the work force within the town. It may be considered surprising, of course, that so many strangers wanted to come to a depressed area, and one is led to believe that possibly the poverty in the surrounding countryside was even more widespread than it was in Stamford itself. This, however, is an aspect of the situation that needs further research beyond the scope of this thesis and in consequence must be left unresolved in the context of this discussion.

The corporation of Stamford, however, did not confine itself to preventive measures. Several attempts were made to stimulate trade within the town.

---

Before considering these it is necessary to examine critically two schemes in which Sir William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, was concerned. In 1561, there was correspondence between the alderman and Sir William Cecil concerning the possibility of establishing a canvas manufacturing industry within the town to be initially on a "small scale".<sup>1</sup> It was reckoned that a mill for beating hemp would cost £50. It seems unlikely that much came of this proposal as it is not referred to in the hall book.

Sir William Cecil was also involved in 1567 in correspondence concerning the settling at Stamford of overseas immigrants. A number of "foreign artists in various branches of weaving" sought his permission to settle at Stamford and to occupy his house and 200 to 300 acres of land.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently in 1572 there was

- 
1. C.S.P., Domestic Series, Vol.XVII, 22.  
c.f. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 64.
  2. C.S.P., Domestic Series, Vol.XLIII, p.11.



correspondence between Sir William Cecil, created Lord Burghley in 1571, and Casper Vosburgh urging the former to solicit the queen for the granting of certain privileges to the Church at Stamford<sup>1</sup> and articles were drawn up for the regulation and endowment of a German church at Stamford.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Joan Thirsk has commented that the project bore fruit<sup>3</sup>, and that the scheme made headway.<sup>4</sup>

She poses a number of questions, namely did these people settle permanently and prosper? Did their families quickly become integrated with the native population and cease to be regarded as foreigners within a generation or two? Has any evidence survived in local surnames of this immigration and what lasting influence did the Dutch have upon the trades of the town? Certainly as Dr. Thirsk comments, they did not succeed in re-establishing a woollen cloth industry, since the council minutes show, as is discussed below, that another attempt was made to set up such an industry in 1584.<sup>4</sup> An examination of the admission to the rolls of freedom between 1567 and 1584, however, indicates that no one

---

1. C.S.P., Domestic Series, 1547-1580, Vol. XXXV., p. 76.

2. Ibid., Vol. LXXXVI, p. 5.

3. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 64.

4. Ibid., p. 65.

5. See p. 323 below.

with a Dutch or German name was enfranchised during that period.<sup>1</sup> Moreover there is not a single reference to the scheme anywhere in the hall book. It seems extremely unlikely, therefore, that the corporation was in any way involved in these proposals. Indeed, in view of the great efforts made by the council to prevent strangers from entering the town, as has been observed above, it is difficult to see how a scheme to accommodate overseas immigrants in the town would have met with approval unless it was to be a means by which the local poor could be provided with work. One ventures to suggest, therefore, that in spite of the correspondence which took place between the would-be immigrants and Lord Burghley, the scheme never really materialised, at least as far as the corporation and town of Stamford was concerned. Perhaps if any immigrants did come to Stamford they lived not in the borough of Stamford but at Burghley in Stamford Baron, helping to make tapestries and curtains for the great mansion built there by Lord Burghley between 1553 and 1589.<sup>2</sup> The

---

1. Unless anglicization had taken place.

2. B.W. Beckingsale, Burghley, 1967, Macmillan Press, p. 264.

building and furnishing of these great houses was in a sense "public works providing employment and stimulating industry".<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this is the significance of the terminology in the immigrants' petition to Sir William Cecil that they should live in his house.

In 1584, however, there are references in the hall book to a scheme which seems to have had the full approval of the corporation. During the aldermanry of Richard Shute, gentleman, the "profitable science and occupation of clothing! . . . was first set up"<sup>2</sup> in the town, the implication being that the industry was a new one. According to the hall book, the enterprise was of "great profit and commodity" to the town. The venture received the approval of Lord Burghley who helped finance it by a gift of 200 marks. Part of this sum of money was intended as recompense to the council for bearing expenditure amounting to £140 incurred in rebuilding the town bridge, which had fallen down. Lord Burghley seems to have been concerned for the well-being

---

1. Beckingsale, op. cit., p. 265.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 227.



of the town, since he also gave trees towards the making of looms and beams for the weavers. The admission to the freedom rolls show that 13 weavers were admitted for the period 1475-99, 8 for 1500-24, 9 for 1525-49, 10 for 1550-74, 7 for 1575-99, 7 for 1600-24 and 14 for 1625-49.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear, therefore, that the scheme outlined above, if it materialised, increased the numbers of weavers in the town, unless those that worked the looms were not actually admitted to the freedom. In general, as is discussed in Chapter XIII below, the numbers employed in Stamford in the clothing industry as a whole declined from 75 for the period 1475-99 to 37 in the period 1600-24, increasing again to 47 for the period 1625-49.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of unemployment in the town

---

1. See Appendix Tables F, p.(18) & S, p. (39).
2. Ibid.

was looked at anew by the corporation in 1631 following the receipt of orders from the Privy Council concerning the need to set the able poor to work. It was agreed in hall that every parish within the borough should be assessed by the parishioners, with the proviso that the alderman could amend such assessment as he thought fit. The funds so collected were to be expended on providing employment for the able-bodied poor. Those not able to work on account of infancy or age were to be maintained by a weekly collection. To prevent abuse of the system it was agreed that wardens should be appointed to keep out "all foreigners, rogues and stragglers" so that they would not beg within the town.<sup>1</sup> Any who disobeyed this instruction were to be

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 363v.

punished according to the law concerning vagabonds. Unfortunately, there is nothing recorded in the hall book concerning the nature of the tasks which were to be undertaken by the able bodied poor, or indeed whether the scheme met with success. Nevertheless, the scheme was more ambitious in intent than the mere dispensation of relief under the poor laws.

Some four years later, in November 1634, Stamford corporation agreed to assist a certain Peter Mather, a jerseyman, in the employment of thirty children at "combing, spinning and knitting of jersey".<sup>1</sup> He was given a loan of £10 from the corporation in order to purchase a supply of wool, the intention being that initially the scheme should last for one year. For the first six months Mather would instruct the children in return for their work, and for the second half of the year he would pay them as much as they would receive elsewhere. Thereafter he was to have preference over other employers if he could continue to find them work.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 377.



Moreover he was to receive a wage of £6 for the year, paid quarterly, providing that he gave the town sufficient security for the loan he had received. It was also agreed that after the initial six months had elapsed, he would take a further ten children on the same terms. Thereafter he was to accept ten further children at half yearly intervals until a period of seven years had elapsed. This training scheme inaugurated by Peter Mather seems to have been successful for a number of years for it is recorded in the hall book in November 1648 that it was ordered that Peter Mather should "continue the keeping of the spinning school for children and have the same allowance given him for the several parishes that he formerly had".<sup>1</sup>

In 1636/7 the corporation became closely involved with Henry, Earl of Stamford, in the establishment of a brewery within the town. The minutes in the hall book concerning this project are copious and significant in several ways: they not only indicate, for example the corporation's eagerness to acquire additional

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 430v.

funds to provide employment for the poor, but also an illustration of the establishment of a trade monopoly.

To fully appreciate the circumstances which led to the involvement of the corporation with the Earl of Stamford in this scheme it is necessary to consider first the case of William Salter, one of the comburgesses and justices of the peace in Stamford, and former alderman in 1602, 1604, and 1618. In 1632, this councillor was ordered to appear before the Lords of the Privy Council for opposing the execution of the orders and directions of the king and the board "touching the courses to be held for prevention of the late dearth and for the relief of the poor and otherwise".<sup>1</sup> He was committed to the Fleet prison and sequestered from his public offices pending a further order of the board. Salter, described as a gentlemen on his admission to the freedom in 1601 and as an attorney by Butcher<sup>2</sup>, was by 1632 in the brewing trade. It transpired

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 366.

2. Butcher, op. cit., p. 28.

that he "did usually sell his ale and beer above the rates and prices assessed and proclaimed by the alderman of Stamford".<sup>1</sup> The Privy Council referred the matter to the Earl of Exeter who, upon the release of Salter from prison, directed that he should be bound to the king by recognizance of £200 to obey the rules laid down by the alderman with regard to rates and prices of beer. It is perhaps a measure of the influence of the Cecils in the town that Salter's promise of good behaviour had to be made to the Earl of Exeter and not to the corporation. It is also of interest that the conditions of recognizance were assigned by a county justice of assize, Sir Richard Hutton, bearing in mind the terms of the sixth clause of the charter of incorporation.<sup>2</sup> However, it would appear that in spite of this pledge, Salter continued to sell his drink "at excessive high prices above the rates, assessed and proclaimed by the Alderman . . . to the greater oppression of the poorer sort and of others his Majesty's liege people".<sup>3</sup> In

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 366.

2. See pp 57-58 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 366 v.



consequence he was again committed to Fleet Prison by the Privy Council, which decided not to restore him to the public offices from which he had been suspended. The alderman and comburgesses were ordered to dismiss Salter formally from office, which they did in May 1632.<sup>1</sup>

The arraignment of Salter, however, had much wider implications. The privy council included in its order to Stamford corporation concerning Salter a general observation upon the brewers of Stamford -

"It. . . appeared to their Lordships that not only the said Salter but also divers other common brewers in or near Stamford do usually sell or utter their drink within the said. . . town in tubs, pails or other ungauged vessels on purpose to evade the law." 2

It was, therefore, ordered by the Privy Council that not only Salter but also "all other common brewers and other persons whatsoever that now do or hereafter utter or sell any ale or beer" in the town or liberties of Stamford should thenceforth be bound in

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 365v.

2. Ibid., p. 366.

recognizance of £100 each to the king not to charge higher prices than those assessed by the alderman.<sup>1</sup>

To prevent brewers compensating themselves for the lower price by reducing the quality of their products, it was further ordered by the Privy Council that all beer and ale should be "well boiled and well brewed of wholesome grain and of sufficient strength according to the price of corn in the market as it ought to be".<sup>2</sup>

The alderman and comburgesses were charged with making the order effective and required to return to the king annually any recognizance which had been forfeited so that necessary legal proceedings could be instituted against the offenders.

At this point, it might be considered that the orders from the Privy Council concerning Salter and other brewers in Stamford are not particularly relevant to the general topics under discussion in this chapter. However, during the same month as the public disgrace of Salter, Charles I sealed a letter, dated 6th May 1632

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 365v.  
 2. Ibid.

addressed to the corporation. It may be significant that this was not referred to in the hall book until a meeting of the hall held in January 1633/34 some twenty months after it was written.<sup>1</sup> The letter inter alia stated -

"...the Earl of Stamford . . .proposes to build a common brewhouse for the service of the town, whereby our loving subjects may be supplied with good and healthsome drink at easy rates and the multitude of tippling brewers may be lessened by which many people are diverted from honest labour".<sup>2</sup>

There is an indication that the Earl of Stamford may have had doubts concerning the corporation's willingness to support his proposals and had solicited the king's help in furthering them. The royal letter continues -

"...we, therefore, for the advancement of this work, have thought fit hereby to recommend it to your care and good judgement. . " <sup>3</sup>

Indeed the king instructed that if opposition was encountered to the scheme the corporation was to set down the reasons of the objections for consideration by the king's nominee. This was to ensure "that frivolous pretentions" did not hinder "real good".<sup>4</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 373v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.



The recent public humiliation of William Salter and the threats of crushing penalties of £100 for infringing the Privy Council's orders with regard to the strength of beer must have weighed heavily with those who might wish to challenge the Earl of Stamford's proposals. It is perhaps worthy of note that the king's letter is recorded in the hall book without comment.

Nothing further seems to have taken place until April 1636 when it was reported to the corporation that the king had granted a warrant to the Earl of Stamford "for the erecting of a common brewhouse".<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, the Earl offered to the council the sum of £60 out of the profit if they would support his proposals. It was decided, therefore, by the full council that the alderman and comburgesses should be authorised to negotiate an agreement with the Earl on behalf of the corporation. At this same meeting the Earl of Stamford was admitted to the freedom of the town. No fine is mentioned in the hall book although it is recorded that the Earl gave the officers ten shillings, and a like amount to both the second

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 381.

twelve "to drink" and the bell-ringers.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps not insignificant that on the same occasion David Cecil, the Earl of Exeter's son, was also admitted to the freedom, though in his case he gave 6s 8d to each of the groups referred to above.

The hall book records in detail the draft agreement, dated 30th April 1636, proposed by the corporation, and also the corporation's objections to comparatively minor details of the Earl of Stamford's alternative suggestions. The final draft<sup>2</sup> was approved by the corporation in the following month. The Earl of Stamford undertook to pay the corporation £62 per annum for a term of 31 years in return for the specific privileges discussed below. Fifty-two pounds of this was to be paid in weekly instalments of one pound each Saturday "towards the providing of a stock to set the poor on work". Unfortunately, it is not possible to ascertain what type of work the council proposed. Certainly in their own draft of the agreement the council had suggested the phraseology "towards the erection and maintenance of a workhouse for better

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 381.

2. Ibid., p. 383.

relief of the poorer sort of people or for some other charitable use for. . the relief and benefit of the said poor."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it would appear that at one time the council were under the impression that the Earl of Stamford had agreed to its suggestion and it is interesting to speculate why it was not eventually adopted.

In complete contrast, the remaining £10 of the Earl's annual payment was to be added yearly within a fortnight of the feast of St. Michael (September 29th) to other monies in the possession of the corporation to enable it to provide "a piece of plate of gold or silver" annually for the 31 years of the agreement as a "prize for the horserace in or near Stamford".<sup>2</sup> The total sum to be provided by the corporation each year for this purpose was fixed at twenty pounds. The minutes of the council indicate that they had sought without success to limit their annual contribution to £6, on the grounds that they could not afford more. Presumably, however, the corporation gave their eventual

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 382v.

2. Ibid.



support to the Earl's proposal in the hope that the horse race would help to stimulate the flagging trade of the borough.

In return for the payment of £62, the corporation granted to the Earl of Stamford a complete monopoly in brewing and undertook not to license "any innkeeper or victualler to sell . . . any ale or beer by retail within the . . . town and liberties thereof" unless it had been supplied by the Earl's brewers, or other brewers in Stamford, nominated by him.<sup>1</sup> All drink manufactured was to be "wholesome" and of sufficient strength according to the statutes of the realm or to the "use and custom of the City of London".<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, the council had wanted the references to the City of London omitted but the Earl would not agree. The corporation had also asked without success for the inclusion of a clause stipulating that all concerned would observe "the rates and prices of ale and beer to be limited by the . . . alderman".

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 381v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 382v.

Presumably, as a further encouragement to the corporation to accept his proposals, the Earl also agreed, at the expiration of the 31 year term, "to do his best endeavour to procure a grant by letters patent" whereby the corporation itself could succeed to his monopoly of brewing for a further period of 31 years.<sup>1</sup> Finally the Earl agreed that as far as he was able he would not allow the brewers under his control to make malt either in Stamford itself, or within ten miles thereof.

In February 1636/7 the corporation sent ~~to the king~~ certificate of the agreement between itself and the Earl of Stamford. Therein it is stated by the corporation inter alia that the Earl had entered "into certain articles that his servants employed in the . . . brewhouses shall be liable to the orders and constitution of our corporation".<sup>2</sup> This statement presents a certain difficulty in that the clause requiring the observance of bye-laws was not included in the formal agreement. Whether this

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1462 - 1657, p. 383v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 387.

fact had been overlooked, or a subsequent agreement entered into by the parties concerned it is impossible to say. The granting of the brewing monopoly to the Earl of Stamford is of further interest in that the brewing industry throughout the realm came under scrutiny in 1637.

It is difficult to know whether the corporation's agreement granting a monopoly to the Earl of Stamford succeeded in its intention of setting the poor on work. Certainly the whole saga records how much influence both the Earls of Exeter and Stamford had within the town. Moreover, it seems possible that a grave injustice might have been rendered to William Salter, who seems to have paid a heavy price for disregarding authority. Indeed, some twelve years later at a meeting of the hall held in October 1644,<sup>1</sup> the order made on 21st May 1632 for displacing him from his public offices was declared "void and of none effect".<sup>2</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 416.

2. Ibid.



Finally, in this discourse on the council's efforts to stimulate trade and provide work for the poor, it is necessary to examine its decisions with regard to the river Welland. In the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the burgesses of Stamford were clearly of the opinion that the former prosperity of the town owed much to the Welland at one time being navigable. This is evident from a petition to Queen Elizabeth in which the council drew attention to the "pitiful sight of the ruins, decays and remains" in the town.<sup>1</sup> In its view the wealth of the former merchants of Stamford "began, grew and increased by reason of an ancient river named Welland".<sup>2</sup> Thus, it sought from the queen an act of parliament to make the river "navigable, as before times it hath been"<sup>3</sup>. Though beyond the scope of this thesis to do so in depth, it is necessary to question the generally accepted assumption that the Welland was at one time open for traffic from Stamford to the sea.<sup>4</sup> The Welland is 62 feet above sea level

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., II, p. 535.

2. Ibid. 3. Ibid.

4. See A. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 70.

5. A.J. Hales, ex.inf., Welland & Nene River Authority.

at Stamford and any navigation would have been impossible upstream from the tidal reaches without locks and weirs. Is there any evidence either documentary or visual that these existed? Certainly the minutes of meetings of the Commissioners of sewers in the Parts of Holland, held on the 6th July, 1552,<sup>1</sup> indicate that at that time there was a dam<sup>2</sup> at Deeping and two locks at Crowland, but the latter seem to have led to a "trench",<sup>3</sup> probably the disused canal now known as Crowland lake. Apart from these works there is virtually no evidence available of the existence of the kind of engineering works that would be necessary for a boat to reach Stamford prior to the period now under discussion. The river itself, in 1552, was obviously in a much neglected state as not for a "long time"<sup>4</sup> had it been "roded, cleansed and scoured, dyked and banked"<sup>5</sup> and in consequence was obstructed by "cloughs, trees, roots, shelves, sand beds hills and banks".<sup>6</sup> By Queen Elizabeth's reign, according to the petition

- 
1. A.M. Kirkus, The Records of the Commissioners of Sewers in the Parts of Holland, 1547-1603, 1959, p. 33
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., p. 35.
  4. Ibid., p. 33.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Ibid., p. 34.

discussed above, the river had also been diverted "into divers streams for the erection of six or seven water mills. . . between Stamford and Deeping".<sup>1</sup> It seems unlikely that such a river was formerly ever in such good order that water traffic could pass easily between Stamford and the coast even at the height of the town's prosperity. Whether or not the council's supposition concerning the past had little substance, it was successful in 1571 in securing its desired act of parliament "for making the river Welland navigable from Stamford to the sea".<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, there are no references to the passing of the act in the hall book. Indeed the river is not mentioned until 2nd April 1619, when it was agreed by the hall that the alderman, attended by the sergeant, should go to London "to get the laws drawn concerning. . . [the] navigable passage".<sup>3</sup>

It would appear from a subsequent grant of James I, made in 1620<sup>4</sup>, that the purpose of this visit, or possibly a similar but unrecorded one,

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., p. 536.

2. Ibid., p. 535

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 329.

4. See below p. 347 below.



was to inform the king of difficulties encountered in the implementation of the act of Queen Elizabeth. In consequence the inhabitants of Stamford, and of neighbouring areas, instead of receiving great benefit from the act had "reaped none at all"<sup>1</sup> and the town was still "greatly decayed".<sup>2</sup> Upon the petition of the alderman and burgesses, king's commissioners were appointed to survey the river Welland with a view to it being made navigable from Stamford to the sea either in its "ancient course"<sup>3</sup> or else in a "new cut".<sup>4</sup>

Following the completion of their survey, the commissioners reported that in their view the best and least expensive scheme would be by making a new cut from near the town to Market Deeping. A reference in the commissioners report to a "trial already made by skilful men"<sup>5</sup> seems to

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., II, p. 537.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 538.

4. Ibid., p. 539.

5. Ibid.

indicate that at least preliminary work had been undertaken following the passing of the Elizabethan act of 1571. This reference to earlier works could be construed as making the precise meaning of the following recommendation by the commissioners somewhat obscure -

" the said cut, if it might be enlarged and made of sufficient breadth and depth as it evidently appears it may, with certain locks and sluices to be therein set, made and maintained and kept, will make the said river again navigable and passage for boats to ten tons, or more if need be, to the exceeding and inestimable benefit of the said town and country aforesaid, and yet without grievance to the owners and hereditary possessors of the mills <sup>1</sup> standing upon the said old river."

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., pp. 539, 540.

It might be considered that the implication of the above extract is that the river had been made navigable during Elizabeth's reign. This seems highly improbable, firstly because the petition to King James by the alderman and burgesses, as has been noted above,<sup>1</sup> states that the act of 1571 had brought no benefits; secondly because there are no references at all in the hall book to expenditure having been incurred on the river between 1571 and 1620.

Indeed, it is surprising that the 'trial' referred to above receives no mention in the council minutes. The reference to the river being "again"<sup>2</sup> navigable is probably only a repetition of the generally accepted but unsubstantiated view of the corporation referred to above.<sup>3</sup>

The king's commissioners held general sessions on sewers at Stamford on 26th August and 10th September 1619.<sup>4</sup> At these, it was decreed that under the 1571 Act of Elizabeth, it "should and might be lawful"<sup>5</sup> for the alderman and burgesses "to make a river or new cut of such breadth and depth as to them should seem

- 
1. See p. 342 above.
  2. Harrod, op cit., p. 539.
  3. See p. 339 above.
  4. Harrod, op. cit., p. 540.
  5. Ibid.



fit for the passage of boats. . ."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, at the sessions the precise details of the commissioners' views concerning the best course for the new cut were announced.

The commisioners had been informed by skilled contractors, that the estimated cost for the project was two thousand pounds "at the least".<sup>2</sup> This sum was to be found by the alderman and burgesses "with the assistance of some other good friends, benefactors, and well wishes to the said work".<sup>3</sup> In consequence the commissioners enacted that the corporation should receive a toll "at every lock. . .according to the burden of the said vessels".<sup>4</sup>

Work appears to have begun in earnest within a few weeks of the commissioners report, since at a meeting of the hall held on the 3rd April 1620 it was reported that good progress had already been made in the navigable passage. Unfortunately, however, it was also reported that money was not coming in according

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., p. 540  
 2. Ibid., p. 542. p. 542.  
 3. Ibid., p. 543.  
 4. Ibid.

to expectation. Since a good number of workmen had been engaged, it was agreed to borrow £200 so that they should not "give over labour for want of money",<sup>1</sup>

The loan was to be in the name of certain freemen, who were permitted to use the town lands as security, until such time as the loan was repaid "either by benevolence or by any other ways or means".<sup>2</sup>

The decision to borrow the money was not unanimous, but was carried with a substantial majority, 31 in favour, 4 against.

In the following month, collectors were appointed to receive money from those who had promised contributions to the "making of the new river".<sup>3</sup>

By now, however, the need for more and more money was being felt.

At a hall held on the 24th October it was agreed that those who had borrowed money, or arranged to purchase land towards the making of the new river on behalf of the corporation should be secured by the town's lands.<sup>4</sup>

Particular reference is made in the minutes

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 329v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 330v.

of the hall to £100 borrowed from Mr. John Bourne and £40 from Lady Bucke's money, and to land purchased from the Earls of Rutland and Exeter in "Stamford, Uffington, Tallington and the three Deepings".<sup>1</sup> It was proposed that the debts and purchase monies should be satisfied by payments of £80 per year, paid in equal half-yearly instalments out of the town's rents beginning on the next lady day.

By now, a grant from King James I, dated 17th June 1620, had been made confirming the decisions of the Commissioners of Sewers. This grant also fixed the levy to be charged at every lock at "three pence for and upon the ton" and pro-rata.<sup>2</sup> The crown, however, was to have no part in the financial arrangements. The corporation were also empowered to build "wharfs, quays and cranes for landing, loading and unloading of any wares, goods, commodities and merchandises" which were to be carried on the river, and to charge "moderate" sums for using the same.<sup>3</sup> Boats, for which appropriate dues

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 33lv.
  2. Harrod, op. cit., p. 545.
  3. Ibid.



for locks and loading or unloading had not been paid would be denied passage by the corporation until payment had been made. Finally, all fishing rights in the new river were granted to the corporation.

The corporation, however, was a long way from the impounding of craft for non-payment of dues. It was finding itself in ever increasing difficulties. Mr. Prichard, secretary to the Earl of Rutland, and "divers others" had caused a subpoena to be served on Thomas Grason, the alderman, and William Salter, a comburgess, amongst others.<sup>1</sup> The charge related to the cutting of ground by the defendants for the new river, the aggrieved parties "fearing that they should not be paid for the same". It was, therefore, agreed that the suit should be defended at the "charge of the common purse". No doubt in consequence of these further difficulties the council found itself unable to abide by its original decision, made on the 24th October 1620 to pay £40 half yearly out of the town rents towards the settlement of debts for money borrowed or ground purchased. It was, therefore, decided

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 332v.  
(Reported to meeting of the Hall held on the 20th January 1620/1).

to use the £40 due on the next Lady Day to pay townsmen where debts were due and to borrow an equivalent sum for a further six months. It also appeared that many of those who had promised money towards the making of the new river would not pay. It was, therefore, decided that if payment was not made on demand the defaulters would be sued.<sup>1</sup> Yet more legal proceedings were to follow. In May 1622,<sup>2</sup> it was reported to the hall that Lord Nowell had commenced action against the corporation in respect of £10 worth of timber delivered by him to one, John Bassett, a carpenter upon the instructions of William Salter, one of the "expeditors" appointed for the new river. This claim the corporation agreed to defend.

The corporation appear to have subscribed to a "commission. . . towards the raising of money for the perfecting of the. . . new river "<sup>3</sup>. This is apparent from a minute, dated 5th August 1623, in which it was recorded that the chamberlain of the town had insufficient funds to renew it. However, during the debate in the hall on the matter, Sir Robert Brown, who was present, offered to lend money to enable the commission to be renewed, the council undertaking to repay him when money came to their hands.<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious that the council had given insufficient consideration to the raising of the necessary finance for the cutting of the new

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 332v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 335.  
 3. Ibid., p. 338v.  
 4. Ibid.



channel to Market Deeping. As has been observed above the estimated cost was £2,000 at least, and the money at the council's disposal was far short of this amount. During 1624, the corporation became more and more involved in complicated financial arrangements in order to satisfy its creditors. It is worth while considering such arrangements in detail since they throw much light upon the difficulties faced by the corporation in attempting to finance the river project. The corporation found itself faced with a demand for the return of the £60, which it had borrowed from John Wingfield. In consequence, the alderman, together with five of the first twelve and six of the second twelve, agreed to borrow £60 at 7% per annum from Peter Fulwood, another member of the first twelve. This loan, together with accrued interest, was to be repaid after a year out of the town's revenues.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1624,<sup>2</sup> the council were faced with repaying a further sum of £60, with interest at 10%, to John Bourne who had originally lent £100 in 1620. Peter

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 342.

2. Ibid., p. 342v.



Fulwood again offered to help and his proposals were accepted by the council. He would lend 100 marks at 8% for a year. There was a promise that the interest would be given "to some charitable use for the common good of the corporation" and a hint that even the capital sum itself might be given also.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it was necessary for four comburgesses and eight capital burgesses, who were "not already bound for the town's debts" to bind themselves to Mr. Peter Fulwood for a year, at the end of which he was to be repaid the capital and interest out of town revenues.

It may be presumed, however, that the councillors were beginning to have doubts concerning the wisdom of the corporation itself continuing the project. In June 1625 a new proposal was put forward. It was agreed that the river should be leased to a Mr. Captaine Gason for 26 years providing he undertook to complete the work by midsummer 1627.<sup>2</sup> Should the town desire to resume control of the river on completion they were to have the option to repurchase the lease for

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 342v.

2. Ibid., p. 343.

the sum of £1,400. This figure, when compared with the borrowed monies referred to above, and the original estimate of £2,000, tends to suggest that a very great deal of work still needed to be carried out. Nothing appears to have come of this proposal. The hall book shows, however, that the seeking of one loan to repay another was a common occurrence. For example, in 1627 a sum of £66 13s 4d<sup>1</sup> was borrowed to repay Peter Fulwood, referred to above. Fortunately a number of the comburgesses were prepared to make interest free loans to the corporation, as for example Thomas Jackson, a comburgess who lent £60 for four months in 1628 out of his "exceeding love and favour he beareth to the town"<sup>2</sup>, though by the October<sup>3</sup> the council were seeking to borrow at interest to repay him.

It seems likely that by the 1630s all work on the river had stopped, though there is nothing in the hall book to indicate exactly what happened. In October 1633 the council passed a resolution to the effect that "a commission

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 349.
  2. Ibid., p. 348v.
  3. Ibid., p. 352

shall be sued out for the making of the river of Welland navigable from Stamford to the sea at the town's charge".<sup>1</sup> It is not clear precisely what this resolution entailed, but whatever was intended, it seems unlikely that anything positive was done. Thus in July 1636, David Cecil offered to make the river navigable if the corporation would "freely resign all their interest in the said river to him".<sup>2</sup> The council "did altogether dislike" this proposal and put forward another proposition. If David Cecil would make the river navigable at his own expense they would grant him a lease for 61 years, only reserving the right of every freeman of Stamford to use the river with their own vessels, whether empty or laden, free of toll apart from a fixed payment to Cecil of twelve pence per journey. Not surprisingly, perhaps, nothing came of this proposal; it could scarcely have been considered as providing an adequate return on the thousand or more pounds that Cecil would need to have invested.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 373.

2. Ibid., p. 384.



In 1637 a further attempt was made to reach agreement over the river, this time with Symon Hill.<sup>1</sup> It was proposed by the corporation that in consideration for making the river navigable, he should have a lease of all the profits for 41 years at a nominal rent of one shilling per year. Symon Hill, however, asked for a longer lease and it was agreed that the alderman should be empowered to negotiate a term acceptable to Mr. Hill. This proposal also fell through. In the April of the following year, the alderman reported to the hall, that he had had discussions with Mr. Sands concerning the latter making the river navigable.<sup>2</sup> It transpired at the same meeting from one of the comburgesses, Edward Camock, that Simon Hill, who had already agreed upon terms concerning the river with the council, now wished to alter them.<sup>3</sup> It was, therefore, decided that no answer would be given to Hill's alternative suggestions until the alderman had had further discussions with Sands. In the event negotiation with both Sands and Hill broke down. All hope of making the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 388v.

2. Ibid., p. 391v.

3. Ibid.

river navigable in the short term was by now presumably abandoned, since no further references are made to the project in the hall book until 1641.<sup>1</sup> In that year, along with other pleas<sup>2</sup>, it was decided to petition parliament "to make our river navigable".<sup>3</sup> By the end of the period now under discussion no further proposal had been made. In February 1650/1 it was reported to the hall that a petition had been presented to parliament, one of the clauses of which was for "the making of the river navigable".<sup>4</sup> A Mr. Jeremy Cole was authorised to go to London to solicit the case of the corporation. At a hall held in February of the following year, the Alderman and Cole went to London to have discussions primarily about the regulation of Brown's Hospital, but also concerning "the discovery of delinquents estates towards making the river navigable".<sup>5</sup> This plea for the sequestered royalist estates to be used for the benefit of the corporation is of considerable interest in itself. It is in a sense the corollary of the dismissal of 14 (possibly 17) councillors at the order of parliament in 1647.<sup>6</sup> In the event, parliament

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406v.
  2. See pp. 302, 355 above, 662 below.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406v.
  4. Ibid., p. 436v.
  5. Ibid., p. 438v.
  6. See p. 390 below.

does not appear to have acceded to the corporation's request. As a result nothing further was done until after the Restoration.

What conclusions can be drawn, therefore, from the corporation's abortive efforts to make the river Welland navigable? First, that the project was very protracted; the events discussed above occupied a period of eighty years, and, as is noted below<sup>1</sup> in Section III of this thesis, success was not finally achieved until nearly another twenty years had passed. Secondly, the entire scheme may have been inspired by a myth, namely that the former prosperity of the town was due to the navigability of the river, rather than to its position on one of the principal fords on the north-south route.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, work seems to have been put in hand without adequate financial provision having been made. In a sense, the project was "an act of faith" a gamble, which it was hoped would bring prosperity to a decayed town. During the period now under discussion, however, it only aggravated the position by overtaxing the already strained funds of the corporation.

---

1. See pp. 692-701 below.

2. See p. 8 above



Thus, it can be seen that the corporation's struggle to promote trade and combat poverty from 1559 to 1649 was continuous throughout the period. Its task was difficult for the borough was much depressed. For a century or more the reports on the condition of the town carried the same message. There was "ruin and decay"<sup>1</sup> and the town was of "poor estate" in 1567<sup>2</sup>, a "pitiful sight of . . . ruins, decays and remains"<sup>3</sup> in 1571. In 1624 it was still "the poor decayed town of Stamford".<sup>4</sup> How to cope with the "divers and poor people"<sup>5</sup> within the town was a constant concern. Exacerbating the problem of poverty and in part causing it were two national factors, inflation and the plague. With regard to inflation the price of a composite unit of foodstuffs (the price of which was directly relevant to the condition of the poor) rose from 315 at the beginning of the period, 1559-1649, to 723 at the end. With regard to the plague there were attacks in Stamford in 1574, 1580, 1604, 1642 and possibly 1625, 1630 and 1637. The most severe of these were the attacks in 1604 and 1642.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 153      See pp. 82-84 above.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190.      See p. 295 above.
  3. Harrod, op. cit., II, p. 535.      See p. 339 above.
  4. C.S.P., Domestic Series, James I, 1623-1625, Vol. CLxx, p. 317.
  5. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190v.

It has been seen that the council's remedy for dealing with the situation was threefold. To prevent the dilution of labour; to provide more work and to improve the communications of the town by opening up the river to navigation.

To prevent the dilution of labour numerous bye-laws were issued throughout the period all with the aim of keep out foreigners , a power which the council would have liked specifically confirmed in a further charter. To provide more work the council encouraged a number of schemes some of which apparently never materialised but one in particular, the spinning school seems to have enjoyed a measure of success. In its anxiety to provide funds "to set the poor on work"<sup>1</sup>, in one case granting a monopoly in brewing to the Earl of Stamford, the council might be considered to have acted unethically. Finally, the bid to make the river navigable proved to be, at least during the period under discussion, an unmitigated disaster which only compounded the difficulties of the council. As will be seen in Section III, however, better times were to come after the Restoration.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 387.

Chapter VIIIThe relationship of the corporation with  
the county, the aristocracy, Crown and  
parliament

The importance attached by the burgesses of Stamford to the privileges granted in the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 and the letters patent of 1481 has been discussed in Chapter I above.<sup>1</sup> It has also been observed in Chapter VI how dissatisfaction with "divers. . .inconveniences and ambiguities"<sup>2</sup> led to the granting of further letters patent in 1593 by Queen Elizabeth and subsequently in 1605 by James I. No doubt the burgesses felt that the four principal charters referred to above would be a perpetual guarantee that all their privileges were inviolate, but this was not to be so.

It will be recalled that several of the privileges granted by the crown to the burgesses of Stamford in the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 were concerned with the latter's relationship with the county system for the administration of justice. Thus, the thirteenth clause of the charter decreed that the alderman and burgesses

---

1. See pp.34-76 above.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 238, 239. See pp.234-239 above.



should not be impanelled upon any assizes or juries which were to be held outside the town and were touching matters not relating to the town.<sup>1</sup> This was a valued right and one which the corporation was called upon to defend in 1615. In that year, one of the comburgesses, Robert Fawcett, gentleman and alderman, was amerced for not appearing to serve on a jury at Lincoln. The alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses, sitting in hall on the 28th September 1615 agreed that should he be distrained for not paying the amercement, the corporation would plead the town charter in his defence. Moreover any costs that fell upon the defendant on account of his refusal to pay would be reimbursed out of the town stock.<sup>2</sup>

It appears likely that this stand taken by the corporation was brought to the notice of the king's ministers in London. Certainly a quo warranto was served upon the alderman and burgesses of Stamford to make a personal appearance at the king's bench at Westminster on the first day of the Easter Law Term in

---

1. C.C.R., Vol. VI, p. 167., S.C.R. The Charter Book, p. 13.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 319.

1616.<sup>1</sup> Here they were to "make answer. . .by what right" they used "divers privileges within. . . their said borough". Considerable apprehension seems to have been caused by this royal command. This is evident from the decision of the council not merely to pay the cost of answering the quo warranto from the town stock as might be expected, but also to make provision "if it chance that any fine. . .be imposed . . . for any breach of our charter".<sup>2</sup>

It is not apparent from the hall book what the outcome of the answering of the quo warranto was. Presumably after the payment of the appropriate fees the matter was closed in so far as the crown was concerned. However, whether or not the dispute with Lincoln and the serving of the quo warranto were directly connected, the former continued. It was reported at a meeting of the hall held on the 23rd October 1617<sup>3</sup> that "divers of the free burgesses" had been summoned to appear on juries at Lincoln. It

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 321.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 324v.

was considered that this was not only "a great vexation and incumbrance" to existing inhabitants but would be also to their successors in the future. It was, therefore, decided to employ learned counsel at the corporation's expense to free the burgesses of Stamford from these duties by pleading the privileges granted in the charter. Unfortunately, it is not clear what the result of the proposed representation was. It can only be assumed by the absence of further references to the dispute in the hall book that the matter was eventually resolved.

It was not only from the County of Lincoln, however, that a threat to the liberties of the borough came. In September 1622 the corporation became concerned about a proposal that the Clerk of the Market of the king's household should undertake his offices within the town.<sup>1</sup> It will be recalled, however, that the eighth clause of the charter of incorporation 1461/2 specifically stated

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 336.



that this royal officer should not "enter or sit within the town", exercise his office there or to "intermeddle" therein.<sup>1</sup> In consequence, the council agreed that although the writ of the clerk of the market was lawful in the county at large it did not extend to Stamford itself. Moreover, in the council's view the office of clerk of the market in Stamford was vested in the alderman, this latter contention resting upon the sixth clause of the 1593 Letters Patent.<sup>2</sup> The council, therefore, agreed that should the clerk of the king's household persist in his attempts to execute his office within the town, the alderman should forbid him to do so and should hinder him as much as possible. If as a result of this stand by the council, legal proceedings were instituted against the alderman, the corporation would bear the cost from the common purse.<sup>3</sup> The action taken by the council in these matters is an indication that the legal powers vested in the corporation and discussed in Chapters I and III above were not only

- 
1. C.C.R., Vol. VI, 1427-1516, p. 166. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 8. See p.59 above.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 244. See p.242 above.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 336.

valued but needed to be defended. The granting of a charter in itself was not an absolute barrier against infringements of the burgesses' privileges.

The dispute between the corporation and the crown concerning the town charters seems to have simmered for several years. In a debate at a meeting of the hall held in October 1628<sup>1</sup> Henry Rastell, one of the comburgesses, expressed the opinion that the Attorney General would not be pleased to let the charter continue as it was. He was speaking in support of a motion of one of his fellow comburgesses, Richard Wolfe, who recommended that the existing charter should "be renewed and all former charters confirmed and no further".<sup>2</sup> An amendment proposed by another comburgess, Vincent Hall, to the effect that the charter should "be renewed with such additions as may be thought for the good of the town by the advice of learned counsel"<sup>3</sup> was, however, carried; seven comburgesses voting in favour of the original proposals and the alderman, three comburgesses and nine capital burgesses in favour

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 352.

2. Ibid., p. 352v.

of the amendment. At the same hall, the council authorised one of their number, Henry Rastell, to search the town roll and "other ancient records" during Michelmas in order to ascertain at the expense of the town the ancient privileges thereof.<sup>1</sup>

In the following month, November 1628, Thomas Watson and Richard Langton, a comburgess and burgess respectively, were authorised to go to London with a Letter of Attorney "to make answer for the town to such things as shall be, on his majesty's behalf, objected against the said town by his majesty's attorney general",<sup>2</sup> possibly by way of a further quo warranto. Their visit did not settle matters, however. Thus in January 1628/9 it was agreed by a majority of capital burgesses that the differences arising from the corporation's proposals to renew the charter, should be referred to a hearing to be held by Sir Guy Palmer and John Balguye Esquire. In turn, the latter were to report to William Earl of Exeter who apparently had written to the council on the matter.<sup>3</sup> Later in the same month the council agreed that application for renewal of the charter should be made immediately and if granted

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 325v.

2. Ibid., p. 352v.

3. Ibid.



the title of alderman and comburgesses altered to mayor and aldermen.<sup>1</sup> Further the king was to be petitioned to grant powers for the taking of Statutes Merchants similar to those granted to Newark and other neighbouring corporations. This is a reference to one of the clauses of the charter granted to Newark in 1629 relating to the recognizance of debts according to Statutes Merchant.<sup>2</sup> Such a clause was subsequently included in letters patent granted to Grantham in 1631.<sup>3</sup>

The work entailed in preparation for the renewal of the charter seems to have fallen in part at least on Richard Stace, who, on account of "his special favour to the town" in this respect, was promised, on January 26th 1628/29 the freedom of the town whenever he wished to receive it.<sup>4</sup> This public recognition of service to the town by the granting of the freedom is of interest in that it may be regarded as a fore-runner of the honorary freedoms of the present day.

On May 2nd, 1629<sup>5</sup> it was again resolved that the charter should be renewed, together with confirmation of all former grants and entitlements. Henry Rastell,

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 353.
  2. Weinbaum, op. cit., pp. 90, 91. I.E.B.
  3. Martin, op. cit., p. 153.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 353.
  5. Ibid., p. 355.

one of the comburgesses, was authorised to solicit the renewal by virtue of a Letter of Attorney under the town seal dated the preceding 31st January. However, later the same month, on May 14th, the council had second thoughts on the matter. It was decided that the quo warranto, which was depending at that time, should, if possible, be stayed. If this proved impossible then a defence should be pleaded without first renewing the charter.<sup>1</sup> For several months the quo warranto remained sub judice. In consequence on October 22nd, 1629, the council decided to write to Mr. Stace that he "would do the town much favour"<sup>2</sup> if he could persuade the Attorney General either not to prosecute or to acknowledge the town's plea. Such action, in the council's opinion, would ensure that the borough was "eased of further trouble about the business"<sup>3</sup> as had occurred on previous occasions with other attorneys general. Precisely what the outcome of this encounter with the crown was it is impossible to say. The problem was persistent, however. As has been observed above Grantham had obtained its new charter by 1631, but two years later in 1633, Stamford corporation was still arguing its case. In that year, a number of documents from the town chest were handed to the Alderman so that he could consult counsel at the town's expense with regard to the best that could be obtained concerning the "town's title and power".<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 335v.

2. Ibid., p. 358.

3. Ibid., p. 370v.

The documents comprised some of those discussed in preceding chapters, namely, the Charter of Edward IV<sup>1</sup>; the act of parliament for the uniting of churches and settlement of lands to the school<sup>2</sup>; letters patent of Edward VI concerning the grant of various lands<sup>3</sup> and the commission under the great seal concerning the new river.<sup>4</sup>

What the outcome was of these particular negotiations with the crown is difficult to assess. Certainly nothing was finally resolved and it was not long before the council was again in dispute over its rights, this time with the county of Northampton. The matter of contention was an alleged violation of the eleventh clause of the charter of incorporation of 1461/2.<sup>5</sup> It will be recalled that the alderman and burgesses were granted the privilege of having the return of all the king's "writs, precepts, mandates and bills" and "the executions thereof".<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, no "sheriff, escheator or justice of the peace or any king's minister" was permitted to enter the town for this purpose under heavy penalty to the king.

---

1. See pp.34-68 above.

2. See pp.85-91 above.

3. See pp.91-94 above.

4. See p.347 above.

5. See p. 63 above.

6.

S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 11.

C.C.R., Vol. VI, 1427-1516, p. 166.



This was, of course, a right confirmed in every subsequent charter. It appeared, however, that in 1638<sup>1</sup> one Richard Grimbald, a bailiff living in Stamford Baron in Northamptonshire, and not sworn to the alderman of the borough, entered the town to issue a number of warrants. It was agreed by Stamford corporation, therefore, to authorise the alderman to proceed against Mr. Grimbald and the like, though exactly what immediate action was taken it is impossible to determine. However, towards the end of the same year, November 1638,<sup>2</sup> it was resolved in hall that the alderman should go to London with the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 and the 1558 charter of Queen Elizabeth which, it will be recalled, confirmed the privileges therein. The purpose of his visit was to seek the advice of "counsel learned in the laws" on the best course to adopt concerning those who entered the town to execute writs, warrants and precepts contrary to the charters.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 392.

2. Ibid., p. 395v.

It appears likely that the advice received was to the effect that the corporation should proceed again with its application for the renewal of the charter. Certainly in the following February, 1638/9 it was agreed in hall to seek the confirmation of former grants, with other additions if these could be procured. The latter were to include the right to be a "Mayor town" and "to have the breaking up and return of all writs which shall be executed within the said town or liberties thereof with other privileges granted to Newark and Grantham which as yet are not granted to this town".<sup>1</sup> The specific reference to the breaking up of writs suggests that counsel had advised that in this matter in particular the council's powers under its existing charters were not sufficient to deal with the current situation. As has been observed above the references to Newark<sup>2</sup> and Grantham<sup>3</sup> refer to charters granted in 1626 and 1631 respectively. It was agreed that the alderman, Mr. Richard Wolph, and Robert Whatton the younger, should handle the matter on

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 398v. See pp. 661-2 below.  
 2. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. 90. I.E.B.  
 3. Martin, op. cit., pp. 122-155.

behalf of the corporation. The councillors, themselves, agreed to finance the application for renewal, the alderman paying £10, 26 other members of the council contributing sums ranging from ten shillings to two pounds. In all a total of £50 10s was raised.<sup>1</sup>

By now, however, the approaching conflict in the nation at large was tending to overshadow such matters as Stamford corporation's desire to renew its charter. Nevertheless, in January 1640/1 the council agreed to instruct their parliamentary representatives in writing to press parliament to grant certain requests, or some of them, which it was felt would be of great benefit to the town, namely;  
<sup>2</sup>  
 to make the Welland navigable; to make Stamford a "shire town" by adding to it Rutland, the Soke of Peterborough and the hundred of Nesse in Lincolnshire; to have the privilege to break up writs; to have the privilege of certain other corporations to keep out foreigners;  
<sup>3</sup>  
 and for Stamford Baron to be "united and made member" of the corporation.  
<sup>4</sup> The events

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 397v.
  2. See p. 355 above.
  3. See p. 302 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406.



and circumstances that no doubt prompted all but one of these requests have been discussed in detail above. The one request to which there appears to be no other reference in the records of the corporation is that relating to the establishment of Stamford as a shire town. To subsequent writers, however, the notion of a "Stamfordshire" had considerable fascination. Francis Peck, for example, maintained that at one time such a county had existed.<sup>1</sup>

The involvement of the corporation with the crown, of course, was not confined to legalities concerning the charters or, for example, to such matters as the granting of a monopoly in brewing, discussed in the previous chapter. There were a number of personal visits to the town by the monarch during the period covered by this thesis. Harrod records visits of Edward IV in 1462<sup>2</sup>; Henry VIII in 1532 during his progress in Lincolnshire and again in 1539 whilst journeying to York<sup>3</sup>; Elizabeth I in 1565 during her progress<sup>4</sup>; James I in 1602/3<sup>5</sup> on his journey from

- 
1. Peck, op. cit., Lib. III, p. 19.
  2. Harrod, op. cit., p. 147.
  3. Ibid., p. 150.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid., p. 151.

Scotland; and Charles I in 1633<sup>1</sup> on his way to Scotland and again in 1634 whilst on a private visit to the Earl of Westmoreland's estate at Apethorpe.

Relevant to the period now under discussion, nothing is recorded concerning the visit of Queen Elizabeth, nor indeed of the earlier visits by the monarch. The visit of James I<sup>2</sup>, however, prompted the council to review its rules concerning the wearing of gowns, an aspect of the dignity of the corporation which is discussed more fully in the following chapter.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Charles I, the minutes of the hall<sup>4</sup> give a comprehensive account of what a visit of the sovereign entailed during this period. At a meeting of the council held on March 4th 1632/3, it was decided that a silver and gilt cup should be presented to the king at the expense of the corporation. This gift was to be purchased by the alderman at a price not exceeding £30. It was also agreed that the rules relating to ceremonial dress, adopted at the time of the visit of James in 1603 should be reaffirmed.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, all those members of the upper and lower councils who were "well in body and limb"<sup>6</sup> were ordered to attend, with<sup>7</sup>

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., p. 151.

2. Harrod gives the date of this as March 24th, which coincides with James' succession. This is clearly incorrect.

3. See pp 468-474 below.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 369.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

the alderman, on horseback<sup>1</sup>, or otherwise on foot, in order to wait upon the king during the time he was within the liberties of the town. Penalties for those who disobeyed, were to be severe, and similar to those relating to failure to wear ceremonial dress, namely, a fine of £10 for members of the first twelve, and £5 for the second twelve. Offenders were to be committed to prison until their fines were paid, and expelled from the council and "disenfranchised of all liberties, belonging to the . . . corporation".<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the meeting referred to above, namely on March 12th 1632/3, the hall assembled again.<sup>3</sup> One of the matters discussed related to advice concerning the royal visit expressed in a letter to the alderman and comburgesses from the Earl of Exeter. The letter advised the corporation on steps to be taken "for the decent entertainment of his majesty" during his passage through the town.<sup>4</sup> It was, therefore, agreed by the council that "all the houses on each side of the street through which the king was to pass should be "washed whited".<sup>5</sup> It is not entirely clear who was to pay for this work. Apparently,

---

1. c.f., Harrod, op. cit., I, p. 151.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 369.

3. Ibid., p. 369v.

4. Ibid.



the cost was to be borne initially by the inhabitants but subsequently reclaimed from the landlords. Four waits were bound in the sum of five marks to be at the Welland bridge or the Town Hall with their wind instruments at the King's coming to the George and his subsequent passage through the town.<sup>1</sup> In addition the corporation agreed to purchase three bell ropes at the public expense to be used in ringing of St. Mary's Bells.<sup>2</sup> The opportunity was also taken to set aside a "common day" for the repair of the highways, with the proviso that this work should be undertaken by those who had failed to carry out their obligations to undertake this work earlier.<sup>3</sup> The cost of these preparations for the king's visit must have fallen heavily upon a borough with financial problems such as Stamford had, more especially as fees were required to be paid to the king's servants by the town chamberlain.<sup>4</sup> Indeed as is noted below public dissatisfaction was to be expressed in 1636 at such expenditure.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 369v.

2. Ibid., p. 370. See pp. 506-507 below.

3. Ibid. See pp. 560-562 below.

4. Ibid.

5. See p. 577 below.

In the following year there was another royal visit to the town. Accordingly, it was agreed at a hall held on July 10th, 1634<sup>1</sup>, that every one of the first and second companies should "be furnished with a sufficient man in good apparel with a halbert for the worship of the town. . .at the king's and queen's coming through it." <sup>2</sup> The cost of hiring the men was to fall upon the councillors themselves. The constables too were to attend "with their staves in their best apparel with a halbert".

This welcoming of Charles I is worthy of mention if only as a contrast to what was to follow within a few years. Demands upon the town's resources by the king were considerable. In August 1635<sup>3</sup>, for example, a writ was directed to the alderman and comburgesses for the assessing of the town for a man of war. As a consequence it was necessary for the alderman and one of the comburgesses, Mr. Rastell, to go to Lincoln in the September apparently with the object of securing the terms that were "for the general good of the town".<sup>4</sup> The following year, dissatisfaction with the king's demands came into the open. At a meeting of the hall

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.375.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 379.

4. Ibid.

held in July 1636, it was reported that the king was expected to come through the town again during his progress.<sup>1</sup> Concern was expressed that the king's officers would again demand their fees. It was pointed out that the king and queen had visited the town twice in the preceding three years and each time a presentation had been made, on the first occasion to the king and on the second to the queen. On both occasions the fees paid to the king's officers had exceeded £120, which had caused the town to be greatly indebted and therefore "more unfit for extraordinary expenses".<sup>2</sup> The alderman was, therefore, instructed to negotiate for the waiving of the fees. If this should involve him in any trouble his expenses were to be borne by the council.

A further dispute concerning fees due to the king's servants during his passage through the town on the way to Scotland occurred in December 1639. Mr. Richard Wolph, who had been elected alderman in 1638, received a demand for £40 in this respect from a Mr. Bartholomew.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, a messenger was sent demanding why it had not been paid. It was, therefore, agreed that in the event of the former alderman being obliged to take up

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 384.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 400v.



money the corporation would enter into a bond with him<sup>1</sup> in the sum of £50 "for the payment of £45 within six months".

More dissatisfaction with the crown was to follow. It was reported at a hall held on the 9th November 1640<sup>2</sup> that "divers inhabitants" having horses and teams had been "sore charged" with providing carriage for the king, apparently without payment. It was agreed, therefore, that in the interests of "more equality" such expenses and indeed "other charges and disbursements concerning the town" should from time to time be met by an assessment on the inhabitants made by the alderman and comburgesses. The amount levied was to be according to the "equality of every man" and to the "bills of every parish". Those living elsewhere, who held land within the town were to be charged in relation to the "proportion and quality" of the land which they held.<sup>3</sup> This in itself is of interest in that it represents an early example of a municipal rate levied for purposes other than those of the Poor Relief Act of 1601. Subsequent records show, however, that the scheme met with difficulties. It was reported to a hall held in August 1641 that the constables of each parish, appointed to collect the levy, had found that there were "divers within their several parishes which had refused to pay. . ."<sup>4</sup> It was, therefore, agreed that the constables should once again demand the money and those who still refused to pay would be proceeded against "in due form of law".

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 400v.

2. Ibid., p. 405v.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 408v.

Dissatisfaction with the demands of the king was not confined to Stamford alone. In March 1641, a letter was received from one Gervase Fullwood on behalf of the inhabitants of the County of Huntingdon and of the town of Huntingdon and Godmanchester, concerning their intention to petition parliament over "excessive and innovating fees" demanded by the king's officers.<sup>1</sup> Stamford corporation was invited to join in the protest. The precise wording of the proposed petition, however, did not meet entirely with the approval of Stamford council, the members of which thought some of it superfluous and in consequence a revised draft was prepared. To enable this petition to be presented to parliament, Stamford corporation agreed to pay a quarter of the cost.

A number of other matters relating to crown and corporation require mention in this discourse. One, the collection of fifteenths has been referred to in Chapter VII.<sup>2</sup> Another concerns provision of post horses during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. For example, at a hall held on February 9th, 1575/6<sup>3</sup> it was agreed that there should always be "in readiness for the Queen's Majestys

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 407.

2. See pp. 295n, 312-313 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.211v.

service eight good, sufficient and able post horses".<sup>1</sup>  
 Four of these were to be provided by one Thomas Yarwood and two each by Michael Ward and Peter Gibson, each receiving in payment a proportionate part of £7. It was agreed that this arrangement, which was to prevent the Queen's service deteriorating for lack of horses, should last for approximately a year. To raise the necessary funds, collectors were appointed, two for the first twelve, two for the second twelve and one each for the parishes of St. Mary's, St. John's, St. Michael's, All Saints and St. George's.<sup>2</sup>

A further aspect in the relationship of crown, corporation and county which also needs special mention relates to the requirements of the military. Nothing is recorded in the hall book in this respect during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but thereafter there are numerous references. For example, in August 1615<sup>3</sup>, a letter was received

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 211v.
  2. Ibid., p. 212.
  3. Ibid., p. 318v.



from the Lord Lieutenant concerning the supply of armour, both private and common.<sup>1</sup> In September, 1625, a warrant was received from the county justices ordering all the trained men within the liberties of Stamford to be in readiness to present themselves at Sleaford that month with their arms, and sufficient provisions for three days training.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, in June 1633, the council agreed upon rates of pay for those called to show their arms. Armour bearers of "every musket and corslett" were to receive one shilling in respect of their horse, a second for their dinner and a third for "all other charges".<sup>3</sup> Two years later, in June 1635, Edward Corker, a comburgess and William Anthony, a burgess, were instructed to go with the "trained band" to Edenham for "the better ordering of them and answering for the defects if any be".<sup>4</sup> In the same year, as is noted below, a writ was received for assessment in respect of a man of war. A further insight into the manner in which trained men were mustered is given in the minutes

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 318v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 343v.  
 3. Ibid., p. 370v.  
 4. Ibid., p. 378.

of a hall held in August 1638. After the reading of a warrant from the Deputy Lieutenant with regard to the muster of the trained band at Edenham in the following September it was agreed to instruct the constables of every parish in Stamford, and significantly also in Stamford Baron, to warn all the members of the militia to be ready with their arms on the appropriate day.<sup>1</sup> In September 1640 more orders were issued to the "soldiers of the trained band which bear the common arms for the town of Stamford".<sup>2</sup> They were to present themselves at Grantham for which service it was agreed that they should receive 6s 8d each. This apparently was to be the last call to arms on behalf of the king before the civil war broke out.

By the midsummer of 1646 the whole of England was in parliamentary hands. The minutes of the hall reveal no immediate impact of the defeat of the royalist cause. Indeed, the proceedings

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 394.

2. Ibid., p. 404.

in the hall of the 26th August 1647 seem to have been conducted without reference to national events.<sup>1</sup>

As ordained in the seventh clause of the letters patent of James I, 1605, the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses had nominated Richard Wolphe and William Anthony with the intention that one of them should subsequently be chosen as alderman. However, before the election meeting, due to be held in the October, parliament issued an edict, dated 9th September 1647 to the effect -

"That no person whatsoever that hath been in arms against the parliament or hath been aiding or assisting the forces of the enemy or hath been or is sequestered shall be elected or constituted, Mayor, Alderman, Bailiff, Justice of the Peace, Steward of any court, Constable, or other officer in any county; city, borough or town corporate within the Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales and Town of Berwick".<sup>2</sup>

Subsequently the speaker in parliament, William Lenthall, in a letter dated 27th September 1647, addressed to "the several cities, boroughs and corporation of the kingdom" pointed out that if any persons had been

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 423v.

2. Ibid., p. 425.



elected contrary to the edict referred to above they were to be forthwith displaced and other persons elected in their places. The latter were to be chosen from those who had expressed "good affections to the proceeding of parliament".<sup>1</sup> The letter concluded with a hint that those corporations which failed to obey might jeopardise their charters.

The provisions in this letter were legally embodied in a comprehensive ordinance of parliament dated 4th October 1647.<sup>2</sup> This decree which was to remain in force for five years, was intended to strengthen the ordinance of the 9th September. It was directed at those royalists, who in their capacity as members of corporations, continued to elect officers of like persuasion. This, in the view of parliament, might lead to "the endangering of raising new tumults, and disturbing the peace of the kingdom". In consequence supporters of the king were virtually banned from holding all public offices whatever they might be. Moreover the Committee of Lords and Commons for Indemnity, named in a further ordinance dated 21st

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 425.

2. Ibid., p. 425v.

May 1647, was empowered to call before it any person suspected of royalist sympathies.<sup>1</sup> If found guilty not only was the accused to be dismissed from office, but also made liable to a fine of up to £100, half of which was to go to the poor of the county or town where the offence was committed, and half to the person or persons initiating the prosecution. Those members of corporations etc., who were not so punished were required to elect successors to those dismissed.

On the 7th October 1647, all three parliamentary orders were presented to the hall at Stamford.<sup>2</sup>

Richard Wolphe, one of the nominees as alderman, would not declare himself to be "quit from sequestration" and refused to serve as alderman.<sup>3</sup>

In consequence a Mr. Bullock was nominated in his place and indeed elected as alderman.<sup>4</sup> It is of interest that the successful candidate had only ~~been~~ elected as a comburgess in the preceeding August<sup>5</sup>, having served as a capital burgess from 1614.<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 425v.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 424-26.
  3. Ibid., p. 424. See p. 383 above.
  4. Ibid., p. 424v.
  5. Ibid., p. 423v.
  6. Ibid., p. 309.

The question of Richard Wolphe, however, was to be only the beginning. At a hall held on the 16th February 1647 it was reported that two different orders, dated 3rd February, had been received from the Committee of the Lords and Commons for Indemnity.<sup>1</sup> The first referred to complaints to the committee that seven men<sup>2</sup> had continued to serve as capital burgesses in spite of the ordinances of 8th September and 4th October 1647 referred to above.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly they had been ordered to appear on the 2nd February at Lincoln before the Committee and had there tendered their resignations. The second order related to Nicholas Lamb (a comburgess) and Thomas Sherwood (a capital burgess).<sup>4</sup> These two had had charges laid against them by the "well affected inhabitants of Stamford"<sup>5</sup> but had failed to appear at Lincoln. In consequence they were sequestered by the Committee and "discharged and disabled from being or continuing in their several

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 427v.

2. Edmund Corker (Comburgess), William Anthony (Comburgess), Richard Butcher, Lawrence Robbins, Robert Whatton jun., Richard Goodman and Thomas Hawkins.

3. See p. 384 above. 4. See pp. 407-408 below.

5. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 427v.



offices of comburgess and capital burgess".<sup>1</sup> Under both orders the alderman and burgesses were ordered to elect fitting persons to replace the supporters of the royalist cause.

The implementation of these orders must have had a great impact on Stamford Council, similar perhaps to the situation which occurs at the present time when a different political party obtains a majority. It certainly marked the end of the stability of the old oligarchy in which the number of changes was limited to individual circumstances, usually the death of a councillor. On one day three comburgesses and six capital burgesses had been forced to resign or dismissed. In addition a further capital burgess, Richard Royce, had resigned, possibly fearing charges being laid against him, whilst another, George Salter, was dismissed for failing to appear at an earlier meeting of the council.<sup>2</sup> In addition the deputy recorder, William Montague Esq., tendered his resignation to the Earl of Exeter, who held the office of recorder, being replaced by one

---

1. S.C.R. The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 428.

2. Ibid.

John Balguy Esq.<sup>1</sup> The choice of the new councillors of parliamentary persuasion reveals that three burgesses, Thomas Hatcher and John Weaver, esquires and Thomas Corney, gentleman, were elected first as capital burgesses and then immediately afterwards promoted to comburgesses.<sup>2</sup> In addition eight new capital burgesses were elected.

Accusations against members of the council, however, continued. On the 18th May 1648 an order was issued to the corporation to dismiss Henry Clarke, a comburgess since he was "a person disaffected to the parliament and a continued opposer of their proceedings".<sup>3</sup> Apparently he, too, had refused to appear before the Committee for Indemnity. This order was considered at a hall held on the 31st August 1648 when the accused was replaced by one Edward Billington, a shoemaker.<sup>4</sup> At the same time the votes of John Curtis and Thomas Heawards, capital burgesses, were suspended pending their appearance before the Committee of Indemnity on the following 7th September.

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 428v.  
Subsequently (29.8.1650) the Earl of Exeter resigned the recordership and was replaced by John Balguy.  
Ibid., p. 435.
2. Ibid., p. 428.
3. Ibid. p. 428v.
4. Ibid.

Also, at this hall the resignation of Richard Wolphe, as a comburgess was accepted, it being rather surprising that he had remained on the council after being debarred from standing as alderman. This resignation, together with Thomas Corney's refusal to accept office<sup>1</sup> brought two more newcomers to the council to replace capital burgesses elected to fill the vacant seats on the first twelve.

Shortly following this meeting of the hall there appears to have been a royalist insurrection near Stamford. On 5th June 1648 the forces under one Capt. Hacker, the Supernumeraries of Lincolnshire and the horse from Belvoir Castle in Rutland were "appointed to march to Stamford for the suppression of the enemy there".<sup>2</sup> The following day Col. Rosseter was instructed to take

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 429.
  2. C.S.P., Domestic Series, 1648-1649, p. 99.



command of the combined forces, parliament being of the opinion that the enemy "if not speedily dispersed" might "give a beginning to further mischief".<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful whether the uprising affected Stamford borough. Certainly the purge of the royalists on the council continued. In October John Curtis, whose vote it will be recalled was suspended, resigned his seat at his own request. This seems to have been the last of the political changes on the council.<sup>2</sup> In all 4 comburgesses and 10 capital burgesses had been dismissed and 17 newcomers elected to fill ~~these~~ vacancies and 3 others caused by a refusal to serve.

It is perhaps ironical that the final matter to be noted in the relationships between the corporation, crown and parliament between 1558 and 1649, relates to a disagreement between the reconstituted council and the new central authority. Thus, in January 1649/50, Jeremy Cole, a comburgess, was ordered to "use his best endeavour to recover the monies audited at Cambridge for the quartering of soldiers under the command of Lieut. Lilborne, Capt. Poe, Capt. Moodie, Capt. Mercer, Capt. Beaumont and Capt. Phillips."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. C.S.P., Domestic Series, 1648-1649, p. 103.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 429v.
  3. Ibid., p. 434.

Thus, as can be seen, county, crown and parliament all in turn faced Stamford corporation with problems with which its members had to deal. But this was not all, for, from time to time, the local aristocracy became closely involved in the affairs of the town. It has already been observed in Chapter VI<sup>1</sup>, how the letters patent granted to Stamford corporation in 1593 by Queen Elizabeth I gave Lord Burghley a royal licence to exercise great influence within the town. Generally speaking, however, if the minutes of the corporation be a true guide in this respect, in his earlier years he seems to have avoided conflict with the corporation. Certainly in the national field "he maintained for the people of England one of the least oppressive and for the Queen one of the most efficient administrations in Europe".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there is ample evidence in the Calendars of State Papers that the corporation of Stamford looked to Lord Burghley for guidance. For example, in 1554 just before the commencement of the period now under discussion, the alderman and comburgesses wrote to him (as Sir William

---

1. See pp. 254-256 above.

2. Beckingsale, op. cit., p. 244.



Cecil) thanking him for setting forward their charter.<sup>1</sup>  
 As has been observed in Chapter VIII above<sup>2</sup> in 1561 he  
 was involved in correspondence concerning a scheme for  
 the manufacture of canvas.<sup>3</sup>

In 1567/8, however, he was involved in disagreements  
 with the corporation on matters which are not recorded in  
 the hall book.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the difficulties were, they  
 warranted the appointment of a committee of seven in an  
 attempt to resolve them. Subsequently, however, in 1576  
 when John Houghton was alderman, he seems to have been the  
 instrument through which a warrant was obtained from the  
 Queen to fell four trees; these to be used in the erection  
 of the new town hall.<sup>4</sup> This hall was built athwart the  
 old town bridge.<sup>5</sup> As has been noted in Chapter VII<sup>6</sup> in  
 1584 William Cecil helped finance the repair of the town  
 bridge which had been damaged by flood and gave wood for the  
 beams of weavers looms. Cecil's position as "chief  
 lord of Stamford"<sup>7</sup> involved him closely in certain  
 aspects of town government. In December 1583, his  
 consent, together with that of his heir apparent,  
 Sir Thomas Cecil, was required for the enclosure  
 of Tenter Meadow.<sup>8</sup> When the enclosure order

---

1. C.S.P., Domestic Series, 1547-1580, Vol.IV, p. 34.

2. See p. 320 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 193.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 213. The trees were taken (from Morehay & West  
 Hay in Rockingham Forest) and delivered by "Houghton" the  
 Queen's "wood ward".

5. See Appendix Plate 9, p. (70). Harrod, *op. cit.*, p.150  
 gives the date of the new hall as 1558, in which year Hough-  
 ton had been previously alderman; this accounts for the error.

6. See pp. 323-324 above.

7. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 232v.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 225v.



was confirmed in March 1587/8, having apparently fallen into desuetude, he and his son were again concerned.<sup>1</sup>

The corporation continued to look to the Cecils for guidance from time to time, particularly with regard to legal matters. It is apparent from the Hall Book, for example, that the securing of the 1605 letters patent of James I<sup>2</sup> was advanced "by the special means"<sup>3</sup> of Thomas Cecil, the first Earl of Exeter, who succeeded to the title of 2nd Baron Burghley in 1598<sup>4</sup>. In August 1607, the Earl's further advice was sought with regard to a particular aspect of the 1605 letters patent, namely the functioning of the Court of Record authorised under clause 14 thereof. The circumstances are of additional interest in that they offer a further illustration of the provisions of a charter being ignored. Apparently the alderman, John Loveday, had taken it upon himself, without the consent of the comburgesses and common council, to cease to call the Courts of Record with effect from the previous Easter.<sup>5</sup> The matter was brought to the attention of the 2nd Earl of Exeter, who requested the alderman to convene a meeting of the comburgesses and common council in order to enable a decision to be made whether or not the calling of the court would be of benefit to the town.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 232v.

2. See pp. 257-276 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 284v.

4. Beckingsale, op. cit., pp. 187-188, p. 285.

5. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 285v.

Those present agreed that the court should continue since experience had shown that "many honest, well-minded men" had "in short time and with small cost recovered their due and almost desperate debts and damages".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, "many unthrifty and disordered persons" had not, for fear of the court, frequented the town as often as they had done previously. There seems little doubt that in this dispute between the alderman and the council, the Earl of Exeter was looked upon, certainly by the majority of councillors, as some one who would advise impartially upon the best course of action to be taken. Indeed, the detachment of the Exeters from the day to day running of the town during the early decades of the seventeenth century is evident from the paucity of references to the family in the hall book of the period. The first Lord Burghley had been regarded as a "pater patriae"<sup>2</sup> and this is the Cecil image which seems to have persisted into the sixteenth century. Thomas Cecil, his elder son, was one of several benefactors who gave money to the town for the benefit of the needy, namely an annuity of £41 1s 8d arising from certain lands in Market Deeping for "the puttingforth of poor children to be apprentices. . and towards other charitable uses".<sup>3</sup> The hall book records that part of this, to the sum of £5, was used to enable a poor child, Winifry

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 286.

2. Beckingsale, op. cit., p. 278v.

3. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 20-21.

Saddler, to serve a twelve year apprenticeship.<sup>1</sup>

A minor incident recorded in 1623 provides a further illustration of the relationship between peer and corporation and at the same time casts a glimmer of light on the social life of the town during the period. William, the 2nd Earl who succeeded to the title in 1622, on the death of his father Thomas, presented the council with a buck "to make merry with".<sup>2</sup> This was to be baked at the corporation's expense and eaten at one Luke Uffington's. Men and their wives were to sit together, at a charge of 8 pence each, with every man paying for such wine as he called for. It is worthy of note that Mr. John Browne, promised to give a similar buck for the same occasion, "out of his love and goodwill", an indication perhaps that as a "gentleman" he was not to be lightly regarded.

William Cecil had an official link with the corporation in that he held the post of Recorder.<sup>3</sup> It seems likely, however, that the duties were principally performed by the deputy recorder, John Browne, referred

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 356v.

2. Ibid., p. 338v.

3. Ibid., p. 350v.



to above, and subsequently in 1628, John Balguy.

In August 1629, however, there began a saga which was to sour the relationship between the corporation and the 2nd Earl of Exeter. The latter made application for the lease of Hudd's Mills,<sup>1</sup> which were situated downstream from Stamford and approached from the Uffington Road.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the mill building still occupies the site, and remained corporation property until the Local Government Act took effect in 1974. The corporation replied to the effect that although they would give him first option it would take time to consider the fine and yearly rent payable.<sup>3</sup> The following month, the council wrote to the Earl pointing out that a bid of £20 per annum had been received for the mills before any money had been expended on them. It was also pointed out that elsewhere in the town rents on other leases had been doubled.<sup>4</sup>

The Earl of Exeter's bid to secure the tenancy of Hudd's Mills seems to have failed. In this respect

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 357.

2. Speed, Map of Stamford, 1600.  
See Appendix, Map II p. (60).

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 357.

4. Ibid., p. 357v.

it is significant that the same year he had embarked upon a scheme to improve his own mills. Thus, on the 1st June 1629<sup>1</sup> he entered into an agreement with a neighbouring landowner, Henry Rastell, former alderman and prominent member of the Council.<sup>2</sup> This related to an area of land adjoining the Earl's mills "commonly called the King's Mills or North Mills".<sup>3</sup> The land was required for the construction of a new dyke for the "conveying of the water thereby unto or nigh the said mills."<sup>4</sup>

Matters came to a head concerning the North Mills in 1637, undoubtedly prompted by the Earl's failure to secure a lease on Hudd's Mill. In that year he commenced legal proceedings in the Court of Exchequer against the same Henry Rastell, the alderman, six of the comburgesses, six of the capital burgesses, the constable in St. Michael's parish and two others, one a former capital burgess, the other a man subsequently elected to the council, together with unspecified other persons.<sup>5</sup> The charge laid against the defendants, as representatives of the corporation, was for "not grinding all their corn and griests at his

- 
1. Ex. Inf., Dr. E.C. Till, Property Deeds., 1975
  2. See Appendix Table A, p. (8).
  3. Ex. Inf., Dr. E.C. Till, Property Deeds, 1975
  4. Ibid.
  5. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 390v.

Honour's Mills called the North Mills next Stamford". The council, in debating the matter in December, 1637<sup>1</sup> agreed that if the defendants should agree to grind their corn at the North Mills, then all the rest of the inhabitants in Stamford would thereafter be enjoined by. . .like proceedings to grind their corn there and no where else. It was considered that such a turn of events would be "to the great prejudice of the corporation and the utter ruin and overthrow of other mills near Stamford. . . belonging to the. . .corporation. . .commonly called the Hudds Mills".<sup>2</sup> The latter, of course, yielded a useful rent to the corporation. It was agreed that a third part of the cost incurred by the defendants in answering the charge would be borne by the corporation. A month later the matter was again debated at a meeting of the council. The minutes thereof are significant, not only in their content, but in the innuendoes of the phraseology. Gone was the defiance of the earlier meeting; instead an acknowledgement almost of helplessness, certainly of deference: -

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 390v.  
 2. Ibid.



"Whereas upon a petition preferred to the Right Hon. William Earl of Exeter for prevention of further suits between his Lordship and this Corporation concerning the grinding of all their corn and griests at his Honours mills near Stamford, called the North Mills, his Honour was pleased to grant that (for saving of charges in putting in several answers to his Honours bill) it should be lawful for any four or three men of the burgesses of Stamford as well to appear and answer the said bill in the behalf of all the rest of the defendants as also to treat and compound with any whom his Lordship<sup>1</sup> should be pleased to appoint to agree or compound".

Accordingly, therefore, the alderman, Henry Rastell, and any two or three of the burgesses were appointed to treat with the Earl on behalf of the corporation. In the April (1638) following, it was reported that no agreement had indeed been reached during the preceding<sup>2</sup> law term. It was agreed that the Alderman and Messrs. Falkener, Cole and Billington, should go to London during the Easter law term, there to remain until the differences between the Earl of Exeter and the corporation had been resolved. By now the council's will to resist the demands of the Earl of Exeter seems to have stiffened somewhat. Certainly, by May, the council had extracted a promise from the tenant of the North Mills, namedly Edmund Corker, who was one of the comburgesses and a former alderman. This understanding was

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 391.

2. Ibid., p. 392.

to the effect that he would write a letter to the Earl, his landlord, pointing out that his mills had not the capacity to "grind half the corn of the inhabitants of Stamford".<sup>1</sup> This letter was to be read by the Alderman (before it was sealed) and subsequently presented on behalf of the corporation as evidence in the dispute. The miller at North Mills also promised to keep a pair of scales and weights so that he could weigh all corn both before and after grinding. Presumably the council felt that this would enable them to quote actual tonnages in pleading the corporation's case. At the same meeting, the council also passed a resolution concerning those freeholders in the town who had evidence in writing that they were free from grinding their corn "under constraint or compulsion at any mills other than those of their own choice".<sup>2</sup> Such freeholders were to produce their evidence to the corporation before the following Monday evening. Failure to comply would result in their being ordered to grind their corn at the North Mills.

By November, however, of the same year it was again

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 392v.

2. Ibid.

reported that no agreement had been reached between the corporation and the Earl of Exeter.<sup>1</sup> It was, therefore, agreed that a further attempt at agreement should be made by a new team of negotiators, the present alderman, Richard Wolphe, the former alderman, Henry Rastell and Joseph Stroud, a burgess, with the advice of counsel. The preservation of Hudds Mills remained as before, one of the corporation's principal objectives. By January 1638/9<sup>2</sup> it had become necessary for a further deputation of councillors, Jeremy Cole, a comburgess, Richard Dammalt and John Storer, burgesses, to go to London to make a "final end and conclusion" of the dispute on the basis of agreements derived by the respective counsel acting for both sides. To ensure that the representatives of the town were clearly understood to have full authority to reach a settlement they were to be supplied by a "warrant general" signed by those inhabitants with an interest in the matter. Unfortunately, there is no indication in the hall book concerning the final outcome of the dispute; it can only be assumed that the absence of further references to it is an indication that it was settled.<sup>3</sup> It is relevant

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 396.

2. Ibid., p. 396v.

3. At a meeting of the hall held on the 26th October 1654 a lease on Hudds Mill, granted by the town to William, Earl of Exeter, was placed in the safe keeping of the Alderman, Robert Wilson.

S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.445v.



to point out that leases granted by the Exeter family stipulated for many years that tenants' corn should be ground in the landlord's mill.<sup>1</sup>

After the second Earl's death further difficulties concerning the mills were to transpire between Elizabeth, the Dowager Countess of Exeter, and the corporation. In January 1640/1 the inhabitants of Stamford drew up a petition asking for redress with regard to the cutting of the commons in order to make a water course to the "new" mills which had recently been built by the Countess.<sup>2</sup>

It was agreed that the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses should forward this petition, together with one of their own, to the Countess asking for redress. It was the hope of the council that she would "understand the grievances of the whole town" and would assist in the matter "without any further trouble or charges".<sup>3</sup>

The reference to "new" mills is of interest in itself in that it implies that the former mills were rebuilt at this time. Certainly the extant building of King's Mill, now used as a hostel, is listed by

- 
1. Ex. inf., Dr. E.C. Till, Stamford, 1975  
Ibid., E.P. Langton, Burghley Estate Office, 1975.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406.
  3. Ibid.

the Department of Environment as a "large irregular C17 building in coursed rubble with stone quoins. 3 storeys. Hipped stone slate roof".<sup>1</sup> In March 1640/1<sup>2</sup>

it was recorded in the council minutes that an agreement had been reached between the alderman and the steward to the Countess, a Mr. Corney, with regard to this water course to the new mills. It was proposed that in exchange for the land taken for the new cut the corporation should receive "a valuable consideration of ground both for quantity and quality".<sup>3</sup>

The alderman, however, "would not rashly of his own accord agree to anything propounded without a general consent of the whole town". What followed is an interesting example of a democratic process. The town bell (in St. Mary's)<sup>4</sup> was tolled to summon the burgesses to a meeting of the hall. The alderman, with the comburgesses duly assembled, explained the proposals of the Countess to those present. The burgesses were then asked whether they would be content to allow the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses to make an agreement with the Countess "to the liking of Mr. Hatcher, Mr. Palmer and two burgesses chosen for . . . .

1. Ref. Department of Environment, Scheduled Buildings TF 0206 1/344.
2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406v.
3. Ibid.
4. See pp. 505-507 below.

parliament".<sup>1</sup> Thirtyfive burgesses signified their assent to this proposal, seven voted against.

Controversies between the corporation and the Cecils were not confined, however, to the grinding of corn. For example, in March 1632/3<sup>2</sup> it was agreed by general consent" of the hall that David Cecil<sup>3</sup> should have 12 acres of land in St. George's Parish, provided he gave to the town in exchange, sufficient land by way of "quantity and quality".<sup>4</sup> David Cecil did not, however, immediately honour his undertaking, but as has been noted this did not prevent his being<sup>5</sup> made a freeman in April 1636, on which occasion he distributed largesse to the second twelve and officers of the corporation, amongst others. However, later in the same year, at a meeting held on the 25th August it was "thought fit by the whole hall"<sup>5</sup> to write to Cecil with regard to the "allowance for quantity and quality" appertaining to the exchange land.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406v.

2. Ibid., 369v.

3. Succeeded as the 3rd Earl in 1640.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 369v.

5. Ibid., p. 381.

6. Ibid., 384v.



Other matters were in dispute also between the Corporation and David Cecil's uncle. In May 1633<sup>1</sup> the council agreed that a petition should be presented to the Earl of Exeter asking him to stay the legal suit depending at the Court of Exchequer with regard to the town tolls. It was the hope of the corporation that the Earl would be given satisfaction by comparing the opinion of the counsel acting for the town with that of his own. It was felt that he would then "be pleased that the townsmen may remain free from paying of toll as they heretofore hath been".<sup>1</sup> The task of conveying the petition to the Earl was entrusted to those unspecified burgesses upon whom subpoenas had been served, or as Mr. Balguy, the deputy recorder, advised. Whatever the result of this dispute in January 1640/1, the corporation also became concerned with Elizabeth, Dowager countess of Exeter, over market tolls. It appears that the free burgesses of the town were "debarred of their ancient privileges of free standing in the markets and fairs without paying any toll",<sup>2</sup> and were "constrained for their peace to pay toll as much as any foreigner". The council agreed, therefore, to petition the Countess with regard to the impositions levied upon them by those whom she appointed as farmers of the tolls. It was further agreed that in the event of an unsatisfactory answer being received from the Countess, a further petition would be presented to the high court of parliament, or the Countess's title concerning the tolls examined in court on behalf of the town.

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1637, p.370.

2. Ibid., p. 406.



In August 1641 there was yet further disagreement with the Countess, this time over the town bridge.<sup>1</sup> The council were of the opinion that the foundations of the bridge were "much decayed". Moreover, since the Dowager, or her tenants, were in receipt of the tolls, it was considered that she had a duty to repair the bridge, in order to prevent it from "any further ruin". Unfortunately, as is so often the case in this examination of the working of Stamford corporation, there is nothing recorded in the minutes of the council meeting concerning the eventual outcome of the dispute. If, however, the records of Burghley House were generally available, it might prove possible to examine many of the problems discussed above from the point of view of the Exeter family.

Direct disputes between the corporation and the aristocracy, however, were not the only matters which affected the relationship of the parties concerned. There were a number of personal disputes between the local aristocracy and individual members of the council. One

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 408v.

of them, the affair of William Salter, has been discussed in detail in the preceding chapter. Another worthy of note, concerned Nicholas Lamb one of the leading members of the council. Lamb, a draper, was admitted to the freedom of the town in 1611 and was elected as a capital burgess in 1613. In 1624 he was elevated to the first twelve.<sup>1</sup> In 1634 he was summoned by warrant to appear before the Privy council on account of "some offence by him given to . . . William . . . Earl of Exeter".<sup>2</sup> The Lords thereupon committed him to Fleet Prison for 14 days and ordered him to be sequestered from his office of comburgess. Possibly as a veiled act of protest the council did not elect a replacement. Shortly before he died, the Earl, possibly reflecting upon the harshness of the punishment inflicted upon Lamb, wrote to the Stamford council to the effect that the two were now reconciled. Accordingly, the Earl requested that the alderman and comburgesses readmit Lamb to his former position. Unfortunately, however, before the letter was delivered the Earl died. Lamb therefore petitioned the Privy Council for his reinstatement. The latter,

---

1 See Appendix Table A, p.(7).

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 403.



having examined the letter of the late Lord Exeter, recommended to the corporation on the 29th July, 1640, that Lamb should be re-admitted to the rank of comburgess and "chosen alderman according to his turn and place".<sup>1</sup> Lamb was duly restored to his seat on the first twelve, only to be one of those dismissed in 1647 for "being in actual arms against the parliament".<sup>2</sup>

No discourse on the relationship between the corporation and other authorities can be complete without mention of the choice of parliamentary candidates. Although there are of course, references elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, little is recorded in the hall books in this respect except the bald statement of fact, for example, the selection in 1597 of Robert Wingfield and Thomas Balguy<sup>4</sup> or John St. Armand and Sir Montague Bertie in 1625<sup>5</sup>. One entry in the hall book, however, is an exception to this general observation and this relates to 1620<sup>6</sup>. At a hall held in the October of that year, the king's proclamation for the calling of parliament was read, together with a letter from the 1st Earl of Exeter, asking if he might have the nomination of two burgesses that were to be chosen to represent

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 403, 403v.

2. Ibid., p. 428. See p. 385 above.

3. e.g. Pryne, Brevia Parliamentaria  
Willis, Notitia Parliamentaria

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 26lv.

5. Ibid., p. 343.

6. Ibid., 38lv.

Stamford. The council agreed to this request and as a result at the next hall Sir Richard Cecil, the Earl's brother and John Wingfield of Tickencote were chosen.<sup>1</sup> The election of a Cecil to parliament was not, of course, an innovation. William Cecil had been chosen in 1547, Thomas Cecil, the 1st Earl of Exeter in 1563, 1571 and 1572, William Cecil the 2nd Earl in 1586 and 1588 and Richard Cecil (Thomas's second son) in 1614.<sup>2</sup> After the Restoration, as has been indicated by Drakard, Stamford was eventually to become a rotten borough controlled by the House of Burghley.<sup>3</sup>

What conclusions, therefore, can be drawn from this discourse on the relationship between the corporation and those other locations of authority with which it had to deal, namely, the county, the aristocracy, crown and parliament? First, it is apparent that the granting of the charter of incorporation in 1461 did not of itself guarantee the independence of the corporation. It has been noted in Section I how it was found necessary to petition for the supplementary privileges granted by letters patent in 1481. Subsequently, as is discussed in Chapter VI, further clarification of the corporation's powers was set out in letters patent granted by Elizabeth I in 1593 and James I in 1605. Even then the council was to find itself in conflict with both county and

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 382.

2. Harrod, op. cit., pp. 216, 217.

3. Drakard, op. cit., p. 173.

the crown with regard to the privileges of the charter of incorporation and subsequent letters patent. Secondly, the relationship between corporation and the aristocracy worsened towards the end of the period now under discussion. It is possible to see how the vacuum created by the dissolution of the monastic estates around Stamford was steadily replaced by the growing power of the Cecils. William Cecil, the first Lord Burghley, was most probably a benign influence in the town. His successors, however, sought progressively to increase their personal power, not necessarily to the advantage of the burgesses. Thomas the 2nd Baron and 1st Earl of Exeter, for example, chose to influence the selection of Members of Parliament. William, the 2nd Earl attempted to obtain economic control of such an important industry as the grinding of corn. Similarly, as has been noted in Chapter VII, his son-in-law, Henry, Earl of Stamford sought and in fact succeeded in obtaining a monopoly in brewing. Personal opposition by burgesses to such powerful men as the Earl of Stamford and 2nd Earl of Exeter, was fraught with danger, as such men as William Salter and Nicholas Lamb found to their cost in 1632 and 1634.

It is apparent, however, that the council did not lightly surrender its rights either to the county or the

---

1. The Earl of Stamford married Anne, daughter of the 2nd Earl of Exeter by his second marriage to Elizabeth Drury.



aristocracy. The minutes of the hall book record not only the disputes, but also certain successes, for example, the compensatory land obtained from Elizabeth, the Dowager Countess of Exeter.

With regard to the third relationship discussed above, namely that of the corporation and the crown, there was a considerable change between the beginning and end of the period covered by Section II of this thesis. The reigns of Elizabeth and James I seem to have passed without there being any direct involvement in the affairs of the corporation by the crown, apart from for example such matters as the provision of post horses or the levying of fifteenths. As was observed in Chapter VI above<sup>1</sup> the monarch was seen as the grantor of municipal privileges, the means by which dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the earlier charters could be remedied. By contrast, however, Charles I sought fit to recommend to the corporation such matters as the monopoly of brewing granted to the Earl of Stamford. Moreover excessive expenditure by the corporation in attempting to meet the king's needs brought protests of the kind that in the country at large led to his eventual downfall.

---

1. See pp. 236-238 above.

Nevertheless, as is noted above<sup>1</sup> a proportion of the council remained loyal to him in the civil war.

Fourthly, therefore, it may be said that nothing had such an impact upon the corporation as the post-civil war purge of royalist supporters. Suddenly the oligarchial system which had given the borough stability of government for many generations was seen to be no longer inviolate. From the granting of the charter of incorporation in 1461, indeed from probably before that date as has been observed in chapter 1, change had come to this oligarchy only slowly, by death, or the very occasional resignation or dismissal. Now, in a short space of time a considerable proportion of the councillors were removed by parliament from office. Even the remaining members must have felt the strain, and no doubt were torn in many cases by personal loyalties. It must have been a traumatic experience and it is doubtful whether anything was quite the same again.

To sum up, therefore, the period from 1558 to 1649 was one in which the independence of the corporation came under-

---

1. See pp. 383-390 above.

increasing pressure from external sources. In the years that were to follow, as is noted in Section III of this thesis, the freedom of the corporation from outside interference was to ebb and flow.



Chapter IXChallenges to the Sanctity of the Freeman's Oath1559 - 1649

So far in this discourse upon the working of Stamford corporation during the years from 1558 to 1649, consideration has been given to the legal formalities of the charters, to the efforts made to combat poverty and promote trade within the town, and to the relationship between the corporation and other locations of authority. Much of what has been discussed may be summarised by the trite adage that theory differs from practice, namely the contrast between what the burgesses hoped to achieve through the vehicle of their charters and formal resolutions in council and what transpired in the event.

This contrast between theory and practice is no where better illustrated than in the relationship between the corporation as a collective body and the individual burgesses of which it was composed. It will be recalled that in chapter IV the importance of the freeman's oath was discussed. The promises to "be true"<sup>1</sup> to the alderman and to "stand by"<sup>2</sup> him were not to be

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 11.

2. Ibid. See p. 153 above. Appendix, p. (56).

taken lightly. Indeed, the higher the position in the hierarchy of the town of any townsmen who broke his oath, the more severe the punishment.<sup>1</sup> As is discussed subsequently in this chapter, one of the principal purposes of the freeman's oath was to bind "every man to honest and good conformity".<sup>2</sup> In return for such obedience a freeman would be "nursed . . . to his great advancement"<sup>3</sup> by the corporation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that drastic punishment awaited those who transgressed the code of conduct implicit in the freeman's oath. This was especially so during the period now under discussion when a considerable number of burgesses were either disfranchised or dismissed from office on the corporation (and sometimes both). The reasons for dismissal were many, some personal, some political. In the former category were such moral offences as adultery, in the latter strong differences of opinion with the alderman. Often the two were intermingled and the distinctions between them blurred. This

---

1. See p. 154 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.  
See p. 446 below.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 219v.  
See p. 429 below.



is particularly true of the latter part of the Elizabethan era during which the machinations of the members of the first twelve to publicly humiliate their colleagues for their shortcomings is one of the dominant features of the corporation records. Accusation and counteraccusation, dismissal and reinstatement were the outward signs of what must have been a very unsettled period.

Though some of those dismissed had committed moral offences, the repeated questioning of the alderman's authority, illustrated by the examples given below, was surely, in part at least, the initial birth pangs of the truly democratic system of local government which did not finally emerge until several hundreds of years later. By contrast, until the case of John Fenton in 1554<sup>1</sup>, there seems to have been very little challenge to the alderman's omnipotence during the period covered by Section I of this thesis.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, there is nothing recorded in the hall book which suggests otherwise; on the contrary, as has been

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 159v. See pp 226-227 above  
 2. 1461/2 - 1558.



observed in Chapter V, the long unbroken periods of service of members of the first and second twelves during this earlier period suggests a period of stability in the affairs of the ruling oligarchy.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt, however, that during the reign of Elizabeth there arose a definite challenge to the omnipotence of the corporation. The very notion of an inviolate ruling oligarchy was being called to account. Yet those who did protest were relentlessly crushed. It is not easy to form an impartial judgement on the significance of each individual challenge to the alderman's authority. The hall books, for example, are biased strongly in favour of the aggrieved parties, the alderman and the corporation. Indeed, according to its own records, the corporation was always in the right. Of course, in many cases a burgess transgressing the accepted code of behaviour was no doubt generally at fault. It is difficult to believe, however, that in certain of the cases discussed below the alderman and his supporters were entirely without blame.

---

1. See pp. 149-151 above.

Virtually throughout the period now under discussion there are numerous examples of the arraignment of those who were considered by their fellow burgesses as having broken the freeman's oath. As has been observed some were charged with moral turpitude, others with political offences, some with both. For the sake of clarity, these are considered below in chronological order.

An early example of dismissal for a political misdemeanour is the case of Henry Campion. This burgess was admitted to the freedom of the borough in 1538, to the second twelve 1543-50, to the first twelve 1551-59 and was alderman in 1555. In May of 1562, from a letter from Peter Kemp to Sir William Cecil, he was alleged to have acted in an unruly manner whilst reading a bill in the Common Hall.<sup>1</sup> Campion was obliged to honour a promise he had made to the Privy Council to apologise at a meeting of the hall for his "folly and lewdness in preparing a seditious bill"<sup>2</sup>

---

1. C.S.P., Domestic Series, Vol XXIII, 26  
 2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 179.

at the hall held the previous Whitsun; to submit himself to such punishment as was deemed necessary; and to undertake not to "molest, vex or trouble" his brethren the comburgesses in any such matter again.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Campion, however, does not appear to have been the only burgess against whom a charge of sedition could be laid. A bye-law passed in 1564/5<sup>2</sup> indicates that there was a general problem in this respect at the time. It was ordained that if thereafter any freeman of the town spoke "any seditious language or irreverant words" or otherwise disobeyed the alderman, or comburgesses, he was to be committed to prison by the alderman until an appropriate fine had been paid, namely two pounds for members of the first twelve, one pound for members of the second twelve and 6s 8d for commoners. This differentiation, of course, provides yet a further example of the principles discussed in chapter IV,<sup>3</sup> namely that a higher degree of responsibility was demanded from those charged with governing the town and that membership of the two

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 179.

2. Ibid., p. 184v.

3. See p. 154 below.



companies on the council was conditional upon a burgess's local standing.

From time to time an individual's conduct became the subject of close investigation at a meeting of the hall. Such was the case of Francis Thorness, who was admitted to the freedom in 1551, served on the first twelve from 1551-1553, and the second twelve from 1558 to 1566, being alderman in 1557. Mr. Thorness was also chosen as one of the borough's parliamentary representatives in 1555, 1557 and 1563.<sup>1</sup> At a hall held in February 1556/7<sup>2</sup> during the aldermancy of John Houghton, a list of charges were presented against him. These warrant close study since, as in other cases, discussed below, they throw light upon relative social values of the period. It would appear that in 1563, during the aldermancy of Richard Harrop, Thorness had quarrelled with his fellow comburgess, John Houghton. His offence was "without any just cause" to call Houghton "a knave" in the presence of "the . . . alderman and his

---

1. Harrod, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

2. S.C.R., *The Hall Book*, 1461-1657, p. 188.

brethren, with many other unseemly words, without any reverence at all to the alderman".<sup>1</sup> Ordered to hold his peace, Thorness refused and in consequence was committed to prison, to be released at the intervention of Houghton. In the following year, 1564, when William Campinet was alderman, Thorness was again at logger-heads with the council, this time over failing to honour an undertaking he had made.<sup>1</sup> Thorness had asked for the temporary release from prison of his servant, one John Lyon, on account of "divers guests" coming to his home. The request was granted by the alderman on the understanding that Thorness would deliver up the prisoner again on the following morning. The promise was not kept, however, and when called upon to explain his action, Thorness "answered the alderman very unreverently". Indeed, he was to continue his open contempt for the conventions of the hall. In 1565, the then alderman, Godfrey Dawson, sent for Thorness three times to attend a meeting. In the end he appeared "in his jerkin, most unseemly, and with short words and counter~~ance~~ance to the alderman and whole company

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 187v.

used himself most unreverently".<sup>1</sup> As a result he was committed to prison there to remain until he had paid a fine. The principal charge against Thorness, however, related to the manner in which he had gone about his duties as one of the borough's parliamentary representatives. It appeared that he had canvassed the alderman, his fellow comburgesses and indeed the whole hall commons both privately and in open hall with regard to his selection as one of the town's M.Ps. His grounds for putting his name forward were that he had business of his own to do in London and could serve the town as a member of parliament without requiring payment. However, having been elected, he asked in hall for two pounds towards his expenses, which would suffice him even "if the parliament should last seven years". This request was granted on the understanding that he would submit no further claims as he had done when he served in parliament in 1555.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, on this earlier occasion, he had also promised to serve as M.P. without charge, only to issue a writ against the then alderman, Henry Campion demanding payment for his services, which he thereafter received. However,

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 187v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 188.



in spite of his promise, immediately after the end of the sitting of parliament, Thorness served a writ upon the alderman charging him to levy the inhabitants to the sum of £20, that is two shillings for each day of service in parliament. The answering of this process necessitated the alderman going to London to answer it; not only to his "vexation and trouble" but also at the charge of the town. Such behaviour was clearly unacceptable to Thorness's fellow councillors, who, with the consent of the "whole commons", dismissed him from the first twelve on the grounds that he was "most unmete and unworthy of that place".<sup>1</sup>

Pressure to conform to the standards of the hall was not only exerted upon members of the first and second twelve, however. For example, in September 1569<sup>2</sup>, John Lyon (Thorness's servant) was obliged to appear at the hall before the alderman<sup>3</sup>, comburgesses and the whole commons in order to publicly apologise for having "misused" the alderman and comburgesses.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 187v-188.
  2. Ibid., p. 196v.
  3. Alexander Anthony.

Apparently he had ridden to Lincoln, there taking an oath regarded by the council as "against the truth".<sup>1</sup> Presumably Lyon's action had been encouraged by Thorness as a means of revenge against Houghton for the latter's part in his dismissal.

The determination of the alderman and comburgesses to uphold the dignity of the former is evident from a number of other cases. One of particular interest is that of John Allen. He had originally been admitted to the freedom of the borough in 1561, had served on the second twelve from 1566 to 1568 and had been elected to the first twelve in 1569.<sup>2</sup> His service as a comburgess, however, was to last only three years, to be terminated in 1571 in disgrace. The circumstances were as follows. On the 26th September 1571,<sup>3</sup> the then alderman, John Backhouse, was conducting the sessions of Statute Labourers for Stamford in the common hall. "John Allen, unmindful of his duty both to the place and person

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 196v.  
 2. See Appendix Table A, p. (5).  
 3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.203v.

of the alderman, very contemptuously abused the said court and alderman's authority without any just or reasonable cause. . . ."<sup>1</sup> As a result he was ordered on the following 4th October to appear before the alderman and comburgesses at a general sessions of the peace. In the view of the recorder, Francis Harrington, not only had he committed a "heinous" offence, but his defence of his misbehaviour was "a wilful defacing of authority and breach of the Queen Majesty's peace".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly he was bound over to keep the peace. This did not end the matter however. For his offence and "divers other causes of obstinancy" which had previously occurred, further punishment was to issue from his fellow burgesses. The sentence pronounced upon him exemplifies the aura surrounding the alderman and his brethren at this date -

"If he John Allen should still continue of that company, this might bestow stain and loss of credit to the whole fellow burgess-ship and rather a readier inducement to others to show the like offence, than any curb to restrain their untamed passions through remiss and slack corrections. . . . It is. . . in this assembly thought good . . . that he from the place, office and calling of a fellow burgess of this borough should be dismissed,

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 203v.
  2. Ibid.



and we, the said alderman, and comburgesses, do dispose, discharge and amove the said John Allen of and from the said seat, office and company as one yet unmeet to use or enjoy the title place or calling of such a magistrate".<sup>1</sup>

The names of the alderman, Richard Barton, and ten of the comburgesses appear below the record of the sentence.

Subsequently, in September 1585, during the aldermancy of Robert Meadows, John Backhouse was himself dismissed;<sup>2</sup> only to be restored again to office in November 1588.<sup>3</sup> Allen, however, was not forgiven. The circumstances surrounding these subsequent developments have more than a suspicion of intrigue around them, and are discussed in detail below.<sup>4</sup>

The sanctity of the freeman's oath, as interpreted by members of the corporation, is revealed even more strikingly in the case of a commoner, Thomas Sherwood, pursemaker, who in 1574 after correction for an unspecified offence made "further very irreverent speeches to the alderman<sup>5</sup> and lieutenant of the town and to the whole company of comburgesses and justices of the Queen Majesty's peace".<sup>6</sup> Moreover, to compound the felony, he had made known the gist of his speech to the entire commonalty of the town beforehand. His refusal to honour his

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 228v.
  2. Ibid., p. 229. See p. 431 below.
  3. Ibid., p. 235.
  4. See p. 431 below.
  5. William Lacy.
  6. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 209.

corporate oath to obey the alderman was an act regarded as being "to the high displeasure of Almighty God and perilous example" to "like untoward, disposed persons". The sentence was pronounced on the 30th September 1574 with all the solemnity the occasion demanded -

"Thomas shall of his freedom be disfranchised, so to remain until further time, as upon his due reconciliation and better submission both to God (whom he hath highly offended) and the magistrates (whom he hath vilely abused and disobeyed) he shall be thought a mete member of this town and further enabled to renew his former enfranchisement".<sup>1</sup>

Disfranchisement, a method of punishing wayward burgesses, was, of course, not confined to irreverent behaviour towards the alderman. As is discussed more fully below it was a significant factor in maintaining the law and order in the town.

The importance attached to the freeman's oath is clearly discernible in the examples quoted above. On the 12th December 1579, it was resolved that a supplementary oath should be taken by members of the first twelve, to be administered yearly in the following form -

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 209.

"You shall true councillors be and true counsel give to the uttermost of your knowledge unto the new alderman of this town and borough of Stamford. You shall be aiding and assisting unto him for the administration of justice in the execution of his office of aldermancy so long as he shall use the same office, and the acts spoken of and dealt in at all consultations and meetings of the alderman and his brethren, you shall truly keep so help you God".

There is no better example of the reasons why breaking the freeman's oath was considered to justify severe punishment than that of William Colsell, who was dismissed on the 2nd February, 1580/1.<sup>2</sup> Colsell had concealed the goods of a certain outlaw by the name of Symes which under the provisions of clause 7 of the charter of incorporation of 1461/2<sup>3</sup> rightfully belonged to the borough. Not only that but he had made a secret bargain with the outlaw's wife, Ann. When called upon to give an account of these arrangements he challenged the alderman's right to examine him. His "immeasurable presumption" in protesting that he had done nothing for which he need apologise was more than the alderman and comburgesses were prepared to tolerate. The sentence pronounced upon him gives a clear indication of the purpose of the corporation as seen by its members at that time:-

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 218.

2. Ibid., p. 219v.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 7, 8.  
See pp. 58-59 above.



"Mr. John Wimbleby, alderman, . . . and the comburgesses. . . pronounce. . . William Colsell an unkind, unnatural and unlawful member of this corporation, which has nursed him divers years to his great advancement if he had been thrifty, and therefore not worthy for his perverse dealings to take benefit by this corporation which he has so viperously rewarded for his former benefits therein received. But to be by general sentence and judgement of the whole body of this town and borough disfranchised and so by their pity we the said alderman, comburgesses and all the commons in this present hall congregated and assembled this day by their presence do with one assent, consent and full agreement disfranchise the said William Colsell adjudge, pronounce and condemn him as a man worthily disfranchised and cut off from the body of our corporation as well for his manifest falsehood before rehearsed as for divers others there not remembered." 1

The great social pressure exerted by the corporation collectively upon those who failed to comply with its wishes is strikingly apparent from the examples given above. The corporation was the Alma Mater of the burgesses; the alderman in performing his duties was fulfilling the work of Almighty God; those who failed to honour their oaths were to be cut off from their former privileges. This pressure was extended even to the private lives of members of the corporation. Immorality

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 219v, 220.

was not to be tolerated.

Consider, for example,

the case of Ralph Haseldine, alias Carter, one of the comburgesses. This came before the hall in April 1582.

Haseldine's offence was that he "unlawfully misused himself with one Joanne Ireland, his late servant, contrary to the law of God, and also of the Queen Majesty's laws".<sup>1</sup>

The unfortunate girl, having become pregnant, was called before the alderman, John Houghton, and three of the comburgesses<sup>2</sup> as also was one Margery Hunt, a midwife.

In the opinion of the alderman and comburgesses a man guilty of "such a crime" was quite unworthy to continue as a member of the first twelve, and he was dismissed therefrom. His dismissal in the words of the town clerk was "according to our ancient order and custom by virtue of our charter".<sup>3</sup>

This is a reference to the third clause of the charter of incorporation which gave the alderman and comburgesses power to remove one of their fellows "for some notable cause".<sup>4</sup>

Such punishments as Haseldine received, however, were not always for life.

He, for example, on promise of reformation, was restored to

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 222v.

2. William Campinett, Reynold Harrison & Richard Eveley.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 222v.

4. C.C.R., Vol. VI, p. 165. S.C.R., Charter Book, p. 3.  
See pp. 52-53 above.

his former privileges in September 1585 during the aldermancy of Robert Meadows.<sup>1</sup> At the same meeting, however, another comburgess, John Backhouse, a former alderman referred to above,<sup>2</sup> was dismissed from office "for many notable causes"<sup>3</sup>, although as is explained below<sup>4</sup>, he too was subsequently reinstated in 1588.

In the discussion above upon the dismissals in 1571 and 1585 respectively of John Allen and John Backhouse, passing reference was made to possible intrigue amongst the comburgesses during the late 1580's and early 1590's.<sup>5</sup> Certainly over this period of several years there was great discord in the affairs of the corporation. Unfortunately, it is not possible to ascertain precisely the causes of the "Stamford troubles"<sup>6</sup> as they were contemporarily described, but there is no doubt of the magnitude of the crisis in the context of the ruling oligarchy of the town.

The determinible facts give an indication of what took place, but also raise a number of questions

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 229.
  2. See p. 424 above.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 229.
  4. See p. 433 below.
  5. See p. 426 above.
  6. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.



which it has not proved possible to answer. May be this is a further instance in which the archives of Burghley House might supply information which would facilitate a better understanding of this period of contention in the affairs of Stamford.

An appropriate, if possibly somewhat arbitrary, point of time to commence this enquiry into the nature of the dissension is June 1588, when Tobias Loveday was alderman. In that month it was agreed by the alderman, "most of the first twelve" and the "whole commonalty" that Mr. Loveday should take counsel's advice whether "the commission be prejudicial to their charter and liberties of the town"; moreover he was to endeavour to "strengthen their charters as much as by law" he could.<sup>1</sup> The expenses incurred were to be paid out of the town stock. At the same hall, possibly because the seeds of dissension were present, it was resolved that members of the first and second twelves and the whole commonality should be sworn to the alderman yearly "according to the ancient custom".<sup>2</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 233.

2. Ibid.

No doubt it was not merely coincidence that also at this meeting Nicholas Fulwood, a grocer, was dismissed from the second twelve for "his misbehaviour and disobeying Mr. Alderman and some of the other justices".<sup>1</sup>

The reference above to the "commission" is somewhat obscure, but the general inference is that the privileges set out in the charter of incorporation of 1461/62 and the letters patent of 1481 were becoming endangered. As has been observed above in chapter VI the preamble of the further letters patent which were granted in 1593, specifically referred to the "divers inconveniences and ambiguities" which had arisen in the earlier charters of Edward IV.<sup>2</sup>

At the next hall, held on the 6th November 1588, John Backhouse, who it has been observed above was dismissed from the first twelve in 1585<sup>3</sup>, "upon submission and sorrow for his oversight past, and upon giving his hand to Mr. Alderman (Anthony Gunson) with his promise of good behaviour" was again elected as a<sup>4</sup> comburgess. Such clemency, however, was not extended to

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 233.
  2. See p. 235 above.
  3. See p. 431 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 235.

John Allen, whom it will be recalled, was dismissed as a comburgess in 1571 when John Backhouse was alderman. This distinction of treatment obviously rankled, for John Allen refused to take the yearly oath referred to above unless it be "as a comburgess" since he insisted that "he was not lawfully dismissed from that company".<sup>1</sup>

How far the separate events of 1588 discussed above were connected, if at all, it is difficult to assess. Nor is it possible to know what bearing they had on the stability of the ruling oligarchy of comburgesses in the following years. Dismissals from the ranks of the first twelve were to continue. During the aldermanic year of Robert Ramsden, mercer, 1590/91, Robert Meadows, who had been alderman in 1584/85, was dismissed though the hall book does not explain the reason. It was Meadows, it will be recalled, who presided over the dismissal of John Backhouse in May 1585,<sup>2</sup> and the subsequent re-election of Ralph Haseldine<sup>3</sup> in September 1585 to fill the vacancy. More dramatic events were to follow.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 236. See pp. 424-426 above

2. Ibid., p. 228v.  
See p. 431 above.

3. See pp. 430-431 above.  
S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 229.



At a meeting held on the 26th October 1591,<sup>1</sup> during the aldermancy of Richard Shute, it was reported that Edward Heron, esquire, who had dwelt in the liberties of Stamford for a number of years without being made a freeman, had been secretly enfranchised in his house by the alderman Robert Ramsden, a few days before his term of office expired in 1591. Since this should have been done "in open hall" and since it appeared that the intention was that "he should be made free unknown to the commonalty", Heron was dismissed and disfranchised. At the same meeting another freeman, Francis Cole, who had also been made free in "hucker-mucker"<sup>2</sup> was likewise dismissed and disfranchised. This man, however, had the additional charge levied against him that he had "been a long time partaker with factious persons to the great disservice of the town".<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, two burgesses, Reginald Waters and Jeffrey Harrop were disfranchised. They were described as being "two notable persons for raising strife between one and another in this town, whereby troubles had ensued, and for that they are noted persons to

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 243v.

2. An interesting example of the use of local dialect.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 243v.

seduce and persuade simple people to commit outrages and misdemeanours".<sup>1</sup>

During the same hall a comburgess, Lawrence Wilsby, was dismissed for his absence out of the town for three years and for not answering scot and lot. Neverthelss during his absence he had resorted to the town "to maintain a faction and a factious side during all these troubles that were in the town".<sup>2</sup> How far the conduct of Mr. Ramsden, the former alderman, had contributed towards these troubles it is difficult to ascertain, but it is significant that at the same meeting, he was dismissed from the office of comburgess "for notable abuses and misdemeanours."<sup>3</sup> Those consenting to his dismissal included not only the alderman, Mr. Richard Shute, but also seven comburgesses, William Clark, Tobias Loveday, Robert Langton, Cuthbert Greenberry, Nicholas Lamb, Leonard Palmer, William Watson. Ironically, in a relatively short time, as is discussed below, both Shute and Loveday were to face charges of misconduct themselves.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 243v.

2. Ibid., p. 244.

3. Ibid.

It may be significant that at the meeting at which Ramsden was dismissed the alderman, Mr. Richard Shute, as has been observed in chapter VI above, read the charter to the burgesses to remind them of their privileges and liberties<sup>1</sup>, as he had done on the previous occasion he had been alderman in 1583. Indeed, it seems possible that the troubles of Stamford at this time were at least in part related to the questioning of the privileges contained in the charter of Edward IV. The rancour which had arisen amongst the comburgesses was not yet abated, however. The next one to be arraigned before his fellows was Anthony Gunson, an apothecary, who had been alderman in 1588. It was he, it will be recalled<sup>2</sup>, who presided over the reinstatement of John Backhouse. Gunson was charged on the 2nd December 1591, by the then alderman, Richard Shute, with "divers matters. . .proved against him by witnesses"<sup>3</sup>. In denying the accusations, it was alleged he thrice abused the alderman contrary to the "ordinance. . .against irreverent speeches"<sup>4</sup>.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 244.
  2. See p. 433 above.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 245.
  4. Ibid.



Moreover, in the previous November he had slandered the alderman to one Morris "a mere stranger" by accusing him of taking the common seal out of the town chest, for his own private use.<sup>1</sup> Whatever it was that was disturbing the stability of the ruling oligarchy knowledge of it had by 1592 reached William Cecil, Lord Burghley. The "chief men of Stamford" were summoned before his lordship who advised them to "reform their evil practices lest their charter be called in question by a quo warranto".<sup>2</sup> This advice was seized upon, however, by Mr. Heron, whom it was recalled had been made free secretly by the alderman, William Ramsden. Heron, no doubt incensed by his subsequent disfranchisement declared to the principal burgesses that Lord Burghley had no right to make such threats adding "that it was lamentable that he should so tyrannise and overrule all England".<sup>3</sup>

Lord Burghley had asked Edward Wymark to furnish him with a report upon "Mr. Heron's unbeseeming behaviour with regard to his Lordship and Stamford

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 245.  
The relevant entries in the hall book are somewhat obscure. It would have been that it was Gunson himself who took the town seal.
  2. C.S.P., Vol. CCXLII, 23, p. 221.
  3. Ibid.

matters".<sup>1</sup> This the latter did in a letter dated 21st May 1592, in which he was obliged to confess that in the first troubles of Stamford he had been "so far tied to Heron by injurious devices as to be forced to wink at his actions, and attend daily in his chamber".<sup>2</sup> Here Wymark observed "the principal actors in the Stamford business hourly resorted for counsel and encouragement". Heron, had prophesied that "a great multitude of the Stamford people would repair to court to cry for justice, and if not speedily granted, that double the number would follow".<sup>3</sup> Wymark had advised Heron "to suppress such mutinous courses which would hazard his reputation and utterly spoil the poor men of Stamford". Furthermore, Wymark sought leave of Lord Burghley to bring Heron before the Star Chamber, for the latter's "misdemeanour" against himself. It would, however, require further research outside the scope of this thesis to ascertain what became of Heron.

Dismissals from the ranks of the first twelve had continued during the Heron affair. John

Elmes was not elected after 1591, only to

---

1. C.S.P., Vol. CCXLII, 23, p. 221.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

reappear in 1598.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing in the hall book, however, to indicate the reasons for this. Moreover further punishment was meted out to Robert Meadows<sup>2</sup> and Anthony Gunson<sup>3</sup>, the two former aldermen dismissed in 1590 and 1591 respectively. At a hall held on the 7th September 1592 they were both disfranchised "for divers causes".<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, they were ordered "to keep their shop shut up" until such time as they were reenfranchised. Thus, disfranchisement deprived a man not only of his status but ipso facto of his livelihood as well. Moreover, in this case, the two disgraced burgesses were threatened with further punishment if they disobeyed. Ramsden, however, fared better. On the 30th September 1592, he apologised for his offences "committed against the whole corporation".<sup>5</sup> On the promise of amendment and the payment of a "new fine" for enfranchisement, he was re-admitted.

One of the more notorious dismissals, however, was that of Tobias Loveday, who was a member of the second twelve from 1576 to 1583 and of the first twelve

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 243, 264.

2. See p. 434 above.

3. See pp 437-438 above.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 247.

5. Ibid., p. 247v.



from 1584, being alderman in 1587. It was he, it will be recalled, who was charged with seeking counsel's advice concerning the charters, and who presided over the meeting at which it was confirmed that all burgesses, including those on the first and second twelves should be sworn annually to the alderman.<sup>1</sup> In September 1593 it was to be Loveday's turn to face his fellow comburgesses to be told that he was "not worthy to hold and keep the place of comburgess or justice of the peace in Stamford".<sup>2</sup> His dismissal gives clues but not clear answers to the causes of the dissension amongst the ranks of the comburgesses and in the town at large. Moreover, it warrants close study in other respects. In particular it illustrates in detail many of the traits of character of a particular individual, and in so doing, casts light upon the social values of the period.<sup>3</sup> The charges against him were many, but principally that it was -

" . . . right well known to the comburgesses

- 
1. See p. 432 above.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.
  3. See Appendix, Plate 10 p.(71); photograph of indictment of Tobias Loveday, September 1593.

burgesses and inhabitants of this corporation that . . . Mr. Loveday was one principal mover and beginner of all the late troubles that were raised in Stamford for so he had confirmed the same. . . ." 1

It is a matter of speculation precisely what his offence was, but he appears to have been involved in some kind of speculative venture. His actions in fermenting the "troubles" seems to have caused considerable financial loss to many of the inhabitants, particularly sundry poor men, who were persuaded to spend their money on the understanding it would be paid back, which it was not. Moreover, he was accused of wasting the town's money and also of retaining in his own hands funds entrusted to him during his aldermanship.

It was also alleged that at the beginning of the Stamford troubles Loveday procured the warden of alms houses, a Mr. Rowth, to preach a very seditious sermon. This was an exhortation to the townsmen to prevent "their liberties [being] taken away".<sup>2</sup> Mr. Loveday also appears to have persuaded one Mr. Langton (who was considered unlearned and unable to read) "to send "a

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

2. Ibid.

most scandalous and false lie"<sup>1</sup> concerning the alderman<sup>2</sup> to William Cecil. In the opinion of the corporation the "troubles and controversies" had gone on too long, but now the truth had appeared and various falsehoods come to light. Unfortunately, nothing specific is mentioned in the hall books. There is, however, an intriguing passage concerning what followed the alleged ascertainment of the facts -

"Mr. Loveday was then the first that shipped coals from three or four of that faction that raised those troubles and find he had offended. As led by others to do that he then repented whereupon he was the better thought of and so though others lost their places of comburgesses and were disenfranchised for their bad and lewd dealings yet was Mr. Loveday held in his place of comburgess till this day<sub>3</sub> in hope of a full conversion".

A question concerning the significance of the words

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.
  2. Presumably Richard Shute, alderman 1591/2, 1592/3.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.



"shipped coals" must surely be asked. Is this merely a metaphorical way of stating that Loveday abandoned the trouble makers, or has it a more literal meaning? The reference to the dismissal of comburgesses for participation in the troubles is, of course, significant and presumably refers to Wilsby, Elmes, Gunson and Meadows. However, Loveday reassociated himself with the "evil faction" which was seeking to reassert its strength. Inflammatory speeches were stated to have turned the town "topsy-turvy" again.<sup>1</sup>

It would appear that Loveday and two or three others, did their utmost to displace the alderman from the comburgesses with "all untruths devised". One of the principal accusations levelled by Loveday at the alderman was that he had not been sworn as other comburgesses had been. In the eyes of the accusers, however, this was hypocritical in that he himself had refused to take

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

the yearly oath. Loveday, however, maintained that Mr. Shute was activated by nothing but "malice, discord and revenge" and was incapable of administering justice.

Loveday's bitterness is revealed in the language which he used towards his fellow burgesses. They were "flat caps", they had only "muckhill and dunghill" reasons for being aggrieved and the deputy alderman was "such an ass".<sup>1</sup> Perhaps in modern eyes such conduct seems petty, but the upheaval in the town must have been considerable. It was not surprising that there were townsmen whose only wish was to "seek quietness". Loveday remained adamant, however, refusing to go to the alderman when called, or to go with him to and from sermons with the other comburgesses.<sup>2</sup>

There was, however, a further "notable offence" committed by Loveday that in the view of his fellow comburgesses warranted disfranchisement and a grievous fine rather than just dismissal from the ranks of the comburgesses. It was alleged that

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

2. See pp.476-7 below. (Re Tobias Loveday)

Loveday had taken upon himself the place and calling of a freeman and also the office of alderman without first taking the freeman's oath. The importance of this oath is summarized in the charges levied against Loveday -

"Without which oath taking no person dwelling within this corporation is accounted any member thereof or a townsman but a town dweller whereby they are disabled to enjoy the liberties and freedom to<sup>1</sup> a townsman and freeman belonging".

In the view of his colleagues Loveday's conduct was not to be marvelled at since he "never took the freeman's oath which bindeth every man to honest and good conformity and quietness". What especially rankled, however, was Loveday's apparent hypocrisy referred to above.<sup>2</sup> He had complained to the Lords of the Privy Council "in the time of Stamford's troubles" that Shute had not taken the freeman's oath and should be dismissed from the office of comburgess. Nevertheless Loveday's accusations seem justified. Shute, an attorney at law<sup>3</sup>, had been elected directly to the rank of comburgess in 1583 and was immediately appointed alderman. The reasons for this are not apparent but

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

2. See p. 444 above.

3. Butcher, op. cit., p. 25.



no doubt this sudden elevation to the office of the principal townsman was resented by many of the comburgesses. When Loveday was made alderman for the aldermanic year 1587/88 he seems to have directed his energies at removing Shute from the office of comburgess. Although there is no record of the latter's dismissal in the hall book, his name does not appear on the roll of comburgesses for the aldermanic years 1588/89, 1589/90. On the 30th September, 1590,<sup>1</sup> however, he was admitted formally to the freedom of the town, being alderman for two consecutive aldermanic years 1591/92 and 1592/3, an unusual procedure in itself. In addition he had even been appointed auditor of the town in January 1591/2 "during his natural life" promising to remit the usual fee of 26s 8d and to execute the office without charge.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it was that Richard Shute took his revenge and in September 1593 the following sentence was pronounced -

"The alderman and comburgesses do dismiss the said Mr. Loveday from the place of a comburgess whereunto the burgesses wholly assembled do consent and think him no fit person or member to use so worshipful and honest a place until he hath submitted himself

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.240v.

2. Ibid., p.245v.

recompensed [for] the aforesaid injuries and [assured] the company and commons of his better conduct hereafter".<sup>1</sup>

Loveday's dismissal on the 30th September 1593, however, was to lead to the restoration at the next hall as a comburgess of the former alderman Ramsden, who it will be recalled was dismissed on the 26th October 1591, principally for secretly enfranchising Edward Heron.

What a tangled web of intrigue there must have been! Loveday had given support to Shute when Ramsden was dismissed.<sup>2</sup> Now Ramsden was to be restored to membership of the first company and Loveday himself disgraced. It would appear that, as in the case of Loveday himself, a switching of loyalties was not uncommon. Is it possible to ascertain the principal cause of the "troubles" of the corporation? Were they due to the contrivances of Tobias Loveday as the hall book suggests.<sup>3</sup> Was he really the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

2. See p. 436 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

the "principal mover and beginner of all the . . . troubles"<sup>1</sup> or was he in fact speaking out against what he considered to be injustices? Loveday's principal accuser was Richard Shute. What part did he play in the unrest? Loveday had accused him of "malice, discord and revenge".<sup>2</sup> As has been observed above, Shute had been elected directly to the ranks of the comburgess in 1583, even though it subsequently turned out he was not even a freeman of the town at the time. He was a lawyer by profession; perhaps a little too sophisticated for the local townsmen. It was he who read the charters during his aldermancies to the assembled hall in October 1583<sup>3</sup> and October 1591<sup>4</sup>. It was he who encouraged setting up the rich and profitable science and occupation of clothing in the town in 1584.<sup>5</sup> After two years of absence from the ranks of the comburgesses during the aldermanic years 1588/89, 1589/90 he had succeeded not only in being officially admitted to the freedom in 1590 but also in securing the aldermanship in two successive years 1591/2 and 1592/3. Would not such a man arouse strong feelings of resentment amongst

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 221.

4. Ibid., p. 244.

5. Ibid., p. 227. See pp. 323-324 above.



the freemen of long standing? Could, as is discussed below, he be accused of altering the rules for the election of an alderman to serve his own ends? And what of the special licence granted to him during the aldermancy in 1591 to pipe water from the town's conduit to his yard?<sup>1</sup> Such privileges easily arouse resentment amongst less fortunate colleagues. Here was a man, as has been observed above, who was appointed as auditor of the town's accounts for life, on the promise that he would do so without charge.<sup>2</sup> Here too was a man who had held the office of coroner in the town.<sup>3</sup>

Men like Shute make enemies. In July 1594 during the aldermancy of William Watson, he was declared "not worthy to hold and keep the place of comburgess or justice of the peace in Stamford" and in consequence "to be dismissed from the fellowship and company".<sup>4</sup> It was alleged that he had frequently said "that it was a great disgrace and discredit to him to be of the company, for the most part of them were men of base

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 244.
  2. Ibid., p. 245v. See p. 447 above.
  3. Ibid., p. 251.
  4. Ibid., p. 252v.

condition and not fit for his company".<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he had repeatedly declared in the town hall, and at private meetings, that he wished to be displaced from the office of comburgess and justice of the peace. With biting sarcasm, his accusers declared that thereby he had shown "himself to be weary of so base a company," as he thought, for that he termed some of them "dolts and fools!"<sup>2</sup> Shute's opinion of his fellow burgesses was considered a disgrace to the whole town and "contrary to the oath of every freeman". What was the charge against this proud man? That he had "unlawfully misused himself with one Jane, his servant, contrary to the laws of God and the Queen's Majesty".<sup>3</sup> The girl had confessed as much to Mistress Ratsey and Elizabeth Byfield of Deeping and "divers other honest women as well before the birth of her child as after". In consequence and "for divers other causes manifestly known" Richard Shute was declared by the "burgesses and whole assembly" to be "no fit . . . person to use so worshipful and honest a place, until he hath submitted himself and secured the company and commons of his better conformity. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall book, 1461-1657, p. 252v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Shute was never re-elected to the first twelve and henceforth seems to have departed from local politics. The obvious question must be asked, however. Did he really have sexual relations with his servant Jane? Had his pride made him so many enemies that they were merely waiting for him to make a slip so that they could charge him with breaking the freeman's oath? Or was he, perhaps, a victim of a well planned conspiracy to rid him once and for all from the ranks of the comburgesses? These are questions which it is extremely unlikely will ever be answered.

With the departure of Shute from the company of the comburgesses, the corporation seems to have entered upon a more settled period. The town records give no further indication of attacks upon the authority of the alderman for many years, apart from the case of Richard Dickenson, vintner. On the 26th July, 1594, some ten days after the dismissal of Shute, he was dismissed from the second twelve "for his bad behaviour. . .

---



towards Mr. Alderman and other of the comburgesses. . . and also for other notable causes and offences by him committed".<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he represented the last of Shute's supporters; one cannot tell.

Can any conclusions be drawn concerning this turbulent period in the corporation's affairs?

It has been observed above that it is not possible to ascertain precisely the causes of the "Stamford troubles", nor is it possible to answer some of the questions raised. The evidence suggests that Richard Shute was deeply involved, not as the instigator of the sedition, but as one of its causes. It has already been noted that he stood apart from many of the comburgesses in that he appears to have been generally better educated. He was certainly a proud man, but might have had the interests of the town, as he saw them at least, at heart. He seems to have come originally to Stamford to assist in the building of Burghley House for on the 30th July, 1578, he sent a report to Lord

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 253.

Burghley on the progress of the works there.<sup>1</sup> Because he was alderman when Heron was disfranchised in 1591, it is probable that Heron's activities in 1592 were in part directed at him. Presumably, Shute, as alderman, had also led the delegation of comburgesses which appeared before Lord Burghley on the occasion he told them to "reform their evil practices",<sup>2</sup> in order to avoid their charter being called into question. Heron's subsequent attack on the tyranny of Lord Burghley possibly indicates that there was resentment in some quarters of the growing power of the Cecil family. Indeed, Butcher asserted that William Cecil, following his creation as Lord Burghley on the 25th February 1570/71<sup>3</sup>, had been entrusted by the townsmen to secure the fee-farm of Stamford for the benefit of the corporation. In the event he obtained it for himself "to the great disadvantage of the said town".<sup>4</sup> Considering the value of the fee-farm and the dire

---

1. C.S.P., Vol. CXXV, 40.

2. See p. 438 above.

3. Beckingsale, op. cit., p. 127.

4. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., p. 6.

poverty of the town this alleged impropriety seems somewhat unlikely. Nevertheless, it might well have been given credence in the town at the time. In this respect, it will be recalled that the twelfth clause of the letters patent of 1593, specifically stated that any land transaction entered into by the corporation should "not be in anywise prejudicial to our right trusting and beloved chancellor William Lord Burghley, High Treasurer of England, Lord of the Manor of Stamford." <sup>1</sup> Was this clause under discussion when Loveday was tasked in June 1588 to seek counsel's advice on "the charter and liberties of the town"? <sup>2</sup> Was this the reason why he had procured the warden of the almshouses to preach a sermon exhorting the townsmen to prevent "their liberties being taken away"? <sup>3</sup> The paradox is difficult to understand. Shute could hardly have identified himself with the loss of rights contained in the town charters for on two occasions he read them openly in hall, in 1583 and 1591. Moreover, he had presided over the dismissal in November 1591 of Robert Ramsden, the alderman who had

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 252, 253.

See p. 254 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 233.

See p. 432 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 250.

See pp. 442-443 above.



secretly enfranchised Heron, and who may have supported his views. The inference must be, therefore, that Shute, Heron and Loveday were all paying at least lip-service to the importance of maintaining the privileges inherent in the charters. Had therefore the latter been mis-used in some way? It will be recalled that in Chapter VI it was suggested that this might have been so on account of a passage in the 1593 letters patent which provided that the rights of the townsmen should still be valid even if they had been "misused or abused".<sup>1</sup> Was it the alleged personal abuse of power which was the source of all the dissension? Was this why Gunson had accused Shute of using the town seal for his own use? Why Loveday was accused by Shute of embezzling the town funds? Why Shute was accused of unascertainable offences in a letter written to William Cecil at Loveday's instigation? Were all the troubles, therefore, at "parish pump" level or was William Cecil in any way implicated? Were the comburgesses jealous of one another or fearful of the growing influence

---

1. See p. 238 above.

of the Cecil's? It is difficult to be certain for both elements were probably present. In general though, the evidence is that the greater emphasis should be placed on the former. It would appear that the reverence which was attached to the alderman for the first century after the granting of the charter of incorporation was no longer shared by all the comburgesses. This change of attitude probably began with the decline of the guild system and all it stood for and was in a sense part of the evolutionary growth of present day society. In a country which was beginning to look outward to America and the Indies, the whole conception of an inward looking corporation in itself produced several strains as has been noted in Chapters VI, VII and VIII.

Before leaving the matter of the Stamford "troubles" it is of interest to pursue further the careers of four of the aldermen dismissed during them, Tobias Loveday, Robert Ramsden, Robert Meadows and John Elmes.

In 1597 Tobias Loveday,

---

or "Toby"<sup>1</sup> as he seems to have been called by his colleagues was in trouble again. Indeed, the then alderman, William Clark, and the comburgesses reported him to the privy council for selling corn out of Stamford contrary to that body's orders. Furthermore he refused both to show any of the corn to the jury appointed to view it, and also to enter into bond to appear before the alderman to explain his refusal. In keeping with traits of character he displayed in 1593 when dismissed from the comburgesses, he questioned the alderman's authority to seek such a bond. In the event, however, he was forced to apologise "most humbly craving pardon of their worships".<sup>2</sup> Loveday must have been a resilient man, however, for in 1598 he was reinstated as a comburgess; becoming alderman in 1601. In 1608, however, he was dismissed again from the first twelve, though the hall book gives no indication of the reason. By 1609 aldermanic year, however, he was back once more, to become alderman in 1614. He never forgot the shame of his earlier

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 244, 250.

2. Ibid., p. 260.



dismissals, however, and during his last aldermancy he tore the page out of the hall book which "contained divers notable causes" concerning the reasons for his dismissal from the company of comburgesses.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear whether this relates to his dismissal of 1593 or that of 1608. As has been observed, there is now no record of the 1608 dismissal, though as can be seen from plate 10<sup>2</sup> in the appendix, there is a detailed account of that of 1593, written in a close hand distinct from the preceding and subsequent pages. It is not clear, therefore, whether the instructions issued on the 20th June 1616 under the aldermancy of Thomas Watson that the substance of the causes of the dismissal should again be entered into the hall book were carried out.

It will be recalled that Ramsden, Meadows and Elmes were dismissed from the company of comburgesses in 1591, being restored in 1593, 1594 and 1598 respectively. During the aldermancy of Elmes in 1599/1600, Ramsden and Meadows were in difficulties

---

1..S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 321.  
 2. See Appendix, Plate 10, p. (71).

because "some base people had raised some notorious scandals" against them.<sup>1</sup> Commissioners<sup>2</sup> were appointed to examine the accusations. It was ruled that the two comburgesses had been "falsely accused" and they were cleared with due punishment being meted out to their detractors. Surprisingly there is no mention of the affair in the hall books. Both Meadows and Ramsden were to become alderman again in 1600 and 1607 respectively.

After the succession of James I the emphasis on dismissal for irreverence to the alderman seems to have declined, although the lapse of Loveday in 1608 might well have been for this reason. There appears to have been relatively few dismissals for other offences during this period. also. Two cases concerning capital burgesses are of interest, however. The first concerned John Sharpe who was dismissed in January 1613.<sup>3</sup> He had been advised by the alderman and comburgesses both in private and in public, to give up his "excessive drinking". His being drunk was considered to be "to the great disgrace" of the whole borough and of the whole corporation.<sup>4</sup> The second dismissal related to Henry Clark in 1616. He was dismissed for adultery with the wives of both a fellow burgess and a shoemaker from Middlesex.<sup>5</sup> For these misdemeanours Clark was deemed "unworthy. . . .to hold a place of that

---

1. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., p. 28.

2. Messrs. Allington, Wingfield, Lambert & Boderham.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 252v.

4. Ibid., p. 312.

5. Ibid., p. 252v.

reputation" (i.e. as a capital burgess). Clark was eventually forgiven, in October 1644, when along with that of others<sup>1</sup> his case was reviewed. Upon "good and deliberate consideration" by the council, he was stated to be a man "well deserving to hold office in the town", and accordingly the order dismissing him was to "be delineated and stand as void and of non-effect".<sup>2</sup> The striking out of the previous record was duly carried out, though it is still readable.

Virtually all the dismissals or disfranchisements discussed above relate to dismissal either for irreverence to the alderman or for immorality. These were not the only infringements of the freeman's oath which brought retribution, however. For example, on the 25th September 1581<sup>3</sup> it was reported to the hall that a comburgess, Richard Barton, had been absent from the town for over three years, and had refused to pay scot and lot and to perform such other duties as were required by his oath. Accordingly his fellow

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 32lv.

2. Ibid., p. 416.

3. Ibid., p. 220v.



comburgesses "thought it good, therefore, to dismiss him from the company of the first twelve".<sup>1</sup> Similarly on the 30th September 1584<sup>2</sup> another comburgess, William Lacey, was dismissed for similar reasons. His colleagues had objected to being "enforced to sustain and bear the burden which belongeth to him".

Not all dismissals from the first and second twelves were at the instigation of the corporation. For example, in 1575 Christopher Loveday, a comburgess, moved to Peterborough. In consequence, he petitioned the alderman that he might be dismissed from the first twelve. This was agreed to subject to the levying of a fine of £2 13s 4d which was "contentedly paid".<sup>3</sup> Similarly on the 17th September 1590 John Barnes of Wansford, a former comburgess, came before the alderman, Robert Langton, and comburgesses to seek his dismissal on the grounds that he no longer dwelt in the town.<sup>4</sup>

Further instances of voluntary dismissal are to be found during the early decades of the seventeenth century. For example, William Walker was removed "at his special request" on August 1609<sup>5</sup> from the company of comburgesses and on the same occasion William Walker from his "choice" a capital burgess.<sup>6</sup> Similarly,

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 220v.
  2. Ibid., p. 226v.
  3. Ibid., p. 212.
  4. Ibid., p. 240.
  5. Ibid., p. 290v.
  6. Ibid.

in 1628, during the early years of the reign of Charles a comburgess, "at his own request was removed from. . . office".<sup>1</sup> There are other examples also.

In considering reasons for dismissal from office, mention must be made again of the punishment meted out to William Salter the brewer<sup>2</sup> whose case was discussed in detail in Chapter VII and to Nicholas Lambe<sup>3</sup> who offended against the Cecil family. Similarly in a unique category were the many burgesses and capital burgesses dismissed in the anti-royalist purges of 1647-48.

Before concluding this discussion on the dismissal from office of comburgesses and capital burgesses and the disfranchisement of burgesses generally, mention must be also made of the punishment administered from time to time to council officials. For example, in October 1591<sup>4</sup> Bartholomew Allen, who had been sworn as clerk on the 6th November 1588<sup>5</sup>, was dismissed from the office of town clerk for unspecified "divers

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 350v.
  2. See pp. 328-330, 338 above.
  3. See pp. 407-408 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 243.
  5. Ibid., 235.

and manifold abuses". Moreover, he was disfranchised from the freedom of the town to which he had been admitted, free of charge as a native in 1587/<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>. Another town clerk, Richard Butcher, was dismissed at a meeting of the hall held on the 25th March, 1634<sup>2</sup> during the aldermanship of Edward Camock. Butcher, it will be recalled, was the clerk who published The Survey and Antiquity of the Town of Stamford in 1646. Butcher's offence can unfortunately be no longer ascertained as the record of it in the hall book has been crossed out. This deletion was a result of his being pardoned in 1644 along with Henry Clark, referred to above.<sup>3</sup>

In the discussion above, close attention has been given to the reasons that prompted disfranchisement or dismissal from the office of comburgess or capital burgess. Each of the cases examined is of interest not merely because it gives an insight into certain aspects of the life of a particular individual but because of the general indication it gives of the moral values of the period.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 233v.
  2. Ibid., p. 374.
  3. See pp. 460-461 above.  
See Appendix, Plate 11, (72).



There was no escaping the social pressures involved. A burgess was expected to honour his freeman's oath. Moreover, if he was chosen to serve on the first and second twelve his private life had to be beyond reproof as well. However, it is only too clear that for a period at least, during the late 1580s and early 1590s, certain of the comburgesses sought to use the sanctity of the freeman's oath to further their own objectives in which there appears to have been a bitter struggle for supremacy amongst some of the principal townsmen. Nevertheless, in spite of all the challenges from whatever source they came, it is true to say that at the end of the period now under discussion, just as at the beginning, the essential sancity of the freeman's oath remained and the government of the town still rested firmly upon it.

---

Chapter XThree Aspects of Town Government:the dignity of the corporation,disorderliness amongst the "town dwellers"and charitable assistance for the poor.1559 - 1649

In the preceding chapter consideration was given to the difficulties inherent in the preservation of the sancity of the freeman's oath. As has been seen, the weaknesses of human nature brought retribution upon a considerable number of individual freemen and for a time at least sullied the very conception of the corporation with intrigue. In general, however, the period now under discussion was marked by a conscious effort to counteract those elements in society which tended towards the devaluing of the freeman's oath. Thus, various measures were introduced to enhance the dignity of the corporation in order to impress upon the burgesses the importance of their obligations to it.

It has already been observed on several occasions that members of the first and second twelve were punished more severely for transgressing many of the bye-laws than were the ordinary burgesses.<sup>1</sup> In consequence, the

---

See pp. 119, 120, 154.

code of conduct required of members of the upper and lower companies in itself tended to set them apart from the remainder of the burgesses. Particularly, in the case of the alderman and common-burgesses, who were also justices of the peace,<sup>1</sup> a degree of separateness was essential if they were to fulfil their duties. Indeed, the unique position of the ruling oligarchy was emphasised in a number of ways. One of these was the wearing of ceremonial dress; another the formalisation of council procedures. The development of both these concepts is discernible from the hall books. For example, in 1574<sup>2</sup> it was ordered that henceforth members of the first and second twelves should be in attendance upon the alderman at any holding of the sessions or meeting of the hall. They were to accompany him, two by two, in array according to

---

1. See p. 56 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 208v.



their seniorities, dressed in "their most seemly apparel for the worship of the town".<sup>1</sup> Only sickness or other "great occasion" licensed by the alderman was a reason for non-attendance. Indeed, those who failed to present themselves were required to pay a fine of 8d if a member of the first twelve, and 4d if of the second twelve. Failure to pay would result in committal to prison.

The visit of James I to Stamford in 1603 on his way to London from Scotland, already referred to in chapter VIII above, prompted the alderman, comburgesses and burgesses to consider the matter of ceremonial dress. At a meeting held on 17th April of that year it was resolved that every member of the first twelve, "for the entertainment of the King's Majesty, for the worship of the town and place he holdeth" should provide himself before the king's arrival in the town with "one gown of sad murray cloth, furred with fine down"<sup>2</sup> this to be in accord with the gowns worn by the alderman and other comburgesses. Similar

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 208v.

2. Ibid., p. 273.

The paleography of the word "down" is a doubtful transcription.

gowns, without the trimmings, were to be provided by members of the second twelve. It was intended that this official dress should be worn not only on the occasion of the king's visit, but on festival days and other occasions as decreed by the alderman. Those elected to the council in the future, would be given six months in which to obtain an appropriate gown. Penalties for disobeying this order were severe, a fine of £10 in the case of members of the first twelve, and £5 in respect of the second twelve, with the prospect of imprisonment till they be paid. Moreover, any persistent offender was to be dismissed from the council and disfranchised of all his liberties and privileges appertaining to membership of the corporation and another put in his place with "more regard" for the "worship of the town".<sup>1</sup> It would be of interest to know if such penalties were ever implemented; if they were there is no specific mention of the fact in the hall books.

This ruling, however, seems to have fallen in desuetude, at least as far as the capital burgesses were

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 273.

concerned. This may have been partially on account of clause 3 of the 1605 letters patent which, it will be recalled, authorised a common council of 24 capital burgesses<sup>1</sup>, as a successor to the second twelve, which existed only by prescription<sup>2</sup>. Thus, at a hall held on the 14th October 1614<sup>3</sup> a discussion took place on whether or not members of the 24 capital burgesses should have gowns to wear when attending the alderman "to and fro the church and elsewhere upon warning being given to them".<sup>4</sup> It was proposed to leave the matter in abeyance to the next meeting of the hall to allow time for consideration. However, at a meeting held on the 3rd November the same year it was agreed that the capital burgesses should buy themselves gowns and "wear them for the worship and credit of the town and grace of their places".<sup>5</sup>

A subsequent ordinance indicates that the wearing of gowns at least for the comburgesses became not merely a matter of royal visits and festival occasions. Thus on the 27th October 1623<sup>6</sup> it was agreed that in future all comburgesses should attend the common hall in their

---

1. See pp. 259-260 above.

2. See p. 54 above.

3. S.C.R, The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 314.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 316v.

6. Ibid., p. 340.



gowns "upon all occasion for the worship of the town".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, they were to wear them when attending the Sunday sermon in the company of the alderman, and when escorting him to his home afterwards.

The coming to the town of Charles I in 1633, caused the matter of official dress to be looked at again. As has been noted in chapter VIII, this royal visit was one on which much time and money was expended. At a hall held on the 4th March 1632/3<sup>2</sup> the rules with regard to gowns enacted in 1603, prior to the visit of James I, were re-introduced virtually ad verbatim. In spite of this enactment, however, on the 25th March 1633/4 it was considered necessary to ordain that all the capital burgesses should "wear their gowns at all such times as Mr. Alderman and the comburgesses. . .except at the sessions".<sup>3</sup> The penalty for disobeying was set at one shilling for every occasion

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 340.
  2. Ibid., p. 369.
  3. Ibid., p. 374.

Furthermore, two of the capital burgesses, Richard Royce and Thomas Woodliffe were specifically ordered to purchase gowns upon the pain of a similar penalty.<sup>1</sup> This is an interesting order in that it emphasises the differences between comburgesses and capital burgesses since the former were also justices of the peace. Should any capital burgess have cause to attend the sessions, it was to be made quite clear to the prisoners and others that they were of inferior status. Further difficulties must have arisen, however, concerning the enforcement of this bye-law for a similar edict was issued at a meeting of the hall held on the 9th November 1640.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, those capital burgesses without gowns were given to the following feast of St. Thomas to obtain them. Such gowns were to be of "sad coloured

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 374.

2. Ibid., p. 405v.

stuff or cloth" which is an indication that there had as yet been no general change in the styles agreed in 1603. Those who failed to comply, as in 1603 and 1633/4<sup>1</sup> were to be fined £5, with the same additional severe penalties for non-payment. In future newly elected capital burgesses were to be given three months to comply with the order.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless it appears that certain of the capital burgesses still failed to provide themselves with the necessary gowns. In consequence, at a hall held on the 26th August 1641<sup>3</sup> it was again resolved that the order be enforced and the appropriate penalties extracted for every default. This seems to be the last occasion during the period now under discussion

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 374.  
See pp. 469, 471 above.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 405v.
  3. Ibid., p. 408.



in which the question of distinctive dress for members of the council was raised at a meeting of the hall. Subsequently, however, in the period covered by Section III of this thesis, 1650-1750, there are a number of references to the matter, for example in Butcher's <sup>1</sup>  
Survey of Stamford.

Thus, it can be seen how the dignity of the corporation depended, in part at least, upon the factors discussed above; first an insistence upon the observance of the rules of the oligarchy which controlled it; secondly an outward visual display of the latter's importance to the population at large. The association of authority with the awe of God has also been noted above.<sup>2</sup> The Stuart's belief in the divine right of kings was not so far removed from the Elizabethan alderman's conception of the majesty of his office since an offence against him was an offence against God. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of regulations enacted during this period related to church going.

---

1. Butcher, op. cit., p. 11.

2. See p. 427 above.

Thus, on the 15th December 1570, a comprehensive bye-law concerning attendance at church was adopted by the alderman and comburgesses with the assent of the assembled commons. It appears that "divers godly and well disposed persons" had asked whether it would be possible for "the most part of the inhabitants" to attend divine service daily at a time of day when their businesses would not be "let, hindered or slacked".<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, therefore, it was proposed that daily services should be held in St. Mary's church, morning prayers at 5 a.m. and evening prayers at 5 p.m. The master and mistress of each house, together with their servants, or at least "one discreet person of every house" was expected to attend each service "for the whole space of the same".<sup>2</sup> Penalties for non-compliance, apart from lawful excuses, were fixed at 2d. for the first offence and 4d for every second and subsequent offence. Those who failed to pay were liable to imprisonment until they did so. The forfeits so collected were to be distributed weekly to the "poor people" of the town "for their further and better relief

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 200.

2. Ibid.

and sustentation". This ordinance prompts the suggestion that perhaps, in spite of its laudatory language in praise of "the high honour and glory of Almighty God", one of its principal purposes, in the eyes of some of the council at least, might have been that it was a further means by which money could be raised to alleviate the pressing problem of poverty within the town.

As regards the members of the first twelve were concerned, additional duties with regard to church attendance were required of them by an ordinance issued on the 30th September 1574.<sup>1</sup> Whenever a sermon was to be delivered, which would require the attendance of the alderman or his deputy, members of the first twelve were required to call upon the alderman, or his deputy, and accompany him to church. Afterwards they were to escort him home "two by two" in orderly array ". . .for the worship of the town". Those who remained at home without a reason approved by the alderman, or someone acting on his behalf, were to be fined 6d, with committal to prison in default.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 208v.



Apparently, however, it often happened that many of the first twelve were away from home, which resulted in the alderman being accompanied "by three or four or less" of his fellow comburgesses. This was felt to be to the "great disadvantage, disworship and discountenance of the town". Consequently, at a meeting of the hall held on the 10th December 1583<sup>1</sup> it was ordered that members of the second twelve should also observe the ordinance made on the 30th September 1574, with like penalties for default.

It is not possible to assess how strictly this rule was enforced. A modification made to it on the 13th May 1630 suggests that it may have fallen into desuetude. A bye-law of that date required members of the first and second companies, who lived in the same parish as the alderman or his deputy, to wait upon him to and from the church on Sunday mornings and afternoons, providing he attended his own parish church.<sup>2</sup> This order, however, has been shown to be the case with others discussed in this thesis, was gradually eroded by the passage of time. So much so, in fact, that at a meeting of the hall held on the 26th August, 1641 it was reported that "due observation of the performance

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 225v.

2. Ibid., p. 353v.

of the said order" was "daily more and more neglected to the great disgrace of the alderman or his deputy".<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, therefore, it was decided to revise the fines levied on offenders. Possibly, however, no final agreement could be reached on the matter because in the hall book blank spaces have been left where the new fines should have been entered. Indeed, this particular hall seems to have been one in which other forms of slackness were considered in regard, for example, to the wearing of gowns, discussed above,<sup>2</sup> and absence from meetings, referred to below.<sup>3</sup>

It is probable that the formal attendance at church of members of the first and second companies proceeded for much of the period under discussion without incident. In 1624, however, the alderman and comburgesses were faced with a situation which must have caused considerable consternation at the time. John Vicars, the parson of St. Mary's, Stamford, was accused by Robert Newton, the parson at Greatford, of "holding conventicles". As a result the alderman certified to the Privy Council that Vicars was "guilty of propounding dangerous

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 407v.

2. See pp. 468, 474 above.

3. See pp. 500-505 below.

doctrines, both public and privately, thereby causing great discord and contempt of authority, to the prejudice of the town's government",<sup>1</sup> his sermons "tending to the disgrace of the temporal magistrate".<sup>2</sup> As a result Bishop Williams of Lincoln called upon him to acknowledge his errors.

On 17th February, 1630, on the accusation of Robert Newton, Vicars was bound over in the sum of £48 not to leave the town. However, on 11th March, he was required to provide a further bond of £500 pending his appearance before the ecclesiastical commissioners in London on 15th April.<sup>3</sup> This larger bond was entered into jointly in the name of Vicars himself and two others, John Smith a leather seller, and John Bailly, a brown baker, both of London.<sup>4</sup> Because of this second bond, the Attorney General on 25th March, decreed that Vicars should be released from his attendance on the Privy Council.

Subsequently, in June the corporation's representative in London, Mr. Richard Stacey, wrote to the alderman to the effect that the cost of the suit against

---

1. C.S.P., Domestic Series, Vol CLXXX, p. 421.  
 2. Ibid., Charles I, 1628-29, Vol. CXIX, p. 363.  
 3. Ibid., Charles I, 1629-1631, Vol. CLXII, p. 210.  
 4. Ibid., p. 221.



Vicars depending in the Court of the High Commissioners should be defrayed out of the common stock of the town. Accordingly, on 15th June 1630, a hall was called to discuss the matter.<sup>1</sup> Three comburgesses and fifteen capital burgesses voted that the town should not bear the cost of the prosecution. One capital burgess, Abraham Falkner, felt that on the contrary the town should help the rector in his defence. Only three comburgesses, Nicholas Lamb, Robert Whatton and William Salter believed that either the town or private men should pay for the prosecution.<sup>2</sup>

It is significant that the three townsmen prepared to utilize town funds to assist in the prosecution of Vicars were comburgesses. Opposed to their views were fifteen capital burgesses and three comburgesses. In the event, therefore, half the comburgesses and a third of the capital burgesses had failed to vote. It seems likely, that these abstainers were anxious not to commit themselves one way or the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 359v.

2. Ibid., p. 359v.

other. It would appear also that the Bishop's views on the rector's transgressions may not have been shared by the burgesses at large, certainly not enough to warrant the expenditure of public money in seeking a conviction against him. Possibly many of the capital burgesses in particular, were not out of sympathy with the rector's attack on the "temporal magistrates". Indeed, it is possible that the views of the one capital burgess who felt the corporation should rather give its support to Vicars, were more widely shared than the voting figures indicate. Ironically, as has been observed in chapters VIII and IX, Lamb and Salter, two of the "hard-liners", were subsequently to be displaced from office on account of their alienating the Earl of Exeter.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting upon the Vicars affair some eighteen years later<sup>2</sup>, Butcher proffered the opinion that immediately prior to it the town "was well established, settled and disposed to peace and unity in itself", a conclusion which, as has been observed in

---

1. See pp. 407, 408

2. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 24.

Chapter IX above, seems to have been justified. His view was that certain of the magistrates were really to blame for appointing the youthful Vicars as rector. Their motives in so doing in his estimation were merely to gratify their own "vain gloriousness" by having the golden mace borne before them to St. Mary's church, "more as a proud ostentation to the people than any humility to the scripture". Butcher, nevertheless, was no supporter of Vicars whom he considered to have divided the people of Stamford "into faction and vexation one against another".<sup>1</sup> Possibly, however, Vicars was merely reflecting a national trend which was becoming apparent in 1630. He was a puritan<sup>2</sup>, and Bishop Williams, who had so vehemently opposed him was, according to his former secretary, Edward Lake, "no favourer of Puritans, but a strict observer of the rites and ceremonies of the Church".<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, in 1635, Vicars, who moved to London, was restored to his ministry on the recommendation of the Bishop of Ely, but was not permitted to return to Stamford.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 24.

2. C.S.P., 1626-1649, Addenda, Vol. DXXVII, 32.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 1635-1636, Vol CCLXI, Fol. 295v. p. 119.



There are no further references in the hall books to church going as part of the municipal scene during the period now under discussion, namely 1559-1649. It would not be inappropriate, therefore, to conclude this discussion on the part that church attendance played in the working of the corporation by making reference to the will of the Reverend Robert Johnson, formerly of North Luffenham, and archdeacon of Leicester. He gave, in the first half of the seventeenth century, a bible of the "largest size" which was "to pass from alderman to alderman and to be laid on the alderman's cushion before him in the church every Lord's day, or at other times when he goeth to church".<sup>1</sup>

So far in this chapter an appraisal has been made of the public image of the corporation. In considering the formality and dignity of the latter, it is necessary to examine further some of the rules which appertained to the office of alderman

---

1. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 20.

and membership of the first and second companies. Such rules were important, not only from the administrative point of view, but also because any kind of dissension amongst members of the corporation detracted from its aura. In particular, as has been observed in the previous chapter, the status of the alderman had to be maintained. Thus, on the 23rd September 1567, during the aldermancy of John Houghton, consideration was given by the hall to the long standing rule<sup>1</sup> that every year three of the comburgesses should be nominated for the office of alderman, one being subsequently elected by the "commons" to hold the post for the ensuing year. This rule was a refinement of the procedure laid down in the third clause of the chapter of incorporation, 1461/2<sup>2</sup> It was alleged that as a result of the implementation of this customary procedure, certain of the comburgesses had been "oftener called and chosen than their ability could well bear, to the hindrance of divers, and the undoing of some".<sup>3</sup> In

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 3.  
C.C.R., VI, p. 165. See pp. 52-53 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190.

consequence, it was agreed that if a comburgess should be elected as alderman for a second time within the space of seven years, he should receive financial help from the corporation towards the expenses of his office. This was to comprise the receipt of "all. . . fines, amercements and correction money"<sup>1</sup> collected during the term of his aldermancy. To assist the alderman in this way was considered to be "for the better maintaining of the poor estate" of the town. Presumably it was felt that an alderman unembarrassed by financial hardship could better devote his time to the interests of the town,<sup>2</sup> particularly the poor. It is interesting to speculate why this ordinance was made since an examination of the roll of aldermen indicates that there were very few comburgesses to whom it might have applied. John Houghton, the alderman at the time the ordinance was made had only been alderman once before, in 1558/9 (an interval of seven aldermanic years). During the twenty years preceding the ordinance, William Campinet

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190

2. See pp. 489-490 below.



a draper, had been alderman in 1553/4 and 1564/5 (an interval of 10 aldermanic years), Ralph Harrop, an innkeeper, in 1554/5 and 1563/4 (8 years), Thomas Watson, a butcher, who had died ten years previously in 1556, had been alderman in 1533/4, 1546/7 and 1550/1 and Nicholas Wyles, a draper, who died in 1571, in 1547/8 and 1556/7. All the other comburgesses elected as alderman between 1546 and 1566 were newcomers to the office, though some of them were subsequently to hold office for a further period (Henry Inman, 1561/2, 1570/1; Godfrey Dawson 1565/6, 1577/8). The only reasonable explanation for the making of this ordinance would be that possibly Houghton, Campinet or Harrop thought that they were likely to be elected for a third time to the office of alderman in 1567 or Dawson or Inman for a second time. Much earlier in the sixteenth century, prior to 1546, very many more of the aldermen had held the office on three or even four occasions.<sup>1</sup> For example,

---

1. See Appendix, Table A, pp.(1)-(10).

of the aldermen who were elected between 1521 and 1545 11 were elected for the first time, 7 for the second time, 5 for the third and 2 for the fourth. Perhaps it was a "folk memory" of this earlier period that the burgesses of 1567 had in mind when framing their bye-law. It could have been little else since all those comburgesses who had been alderman between 1521 and 1545 were by that time dead.

Subsequently, on the 20th October 1591, the bye-law of 1567 was repealed.<sup>1</sup> It was considered that this constitution was not only "providential to the benefit of the . . . town" but also restrained "the free election of the alderman yearly according to the charter".<sup>2</sup> Possibly one of the reasons prompting the abolition of the "seven year" rule may have been that it could have had the effect of making the nomination of a former alderman for a second or third term of office less likely on account of the rest of the comburgesses being fearful of the expense involved. Perhaps its abolition, therefore, helped to make it possible for Richard Shute to be elected for a third term of office in 1592, immediately following

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 244.

2. Ibid.

his second period of office.<sup>1</sup> It is of further interest that between the making of the bye-law in 1567 and its repeal in 1591 only one comburgess might have been qualified to have taken advantage of it, namely John Houghton, who was serving his second term as alderman when it was passed. He subsequently became alderman for a third time in 1575/6 (an interval of eight aldermanic years) and in 1582/3 (an interval of six aldermanic years). Possibly, therefore, for his fourth period of office he was eligible to receive the income from fines, etc. Certainly, the preamble of this bye-law gives a misleading impression of the length of the intervals between their respective periods of office as alderman of those comburgesses who held the post more than once. It serves as an example of the caution needed in interpreting the significance of the corporation records. One is tempted to conclude that the bye-law was introduced principally for the benefit of John Houghton and possibly repealed for that of Richard Shute.

---

1. See p. 435 seq. above.



Whether or not any aldermen actually benefited from the "seven year" rule, there were a number of personal privileges attached to the position of the town's principal burgess. For example, on the 23rd September, 1569<sup>1</sup> it was agreed that every one holding the office of alderman should in future be entitled to keep "ten fat sheep" in the common field towards the cost of his housekeeping. These were to be "killed in his house" presumably to ensure that they were kept only for his personal use. Any alderman who grazed more than the permitted number was liable to a fine of 3s 4d.<sup>2</sup> On the 25th March 1572/3 a further privilege was agreed for the alderman, this time "for the maintenance of his house".<sup>3</sup> The lease on a parcel of town land, called Cow Holme, had almost expired. Instead of letting it again, it was granted in perpetuity to the alderman on payment of the "old accustomed rent of 13s 4d" and the carrying out at his own expense of any repairs that might be necessary. The timber from

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 196v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 203.

of trees

the willows or other types<sup>1</sup> growing within the close, however, was to be used for the benefit of the town and not for the alderman personally.<sup>1</sup>

As has been observed above, the office of alderman sometimes imposed financial hardship upon its holders. Thus, in December, 1627<sup>2</sup>, it was agreed by the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses that there should be an additional yearly allowance from the town stock of £10 towards the alderman's "hospitality". This sum brought the total allowance up to £24 per annum, the first alderman to benefit from the increase being Nicholas Lamb.

Another aspect directly affecting the dignity of the corporation related to the

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 203.
  2. Ibid., p. 348v.

election of the alderman, and members of the first and second companies. It has already been observed that disputes in this respect detracted from the public image of the corporation. In consequence, therefore, a number of bye-laws were enacted during the period now under discussion, the purpose of which was to try to ensure the council elections took place without controversy. It will be recalled that in chapter I it was pointed out that although the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 specifically authorised only a "first twelve", in practice a "second twelve" was elected as well.<sup>1</sup> At a meeting of the hall held on the 12th January, 1595/6<sup>2</sup>, it is recorded that the alderman, Cuthbert Greenberry, and the twelve comburgesses, chose twelve of the "most discreet sort in the town" to help them in the "making of laws and ordinances for the good of the town, according to the tenor of the Queen's

---

1. See p. 54 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 272v,



Majesty Charter lately granted. . ."<sup>1</sup> The burgesses so elected were to be known as the "twelve elect". The reference to the "charter lately granted" relates to the fourth sub-division of the seventh clause of the 1593 letters patent. This, it will be recalled, granted certain privileges to the alderman, comburgesses and "twelve more discreet burgesses".<sup>2</sup> It was not, however, until the letters patent granted by James I in 1605 that the election of a second company (of twenty-four) was specifically authorised.<sup>3</sup>

It is not clear why special mention is made of the election of the second twelve in 1595/6 unless it was that controversy was already arising concerning the status of the second twelve, who it will be recalled were elected by prescription. Certainly the preamble to the 1605 letters patent refers to the "controversies" which had arisen concerning the "election of the alderman and other officers".<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 257v.
  2. See pp. 246-248 above.
  3. See p. 261 above.
  4. See p. 258 above.

This supposition concerning possible dissension tends to be borne out by the consideration given at the meeting of the hall in January 1595/6 referred to above to the aspects of the town's electoral system. Thus, an addition was made to the rules relating to the election of a substitute whenever the alderman was too ill to perform his duties. It had been the "ancient use and custom of the town".<sup>1</sup> for the alderman to appoint one of the comburgesses, who had himself previously served as alderman, to act as his deputy in such instances. This is borne out by references to a deputy alderman in the hall book, for example in 1465.<sup>2</sup> Such customary practice, however, does not seem to have been extended to the alderman's role as presiding magistrate at the Quarter Sessions. On the contrary, during an alderman's illness the gaol was "pestered with prisoners".<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, therefore, it was agreed that in case of his illness, the alderman should appoint a deputy from

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 256v.

2. See p. 155 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 256v.

amongst those who had held the office of alderman to conduct the Quarter Sessions in his absence. Subsequently, as has been observed in chapter VI, the rules concerning the election of deputy aldermen were removed from customary law and embodied in the eleventh clause of the 1605 letters patent granted to Stamford corporation by James I.<sup>1</sup>

Also on the 12th January 1595/6, consideration was given to the procedure to be adopted in the case of the death of the alderman during his period of office. It was agreed that henceforth, if such an eventuality should occur, the twelve comburgesses and twelve elect should elect a new comburgess to make up the number of the senior company to thirteen, "according to the ancient use of the . . . town".<sup>2</sup> The newly elected comburgess would then act as "recorder"<sup>3</sup> for the first twelve, nominating three comburgess who had previously held the office, for the post of

---

1. See p. 267 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 256v.

3. Spokesman.



alderman for the remainder of the aldermanic year. These chosen three were to be presented in open hall to the rest of the comburgesses and burgesses who would chose one to be alderman. If the burgesses failed or refused to elect one of the candidates, the choice was to be made by the comburgesses and "twelve elect" by themselves.

A similar regulation was also adopted on the 12th January 1595/6 in respect of the annual election of the alderman. Three comburgesses were to be nominated by the alderman and the remainder of the comburgesses and presented to the hall. The choice of one of them as alderman was vested in the burgesses, though should they refuse to carry out this duty the alderman and the twelve elect were authorised to act in their stead.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to speculate upon the reasons why these bye-laws, especially those concerning the procedure to be adopted in the case of the illness

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 256v.

or death of the alderman, were adopted at this particular point of time. Possibly the alderman, Cuthbert Greenberry was in poor health for ironically he died before completing his term of office. Butcher records that the choice of his successor for the remainder of the aldermanic year, William Clark, a glazier, was made by the comburgesses but not by the commons".<sup>1</sup> The hall book records, however, that at a meeting held on the 28th May 1596, Clark was elected on the votes of seven capital burgesses in addition to the twelve comburgesses.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, Clark was elected alderman for the following aldermanic year 1596/7 as well.<sup>3</sup>

On the 27th September, 1597, during the aldermancy of William Clark, reference is again made to the choice of the twelve elect~~ed~~ by the comburgesses.<sup>4</sup> The implication is that the members of the second twelve were obliged to stand annual re-election by the comburgesses. In the event those chosen were the same as

---

1. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 28.

2. At the same hall, Lionel Featherstone, a capital burgess, was elected to the first twelve.

3. See Appendix Table A pp.. (1)-(10).

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 261.

those elected in 1595/6, apart from one Lionel Featherstone, who had been chosen as a comburgess in May 1596, and two newcomers. "For the good government of the town", the alderman, comburgesses and twelve elect thereafter confirmed the bye-laws made on the 12th January 1595/6 with regard to the election of the alderman, it being resolved to "explain some of the same further. . .for the good and quiet government" of the town.<sup>1</sup> Such explanation as was made, however, amounted in effect to a substantial revision. Thus, in the event of an alderman dying in office, a new comburgess was to be elected, not by the twelve comburgesses and twelve elect, but by the former alone. The changes in this revised bye-law were undoubtedly intended to strengthen the position of the comburgesses in relation to the "twelve elect". A modification having the same effect was also introduced in the 1595/6 bye-law relating to the annual election of the alderman. It will be recalled that the final choice from the three nominees was to

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 261.



be made by the burgesses. If the burgesses failed to make a choice, either by neglect or wilful default, the election of the alderman was to have been made by the alderman and twelve elect.<sup>1</sup>

Under the revised constitution, however, this last named rule was amended to the "alderman, and comburgesses and the twelve elect".<sup>2</sup>

However, the bye-law did not in the event prevent strife. In 1598, Nicholas Lamb, a draper, was elected as alderman by the burgesses, but without the support of the comburgesses. As a result "great dissension"<sup>3</sup> took place. Unfortunately, the hall book offers no illumination upon this controversy. Indeed, apart from the names of those elected from the companies there is nothing recorded in the council minutes from October 1597 to October 1601.<sup>4</sup>

As has been observed in chapter VI<sup>5</sup> different forms of the bye-laws relating to the annual election of the alderman and of a substitute in the event of

- 
1. It is possible that the scribe inadvertently omitted "and comburgesses" from the record of the 1595/6 bye-law.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 261.
  3. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 28/
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 262-269.
  5. See p. 267 above.

the alderman's death in office were incorporated into the 1605 letters patent of James I. In both cases, the number of nominees was reduced to two. The election of the successful candidate in the case of the annual election of an alderman, however, was firmly vested in the "existing alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses" and not in the burgesses as a whole. Similarly, in the case of the death of the alderman, the choice of a successor was left to members of the first and second companies.

Finally, on the 27th September 1597, consideration was given to the procedure to be adopted if a comburgess should be dismissed or die in office. The alderman and comburgesses were to nominate two of the burgesses in open hall. The alderman and burgesses should then choose one of these to be a comburgess for "the term of his natural life"<sup>1</sup> unless subsequently dismissed. If the burgesses could not agree, or refused to make a decision, then the new comburgess was to be chosen by the alderman,

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 261.

comburgesses and twelve elect. This bye-law also was included in the 1605 letters patent, except that the choice was limited to a member of the "twenty-four capital burgesses".<sup>1</sup> In January 1628/9<sup>2</sup> an interesting ordinance was enacted concerning the selection by the comburgesses of a new member of their company. Only a tradesman who had previously held the office of chamberlain, or who had hired someone to execute the office on his behalf was to be eligible for appointment. A similar proviso was to apply to an alderman's or comburgess 's son or other inhabitant within Stamford"<sup>3</sup>. By contrast, however, if the candidate for office of comburgess was a "gentleman" or a "stranger. . .chosen to be a countenance to the corporation", he was exempt from the ruling.

In this discussion upon the dignity of the corporation certain discrepancies have become apparent. What Butcher had called the "vain gloriousness"<sup>4</sup> of some of the magistrates was not, it would appear, an attribute

---

1. See p. 260 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 353.

3. Ibid.

4. See p. 482 above.



of all members of the first and second companies. Possibly some of them found the holding of office not merely expensive, but also somewhat tedious. This is evident from the reluctance of some members to attend church, or, particularly in the case of the second company, to purchase gowns. Moreover, as has been noted in chapter IX<sup>1</sup>, a number of individuals were dismissed from office from time to time on account of absenting themselves over a prolonged period from meetings of the hall. Towards the end of the period now under discussion, however, the failure of the members of the two companies to observe the rules of the corporation concerning attendance at the hall prompted the making of specific ordinances to deal with the problem. The circumstances were thus. On the 21st August 1638, the alderman, Henry Rastell, summoned a meeting of the hall after giving "reasonable warning" through the medium of the clerk.<sup>2</sup> Only the alderman himself, five comburgesses (out of twelve) and ten capital burgesses (out of twenty-four) put

---

1. See pp. 461-462 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 393.

in an appearance. As a result, the alderman declared that the hall "could not proceed to the expediting and effecting of such business. . . as was intended to have been done".<sup>1</sup> Those present were uncertain whether or not there was in existence any bye-law "concerning any punishment. . . to be imposed upon any comburgess or capital burgess for not. . . attending at the hall".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, they decided that if such an ordinance existed it was to be confirmed; if it did not, then thereafter those who absented themselves from meetings were to be fined 2s 6d, any such fines levied being employed by the alderman for the relief of the poor in the town. Only those members of the two companies who had leave of absence from the alderman were to be exempt from payment.

A few years later on the 26th August 1641<sup>3</sup> the matter of attendance at meetings of the hall was raised again. The occasion was one to which

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 393.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 408.

reference has already been made above<sup>1</sup>, since other matters relating to neglect of duty, namely church going and the wearing of gowns by members of the second company<sup>2</sup> were also dealt with. It may be assumed that laxity in attendance at the hall had again arisen, for a further bye-law, similar to that of 1638 was agreed. Those who failed to obey a summons from the alderman's officer to attend a meeting "at the time and hour. . .appointed" were to be punished by a fine of 3s 4d if a comburgess and 2s 6d if a capital burgess.<sup>3</sup> As in the earlier ordinance, the proceedings were to be used at the alderman's discretion for the benefit of the poor. Only those with express permission of the alderman were excused payment. Presumably, for a few years at least, the ordinance had the desired effect. It is of interest, however, that on the 2nd October 1647<sup>4</sup> so few members of the two companies were present, that "business. . .could not be effected so that the alderman and rest of the company of comburgesses

---

1. See p. 477 above.

2. See p. 473 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 408.

4. Ibid., p. 424.



and capital burgesses departed home and nothing done".<sup>1</sup> Those absent included six comburgesses and thirteen capital burgesses. This was an exceptional occasion, however, since many of the absentees were shortly afterwards dismissed for royalist sympathies.<sup>2</sup> Even after the purge from the two companies of those unsympathetic to the parliamentary cause, however, the problem of securing regular attendance at meetings of the hall persisted. Thus, shortly after the end of the period now under discussion, namely in February 1650/1, eleven capital burgesses were warned by the Sergeant at the Mace to attend at the common hall. However, they failed to do so and were accordingly fined 2s 6d each. The fines were ordered to be collected by constables and overseers appointed by the alderman within a month.<sup>3</sup> Such officers were to be required to pay 2s 6d themselves to the Sergeant at the Mace in respect of every fine they failed to collect. Of course, the problem of

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 424.

2. See p. 385 seq.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 436v.

ensuring attendance at meetings of the hall was not confined to Stamford, as the records of a number of towns testify. At Nottingham, for example, in 1605, it was ordained that those who failed to honour their obligations in this respect without lawful excuse were to be fined one shilling, which sum of money was to be given to the poor of the parish in which the offender lived.<sup>1</sup>

In considering those factors which contributed to the maintenance of the dignity of the corporation, there are a number of other ordinances which call for comment. Some of these have already been referred to in Chapter VIII, for example, that which related to the furnishing of members of the first and second companies with a man"with a halbert for the worship of the town" on the occasion of the visit of King Charles I in 1634.<sup>2</sup> Other ordinances now to be considered, relate to the town bell, the use of which contributed to the formality of corporation proceedings. Regulations concerning it were made at a meeting of the hall held on the 27th October 1623, at which it will be recalled the matter of ceremonial dress was also considered.<sup>3</sup> It was ordered that

---

1. Stevenson, op. cit., IV, 1547-1625, p. 270.

2. See p. 376 above.

3. See p. 471 above.

whenever the alderman convened a common hall, the treble bell at St. Mary's should be tolled to summon both companies to attend upon the alderman "to and fro the hall for the glory and worship of the town".<sup>1</sup>

Of interest, too, is that at the same meeting of the hall, Toby Loveday, about whom much has been written in chapter IX<sup>2</sup>, was authorised to receive his "ordinary allowance" from the chamberlain for "ringing the bell and keeping the clock" at St. Mary's for the previous year. Likewise, one Timothy Evatt, a clerk, was remunerated for reading prayers there. The matter of the town bell was to come before the hall again on the 2nd January 1626.<sup>3</sup> It was agreed on this occasion that five pounds should be given out of the town stock towards the cost of recasting the "common bell" in St. Mary's providing that it could be made tuneable to the other five bells. It was confirmed that the bell was the property of the town rather than the parish and ordained that it should be inscribed to this effect. The

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 340.

2. See pp. 440-449, 457-459.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 345.



subsequent inscription was to read -

"Campana Burgensibus de Stanford inserviens"<sup>1</sup>

The town bell, however, was not the only one that was to concern the corporation and it is of passing interest to note that on the 28th August 1638 the hall agreed to order the churchwardens of every parish to collect money towards the cost of recasting the great bell at St. Mary's.<sup>2</sup> The dedication on this was to read -

"Fear God, Honour the King, 1638. 3  
I.B.T.T. Guardiane"

Likewise, on the 9th October 1651 it was ordered that one Francis Cole should receive 6s 8d a year out of the town stock to ring the bell at All Saints at five o'clock in the morning and nine o'clock at night.<sup>4</sup>

A further aspect of corporation ceremonial has already been mentioned briefly in chapter VIII<sup>5</sup>, namely the employment of waits for special occasions, such as the journey through Stamford of Charles I in 1633. Subsequent to the

---

1. Harrod, op. cit., I, p. 91.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 394.

3. Harrod, op. cit., I, p. 91.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 438.

5. See p. 375 above.

royal visit, at a meeting of the hall held on the 4th October 1627 a letter was read from Henry, Lord Gray in which he offered the services of seven of his servants as town waits.<sup>1</sup> By a majority decision, the offer was accepted and it was agreed to provide them with "coats and the town badge" at public expense. The newly appointed waits were to "do such for. . . the town as waits in other towns. . . were accustomed to do". Their initial duties were to play yearly at the alderman's feast. It is probable that until this time Stamford Corporation had no waits of its own. Certainly, earlier in the period now under discussion, namely in 1573, the waits from Nottingham were staying in Stamford, though whether or not on official duty, it is difficult to say.<sup>2</sup> In 1572, however, Stamford's neighbours Grantham and Leicester had waits of their own.<sup>3</sup>

Further references to the "town's musicians" at Stamford are to be found in the hall books. Thus,

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 348v.
  2. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol IV, p. 150.
  3. Ibid., pp. 140, 138.

on the 2nd December 1641, it was resolved that the town's "three scutcheons", together with two others, yet to be made, were to be worn by the musicians and placed in the safe keeping of one of their number, William Mewes.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, it can be seen from the discussion in the present and preceding chapters that, during the period now under discussion, the corporation of Stamford was constantly concerned with the preservation and extension of the privileges which it had acquired under the charter of incorporation of 1461/2 and subsequently. Such a preoccupation was not unique, of course, in so far as it applied to corporate towns in general. Each town, however, had its own peculiarities with regard to the finer points of local government. At Stamford, as has been noted more particularly

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 410.



in the present chapter, the first and second companies gave considerable attention both to the corporation's public image and to endeavouring to ensure that its members, particularly the alderman, were elected without dissension. One gains the impression, however, that the more formal aspects of service to the corporation commended themselves more to the comburgesses than to their less influential colleagues of the second company. Nevertheless, the concern of the comburgesses and capital burgesses and to a lesser extent of the commonalty with the niceties of corporation procedure is in sharp contrast to the activities of the poorer elements of the population. The existence of poverty in the town has been dealt with at some length in chapter VII above. It is now opportune to examine more closely certain

---

differences in the way of life of the townsmen who had taken the freeman's oath and the town dwellers who were denied the liberties and freedom of the former.

Numerous bye-laws were passed during the period from 1559 to 1649 relating to the poorer elements of the community. One of the earliest was enacted at the meeting of the hall held on the 22nd May 1565<sup>1</sup>, on which occasion it will be recalled consideration was also given to anti-sedition legislation in regard to burgesses.<sup>2</sup> These must have been difficult times in Stamford, presumably because of the poverty there. It was decreed that "no person being a handicraft labourer, or other man's . . . servant" should leave their dwelling houses after 8 p.m. between 29th September and 25th March and after 9 p.m. during the remainder of the year. Any breaking this law were to be arrested by the constable, or other person appointed by the alderman, and committed to prison

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 184v.

2. See p. 419. above.

until they had paid a fine of one shilling, a not inconsiderable sum for the unfranchised. Moreover, it was decreed, by a further bye-law, that no artificer or handicraftsman should "go from house to house vagrantly". Rather they were to "occupy themselves in their . . . occupations or some other labour for the avoiding of idleness".<sup>1</sup> First offenders, upon presentation to the alderman with the requisite proof, were to be imprisoned for three days and nights; second offenders were to be both imprisoned and fined and third offenders "banished the town without any favour to be shown".

The problems ~~causing~~ arising from the presence of poverty in the town, however, were virtually intractable. It has already been recorded in chapter VII that in 1567 it was reported that there were "divers idle and poor people within the town of late days".<sup>2</sup> These unfranchised townsmen "were given daily from week to week when the weather serveth to shout and bet

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 184v.

2. Ibid., p. 190v.  
See p. 295 above.



without any respect or regard of living for themselves, their wives, children or family to their great hinderance, undoing and impoverishing".<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the burgesses assembled in common hall on the 23rd September 1567 and agreed that none of their handicraftsmen, labourers or servants should "shout upon the work days other times than upon the Thursday in the afternoon" unless they had licence.<sup>2</sup>

Offenders were to be committed to prison and fined one shilling. A supplementary bye-law, passed at the same time, decreed that no handicraftsman, labourer, or apprentice should henceforth "bet any money upon the shouters" upon penalty of two days and two nights in prison and a fine of one shilling.<sup>3</sup>

This is an interesting reference and possibly might refer to the shouting of odds. It is of interest that in other towns too servants were punished for gambling. At Nottingham, for example, in 1553, one John 'a Talles amongst others, was presented at the sessions for playing at quoits for

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 190v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

money.<sup>1</sup> Such games as tennis, football, quoits, dice, casting the stone, kailes and the like had, of course, been prohibited by statute<sup>2</sup>, men being enjoined to practise archery instead. Subsequently, during the reign of Edward IV, the games of half-bowl, hand-in and hand-out, and queck-board were declared illegal.<sup>3</sup>

At a meeting of the hall held on the 9th December 1570<sup>4</sup> complaint was made of "divers and great abuses, not only leading to the blasphemy of Almighty God and degradation of his glory, but also to the particular hurt and damage of sundry persons the undoing of money, and ruin and decay of divers by over-much levity and gentleness".<sup>5</sup> Such a state of affairs, it was alleged, had come about principally by not "correcting and chastising. . .common weavers, common drunkards and the usual haunters of ale-houses and

---

1. Stevenson, op. cit., IV, p. 105.

2. Stat. 12 Rich. II, c.6. (Stat of the Realm, ii, 57).  
Stat. 11 Hen. IV, c.4. (Ibid., ii, 163)

3. Stat. 17 Edw. IV, c.3 (Ibid., ii, 462-3)

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 200v.

5. Ibid.

houses".<sup>1</sup> Of special concern to the burgesses, however, was that such places were also frequented by "their men servants, apprentices, journeymen and other handicraftsmen". To prevent "further corruption to the utter subversion of the whole estate and body" of the town a number of measures were introduced. The first concerned "swearing" and "unlawful oath taking". An offender was initially to be warned. If he persisted, he was to be fined 2d for the first subsequent offence, 4d for the second 6d for every time thereafter. The second measure introduced at this time concerned any town dweller who was a "drunkard or common ale-house haunter". On conviction he was to be fined 2s for the first offence and 4d for every subsequent offence. The third measure forbade any "labourer, artificer, servant, journeyman. . or other handicraftman" to frequent an ale-house, other than in the company of a friend, who being a stranger, was not staying

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 200v.



in the town longer than "one night and day".<sup>1</sup>

Any who transgressed this bye-law were to be fined 4d for the first offence, 6d for the second and 8d for any subsequent conviction. Any such fines levied, as in the case of those punished for not attending divine service, were to be used at the discretion of the alderman for poor relief.

The implication of the Stamford bye-laws discussed above is clear, however. Shouting about the town and gambling with the consequent neglect of their families, was not confined to the unemployed. The employees of the burgesses, in the opinion of the latter at least, had become idle and needed to be taught a sharp lesson. With such an emphasis on morality, it was not surprising perhaps that the council enacted the comprehensive bye-law of the 15th December 1570<sup>2</sup> with regard to church going discussed above.<sup>3</sup> The question of enforcing this bye-law was

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 200v.

2. Ibid., p. 200

3. See pp 475-476 above.

dealt with by the appointment for a period of a year of a special officer for each of the town's five parishes. Any offenders were to be presented by their respective parochial officer to the court.<sup>1</sup> These officers included John Backhouse (St. John's) who it will be recalled had been dismissed from the office of comburgess in 1585<sup>2</sup>, and John Allen (St. Michael's) a comburgess who had been earlier dismissed.<sup>3</sup> This bye-law was passed on the 9th December 1570. However, as has been observed in several other instances, the mere passing of a bye-law did not of itself necessarily resolve a particular problem particularly after the lapse of a period of years. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 9th February 1575/6<sup>4</sup> a further bye-law was introduced concerning "any poor handicraftman, labourer, journeyman or servant" who presumed to leave his work to frequent an alehouse on a week day, or similarly to "go idly. . . abroad for any past-time, game or plays (shooting only excepted)".<sup>5</sup> Such conduct was forbidden and offenders, unless they had

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 200v.

2. See p. 426 above.

3. See p. 424 above.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 212.

5. Ibid.

an excuse acceptable to the alderman, were to be committed to prison and fined 6d in addition.

The keeping of the servant classes at work, was of course, linked closely with the general question of employment of the poor within the town, a topic which has been discussed at length in chapter VII above. At a meeting of the hall held on the 26th October 1618 it was decided that the overseers of the highways for every parish should ensure that the poor in their respective areas should have "two cart loads of fuel" for use during the winter.<sup>1</sup> This was to ensure that when winter arrived they might be "fit to follow their labours and not break mens hedges" as they had "usually" done.<sup>2</sup> Those poor who failed to comply were to forfeit an unspecified amount to the town.

Before leaving the question of disorderliness amongst the town dwellers, it should be observed that during the period now under discussion there seems little evidence of general disturbances within the town. All that did occur

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 326.  
See p. 295 above (re. similar bye-law 1593)
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 326.  
See p. 573 below (re. similar bye-law 1581)



was a riot on the 26th July 1647, following which at a hall held on the 21st October in the same year, the alderman, comburgesses and common council decided to prosecute the offenders at the town's expense.<sup>1</sup>

In considering the contrast in the respective social values of members of the ruling oligarchy and the town dwellers in general, mention must be made of the concern felt by at least some of the former for the plight of the poorer members of the community. It has already been noted that any fines paid in respect of an infringement of the regulations relating to attendance at church, the wearing of ceremonial dress, drinking and gambling were to be applied, at the alderman's discretion, to the relief of the poor. In addition, as has been noted in chapter VIII, attempts were made by the corporation to promote work within the town. It might be argued that their efforts were not

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 426v.

entirely altruistic, since they themselves would benefit from any increase in general prosperity in the town. In a sense the same doubts could be expressed with regard to poor relief, an aspect of the government of the town which has also been discussed above. It would be cynical, however, to undervalue the degree of responsibility felt by many of the townsmen for those less fortunate than themselves. There are a number of cases referred to in the hall book which illustrate this point. For example, at a meeting of the hall held on the 26th May 1629 it was agreed that one James Carrington, a wigmaker, should receive quarterly payments of five shillings, for looking after a poor child.<sup>1</sup> The corporation, however, did not thereby divest itself of all responsibility for the latter since the arrangement was subject to an important proviso, which stated ". . .if the town

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 356.

should dislike the keeping of the said child at any time, they shall be at liberty to take him away and place him elsewhere".<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the concern for others extended beyond the limits of the town itself. Thus, at a hall held on the 29th April 1630<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that a "voluntary and charitable contribution" should be gathered from house to house by two capital burgesses respectively in each of the town's five parishes. This was to be given towards the "waifs" of Cambridge, which at that time was suffering a "great infection of the plague".

Indeed, the subject of charitable giving in Stamford during the period from 1559 to 1649 is one worthy of considerable discussion, much of which, however, would be outside the scope of this thesis. Butcher, however, gives a comprehensive account of the Stamford charities in existence at the time of the publication of his book on Stamford in 1646.<sup>3</sup> The corporation itself

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 356.
  2. Ibid., p. 360.
  3. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., pp. 19-23.



was concerned with administration of a number of charities relating to the relief of the poor. For example, in 1586, George Trigg , gentleman, gave £400 to the town "to be lent for ever upon good security to poor young tradesmen and artificers of Stamford without interest."<sup>1</sup> There are few extant records of the administration of this charity, but the money appears to have been lent out in the form of bonds. Thus, in January 1648/9 it was ordered that all people holding such monies contrary to the terms of Trigg's will were to repay it, failing which legal proceedings would be put in motion for its recovery.<sup>2</sup> The following year, in January 1649/50<sup>3</sup> it was reported that many of those in possession of "Mr. Trigg's money" had "fallen into decay" or had sureties who were dead. As a result the corporation became concerned that the money might be lost altogether. It was, therefore, ordered that the bonds should be reviewed with sufficient

- 
1. c.f., S.C.R., Deed relating to the grant of Trigg's Charity, 1593.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 431.
  3. Ibid., p. 434.

surety, failing which legal steps would be taken for its recovery.

Another charity relevant to the present chapter, worthy of special mention, is that instituted by the will of Richard Snowden, formerly a minister at St. John's, who died in 1604.<sup>1</sup> He provided, that after the death of his wife Margaret, the income from certain lands and tenements should go to the benefit of "seven poor widows". Following her decease on the 30th October 1612, under the terms of the will, the alderman, who at that time was Robert Whatton, nominated seven poor widows "being of age of three score years and upwards" to receive the "charitable gifts of the said Richard Snowden". A third charity which directly involved the corporation was that instituted by the will of William Berill, Esquire, formerly of Chesterton in Huntingdonshire. He left £80 for "the use of the poor of Stamford".<sup>2</sup> At a meeting of the hall held on the 30th January 1639/40 it was agreed that the profits accruing from the investment

---

1. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 20.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 401.

of this legacy should be split into five equal parts in respect of each of the town's five parishes annually upon the 2nd February. There were also a number of other charitable gifts made for the benefit of the poor during the period from 1559 to 1649, and which concerned the corporation to some degree. For example, as has been noted in chapter VIII,<sup>1</sup> Thomas Cecil was one of several benefactors who gave money to help the needy, particularly poor children wishing to serve apprenticeships. Earlier under her will of 1588, his grandmother, Jane Cecil, had bequeathed £50 to be "lent out for ever without interest to poor tradesmen and artificers in Stamford and Stamford Baron."<sup>2</sup> Though obviously having a bearing on the admission of tradesmen to the freedom of the town, this bequest was not of direct concern to the corporation.

Indeed, in considering the place of charity in relation to the corporation, mention must be made of a number of examples in which the corporation was only marginally involved. Thus,

---

1. See pp. 394-395 above.

2. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 20.



in 1597, William Cecil erected an almshouse on the south bank of the river for twelve poor men. The nomination of four of these was vested in the alderman.<sup>1</sup>

What conclusions can be drawn, therefore, ~~from~~ this discussion upon the relationship between the dignity of the corporation, the disorderliness of the poor and the place of charity within the town? Certainly it was one of great contrasts. On the one hand the ruling oligarchy were concerned collectively with maintaining their public image by enacting a series of bye-laws intended to enhance the dignity of the corporation. As has been seen such ordinances included many to formalise meetings at the hall, such as the wearing of gowns, the escorting of the alderman when on duty, attendance at church, or the use of the town bell in St. Mary's Church. Other rules were designed to prevent the undermining of the corporation's

---

1. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 20.

authority by dissension at the times of election, for example of the deputy alderman or on the occasion of the death of the alderman himself. That certain of the rules were considered necessary, however, was an indication that a proportion of the members of the two companies, particularly those of the second, needed more than mere persuasion to make them accept the disciplines required of them. If such a matter as the preservation of the dignity of the corporation was of considerable importance to its principal members, it could hardly have been of great concern to the town dwellers. Their way of life was vastly different, many of them, in the view of the corporation at least, idling their time away for example in gambling and drinking. Such excesses, therefore, had to be curbed and a number of regulations were introduced in an effort to improve the situation, particularly with regard to handicraftsmen, servants and apprentices.

---

Such regulations concerning the activities of the poorer members of the community, however, should not be allowed to overshadow the genuine efforts made by the corporation to alleviate their plight. Such assistance took the form of schemes to provide work, as discussed in chapter VIII and the administration of the various charities referred to above. Many of these, it should be observed, were intended to help the poor inhabitants to become tradesmen. In a sense, therefore, the charities administered by the corporation, together with the measures to provide work, provided a bridge between the two extremes, the comburgesses as rulers of the corporation on the one hand and the unfranchised town dweller on the other.



Chapter XIThe Regulation of Trade within  
the Borough of Stamford, 1559 - 1649

It will be recalled that one of the last bye-laws enacted during the reign of Philip and Mary decreed that "all good old orders, laws and statutes. . . recorded in the town book should stand . . .till further order be taken. . ." <sup>1</sup> Included amongst such ordinances were many relating to the regulation of trade within the borough, and these have been discussed above in Chapter II. During the period now under discussion many further regulations appertaining to this particular aspect of local government were issued. Some of these, namely those relating to foreigners and admission to the freedom of the town, have been examined in Chapter VII above. Others relating to specific occupations now call for consideration.

During the early years of the reign of Queen

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 169v.  
See p. 283 above.

Elizabeth a number of bye-laws were enacted which were concerned with the regulation of many of the more common trades, especially those connected with food and drink. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 13th June, 1560<sup>1</sup> it was decreed that bakers should sell their horsebread to the innkeepers for one shilling per dozen. The penalty for infringement was fixed at 3s 4d with imprisonment till it was paid. Moreover, all bread had to be baked according to the statute. A further ordinance relating to bakers was enacted on the 13th May 1567<sup>2</sup>. It was reiterated that horsebread should be baked according to statute. It was to be sold at three loaves a penny with "thirteen pennyworth for twelve pence", thus enforcing the "baker's dozen". The penalty for infringement was severe, committal to prison until a fine of one pound had been paid. At the same hall, innkeepers were ordered to sell loaves to their guests at two for one penny, the penalty for default also being one pound.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 174.

2. Ibid., p. 189.

They were also forbidden to purchase their bread, upon like penalty, at rates other than those set out above.<sup>1</sup>

It will be recalled, from Chapter II above, that in 1465 the price of horse-loaves was fixed at four to the penny, at a weight according to the assize, with twelve to the dozen and "no more".<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult, however, to make comparisons between the respective price of a horseloaf in 1465, 1560 and 1567 since one cannot be sure that the weights of the loaves referred to were identical in each case. In the same period, however, the index of a composite unit of foodstuffs had moved from 105 (1461-70) up to 351 (1551-60) and down again to 298 (1561-70). The indexes for a quantity of foodstuff commanded in exchange by a unit of industrial products for the same periods were 98, 59 and 73 respectively.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 189.

2. Ibid., p. 25v.

3. See Appendix, Table N, p. (31).



Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace further the change in the price of bread at Stamford through the medium of the hall books after 1567 since this is the last recorded reference to the subject.

The hall book also contains details of the changes in the wholesale and retail prices of ale between 1559/60 and 1566. Unfortunately, no such records are available for other years. As the table below<sup>1</sup> indicates, there was a considerable fluctuation in the maximum price per dozen gallons permitted to brewers. As will be noted, the profit margin allowed tipplers for retailing the ale is not very clear from the records, particularly as a higher price seems to have been allowed in respect of smaller quantities. There is also a suggestion that for 1559/60 at least, the brewers' dozen was thirteen gallons.

---

1. See Appendix, Table R, p. (35).

By way of comparison, in 1579, the nearest date for which information is available, the price of ale at Nottingham was fixed at 1d a quart.<sup>1</sup> The penalties for breaking the ordinances concerning the price of ale were severe. Thus, on the 21st June 1563<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that offending brewers and tipplers should be fined £3 6s 8d and £1 respectively, whilst the former were also to be barred from carrying on their trade. At a subsequent meeting held<sup>3</sup> on the 28th October in the same year steps were also taken to deal with those brewers who refused to sell at the controlled price and chose instead to "give over their brewing". They were forbidden to practise their trade again until they had given six months' notice to the alderman of their intention to do so. Any tippler who acquired ale from a brewer contrary to this rule was to be liable to a fine of 3s 4d.

It is difficult to judge how long

- 
1. Stevenson, op. cit., p. 193.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 181.
  3. Ibid., p. 181v.

such ordinances remained effective since there is little recorded in the hall book. On the 15th August 1615<sup>1</sup>, however a proclamation was read openly in hall signifying "in what manner beer and ale should be brewed and sold". As has been noted in chapter VII, however, the corporation was to become involved in legal proceedings against a number of Stamford brewers, an action which culminated in 1636 with the granting of a brewing monopoly to the Earl of Stamford.<sup>2</sup>

The earlier years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth also saw bye-laws enacted with regard to butchers and the allied trade of chandler. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 29th May 1565<sup>3</sup> it was ordained that if any butcher, who had not been enfranchised, brought mutton or beef to the market to be sold, he must also bring the skin

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 318v.

2 See pp. 331-338 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 185.



and tallow to the market to be sold to the chandlers of Stamford at a price fixed by the alderman. A butcher failing to comply with this order was to be excluded from selling meat at the market. Butchers living within the town were also required to sell their tallow to the chandlers at a price set by the alderman. The penalties for disobeying were severe, one pound for the first offence and disfranchisement for the second.<sup>1</sup> Two overseers<sup>2</sup> were appointed to ensure that the bye-law was observed. It was also decreed at the same meeting of the hall, that no inhabitant who was enfranchised should sell candles other than by the pound, half pound or quarter pound at such prices as the alderman should decree.<sup>3</sup> This represents a modification of the bye-law enacted in 1556 which tacitly admitted the sale of candles by the pennyworth. As in 1556, however, chandlers

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 185.

2. Michael Wood (capital burgess) and Robert Langton.  
(shoemaker).

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 185.

were also forbidden to refuse to sell candles if offered ready money by any householder within the town, whether rich or poor.<sup>1</sup> After 1565, there are no further references in the Stamford hall books to the regulation of the trades of butcher and chandler.

Other bye-laws enacted at Stamford during the 1560s related to the clothing trade. Thus on the 19th May 1562<sup>2</sup> the tailors of the town were "bound by their obligations. . .sealed in the open hall" to abide by the regulations for the making of hose set out in a proclamation of Queen Elizabeth dated 6th May 1561. On the 12th November 1562<sup>3</sup> it was decreed by Stamford corporation that no tailor should "fur any manner of garment, except his own". Such work was to be done by skinners. However, should any member of the latter trade charge an excessive price for the laying of fur the alderman could at his discretion either abrogate the bye-law or commit the skinner to prison until he had paid

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 185.

2. Ibid., p. 179.

3. Ibid., p. 180.

a fine of 3s 4d.<sup>1</sup>

A number of regulations made during the reign of Queen Elizabeth were concerned with the leather trade. Thus in December 1562<sup>2</sup> it was ordained that tanners should take their leather to the Market Cross on any Monday or Friday between 9 o'clock in the morning and 12 noon. to be sealed by the alderman or his deputy. Sealing elsewhere was not permitted. The Market Cross is also referred to in an order made in 1566<sup>3</sup>. Under this bye-law glovers were forbidden to buy sheep skins on market day at any place other than the cross, the penalty for disobeying being fixed at one shilling. There are few extant records of the punishments inflicted for contravening bye-laws relating to the various trades. With regard to the leather industry, however, on the 29th April, 1587<sup>4</sup> four hides were "praised by 6 honest men for want of sufficient tanning". A fine of 12s was levied, a third of which went to the searchers and the remainder to the town. Likewise, two more hides were found faulty, a fine of 4s being

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 180.

2. Ibid., 180v.

3. Ibid., p. 186v.

4. Ibid., p. 231v.



imposed (1s 4d to the searchers and 2s 8d to the town).<sup>1</sup>

Of the illustrations of the regulation of trade in Stamford referred to so far in this chapter, the bye-laws have referred to those practising various occupations in the collective sense.

On the 29th May 1565,<sup>2</sup> however, a bye-law was passed which is of special interest in that it granted the sole right to "load or carry any mortar or sand" to one Brian Wardman. His wages for digging and carrying a load of mortar were fixed at 4d and for sifting and carrying a load of sand, 8d. The penalty for contravention was fixed at 6s 8d.

In the earlier part of the period now under discussion a number of bye-laws were introduced with regard to Sunday trading, a topic, it will be remembered, which was discussed in chapter II.<sup>3</sup> Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 4th December 1561<sup>4</sup> it was ordained that no ale house keeper or victualler should receive into his house

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 231v.

2. Ibid., p. 184v.

3. See pp.105-106 above.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 178.

for breakfast any servants, or others, during the time of divine service, on Sundays or Holy days.<sup>1</sup> The only exception permitted was that of a stranger.

A second ordinance enacted on the same occasion concerning Sundays and holidays stipulated that "no manner of persons"<sup>2</sup> except butchers should open their shop windows on such days. A penalty of 3s 4d was fixed for infringement of each byelaw. Subsequently in November 1564<sup>3</sup> it was agreed that even butchers should not keep their shops open on Holy days after 9 o'clock in the morning. After that time they were liable to the forfeit of all stock offered for sale. Further bye-laws concerning Sunday trading were adopted at a meeting of the hall held on the 10th December 1583<sup>4</sup>. It would appear that sundry butchers, shoemakers and tailors had been in the custom of fetching their wares out of the country on a Sunday and likewise sending servants

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 178.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 184.

4. Ibid., p. 225v.

with their goods to customers out of town. It was, therefore, ordained first that no butcher, or his servant, should fetch "any wares at all" out of the country. Secondly, that no shoemaker, tailor or handicraftman should send into the country on the sabbath "any shoes, apparel or wares to their customers" but should rather "themselves and their servants keep home on the sabbath day for the service of God".<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, the hall at which this decision was made was the same as that at which it was decreed that the second twelve should attend the alderman "to and from every sermon" in addition to members of the first twelve.<sup>2</sup>

The enforcement of the bye-laws on fair trading, of course, as was noted in Chapter II<sup>3</sup>, required the corporation officers to have at their disposal accurate sets of weights and measures. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 22nd April 1619<sup>4</sup> it was agreed that the alderman should exchange the town's "brazen gallons" if he had cause to suspect discrepancies

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 225v.

2. See p. 477 above.

3. See pp. 112-114 above.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 329.



in "the littleness or the bigness" of them. In addition, it was ordered that quart and pint measures, and a pile of weights, all of brass, should be purchased at the town's expense. Subsequently, on 15th May, 1620, it was ordained that the chamberlain should provide, out of the common purse, two piles of weights "one to weigh gold and the other to try weights in the town, and to weigh butter, bread and such like".<sup>1</sup>

On the same occasion it was also decreed that the chamberlains should provide a common seal to seal cloth so that when it was offered for sale it would not be forfeited.<sup>2</sup>

During the period now under discussion there were also many regulations issued concerning the trading by strangers within the town. These, together with the changes that took place in respect of fines payable for admission to the freedom of the town, have been discussed in detail in chapter VII.<sup>3</sup>

A number of further regulations that relate to foreigners require to be noted. For example, on the 23rd September 1569<sup>4</sup>, it was decreed that no free man should sell, or give

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 330.

2. Ibid.

3. See pp. 313-319 above.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 196v.

any compost or dung, either out of their yard or ground to any foreigner if another freeman wished to purchase it. The penalty for infringement was 6s 8d.<sup>1</sup> In April 1594<sup>2</sup>, it was agreed that no man, who had not taken the freeman's oath, should be allowed to carry dung or compost. The penalty was fixed at 6s 8d for every load with imprisonment till it be paid.

In concluding this chapter upon the regulation of trade within the borough of Stamford between 1559 and 1649 it must be observed that the majority of bye-laws discussed relate to the earlier part of the period, in particular the 1560s. It is of interest, however, that in the 26th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, following a hall held on the 10th December 1583<sup>3</sup> it was recorded that -

"all the ordinances and constitutions from the beginning of the corporation, as they be entered in the town book, were openly read in the hall to the end, that every person knowing the penalties inflicted for misdemeanours might avoid the danger thereof and that sundry necessary laws there inserted might be put into execution". 4

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 196v.
  2. Ibid., p. 252. See p. 296 above.
  3. Ibid., p. 225v.
  4. Ibid., p. 225v.

There is again a suggestion here that the "town book" in this context does not refer to the hall book, but to a separate volume since lost.<sup>1</sup>

This presumably contained in tabular form many of the regulations which were enacted from time to time and recorded in the hall books. Referring to the above exposition of the bye-laws, the clerk comments that "the reading of them within the memory of man was not known before this time".<sup>2</sup> If such were the case, it seems likely that many of the ordinances would have fallen into desuetude, sometimes, as the study of the hall books suggests, to be revived or modified. Reference has already been made in earlier chapters to the comprehensive revision of bye-laws which took place in 1631<sup>3</sup>. It is appropriate now to consider the nature of this revision in more detail. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 24th January 1630/1<sup>4</sup> it was agreed -

" . . . by a general consent that all and singular orders now in the open hall read

- 
1. See p. 163 above, re. "common book".
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 225v.
  3. See p. 299 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 362.



and made for the good government and common utility of the. . .town shall be forever confirmed and ratified at the town's charge by the judges of assize within the circuit of Lincoln according to the form and words now in the open hall read to the whole assembly".<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately there is no record in the hall book of such bye-laws though they too might have been written in the "town book". Butcher, however, records fifteen bye-laws which he states were made on the 15th March 1631, subsequently to be confirmed<sup>2</sup> under the seals of Sir Richard Hutton, a justice of the Court of common pleas and Sir George Crooke, a justice of the court of the King's bench, and both judges of assize for the county of Lincoln. These bye-laws, written on parchment were fixed in a wooden frame and hung in the council chamber.<sup>3</sup> There is also a copy of them amongst the extant corporation records. As will be seen from an examination of these<sup>4</sup> bye-laws of 1631, which are quoted in full in **Butcher**, they were not principally concerned with such matters as the day to day regulation of trade within the borough. Indeed, only one, the

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 362.
  2. Under the provisions of Statute (19 H. 7. cap.7).
  3. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
  4. S.C.R., Bye-laws, 1631.

ninth, had any direct bearing upon the trade of the town. This was a restatement of the once inviolate principle that only freemen could open shops, or sell wares within the borough. As has been observed in chapter VII however, this ordinance was of particular relevance at the time, since for some fifty years prior to 1631 the corporation had been much concerned with keeping strangers out of the town. Indeed, there was a considerable change in the nature of business conducted at meetings of the hall during the course of the period now under discussion. At the beginning, during the early years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, much attention was given to the detailed regulation of particular trades, as had also been the case during the period 1461/62 discussed in section I of this thesis. During the latter part of the Elizabethan era, however, as has been discussed in chapter VII above the principal business of the hall shifted to discussing such problems as those caused by strangers seeking work in the town and the need to stimulate trade generally in a town suffering from much poverty. Thus,

---

See p. 301 above.

apart from the first decade of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there is virtually nothing recorded in the extant records concerning the regulation of trades within the borough relevant to the period from 1558 to 1649. Rather for the majority of this time much of the corporation's business was concerned with the promotion of trade in the widest sense of the word.



Chapter XIIAdministration of Town and Corporation1559 - 1649

In this, the final chapter on various aspects of the corporation of Stamford appertaining to the years from 1559 to 1649, consideration is now given to various ordinances which were enacted in respect of the administration of the town and of the corporation itself. This then completes the examination of the working of the corporation during the period now under discussion. It is believed that the accounts that have been given in the respective chapters above are as comprehensive as possible bearing in mind the nature of the extant contemporary records.

One of the most persistent items to be discussed at meetings of the hall between 1559 and 1649 which had a direct bearing on town administration related to the town wall. The need to preserve this inheritance from medieval times was not primarily a military one.

---

It was rather that the enforcement of many of the bye-laws discussed in preceding chapters required as a prerequisite a finite physical barrier between the borough and its environs. For example, most of the ordinances which were concerned with the presence of foreigners within the borough would have been even more difficult to enforce in an "open" town than they were in a "closed" community.

It will be recalled that various decisions made by the corporation with regard to the walls were discussed in chapter III above<sup>1</sup>, the earliest records relating to 1466, when the west gates were built. Subsequently in 1551 men with back gates in the walls were required to repair the latter as often as necessary. At a meeting of the hall held on the 14th April 1562<sup>2</sup> the matter of the back gates was raised again. All those having such private gates were ordered to "keep them shut continually and not to open them at any time to receive any guest in upon the market days, nor any cattle".<sup>3</sup> The penalties for default were

- 
1. See pp. 144-146 above.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 178v.
  3. Ibid.

a fine of 4d payable to the common hall and a further 2d to the pinder. Imprisonment might also result at the discretion of the alderman. It is apparent from this ordinance that the regulation of trade within the market required controlled access to the town, which was another important reason justifying the preservation of the walls. It would appear, however, that in spite of the ordinance of 1551, many of the townsmen who had postern gates failed to keep them and the adjacent walls bordering their property in repair. Thus at a hall held on the 15th May 1574<sup>1</sup> it was decreed that those who had such gates and walls "in ruin and decay" should repair them before the following Michaelmas, on pain of a fine of £5. Moreover, they were to keep their gates shut as decreed in 1562. The corporation, however, seems to have encountered much opposition to its policy concerning the walls, presumably from burgesses seeking to pursue their own self interests rather than assist in the preservation of the rules designed for the benefit

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 207.



of the community as a whole. In consequence, at a meeting of the hall held on the 21st March 1613/14<sup>1</sup> it was agreed that all those who had made "any doors or gates" out of the town walls should build them up again forthwith and "maintain the town wall both in height and thickness" as it had formerly been.<sup>2</sup> Fines, as before, were to be levied on defaulters. Later, in the same year, on the 3rd November,<sup>3</sup> the comburgesses and capital burgesses agreed to commence actions of trespass against those who had broken the town walls to make gates as such action was considered to be to the "damage of the town". The town wall was regarded as of special importance during threatened attacks of the plague. It will be recalled from Chapter VII, that in September 1625<sup>4</sup>, the watch at Stamford was strengthened at "this dangerous time of visitation". In the following month, at a hall held on the 6th October<sup>5</sup>, it was agreed that during the ensuing month the town gates should be closed at eight o'clock at night until the following morning. The only exceptions were the Clement gate,

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 309.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 316.

4. Ibid., p. 343v. See p. 309 above.

5. Ibid., p. 344.

Bridge gate and Newgate which were "to be watched by every householder or his deputy",<sup>1</sup> excluding labouring men not liable to weekly assessment for the benefit of the poor. The watch was to consist of eight men by day and six at night.

The assault on the walls from within, however, seems to have continued and in April 1630<sup>2</sup> a new appraisal to the problem was agreed at a meeting of the hall. All those who had "encroached or built upon the town walls" were to be required to pay yearly for such encroachments one half penny per yard. Moreover, at their own charge they were to maintain the walls where they had been "encroached upon" or weakened by the taking of stones from the ramparts or elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> To prevent a further deterioration in the walls, it was expressly forbidden henceforth to take away the ramparts of the walls, to encroach upon them, to remove stones or to make doors or gates in them without the consent of the alderman, together with "the greatest number of the voices of the comburgesses and capital burgesses in the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book 1461-1657, p. 344.

2. Ibid., p. 360.

3. Ibid.

open hall," being first obtained. Any permits granted in this respect were to be entered in the "town book", to which it will be recalled several references had already been made.<sup>1</sup> The penalty for default, was to be £1.

A further ordinance concerning the walls, enumerated No. XII, was also included in the comprehensive list of bye-laws<sup>2</sup> enacted in 1631. This stipulated that all those who had built upon the town walls, or the ramparts, or made any doors or gates in the walls within the previous 40 years should take leases "from the town of the said passages". The penalty for continuing the trespass without a lease was fixed at one shilling per month.<sup>3</sup> There appear to be grounds for assuming that, following this comprehensive ordinance, severe damage to the walls ceased for at least twenty years. There are no further references in the hall books to the wall until the 3rd July 1651.<sup>4</sup> At that time, damage by one Robert Ball was reported to the hall in such a way as to suggest that it was regarded

- 
1. See p. 542 above.
  2. See pp. 542-544 above.
  3. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., p. 9.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 437.



as a serious matter. Ball owned freehold land adjacent to the wall. He enlarged the area of this by pulling down a three feet thick section of the wall along the entire length of the boundary to his property. Moreover, he used the stones he had removed to build himself a side wall for a 'malthouse and kiln twenty yards in length and one. . . wall containing about ( - ) yards over." <sup>1</sup> When his action was discovered he was summoned by certain officers of the corporation to appear before the hall "to answer for his . . . trespass and to make satisfaction for the ground and stones. . . gained from the town". His request for "mercy" until the buildings had been completed was granted. What happened subsequently is not recorded. Thus it can be seen that throughout the period now under discussion, 1559 - 1649, the town walls remained, as they had done in the period covered in Section I of this thesis, 1461/2 - 1558, an important concern of the corporation. Though the walls were still functioning in 1649, the social pressures which eventually resulted in an "open"

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 437.

town continued relentlessly to increase, even if held temporarily in check by the ordinances of the corporation. Indeed, writing in 1646, Butcher attacked the magistrates for allowing the walls to deteriorate " either by self-seeking covetuousness or friendly partiality". He laments -

"so many tenements. . .border upon them, so many new posterns are made out of them; serving for no other purpose than for the letting in and out, at unlawful hours, nightwalkers and suspected persons, who fear to appear in the presence of a watch, or to be seen in the heart of a town; or to come within the compass of the awful eye of the public magistrate; things of no small and dangerous consequence. . . especially where they are permitted to the backsides of victualling<sup>1</sup> houses, as too many of them are".

Another matter which was the subject of periodic legislation at meetings of the hall

---

1. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., pp. 2,3.

related to the cleanliness of the streets.

This was a recurring problem and one which no doubt caused much concern to the corporation.

It will be recalled from chapter III above that several bye-laws were enacted in this respect during the period covered by Section I of this thesis, 1461/2 - 1558, culminating in 1557 with an order that every man should cleanse the area in front of his own property.<sup>1</sup> Such legislation that was enacted took two forms, first the prohibition of the depositing of offensive matter in specific places and secondly the issuing of instructions with regard to the actual cleaning of streets. Examples of both types of bye-laws are to be found in the records of a meeting of the hall held on the 4th December 1561.<sup>2</sup> It was

---

1. See pp. 132-133 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 178



enacted that no one should "lay any more dung at St. John's well" on pain of a fine of 3s 4d.<sup>1</sup> Also it was decreed that everyone should clean the streets "before their doors once a fortnight" on penalty for default of 4d.<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting reference in a corollary to this bye-law to a statute of the realm, Cap. 36, Henry VIII, 33, which was concerned with the cleaning of streets. A proclamation under this act had been issued by the corporation on the 14th November 1561, shortly before the meeting of the hall at which the matter was discussed, in respect of three properties within the town. On the 15th May, 1574<sup>3</sup> at the meeting of the hall at which the disrepair of town walls was considered, it was confirmed that "all old ordinances concerning muck heaps or dung hills to be removed from the town walls",<sup>4</sup> should remain effective and be more strictly enforced. How successful this ordinance was in achieving its object it is difficult to say. However, on the 23rd October

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 178.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 206v.

4. Ibid.

1617<sup>1</sup>, further regulations were introduced with regard to the cleaning of the streets which seem to suggest that as in so many other instances the former bye-laws had fallen into desuetude, or at least were ineffective on account of the sweepings not being carted away. Inhabitants were again ordered to clean the streets against their doors at least once a fortnight, but with the added proviso that all rubbish or compost swept up should be carried away fortnightly. The penalty for default was 4d and the task of enforcement left to the overseers of highways in each parish.<sup>2</sup> It seems, however, that some inhabitants merely swept their rubbish onto their neighbours' property, for in October 1618<sup>3</sup> such conduct was specifically forbidden.

A further ordinance enacted on the 27th October 1623<sup>4</sup> seems to suggest that difficulties may have arisen concerning the removal of sweepings by the residents. Under this regulation, though the inhabitants were still required to clean the street against their door "as often as occasion is", a "scavenger"

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 324v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 326.

4. Ibid., p. 339v.

was appointed to cart away the compost. A particularly interesting ordinance was enacted on the 13th May 1630<sup>1</sup>. This delineated certain areas to be cleansed. Thus all the inhabitants between the market cross and St. Michael's conduit to the upper end of Butchers' Row were to clean the streets in front of their doors every Saturday. Likewise those inhabitants of property bordering the common road between the bridge gate and St. Clement's gate were to clean it to the mid-point once a week. The named areas included the High Street, White Meat and Monday market. Such cleaning together with that in "other places within the. . . town" was to be performed by the inhabitants for "two yards before their own doors".<sup>2</sup> An ordinance for the cleansing of the streets, enumerated VII<sup>3</sup>, was also included in the comprehensive set of bye-laws enacted in 1631 and to which reference has been made in earlier chapters.<sup>4</sup> This stipulated that the streets and lanes of the town should be cleansed

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 358v.

2. Ibid.

3. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., p. 8.

4. See pp. 299-301, pp. 542-544 above.



every Saturday by the adjacent inhabitants. The penalty for non-compliance was fixed at 6d. Constables not presenting offenders at the sessions, following their being committed were to be fined 2s 6d. This seems to be the last occasion during the period now under discussion, 1559 - 1649, in which the cleanliness of the streets was the subject of legislation at a meeting of the hall. Similar bye-laws, however, were not surprisingly issued in neighbouring towns. For example, at Leicester in November 1582 it was decreed that all inhabitants and owners of empty houses should clean the streets in front of their property each week, and cart away the "muck, filth and garbage" upon pain of 3s 4d for default.<sup>1</sup>

Cleanliness was not, however, the only matter relating to the streets with which the corporation was concerned. Thus at a meeting of the hall held on the 11th April 1594<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that every owner of lands and tenements within the town

---

1. Bateson, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 191.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 252.

should "pave the street" in front of his property before the following feast of St. Michael (29th September). On the 23rd October, 1617<sup>1</sup> at the same meeting at which additional regulations were enacted with regard to the cleanliness of the streets, a further ordinance was issued requiring every inhabitant "to pave against his own door unto the middle of the street". A period of just over a year was allowed for the work to be carried out.

Two ordinances of local topographical interest were also enacted on the 23rd October 1617.<sup>2</sup> The first stipulated that the Swine Market henceforth should be from "the end of William Falthop's house downward to Star Lane". The second that the pinfold should be moved at the expense of the town into St. Clement's delves "against the rocks there".<sup>3</sup> No immediate action to implement the second decision could have been taken, however, for in April 1619<sup>4</sup> it was again ordered that such a removal should take place "at the town's charge by the chamberlain". A further order of some interest was made in

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 324v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 329.

December 1622<sup>1</sup>. This related to the repair of the "foot of the king's cross" by a workman employed by the corporation. This may be a reference to the "Eleanor Cross" which formerly stood "upon the north side of the town near unto York highway, and about twelve score from the town gate which is called Clementgate".<sup>2</sup> It appears to have been destroyed between 1646 and 1660.<sup>3</sup>

Another series of ordinances which were concerned with the maintenance of the public areas of the town were those relating to the keeping of "common days", that is days set aside for communal projects by the inhabitants of the town. Thus, for example, at a meeting held on the 13th June 1560<sup>4</sup> it was decreed that the "common days according to the statute" should be on the following Saturday, Tuesday, Thursday and the first Saturday thereafter. Any husbandman who was absent with his cart was to forfeit ten shillings; every cottager or labourer, one shilling for each day of absence. Four overseers, two of whom were comburgesses and two capital burgesses, were appointed to supervise the work. It is not possible to ascertain from the corporation records, however, how frequently such common days were kept since they are seldom referred to. One such occasion, however, relates to a meeting of the hall held on the 10th April 1567<sup>5</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 337v.

2. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., p. 17.

3. Ibid.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 173v.

5. Ibid., p. 189v.



when it was decreed that the ensuing Tuesday should be the first day of the "beginning of common works" and henceforth every Tuesday. Similarly, at a meeting of the hall held on the 22nd April 1572<sup>1</sup> it was agreed that the common day for amending highways should begin on the 29th April and "so to continue every Tuesday following without further commandment".

A particularly interesting reference to communal work is contained in the minutes of a meeting of the hall held on the 12th June 1576.<sup>2</sup> It was agreed that for the five "bowne"<sup>3</sup> days if any labourers or artificers were not disposed to perform their labours, then they should pay 3d to the corporation to enable another workman to be "employed toward the same work". Members of the first twelve, however, who similarly wished a labourer to be provided by the corporation were required to pay 6d and members of the second twelve 4d. This differentiation in rates is just a further example, of course, of the principle referred to above that members of the first and second companies were required to accept responsibilities appropriate to their status in the community.<sup>4</sup> The reference to "bowne" days is

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 203.

2. Ibid., p. 212v.

3. i.e. "boon".

4. See pp. 119-120, 154, 466, 469.

of interest in itself since "boon work" was the name originally applied to the agricultural services due from the tenants to the lord of the manor. In the view of Stevenson, however, "common work" was not so much a survival of these ancient agricultural services, but rather "of the nature of an assessment taken in labour instead of in money".<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, in March 1633, in preparation for the forthcoming visit to the town of Charles I, a further ordinance concerning common days was issued. This decreed that in addition to the ordinary supervisors elected by statute, there should be two capital burgesses and one comburgess on duty every day to oversee the work being carried out. The duty rota was to be drawn up according to the ages of the members of the two companies, beginning with the eldest.<sup>2</sup>

A further important function performed by the corporation during the Elizabethan and early Stuart era appertained to the provision of an adequate supply of water. Thus in 1571, it is recorded that Mr. Backhouse, when he was alderman, delivered 9 stone 12 pound of newly melted lead to one James Baker.<sup>3</sup> Some of this was used to repair the town conduit and the remainder, weighing 7 stone 10 pound was left in the

---

1. Stevenson, op. cit., p. 449

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 369v. See p. 375 above

3. S.C.R., The Lease Book.

care of Baker, who undertook to deliver it when it was called for. In addition Mr. Backhouse delivered to one Thomas Tailor 15 stone 7 pound of "web" lead which was also to be "redelivered to the chamberlain to the use of the town" when called for.<sup>1</sup> It has already been noted in chapter IX<sup>2</sup> how a special licence was granted to Richard Shute in October 1591<sup>3</sup> to convey water from the town conduit into his yard "at his will and pleasure". This seems to have been an exceptional case of privilege, however, for similar references do not occur elsewhere in the hall book during this period. Shute was, of course, as has been noted above<sup>4</sup>, alderman at the time. References to the water supply become more frequent in the corporation records after 1622. At a meeting of the hall held on the 23rd December of that year<sup>5</sup> it was agreed that thereafter a yearly allowance of 6s 8d should be made out of the town stock for the repair of St. George's pump and a like amount for every other common pump and well in the town, if need be. A similar enactment was made in May 1629 with the rider that such

---

1. S.C.R., The Lease Book.

2. See p. 450 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 244.

4. See pp. 487-488 above.

5. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 337.



expenditure was deemed necessary in case there should be "any sudden occasion" which might "befall. . .the. . .town for the use of water".<sup>1</sup>

In the comprehensive list of bye-laws enacted in 1631, one, the tenth, related to the "conduits, common wells, and pumps" of the town.<sup>2</sup> These were to be repaired from time to time at the town's expense. If they were not, the two chamberlains responsible were to forfeit 6s 8d each. Thus, in August 1634<sup>3</sup> an allowance of two pounds was promised by the corporation towards the cost of sinking a well at the market cross on the understanding that it should "hold good and continue a year after". If it failed to do so no grant was to be forthcoming. Shortly after the end of the period now under discussion, in August 1653<sup>4</sup>, the parishioners of St. George's parish petitioned the corporation for an allowance towards the cost of sinking a well. The sum of £1 10s was granted to them for this purpose. Likewise in 1654 £5 was granted towards the making of a pump in the Hog Market and £1 10s for another at "John Dexter's corner".<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 355.
  2. Butcher (in Peck), op. cit., p. 8-9.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 337v.
  4. Ibid., p. 443v.
  5. Ibid., p. 444.

An adequate supply of water was, of course, required not only for drinking and washing, but also as a safeguard against the ever present risk of fire. On the 15th May 1620<sup>1</sup> it was enacted that every member of the first twelve should have ready before the following 1st of August at their houses, at their own expense, two leather buckets for "defence against sudden fire" which might befall them or their neighbours. Likewise all members of the second company of twenty-four, or others who had the ability, were to provide one. It was further agreed that the fire buckets at the town hall should be made up by the chamberlain to twelve in number.<sup>2</sup> Some eighteen years later, on the 4th October 1638<sup>3</sup> it was ordered that the "old decayed leather buckets" belonging to the town should be repaired and new ones provided to make their number up to twenty-four. In addition a "ladder and two hooks with long poles set on them" were to be provided at the town's expense. Every comburgess was also to provide two buckets and every capital burgess one. The penalty for failing

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 330.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 394v.

to provide these buckets was 6s 8d for the comburgesses and 3s 4d for the capital burgesses. It was further resolved that the buckets should "from time to time [be] repaired and amended when and as often as need shall require".<sup>1</sup>

However, some three years later it would appear that little had been done to implement the order and as a consequence it was considered that there would be "great danger" to the town if a "sudden or violent fire" occurred.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses agreed that at the next general meeting of the hall "speedy" action should be taken to remedy the matter by fining the offenders for neglect and at the discretion of the alderman, using the monies collected for the relief of the poor.

Another aspect of town government which was of constant concern to the corporation during the period now under discussion, 1559-1649, related to the agrarian interests of the inhabitants. Those of particular relevance to the alderman have been discussed in Chapter X above.<sup>3</sup>

It will be recalled also that

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 394v.
  2. Ibid., p. 408v.
  3. See p. 489.



in chapter III above a considerable number of ordinances were discussed which served as a reminder that Stamford, like many other boroughs, was not merely associated with the countryside as a market town, but was an integral part of it. Similar bye-laws were enacted during the Elizabethan and early Stuart era. Thus in May 1564<sup>1</sup> it was ordained that no one should keep any sheep in the fold from Low Sunday (the Sunday after Easter day) to Michaelmas (29th September). The only exceptions were to be the butchers who were permitted to keep ten "fat" sheep each. The penalty for keeping "sheep for any work" was fixed at 4d. Those butchers having more than the permitted number of sheep in the field were ordered to remove them by Ascension Day. At a meeting of the hall held on the 10th April 1567<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that the east field should be kept several until May Day and "after. . .no beast or cattle to feed off the pasture there" until the feast of St. John the Baptist (29th August). The only exceptions were in respect of the town's neat herd and the keeper of hogs who had the use of "one piece by the Grey Friars".<sup>3</sup> The penalty for infringement was fixed at 1d for every "beast, hog or sheep" and 4d for every "horse, mare or gelding". It seems probable that these restrictions upon the use of the East Field were to enable it to be cropped for hay. This supposition seems to be borne out by an ordinance issued on the 15th May 1574<sup>4</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 185v.

2. Ibid., p. 189v.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 208.

which decreed that the East Field should be "laid according to the ancient custom"<sup>1</sup> until the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel (29th September). Such a regulation seems almost to indicate that two crops of hay were taken, one in early summer, the other in late summer.

Special attention seems to have been given to agrarian matters at a meeting of the hall held on the 22nd December 1573<sup>2</sup> when a series of ordinances in this respect were issued. The first of these related to the keeping of horses upon the commons. Presumably, to prevent over-grazing of the pasture land, it was decreed that "no person within the town, either married or single" should "keep any horse upon the commons to take commons", other than those having "land in the fields or else such of occupation as weekly shall have occasion to occupy horses for their pack and carriage".<sup>3</sup> Those so entitled to graze their horses on the commons were to "keep them orderly upon their own ground, or else in common time upon the commons without any breach of the ancient constitution

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 208.

2. Ibid., p. 205.

3. Ibid., p. 205v.

concerning commons".<sup>1</sup> An interesting proviso stated that anyone so keeping horses in summer should also keep some of them in winter. Moreover, anyone grazing horses in the summer was not to keep more than were necessary for his work, nor to commit fraud in this respect. These latter restrictions in particular were undoubtedly intended to prevent the common pasture land in summer being used by horse dealers. The penalties for infringement were fixed at 10s per horse.

The second bye-law concerning agrarian matters enacted in December 1573 related to the Bull Meadow. It was ordered that anyone occupying this field for the yearly rent of 20d should, during his tenancy, "find and provide for the town's hardship one convenient and meet common bull".<sup>2</sup> The fine for default was 10s. If, following such a penalty, the town remained unprovided with a bull for more than a fortnight in any one year, then the corporation reserved the right to repossess the Bull Field and to place its further use at the alderman's discretion.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 205v.

2. Ibid.



The third agrarian bye-law of 1573 was concerned with privileges granted to three butchers, John Barnes, Cuthbert Greenbury, (capital burgesses) and John Storer. These tradesmen were permitted to keep a "gate of three score fat sheep" on the commons during both winter and summer. In return they were to provide at their own expense a "common bull" for the use of the town. It was further ordained that failure to honour this commitment would involve them in a fine of 10s each and loss of grazing rights granted for their sheep. An important proviso of this enactment forbade any other butcher to keep sheep on the commons.<sup>1</sup> It would appear, however, that subsequently these butchers, or their successors, were negligent in complying with this regulation. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held on the 21st January 1579/80<sup>2</sup> it was decreed that before Candlemas (2nd February) the butchers should either find a "sufficient common bull or bulls" to go on the commons, or otherwise forego the privileges granted to them. The following year, on the 1st February 1580/1<sup>3</sup> it was

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 205v.

2. Ibid., p. 218.

3. Ibid., p. 219.

felt necessary to issue a further ordinance concerning the common bull. This decreed that if any inhabitants took the bull from the herd home to serve their cows, they were to return him to his owners. If they failed to do so, but instead turned him loose so that he spoiled corn or grass, they were to be fined 1s.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1574<sup>2</sup> two bye-laws were adopted to safeguard the interests of those in occupation of agricultural land within the borough. All inhabitants of the town were forbidden to gather peascod on any land without the "licence of the owner". Furthermore if they did have such permission, they were required to have with them when gathering peascod, the owner or one of his household to testify to this effect. The penalty for infringement was a fine of 1s with imprisonment till it be paid. Another bye-law passed on the same occasion forbade the leading or driving of horses to water across another man's corn. Rather, they were to be led on a halter by the "usual pathways and highways" upon pain for every default of 3s 4d.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 219.

2. Ibid., p. 207v.

3. Ibid., p. 207v.

It has already been noted above<sup>1</sup> that in January 1579/80 a further order was issued with regard to the provision of common bulls by the butchers. At the same meeting of the hall two other bye-laws concerned with agrarian matters were also enacted. One of these ordered that the "wheat field hereafter should be laid at St. Nicholas's day", (6th December) and that the Lammes Closes should only be used to Candlemas (2nd February).<sup>2</sup> Presumably, these bye-laws indicate that stubble fields were used for winter grazing. The third agrarian bye-law enacted in January 1579/80 authorised the alderman and comburgesses to make such further orders for the keeping of swine as they thought fit.<sup>3</sup>

Concern lest the agrarian interests of the town should be harmed by any of the inhabitants, as already observed above in a number of other bye-laws, was also shown in a bye-law enacted on the 7th September 1581<sup>4</sup>. It was ordained that thereafter no man, or his

---

1. See p. 570 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 218.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 220.



servants, should "steal wood or break up hedges or fell down sticks within the liberties of the town. . . and so carry them away".<sup>1</sup> The penalty for default was very severe; offenders were to "utterly be banished and disfranchised out of the town". Indeed, an addendum to this bye-law emphasised that it applied to freemen as well as the unenfranchised.

After 1580, there appear to have been comparatively few ordinances concerning agrarian matters issued by Stamford corporation, apart from those relating to the wages of the town's neat herd and similar employees which are discussed below. However, one regulation concerning this aspect of town administration was included in the comprehensive list of bye-laws issued in 1631. The thirteenth bye-law in this enactment stipulated that the pinder should impound every beast, and levy a fine of 1d for every beast found in the town streets and liberties thereof "not put before the common

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 220.  
c.f., p. 518 above. (re. similar bye-law, 1618).
  2. See pp. 299-301, 542-544, 557.

herd".<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps appropriate to conclude this discussion on those ordinances concerned with the agrarian interests of the town by referring to a decree made at a meeting of the hall held on the 7th June 1649<sup>2</sup>. It would appear that one, Laurence Gilbert, was not a freeman of the town, nor had he made application for enfranchisement. Nevertheless, he obstinately persisted in keeping his stock in the fields. This the corporation felt was to the "great hinderance" of those who were free and "contrary to the ancient constitutions" of the town. It was decreed, therefore, that this cattle should be impounded and not returned except by replevin.<sup>3</sup> To sum up, therefore, it can be seen that throughout the period now under discussion, 1559 - 1649, as had been the case in the earlier period, 1461/2 - 1558, the

---

1. Butcher, in Peck, op. cit., p. 9.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 433.

3. i.e. security, pending trial.

corporation was continually concerned with agrarian matters consequent upon the relatively large area of agricultural land under its jurisdiction.

During the Elizabethan period there were also a number of bye-laws enacted which were intended to prevent annoyance to the inhabitants of the town. Thus in June 1561<sup>1</sup> it was agreed in hall by the alderman, comburgesses and commons, that no one should keep a "great dog, called mastiffs" unless they were tied during the day time. The penalty for default was fixed at 6s 8d. By comparison a somewhat similar order was made in Nottingham in 1607 when it was ordered that "no man should keep any mastiff dogs unmuzzled".<sup>2</sup> Presumably one of the reasons for their restraint was fear of infection from rabies which was at one time very prevalent in this country.

Another aspect of town life which occupied the attention of the corporation during the period now under discussion, 1559-1649, was that of the "free school" which eventually became a public school (Stamford School).

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 176v.  
2. Stevenson, op. cit., IV, p. 283.



Thus, following a meeting held on the 5th June 1623<sup>1</sup> it was recorded that "at divers times, divers and sundry complaints" had been made to the alderman and his predecessors concerning "the great negligence (of Richard)<sup>2</sup> Newborough schoolmaster". This dereliction of duty had apparently continued for some six years, "to the very great damage and hinderance of the town". In consequence Newborough had received many warnings from the alderman, Robert Whatton, to be "more diligent in teaching the scholars" or otherwise face dismissal. Such admonitions, however, had no effect. In consequence, therefore, it was agreed by the alderman, comburgesses and capital burgesses that Newborough should be dismissed from his "office of schoolmastership" with effect from the following feast of St. Michael the Archangel (29th September). At a meeting of the hall held on the 5th August<sup>3</sup> it was reported that there had

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 338.

2. Left blank in Hall Book.  
c.f. Deed, op. cit., p. 20.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 338v.

been several applications for the vacant post of schoolmaster, but it was agreed to seek a man who was "both grave and approved to the work to be a good schoolmaster".<sup>1</sup>

It was hoped that such a man would be a "credit" to the school and would enable it to flourish as did "other adjoining schools". The appointment of Newborough's successor was the joint responsibility of the alderman and the Master of St. John's College, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, Lionel Lamb was appointed to the post. In all probability he followed Newborough without there being an interval, although his appointment was not ratified until 1625<sup>3</sup>.

In January 1626/7<sup>4</sup> it was agreed at a meeting of the hall that £12 should be added to Lambe's salary towards the cost of an usher, although the decision does not appear to have been unanimous.

Lambe, as headmaster, was succeeded by William Duggard who was recommended to the Master of St. John's College by Richard Wolphe, who was elected as alderman in 1630.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 338v.

2. Deed, op. cit., p. 21.

3. Ibid., p. 21.

4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 347.

5. M.S.letter. Muniment Room, St. John's College, Cambridge.

Duggard, as is discussed below, was subsequently to become involved with the corporation in a dispute concerning school property. He was succeeded by Simon Humphrey who was appointed in 1637.<sup>1</sup> A collection, which was made amongst the members of the two companies towards the cost of hiring a cart to bring his goods to Stamford, provides a fresh example of their respective social standing.<sup>2</sup> Out of a total of £2 4s, nine of the comburgesses including the alderman, contributed 2s each, a further two 1s 6d and the capital burgesses and town clerk one shilling each.

It is of interest to note that subsequently Mr. Humphreys was actively concerned with the affairs of certain of the tradesmen of the town. For example, in 1639, it was agreed that, at his "special instance and request" one Samuel Croson, a tailor should be admitted to the freedom of the town for the sum of £5.<sup>3</sup> Similarly he wrote to the alderman recommending that one, William Lane, a goldsmith, should also be admitted as a freeman. This incidentally, was agreed to by the hall since there was "not one of that trade" in the town.<sup>4</sup> Humphrey himself was to remain in the office until 1657.<sup>5</sup>

The appointment of the headmaster was not the only matter relating to the "free grammar school" which concerned

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 389v.

2. See pp. 119-120, 154, 466, 469, 561 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 398.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 398v.

5. *Deed*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.



the corporation. The former received some of its income from property, the letting of which was the responsibility of the latter. For example, in November 1631<sup>1</sup> it was agreed at a meeting of the hall that the house known as the "Bluebell" in St. Michael's Parish in the tenure of one John Curtis should be set aside for the benefit of the school "according to the statute of 43 Elizabeth I". However, the letting of school property by the corporation seems to have caused considerable controversy. Thus, on the 7th May 1635, the Earl of Exeter wrote to Archbishop Lane to the effect that Duggard, the headmaster referred to above, intended to sue in the High Commission the alderman and burgesses for concealing lands rightly belonging to the school. The Earl of Exeter enquired of the Archbishop whether the matter could be referred to the commissioners and it appears to have been settled out of court.<sup>2</sup> Probably as a consequence of this dispute the corporation subsequently took action concerning the mixing of its affairs with those of

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 362.

2. C.S.P., Domestic Series, 7th May, 1637, p. 61.

the school. Thus in June 1639<sup>1</sup> it was reported that there were "divers lands belonging to the town and the free grammar school joined together in one lease". As a result the rents could not be "rightly expended". It was, therefore, agreed that a survey should be made so that the property of one could be divided from that of the other and new leases drawn up accordingly. Three years later there was a further incident which serves as an illustration of the corporation's reluctance to be too closely involved in the affairs of the school. John Curtis, the tenant of the Bluebell, became concerned in a legal suit "touching the title of his lease".<sup>2</sup> This was the house, it will be recalled, which was let for the benefit of the school. At a meeting of the hall held in November 1639, however, it was ordered that no money should be expended by the town in this matter "any former act heretofore made to the contrary

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 398v.  
 2. Ibid., p. 400.

not withstanding".<sup>1</sup> In the view of the corporation, the town was already "far indebted to divers men for divers great sums of money" and the affair of the Bluebell lease in "no way" concerned the corporation.

The matter of corporation leases referred to briefly above is a topic which could provide an interesting field of specialised research. As has been noted in the Introduction above, amongst the records in Stamford Town Hall there are a number of portfolios containing leases from the fourteenth to seventeenth century and a register of leases in three volumes from 1576 to 1873. It would be an interesting exercise to attempt to prepare plans of Stamford showing the whereabouts of property owned by the borough of Stamford from the time of its incorporation onwards. This might well be correlated with the findings of the Stamford Survey Group which, under the leadership of Dr. Alan Rogers, published in 1970 an architectural account of Stamford's medieval buildings. Since

- 
1. S.C.R., *The Hall Book, 1461-1657*, p. 400.
  2. Rogers, *The Medieval Buildings of Stamford*, University of Nottingham, 1970.



most of the former corporation properties have now been sold, such research would ideally require the examination of the title deeds of present day properties situated in the former walled area of the town. In the context of this thesis, however, there are a number of other aspects of corporation leases which call for comment.

On the 25th March 1572<sup>1</sup> it was agreed at a meeting of the hall that from henceforth there should not be made "any lease of any of the town lands in reversion until the lease in possession be clean expired". It is not clear, however, why it was felt necessary to enact this bye-law. In 1611, at a meeting of the hall held on the 5th August<sup>2</sup>, it was decided to make a survey of leasehold property owned by the corporation. Those holding lands or tenements by lease from the town were to be instructed to deliver to the alderman "a true terrier" of their property before the following feast of St. Michael the Archangel (29th September). If any one neglected to furnish

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 203.

2. Ibid., p. 295.

such information, their lease would be "made in reversion" for 21 years to some other person.<sup>1</sup>

A further order concerning leases granted by the corporation was made at a meeting of the hall held on the 3rd April 1620<sup>2</sup>. This stipulated that all town leases within three years of expiration should be "let to the town's best advantage by increasing rents" rather than by merely taking fines for renewal. Such lessees were ordered to produce their leases to the alderman at his house. It is evident from these ordinances that the management of the leasehold property of the town was such that disputes were possible, if not likely, from time to time. For instance, on the 5th April 1625<sup>3</sup>, it was reported to the hall that a question had been raised in the town concerning the sufficiency of a lease in the possession of Robert Johnson, of a house occupied by one Daniel Sherman. It appeared likely that the town had suffered "much wrong" on account of this lease being improperly withheld and the house let at a "very small

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 295.

2. Ibid., p. 329v.

3. Ibid., p. 342v.

rent".<sup>1</sup> It was, therefore, agreed by the alderman and the two companies that in addition to the advice given by John Bourne, the deputy recorder of the town, counsel's opinion should be sought concerning the validity of the lease. When this had been obtained, further action could be considered. By the beginning of 1625/6<sup>2</sup> the necessary advice seems to have been obtained. At a meeting of the hall held on the 2nd January it was agreed that the house should be offered to Richard Wolph<sup>2</sup>, a grocer, for 21 years, with a fine of £50 on the sealing of the lease and £8 a year thereafter. Still apparently somewhat uncertain as to the true legal position, the proviso was added that if Johnson commenced legal proceedings against Wolph, then the latter was to bear the costs himself. Moreover, if he lost his case, he was to forfeit also the £50 fine. In this particular instance, one must conclude that the corporation was not really facing up to its responsibilities, but was rather seeking to shield itself behind Wolph.

There were cases, however, in which the members

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 342v.
  2. Ibid., p. 345.
  3. Richard Wolph, a comburgess, was subsequently charged with royalist sympathies. See p. 385 above.



of the corporation showed sympathy towards the problem of the tenants of town property. For example, in 1632, Robert Palmer, a tailor, was admitted to the freedom of the borough on payment of five pounds.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, he also owed the corporation the sum of five pounds for rent due on his house in respect of a former tenant. Accordingly, by a majority decision, the members of the town companies, fearing lest their tenant might become "desperate", agreed to reduce the amount owing by two pounds.

A further dispute concerning corporation property occurred in 1639. Richard Langton, a comburgess, claimed to hold an acre of arable land in the Pingle field in Stamford by virtue of a lease from the master and fellows of Corpus Christi College in Oxford.<sup>2</sup> In the corporation's view, however the property appeared to belong to it by virtue of "several ancient terriers", one trodden in the first year of Henry; a second in the thirty-eighth year of Henry VIII and a third in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 368.

2. Ibid., p. 398.

It was, therefore, decided at a meeting of the hall held on the 6th June 1639<sup>1</sup> to seek possession of the land and if Langton refused to hand it over, to take legal action on the advice of counsel at the town's expense.

As has been noted above, further difficulties occurred in June 1639<sup>2</sup> on account of certain lands in the ownership of the free grammar school being joined in the same lease with those belonging to the town. In the following month a further ordinance was issued which forbade those holding leases from the school or corporation to sublet any part of the leasehold property to a third party other than freemen of the town, without the consent in writing of the alderman and comburgesses.<sup>3</sup> It was agreed that in future a covenant should be included in all leases to this effect.

At the same meeting of the hall in July 1639 it was also agreed that the alderman, comburgesses and some of the capital burgesses, should inspect Brazen Nose

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 398.

2. See p. 580 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 398v.

and "other decayed buildings"<sup>1</sup> belonging to the town and school. Furthermore, such properties were not to be leased again until some arrangement had been made for their repair. At a meeting in the following July<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that the clerk's fee for making any new leases should be 3s 4d where the annual rent did not amount to £3, 5s for rents above £3, and under £3 6s 8d and 6s 8d for rents exceeding £3 6s 8d. The matter of the leasing of corporation property came under further scrutiny at a meeting of the hall held on the 15th March 1641<sup>3</sup>. It was agreed that in cases in which the lease on town houses or land had run out, the property should be let to those who offered the most rent and were thought fit for the paying of rent and carrying out any necessary repairs. Such tenants would be offered 21 year leases from Lady Day (25th March). Other leases, expiring at Michaelmas, 29th September, were, before being re-let, to have a covenant inserted in them to the effect that the tenant, unless a freeman, was not to let or sell without the consent of the alderman and burgesses. If a lessee wished to terminate a lease before its expiry, it seems to have been the practice to allow him to do so if a new tenant could be found. Otherwise, he was expected to continue to pay the appropriate dues.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 398v.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 407.

4. Ibid., p. 416



This discussion upon the problems raised in the management of corporation property would not be complete without a reference to the plight of Nicholas Lamb, whom it will be recalled was "discharged and disabled from being or continuing" in the office of comburgess on account of his royalist sympathies.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not his public disgrace contributed to his financial downfall it is difficult to say. However in 1649<sup>2</sup> he had become indebted to the corporation for the sum of £40 on account of arrears of rent for certain lands and tenements. Unable to pay, he asked to be allowed to yield up his properties in return for a remission of his debt.

This was agreed providing Lambe would "freely seal and deliver a general release in writing".<sup>3</sup> Thereafter the remaining years of Lambe's leases were to be granted to the alderman on the same terms as previously.

What generalities, therefore, can be expressed with regard to this discussion upon the leasing of town property between 1559 and 1649? First, the administration

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.  
See p. 408 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 43lv.

3. Ibid.

thereof appears to have been lax, at least for much of the period. As has been seen, several disputes arose in which the ownership of the property concerned was in doubt. In one case at least, the corporation seems to have been reluctant to become involved in legal proceedings on this account. Secondly, it is apparent that the covenants included in leases relating to sub-letting to those who were not freemen have to be viewed along with other regulations concerning foreigners discussed in chapter VII above. Thirdly, it may be noted that from time to time the corporation was prepared to give consideration to the individual problems of lessees.

Having considered the nature of the corporation involvement in the leasing of property, it is worth recording that the corporation itself was sometimes the lessee. Thus on the 27th October 1627<sup>1</sup> the alderman and comburgesses concluded a lease with one Edmund Brown, a baker. This stipulated that the latter should allow the corporation the lease of his hurdles for ten shillings per annum. This sum was to be paid during the time of the Green Goose Fair, and the lease was to last so long as Brown held the lease of the fair and market from the Earl of Exeter.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 349v.

2. The paleography here is difficult, the relevant word being "hudles". Another possible transcript is therefore "hovels".

So far in this chapter many aspects of the routine administration of the town have been discussed, namely the maintenance of the town walls, the cleanliness and paving of the streets, "common work", the water supply, fire precautions, agrarian matters, the grammar school and the leasing of town property. There are, however, a number of other miscellaneous aspects of the working of the corporation which call for comment. For example in January 1613/14<sup>1</sup> it was reported to the hall that a robbery had been committed in the Hundred of Nesse. and the felons had not been apprehended. Accordingly the party robbed was entitled, according to statute, to be compensated by the hundred. The justices had assessed the contribution due from the borough of Stamford as £10 being a quarter of the total sum. It was, therefore, agreed that whoever paid this levy on behalf of the corporation should be reimbursed by the chamberlain out of the rents due to the town at Michaelmas.

A further episode which throws light on early

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 312.



Stuart town government took place on the 25th April 1615<sup>1</sup> when the common bell was tolled to call the townsmen together. The purpose of the meeting was to invite them to "adventure some money. . .into Virginia". However, no one was prepared to expend money from their private resources in this respect and in consequence "nothing was done". However, some months later at a meeting of the hall held on the 28th September, 1615<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that three pounds out of the town stock should be laid out in the name of the corporation upon the lottery for Virginia. Any winnings therefrom were to be used "wholly to the benefit and profit of the said corporation".

These then were some of the matters which occupied the time of members of the corporation during the period 1559 to 1649. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider further the role of certain of the officers of the town. It will be recalled that this aspect of corporation administration was discussed in relation to the preceding

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 318.

2. Ibid., p. 319.

period 1461/2 - 1558 in chapter IV above. Perhaps some of the most frequent references in the records of the corporation during the early seventeenth centuries concerned those officers who were responsible for various aspects of the agrarian interests of the corporation. For example at a hall held on the 25th October 1597<sup>1</sup> it was agreed at a meeting that the town's herdsman should receive 2d quarterly throughout the year for every cow kept for any period during the summer. Moreover for pork killed when six months old he was to receive 2d or the rump, when twelve months old 4d or the rump. In October 1630<sup>2</sup> a constitution was adopted which concerned the neatherd. In addition to the 6s 8d paid to him as a contribution towards the rent of his house, he was to receive an additional though unspecified sum "for every beast quarterly put before him". Furthermore, he was to receive the same payment for those animals which were left in his care for a month in the summer as those he kept for the whole year. Subsequently, in June 1633<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 262.

2. Ibid., p. 36lv.

3. Ibid., p. 370v.

one Edward Nunwick was chosen as neatherd, also with an annual wage of 6s 8d. In his case, however, the amount to be paid in respect of each beast was specified as being 2d, with the same proviso concerning winter and summer grazing. As a condition of appointment he was required to pay 12s out of his wages to the widow of the previous neatherd, George Baker. In August 1637<sup>1</sup> it was reported to the hall that Nunwick had received so few cattle that year that he was unable to support his family and in consequence it was agreed that the payment per head should be increased to 3d during the current quarter. Similarly two years previously, in August 1635<sup>2</sup>, William Picktoe, the town's hogherd, asked for an increase in wages on account of his receiving far less in that year than in previous ones. He was, therefore, granted an allowance of 13s 4d per year, paid in quarterly instalments.

Another corporation appointment of particular interest was that of William Lightfoot to the post of "Master of the House of Correction" in October 1617<sup>3</sup>.

- 
- 1.. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 389.
  2. Ibid., p. 379v.
  3. Ibid., p. 324.



Lightfoot, a weaver by trade, was instructed to perform the same duties as were required of his counterpart in Leicester. His wages were fixed at £6 13s 4d per annum, and he was to be provided by the town with such "working implements" as he needed. He was to be assisted in his work by the beadle whose duty it was to administer such correction as he recommended. However, 17 years later in October 1634<sup>1</sup>, Lightfoot was dismissed from office to be replaced by one Richard Ball. Further light is thrown upon the "House of Correction" in the record of the appointment of Richard Royce, as master in March 1648/9<sup>2</sup>. In his undertaking to the corporation upon taking office, Royce promised to prevent damage being done to the house and to ensure that offenders were employed with the knocking of hemp during such time as the alderman directed. In return for his services, Royce was granted the occupancy of a house for ten years. However, in the event of his neglecting his duties, he was liable to six month's notice to quit the property.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 376v.

2. Ibid., p. 431v.

Moreover, should he die his wife was to give up the tenancy. An undertaking was given that the chamberlain would keep the property in good repair at the expense of the town. In addition, Royce would be allowed a "house fee" of 6d in respect of each person committed to his charge. In the event of anyone remaining there longer than one day, an additional payment of 1d would be made in respect of every subsequent day. As in the case of his predecessor, William Lightfoot, the corporation were to provide him with all necessary implements. It appears that as with many punishments of the time, public humiliation was the principal object of committal to the "House of Correction". Thus, whenever anyone was to be sent for correction by the alderman, the town's bellman was to ensure the execution of the order.<sup>1</sup>

Of the other corporation officers, a number of references have been made in preceding chapters. For example, the role of the constables in the struggle to keep foreigners out of the town was discussed in

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 43lv.

chapter VII. An interesting ordinance of January 1635/6<sup>1</sup> forbade them to go out of the town upon any occasion (other than Sunday) without their staves. Those who did so were liable to a fine of 4d, to be used to aid the poor in the parish where the constable lived. For many townsmen, the possibility of being elected constable was irksome. Thus, in August 1632<sup>2</sup> when one of the capital burgesses, Edmund Browne, a baker, asked if he might be removed from the second company, he made his request conditional upon his not being chosen as a constable. A more striking instance of the reluctance to serve as constable, however, was evidenced in 1644.<sup>3</sup> In October of that year warning had been given to several inhabitants to appear before the alderman at a meeting of the hall in order to take the oath for admission to the office of constable. However, they absented themselves from the meeting "thinking thereby to escape the . . . office and put it on others". Accordingly, therefore, it was agreed by the alderman and two companies that those who had

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 380v.

2. Ibid., p. 368.

3. Ibid., p. 417.



failed to appear should be elected in their absence to the office of constable and furthermore fined £5 if thereafter they still refused to take the oath.

By the very nature of the extant records it is only possible to obtain a fleeting look at the work of the officers of the corporation. Sometimes, however, a particular incident helps to illumine the problems with which certain officials had to contend. Such is the case of John Pearham who was town bailiff in 1615, 1616 and 1617.<sup>1</sup> Pearham found himself defendant in a legal suit instigated by Henry Camock, a Stamford cutler, who alleged that the former had unduly taken certain fees from him when serving a writ for £160.<sup>2</sup> The matter was debated at a meeting of the hall, when it was agreed that if it should transpire that the bailiff had only charged the approved fee of £6 10s, his legal expenses would be borne by the corporation. If on the other hand the verdict was that the bailiff had taken more than his due, then he was to pay his own expenses. What the outcome of the case was, is not recorded. Subsequently,

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, pp. 320, 322v, 325.

2. Ibid., p. 326v.

however in December 1622<sup>1</sup> Pearham was dismissed from office for allowing a prisoner to escape, who had been especially placed in his custody by the alderman.

Much the same kind of transitory view is to be found in the corporation archives in relation to the role of the town clerk. In this respect, it has already been observed in chapter IX how two town clerks had been dismissed from office, Bartholomew Allen in 1591, and Richard Butcher in 1634.<sup>2</sup> Further information concerning certain emoluments attached to the post can be gleaned from the town records for 1628. It would appear that a former clerk, William Salter, had claimed that by virtue of a patent which he had received<sup>3</sup> when in office, the sum of £2 annually was due to him. However, Salter had been elected to the ranks of the comburgesses in 1601 and had served as alderman in 1602, 1604 and 1618. From the date of his election to the first company, however, until December 1627, Salter had not paid over the £2 annually to his successors to the office of town clerk.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 337v.
  2. See pp. 463-464 above.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 349v.

It was agreed, therefore, at a meeting of the hall held on the 3rd June 1628<sup>1</sup> that Richard Butcher, the town clerk at that time, should instead receive the two pounds, apparently in two instalments, one at Michaelmas, the other at Midsummer, Lady Day. The proviso was made, however, that the payment would not be made if counsel acting on behalf of Salter, together with further counsel nominated by the corporation, should testify that Salter was legally entitled to receive the two pounds per annum for his life time under his patent. It seems possible that Richard Butcher himself had brought into the open the matter of Salter's alleged right to receive an annual payment of £2. It has already been noted in chapter X that he was a man who was opposed to the "vain gloriousness" of certain of the comburgesses<sup>2</sup> and he probably had little sympathy with a man such as Salter. It seems unlikely that Salter proved his case. Indeed, as has been observed above in chapter VII, he was dismissed from office in 1632 after being charged with selling drink "at excessive high prices".<sup>3</sup>

A further supplement to the stipend of the town

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 348v.
  2. Butcher in Peck, op. cit., p. 24.  
See p. 482 above.
  3. See p. 328 seq. above.



clerk was agreed at a meeting of the hall held on the 10th October 1644.<sup>1</sup> The holder of this office at that time was Matthew Bunworth. However, his yearly income had been reduced on account of his not receiving fees on account of the failure to hold any sessions in the town for  $5\frac{1}{2}$  years. Furthermore, for the previous two years he had made a number of journeys on behalf of the town. It was agreed, therefore, to add £5 to his yearly stipend of £2.<sup>2</sup>

What conclusions can be drawn, therefore, from this discourse upon the administration of town and corporation during the years from 1559 to 1649? Most striking perhaps is the complexity of the task facing those responsible for the town's government. Not only had the corporation to deal with routine matters, many of which had occupied its attention during the period covered by Section I of this thesis, namely the maintenance of the walls; the cleanliness of the streets; the provision of a work force by means of "common" days; the supply of water; precautions against fire; the abatement of nuisances;

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 416.

2. Ibid., p. 419v.

the management of the common lands; the regulation of the town's agrarian interests; the leasing of corporation property; close involvement with the free school; and the appointment of a limited number of paid officers; it also had to concern itself with those major issues discussed in previous chapters in Section II, namely the dire poverty of the town; the influx of foreigners; the visitations of the plague; the promotion of new industries; and the opening of the river to navigation.

With such a wide compass, it is not surprising that many difficulties were encountered in the field of administration. There was no administrative bureaucracy to handle the regular flow of regulations issued by the corporation. In consequence, therefore, in certain aspects of town administration, the non-observance of bye-laws was a recurring problem. For example, in the case of the maintenance of the town walls, a number of ordinances of similar intent were enacted at intervals,

---

clear evidence that they were constantly disobeyed. Laxity of administration is also apparent in the many disputes which arose on the leasing of properties either owned by the corporation or administered by it on behalf of the free school. To sum up, therefore, the corporation clearly tried to carry out its duties to the burgesses as a whole. That it faced problems in enforcing its regulations, and administering its properties, was an inevitable consequence of the growing complexity of urban communities.



Chapter XIIIThe Tradesmen of Stamford1549 - 1649(extended in specific instances to 1674)

It will be recalled that in chapter V above, detailed consideration was given to the tradesmen who were living in Stamford between 1461/2 and 1558, the latter end of this period being extended in specific instances to 1574. Thus an analysis was made of the occupations of those who were admitted to the freemen's roll from 1475 to 1574. A further analysis was made of the frequency of their surnames. The small number of inventories relevant to the period, 1461/2-1559, were analysed and discussed. Certain extant wills of those who had served as members of the first and second companies were also examined.

In this chapter the same procedures have been adopted. The occupations and surnames of freemen have been analysed for the period from 1575 to 1674,<sup>1</sup> using the Hall Book as the source of information.

---

1. See Appendix, Table S, pp. (36)-(41).

In addition, an analysis has been made of inventories dating between 1560 and 1649. Certain of these have been examined in detail, including several relating to members of the first and second twelves.

It has already been observed that from 1563 to 1603, the population of Stamford had remained fairly static, being marginally under one thousand. Dr. A. Rogers has estimated, however, that by 1674, it had increased to somewhere in the region of two thousand.<sup>1</sup> This rise did not, however, greatly affect the number of admissions to the freemen's roll until the second half of the period now under discussion. Thus, whilst admissions between 1575 and 1599 totalled 355, and those between 1600 and 1624, 356 the corresponding figures for the period from 1625 to 1649 was 408 and that for 1650-1674, 487 bringing the grand total to 1606. The totals for the previous century by way of comparison, were 1475-1499, 359; 1500-1524, 281; 1525-1549, 375 and 1550-1574, 326 with a grand total of 1341.

One major difficulty, however, presents itself in analysing the occupations of freemen admitted between 1575 and 1674. Out of the total of 1606, no occupation is given with regard to 228 or 14.20% .

---

1. Rogers, This Was Their World, pp. 16,17.

As a result all conclusions have to be treated with caution. Of those tradesmen admitted, whose occupations are recorded, the largest group during each period of twenty-five years between 1575 and 1674 remained that of the craftsmen. However, compared with the previous century, 1475-1574, discussed in chapter V above, their relative numerical strength declined.<sup>1</sup> During this earlier period, the number of admissions relating to craftsmen was 155, 140, 160 and 158 respectively for each quarter of a century. For 1575-1599, however, the admissions to craft trades fell to 113, to climb again to 130 for 1600-1624, to 151 for 1625-1649 only to decline to 143 in respect of 1650-1674. Thus, for the century from 1575-1674, 537 craftsmen were admitted to the freedom of the town, compared with 613 for 1475-1574, a reduction to 33.44% from 45.71% of the total number of freemen admitted. Of the craft trades, as in the previous century, the most numerous was that of the clothiers, in respect of whom 39, 37, 47, 42 were admitted for each quarter of a century between 1575 and 1674. Nevertheless, the total number of clothiers enfranchised, namely 165, was much less than that for the previous century when 264 were made free. In relation to the total number of craftsmen admitted, this represents a reduction in percentage to 30.72% from 43.07%

---

1. See Appendix, Table F, pp. (15)-(20).



With regard to constituent crafts of the clothing trade, the largest during the period from 1575 to 1674 was that of tailoring. The relative admissions numbered 17, 16, 27 and 26 respectively in each period of 25 years. Thus as a percentage of all the clothiers admitted the comparative strength of the tailors increased in the second half of the century to 57.4% and 61.9% respectively for each quarter, compared with 43.6% and 43.2% for the preceding quarters.

The second largest group of clothing craftsmen during the period from 1575 to 1674 was that of the weavers, the numbers enfranchised being 7, 7, 14 and 10 respectively or expressed as a percentage of all the clothiers, 18.0%, 18.9%, 29.8%, 23.8%. Of the other clothing trades, that of glover<sup>1</sup> showed a remarkable decline in the second half of the century now under discussion, the relevant admissions being 1575-1599, 8; 1600-1624, 13; 1625-1649, 4; 1650-1674, 4. This was a trade, it will be recalled, to which those enfranchised during each quarter of the preceding century had been 15, 21, 18, 15 respectively. Four spinners were made freemen between 1575 and 1599, although none were admitted between 1600 and 1675, as indeed none had

---

1. It could be argued that the gloving industry should be included under the heading of leather crafts, but this demands an assumption which may not be justified.

been during the century from 1475 to 1574.

Admissions to the freedom in respect of other clothing crafts between 1575 and 1674 were very few in number, namely 5 milliners and 1 each in respect of the following trades, hatmaker, silk weaver and hosier.

As was also the case in the preceding century, 1475 to 1574, the second craft trade in terms of numbers of admissions for the period from 1575 to 1674, was that of the leather workers. In total, 149 were enfranchised, figures for each quarter of the century being 29, 30, 54, 36 respectively. The exceptional increase for the period 1625 to 1649 was due almost entirely to the enfranchisement of 45 shoemakers, compared with 25 and 27 in the preceding quarters and 23 in the subsequent quarter. Indeed, the shoemakers made up 80.54% of all the leatherworkers admitted. Of the other leather workers admitted between 1575 and 1674, there were 11 saddlers, 3 purse makers, 13 cordwainers, 1 heelmaker and 1 parchment maker. Thus, for the century from 1575 to 1674 the leather workers had increased

---

their strength in relation to the crafts seen as a whole, from 17.13% in the preceding century to 27.74%. There must, therefore, have been a considerable leather industry in the town, particularly as it seems very likely that much of the glove trade referred to above was probably also in leather. In contrast, as has been already observed, the numbers admitted to the clothing trade declined from 43.07% of all craftsmen for the period 1475-1574 to 30.72% for 1575-1674.

Of admissions to other crafts between 1575 and 1674, the greatest numerically were in respect of the wood and building trades, to each of which 69 men were admitted representing in each case 12.42% of the craftsmen, or 4.30% of the freemen enfranchised. The wood and building trades were followed by that of metal working, to which there were 54 admissions, representing 10.06% of the craftsmen, 3.36% of the freemen. Compared with the previous century, 1475-1574, the relative position of the metal working trade changed considerably

---



for in the earlier period 71 metal workers were admitted which represented 11.58% of the craftsmen and 5.29% of the freemen. The relative position of the woodwork and metal working trades, therefore, was reversed since between 1475 and 1574 there were 52 admissions to the former (8.48% of the cratsmen, 3.88% of the freemen). Of the metal workers it is of interest to note that 4 armourers were admitted between 1475 and 1574 and 3 between 1575 and 1674. During the latter period 3 gunsmiths were also enfranchised. Of special interest too is the admission of a craftsman to the bell-founding industry in each of the three quarters between 1600 and 1674.

The clothing, leather, woodwork, metalwork and building trades, therefore, represented the major industries of the town throughout the periods 1475-1574 and 1575-1674.

---

Between 1575 and 1674 11 men were also admitted to fine craft trades representing 2.05% of the craftsmen, .68% of the freemen . This represented a decline from the previous period when there were 15 such admissions (2.45% of the craftsmen, 1.12% of the freemen). With regard to the subdivision of the fine crafts, there were 2 goldsmiths admitted between 1575 and 1574, compared with 4 between 1475 and 1574, the corresponding admissions for upholsterers being 2 and 1 and for bedders 1 and 1 respectively. Between 1575 and 1674 there were no carvers, nor marblers admitted compared with 7 and 2 respectively in the previous century. However, there were 3 bookbinders and 3 watchmakers enfranchised between 1575 and 1674 but none of either in the earlier period.

In addition to the fine crafts, 20 freemen were admitted between 1575 and 1674 to other miscellaneous trades, certain of which could possibly have been alternatively classified under another of the main categories discussed above. These included a fletcher (1), feltmaker (1), ropemaker (7), buttonmaker (1), saddle-tree maker (2), mat maker (2), basketmaker (1), tobacco-pipe maker (4) and hair weaver (1). By comparison, the number of admissions to

---

miscellaneous trades included in the analysis for the period 1475-1574 totalled 37. Thus, it can be seen that in general terms, the pattern of the craft trades in Stamford did not undergo a dramatic transformation in the two centuries from 1475 to 1674. Such changes as did take place, as has been observed above, were more in the nature of a shift of emphasis than a fundamental break with tradition.

After the craft trades, the occupations to which there were the largest number of admissions between 1575 and 1674, other than those of the unskilled and servant classes discussed below, were those concerned with retailing. In all 229 retailers were enfranchised, representing 14.26% of the freemen admitted, compared with 206 (15.36%) in the previous century. What is striking, however, is the pattern of admissions over the two hundred years from 1475-1674. Commencing 1475, the numbers of retailers enfranchised in each period of 25 years, were 69, 45, 49, 43, 47, 39, 69, 74 respectively. Thus, it can be seen how the number of retailers, having sharply declined after 1500, increased significantly again some one hundred and twenty-five years later.

---



The largest number of admissions to a subgroup within the retail trade between 1575 and 1674 was in respect of those who sold food. Such tradesmen numbered 120 (7.47% of the freemen) compared with 121 (9.02% of the freemen) in the preceding century. As might be expected, the butchers and bakers were the most numerous of those enfranchised, 41 and 36 respectively compared with 39 and 52 in the previous century during which 1 pistor was also admitted. Comparing the two centuries, there are a number of interesting changes concerning the distribution of occupations within the food retail trade. For example, where 10 fishmongers were enfranchised between 1475 and 1574, only 2 received their freedom in the following century. On the other hand only 1 grocer and 4 chandlers were admitted to their trades in the earlier period compared with 12 and 13 respectively between 1575 and 1674. A similar growth took place in the number of vintners admitted which increased from 3 to 9. Of the admissions to the remaining food retail trades those in respect of victuallers or fishers, numbered 11 between 1475 and 1574 and 7 between 1575 and 1674.

---

Following those in respect of the purveyors of food, the greatest number of admissions to the retail trade related to clothing, 55 such retailers being admitted between 1575 and 1674 compared with 59 in the preceding century. This represents a small decline to 24.02% of all retailers from 28.64% and to 3.43% of all freemen from 4.40%. Within the clothing retail trade mercers were the largest sub-group, numbering 34 in both centuries. Most of the other retailers between 1475 and 1674 were involved in the drapery business. From 1575 to 1674, however, there were a number of categories which did not appear in the previous century, namely, 4 furriers, 4 jerseyemen and 1 stayer.

In the analysis tables in the appendix 54 admissions to the retail trade are listed under "miscellaneous" compared with 26 in the preceding century, representing 3.36% and 1.94% respectively of all freemen admitted, or 23.58% and 12.62% of all retailers. Indeed, the growth in miscellaneous retail trades between 1575 and 1674 is most noticeable, the relevant numbers of admissions for each quarter being 4, 11, 18 and 21 compared with

---

10, 5, 6, 5 in the previous century. Certain retail trades call for special comment, for example, whereas there were 3 admissions as tallow chandlers between 1465 and 1574 and 1 between 1575 and 1599, there were 22 between 1600 and 1674. Another miscellaneous retail trade in which there was a marked increase in the number of new admissions was that of haberdashery, 8 between 1575 and 1674 but only 2 for the previous century.

It is perhaps in the processing trades in which the greatest differences occurred between the century now under consideration and the one which preceded it. Thus 112 men were admitted to these trades between 1575 and 1674 compared with only 59 between 1475 and 1574. Expressed as a percentage of the total number of admissions to the freedom of the town this represented an increase to 6.97% from 4.40%. The greatest number of admissions to a specific processing trade in both centuries was in respect of the leather workers, namely 45 between 1575 and 1674 and 38 between 1475 and 1574.

---



This growth in numbers, however, tends to conceal that as a percentage of all admissions to the processing trades, the leather industry declined from 64.41% in the earlier period to 40.18%.

The second largest total of admissions to a processing trade, in both centuries, related to the wool workers. Between 1575 and 1674, 39 were admitted, compared with 17 in the previous century. This represented an increase in relation to all admissions to the processing trades from 28.81% to 34.82% or on terms of all freemen admitted from 1.27% to 2.43%. The total number of admissions to the wool processing trade over the two centuries shows interesting fluctuation over each period of 25 years thus, 7, 1, 6, 3, 5, 10, 13, 11. Of the individual wool trades, the most significant change was in respect of the 19 fellmongers admitted between 1625 and 1674 for none was admitted in the earlier quarter (1575-1599)

Perhaps, however, the most striking change between the two centuries was that which took place in the brewing industry. In the earlier century, only

---

1 admission, that of a miller, occurred which could be considered part of the brewing trade. Between 1575 and 1674, however, there were 16 men enfranchised who were engaged in brewing and allied trades, namely 6 brewers, 6 maltsters and 4 millers. Expressed as a percentage of all the processing trades this represents an increase from 1.7% to 14.29%. Even so, as a percentage of all the freemen admitted, the brewers, even in the later period, represented only 1% of the total.

Of the remaining processing trades that concerning flax was negligible, there being only 1 freeman admitted to this trade between 1475 and 1674 (in the quarter 1500-24). Admissions to the hemp trade, however, non-existent from 1475-1599, numbered 12 between 1600 and 1674 namely 1, 7, 4 respectively in each quarter.

Apart from the gentry, to whom reference is made below, the next largest single group of admissions in both centuries was in respect of the landworker, 38 being admitted between 1575 and 1674 compared with 48 in the previous century. As a percentage of all the

---

freemen enrolled this represented a reduction to 2.37% from 3.58%, possibly a sign of increasing urbanisation. For the fluctuations in the number of landworkers enfranchised during the two centuries under discussion are, however, quite striking, the totals for each period of twenty-five years being 18, 10, 12, 8, 8, 18, 8, 4.

Next in order of the number of admissions were the innkeeping and wayfaring trades. Those enfranchised into these occupations totalled 27 between 1575 and 1674 compared with 20 in the previous century, representing a slight increase as a percentage of all the freemen admitted from 1.49% to 1.68%. As will be seen from Table F & S in the appendix, this increase was due in the main to an increase in the number of wayfaring trades.

Of the other occupations the entries to the professions numbered 28 (1.74% of the freemen) between 1575 and 1674, compared with only 6 (.45% of the freemen) in the preceding hundred years. Much of this increase took place between 1650 and 1674 when 13

---



professional workers were admitted, seven of whom were apothecaries.

Two further groups of tradesmen now need to be discussed, the unskilled and servant classes and the gentry. To the former category there were 330 admissions between 1575 and 1674 (representing 20.55% of all freemen admitted). This compares with 312 23.27% respectively, during the preceding century. Of this class, as might be expected, the largest number of entries were in respect of labourers, 317 between 1575 and 1674 and 289 with respect to 1475 and 1574. Perhaps the most interesting change was that of the minstrels. Whereas there were 8 minstrels admitted in the earlier century, there were none between 1575 and 1674; on the other hand there were no musicians enfranchised in the former, but 11 in the latter. With regard to the gentry, the differences between the two centuries is especially significant. Between 1475 and 1574 only 12 were enfranchised. Between 1575 and 1674, however, the numbers move rapidly from 4 in the first quarter, to 12, 15 and finally 21.<sup>1</sup> Between 1475 and 1599

---

1. cf, Lawrence Stone, Social Change and Revolution in England, 1540-1640, 1965, pp. 6-17.

those admitted were described as gentlemen, but in the last period of twenty-five years there were 11 gentlemen, 8 esquires and 2 members of the aristocracy. It is of interest to note that 21 of those admitted to the freedom between 1650 and 1674 were described as "apprentices"; this description, however, was used in no previous period.

Finally in this discussion upon admissions to the freedom of Stamford, mention must be made of 228 men who were enfranchised between 1575 and 1674 in respect of whom no occupation is made in the hall books. This is a significant factor for such tradesmen represented 14.20% of the total admitted. If their occupations were widely distributed, the general conclusion drawn above would not be invalidated. If, however, they were to be restricted to a few specific trades, then certain observations might need to be modified. In the earlier period from 1475 to 1574 the problem is not as severe since only 48 admissions were made in which no occupation was specified, representing 3.58% of the total number. Fortunately, the number of indecipherable occupations only amounted to 2 in the later period compared with 4 in the earlier period.

What conclusions can be drawn, therefore, from this

---

analysis of the occupations of men admitted to the freedom of Stamford? Certainly, there was no dramatic change in the overall pattern of admissions over the two centuries now under discussion. Thus 1341 freemen were admitted between 1475 and 1574 and 1606 between 1575 and 1674, a rise of only 19.76%. However, it is significant that most of this rise can be attributed to the 25 year periods commencing 1625 and 1650, particularly the latter. A process of expansion of trade had begun which was to accelerate rapidly during the eighteenth century. As will be seen from <sup>1</sup>Tables F & S in the appendix, when placed in order of the number of admissions, there was no change in the rank order of the four leading trades of the town in respect of the two centuries now under discussion. The largest number of admissions were to the craft trades, followed by the unskilled and servant occupations, then the retail and processing trades. As has been explained above, however, the highest number of admissions between 1575 and 1674 were those in which no mention was made of a specific trade, a fact that cannot be ignored. Indeed, the seeming

---

1. See Appendix, pp. (15)-(20) & (36)-(41).



decline in the numbers entering the craft trades, for example, during this century could merely be due to the fact that many of the unspecified occupations were in this category. However, certain definite conclusions can be drawn. For example, the strength of the shoemaking industry, 88 admissions between 1475 and 1574, 120 between 1575 and 1674 is most marked. The same can be said of the tailoring trade, 103 in the first period, 86 in the second. Furthermore during the century from 1575 to 1674 there was a definite growth in the numbers admitted to the processing trades.

Other tentative conclusions can also be drawn, which though probable, cannot be regarded as finally conclusive in view of the uncertainties discussed above. For example, amongst the retail trades, there appears to have been a remarkable growth in the numbers of tallow chandlers, no fewer than 24 being admitted between 1600 and 1675. Of the processing trades, the brewing

---

trade seems to have developed considerably between 1575 and 1674. The growth of the gentry during the later century now under discussion is also noteworthy. Many minor but interesting changes in social patterns are discernible from the analysis in the appendix; for example the disappearance of minstrels and the appearance of musicians during the period from 1575 to 1674; the establishment of a small tobacco pipe manufacturing and watch making industries in the latter part of the same period.

To sum up, therefore, the admissions to the freeman's roll indicate that there was no revolutionary change in the pattern of trade in Stamford during the two centuries from 1475 to 1674. It is apparent, however, from the analysis of the roll for the years from 1650-1674 that an increasing population was destined to change the established order.

It will be recalled that in Chapter V, the matter of journeymen being admitted to the freedom of the town was discussed. This is not a matter that can be pursued in this chapter, however, since mention is made

---

of only two journeymen in the freemen's roll for the whole of the period from 1575-1674, and both of these were in the first quarter century. The most likely explanation for this is that the clerk did not consider the matter of the status of newly admitted freemen worthy of record. It seems unlikely that it signifies a dramatic reduction in the number of journeymen employed in the town.

One of the most interesting analyses that have been made of admissions to the freemen's roll concerns the frequency of surnames. It was observed in chapter V that between 1475 and 1574 686 (75.63%) out of a total of 907 names<sup>1</sup> appeared only once and a further 123 (13.56%) only twice. For the century from 1575 to 1674, however, out of 864 names<sup>2</sup>, 563 (65.16%) appeared once and 143 (16.55%) twice. Such figures indicate a considerable movement of population, since as has been discussed above, a dynastic line of freemen would demand that a family name appeared at least three if not four times at intervals of one

- 
1. excluding six which are indecipherable.
  2. excluding two which are indecipherable.



generation throughout the century concerned. The figures above suggest, however, that between 1575 and 1674 the tradesmen element of the population was somewhat less fluid than it had been in the previous century. This trend is seen even more clearly when the numbers of tradesmen having different names are compared with the total number of admissions to the freedom of the town. Thus, between 1475 and 1574 44.77% of those enfranchised had dissimilar names but in the following century the percentage had fallen to 35.10%. Although tradesmen with surnames which occurred twice represented virtually the same percentage in both centuries (17.13% and 17.83% respectively), those whose surnames occurred three times or more were more numerous between 1575 and 1674. This is clearly indicated in Table T in the appendix.<sup>1</sup>

Tables of the most common surnames during the centuries 1475-1574 and 1575-1674 are given in the appendix.<sup>2</sup> A further table shows the most common surnames over the entire period from 1475-1574. These tables indicate how

---

1. See Appendix, Table T, p. (42).

2. See Appendix, Table U, pp. (43)-(44) & V, pp. (45)-(46).

some families held their leading numerical position in the town, whilst others declined or disappeared. There is evidence too of families growing in strength or coming to settle in the town from outside. For example, the five most frequently occurring surnames between 1475 and 1574 were Smith (24), Clark (19), Brown (14), Harrison (14) and Thompson (14). Between 1575 and 1674 however, they were Smith (27), Clark (26), Palmer (13), Atkinson (12), Brown (12). Thus the Smiths and Clarks were most numerous, though of course, as discussed in Chapter V, it must not be assumed that all tradesmen of the same name, particularly in the case of common surnames, were related. The rise of the Palmer family, however, is interesting since only one was admitted to the freedom of the town prior to 1575 (in 1489). Similarly the Thompson family had declined to a mere four admissions between 1575 and 1674, unless some of them had begun to spell their name "Tomson" in respect of which name there were six further admissions. As will be seen from the appendix certain families

---

disappeared altogether: for example 8 Marshalls were admitted between 1475 and 1574 but none at all between 1575-1674. The genealogy of the freemen of Stamford is indeed an interesting subject and one which could be explored further with the aid of the parish registers.

The relative wealth of those tradesmen of Stamford who died during the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods is now discussed. It will be recalled that in chapter V a comparatively small number of inventories, dated between 1515 and 1559, were looked at in close detail with a view to giving an insight into the lives of the individuals to whom they related. In this chapter, a more general examination is made of the available information since far more inventories have survived relevant to the period from 1560 to 1649. These number 127 in all, but unfortunately 10 are so damaged, that for statistical purposes it has been necessary for them to be ignored. Several of

---



the remainder are also torn with some of the figures missing. However, since the values of the majority of items, particularly the household goods, are ascertainable in the latter inventories, these have been analysed and included in table V in the appendix. This, however, will have had the effect of depressing certain of the averages referred to below.

The 117 inventories analysed have been divided into three groups, representing periods of thirty years commencing 1560. Twenty inventories fall in the first period 1560-1589, with an average value of £29.13s 8d; 49 in the second, 1590-1619 (£147 5s 7d) and 49 in the third, 1620-1649 (£115 0s 0d). With regard to the second period, however, the value of a particular inventory, that of Lionel Fe therstone, is exceptionally high (£1087 15s 4d) and if it is disregarded the average of the remainder falls to £101 18s 1d.<sup>1</sup> There are grounds, therefore, for supposing, although the evidence is by no means conclusive, that there

---

1. For comparative figures for the period from 1515 to 1559 see Appendix, Table L, p. (29).

was a considerable increase in the prosperity of at least some of the townsmen towards the end of the sixteenth century. This is not true of all towns, however, as Dr. A.D. Dyer has shown in the case of Worcester. With respect to this city, there are 241 surviving inventories for the period from 1560-1589, the average value calculated from the average for each decade, being approximately £44. For the period from 1590 to 1619 there are a further 378 with an average value similarly determined of approximately £56.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen from table X<sup>2</sup> in the appendix that the Stamford inventories for the period 1560-1649 have been analysed under such headings as household goods, stock-in-trade, etc. In this respect, however, it should be noted that the allocation of possessions under

---

1. Dyer, op. cit., p. 475
2. See Appendix, Table X, pp. (48)-(53)

the various headings is a personal and arbitrary judgement. In the discussion which follows, particular attention has been given to the capital invested by tradesmen in the pursuit of their various trades and a comparison has been made between this and their total assets. In some instances such capital investment is represented by goods offered for sale, in others by tools of trade and in many by both. In the case of certain individuals a look has also been taken of the manner in which they augmented the income arising from their trade by engaging in another occupation, usually some form of agriculture.

Compared with those inventories examined in Section I of this thesis, there are some striking differences in the relative wealth of the poorer and richer tradesmen. Thus

---



during the latter half of the period from 1560 to 1649 four tradesmen died with stock-in-trade valued in excess of £300, namely Robert Ramsden (1609), Nicholas Lamb (1610), Brundenell Lysle (1615) and James Smith (1630). Much has already been written of Ramsden in earlier chapters.<sup>1</sup>

He was a mercer and his stock in trade was valued at £312 2s 6d. It included many fabrics: linens, brown and white hollands, cambrics and lawns to the value of £74 2s and silks worth £48 9s 10d. In addition, various mercery wares were appraised at £119 17s 8d and grocery and haberdashery items at £69 14s 10d. As well as his mercery business he seems to have been quite a substantial farmer as he owned standing crops valued at £127 and hay at £12. Ramsden was indeed a wealthy man for his total assets amounted to £877 17s 2d.

Nicholas Lamb, another tradesmen referred to often in preceding chapters<sup>2</sup> was a woollen draper, whose stock in trade consisted entirely of woollen cloth to the value of £327 8s 9d.

---

1. See p p. 434-438, 440 above.

2. See p . 498 above.

L.A.O., Invs. No 106/326  
L.A.O., Invs. No 109/81

He seems, however, to have been unduly liberal in allowing credit for on his death he was owed £212 19s 8d, £66 12s 4d of which was described as "desperate debts". Lamb's estate was worth at least £627 18s 4d and may well have been considerably in excess as part of the inventory relating to him is illegible.

Brudenell Lysle was another mercer who died in 1613, leaving trade items to the value of £341 0s 11d.<sup>1</sup> Most of these had been purchased in London: haberdashery valued at £14 10s 3d; linen at £54 12s 8d; mercery wares at £63 15s 6d; silk goods at £41 6s 1d; groceries at £25 8s 6d; woollen and worsted stockings at £12 2s 5d. In addition his shop contained miscellaneous wares to the value of £129 5s 11d. Unfortunately, this inventory is torn, making it impossible to ascertain Lysle's total wealth but it was certainly in excess of £396 7s 9d.

2

James Smith is described in the inventory relating to his estate as a tallow chandler, but his stock in trade indicates that his trading was very diversified.

- 
1. L.A.O., Invs. No. 115/297
  2. Ibid. Invs. No. 139/21

The items which he sold clearly indicate many of the needs of the townsmen of Stamford and no doubt the neighbouring countryside during the early Stuart period. His shop was filled with all kinds of goods, many of which had been imported from overseas. Foodstuffs sold included spices, rice, sugar, sweets, dried fruits, treacle, olives and vinegar. There were items of haberdashery such as thread and pins; minerals and chemicals like brimstone, quick-silver, salt, alum, starch, pitch, indigo and gunpowder; pottery and Venetian glass ware; nails and shot; and all kinds of miscellaneous items such as playing cards and sack cloth. Furthermore his storerooms and outbuildings contained further stocks of goods similar to those in his shop and many additional items as well. There were scuttles, bundles of laths, warps of cloth and considerable amounts of glassware, including a hundred "bastard" Venice glasses and twenty-four fine Venice glasses. Here too, were quantities of dried peas, aquavite, resin, starch, red lead, chalk, gunpowder, copperas, verdigris and alder bark. A chest

---



contained twenty quire of brown paper, presumably either for sale or to wrap purchases in. In the "iron house" there were nearly two tons of iron, worth £35, and in the "honey house", not only honey, but treacle, salad oil, bird lime, prunes and seven and a half pounds of steel. In the yard, there were barrels of tar. The quantities stocked by Smith of some of the cheaper goods were considerable and presumably indicate a brisk turnover. For example, in the shop, there were 188 dozen trenchers worth £2 16s 0d. In the storerooms there were 100 dozen black pots valued at £2 18s and thirteen gross of tobacco pipes at £1 6s.

James Smith also carried a considerable stock of the raw materials required for brewing. Various grades of hops were stored on his premises, the best costing £3 6s 8d a hundredweight; the second best £2 1s 9d and the worst £1 2s 0d. In addition there were ends of "old hops" of little value. Presumably these were for sale to home-brewers since  $2\frac{1}{4}$  cwt. of the best hops were stored in the shop itself and there is no

---

record of any beer being on the premises. In this respect it is not possible to determine whether two brewing pans valued at £2 3s 4d were for sale or for use by Smith himself, a reservation which applies also to two quarters of malt valued at £2.

With such a wide variety of goods offered for sale, Smith's trade as tallow chandler tends to be overshadowed. However, included amongst his possessions, was a candle mould valued at 10s and various barrels, troughs and tallow knives valued at £1 2s 0d. In addition he held a stock of 2 cwt. of tallow worth £2, 10 st. of rough tallow (£1 16s 0d) whilst in his shop there were 13 dozen candles (£2 16s 0d). The making of candles, however, does not appear to be the only manufacturing trade he carried on, for he also owned a honey press worth 6s and his stock included barrels of honey valued at £21. Thus, it can be seen how the wares sold by Smith must have supplied the town with very many of its essential commodities. He was a man who lived in comparative simplicity over the shop. In all his household goods were worth £51 9s 0d and though

---

this sum seems higher than the average, it represented only approximately 9% of his total wealth of £575 12s 6d. Much of his business appears to have been on credit for at his death he was owed £80..

Robert Ramsden and Brudenell Lysle the mercers, Nicholas Lamb, the woollen draper and James Smith the tallow chandler, had their counterparts in other towns also. Thus in Worcester the mercers were very prosperous and held considerable power;<sup>1</sup> here also the draper<sup>2</sup> was often a wealthy man, as was the chandler.<sup>3</sup> Closely following these four Stamford tradesmen in the value of their stock-in-trade was Thomas Dexter,<sup>4</sup> a brazier who died in 1613. The contents of his shop are of particular interest. He carried a large stock of kettles of various descriptions: 6 cwts. of black kettles valued at £36; 5 cwt. of flanders kettles (£35); 4 cwt. of "baternick" kettles (£28). Plates, basins, chargers, new brass pots and iron all formed part of his stock. His moulds and working tools were valued at £40. Of particular

---

1. Dyer, op. cit., p. 123.

2. Ibid., p. 131.

3. Ibid., pp. 211, 212.

4. L.A.O., Invs. No. 501.



interest is the reference to brass pots and other goods sold at Stourbridge fair for £29 10s. Certainly Thomas Dexter was a man of enterprise. Compared with his stock-in-trade, however, his other possessions were modest, since his total estate was valued at £322 3s 2d.

No other tradesmen, whose inventories survive, possessed stock-in-trade approaching in value that of the five tradesmen discussed above. Four valuations exceeded £30, the highest being £85; four were between £20 and £30, four between £10 and £20; and the remaining 18 were under £10. That of £85 related to Agnes Hall<sup>1</sup> whose inventory was taken after her death in 1604, probate rather surprisingly not being granted until 1612. She may have been the widow of John Hall, a tanner, who was admitted to the freedom of the town in 1576.<sup>2</sup> Included amongst the trade items were the tools of the trade, fleshers and knives worth 3s 4d, tan vats and bark (£6). Her main wealth, however, was in the stocks of "cloute" leather worth £78,

---

1. L.A.O. Invs, No. 231.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 214.

"overleather" hides (£3 10s) and horse hides (£3 10s). Her total estate of £177 10s 8d, included household goods to the value of £56 10s 8d, a relatively high figure when compared for example with those of Lamb (£87 9s 11d), Dexter (£44 3s 6d) and Lysle (£55 6s 10d).

The tradesman, whose stock-in-trade was next in descending order of value, was John Piggin<sup>1</sup> (d.1614), another tanner. He possessed leather with the bark to tan it to the value of £50, and tan vats worth £3 and working tools £1. His total estate amounted to £90 5s including household goods to the value of £29 15s. Tanning seems to have been a cash only trade, however, for neither he nor Agnes Hall were owed money on their death.

Two other tradesmen whose stock-in-trade exceeded £30 when they died were Oliver Goodwin<sup>2</sup> (d. 1621; £37 15s 9d) and Robert Bayle<sup>3</sup> (d. 1633; £39 14s 3d). Goodwin was a chandler, but on a much more modest scale than James Smith. He seems to have maintained two

---

1. L.A.O., Invs. No. 114/155

2. Ibid., No. 125/180

3. Ibid., No. 146/215

shops. One "at home" where he sold groceries such as sugar, pepper, rice, powdered corn, ginger, aniseed, candy, nutmegs, cloves and so on. Here, too, his goods included fourteen pounds of steel (5s) and eight dozen candles (£2 10s 8d). His other shop, "the corner shop", was stocked with items not sold by Smith; these included six "cart saddle crowns" worth 4s, three dozen whips (3s), eighteen shovels (5s), two dozen thatch ropes (2s 4d) and various kinds of oil. Goodwin seems to have lived simply for his household goods were valued at £11 10s 8d. Unfortunately the inventory relating to him is incomplete and it is not possible to ascertain his total wealth.

Robert Bayle, on the other hand, was a plumber. The contents of his shop illustrate well the needs of his trade.. His working tools included three planes, an iron vice, 5 hammers, 3 iron ladles, an iron pan, 2 pair of pinchers and 2 cutting knives, 12 plumbing irons, 3 chisels and a rasp, valued in all at 16s.

---



In addition he possessed hand saws, stone moulds, black smithing tools and scales and beams. He had a considerable stock of lead; including 23 st. 4 lb. of new lead worth £2 10s and 21<sup>6</sup> st. of pig lead (£16). Sheet lead weighing 19 st. and valued at £1 13s 9d was on the mould ready cast. Milk pans of lead, brewing leads, lead weights and girdles of lead for horse riders were all included in his stock. Nine pounds of plumbing solder was valued at 4s 6d and 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> st. of "hard metal" (6s). His total estate was valued at £529 14s 8d making him one of the richest of tradesmen. His wealth was not so much in household goods, however, which were valued at only £38 12s 2d, but in debts owing to him. He seems to have lent money on a considerable scale for bills and bonds due to him, with other monies, amounted to £387 1s 8d.

Those tradesmen who possessed on their death trade items worth between £20 and £30 included John Ryder<sup>1</sup> (d. 1567), Margaret Govre<sup>2</sup> (d. 1577), Edmund Richardson<sup>3</sup> (d. 1621), Tobias Aslack<sup>4</sup> (d. 1621) and

- 
1. L.A.O., Invs. No. 41/219.
  2. Ibid., No. 415/61.
  3. Ibid., No. 125/15.
  4. Ibid., No. 125/177.

Henry Smith<sup>1</sup> (d. 1622).                      Ryder's inventory is of special interest since he served on the second twelve from 1547 to 1553 and on the first twelve from 1554 to 1562, being alderman in 1559.                      He dealt in leather and wool and his stock which included well over a thousand skins of various descriptions was valued at £23 10s 8d.                      These included 150 undressed calf leathers (£3 6s 8d), 200 sheep leathers (£1 10s), 800 dressed white calf leathers (£2 13s 4d) and 100 small leathers (£1).                      Finished goods included 2 gross of ready made gloves and a gross of purses worth £2. In addition there were 30 st. of white wool (£8) and 20 st. of black "carded" wool (£2 0s 8d).                      In all Ryder's estate amounted to £48 18s with household goods to the value of £33 5s 8d.

Margaret Govre, a widow, kept a small haberdasher's shop and seems to have undertaken a certain amount of tailoring work as well.                      Her stock-in-trade valued at £23 10s 8d reflects the fashions of the period.

---

1. L.A.O., Invs. No. 126/120.

It included 16 lb of silk valued at £3, bobbin silk, riding hoods, coifs, thread, a variety of lace, buttons, caps, bonnets, ruffs and lengths of various cloths. In addition, she kept somewhat surprisingly a stock of nutmegs and ginger worth 4s. On the tailoring side, she seems to have been working on a satin doublet for a Mr. Fen of London. She appears to have lived simply as her inventory mentions only one chamber, containing merely a bed, a table and two stools as furniture. Nevertheless, her total estate amounted to £68 13s 9d. She possessed silver and gold to the value of £17 10s 7d and a further £8 in ready money. Her personal apparel was valued at £7 18s, a comparatively high figure.

Edmund Richardson was a glover. His inventory contains no details of his stock of gloves, purses and other items other than that they were valued at £23 15s. To this sum must be added 13s 4d representing the value of certain tools, etc. bringing his total trade assets to £24 8s 4d. He too lived

---



simply in a house consisting of a parlour, hall and kitchen. His total assets of £50 11s 4d rather unexpectedly included apparel worth £10.

Toby Aslack was a shoemaker, but his inventory gives few details of his stock, other than that he possessed leather, shoes, oil, tallow and lasts to the value of £20. He appears to have supplemented his income by farming on a modest scale for he had standing crops of wheat, rye and barley to the value of £13 6s 8d. In addition he owned two hogs. His total estate amounted to £101 6s 8d of which £10 consisted of personal apparel and ready money.

Henry Smith was also a shoemaker who held a stock of more than fourteen dozen pairs of shoes. It seems in general to have been his policy to keep a stock of twelve pairs of each type, presumably making replacements when required. The price of a dozen pairs of shoes ranged from 7s to 25s. Boots were more expensive, the thirteen pairs which he had in stock being valued at £2. The remainder of his trade assets comprised his working tools,

---

lasts and various quantities of leather, hides, oil and tallow. Smith's total estate amounted to the not inconsiderable sum of £151 12s 5d, of which £57 was in cash in his best chamber.' His trade debts amounted to a further £3 10s and he held a bond for £20. Such wealth was probably exceptional, however. Dr. Dyer found for example that the shoemaker was "one of the most humble" of Worcester's craftsmen, with average estate of £5 in the 1550s rising to £10 in the early seventeenth century. One, with a trade stock of £34, and total estate of £115, he considered to be quite exceptional.<sup>1</sup>

The value of trade assets in four further inventories taken between 1560 and 1649 fall in the range from £10 to £19. These relate to John Maddison,<sup>2</sup> a blacksmith, who died in 1566, Anthony Havelocks,<sup>3</sup> a carrier (d. 1604), Tobie Norris,<sup>4</sup> a bell founder (d. 1626) and William Bucks,<sup>5</sup> hempman (d. 1632). They give an interesting insight into some of the minor trades of the town. Maddison's stock-in-trade,

- 
1. Dyer, op. cit., p. 194.
  2. L.A.O., Invs., No. 44 / 321.
  3. Ibid., Invs., No. 9<sup>c</sup> / 59.
  4. Ibid., Invs., No. 131 B., 443.
  5. Ibid., Invs., No. 139 / 159.

valued at £13 19s 1d, varied little from that of the village blacksmith of the twentieth century, apart from a stock of 8 manacles worth 1s 8d. It included 13 cwt. of iron valued at £7 16s and 6 dozen horseshoes (9s) as well as the tools of the trade. Anthony Havelocks kept 8 nags, with values ranging from 16s to 26s 8d. In all his horses were worth £10 10s 8d, which together with 6 packsaddles valued at 14s brought his total trade assets to £11 4s 8d.

Tobie Norris, possessed stock-in-trade to the value of £13 13s 4d. It included 18 st. of bell-metal, 12 st. of soft metal and 6 st. of pewter priced at £6 6s, £3 10s and £2 16s respectively. How much bell-founding he undertook it is difficult to assess; most of his casting seems to have been for other purposes. For example, he possessed brass chamber-pot moulds, weighing 80 lbs. to the value of £2 13s 4d. Furthermore he held stocks of brassware, 4 st. of pans and basins worth £2 16s. and 8 st. of pots worth £2 16s. Indeed his

---



inventory lists many other items made of brass, though it is difficult to know whether these were for personal use or for sale. He, like so many of the tradesmen, kept his own horse and cow valued at £6.

William Bucks held a stock of some 13 st. of hemp, of various grades, valued at £5 16s 8d. In his shop he had further stocks, weights and other goods worth £3. He seems to have sold firewood also for in his yard there was a stock of it, together with iron beam scales and other items. In his "shop" in the market he had goods worth 2s. He also kept a shop at Uppingham which also contained stocks of hemp, scales and "other things. . .unseen" by his assessors with a total value of £5 10s. Much of his trade seems to have involved the granting of credit, for on his death he was owed no less than £66 3s 11d. He too kept livestock, 2 horses and a mare valued at £6 6s 8d and cattle at £3 6s 8d.

All the remaining tradesmen, whose inventories form part of the analysis in the appendix had stock-in-trade worth less than £10, excluding livestock which in

---

certain cases could be regarded as trade assets. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to be sure of the nature of a tradesman's principal occupation. It is apparent from the inventories discussed above that many townsmen had agricultural interests in addition to practising another trade. Of course, diversification of a tradesman's activities was to be found in other towns also, as can be seen from Dr. Dyer's comments on this aspect of sixteenth century Worcester.<sup>1</sup>

Ralph Harrop, who served on the second twelve from 1543 to 1549 and the first twelve from 1550 to 1570 and was alderman in 1554 and 1563, provides a good example of a man whose farming activities must have provided an important part of his income, though they were modest compared with those of Robert Ramsden, referred to above. At the time of his death in 1571 with total assets of £75 2s 3d Harrop possessed farm implements to the value of £3 13s 4d, including 2 ploughs, one of which was made of timber, a pair of iron harrows and a 2 draught yoke. His livestock included 3 mares and he had standing crops to the value of £6.

---

1. Dyer, op. cit., p. 194.

Another tradesman with agricultural interests was William Harpe,<sup>1</sup> a joiner who died in 1634. Building timber and other trade chattels belonging to him were valued at £3 7s. His two cows, however, were assessed at £4 and his leases on some 13 acres of meadow and other land at £30. With a total estate of £58 12s he was one of the most prosperous members of the wood working trades. Another, who had died some eight years earlier in 1627, was Richard Benison,<sup>2</sup> a carpenter. His total estate amounted to £69 4s 2d, though this included a lease to the value of £30. His tools, however, were valued at £5 and his timber £2 6s 8d.

Other carpenters, however, were much less prosperous. John Storer<sup>3</sup>, who died in 1620, for example left a total estate of £11 19s 2d, of which 3s represented the value of his carpenter's tools and 6s his stock of wood. He too kept livestock, namely a cow and yearling worth £2 7s. William Fairchild<sup>4</sup> (d. 1635), also a carpenter was less well off still. His tools and stock of wood were worth 6s and 13s respectively and his only livestock, 2 lambs,

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 141, 122.  
 2. Ibid., No. 132 / 274.  
 3. Ibid., No. 123 / 336.  
 4. Ibid., No. 143 / 182.



6s. His total assets, however, amounted to only £7 0s 2d.

Many other townsmen had less than £10 capital invested in their trade; indeed, a considerable number were like Fairchild with their entire assets below this figure. George Bycarstaff<sup>1</sup>, for example, who died in 1576, seems to have been connected with the wool, flax and hemp trades. In his shop there were two pairs of shears and other tools of the trade to the value of 16s. He also possessed 4 lb of yarn, 2 st. of flax and  $\frac{1}{2}$  st. of hemp and other yarn valued at 5s. Like so many tradesmen, he kept a small amount of livestock, in this case two young pigs worth 1s 8d. In all, his assets amounted to £29 8s 10d. Christer Blythe<sup>2</sup> (d. 1576) was a leather merchant and tanner who traded on a lesser scale than Agnes Hall and John Ryder referred to above.<sup>3</sup> His stock comprised of 40 calf leathers and 10 other skins valued at £2 and 13s 4d respectively, whilst in the tanning pits he had further leather worth £1. His total assets of £13 3s were exceeded by his debts of

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 59/ 130.

£14 16s. He owed 5s to the hall for rent and amongst his other debts was one of 8s in respect of 2 buckskins bought from King's Cliffe and £7 2s to one John Wilson in Peterborough. Henry Gamb le<sup>1</sup> (d. 1592) was another small wool and leather dealer. In his wool chamber he had 3 st. of wool to the value of £4 shears, scales, weights and other tools of the trade. He carried a small stock of 15 pairs of gloves and 5 calf skins, as well as having leather in tanning pits worth £1 1s 7d. In addition he had two linen wheels the significance of which it is difficult to ascertain. Such men as Gamble lived simply for his household goods were only valued at £5 16s 10d.

Closely associated with those who dealt in leather were the shoemakers. Not all traded on the scale of Toby Aslack or Henry Smith referred to above.<sup>2</sup> Edward Willes<sup>3</sup> (d. 1604), Richard Billington<sup>4</sup> (d. 1640) had trade assets worth £8 15s and £4 2s 7d respectively. The values set upon their products are of special interest on

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., Nos. 84/ 346.  
 2. See pp. 642-643 above.  
 3. L.A.O., Invs., Nos. 99/ 101.  
 4. Ibid., Nos. 150b/ 404.

account of their death being separated by some 36 years. Included amongst Willes' goods there were 7 pairs of boots graded from size 9 to 12. Plain boots cost in the region of 3s 6d a pair, French boots 5s. He had for sale some 55 pairs of adult shoes, some "tied", others "ankle" or "dry leather", available in various sizes and costing from 1s to 1s 6d a pair. In addition he carried a stock of 21 pairs of children's shoes valued at 12s 4d or about 7d per pair. Billington's shoes were scarcely more expensive, though whether of the same quality it is not possible to say: 8 pairs of shoes at 1s 8d each; 6 pairs of small shoes at 8d a pair. The marginal increase in price is in keeping with the index of the price of a sample of industrial products which was 256 and 281 respectively <sup>1</sup> when Willes and Billington died, a rise of approximately 10%. Much the same can be said of their lasts. Willes had 5 dozen priced at 6s 8d or 1s 4d per dozen; Billington 9 dozen at 15s 6d or approximately 1s 9d per dozen.

---

1. See Appendix Table N, p. (31).  
The index quoted assumes a base of 100 for the period 1451-75.



Before concluding this discussion upon the trade assets of Stamford tradesmen a brief look must be taken at some of the other common occupations. For example, Frances Exton, a baker, who died in 1592, had a total estate in excess of £51 5s.<sup>1</sup> The value of the essential equipment of his trade, however, was modest for in the bakehouse he had a lead trough, moulding boards, saws and three dozen baked bread loaves to the value of £1 6s 8d, with other tools worth 2s, though he may well have used other items in his household as well. His stock of ingredients included wheat, wheatmeal, peas and peasmeal, worth with the other tools of the trade £2 17s 4d. In his shop he had for sale twenty dozen loaves of bread.

Other tradesmen were connected with the clothing trade. Edmond Goodwin,<sup>2</sup> for example, who died in 1614 had, with total assets of £13 5s 10d tools in his shop and a pair of tenters in the meadows valued in all at £2. A number were in service

- 
1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 688 / 83.  
This inventory is badly torn rendering an exact calculation impossible.
  2. L.A.O., Invs., No. 116 / 177.

industries, such as Richard King<sup>1</sup> who died in 1612 with assets worth £6 13s. All he required to practise his craft was five basins, a chair, a glass, cloths, razors and scissors to the value of 6s.<sup>2</sup> Arthur Maisters, a butcher, (d. 1615) had total assets of £61 and owned stalls in the market to the value of £2 0s 2d as well as the tools of the trade. When he died he had served on the second twelve for less than a year. A number of the inventories suggest that certain tradesmen made their living by a variety of methods. For example John Barnes<sup>3</sup>, who died in 1595 and was described as a tanner, had no stocks of leather. His six horses and five pack saddles and three pair of hampers suggest that he had turned his hand to carrying. Possibly also he sold oil and vinegar for there were quantities of both to the value of £1 in his shop.

What conclusions, therefore, can be drawn from this survey of the capital invested by the tradesmen of

- 
1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 114/ 3.
  2. Ibid., 115/ 51.
  3. Ibid., 86/ 247.

of Stamford in the practice of their trade during the period from 1560 to 1649? Certainly the early decades of the seventeenth century saw the rise of wealthy tradesmen such as Robert Ramsden and James Smith. No inventories survive of tradesmen with comparable wealth prior to the seventeenth century and it is possible that none existed. Inflation alone does not account for this apparent increase in wealth, though, of course, it cannot be ignored. Thus, the index of the price of a sample of industrial products, which was 186 for the years 1551-1560, had risen, as has been observed above, to 256 for the years 1601-1610 and 281 for 1631-1640.<sup>1</sup> As might be expected from studies of the town, the most prosperous trades were that of mercer, Chandler and woollen draper. Of the leather trades the prosperity of those following them varied considerably, presumably according to the business acumen of those who pursued them. It must also be observed that possibly at the time of the death of certain tradesmen their businesses had been in decline

---

1. See Appendix, Table N, p. (31).



for a number of years on account of ill health or old age. Nevertheless, there were many tradesmen, like Richard King the barber, who had little capital invested and little by way of assets. This earlier seventeenth century appears to have been a time, therefore, of considerable inequality.

One class of tradesmen not included in the survey above calls for special comment, namely the innkeepers. Often such men preferred to describe themselves as gentlemen. Such was the case of Lionel Fetherstone<sup>1</sup>, who died in 1614, after having served on the second twelve from 1592 to 1595 and on the first twelve from 1596 until his death. An influential man, he had been alderman in 1597 and 1609. He was a man of considerable riches, his assets of £1,087 15s 4d exceeding even those of Robert Ramsden, the mercer.<sup>2</sup> His inn, known as the Black Bull, was in St. Mary's Street and contained some 16 rooms, many with evocative

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 116/173.

2. A comprehensive study has been made of the Black Bull and its owners by Dr. E.C. Till.

names such as the "star", "paradise", "lion" and "knight" chambers. An important coaching station, the Black Bull was unfortunately demolished in 1810 to make way for the Stamford Hotel, an establishment which has failed to prosper. The house was well furnished with many visible signs of luxury - curtains, cushions, featherbeds, painted cloths for wall coverings, silver and gilt plate worth £40 and so on. The linen alone was valued at £136 11s 8d and included, for example, 157 pairs of sheets of various qualities and 49 table cloths. Provender by way of peas and oats was kept for the horses, and the barns held some thirty load of hay valued at £20 and stocks of beet worth £2. Like so many other of the townsmen, Fetherstone had his agricultural interests, six pigs, four cows, two mares and twenty sheep valued in all at £34 10s. He must have been a man also who prided himself on his personal appearance for his gowns, cloaks, doublets and other articles of clothing were worth £35.

1

When Fetherstone's successor Richard Banister died in 1626, the inn seems to have declined. Though

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 131 B. 407.

still well furnished there was no longer such an adequate supply of linen, for example 38 pairs of sheets worth £12.14s 8d, whereas before there were 157 pairs. In a similar way the quantity of silver and gold plate had declined to the value of £22 10s. However, there was an adequate supply of drink in the cellar, 7 hogsheads of beer and others of wine. Unlike Fetherstone, Banister kept no livestock other than an old nag. He must have been quite a different man for his apparel and ready money only amounted to £9. His total estate £314 8s 8d, though considerable, was less than a third of that of his predecessor. His successor, John Bate<sup>1</sup>, however, seems to have revived the ~~trade~~ of the Black Bull, for when he died in 1630 his assets were valued at £789 3s 4d. His stock of linen, though less than Fetherstone's was worth £72 9s 8d including 68 pairs of sheets and 48 tablecloths. His clothes were valued at £13 6s 8d, indicative perhaps that he himself had adopted a life style more sophisticated than Banister but less so than Fetherstone.

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 136/ 501.



The kind of luxury goods which graced the Black Bull were to be found in many of the homes of Stamford's principal tradesmen of the period, particularly those who died during the reigns of James I and Charles I. Toby Loveday<sup>1</sup>, the skinner, about whom much has been written in previous chapters, had assets valued at £399 4s 3d when he died in 1624. By that time he appears to have given up his former trade to become a "gentleman" farming on a fairly substantial scale on some 127 acres. Much of his land appears to have been held on lease from the Exeter family, or from the local clergy.

The growth of luxury goods in certain households appears to have become more general in the 1570s. For example, William Baggott, a dyer who died in 1563<sup>2</sup>, had few real luxuries in his house, save perhaps for six cushions. Nevertheless, he was one of the town's leading tradesmen having served on the second twelve from 1553 to 1556 and on the first twelve thereafter until his death, a few years before

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 128 /156. See pp. 440-449, 456, 457-459,  
 2. Ibid., No. 41 /218. 506.

which, in 1560, he had been alderman. One of the first townsmen who had a liking for more gracious living was John Walkerwood<sup>1</sup> who died in 1575 and was parson at All Saints. His house had glass windows valued at 13s 4d and contained considerable quantities of linen, fine needlework valances and so on. His clothing too, valued at £5, consisted not only of the usual leather jerkin, but a doublet of satin. He also possessed some 80 books valued at £15. Many of his possessions, however, seem to have been purchased at the expense of his creditors, since he owed £27 1s 2d, some of which was due to local tradesmen. In all his assets were valued at £64 9s. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, items formerly regarded as luxuries were to be found in comparatively modest homes.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Southwell, for example, who died in 1604 with possessions worth in total £27 2s 4d, had glass in her "great window" valued at 5s. Such was the case, of course, in other towns as Dr. A.D. Dyer has pointed out with regard to Worcester.

---

1. L.A.O., Invs., No. 58 / 226.  
 2. Ibid., No., 100/ 93.

The desire for a more pleasant and comfortable life is indeed apparent not merely from the inventories of such men as Lionel Fetherstone, but also from those of the less well off tradesmen.



Section IIIChapter XIV

An indication of developments concerning  
the Corporation of Stamford, 1650 - 1750  
with regard to the securing of additional  
Letters Patent and the completion of the river  
navigation

It will be recalled that at the end of the period, 1549 - 1649, covered by Section II of this thesis, two matters of considerable importance to the tradesmen of Stamford remained unconcluded. These were the attempts by the corporation to secure a further charter and to open the river Welland to navigation. This chapter is concerned with the extent to which these ambitions were realised and the subsequent developments which took place with regard to them. In order to provide the necessary background for the discussion of these topics, however, it is first necessary to consider briefly the growth which took place between 1650 and 1750 in the population of Stamford.

Dr. A. Rogers has estimated that a population which stood at just under 1000 heads in 1603 had risen by

---

1670 to approximately 2000 in which region it

remain for several decades.

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, it totalled approximately 4000 (there being 4022 persons in the borough of Stamford in 1801).<sup>1</sup>

Thus, between 1650 and 1750, in broad terms, the number of inhabitants increased from about 1500 to approaching 3000, that is, it virtually doubled. Such an expanding population

no doubt gave a certain sense of urgency to the twin ambitions of the corporation to secure the status of a mayoral town and to improve communications for the benefit of the tradesmen living in it.

In this respect, it has already been observed above that in February 1638/9<sup>2</sup> the corporation agreed to seek a new charter, which would confirm former privileges and grant additional ones. The latter were to include the right to be a "mayor

---

1. Rogers, This was Their World, pp. 16, 17. See pp. 603-4 above.  
 2. See p. 370-371 above.

town" and the power to break up writs.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, in January 1640/1, it was agreed that Stamford's parliamentary representative should press for further powers which would enable the Welland to be made navigable; Stamford to become a shire town by the addition of Rutland, the Soke of Peterborough and the hundred of Nesse in Lincolnshire; the corporation to have the privilege to keep out foreigners; and Stamford Baron to be united with the corporation.<sup>2</sup> Yet another petition was presented in February 1650/1,<sup>3</sup> but thereafter the question of renewing the charter was not raised again until the restoration. However, in April 1661<sup>4</sup>, on the motion of the alderman, the members of the hall were asked for their advice on what should be added to the former grants. A meeting was arranged at the alderman's house to view the old charters and to consider any proposed additions.

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 397v.  
See p. 370 above.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 406.  
See pp. 302, 355, 371 above.
  3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 436v.  
See p. 355 above, p. 693 below
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 10



In May 1663<sup>1</sup> the corporation decided to seek the assistance of the Attorney General in renewing the charter through the offices of Messrs. Stafford and Montague, Esquires. The latter was also asked to help with the raising of the necessary funds to finance the renewal, towards which the corporation also agreed to take up a loan of £100 at interest for which four of the comburgesses and two capital burgesses stood bond.<sup>2</sup> It was further agreed to despatch the charter of James I (1605) to London with the sergeant prior to the alderman going there himself to effect the renewal. In November of 1663<sup>3</sup> further deliberations took place in the hall. It was resolved to send another letter to Mr. Montague and also others to the Earl of Lindsey and Sir Christopher Chapham soliciting their help.<sup>4</sup> However, due to lack of funds the application for renewal of the charter was deferred to the following Hilary or Easter terms. Further consideration was given, however, to the nature of the

---

1. S.C.R. The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 17.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 20.

4. Ibid.

additional privileges which the corporation was to seek. These were now to include; the power to impanel a jury to enquire into nuisances in the town streets, fields and highways and into the unlawful making of doors and gates in the town walls or buildings thereupon; the power to take recognizances of Statutes Merchant; the benefit of all recognizances forfeited in the sessions of the peace; the right for the alderman or mayor to take his oath at the town hall<sup>1</sup> before the recorder, deputy recorder, or the town clerk; and the power to insist that all foreigners attending the market with goods should take away at night any which remained unsold upon pain of forfeiting such goods to the corporation on default. Subsequently, in January 1663/4<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that John Palmer and Simon Walburge, two of the comburgesses, should go to London together with a third person, if considered necessary, at or before

- 
1. It seems to have been the custom for the alderman to take his oath in the "site of the Castle of Stamford" before the Steward of the Manor of Stamford.  
S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, pp. 3, 4v.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, P. 21v.

the Hilary term to seek the renewal of the charter, taking with them the letters patent of James I. All fees and necessary expenses were to be paid by the corporation.<sup>1</sup> It was further agreed that in order to finance the renewal of the charter, £100 should be borrowed for six months from Simon Walburge on the bond of four other comburgesses and four capital burgesses.<sup>2</sup> Shortly afterwards on the 19th February, Charles II was to seal a new letter patent relating to the borough of Stamford. This was not the end of the financial burden imposed by the securing of the new charter, for in the following March<sup>3</sup> the corporation agreed to take responsibility for £50 taken up in London at interest towards the cost of the renewal by Simon Walburge and Daniel Wigmore, two of these appointed alderman<sup>4</sup> under the terms of Charles II's patent.<sup>5</sup>

The 1664 letters patent comprised a very lengthy document consisting of a preamble and some thirty-six principal clauses, many of which are divided into complex sub-clauses.<sup>5</sup> Like other charters, they were

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 21v.

2. See pp. 665-681 below.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 22.

4. See pp 667, 669-670 below.

5. This division of the letters patent into numbered clauses is somewhat arbitrary.



essentially a contract between the crown and the burgesses of Stamford, the hopes of the former being expressed in the preamble -

"trusting that if the alderman and burgesses of the town. . . shall be able to enjoy greater liberties, dignities and privileges, then they may consider themselves more especially and strongly bound to do and perform the services which they shall be able to us, our heirs and successors. . ." <sup>1</sup>

The letters patent were to be for the benefit not only of the residents of Stamford, but also of all those "resorting" <sup>2</sup> there, in the hope that the town would "remain a borough of peace and quiet to the dread and terror of evil". <sup>3</sup>

It is necessary to examine, therefore, the precise nature of the "greater liberties, dignities and privileges" promised to the burgesses of Stamford. Were the hopes that had been cherished by the members of the hall realised? Most of them were not. The voluminosity and effusive language of much of the 1664 letters patent might well have impressed some of the burgesses of Stamford, but the more discerning of them must have been disappointed at what had been achieved. The letters certainly had not the merit of enumerating systematically the privileges secured by the borough from the inception of the corporation in 1461/2. Though

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 284 (Preamble)

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

in some cases omissions would be justified by the changing needs of the town, for example, the right to have a guild merchant,<sup>1</sup> others are difficult to understand. Thus, many important rights, such as those relating to the holding of fairs, were not specially defined, being merely included in a general confirmation of earlier grants.

The alderman and burgesses, however, were successful in their request that Stamford should be a "mayor" town. Thus, the original corporation, established in 1461/2 comprising the "alderman and burgesses"<sup>2</sup> of the town was replaced by another in "the name of mayor, alderman and capital burgesses".<sup>3</sup> The significance of this change in the context of the national scene is perhaps worthy of greater discussion than would be appropriate in this chapter. It is of interest, however, that when letters patent of re-incorporation were granted to Grantham in 1685, the new corporation comprised the "mayor, alderman and burgesses" of the town.<sup>4</sup>

In theory, at least, therefore, the reconstituted corporation at Grantham was more broadly based than that

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 1. See pp 35,38-40 above.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 285, (Clause 1).c.f. pp. 287-290 (Clauses 3-6)

4. Martin, op. cit., pp. 172, 173.

of its Stamford counterpart. Indeed, it is possible that the specific reference in the Stamford letters patent of 1664 to "capital burgesses" rather than the burgesses as a whole, was in part <sup>an</sup> endeavour to prevent the kind of controversies which had at one time arisen in the town with regard to the election of the alderman.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, the reconstituted corporation at Stamford was technically more oligarchial than the one which it replaced.<sup>2</sup> This being so, it probably lent itself to easier management by the crown. Indeed the later Stuarts have often been accused of taking the power of voting from the inhabitants at large following the serving of quo warrantos on corporations.<sup>3</sup> It seems unlikely, however, that this legal difference between the composition of the original corporation of 1461/2 and that of 1664 made much practical difference in the running of town affairs. Much of the spirit of the 1664 revision of the structure of the corporation had been included in the 1605 letters patent granted by James I. Thus, it will be recalled that provision was made in the

---

1. See Butcher in Peck, op. cit., p. 28.

2. i.e. 1605 Letters Patent of James I. See pp. 257-256 above.

3. Drakard, op. cit., p. 93n.



first three clauses of the grant for the management of the corporation to be vested in the alderman, twelve comburgesses and twenty-four capital burgesses (the common council). Little was changed by the 1664 letters patent, except that the alderman became the "mayor" and the comburgesses the "aldermen".<sup>1</sup> The manner in which the "modern" mayor was to be elected<sup>2</sup> was precisely the same as that prescribed for the "modern" alderman of 1605.<sup>3</sup>

Also unchanged were the procedures to be adopted if the mayor died or was removed from office on account of misconduct.<sup>4</sup> Similarly the provisions of the 1605 letters patent regarding the choice of new comburgesses and capital burgesses in the event of death, dismissal or resignation of one of their numbers were included virtually unaltered in the 1664 letters patent, apart from the change of name where appropriate.<sup>5</sup> Rules relating to the appointment of a deputy mayor and his subsequent duties<sup>6</sup> were broadly similar to those laid down with regard to the deputy alderman in 1605.<sup>7</sup> The choice of the

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 287-290 (Clauses 3-6)

2. Ibid., p. 295. (Clause 10).

3. Ibid., p. 266. See pp. 263)265 above.

4. Ibid., pp. 298-300 (Clauses 12 & 13).

c.f. Ibid., pp. 267-268. See p. 265 above.

5. Ibid., pp. 298-300 (Clause 12 & 13).

c.f. Ibid., pp. 269-70. See pp. 265-266 above.

6. Ibid., pp. 300-301 (Clause 14).

7. Ibid., p. 270. See p. 267 above.

deputy mayor, however, was limited to one of the five senior aldermen, whereas no restrictions were placed on the appointment of a deputy alderman from the ranks of comburgesses. Such a rule most probably had the effect of conferring additional status as "elder statesmen" upon those who served longest on the first company.

Thus, Stamford achieved its aim to become a "mayor town", an honour which in practice appears to have made little difference to the pattern of local government. The title of "mayor" had been conferred upon the alderman, the "alderman" upon each of the comburgesses. But what of the other aspirations cherished by the burgesses prior to the Commonwealth? First, the borough had not become a shire town, nor indeed had Stamford Baron been incorporated within the borough. On the contrary, the 1664 letters patent specifically pointed out that the area of jurisdiction of the borough corporation was to be no difference in "length and breadth, circuit and precinct"<sup>1</sup> than was its predecessor.

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 285.

Secondly, no additional powers were granted to the new corporation with regard to the breaking up of writs, the keeping out of foreigners or the making of the Welland navigable.

It is pertinent, therefore, to examine more closely what was included in the 1664 letters patent, in addition to the technicalities concerning the composition of the corporation discussed above. Many of the provisions are a restatement of privileges included in earlier grants from the crown. For example, clause 2 of the 1664 letters patent sets out four of the characteristics which, as has been observed in chapter I<sup>1</sup>, in connection with the 1461/2 charter, were the essence of incorporation, namely "perpetual succession", the right to "receive and possess lands", "to plead and be impleaded" and to have a "common seal".<sup>2</sup> Weinbaum's fifth characteristic of incorporation<sup>3</sup>, the power to make bye-laws is to be found in clause 7 of the same letters patent.

---

1. See p. 38 above.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 286.

3. Weinbaum, op. cit., p. 18. See p. 38 above.  
(I.E.B.)



Apart from the nomenclature relating to mayor and aldermen, however, the terminology of this clause, which also includes references to the leasing of land, punishment of offenders and disposal of fines, is a repetition of the sixth clause of the 1605 letters patent.<sup>1</sup> The latter in turn is an adaption of the seventh clause of the 1593<sup>2</sup> patent though with certain modifications, the significance of which have been discussed in chapter VII above.<sup>3</sup>

A number of clauses in the 1664 letters patent of incorporation were borrowed from the original charter of incorporation of 1461/2. For example, the nineteenth clause<sup>4</sup> of the former concerning the punishment of felons and other law breakers by the mayor and aldermen in their capacity as justices of the peace, is an adaptation of the fifth clause of the latter<sup>5</sup>. Other clauses relate to the use of fines and goods confiscated from outlaws for the repair of walls; appointment of a coroner<sup>6</sup>; the return of writs without interference from the

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 266. See p. 262 above.
  2. Ibid., p. 245. See p. 243 above.
  3. See pp. 262-263 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 308-309.
  5. Ibid., pp. 4-5. See pp. 56-57 above.
  6. Ibid., pp. 310, 311 (L.P. Clause 21)  
pp. 9, 10 (C.I. Clause 9 ) See pp. 51-61 above.

sheriff<sup>1</sup>; and the holding of an assize of bread and wine.<sup>2</sup>

Further clauses included in the grant of 1664 were taken virtually verbatim from the 1605 letters patent of James I. Clause 13 of the latter, giving powers to the corporation to establish a wool market, reappears almost unchanged, apart from the nomenclature of the members of the corporation, as clause 17<sup>3</sup> of the patent of 1664. Similarly, the fourteenth clause of the 1605 patent<sup>4</sup> relating to the Court of Record becomes the eighteenth clause of the 1664 grant<sup>5</sup>; the sixteenth clause of the former,<sup>6</sup> the thirty-third of the latter<sup>7</sup> (the enjoyment of privileges without hinderance from the crown); the seventeenth,<sup>8</sup> the thirty-fourth<sup>9</sup> (concerning quo warrantos); the twelfth<sup>10</sup>, the fifteenth<sup>11</sup> (tenure

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 311, 312 (L.P. Clause 22)  
p. 11 (C.I. Clause 11)
  2. Ibid., pp. 312, 313 (L.P. Clause 22b)  
pp. 14, 15 (C.I. Clause 14) See p. 66 above.
  3. Ibid., pp. 272-275. See pp 270-272 above.
  4. Ibid., pp. 275-277. See pp. 272-274 above.
  5. Ibid., pp. 306-308.
  6. Ibid., p. 279. See p. 275 above.
  7. Ibid., p. 324.
  8. Ibid., p. 280. See pp. 275-276 above.
  9. Ibid., pp. 324-325. An addendum to this clause is discussed below, Pp. 20-21.
  10. Ibid., p. 271. See pp. 268-269 above.
  11. Ibid., pp. 301-302

of offices of members of the corporation, etc.); the fifteenth<sup>1</sup>, the thirty-second<sup>2</sup>; and the eighteenth<sup>3</sup>, the thirty-sixth<sup>4</sup> (true annual value of grants, etc.)

The most striking feature of the 1664 letters patent, however, is the amount of attention given to the taking of "recognizances of debts according to the form of Statutes Merchant and of the Statute of Acton Burnell".<sup>5</sup> The right to do this, it will be recalled, was one of the privileges sought at a meeting of the hall held in November 1663.<sup>6</sup> No fewer than six clauses set out the procedures to be adopted.<sup>7</sup> The mayor and "clerk appointed for the purpose were given "full power and authority"<sup>8</sup> to execute such documents. A special seal was to be employed, the upper part to remain in the custody of the mayor, the lower in the hands of the clerk. Under clause twenty-four Richard Butcher, during his term of office as "the common clerk of the town"<sup>9</sup> was further designated "clerk to the recognizance of debts".<sup>10</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 277-278. See pp. 274-275 above.  
See Appendix pp. (57)-(58).
  2. Ibid., pp. 322, 323.
  3. Ibid., p. 280. See p. 276 above. cf Ibid., p. 254. See p. 256 above.
  4. Ibid., p. 323.
  5. Ibid., p. 313. (1283, Statutes, i. 53:R85, Statutes, I. 98)
  6. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 20v.
  7. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 313-318 (clauses 23-27)
  8. Ibid., p. 313.
  9. Ibid., p. 314.
  10. Ibid., p. 315.



In the event of his death or removal from office, the subsequent town clerk was to perform the same duties. Finally, provision was made for Butcher and his successors to receive "the like. . . fees, wages, rewards and emoluments. . .for exercising the office. . .as any other. . .clerk. . .within any other town".<sup>1</sup> It seems most probable that these specific references to Butcher were made at his own request, or possibly even drafted by him, in his capacity as town clerk. Their inclusion is reminiscent of those made in the 1593 letters patent with the aim of safeguarding the personal interests of the then Lord Burghley.<sup>2</sup>

Another aspect of the 1664 letters patent calling for special comment is the inordinate amount of attention given to the taking of various oaths by the mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses. In contrast, oath taking is not mentioned in the original charter of incorporation of 1461/2. Its importance,

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 318.

2. See pp. 253-256 above.

however, in the life of the community has been fully discussed in preceeding chapters, particuarly, with regard to the freeman's oath<sup>1</sup> and to the appointment of corporation officers.<sup>2</sup> A brief reference in the letters patent of 1481 concerns the presentation on oath of certain accounts.<sup>3</sup> However, as has been observed in chapter VI, the letters patent of 1605 decreed specifically that the alderman should take a corporal oath, as had been used "as of old time".<sup>4</sup> The provisions of the 1664 letters patent, however, were much more specific. The mayor was to take "a corporal oath on the holy evangelists of God before the aldermen or any five or more of them".<sup>5</sup>

---

1. See pp. 153, 446 above.

2. See pp. 155-158 above.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 23. See pp. 75-76 above.

4. Ibid., p. 267. See p. 264 above.

5. Ibid., p. 293 (Clause 8).

This clause is, of course, a modification of the proposals made in hall in November 1663, when it was decided to seek the right for the mayor to take his oath before the recorder, deputy recorder or town clerk.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, in September 1669<sup>2</sup> a bye-law was passed under which a newly appointed mayor who refused to take his oaths was required to pay a fine of up to a maximum of £50, or to suffer distraint of his goods accordingly. The same requirement was demanded also of all "officers and ministers" of the town appointed under clause sixteen of the 1664 letters patent.

Before the "modern mayor and the modern aldermen"<sup>3</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 20v.

2. Ibid., p. 49v.

3. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 318 (clause 28)



were permitted to exercise the office of Justice of the Peace, they were required to take a corporal oath and other "oaths. . . provided by the laws and statutes. . . of England".<sup>1</sup> 'As was "accustomed"<sup>2</sup> for justices, these oaths were to be taken before certain members of the gentry, William Trollope, Bt., Christopher Clapham, Kt., William Hyde, Esq., and Francis Wingfield, Esq., who, by the same letters patent, received authority to administer them.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, further corporal oaths were required to be taken by the justices before the mayor, or his predecessor in office, or any two aldermen,<sup>4</sup> in whom authority of giving the oaths were vested.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, clause thirty-five of the 1664 letters patent "firmly commanded " the "mayor, aldermen and recorder, capital burgesses, common clerk and all other. . . officers and ministers . . . of Stamford. . . and their deputy and also all the

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 318 (Clause 28)

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 320 (Clause 29)

5. Ibid., p. 320 (Clause 30)

justices of the peace. . ."before assuming office to take "the corporal oath called the oath of obedience" and the "corporal oath commonly called the oath of supremacy".<sup>1</sup> Such oaths were to be taken before such persons as were appointed by law. Notice was also given that it was to be the "royal intention"<sup>2</sup> that no recorder or common clerk should exercise office until the crown had approved the appointment.

With this last observation, all the clauses of the 1664 letters patent have now been examined closely, apart from two exceptions, namely clause 31 and an addendum to clause 34. The former stipulates that any powers relating to "any pious or charitable use or. . .any other use"<sup>3</sup> vested in the former alderman of corporation were to be enjoyed by the new corporation comprising the mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses. The addendum to clause thirty-four concerning quo warrantos stipulates that neither the mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses, nor any of

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 326.
  2. Ibid., p. 326 (Clause 35)
  3. Ibid., p. 320

their officers, should be "molested or impeached" in connection with the "use. . or abuse" of any liberties enjoyed within the borough prior to the granting of the 1664 letters patent.<sup>1</sup>

What can be said in conclusion, therefore, with regard to the 1664 letters patent? Certainly, they fell far short of what the former corporation had hoped to achieve both in its deliberations during the reign of Charles I and after the restoration. Indeed, the only request that appears to have been fully satisfied was that made in 1663 with respect to the taking of recognizances according to the Statute Merchant. The opportunity was certainly lost to set out systematically all the privileges which had been granted to the borough of Stamford since its original incorporation in 1461/2 and which were still relevant to the government of the town. Such a charter would have made references to earlier grants unnecessary<sup>2</sup> and would have been a valuable aid to efficient local government. What instead emerged was a rambling, often verbose document, which must have been difficult for the majority of the members of the corporation to have comprehended. Privileges

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 325.

See p. 673 above.

2. In May 1670, Daniel Wigmore was given authority to borrow the charter of Edward IV on security of £200 "in bar to a bill exhibited against him and others in his Majesty's Court of Exchequer". S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 53.



from earlier grants were jumbled together in no particular order making cross references with the original sources difficult. Other important rights, such as those relating to the holding of fairs were scarcely mentioned and some like the wearing of gowns, ignored altogether. On the other hand, certain other matters, for example the taking of oaths, or the appointment of Richard Butcher, claimed more attention than was really necessary. In brief, the letters patent of incorporation of 1664 left much to be desired as an instrument of local government.

The final weeks of the reign of Charles II saw the serving of a quo warranto upon the corporation of Stamford. The matter was first discussed at a meeting of the hall held on January 13th 1684/5<sup>1</sup>. Although Charles did not die until the 6th February 1684/5 it seems very likely that this quo warranto had been issued by the crown officials in anticipation of the accession of James II. Although the corporation agreed to surrender the charters to the king, there appears to have been a difference of opinion with the deputy recorder,

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 113.

Mr. Lane, concerning the manner in which this should be done. Accordingly, therefore, it was decided that an instrument should be prepared under the common seal of the borough and engrossed in parliament, "for the more ready and methodical delivering up of the said charter[s]".<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, on the 27th January 1684/5<sup>2</sup> the prepared instrument was sealed, it being agreed that the mayor (if he wished), Mr. Wigmore, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Hawkins, together with the town clerk should take the charters to London. It was realised that the granting of a new charter would cost a considerable sum of money. In consequence, therefore, it was decided to borrow £200 at interest towards the various costs involved, included the expenses of travelling to London and seeking professional advice. Six councillors, three aldermen and three capital burgesses, agreed to be bound in this sum on the understanding that the corporation would repay it out of rents. etc.<sup>3</sup> By the 3rd March, James II had sealed the new letters patent. They were closely modelled upon

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 113.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

those of 1664. Using the somewhat arbitrary system of numbering already employed, apart from those differences discussed below, clauses 11-15 and 17-36 of the 1664 patent were included virtually unchanged in that of James II. Of the changes that were made, some were concerned only with the personal names of the mayor, aldermen and so forth.<sup>1</sup> Others were in the form of omissions; several references in the 1664 letters patent to the original corporation established in 1461/2 were considered no longer necessary (e.g. part of the preamble<sup>2</sup> and part of clause 31)<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the final clause of the 1664 letters patent concerning the true annual value, etc. of the grants appeared in an abbreviated form.<sup>4</sup>

Of the additions made to the 1664 letters patent, some were to the benefit of the corporation and others,

- 
1. e.g. clauses 4, 5, 6, etc.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 283, 284.  
cf. Ibid., p. 334.
  3. Ibid., pp. 321, 322.  
c.f., Ibid., p. 372.
  4. Ibid., p. 327. See p. 674 above.  
c.f., Ibid., p. 380.



as will as seen below, were not. In the former category were the changes in the text of clause 32. This it will be recalled, referred to "messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments",<sup>1</sup> in the tenure or occupation of the corporation. No doubt to avoid ambiguities, this was changed in the grant of James II to "manors, messuages, mills, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, woods, underwoods, rectories and tithes, rent, obligations, debts, goods, chattels, rivers, waters fishing and hereditaments".<sup>2</sup> Such a change appears somewhat academic, though it should be remembered that the corporation was from time to time involved in various disputes concerning the ownership of property.<sup>3</sup>

Further privileges were bestowed upon the corporation by the patent of James II by two additional clauses inserted immediately after the modified clause 31 of the 1664 patent.<sup>4</sup> One of these granted the corporation

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 322. (See p. 674 above.  
 2. Ibid., p. 376. (c.f. pp. 274-5 above)  
 3. See pp. 580-590 above. Appendix pp(57)-(58).  
 4. See p. 679 above.

the right to hold an additional fair, subject to the usual proviso about non-interference with neighbouring fairs and markets. This new fair, to be held on the Tuesday before Candlemas<sup>1</sup>, was to be for the "buying and selling of horses and mares and their colts and all their cattle, goods, chattels and merchandizes whatsoever".<sup>2</sup> The corporation was to have the right to hold a court of pie powder at the time of the fair and to receive all "tolls, stallages and pickage fines"<sup>3</sup>. The second additional clause referred to above granted the mayor and aldermen the right to "be dressed. . . in scarlet vestments or gowns" on "all feast days, festivals and the Lord's day".<sup>4</sup> The burgesses, or the common council, on the other hand were to be dressed in "the same gowns and vestments as in time past".<sup>5</sup>

A possible clarification of the clause concerning properties, etc. in the tenure of the corporation, the right to hold a horse fair and the privilege of wearing scarlet gowns was virtually all the corporation achieved

- 
1. February 2nd (After the calendar revision of 1752 this fair was held on the Tuesday before February 13th). See Drakard, op. cit., p.426.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 373.
  3. Ibid., p. 373.
  4. Ibid., p. 374.
  5. Ibid. See p. 470 above.

from the letters patent of James II. Indeed, in terms of authority, the corporation lost more than it gained. The king made use of the opportunity to secure for himself further powers designed to assist his ultimate control of the corporation. In this respect it will be recalled that part of clause 36<sup>1</sup> of the 1664 letters patent stated that "no recorder or common clerk of the town" should take office without first being approved by the crown. This passage, however, was omitted from the patent of James II. It had become superfluous on account of clause 16 of the 1664 letters patent<sup>2</sup> concerning the appointment of town officers being completely rewritten. The revised clause stipulated that the recorder was to be a "virtuous and eminent"<sup>3</sup> man with full authority to appoint a deputy, who in turn was to be "a virtuous and honourable man, skilled in the laws of England and who. . . [had] been a barrister"<sup>4</sup>. Other "virtuous and discreet men"<sup>5</sup> were to be appointed coroner, town clerk and

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp.326,327.

2. Ibid., p. 302. See p. 677 above.

3. Ibid., p. 352.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.



the "clerk. . .to enter recognizances".<sup>1</sup> The first recorder under the provisions, Robert, Earl<sup>of</sup> Lindsey, High Chancellor of England was appointed by the king "for his natural life".<sup>2</sup> Before being admitted to the office, and that of justice of the peace, he was required to take an oath before the mayor (Daniel Wigmore), the Hon. Charles Bertie<sup>3</sup> and Thomas Harrington, Esquire (or one or more of them). Likewise the town clerk, John Brown, whose oath had to be taken before the mayor, was also appointed for life. The right to appoint his successor, however, was vested in the mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses.

Thus by appointing the recorder rather than merely approving him, the crown strengthened its influence in corporation affairs. The kind of role he was expected to play is illustrated by various changes made to the 1664 letters patent. Thus, he, or his deputy, replaced the "one learned in law" who formerly sat with the mayor and aldermen in their capacity as justices of the peace.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 352.

2. Ibid., p. 353.

3. One of the M.Ps. for Stamford 1685-1710.

4. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 308 (Clause 19). See p.671 above. c.f. ibid., pp. 4-5. See pp. 56-57 above.

A seemingly minor, though in reality significant change was made to clause 6 of the 1664 letters patent.<sup>1</sup> Under the provisions of this clause, a capital burgess, who was guilty of misconduct, could be dismissed by the mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses sitting together. Under the patent of 1685<sup>2</sup>, however, the last named were no longer permitted to judge their peers; their place was to be taken by the recorder.

Democratic local government, however, was dealt an even more severe blow by the inclusion in the patent of James II of a new clause relating to the royal prerogative. Henceforth, by virtue of an order made by the crown in privy council, under the seal of the council or royal signet any "mayor, recorder, deputy recorder, alderman, capital burgess, town clerk, coroner, bailiff or chamberlain"<sup>3</sup> of the borough could be removed from office "without any further process"<sup>4</sup>. Fit persons to succeed those dismissed were to be "elected, appointed and sworn. . . . within a convenient time".<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 289-290.
  2. Ibid., p. 340.
  3. Ibid., p. 374.
  4. Ibid. p. 375.
  5. Ibid.

Thus it can be seen that the letters patent of James II carried yet further a process, begun by James I in 1605, and continued by Charles II in 1664, by which the relative broad base of the "free borough corporate"<sup>1</sup> established in 1461/2 was progressively narrowed.

The letters patent of 1685 were the last of the major charters granted during the period now under discussion, although further letters were sealed on June 13th 1714 by Queen Anne.<sup>2</sup> These, however, were confined to grants permitting the establishment by the corporation of Stamford of two further fairs, one at Candlemas, the other on the Monday preceding May Day. The idea of such fairs was first mooted at a meeting of the hall

---

1. See p. 35 above.

2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, pp. 329-332.



on the 11th May 1713<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, a writ of "Ad quod damnum" was served on the sheriff of Lincolnshire by the chancery<sup>2</sup>. This was followed on the 5th April 1714 by an enquiry at Bourne<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of the proceedings was to ascertain whether or not the proposed fairs at Stamford would prejudice the monarch, other individuals or neighbouring fairs. As with the case of earlier grants, however, the exercise proved to be an expensive one. In consequence in June 1714,<sup>4</sup> shortly before the letters were sealed, it was agreed at a meeting of the hall to take up a loan of £50 at interest towards the cost on the bond of three aldermen and four capital burgesses. Repayment of the loan was to be made in due course out of the rents, etc. received by the corporation.

The two fairs authorised under the 1714

- 
1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 266.
  2. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 329.
  3. Ibid.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 274.

letters patent were to be for the "sale of all. . . manner of cattle and sheep. . .and all manner of goods, wares and merchandizes commonly bought and sold in fairs or markets".<sup>1</sup> In addition the corporation was granted a court of pie powder, with the associated tolls and profits. The newly acquired privileges were to be enjoyed without "disturbance from any. . .sheriffs, escheators, bailiffs, officers, or ministers" of the crown.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that one purpose of this grant from Queen Anne was to widen the scope of the Candlemas Fair authorised by the letters patent of James II. This, it will be recalled<sup>3</sup> was established primarily for trading in horses. The establishment of the Candlemas and May fairs brought the total granted to the corporation and its predecessor in title, by royal letters patent to five, the others being Corpus

1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 330.

2. Ibid., p. 331.

3. See pp. 684-685 above.

Christi<sup>1</sup> (1481), St. Simon and Jude<sup>2</sup> (1481) and St. James<sup>3</sup> (1593).

The letters patent of 1685 and the supplementary patent of 1714, constituted, therefore, the legal framework upon which the corporation rested during the period from 1649 to 1750. As has been seen above, however, neither of them were a comprehensive statement of the privileges granted to the town. Viewed as part of the national scene, the full implications of the clauses concerning the right of the crown to interfere in borough affairs were of considerable importance. However, the departure of James II from the throne of England in 1688 probably meant in reality that corporation affairs continued<sup>4</sup> much as before. Certainly in September 1702, it was the charter of Charles II which was brought from the town chest and read to the hall.

The other principal issue which remained which had not been brought to a conclusion during the period covered by Section I of this thesis, was that of opening the river Welland to navigation. Previous

- 
1. S.C.R., The Charter Book, p. 21. See pp.72-73 above.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., pp. 249, 250. See pp.250-252 above.
  4. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 212.



attempts to make the river navigable from Stamford to the sea, it will be recalled, had been to no avail.<sup>1</sup> Shortage of money and endless arguments had caused the project to be abandoned, at least for the time being. It will be recalled from chapter VII above that in February 1650/1 it had been resolved that Mr. Jeremy Cole should go to London to discuss the possibility of delinquents' estates being used for making the river navigable.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence available to lead one to suppose that anything came of this idea. However, some eleven years later in April 1664 the corporation leased the navigation from Stamford to Market Deeping to one of the aldermen, Daniel Wigmore, for a term of eighty years at a nominal rent of one shilling per year.<sup>3</sup>

Little is recorded of the work undertaken by Wigmore and in consequence it is difficult to be

---

1. See pp.339-356 above.

2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p. 438v.  
See p. 355 above.

3. Drakard, op. cit., p. 391.  
c.f. T.S. Willan, River Navigation in England,  
1600-1750, 1936, p. 66.

certain when the works on the river were completed. However, Richard Blome, writing of England in 1673 observed that the river was "now made navigable, which affordeth no small advantage to the town and adjacent places".<sup>1</sup> Some two years later in 1675, the corporation issued a bye-law concerning the landing or loading of merchandize by watermen in the parish of St. Martin's on the south side of the river. Unless the goods were for the specific use of the Earl of Exeter, the boatmen were to be required to pay 2s 6d to the corporation for every "tun last or chauldron of goods, wares or merchandize so landed".<sup>2</sup> Presumably, landing a load of goods on the south bank had already become a way of avoiding the payment of tolls.

Daniel Wigmore died in 1687 and his son-in-law, Charles  
<sup>3</sup>  
 Halford, made application to the corporation for a new lease for a further period of eighty years. His request was

- 
1. R. Blome, Britannia, 1673, p. 144.  
 See Rogers, The Making of Stamford, p. 71.
  2. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 72v.
  3. c.f. J. H. of C. XI, 388.

considered at a meeting of the hall held on the 19th January 1692/3 and a decision deferred.

Subsequently, at a meeting held in March 1693, it was agreed that on the surrendering of the old lease, and payment of a £50 fine for the benefit of the corporation, Halford should be granted a lease for eighty years "under the former rent and covenants".<sup>1</sup>

A proviso required him also to take a lease on Hudd's Mills, the management of which, it will be recalled,<sup>2</sup> had for a long time presented a problem to the corporation. This lease was also to be for 80 years, at a rent of £20 per annum, with responsibility also for all taxes and repairs. However, if he refused to accept the mills, he was to pay the sum of £140 for a new lease on the river of 80 years from the preceding Michelmas. Though the terms had been agreed unanimously, there may have been some subsequent dissension concerning them. Thus, at a meeting of the hall held in May 1693<sup>3</sup>, a motion was put whether they should stand as had been earlier agreed, or set aside and new proposals considered. In the

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1651-1721, p. 161.

2. See pp. 396-402 above.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1651-1721, p. 162.



event it was decided that the offer to Mr. Halford should remain. However, in the following July<sup>1</sup> the corporation received an application from a Northamptonshire miller, Robert Barnes of Peiry Mills<sup>2</sup>, for a lease on Hudd's Mills. It was agreed, therefore, to repair the mills out of the rents and profits of the corporation, the application would then be a full repairing lease of 21 years, at an annual rent of £20, exclusive of taxes, etc. A committee of nine, including the mayor and clerk were appointed to supervise the work.<sup>3</sup> The following month, on the 22nd August 1693<sup>4</sup>, it was reported that the chamberlain had no money either to pay the workmen or for carrying out the work at the mills. It was, therefore, agreed to borrow £60 at interest by mortgaging three corporation properties for 500 years; the loan to be repaid out of rents received as soon as possible. The loan proved insufficient, however, and in October<sup>5</sup>, it was agreed to borrow a further £20 on the same security.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1651-1721, p. 163.

2. Perio Mills, Cotterstock, presumably.

3. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1651-1721, p. 163.

4. Ibid., p. 164.

5. Ibid., p. 166.

That the works on the mills were completed is apparent from an order made in August 1698<sup>1</sup> whereby it was ordered that every baker who baked "ticket" bread or the monthly bread for the poor should grind his corn at Hudd's Mills. Subsequently, in January 1708/9<sup>2</sup> it was agreed that thereafter a clause should be included in the leases of all tenants of the corporation to the effect that they must grind their corn at Hudd's Mills.

Having apparently solved the problem of Hudd's Mills the corporation still had to resolve the matter of the lease on the river. The matter drifted on until June 1703<sup>3</sup> when it was agreed that Charles Halford could have a lease of the New River for 80 years on surrendering the former lease granted to Daniel Wigmore and paying a fine of £100. In addition he was to agree to covenanting to repair the wooden bridge over the river near Hudd's Mill and also to reimburse the corporation for setting down posts and rails by the riverside near Stamford bridge. Halford seems

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1651-1721, p. 192.

2. Ibid., p. 250.

3. Ibid., p. 216.

to have experienced some difficulty in finding the £100 for in August<sup>1</sup> he was granted an extension of time, namely until 1st December to pay it. The council resolved, however, that if the money was not forthcoming by that date the lease should be null and void.

Possibly also, Halford was dissatisfied with the lease granted to him, for in November of the same year it was agreed by the corporation that he could surrender it in exchange for another on similar terms, but containing an additional clause. This was to the effect that at any time within the first forty-years of the lease, Halford, or his heirs and assigns, could extend it to run a further eighty years by payment of a fine not exceeding £100.<sup>2</sup>

Halford was also bound not to raise the tolls already being levied nor to assign the lease itself to any person, other than his wife or children without the consent of the corporation. He was also required to make a "good and convenient wharf for the landing of goods" before the following mid-summer.

---

1. S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1657-1721, p. 217.  
 2. Ibid., p. 220.



The navigation was to remain in private hands for many years, passing from Charles Halford each in turn to Messrs. Feast, Buckley and Smith.<sup>1</sup> To Drakard, the surrender of the navigation rights by the corporation to private individuals was iniquitous. In his view "a public trust was perverted into private emolument, and even if it could be sustained in a court of law, it would undoubtedly be censored in a court of equity".<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt, however, that under private enterprise the navigation fulfilled an important role in the economic life of the town for many years. Advertisements in the Stamford Mercury, founded in 1714, provide evidence of this. For example -

"There is to be sold by John Young  
 . . . a parcel of fine timber fit  
 for ship plank, or windmill posts,  
 some of it 40 foot long and 2 foot  
 square, likewise crooks for shipping;  
 the said timber lies by Stamford  
 navigable river,<sup>3</sup> for convenience if  
 sending away."

---

1. Drakard, op. cit., pp. 391-392.

2. Ibid., p. 392.

3. S.M. Feb 7 1716/7, c.f. Ibid., June 13th, 27th 1717.  
 July 4th, 1717.

Indeed, in August 1738, a notice signed by Smith and Grandy appeared in the Stamford Mercury to the effect that the navigation between Stamford and Spalding was to be temporarily stopped so as to get the river ready for dyking and enlarging, work being due to commence on September 6th of that year. <sup>1</sup>

The enlarging of the river no doubt facilitated the carriage of one of its principal cargoes, coal. Evidence of this trade, like that in timber, is also to be found in local advertisements. Thus, in 1748, one John Lowth was advertising Mainteen and Sunderland coals for sale at his "warehouse near the bridge in Stamford".<sup>2</sup> Eventually competition from the railways serving Stamford put an end to the navigation and traffic seems to have ceased about 1863. In 1865, the corporation sought to sell its rights by auction. This was prevented, however, by litigation on behalf of riparian owners who

---

1. S.M. August, 12th, 1738.

2. Ibid., March 6th, 1746.

contended that they owned the canal bed. By about 1868, the corporation sold such rights as it possessed by private treaty with the approval of the Treasury Commissioners.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, to the burgesses of the period, the granting of the letters patent of 1664 brought to a conclusion an issue which had concerned the corporation intermittently for more than thirty years. Further changes, however, were to take place in the legal structure of the corporation in the period up to 1750, as is illustrated by the sealing of the letters patent of 1685 and 1714. The provisions of the principal patent, that of 1664, however, could scarcely have satisfied the ambitions of the ruling oligarchy for they fell far short of what they had hoped to achieve. Many of the alterations made in the 1685 patent might well have dismayed the more discerning of the burgesses even further for the crown had seized the opportunity to erode their

---

1. J.M. Palmer, The Welland Navigation Historical Notes, Railway and Canal Historical Society, 1959.

See Appendix, Plate 12, p. (73).



autonomy. By contrast the patent of 1714 was a modest and uncontroversial addition to earlier grants.

The other major issue discussed above, that of the river navigation had a satisfactory, if not somewhat ironic, conclusion. It will be recalled that it was in 1576 that an act of Queen Elizabeth I authorised the making of the Welland navigable from Stamford to the sea.<sup>1</sup> As has been observed, however, in spite of years of effort, the scheme had failed to reach completion, with consequential financial embarrassment to the corporation. It was not until the navigation was leased to one of the aldermen in his individual capacity that private enterprise brought final success. To some, such as Drakard<sup>2</sup>, this action was seen later as a betrayal of the council's trust. Whatever the moral issues involved, however, the placing of the river navigation under private control brought a long era of frustration and disappointment to an end.

---

1. See p. 341 above.

2. See p. 699 above.

### CONCLUSION

What conclusions can be drawn, therefore, from the observations which have been made in the preceding chapters? Certainly, that Stamford, whilst sharing many of the characteristics of other boroughs in Lincolnshire and elsewhere, was unique. Indeed, it is the uniqueness of the towns of the medieval and early modern period which makes their study such an absorbing task. No where, perhaps, are the differences between one town and another more apparent than in the periodic grants of privileges by the crown. In addition to the Charter of Incorporation of 1461/2, Stamford was to receive a further fifteen letters patent up to 1714.<sup>1</sup> Though six of these are merely inspeximus, the remaining ten provide the essential foundation for a study of the corporation. From beneath the legal phraseology, often tedious and pedantic, emerges not only a clear picture of the hopes and aspirations of the burgesses

---

1. See Appendix, Table Y pp. (54) and (55).

of Stamford, but also in the later grants of 1605, 1664 and 1685 of the insidious efforts that were made by both the ruling oligarchy and the crown to whittle away many of the former liberties of the "liberi burgenses".

The bye-laws enacted by the corporation give a vivid impression of urban life in Stamford during the period from 1461/2 to 1750. Furthermore, an analytical approach to these ordinances helps to underline the changes which took place in the borough during this era. Thus, at the time of the Charter of Incorporation, there is evidence of a closely knit community, displaying much of the fraternalism of a guild merchant, and undramatically going about its day-to-day business. Later, however, about the middle of the sixteenth century, began a prolonged era in which the corporation had a number of severe challenges to meet. The town, several times racked with the plague, was in dire poverty. A constant influx of "foreigners" compounded the problems and desperate attempts were made to keep them out. Positive efforts were made to introduce new industries to the town, but with limited success. The initial attempts to make

---



the Welland navigable proved to be a disaster which severely strained the financial resources of the corporation. Adding to the difficulties, there was a period during the latter part of the sixteenth century when the principal comburgesses of the town were at constant loggerheads, one with another.

The collating of a freeman's roll, and its subsequent analysis over the two centuries from 1475 to 1674 confirms Dr. A. Rogers views that there was little change in the population of the town until the beginning of the seventeenth century when it began to rise steadily. Nevertheless, it was a shifting population as the analysis of the freeman's names shows. The few dynasties that did exist wielded no special power.

Moreover, the further analysis of the freeman's occupations shows that there were no fundamental changes in the trade structure of Stamford between 1475 and 1674, although in certain trade groups there was a shift of emphasis. Particularly

---

after 1650 there were growing indications of increasing prosperity, witnessed for example by the completion of the Stamford Navigation by private enterprise and the growth of luxury goods included in the inventories of the tradesmen.

Finally, let it be observed that although there may have been substance in the complaints of men like Drakard that the townsmen had lost many of their liberties during the latter part of the period covered by this thesis, it nevertheless closed with a promise of increased material prosperity in the years ahead.

A P P E N D I XC O N T E N T S

<u>Table</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Thesis Ref.</u>	<u>Page</u>
A	Roll of freemen serving on Town Council, 1465-1648	p.89 p.92 bis p.148 p.174 p.186 p.188 p.424 p.486	(1)-(10)
B	Fines payable to secure Freedom of Borough in 1465	p.99	(11)
C	Length of Service of members of 1st & 2nd Twelves (block graph)	p.149	(12)
D	Number of new members elected to the 1st & 2nd Twelves each year 1466-1558	p.150	(13)
E	Rents of Corporation Properties, 1548.	p.161	(14)
F	Analysis of occupations of Freemen, 1475-1574	p.171 p.173 p.174 p.177	(15)-(20)
G	Occupations of Journeymen, 1475-1574	p.178	(21)



<u>Table</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Thesis Ref.</u>	<u>Page</u>
H	Comparative Numbers of Admission to Freedom (natives, apprentices, foreigners).	p.180	(22)-(25)
I	Frequency of Surnames of Freemen 1465-1574	p.182	(26)
J	Dynasties	p.184 p.192	(27)
K	Freemen, other than councillors with known date of death 1468-1563.	p.189	(28)
L	Analysis of Stamford Inventories, 1515-1559	p.195	(29)
M	Comparative analysis of inventories from Worcester Distribution of Wealth 1529-1619	p.196	(30)
N	Price Indexes 1401-1700	p.196	(31)
O	Analysis of Stamford Inventories, 1515-1559 (Furniture)	p.199	(32)

(iii)

<u>Table</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Thesis Ref</u>	<u>Page</u>
P	Details of Fines for the admission to the Freedom of Stamford, 1573/4 Revision		(33)
Q	Details of Fines for the admission to the Freedom of Stamford, 1617 Revision		(34)
R	Beer Prices		(35)
S	Analysis of Occupations of Freemen, 1575-1649		(36)-(41)
T	Frequency of Occurrence of Surnames		(42)
U	Analysis of Most Common Surnames (1475-1574)		(43)-(44)
V	Analysis of Most Common Surnames (1575-1674)		(45)-(46)
W	Most Common Surnames 1475-1674		(47)
X	Analysis of Inventories		(48)-(53)
Y	Letters Patent relating to Stamford, 1461/2-1714		(54)-(55)

(iv)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Thesis Ref</u>	<u>Page</u>
Freeman's Oath		(56)
Letters Patent of James I, 1605. (Example of terminology)		(57)-(58)

Frontispiece      Stamford in 1726      v

<u>Map</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Thesis Ref</u>	<u>Page</u>
I	Jurassic Way, Roman Road	9	(59)
II	Stamford c 1600 (Speed)	130	(60)
III	Water Meadow & Medieval town boundaries	10,11	(61)



(v)

<u>Plate</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Thesis Ref</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Stamford c.1788 by N.T. Fielding.	(v)	(62)
2	Portrait of Richard Butcher	2	(63)
3	Portrait of Francis Peck	3	(64)
4	Engraving of Wm Browne & wife	4	(65)
5	Stamford's Charter of Incorporation 1461/2	34	(66)
6	The Borough Seal in 1634	50	(67)
7	Election of Councillors October 1522	54	(68)
8	Bastion of Town Wall West Street, Stamford	144	(69)
9	The Common Hall, Stamford.	382	(70)
10	Photograph of Indict- ment of Tobias Loveday, September 1593	441	(71)
11	The dismissal of Richard Butcher, 25th March 1634	464	(72)
12	Remains of a lock at Deeping.	701	(73)

**TABLE A. ROLL OF FREEMEN**  
Serving on 'Town Council', 1465 - 1648

<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
Hance, R. —	1465	1495	—	29	—	—	1465-1491 1494-1495	29	1465, 1472, 1481	3	2	—
Browne, W. —	1465	1488	—	24	—	—	1465-1488	24	1466, 1470	2	—	—
Browne, J. —	1465	1475	—	11	—	—	1465-1475	11	1462*	1	—	—
Hikeham, W. —	1465	1486	—	22	—	—	1465-1486	22	1464, 1467, 1479	3	—	—
Gregory, T. —	1465	1476	—	12	—	—	1465-1476	12	—	—	—	—
Gregory, J. —	1465	1491	—	27	—	—	1465-1491	27	1463, 1471	2	—	—
Chapman, G. —	1465	1482	—	18	—	—	1465-1482	18	*1461, 1468, 1480	3	—	—
Kesteven, T. —	1465	1490	—	16	—	—	1465-1490	16	1469, 1486	2	—	—
Nevour, R. —	1465	1481	—	17	—	—	1465-1481	17	—	—	—	—
Gybbes, J. —	1465	1486	—	22	—	—	1465-1486	22	1475	1	—	—
Tyard, A. —	1465	1484	—	11	—	—	1465-1472 1482-1484	11	—	—	9	—
Mardoke, J. —	1465	1484	—	9	—	—	1465-1468, 1472, 1481-1484	9	—	—	11	—
Trinke, J. —	1465	1468	—	4	—	—	1465-1468	4	—	—	—	—
Sutton, W. —	1465	1475	—	11	1465-1475	11	—	—	—	—	—	—
Capron, J. —	1465	1466	—	1	1465	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moreton, T. —	1465	1466	—	1	1465	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Neel, J. —	1465	1481	—	17	1465-1468	4	1469-1481	13	1473	1	—	—
Coke, H. —	1465	1487	—	23	1465-1475	11	1476-1487	12	1477, 1487	2	—	—
Holton, T. —	1465	1484	—	20	1465-1484	20	—	—	—	—	—	—
Middleton, T. —	1465	1471	—	7	1465-1471	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Skinner, R. —	1465	1480	—	16	1465-1476	12	1477-1480	4	1478	1	—	—
Marchant, W. —	1465	1468	—	4	1465-1468	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hovy, D. —	1465	1471	—	7	1465-1471	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Casse, R. —	1465	1468	—	4	1465-1468	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bass, J. —	1465	1466	—	1	1465	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Colom, W. —	1466	1473	—	8	1466-1473	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Berks, J. —	1466	1489	—	24	1466-1489	24	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dycon, J. p.1465	1466	1491	—	26	1466-1468	3	1469-1491	23	1476, 1483	2	—	27 plus
Artkell, W. —	1469	1471	—	3	1469-1471	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Edenham, J. —	1469	1473	—	5	1469-1473	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gaywood, W. —	1469	1493*	—	25	1469-1484	16	1485-1493*	9	1490	1	—	—
Phillip, T. —	1471	1511	—	41	1471-1482	12	1483-1511	29	1489, 1499	2	—	—
Mole, J. —	1472	1476	—	5	1472-1476	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Clerke, T. — Tailor 1468	1472	1474	—	3	1472-1474	3	—	—	—	—	—	7
Crane, R. —	1472	1503	—	32	1472-1493*	22	1494-1503	10	1498	1	—	—
Dyott —	1472	1481	—	9	—	—	1473-1481	9	1474	1	—	—

<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
Stede, J. p.1465	1474	1499	—	26	1474-1484	11	1485-1499	15	1485	1	—	35 plus
Dannre, A.	1474	1481	—	8	1474-1481	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wode, W.	1475	1485	—	11	1475-1485	11	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bullove, W.	1476	1481	—	6	1476-1481	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brown, J.	1476	1483	—	8	1476-1483	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Palfreman, C. 1468	1477	1493*	—	17	1477-1493*	17	—	—	—	—	—	26
Toby, J.	1477	1484	—	8	1477-1484	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Browne, C. 1481	1482	1516	—	35	—	—	1482-1516	35	1482, 1491, 1502	3	—	36
Forster, R. — Roper 1478	1482	1483	—	1	—	—	1482	1	—	—	—	6
Richman, B.	1482	1499	—	18	1482-1499	18	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hikson, J.	1482	1498	—	17	1482-1498	17	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malpas, D. 1482	1483	1495	—	13	—	—	1483-1495	13	1484	1	—	—
Edward, T. — Pewterer 1471	1483	1497	—	15	1483-1488	6	1489-1497	9	1494	1	—	27
Billesdon, N. — Dyer 1482	1484	1505	—	19	1484-1486	3	1487-1494 1498-1505	16	1492, 1501	2	3	24
Bullock, W. — Draper 1481	1485	1493*	—	9*	1485-1487	3	1488-1493*	6*	—	—	—	13
Bewshir, W.	1485	1496	—	3	1485-1486 1496	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lister, J. 1472	1485	1504	—	20	1485-1504	20	—	—	—	—	—	32
Cooper, J. 1472	1485	1497	—	13	1485-1497	13	—	—	—	—	—	26
Johnson, R.	1486	1489	—	4	1486-1489	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frebarn, J. 1486	1487	1497	—	11	—	—	1487-1497	11	1488	1	—	12
Lacy, T. — Stapler 1485	1487	1510	—	14	1487-1493*	7	1494 1505-1510	7	1506	1	10	26
Derley, W.	1487	1513	—	27	1487-1513	27	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jameson, R. — Baker 1479	1488	1499	—	12	1488-1499	12	—	—	—	—	—	21
Radcliff, W. 1489	1489	1530	—	42	1489-1490	2	1491-1530	40	1495, 1503, 1512, 1523	4	—	42
Hampton, J.	1490	1504	—	15	1490-1495	6	1496-1504	9	1500	1	—	—
Burbagel, J. — Fisher 1475	1490	1504	—	15	1490-1494	5	1495-1504	10	—	—	—	30
Skinner, W. — Butcher 1482	1491	1504	—	14	1491-1493*	3*	1494-1504	11	—	—	—	23
Gaylyn, J.	1491	1494	—	4	1491-1494	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Claypole, J. — Draper 1494	1494*	1500	—	3*	—	—	1494-1500	7*	1496	1	—	7
Cecil, D.	1494*	1535	—	42*	1494-1501*	8*	1502-1535	34	1504, 1515, 1521	3	—	—
Cobbe, J. — Mercer 1480	1494*	1522	—	29*	1494-1499	6*	1500-1522	23	1507, 1516	2	—	43
Jorden, W. — Glover 1475	1494*	1499	—	6*	1494*	1*	1495-1499	5	—	—	—	25
Bowship, W.	1495	1496	—	1	1495	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
T.B.	1495	1496	—	1	1495	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tyard, J. 1486	1495	1513	—	19	1495-1503	9	1504-1513	10	1509	1	—	28 Dec.
Cannell, R.	1496	1507	—	12	—	—	1496-1507	12	1497	1	—	—
Cokk, L. — Mercer 1495	1496	1501	—	6	1496-1499	4	1500-1501	2	—	—	—	7
Couper, T. — Baker 1480	1496	1519	—	24	1496-1519	24	—	—	—	—	—	40
Tryg, N. — Master Stapler Calais 1495	1497	1509	—	13	1497	1	1498-1509	12	1505	1	—	15
Bowman, R. — Carrier 1494	1498	1507	—	5	1498-1499, 1505	3	1506-1507	2	—	—	5	14
Dannre, R.	1498	1503	—	6	1498-1503	6	—	—	—	—	—	—



<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall Freeman</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
Hanford, T.	—	1499	1512	—	14	1499-1512	14	—	—	—	—	—
Rankill, W. — Glover	—	1500	1529	—	30	1500-1509	10	1510-1529	20	1514	1	—
Martynedale, R. — Mercer	1489	1500	1518	—	19	1500-1504	5	1505-1518	14	1511	1	—
Hynkeley, W.	—	1500	1507	—	8	1500-1507	8	—	—	—	—	30
Walls, J.	—	1502	1519	—	18	1502-1519	18	—	—	—	—	—
Wynter, J. — Mercer	1484	1502	1513	—	12	1502-1513	12	—	—	—	—	—
Stodard, A. — Fisher	1481	1502	1509	—	8	1502-1509	8	—	—	—	—	30
Alex, J.	—	1504	1505	—	1	1504	1	—	—	—	—	29
Hodson, R.	—	1504	1523	—	18	1504-1509	6	1518-1520 1523	12	—	—	—
Hardgrave, J.	—	1504	1546	—	33	—	—	1504-1513, 1520 1522-1526 1529-1542 1544, 1547	33	1508, 1521, 1529	3	12
Feyrday, W. — Glover	1489	1505	1530	—	26	1505-1511	7	1512-1530	19	1517	1	—
Lee, J.	—	1505	1534	—	29	1505-1507	3	1508-1513 1515-1534	26	1513, 1524, 1531	3	1
Rauffe, J. — Husbandman	1498	1506	1511	—	6	1506-1507	2	1508-1511	4	—	—	—
Brown, E. — Gentleman	1505	1508	1513	—	6	1508-1511	4	1512-1513	2	—	—	9 Dec.
Johnson, M. — App.	1500	1508	1550	—	42	1508-1511	4	1512-1528 1530-1550	38	1518, 1528, 1539	3	1
Lacynax, J.	—	1508	1516	—	9	1508-1516	9	—	—	—	—	51
Westlen, R.	—	1508	1511	—	4	—	—	1508-1511	4	1510	1	—
Thomas, J. — Dyer	1503	1510	1541	—	30	1510-1513	4	1513, 1517-1541	27	1520	1	2
Maydwell, T. — Shoemaker	1500	1510	1526	—	14	1510-1519 1523-1526	14	—	—	—	—	3
Croase, T. — App.	1500	1510	1530	—	21	1510-1513	4	1514-1530	17	1519, 1530	2	—
Walbes, R.	—	1512	1520	—	9	1512-1513	2	1514-1520	7	—	—	—
Lacy, H.	—	1512	1564	—	53	1512-1513	2	1514-1564	51	1522, 1532, 1540	3	—
Lee, H. — Butcher	1503	1512	1519	—	8	1512-1519	8	—	—	—	—	—
Cooper, J. — Mercer	1505	1513	1521	—	9	1513-1521	9	—	—	—	—	17
Whitton, M.	—	1514	1534	—	21	1514-1534	21	—	—	—	—	—
Brown, E. — Gentleman	1509	1514	1541	—	28	1514-1519	6	1520-1541	22	1526	1	—
Draper, R.	—	1514	1519	—	6	1514-1519	6	—	—	—	—	33
Gunn, A. — Copper	1510	1514	1541	—	28	1514-1523	10	1524-1541	18	1525, 1538	2	—
Adams, J. — Lab.	p1465	1514	1536	—	23	1514-1536	23	—	—	—	—	—
Stevynson, R. — Shoemaker	1500	1514	1515	—	1	1514	1	—	—	—	—	—
Snow, W. — Baker	1506	1515	1534	—	20	1515-1520	6	1521-1534	14	—	—	—
Jackson, W. — Mercer	1507	1517	1532	—	16	1517-1532	16	—	—	—	—	29
Ward, J. — Fisher	1498	1520	1537	—	18	1520-1537	18	—	—	—	—	26
Ingham, R. — Tailor	1592	1520	1540	—	20	1520-1530	11	1531-1537 1539-1540	9	1534	1	1
Godney, T. — Glover	1511	1520	1541	—	22	1520-1530	11	1531-1541	11	1536	1	—
Freud, W. — Baker	1512	1520	1522	—	3	1520-1522	3	—	—	—	—	31
Storve, E. — Baker	1506	1520	1534	—	15	1520-1534	15	—	—	—	—	11
Sandwith, R. — Labourer	1506	1520	1539	—	20	1520-1539	20	—	—	—	—	—
Hardyke J.	—	1522	1528	—	2	—	—	1522, 1428	2	—	—	5

<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
—	1522	1523	—	1	1522	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haver, R. — Hosier	1512	1522	—	25	1522-1534	13	1535-1546	12	1537	1	—	35
Wright, R. — Fishmonger	1511	1523	—	7	1523-1529	7	—	—	—	—	—	19
Watson, T. — Butcher	1516	1524	—	31	1524-1531	8	1532-1533 1536-1556	23	1533, 1541, 1550	3	2	41
Fenton, J. — Fishmonger	1518	1527	Dismissed	26	1527-1540	14	1514-1548 1552-1555	12	1542, 1552	2	3	38
Wynwyk, R. — Draper	1517	1530	—	29	1530-1541	12	1542-1558	17	1546	1	—	42
Eppald, H. — Surgeon	1523	1531	—	5	1531-1535	5	—	—	—	—	—	13
Bottom, W. — Glover	1509	1531	—	13	1531, 1533-1541	10	1543-1545	3	1545	1	2	37
Beal, R. — (J)	1542	1531	—	19	—	—	1531-1549	19	1535, 1544	2	—	—
Borege, W. — Dyer	1525	1532	—	9	1532-1535	4	1536-1540	5	—	—	—	16
Marshall, W.	—	1532	—	13	1532-1544	13	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vyllers, J.	1534	1535	—	24	—	—	1535-1558	24	—	—	—	25
Alyn, J. — Capper	1530	1535	—	19	1535-1540	6	1542-1554	13	1543	1	1	25
Ley, H. — Mercer	1532	1535	—	19	1535-1546	12	1547-1553*	7	1548	1	—	24
Underwood, T.	—	1535	—	1	1535	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bocher, J. — Husbandman	1536	1536	—	5	1536-1540	5	—	—	—	—	—	5
Brown, E. — (T. & W.)	1535	1536	—	10	1536-1545	10	—	—	—	—	—	—
Smith, R. — Pewterer	1530	1536	—	3	1536, 1538-1539	3	—	—	—	—	1	10
Wytton, W.	1535n	1537	—	11	1537-1541	5	1543, 1546-1550	6	—	—	—	16
Wyllis, N. — Tailor	1530	1537	—	35	1537-1541	5	1542-1571	30	1547, 1556	2	—	42
Shipton, R. — Innkeeper	1539	1540	—	2	1540-1541	2	—	—	—	—	—	3
Jackson, J. — Shoemaker	1536n	1540	—	18	1540-1552	13	1553-1557	5	—	—	—	22
Symon, P. — Fuller	1512	1541	—	18	1541-1553	13	1554-1558	5	—	—	—	47
Creche, G. — Shoemaker	1536	1541	—	12	1541-1552	12	—	—	—	—	—	17
Campynett, W. — Draper	1541	1542	—	48	1542-1548	7	1549-1589	41	1553, 1564, 1576	3	—	49
Myles, W. — Baker	1536	1543	—	15	1543-1546	4	1547-1557	11	1549	1	—	22
Campion, H. — Husbandman	1538	1543	—	17	1543-1550	8	1551-1559	9	1555	1	—	22 Dis.
Harropp, R.	—	1543	—	28	1543-1549	7	1550-1570	21	1554, 1563	2	—	—
Skarrie, A. — Labourer	1531	1543	—	9	1543-1548	6	1549-1551	3	1551	1	—	21
Jones, J. — Yeoman	1543	1545	—	5	1545-1549	5	—	—	—	—	—	7
Watts, W. — Labourer	1532	1545	—	12	1545-1556	12	—	—	—	—	—	25
Hopkins, R. — Tanner	1543	1546	—	5	1546-1550	5	—	—	—	—	—	8
Ryder, J. — Leather worker	—	1547	—	16	1547-1553	7	1554-1562	9	1559	1	—	—
Marshall, T.	1517	1547	—	6	1547-1552	6	—	—	—	—	—	36
Trigs, T.	—	1547	—	2	—	—	1547-1548	2	—	—	—	—
Crookes, T. — Innholder	1543	1549	—	8	1549-1556	8	—	—	—	—	—	14
Oldmoth, J. — Innkeeper	1547	1549	—	4	1549-1550	2	1551-1552	2	—	—	—	6
Clarke, H. — Mercer	1537	1550	—	12	1550-1558	9	1559-1661	3	—	—	—	25
Smith, M. — Pewterer	1540	1550	—	9	1550-1558	9	—	—	—	—	—	19
Thorney, F. — Innkeeper	1551	1551	—	12	1551-1553	3	1558-1566	9	1557	1	4	17
Wood, M. — Baker	1535	1551	—	31	1551-1566 1571-1581	27	1567-1570	4	—	—	—	47



<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall Freeman</i>	<i>No. of Years as</i>
Warren, T. — Mercer 1534 1553	1556	—	—	4	1553-1556	4	—	—	—	—	—	23
Bagnot, W. — Dyer 1542 1553	1562	—	—	10	1553-1556	4	1557-1562	6	1560	1	—	21
Bromfield, H. — 1553	1568	—	—	16	1553-1568	16	—	—	—	—	—	—
Holmes, W. — Mason 1530 1554	1556	—	—	3	1554-1556	3	—	—	—	—	—	27
Curtis, J. — Tanner 1528 1554	1568	—	—	13	1554-1568	14	—	—	—	—	—	41
Backehowse, J. — Draper 1550 1554	1589	Dis. '85 Re-ad.	—	30	1554-1558	5	1559-1568 1572-1584 1588-1589	25	1571	1	2	41
Beale, T. — 1556	1570	—	—	15	1556-1557	2	1558-1570	13	1562	1	—	—
Barton, G. — Baker 1554 1556	1576	—	—	20	1557-1558	2	1559-1576	18	1567	1	—	23
Haughton, J. — Labourer 1540 1557	1583	—	—	27	—	—	1557-1583	27	1558, 1566, 1575, 1581	4	—	44
Taylor, S. — Shoemaker 1551 1557	1561	—	—	5	1557-1561	5	—	—	—	—	—	11
Anthony, A. — 1557	1571	—	—	15	1557-1561	5	1562-1571	10	1568	1	—	—
Coolyng, J. — 1557	1558	—	—	2	1557-1558	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marshall, R. — 1557	1570	—	—	14	1557-1570	14	—	—	—	—	—	—
W. Westley — Cooper 1538 1558	1571	—	—	13	1558-1571	14	—	—	—	—	—	33
G. Dawson — Butcher 1559 1559	1580	—	—	22	1559-1562	4	1563-1580	18	1565, 1577	2	—	22
S. Young — Draper 1558 1559	1559	—	—	1	1559	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cowy, R. — 1559	1559	—	—	1	1559	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vawions, W. — 1559	1561	—	—	3	1559-1561	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hanson, G. — 1559	1581	—	—	23	1559-1581	23	—	—	—	—	—	—
Loveday, G. — Glover 1553 1560	1575	—	—	16	1560-1570	11	1571-1575	5	—	—	—	23
Barnes, J. — 1560	1589	—	—	30	1560-1576	17	1577-1589	13	—	—	—	—
Inham, H. — 1560	1571	—	—	12	—	—	1560-1571	12	1561, 1570	2	—	—
Harryson, R. — Mercer 1560 1562	1597	—	—	36	1562-1564	3	1565-1597	33	1569, 1582	2	—	38
Symond, J. — Fuller 1559 1562	1599	—	—	38	1562-1565 1571-1591	25	1566-1570 1592-1599	13	—	—	—	41
Browne, W. — Gentleman 1560 1562	1565	—	—	4	1562	1	1563-1565	3	—	—	—	6
Freshwater, R. — Plumber 1552 1563	1572	—	—	10	1563-1572	10	—	—	—	—	—	21
Taylor, W. — Glover 1557 1563	1563	—	—	1	1563	1	—	—	—	—	—	7
Bartone, R. — Husbandman 1563 1564	1580	Absent 1578	—	17	1564-1570	7	1571-1580	10	1572	1	—	18
Allyn, J. — Mercer 1561 1566	1571	—	—	6	1566-1568	3	1569-1571	3	—	—	—	11
Wymblesby, J. — Mercer 1557 1566	1585	—	—	20	1566-1571	6	1572-1585	14	1580	1	—	29
Tynnyng, T. — Shoemaker 1557 1567	1582	—	—	16	1567-1575	9	1576-1582	7	—	—	—	28
Curte, J. — 1567	1567	—	—	1	1567	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Smith, H. — Carpenter 1555 1569	1596	—	—	28	1569-1596	28	—	—	—	—	—	42
Jennings, W. — Wheelwright 1555 1569	1581	—	—	13	1569-1580	12	1581	1	—	—	—	27
Peoley, R. — 1570	1570	—	—	1	1570	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barton, R. — 1570	1570	—	—	1	1570	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hawkins, J. — 1570	1571	—	—	5	—	—	1571-1575	5	1574	1	—	6
Eveley, R. — 1566	1571	—	—	12	1571-1575	5	1576-1582	7	1579	1	—	17
Elmes, J. — 1572	1591	Dismissed and restored	—	43	—	—	1572-1591 1598-1620	43	1578, 1599	2	—	—
Lacy, W. — Gentleman — 1572	1583	—	—	12	—	—	1572-1583	12	1573	1	—	—
Parsons, R. — 1572	1575	—	—	4	1572	1	1573-1575	3	—	—	—	—
Taylor, T. — Chapman 1566 1572	1581	—	—	10	1572-1581	10	—	—	—	—	—	15



<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
<b>Lyn, L. — Labourer</b> 1547 1572 1584	—	—	—	13	1572-1584	13	—	—	—	—	—	38
<b>Haseldyne, R. — Tanner</b> 1570 1572 1581 1585 1587	Dismissed 1582 and restored	13	1572-1575	4	1575-1581 1585-1587	9	—	—	—	—	18	
<b>Greenebery, C. — Butcher</b> 1564 1573 1595	—	23	1573-1580	8	1581-1595	15	1595	1	—	32		
<b>Loveday, T. — Skinner</b> (Not ad. admitted until 1614)	1576 1592 1598 1623	Dismissed 1593. Restored 1608. Tore pages out of Hall Book concerning his dismissal	43	1576-1583	8	1584-1592 1598-1623	35	1587, 1601 1614	3	—	10	
<b>Clarke, H. — Mercer</b> 1539 1576 1590	—	15	1576-1588	13	1589-1590	2	—	—	—	52		
<b>Langton, R. — Shoemaker</b> 1568 1576 1603	—	28	1576-1585	10	1586-1603	18	1589	1	—	36		
<b>Yarwood, J. — Shoemaker</b> 1557 1577 1597	Dismissed	21	1577-1591	15	1592-1597	6	—	—	—	41		
<b>Clarke, W. — Glazier</b> 1577 1581 1613	—	33	1581	1	1582-1613	32	1585, 1596, 1605	3	—	37		
<b>Willaby, L.</b> — 1581 1590	Dismissed	10	1581	1	1582-1590	9	1586	1	—	—		
<b>Coye, J. — Husbandman</b> 1570 1582 1591	—	10	1582-1591	10	—	—	—	—	—	22		
<b>Meddows, R. — Mercer</b> — 1582 1621	Dismissed 1591, re-elected 1594	37	1582	1	1583-1590 1594-1621	36	1584, 1594, 1600	3	—	—		
<b>Dickonson, R. — Vintner</b> 1580 1582 1593	—	12	1582-1593	12	—	—	—	—	—	14		
<b>Dickonson, J. — Innkeeper</b> 1577 1582 1599	Dismissed 1594	18	1582-1591	10	1592-1599	8	—	—	—	23		
<b>Gomson, A. — Apothecary</b> 1580 1582 1591	Dismissed	10	1582-1583	2	1584-1591	8	1588	1	—	12		
<b>Shute, R. — Gentleman</b> 1590 1583 1593	Dismissed	11	—	—	1583-1593	11	1583, 1591, 1592	3	—	3		
<b>Baker, J.</b> — 1583 1594	—	12	1583-1594	12	—	—	—	—	—	—		
<b>Fullwood, N. — Grocer</b> 1583 1584 1587	—	4	1584-1587	4	—	—	—	—	—	5		
<b>Lambe, N. — Woollen Dyer</b> — 1584 1609	—	26	1584-1589	6	1590-1609	20	1598	1	—	—		
<b>Ramsden, R. — Mercer</b> — 1585 1608	Dismissed 1591 Re-elected 1593	22	1585-1587	3	1588-1590 1593-1608	19	1590, 1607	2	—	—		
<b>Temyngs, J.</b> — 1586 1597	Dismissed	12	1586-1591	6	1592-1597	6	—	—	—	—		
<b>Leefe, J.</b> — 1588 1597 1600 1606	Dismissed. Returns as Comburgess after 2 years	17	1588-1597	10	1600-1606	7	—	—	—	—		
<b>Littler, J. — Baker</b> 1582 1588 1602	—	15	1588-1602	15	—	—	—	—	—	21		
<b>Waters, R. — Doctor</b> 1588 1589 1590 1598 1614	Dismissed. Returns as Comburgess after 8 years	19	1589-1590	2	1598-1614	17	1603	1	—	27		
<b>Palmer, L.</b> 1583 1590 1601 1605 1610	Resigned. Returns 1st year of 24, 2nd twelve.	18	1590 1605-1610	7	1591-1601	11	—	—	—	28		
<b>Hinde, G. — Innkeeper</b> 1584 1591 1591	—	1	1591	1	—	—	—	—	—	8		
<b>Watson, W. — Brewer</b> 1591 1592 1597	—	6	—	—	1592-1597	6	1593	1	—	7		
<b>Southwell, M.</b> 1578 1592 1598	—	7	1592-1598	7	—	—	—	—	—	21		
<b>Atton, T.</b> — 1592 1604	—	13	1592-1604	13	—	—	—	—	—	—		
<b>Waste, R. — Cooper</b> 1583 1592 1603	—	12	1592-1603	12	—	—	—	—	—	21		
<b>Fetherstone, L.</b> 1584 1592 1613	—	22	1592-1595	4	1596-1613	18	1597, 1609	2	—	30		
<b>Sherwood, T. — Innkeeper</b> — 1592 1598	—	7	1592-1598	7	—	—	—	—	—	—		
<b>Hitchcocke, H.</b> — 1592 1602	—	11	1592-1602	11	—	—	—	—	—	—		

<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall Freeman</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
Baker, R. — Yeoman 1591 1593	1594	—	—	2	1593-1594	2	—	—	—	—	—	4
Clark, J. — Miller 1593 1594	1606	—	—	13	1594-1603	10	1604-1606	3	—	—	—	14
Aslack, T. — 1596	1620	—	—	25	1596-1613	18	1614-1620	7	1616	1	—	—
Mourdent, R. — 1596	1602	—	—	7	1596-1602	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cole, F. — Yeoman 1590 1596 1605 1627	1597 1627	—	—	25	1596-1597 1605-1606	4	1607-1627	21	1612	1	—	38
Smithson, J. — Shoemaker 1584 1597	1614	—	—	18	1597-1614	18	—	—	—	—	—	31
Wingfield, R. — 1598	1608	—	—	11	—	—	1598-1608	11	—	—	—	—
Camock, R. 1580 1598	1620	Resigned	23	1598-1620	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	41
Hall, J. — Tanner 1576 1598	1603	—	—	6	1598-1603	6	—	—	—	—	—	28
Hall, A. — Maltster 1584 1599	1613	—	—	15	1599-1613	15	—	—	—	—	—	30
Loveday, J. — Fellmonger 1599 1599	1609	—	—	11	1599	1	1600-1609	10	1606	1	—	1
Denman, J. — Gentleman 1599 1601	1614	—	—	14	1601-1614	14	—	—	—	—	—	16
Salter, W. — Gentleman 1601 1602	1631	Dismissed 1632	30	—	—	—	1602-1631	30	1602, 1604, 1618	3	—	31
Whetton, R. — Apothecary 1591 1603	1633	Resigned	31	1603-1609	7	1610-1633	24	1611, 1622	2	—	—	43
Walker, W. — 1603	1613	—	11	1603-1607	5	1608-1613	6	—	—	—	—	—
Haseldyne, J. — Tanner 1596 1603	1610	Dismissed	8	1603-1610	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	15
Fawcett, R. — Mercer 1596 1604	1626	—	23	1604-1609	6	1610-1626	17	1613	1	—	—	31
Cappitt, W. — Husbandman 1596 1604	1612	—	9	1604-1612	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Senscall, J. 1599 1604	1623	Absent 1612	20	1604-1620	17	1621-1623	3	—	—	—	—	25
Allen, B. 1587 1605	1613	—	9	1605-1613	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	27
Sherwood, P. — Pursemaker 1594 1605	1613	—	9	1605-1613	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	20
Watson, T. — Gentleman 1601 1605	1637	—	33	1605-1613	9	1614-1637	24	1615	1	—	—	37
Langton, R. — Gentleman 1604 1605	1613	—	9	1605-1613	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Camock, H. — Cutler 1605 1605	1610	—	6	1605-1610	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Vaux, W. (Vanner) — 1605	1637	—	33	1605-1637	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dexter, T. — Pewterer 1596 1605	1612	—	8	1605-1612	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Grason, T. — Sadler 1603 1605	1621	Absent 1617	17	1605-1615	11	1616-1621	6	1620	1	—	—	19
Tod, J. — 1605	1629	—	25	1605-1629	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sharpe, J. — Tallow Chandler 1598 1605	1613	Dismissed (Drunkeness)	9	1605-1613	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	16
Ryder, G. — 1605	1622	—	18	1605-1620	16	1621-1622	2	—	—	—	—	—
Browne, J. 1606 1607	1631	—	25	—	—	1607-1631	25	1608, 1619	2	—	—	26
Corker, E. — Postmaster 1602 1607	1647	Dismissed	41	1607-1614	8	1615-1647	33	1617, 1629	2	—	—	46
Jackson, T. Jr. — Gentleman 1607 1608	1629	—	22	1608	1	1609-1629	22	1610, 1621	2	—	—	23
Lysle, B. — 1609	1612	—	4	1609-1612	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dalby, R. — Innholder/Vintner 1601 1610	1629	Dismissed	20	1610-1629	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	29
Fullwood, P. — App. Apothecary 1604 1610	1643	—	34	1610-1621	12	1622-1643	22	1623, 1628	2	—	—	40
Bowder, F. — Mercer 1608 1610	1614	—	5	1610-1614	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
Palmer, T. — App. Glover/Fellmonger 1601 1611	1643	—	33	1611-1631	21	1623-1643	12	1634	1	—	—	43
Taylor, T. — Yeoman 1608 1611	1612	—	2	1611-1612	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Hall, V. — Mercer 1609 1613	1646	—	34	1613-1621	9	1622-1646	25	1625, 1631, 1644	3	—	—	38
Lamb, N. — Woollen Draper 1611 1613 1640 1647	1632 1647	Dismissed twice	28	1613-1623	11	1624-1632 1640-1647	17	1627	1	—	—	37



<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall Freeman</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
Clarke, H. — Husbandman 1606	1613	1647	Fined for non-attendance 1643	35	1613-1647	35	—	—	—	—	—	42
Cole, L. — Tanner 1604	1613	1627	Resigned	15	1613-1627	15	—	—	—	—	—	24
Malsters, A. — Butcher 1596	1614	1614	—	1	1614	1	—	—	—	—	—	19
Falkener, A. —	1614	1656	—	43	1614-1632	19	1633-1656	24	1635, 1652	2	—	—
Bullock, J. —	1614	1657	Fined for non-attendance 1643. Resigned	44	1614-1646	33	1647-1657	11	1647	1	—	—
Furnis, E. 1602	1614	1621	—	8	1614-1621	8	—	—	—	—	—	20
Lightfoot, J. — Shoemaker 1607	1614	1621	—	8	1614-1621	8	—	—	—	—	—	15
Eldred, H. — Tanner 1612	1614	1637	—	24	1614-1632	19	1633-1637	5	1636	1	—	26
Clarke, J. — Yeoman 1610	1614	1640	—	27	1614-1640	27	—	—	—	—	—	31
Dawson, G. 1612	1615	1634	Resigned	20	1615-1634	20	—	—	—	—	—	23
Collington, R. — Butcher 1585	1615	1622	Resigned	8	1615-1622	8	—	—	—	—	—	38
Royse, J. — Baker 1611	1615	1644	Fined for non-attendance 1643	30	1615-1644	30	—	—	—	—	—	34
Cole, J. — Glover 1612	1615	1651	Resigned	47	1615-1637	23	1638-1651	14	1640, 1648	2	—	40
Atton, J. — Baker 1615	1615	1634	Resigned	20	1615-1626	12	1627-1634	8	1632	1	—	20
Smith, H. — Shoemaker 1608	1616	1621	—	6	1616-1621	6	—	—	—	—	—	14
Smith, J. — Chandler 1604	1621	1629	—	9	1621-1629	9	—	—	—	—	—	26
Canock, E. — Saddler —	1621	1652	—	32	1621-1630	10	1631-1652	22	1633, 1643	2	—	—
Canock, R. — Butcher 1605	1621	1661	Dismissed	41	1621-1637	17	1638-1661	24	1642, 1649	2	—	57
Dale, C. — Mercer 1616	1622	1646	Fined for non-attendance 1643	25	1622-1646	25	—	—	—	—	—	31
Anthony, W. — Shoemaker 1613	1622	1647	Fined for non-attendance 1643. Dismissed	26	1622-1644	23	1645-1647	3	—	—	—	35
Woolfe, R. — Grocer 1618	1622	1647	Resigned	26	1622-1627	6	1628-1647	20	1630, 1638	2	—	30
Wade, J. —	1622	1635	—	24	1622-1635	24	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bate, Z. —	1622	1639	Absent 1635	18	1622-1639	18	—	—	—	—	—	—
Death, H. —	1623	1632	Resigned	10	—	—	1623-1632	10	1626	1	—	—
Rastell, H. —	1623	1651	—	29	1623	1	1624-1651	28	1624, 1637	2	—	—
Sterner, J. — Shoemaker —	1624	1651	Resigned to become Bailiff of the Liberty . Fined 1643	28	1624-1651	28	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brown, E. — Baker —	1624	1631	Resigned	8	1624-1631	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sharman, D. —	1627	1628	—	2	1627-1628	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Langton, R. — Gentleman 1604	1628	1644	—	17	1628-1631	4	1632-1644	13	1641	1	—	41
Dammalde, R. — Haberdasher 1625	1628	1660	—	33	1628-1643	16	1644-1660	17	1645, 1655	2	—	36
Cole, L. — Tanner 1604	1629	1648	—	20	1629-1634	6	1635-1648	6	1639	1	—	45
Wilson, R. — Tanner 1625	1630	1637	Resigned	8	1630-1637	8	—	—	—	—	—	13
Parsons, J. — Shoemaker 1622	1630	1672	Absent 1664. Resigned. Old	43	1630-1672	43	—	—	—	—	—	51
Barker, R. — Husbandman 1620	1630	1659	Fined for non-attendance 1643	30	1630-1657	28	1658-1659	2	—	—	—	40



<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall Freeman</i>	<i>No. of Years as</i>
Fawcett, R. — Weaver — 1631	1654	Fined for non-attendance Resigned	24	1631-1643	13	1644-1654	11	1646	1	—	—	—
Mannings, C. — 1632	1653	—	22	1632-1653	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Berrye, H. — Upholsterer — 1632	1638	—	7	1632-1638	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Aslack, W. — Shoemaker 1626 1633	1637	Resigned to become Bailiff of the Liberty	5	1633-1637	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Royse, R. — Baker 1626 1633	1647	Fined for non-attendance 1643. Dismissed	15	1633-1647	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	22
Woodliffe, T. — Mercer — 1633	1658	Resigned	26	1633-1649	17	1650-1658	9	—	—	—	—	—
Whatton, R. Jnr. — Apothecary 1633 1635	1647	Dismissed	13	1635-1647	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	15
Dexter, J. — Brazier Pewterer 1624 1635	1637	—	3	1635-1637	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
Sherwood, T. — Ironmonger 1629 1635	1647	Dismissed	13	1635-1647	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	19
Salter, G. — Gentleman, Maltster 1627 1638	1647	Dismissed	10	1638-1647	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	21
Billington, R. — Baker — 1638	1649	Resigned	12	1638-1647	10	1648-1669	2	—	—	—	—	—
Wright, J. — Baker — 1638	1639	—	2	1638-1639	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norris, T. — Bellfounder 1627 1638	1677	Fined for non-attendance 1643 & 51. Absent 1664 Resigned	40	1638-1652	15	1653-1677	25	1656	1	—	—	51
Lamb, W. — Woollen Draper — 1638	1654	Resigned	17	1638-1654	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stroude, J. — Plumber — 1638	1655	Absebt 1651	18	1638-1655	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norton, T. — Shoemaker 1621 1639	1644	—	6	1639-1644	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	24
Brittaine, R. — Fellmonger 1631 1640	1648	Dismissed	9	1640-1648	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	18
Robbins, L. — Tanner — 1640	1647	Dismissed and re-appointed 12 years later *Died before completing year as Alderman.	17	1640-1647 1660-1661	10	1662-1668	7	1668*	1	—	—	—
Langton, J. — Gentleman 1639 1642	1661	Dismissed	20	1642-1647	6	1648-1661	14	1650, 1659	2	—	—	23
Butcher, R. — 1644	1647	Dismissed '48. Re-appt. Resigned to become Clerk of the Peace	7	1644-1647 1660-1662	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Annis, H. 1638 1644	—	Died before being sworn in.	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Curtis, J. — Innkeeper 1629 1644	1647	Resigned	4	1644-1647	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	19
Goodman, R. — Mercer 1624 1645	1647	Dismissed. Re-apt 12 years later	4	1645-1647 1660-1660	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	37
Hawkins, T. — 1645	1647	Dismissed. Re-apt 12 years later. Absent 1664 & 1669	15	1645-1647 1660-1661	5	1662-1671	10	1665	1	—	—	—
Palmer, J. — Fellmonger — 1645	1682	Absent 1664, 1668, 1671-1674	38	1645-1648	4	1649-1682	34	1651, 1658	3	—	—	38
Clarke, E. — Shoemaker 1628 1647	1663	—	17	1647-1663	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	36
Wilson, R. — Fellmonger 1628 1647	1668	Resigned	22	1647-1652	6	1653-1668	16	1654	1	—	—	41
Metcalfe, J. — Shoemaker — 1648	1659	Dismissed	12	1648-1659	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ringe, T. — Chandler — 1648	1650	—	3	1648-1650	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

<i>Date of admission to Freedom</i>	<i>Date of Election to Council</i>	<i>Date of Cessation from office</i>	<i>Reason when known</i>	<i>No. of Years Service on Council</i>	<i>Service As Burgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Comburgess</i>	<i>No. of Years</i>	<i>Service As Alderman</i>	<i>No. of Times</i>	<i>No. of Years absent from Hall Freeman</i>	<i>No. of Years as Freeman</i>
<b>Dalby, F. — Baker</b> 1631	1648 1654	1651 1660	—	11	1648-1651 1654	5	1655-1660	6	—	—	—	31
<b>Johnson, E. — Apothecary</b> 1645	1648	1652	Resigned	5	—	—	1648-1652	5	—	—	—	8
<b>Weaver, J.</b> 1631	1648	1660	Resigned	13	—	—	1648-1660	13	—	—	—	31
<b>Corney, T. — Gentleman</b> 1639	1648	—	Refused to serve	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
<b>Thistlewheat, T. — Saddler</b> —	1648	1661	—	14	1648-1656	9	1657-1661	5	—	—	—	—

TABLE B

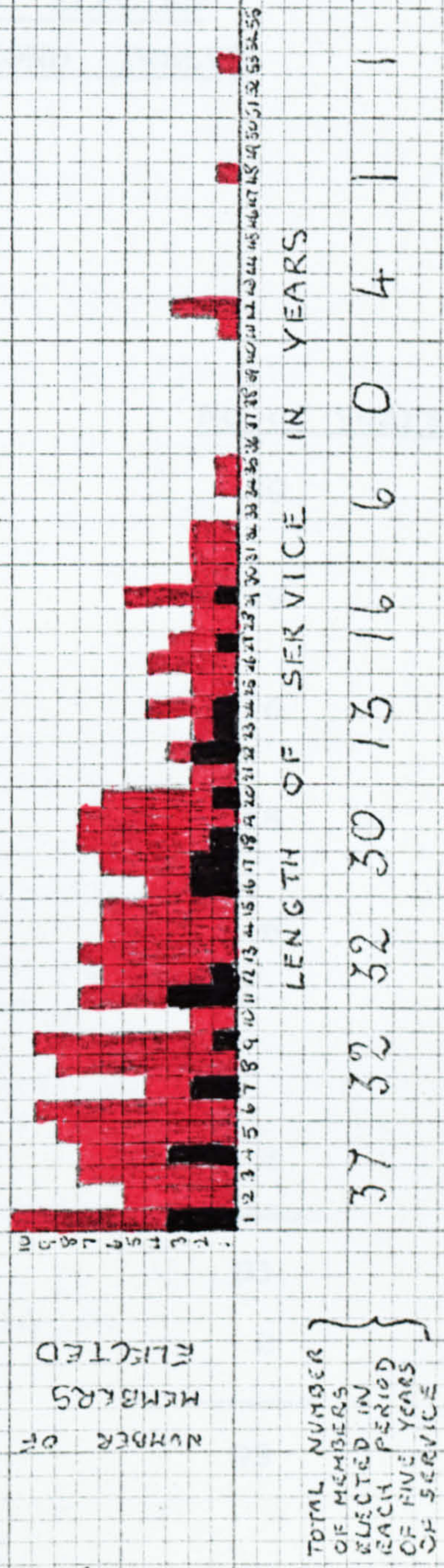
FINES PAYABLE TO SECURE FREEDOM  
OF BOROUGH IN 1465

<u>Margin</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Yearly</u> <u>Rate</u>		<u>Once</u> <u>For All</u> <u>Rate</u>		<u>Comments</u>
		s	d	s	d	
Drapers & Mercers	Draper/Mercer	6	8	20	-	
Tailors & Hosiers	Tailor/Hosier	3	4	6	8	
Shoemakers	Shoemaker	5	-	13	4	
Glovers & Tinkers	Glover	3	4	6	8	Entry for Tinker in margin erased.
Bakers, Brewers & Innkeepers	Baker	3	4	6	8	
Fishers	Fisher	1	8	3	4	1s 8d written 20d.
Butchers	Butcher	3	4	6	8	
All manner handicrafts	Ironmonger )	2	-	4	-	or other handicrafts
	Hammerman )					
	Weaver )					
	Walker )					
Baker	Baker	3	4	6	8	
Husbandmen	Husbandman	2	-	4	-	
Labourers	Labourer )	1	-	2	-	Written 12d or any other handicraft
	Ploughman )					
	Wright )					
	Mason )					
Flaxchapmen or other chapmen	Flaxchapman	2	6	5	-	



TABLE C

LENGTH OF SERVICE OF FREEMEN  
ON FIRST AND SECOND TWELVE  
ELECTED 1465 - 1558



NOTE: FREEMEN SHOWN IN BLACK  
MAY HAVE HAD FURTHER  
SERVICE PRIOR TO 1465



(13)

TABLE D

NUMBER OF NEW MEMBERS ELECTED  
TO THE FIRST AND SECOND TWELVE  
EACH YEAR  
1466 - 1558

No. of new members  
elected during one year

No of years

0	29
1	19
2	16
3	18
4	6
5	-
6	3

---

91

2

---

93

Missing years 1492 and 1493

TABLE EPROPERTIES LET BY THE CORPORATION OF STAMFORD, 1468/9

<u>Tenant</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Situation</u>	<u>Rent</u>	
			s	d
R. Rankell	Garden	-	1	8
R. Barker	Garden	-		3
R. Furbisher	Garden	In the Pinfold		8
R. Taylor	Garden	In the Pinfold		8
T. Gregory	Garden	In St. Paul's parish	1	-
J. Tovy	2 acres of land	Without Scotgate gate	1	8
R. Hance	4 acres of land	-	2	-
R. Crane	Garden	Without Cornstall gates	3	-
R. Darley	'Place'	In St. Mary's Bynwarke		8
J. Weyver	'Place'	In St. Clement's parish		- 1
J. Parceley	Garden	Outside gates of St. Mary's Parish	1	-
* R. Hance		Outside the walls	1	4
* T. Cokestole	'Place	In St. Peter's parish		4
			<hr/>	
			14s	3d

1 no rent mentioned

\* recently vacated land



(15)

TABLE F

ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONS OF FREEMEN

1475 - 1574

	<u>1479-99</u>	<u>1500-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. <u>GENTRY</u>					
Gentlemen	2 .56%	4 1.83%	3 .80%	3 .92%	12 .89%
2. <u>PROFESSIONS</u>					
Surgeons	-	3	1	1	
Scriveners	-	-	-	1	
	-	3 1.38%	1 .27%	2 .61%	6 .45%
3. <u>INNKEEPING &amp; WAYFARING</u>					
Innholders/Keepers	1	-	6	6	
Tapsters	-	-	2	-	
Hosteller	-	-	-	2	
Chapman	-	-	1	1	
	1 .28%	-	9 2.40%	10 3.07%	20 1.49%
4. <u>PROCESSING TRADES</u>					
i <u>Brewing</u>					
Miller	-	-	1	-	
	-	-	1	-	1 .07%
ii <u>Wool</u>					
Dyers	1	1	3	3	
Stapler	1	-	-	-	
" from Calais	2	-	-	-	
Wooler	1	-	-	-	
Sherman	2	-	3	-	
	7	1	6	3	17 1.27%

(16)

	<u>1475-99</u>	<u>1500-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>PROCESSING TRADES</u> cont'd					
iii <u>Flax</u> Flaxman	-	1	-	-	
	-	1	-	-	1 .07%
iv <u>Leather</u> Tanners	-	9	8	5	
Curriers	-	1	2	4	
Barkers	2	-	-	-	
Skinners	3	2	1	1	
	5	12	11	10	38 2.83%
v <u>Miscellaneous</u> Candler	1	-	1	-	
	1	-	1	-	2 .15%
TOTAL	13	14	19	13	59
	3.62%	4.98%	5.07%	3.99%	4.40%

5. RETAIL TRADES

i <u>Food</u> Bakers	18	15	9	10	
Butchers	12	9	9	9	
Grocers	1	-	-	-	
Fishmongers	1	5	4	-	
Fishers	8	-	2	1	
Vintners	-	-	1	2	
Pistors	-	-	-	1	
Chandlers	3	-	1	-	
	43	29	26	23	121 9.02%
ii <u>Clothing</u> Drapers	6	6	8	4	
Woollen Drapers	-	-	-	1	
Mercers	10	5	9	10	
	16	11	17	15	59 4.40%

(17)

	<u>1475-99</u>	<u>1500-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>RETAIL TRADES cont'd</u>					
iii <u>Miscellaneous</u>					
Barbers	6	3	6	1	
Ironmongers	1	-	-	2	
Haberdashers	2	-	-	-	
Tallowchandlers	-	1	-	2	
Merchants	-	1	-	-	
Pharmacist	1	-	-	-	
	10	5	6	5	26
					1.94%
TOTAL	69	45	49	43	206
	19.22%	16.01%	13.07%	13.19%	15.36%

6. CRAFTS

i <u>Metal</u>					
Smiths	11	9	14	4	
Pewterers	3	1	3	4	
Braziers	1	2	-	-	
Locksmiths	-	1	-	-	
Coppersmiths	-	-	-	1	
Cutlers	-	-	-	1	
Armors	1	1	1	1	
Patterner	2	-	-	-	
Furbisher	1	2	4	3	
	19	16	22	14	71
					5.29%
ii <u>Leather</u>					
Shoemakers & Cordwainers	11	23	23	31	
Saddlers	4	3	5	2	
Cobblers	1	-	2	-	
	16	26	30	33	105
					7.83%



(18)

		<u>1475-99</u>	<u>1500-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>CRAFTS cont'd</u>						
iii	<u>Clothing</u>					
	Weavers	13	8	9	10	
	Tailors	30	16	29	28	
	Collarmakers	-	-	-	1	
	Cappers	-	1	1	-	
	Hatters	-	1	-	-	
	Staymakers	-	-	-	1	
	Glovers	15	21	18	15	
	Walkers	3	-	-	-	
	Fullers	7	9	-	5	
	Furriers	1	-	-	-	
	Milliners	-	1	5	5	
	Hosiers	6	2	1	-	
	Webster	-	2	-	-	
		75	61	63	65	264 19.67%
iv	<u>Wood</u>					
	Carpenters	4	1	2	7	
	Coopers	3	5	10	6	
	Sawyers	2	-	2	-	
	Joiners	-	1	-	1	
	Wheelwright	-	-	-	1	
	Wrights	2	2	-	2	
	Turner	-	-	1	-	
		11	9	15	17	52 3.88%
v	<u>Building</u>					
	Masons	5	2	4	3	
	Slaters	7	5	4	-	
	Freemasons	2	1	-	-	
	Plasterers	1	1	-	-	
	Painters	3	6	6	7	
	Plumbers	1	2	-	3	
	Glaziers	-	2	-	4	
		19	19	14	17	69 5.15%

(19)

		<u>1475-99</u>	<u>1500-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>CRAFTS cont'd</u>						
vi	<u>Fine Crafts</u>					
	Goldsmiths	3	-	-	1	
	Upholsterers	-	-	-	1	
	Bedders	-	-	-	1	
	Carvers	2	1	4	-	
	Marblers	1	1	-	-	
		6	2	4	3	15
						1.12%
vii	<u>Miscellaneous</u>					
	Bottlemakers	-	-	-	2	
	Buttonmakers	-	-	-	1	
	Paintmakers	3	-	-	-	
	Bagmakers	-	-	2	1	
	Bowers	1	1	2	-	
	Ropers	2	1	2	-	
	Handicraftsmen	-	-	1	-	
	Pursers	-	-	-	1	
	Fletchers	3	5	5	4	
		9	7	12	9	37
						2.76%
Total		155	140	160	158	613
		43.17%	49.82%	42.67%	48.47%	45.71%
7. <u>LANDWORK</u>						
	Yeomen	2	2	1	-	
	Hogsherd	-	1	-	-	
	Husbandmen	16	7	11	8	
		18	10	12	8	48
		5.01%	3.56%	3.20%	2.45%	3.58%
8. <u>SERVANTS</u>						
	Labourers	69	51	98	71	
	Minstrels	4	-	2	2	
	Journeyman	-	-	4	-	
	Servingmen	-	-	1	6	
	Cooks	-	-	2	-	
	Ladysmen	-	-	2	-	
		73	51	109	79	312
		20.33%	18.15%	29.07%	24.23%	23.27

(20)

	<u>1475-99</u>	<u>1500-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
9. <u>NO OCCUPATION MENTIONED</u>	24 6.68%	8 2.85%	7 1.87%	9 2.76%	48 3.58%
10. <u>APPRENTICES</u>	-	2 .71%	-	-	2
11. <u>INDECIPHERABLE OCCUPATIONS</u>	1 .28%	1 .36%	2 .53%	-	4 .30%
12. <u>OTHERS</u>	3 .84%	3 1.07%	4 1.07%	1 .31%	11 .82%
GRAND TOTAL	359	281	375	326	1341



(21)

TABLE G

OCCUPATIONS OF JOURNEYMEN

1475 - 1574

	<u>1475-99</u>	<u>1550-24</u>	<u>1525-49</u>	<u>1550-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
Shoemakers	-	8	13	12	33
Glovers	5	13	12	2	32
Bakers	2	7	2	-	11
Baxter	-	1	-	-	1
Journeymen (unspecified)	-	-	5	-	5
Butchers	-	1	2	-	3
Carvers	-	-	2	-	2
Fletchers	-	1	1	-	2
Tailors	-	2	-	-	2
Bower	-	-	1	-	1
Cooper	-	1	-	-	1
Draper	-	-	1	-	1
Hosier	-	-	1	-	1
Smith	-	-	1	-	1
Tanner	-	-	1	-	1
Weaver	-	-	-	1	1
	7	34	42	15	98

(22)

Table H

Number of Freeman admitted 1465 - 1574

<u>Year</u>	<u>Natives</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>	<u>Full Fine</u> <u>Payers</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pre 1465	-	-	-	-
1465	-	-	8	8
1466	1	-	2	3
1467	1	-	5	6
1468	2	-	14	16
1469	-	-	-	-
1470	-	-	-	-
1471	-	-	8	8
1472	-	-	26	26
1473	1	-	4	5
1474	2	-	8	10
	( 7 )	( - )	(75)	(82)
1475	-	1	18	19
1476	-	-	10	10
1477	-	1	20	21
1478	2	-	9	11
1479	-	-	16	16
1480	-	-	12	12
1481	4	-	22	26
1482	1	-	10	11
1483	-	-	6	6
1484	-	-	6	6
1485	-	-	9	9
1486	3	-	15	18
1487	-	-	2	2
1488	2	-	9	11
1489	1	-	42	43
1490	-	-	2	2

(23)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Natives</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>	<u>Full Fine Payers</u>	<u>Total</u>
1491	-	-	-	-
1492	-	-	-	-
1493	-	-	-	-
1494	7	-	60	67
1495	4	-	19	23
1496	-	-	4	4
1497	-	-	17	17
1498	2	-	17	19
1499	1 (27)	- ( 2)	5 (330)	6 (359)
1500	-	2	12	14
1501	-	-	-	-
1502	1	-	14	15
1503	4	-	23	27
1504	-	-	14	14
1505	1	-	4	5
1506	2	-	20	22
1507	-	-	5	5
1508	-	-	5	5
1509	2	-	11	13
1510	-	-	6	6
1511	1	-	17	18
1512	-	-	20	20
1513	1	-	10	11



(24)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Natives</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>	<u>Full Fine Payers</u>	<u>Total</u>
1514	-	-	8	8
1515	-	-	6	6
1516	-	-	12	12
1517	-	-	6	6
1518	-	-	15	15
1519	1	-	8	9
1520	1	-	14	15
1521	1	-	4	5
1522	1	-	12	13
1523	2	-	15	17
1524	-	-	-	-
	(18)	(2)	(261)	(281)
1525	1	-	13	14
1526	-	-	8	8
1527	-	-	7	7
1528	1	-	16	17
1529	-	-	2	2
1530	5	-	19	24
1531	1	2	14	17
1532	2	-	12	14
1533	-	-	4	4
1534	-	-	24	24
1535	4	-	10	14
1536	2	-	19	
1537	1	-	9	10
1538	1	-	15	16
1539	1	-	18	19
1540	3	-	11	14
1541	1	-	11	12
1542	2	-	21	23
1543	2	-	18	20
1544	1	-	7	8
1545	1	1	8	10
1546	-	-	14	14

(25)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Natives</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>	<u>Full fine Payers</u>	<u>Total</u>
1547	1	-	11	12
1548	3	-	9	12
1549	-	-	24	24
	(33)	(3)	(324)	(360)
1550	-	-	6	6
1551	-	-	11	11
1552	1	1	26	28
1553	-	-	6	6
1554	2	-	13	15
1555	-	1	13	14
1556	2	1	9	12
1557	4	-	7	11
1558	1	-	18	19
1559	3	-	34	37
1560	4	-	13	17
1561	3	-	11	14
1562	1	-	8	9
1563	2	-	3	5
1564	1	-	9	10
1565	-	-	12	12
1566	-	-	12	12
1567	5	1	9	15
1568	3	-	9	12
1569	1	-	3	4
1570	6	-	17	23
1571	5	1	2	8
1572	2	-	4	6
1573	4	1	8	13
1574	1	1	8	10
	(51)	( 7)	(271)	(329)

(26)

TABLE I

FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF SURNAMES

1465 - 1574

<u>Number of Names</u>		<u>Occurrence</u>		<u>Total number of individuals</u>
686	x	1	=	686
123	x	2	=	246
42	x	3	=	126
21	x	4	=	84
10	x	5	=	50
5	x	6	=	30
5	x	7	=	35
5	x	8	=	40
0	x	9	=	0
3	x	10	=	30
0	x	11	=	0
2	x	12	=	24
0	x	13	=	0
3	x	14	=	42
0	x	15	=	0
0	x	16	=	0
0	x	17	=	0
0	x	18	=	0
1	x	19	=	19
0	x	20	=	0
0	x	21	=	0
0	x	22	=	0
0	x	23	=	0
1	x	24	=	24

---

1436

Plus indecipherable surnames

6

---

1442



(27)

TABLE J

DYNASTIES

P E R I O D

<u>Names</u> <u>Occurring</u>	<u>Under</u> <u>30 years</u>	<u>Under</u> <u>60 years</u>	<u>Over</u> <u>60 years</u>	<u>T O T A L</u>
3 times	11	25	6	42
4 "	3	9	9	21
5 "	1	4	5	10
6 " or more	-	4	21	25
<hr/>				
	15	42	41	98

(28)  
TABLE K

FREEMEN WITH KNOWN DATES OF ADMISSION AND CESSATION ON DEATH  
 (other than 1st & 2nd twelves)

	<u>Date of</u> <u>Entry to Freedom</u>	<u>Date</u> <u>of Will</u>	<u>Total No.</u> <u>of Years</u>
Brown, T.	1468	1538	70
Foster, R.	1522	1541	19
Uttam, W.	1516	1537	21
Marshall, T.	1540	1545	5
Tod, W.	1539	1547	8
Greensid, T.	1523	1547	24
Beal, J.	1541	1547	5
Pocster, R.	1525	1551	26
Johnson, M.	1500	1551	51
Marshall, T.	1518	1552	34
Yates, W.	1540	1554	14
Freshwater, T.	1516	1554	38
Tymyng, W.	1530	1556	26
Coop, J.	1543	1556	13
Furnis, J.	1540	1557	17
Ball, W.	1549	1557	8
Ley, S.	1528	1558	30
Morrison, R.	1548	1565	17
Freshwater, J.	1563	1582	18
			<hr/> 444 years

**Text cut off in original**



TABLE L

ANALYSIS OF STAMFORD INVENTORIES 1515 - 1559

VALUES

	CRANE 1515			STOKTON 1525			TYMYNG 1550			POOTER 1552			UNRWOOD 1557			LAUGHTON 1558			SMYTH 1558			SYMOND 1559			LEVY 1559		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
Apparel		9	2		8	8		11		2			10			1	10		3	6	8						
Ready Money												20							3								
Silver/Gold	6	3	4																			1	6	8	1		
Household Goods	6	5	10	4	18	8	13	4		12	6		4	13	9	12	19	6	9		17	3	8	10	13		
Debt by	10	13	-													6											
Debt to	1	5	-																5								
Made items				3	6	4				5	6	8				8	15	4	40	7	4						
Woolstock				1	5	8	2	6		1						3	13	4	14	10		3	4	8	4	5	
Standing Crops																4	2		8			10	10				
Wool, etc.				6	8																	1		1			
General charges	1	13	1																								
Food & timber				10			2			5									2			1			1		
TOTAL VALUE	12	10	- $\frac{1}{2}$	11	19	6	18	1	8	23	2	8	24	16	9	40	14	10	83	14		36			26		

(30)

TABLE M

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INVENTORIES

FROM WORCESTER.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

1529 - 1619

	£0-9	£10-39	£40-99	£100plus
1529-49	46%	39%	12%	3%
1550-59	37	31	20	11
1560-69	33	42	19	7
1570-79	35	35	15	15
1580-89	30	40	18	10
1590-99	33	32	16	18
1600-09	27	36	20	16
1610-19	26	42	16	16

(31)  
TABLE N  
PRICE INDEXES

Indexes of (1) price of a composite unit of foodstuffs,  
 (2) price of a sample of industrial products (3) quantity of  
 foodstuffs commanded in exchange by a unit of industrial  
 products in the sample, i.e. (2) divided (1), in the 15th,  
 16th and 17th centuries. 1451 - 75 = 100

	(1)	(2)	(3)
1401-1410	115	107	93
1411-1420	111	107	96
1421-1430	107	108	101
1431-1440	118	106	90
1441-1450	95	101	106
1451-1460	98	99	101
1461-1470	105	103	98
1471-1480	93	100	108
1481-1490	121	103	85
1491-1500	100	97	97
1501-1510	106	98	92
1511-1520	116	102	88
1521-1530	159	110	69
1531-1540	161	110	68
1541-1550	217	127	59
1551-1560	315	186	59
1561-1570	298	218	73
1571-1580	341	223	65
1581-1590	389	230	59
1591-1600	530	238	45
1601-1610	527	256	49
1611-1620	583	274	47
1621-1630	585	264	45
1631-1640	687	281	41
1641-1650	723	306	42
1651-1660	687	327	48
1661-1670	702	343	49
1671-1680	675	351	52
1681-1690	631	310	49
1691-1700	737	331	45



FURNITURE

TABLE 0

	Stools	Bedsteads	Cupboards	Forms	Beds	Tables	Chests	Bedboards	Chairs	Counters	Benches	Trundle Beds	Servants Beds	Counters	Cradles
CRANE (68)	2	2	5	4	1	1	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
STOKTON (30)	1	3	1	1	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
TYMYNG (206)	2	5	5	4	6	2	9	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
POOTTER (98)	3	-	4	4	2	5	6	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	-
UNDERWOOD (51)	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
LAUGHTON (319)	2	-	3	-	5	3	4	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
SMYTH (643)	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	1
SYMOND (123)	3	-	-	4	5	3	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	1	-
LEY (37)	3	-	2	1	-	3	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-

(33)  
TABLE P

DETAILS OF FINES FOR THE  
ADMISSION TO THE FREEDOM OF STAMFORD  
1573/4 REVISION

	<u>Monthly</u> <u>Rate</u>			<u>Once</u> <u>for all</u> <u>Rate</u>	
	s	d	£	s	d
Mercers, drapers & vintners	13	4	5	-	-
Ironmongers	13	4	3	-	-
Tailors & Hosiers	6	8	2	13	4
Shoemakers	10	-	2	-	-
Glovers	6	8	2	-	-
Apothecaries and grocers	6	8	1	10	-
Tinkers, plumbers and pewterers	Blank		2	-	-
Glaziers	Blank			6	8
Bakers, brewers & innkeepers	6	8	1	-	-
Fishers & scriveners	6	8	1	-	-
Butchers	6	8	2	-	-
Joiners and carvers	10	-	1	6	8
Weavers, walkers, smiths, slatters, masons and sawyers	6	8	1	-	-
Painters, carpenters, purse-makers and button-makers	6	8	1	-	-
Baggers, cutlers and furbishers	3	4		13	4
Saddlers	6	8	2	-	-
Skinners	3	4		13	4
Dyers	6	8	2	-	-
Chandlers	6	8	1	6	8
Fullers	6	8	1	6	8
Upholsterers	6	8	3	-	-
Coopers	3	4	1	-	-
Tanners	10	-	3	-	-
Curriers	3	4		13	4
Husbandmen	3	4		13	4
Labourers	2	-		4	-
Bowers and Fletchers	3	4		10	-
Barbers	Blank			10	-
Ropers	Blank			10	-
Flaxmen & chapmen	4	-		13	4

(34)

TABLE Q  
DETAILS OF FINES FOR THE  
ADMISSION TO THE FREEDOM OF STAMFORD  
1617 REVISION

	£	s	d
Mercers, drapers and vintners	10	-	-
Maltsters	5	-	-
Ironmongers	6	-	-
Tailors and hosiers	5	-	-
Shoemakers	5	-	-
Fellmongers	6	13	4
Glovers	5	-	-
Apothecaries and Grocers	10	-	-
Tinkers, plumbers and pewterers	5	-	-
Glaziers	3	6	8
Bakers, Brewers and Innkeepers	6	13	4
Fishers and scriveners	3	6	8
Butchers	5	-	-
Joiners and carvers	5	-	-
Weavers	3	6	8
Saddlers	5	-	-
Skinners	3	6	8
Dyers	6	13	4
Walkers, smiths, masons, slaters, sawyers, carpenters, painters, pursemakers, button- makers, badgers, cutlers and furbishers	3	6	8
Chandlers	6	13	4
Fullers	3	6	8
Upholsterers	5	-	-
Coopers	3	6	8
Tanners	6	13	4
Curriers	2	-	-
Husbandmen	2	13	4
Labourers	1	-	-
Bowers and Fletchers		10	-
Barbers	2	13	4
Ropers and whittawers	2	-	-
Goldsmiths	5	-	-
Haberdashers	5	-	-
Hemp and flax sellers to pay	2	-	-
Petty chapmen	2	-	-
Musicians	1	-	-



(35)  
TABLE R  
B E E R P R I C E S

Date of Meeting	Hall Book Reference	<u>Maximum Price for Brewers</u>		Remarks
		Per doz. gallons	Per single gallon.	
		Stipulated	Calculated	
10.1.1559/60	p. 173	2s 2d	2½d	No difference between Brewers and tipplers
21.6.1563	p. 181	3s 6d	3½d	
28.10.1563	p. 181v.	3s	3d	The rate for tipplers is as "a quart for a penny"
15.2.1566/7	p. 188	2s 6d	2½d	
10.4.1566/7	p. 189v	2s	2d	The retail price per pt. seems high. 1d per quart.

Date of Meeting	Hall Book Reference	<u>Maximum Price for tipplers</u>	
		Per Pint etc.	Per gallon
10.1.1559/60	p. 173	See brewers	See brewers
21.6.1563	p. 181	<u>Stipulated</u> 1½pts per 1d	<u>Calculated</u> 6d
28.10.1563	p. 181v.	"	
15.2.1566/7	p. 188	Not stipulated	Stipulated 3d
10.4.1566/7	p. 189v.	Stipulated 1pt for 1d	Stipulated 2½d

(36)

TABLE 9

ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONS OF FREEMEN

1575 - 1674

1.	<u>GENTRY</u>	<u>1575-99</u>	<u>1600-24</u>	<u>1625-49</u>	<u>1650-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
	Gentlemen	4	12	15	11	
	Esquires	-	-	-	8	
	Rt. Hons	-	-	-	2	
		4	12	15	21	52
		1.13%	3.37%	3.68%	4.31%	3.34%
2.	<u>PROFESSIONS</u>					
	Physicians	2	-	-	-	
	Scriveners	1	-	3	1	
	Postmasters	-	1	-	1	
	Apothecaries	2	1	2	7	
	Surgeons	-	1	2	4	
		5	3	7	13	28
		.85%	.82%	1.26%	2.67%	1.74%
3.	<u>ARMED FORCES</u>					
	Gunner	1	-	-	-	
	Milit.	-	-	1	-	
		1	-	1	-	2
		.28%		.24%		.12%
4.	<u>INNKEEPING &amp; WAYFARING</u>					
	Innkeeper	1	-	2	-	
	Innholder	-	5	1	6	
	Tinker	-	1	-	-	
	Carrier	-	1	1	1	
	Chapmen	2	2	-	-	
	Petty Chapman	-	-	1	-	
	Coachman	-	-	-	1	
	Horserider	-	-	-	1	
	Badger	1	-	-	-	
		4	9	5	9	27
		1.13%	2.53%	1.26%	1.23%	1.68%

(37)

	<u>1575-99</u>	<u>1600-24</u>	<u>1625-49</u>	<u>1650-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
--	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	--------------

## 5. PROCESSING TRADES

i	<u>Brewing</u>				
	Brewers	1	2	-	3
	Maltsters	2	-	1	3
	Millers	-	-	2	2
		3	2	3	8
		.85%	.56%	.74%	1.64%
ii	<u>Wool</u>				
	Dyer	3	4	2	1
	Sherman	1	3	2	-
	Fellmonger	1	-	8	10
	Clothworker	-	1	-	-
	Fuller	-	2	1	-
		5	10	13	11
		1.41%	2.81%	3.19%	2.26%
iii	<u>Hemp</u>	-	1	7	4
			.28	1.72	.82
					12
					.75%
iv	<u>Leather</u>				
	Tanners	9	6	6	6
	Curriers	3	3	4	4
	Skinners	1	1	-	-
	Whittower	-	1	-	1
		13	11	10	11
		3.66%	3.09%	2.45%	2.26%
					45
					2.80%
	TOTAL	21	24	33	34
		5.92%	6.74%	8.09%	6.98%
					112
					6.97%

6. RETAIL TRADES

i	<u>Food</u>				
	Butchers	15	3	12	11
	Vintner	3	1	3	2
	Chandler	4	3	4	2
	Baker	5	5	12	14
	Fishmonger	2	-	-	-
	Grocer	1	1	2	8
	Victualler	1	2	1	3
		31	15	34	40
		8.73%	4.21%	8.33%	8.21%
					120
					7.47%



(38)

	<u>1575-99</u>	<u>1600-24</u>	<u>1625-49</u>	<u>1650-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
--	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	--------------

RETAIL TRADES Cont'd

ii	<u>Clothing</u>					
	Mercers	6	9	8	11	
	Furriers	1	1	-	2	
	Woollen Drapers	1	-	3	-	
	Jerseymen	2	-	2	-	
	Drapers	2	-	3	-	
	Clothier	-	1	-	-	
	" & Draper	-	2	-	-	
	Stayer	-	-	1	-	
		12	13	17	13	55
		3.38%	3.65%	4.17%	2.67%	3.43%
iii	<u>Miscellaneous</u>					
	Tallowchandlers	1	6	8	8	
	Haberdashers	2	2	1	3	
	Barbers	1	3	5	4	
	Ironmongers	-	-	2	4	
	Pharmacist	-	-	1	-	
	Stationer	-	-	1	2	
		4	11	18	21	54
		1.13%	3.09%	4.41%	4.31%	3.36%
	TOTAL	47	39	69	74	229
		13.24%	10.96%	16.91%	15.20%	14.26%

7 CRAFTS

i	<u>Metal</u>					
	Locksmith	3	1	1	1	
	Pewterer	1	1	-	1	
	Smith	3	5	-	-	
	Blacksmith	3	6	5	6	
	Cutler	-	1	-	1	
	Brazier	-	2	-	3	
	Gunsmith	-	1	-	2	
	Bellfounder	-	1	1	1	
	Furbisher	-	-	1	1	
	Armourer	-	-	2	1	
		10	18	10	16	54
		2.82%	5.06%	2.45%	3.28%	3.36%

(39)

	<u>1575-99</u>	<u>1600-24</u>	<u>1625-49</u>	<u>1650-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>CRAFTS cont'd</u>					
ii <u>Leather</u>					
Shoemakers	25	27	45	23	
Saddler	2	2	4	3	
Purse makers	2	1	-	-	
Cordwainer	-	-	5	8	
Heelmaker	-	-	-	1	
Parchment maker	-	-	-	1	
	29	30	54	36	149
	8.17%	8.43%	13.24%	7.39	9.28%
iii <u>Clothing</u>					
Glovers	8	13	4	4	
Milliner	2	1	2	-	
Tailors	17	16	27	26	
Weavers	7	7	14	10	
Spinners	4	-	-	-	
Hatmaker	1	-	-	-	
Hosier	-	-	-	1	
Silkweaver	-	-	-	1	
	39	37	47	42	165
	10.99%	10.39%	11.52%	8.62	10.27%
iv <u>Wood</u>					
Carpenters	3	7	8	9	
Coopers	3	3	3	3	
Wheelwrights	-	2	3	3	
Joiner	3	4	3	4	
Turner	-	1	1	1	
Bodymaker	-	-	-	1	
Cabinetmaker	-	-	-	1	
Millwright	-	-	-	2	
Bootlastmaker	-	-	-	1	
	9	17	18	25	69
	2.54%	4.78%	4.41%	5.13%	4.30%
v <u>Building</u>					
Glaziers	4	1	3	1	
Rough Masons	1	4	-	-	
Freemasons	2	3	-	-	
Slater	7	6	4	8	
Masons	5	3	6	4	
Painter	1	1	1	-	
Plumber	-	2	-	2	
	20	20	14	15	69
	5.63%	5.62%	3.43%	3.08%	4.30%

	<u>1575-99</u>	<u>1600-24</u>	<u>1625-49</u>	<u>1650-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
--	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	--------------

CRAFTS Cont'd

vi	<u>Fine Crafts</u>				
	Bedder	1	-	-	
	Bookbinder	1	2	-	
	Upholsterer	-	1	1	
	Goldsmith	-	1	1	
	Watchmaker	-	-	1	2
		2	4	3	2
		.56%	1.12%	.74%	.41%
					11
					.68%
vii	<u>Miscellaneous</u>				
	Fletcher	1	-	-	-
	Feltmaker	1	-	-	-
	Ropemaker	1	1	4	1
	Buttonmaker	1	-	-	-
	Saddletreemaker	-	1	-	1
	Matmaker	-	1	-	1
	Basketmaker	-	1	-	-
	Tobacco pipemaker	-	-	1	3
	Hairweaver	-	-	-	1
		4	4	5	7
		1.13%	1.12%	1.25%	1.44%
					20
					1.25%
	TOTAL	113	130	151	143
		31.83%	36.51%	37.01%	29.36%
					33.44%

8. LANDWORK

	Yeomen	2	7	1	2
	Husbandmen	6	9	3	2
	Gardener	-	1	1	-
	Shepherd	-	1	-	-
	Haremen	-	-	3	-
		8	18	8	4
		2.25%	5.06%	1.96%	.82%
					38
					2.37%



(41)

	<u>1575-99</u>	<u>1600-24</u>	<u>1625-49</u>	<u>1650-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
9. <u>SERVANTS</u>					
Labourers	101	69	82	65	
Musicians	1	2	7	1	
Cook	-	-	-	1	
Roadworker	-	-	-	1	
	102	71	89	68	330
	28.90%	19.94%	21.83%	13.96%	20.55%
10. <u>NO OCCUPATIONS MENTIONED</u>					
	50	49	29	100	228
	14.08%	13.76%	7.11%	20.53%	14.20%
11. <u>APPRENTICES</u>	-	-	-	21	21
				4.31%	1.31%
12. <u>INDECIPHERABLE     <u>OCCUPATIONS</u></u>	-	1	1	-	2
		.28%	.25%		.12%
GRAND TOTAL	355	356	408	487	1606

TABLE TFREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF SURNAMES1575 - 1674

<u>Number of Names</u>		<u>Occurrence</u>		<u>Total number of individuals</u>	
563	x	1	=	563	(35.10%)
143	x	2	=	286	(17.83%)
59	X	3	=	177	(11.03%)
44	x	4	=	176	(10.97%)
22	x	5	=	110	( 6.86%)
14	x	6	=	84	( 5.24%)
5	x	7	=	35	( 2.18%)
4	x	8	=	32	( 2.00%)
1	x	9	=	9	( .56%)
2	x	10	=	20	( 1.25%)
2	x	11	=	22	( 1.37%)
2	x	12	=	24	( 1.50%)
1	x	13	=	13	( .81%)
1	x	26	=	26	( 1.62%)
1	x	27	=	27	( 1.68%)
				<hr/>	
				1604	
Plus indecipherable surnames				2	
				<hr/>	
				1606	

(43)

TABLE U

ANALYSIS OF MOST COMMON SURNAMES

(from the Freeman's Roll)

Period 1475 - 1574 (1)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>No of Times</u>	<u>In subsequent Period</u>	<u>Total Periods 1 &amp; 2</u>
Smith	24	27	51
Clark	19	26	45
Brown	14	12	26
Harrison	14	8	22
Thompson	14	4	18
Tailor	12	9	21
Wilson	12	6	18
Jackson	10	8	18
Johnson	10	6	16
Wright	10	10	20
Dawson	8	4	12
Laughton	8	1	9
Marshall	8	-	8
Walker	8	6	14
Wood	8	-	8
Baker	7	1	8
Green	7	7	14
Richardson	7	3	10
Robinson	7	5	12
Sutton	7	2	9



(44)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>No of Times</u>	<u>In subsequent Period</u>	<u>Total Periods 1 &amp; 2</u>
Allan	6	5	11
Andrew	6	2	8
Cobb	6	-	6
Cooper	6	-	6
Pitts	6	-	6

(45)

TABLE V

ANALYSIS OF MOST COMMON SURNAMES

(from the Freeman's Roll)

Period 1575 - 1674 (2)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>No of Times</u>	<u>In previous Period</u>	<u>Total Periods 1 &amp; 2</u>
Barker	8	2	10
Dolby	8	-	8
Harrison	8	14	22
Jackson	8	10	18
Baylie	7	-	7
Green	7	7	14
Oldham	7	1	8
Powell	7	-	7
Turner	7	2	9
Ball	6	1	7
Cammock	6	3	9
Dickinson	6	-	6
Johnson	6	10	16
Neal	6	-	6
Horton	6	-	6
Sisson	6	-	6
Smithergill	6	-	6
Tomson	6	-	6
Walker	6	(See Thompson) 8	14
Wallis	6	6	12

(46)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>No of Times</u>	<u>In previous Period</u>	<u>Total Periods 1&amp;2</u>
Watson	6	5	11
Weedon	6	-	6
Wilson	6	12	18



(47)  
TABLE W

MOST COMMON SURNAMES

(From admissions to Freeman's Roll)

1475 - 1674

Smith	51	Walker	14
Clark	45	Langton	13
Brown	26	Dawson	12
Harrison	22	Lane	12
Taylor	21	Robinson	12
Wright	20	Wallis	12
Jackson	18	Allen	11
Tompson	18	Watson	11
Wilson	18	Cole	10
Johnson	16	Richardson	10
Atkinson	14	Parker	10
Green	14	Barker	10
Hall	14	Ward	10
Palmer	14		

TABLE X. ANALYSIS OF INVENTORIES, 1560 - 1649

Apparel	R. Money	Silver Gold	Household Goods	Debts Owed By To	Stock in Trade	Livestock	Crops	Hay	Wood and Timber	Grain	Misc. Items	Sum Total	Leases	Real Value	Notes
Beggs, Wm. — 1563	3-0-0	—	34-9-0	—	30-6-8	—	4-19-8	—	3-10-0	3-10-0	—	50-6-8	—	—	
Hardley, Thos. — 1564	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Madison, John — Blacksmith — 1566	2-10-0	0-1-8	1-15-0	2-2-0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1-15-0	—	—	
Phillip, Nick. — Baker — 1567	—	—	35-0-0	—	13-19-1	2-0-0	—	16-0	3-0-0	—	—	67-2-0	—	—	
Ryder, John (Leather Trade) 1567	—	—	4-1-5	13-14-5	—	—	—	—	13-4	—	—	5-3-1	—	—	
Richardson, Hen — 1569	—	—	33-5-8	—	23-10-8	3-6-8	8-6-8	—	11-0-0	—	—	48-18-0	—	—	
Curtis, John — 1569	1-10-0	13-0	1-4-6	—	10-0-0	—	—	—	—	—	—	11-4-6	—	—	
Harvey, Ralph — 1571	—	—	23-14-11	11-19-0	—	2-0-0	—	—	2-16-0	10-9-8	—	37-18-0	—	—	
Brandon, J. — Yeoman — 1572	—	43-10-3	21-18-8	—	3-13-4	—	6-0-0	7-8-4	—	—	—	75-2-3†	—	—	
Bourliffe, D. — Fishmonger — 1574	3-0	—	2-19-0	20-11-4	—	18-15-0	—	—	—	—	—	39-8-0	4-0-0	—	Plus debts not specified
Thompson, T. — 1574	1-0-0	3-4	5-7-4	—	—	—	—	—	1-0	—	—	5-11-4†	—	—	
Lawson, Hen. — 1575	—	—	17-4-10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	24-0-0	—	—	
Phillips, Margaret — 1575	—	1-10-0	—	—	—	1-18-8	—	—	—	—	—	3-8-8	—	—	
Walkerwood, John — Farmer — 1575	5-0-0	3-4	5-17-10	—	5-0	8-0	—	—	—	—	—	7-4-4	—	—	
Dymond, Geo. — 1576	10-0	—	27-1-2	23-15-5	9-17-0	12-3-8	—	—	1-0-0	—	—	64-9-0	—	—	
Bryth, Charles — 1576	15-4	—	17-17-11	—	16-0	1-8	—	—	—	—	—	20-8-10	—	—	
Gerre, Marg. — 1577	7-18-0	2-0-0	6-2-6	14-16-0	—	3-13-4	1-1-4	5-0	10-0	—	—	13-3-0†	—	—	Debts exceed assets
Bryth, David — 1578	1-0-0	—	12-0-8	—	23-10-8	—	—	—	—	—	—	68-13-9	—	—	
Birchall, J. — 1579	—	—	4-19-8	—	3-4	1-0-0	—	—	10-0	—	—	9-1-8	—	—	
Daker, L. — 1580	—	—	5-17-0	—	—	3-4	—	—	0-4	—	—	6-0-8†	—	—	
Yarwood, J. — 1591	—	—	17-9	1-1-8	—	1-12-0	—	—	5-0	—	—	3-0-2	—	—	
Russell, Rich. — 1592	—	—	36-18-0	—	—	6-0	—	6-0	2-0-0	—	—	39-4-0	—	—	
Hynd, Geo. — Gent. — 1592	—	—	15-0-3	—	—	2-19-8	—	—	—	—	—	17-19-11†	—	—	Torn
Senecal, John — Joiner — 1592	4-0-0*	—	184-16-4	—	—	—	—	3-6-0	—	—	—	216-2-4†	—	—	Torn
			47-2-3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	51-2-3†	—	—	

Apparel	R. Money	Silver Gold	Household Goods	Debts Owed To By	Stock in Trade	Livestock	Crops	Hay	Wood and Timber	Grain	Misc. Items	Sum Total	Leases	Real Value	Notes
Exton, Fran. — Baker — 1592	7-0-0	4-0-0	—	—	—	5-16-4	—	—	—	—	—	51-5-0†	5-0-0	—	
Camble, Hen. — 1592	—	—	34-8-8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
INCOMPLETE															
Storer, John — 1592	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
— 1-10-0	8-0	40-4-4	—	—	—	3-18-8	—	4-0	3-6-8	—	—	51-16-4	—	—	
Exton, Eliz. — 1593	3-12-11	3-0-0	—	—	—	1-17-0	—	—	—	—	8-0-4	63-5-3†	2-0-0	—	
Tebbs, Mary. — Widow — 1593	10-0*	—	4-16-9	—	—	—	—	—	1-12-0	—	—	6-18-9†	—	—	
Clifford, Wm. — 1593	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
INCOMPLETE															
Thompson, Thos. — 1594	1-0-0	3-4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Garrett, John — 1594	—	—	17-4-10	4-0-0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	22-8-2†	—	—	
— 2-19-0	—	—	28-14-10	—	9-3	—	—	—	—	—	—	53-18-11	—	—	
Burns, John — Turner — 1595	2-0-0*	—	53-4-4	31-7-0	10-4-6	1-7-4	7-9-4	1-6-8	—	—	—	71-16-8†	—	—	
Chamberlain, Robt. — 1604	—	—	—	20-0-0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Debts only
Hillock, Thos. — 1604	16-8	—	14-6	—	—	4-0-0	—	—	—	—	—	5-11-2	—	—	
Stevens, Rich. — Baker — 1604	1-0-0	—	5-9-6	—	—	12-0-0	—	—	6-13-4	—	—	25-2-10†	—	—	
Southwell, Eliz. — Widow — 1604	3-7-4	—	21-17-2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27-2-4†	—	—	
— 1-17-10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20-17-0†	—	—	Trade items pack horses
Flavelock, Ant. — 1604	2-0-0	4-10-0	—	20-9-2	—	11-4-8	3-2-4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Wells, Edw. — 1604	—	—	—	—	—	8-15-0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Hillock, Marie — Widow — 1604	2-0-0	—	42-3-6	—	—	—	—	—	3-0-0	—	—	—	8-15-0	—	
Halls, Agnes — 1604	8-0-0	—	56-10-8	—	85-0-0	5-0-0	—	—	—	—	—	177-10-8	20-0-0	157-10-8	
Baker, Hugh — Gent. — 1605	3-6-8*	—	14-17-6	—	—	101-10-0	10-0-0	14-13-4	—	6-8	—	162-6-8	—	—	
Shipp, Mary. — Widow — 1606	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	60-0-0+	—	—	—	N.B. Not incl.
— 60-0-0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Clark, Robt. — Yeoman — 1609	1-0*	—	6-4-8	—	22-0-0	—	—	4-0-0	—	—	—	126-13-8	83-6-8	43-7-0	
Romeden, R. — Mercer — 1609	94-15-0	—	134-11-2	—	—	312-2-6	79-0-0	105-0-0	—	22-0-0	—	877-17-2	—	—	
Taylor, Eliz. — Widow — 1609	—	—	9-12-4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Butler, Ed. — Carpenter — 1610	1-0-0	5-0	27-9-6	—	—	—	—	—	1-0-0	—	—	10-12-4	—	—	
Lamb, Nich. — Woolen Draper — 1610	—	—	87-9-11+	—	212-19-8	327-8-9	—	—	—	—	—	30-10-6	—	—	
— 87-9-11+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	627-18-4†	—	—	Tom
Warner, Robt. — Yeoman — 1611	3-13-6	5-0	45-7-2+	—	72-0-0	—	—	1-0-0	7-16-0	42-0-0	—	159-6-2	—	—	
Palmer, Leo. — 1611	—	—	64-15-8	—	—	8-18-0	—	—	6-0	41-10-0	—	210-9-4	60-0-0	150-9-0	



Apparel	R. Money	Silver Gold	Household Goods	Debts Owed To By	Stock in Trade	Livestock	Crops	Hay	Wood and Timber	Grain	Misc. Items	Sum Total	Leases	Real Value	Notes
Routh, Joanne -- 1611															
1-0-0	1-10-0	--	5-13-6	--	--	5-0	--	--	--	--	--	9-1-6	--	--	
King, Rich. -- Barber -- 1612															
1-13-0	--	--	4-5-2	3-2-0	6-0	8-0	--	--	--	--	--	7-13-0	--	4-11-0	
Clark, Wm. -- Gent -- 1613															
13-6-8	130-0-0	5-10-0	22-13-10	94-6-0	--	4-0-0	--	1-0	--	--	--	275-8-6	--	--	
Patt, Isaac -- Yeoman -- 1613															
--	--	--	75-7-0	--	28-15-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	101-1-0	--	--	As on inventory
Dexter, Thos. -- Brnzr -- 1613															
3-6-8	10-0	--	44-3-6	221-6-3	10-10-0	280-7-8	--	1-13-4	--	--	--	111-6-11†	--	--	
Tolsonworth, Thos. -- 1613															
40-3-0*	--	--	10-17-10	--	--	1-13-4	--	--	6-8	5-0-0	--	20-17-10	--	--	
Kende, Robt. -- 1614															
11-7	--	--	9-11	--	6-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	7-1-3	--	--	
Yarrowed, John -- 1614															
2-6-8*	--	6-0-0	55-9-1	--	--	3-0-0	--	13-4	--	--	--	69-14-8	--	--	
Piggin, John -- Tanner -- 1614															
2-0-0	10-0	--	29-15-0	--	54-0-0	10-0	--	--	2-0-0	--	--	90-5-0	2-0-0	88-5-0	
Goodwin, Edw. -- 1614															
2-0-0	--	--	8-15-10	--	2-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	13-5-10	--	--	
Peckham, Lancel -- Gent. -- 1614															
35-16-0	71-5-0	42-13-4	530-0-8+	--	154-0-0	34-10-0	--	20-0-0	40-0-0	18-13-4	30-0-0	1087-15-4	--	--	Inv. torn
Huber, Jof. -- 1614															
2-10-0*	--	--	17-3-3	--	--	--	--	--	1-0-0	--	--	20-7-0	--	--	
Harrison, Hugh -- 1614															
1-0-0*	--	--	8-0-0	6-10-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2-10-0†	--	--	
Benson, Thos. -- 1614/15															
3-19-8	--	--	--	--	28-0-0	3-6-8	--	--	--	--	--	37-13-0	--	--	
Simons, John -- 1614/15															
1-0-0*	--	--	19-8-3	--	1-12-9	3-5-4	--	10-0	10-0	29-17-0	--	46-0-5	--	--	
Martens, Arthur -- 1615															
6-0-0*	--	--	49-18-10	--	3-0-2	3-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	61-0-0	--	--	
Waters, Reg. -- Gent. -- 1615															
10-0-0*	--	1-0	53-15-4	--	--	--	--	1-0-0	--	8-0	--	74-5-4	6-13-4	67-12-0	Value of one lease missing
Dunham, John -- Gent. -- 1615															
5-0-0	--	3-0	25-6-0	--	6-0-0	23-0-0	--	1-3-4	1-0-0	2-0-0	--	111-6-0	--	--	
Lynde, Bred. -- Mercer -- 1615															
--	--	--	55-6-10	--	341-0-1	--	--	--	--	--	--	396-7-9†+	--	--	Torn
Ireland, John -- 1615															
1-0-0	--	--	6-16-8	--	--	--	--	--	16-0	--	--	12-19-7	--	--	
Hall, R. -- 1615															
1-0-0*	--	--	6-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7-0-0†	--	--	
Whensley, John -- Teller -- 1615															
1-5-8*	--	--	4-16-10	3-4-4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	8-3-6	--	--	
White, Robt. -- 1615/20															
INCOMPLETE															
Hilton, John -- 1620															
5-8-0*	--	1-10-0	19-15-2	--	--	2-0-0	--	--	--	3-0-0	--	31-10-4	--	--	
Storer, Robt. -- Carpenter 1620															
1-0-0*	--	--	7-16-10	--	9-4	2-7-0	--	--	6-0	--	--	11-19-2†	10-0	11-9-2	
Richardson, Edm. -- Glover -- 1621															
10-0-0	2-0-0	--	13-6-4	--	24-8-4	--	--	--	--	--	--	50-11-4	1-10-0	49-1-4	

Apparel	R. Money	Silver Gold	Household Goods	Debts Owed By To	Stock in Trade	Livestock	Crops	Hay	Wood and Timber	Grain	Misc. Items	Sum Total	Leases	Real Value	Notes
Anthony, Ann -- Splinter -- 1621															
1-13-4	13-0	--	5-7-0	21-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	28-18-4	--	--	
Ashack, Toby -- 1621															
20-0-0*	--	3-0-0	30-0-0	2-0-0	20-0-0	3-0-0	13-6-8	--	--	--	--	101-6-8	--	--	
Simonds, Ann -- Splinter -- 1621															
1-10-0*	--	--	6-2-6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3-0-0	10-12-6	--	--	
Goodwin, Oliver -- Chandler -- 1621															
INCOMPLETE															
Taylor, John -- Husbandman -- 1621/22															
INCOMPLETE															
Wenden, John -- 1621/22															
2-0-0*	--	--	12-14-9	14-0-0	--	3-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	34-4-9	--	--	
Grayson, Thos. -- Gent. -- 1621/22															
--	--	--	41-16-0+	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	267-12-4	--	--	Torn document
Smith, Hen. -- Shoemaker -- 1622															
3-3-0*	57-0-0	--	25-6-4	23-10-0	20-12-10	--	--	--	2-0-0	--	--	151-12-5	--	--	
Clark, Roger -- Gent. -- 1622/23															
2-0-0*	--	--	20-18-3	34-0-0	13-13-1	1-0	--	--	--	--	--	39-1-7	--	--	
Scarf, Eliz. -- Widow -- 1623															
13-4*	--	--	6-14-11	--	--	--	--	--	12-0	--	--	8-0-8	--	--	
Smithson, John -- Shoemaker -- 1623															
1-0-0*	--	--	7-11-8	--	--	--	--	--	2-0	--	--	7-6-10	--	--	
Smutsch, John -- Gent. -- 1623															
20-0-0*	--	7-0-0	62-6-4	20-0-0	--	--	--	--	98-0-0	10-10-0	--	141-13-4	--	--	
Lambert, John -- Yeoman -- 1623															
1-6-8	1-5-0	8-0-0	40-5-4	36-0-0	--	1-0-0	--	--	17-0-0	4-0-0	--	126-2-8	--	--	
Smithson, John -- Shoemaker -- 1623															
1-0-0*	--	--	7-2-1	--	--	--	--	--	2-0	--	--	7-6-10	--	--	Some values missing
Lovely, Toby -- Gent. -- 1624															
20-0-0*	--	--	78-7-1	--	--	--	--	10-0-0	--	--	--	399-4-3	28-13-4	370-10-11	Values missing incl. Debts
Cumbridge, Ben -- 1624/25															
2-0-0	12-15-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15-6-4	--	--	
Gale, John -- 1626															
INCOMPLETE															
Nazia, Toby -- Ballmender -- 1626															
3-0-0*	--	--	45-2-6	--	13-14-4	6-0-0	--	4-0-0	4-14-0	--	--	76-10-10†	--	--	
Bendish, Rich. -- Gent. -- 1626															
9-0-0*	--	22-10-0	243-15-2	24-3-10	--	3-0-0	--	--	5-6-8	6-13-0	--	314-8-8†	--	--	
Wrightson, Sam -- Widow -- 1626/27															
5-0-0*	--	9-0-0	29-18-8	30-0-0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	73-18-8†	--	--	
Carrington, Thos. -- 1627															
6-10-0	3-0-0	--	43-9-6	22-9-8	--	3-6-8	--	1-0-0	1-0-0	--	--	94-6-8	--	--	
Clark, Tobias -- Gent. -- 1627															
10-0-0*	--	3-0-0	20-2-1	9-6-8	--	5-0-0	2-15-4	--	10-0	--	--	51-10-4	--	--	
Bendish, Rich. -- Carpenter -- 1627															
2-0-0*	--	--	23-0-2	6-13-4	2-11-8	4-0-0	--	--	1-0-0	--	--	69-4-2	--	--	
Flower, Edw. -- 1627/28															
--	--	--	9-5-11	--	--	3-14-8	--	13-4	10-0	--	--	14-3-11*	--	--	
Wince, Wm. -- Baker -- 1628															
4-0-0*	--	--	19-14-2	--	--	2-2-8	12-13-4	4-10-0	--	--	--	84-11-10	--	--	Incl. wood
Stanton, Thos. -- 1628															
2-0-0*	--	--	5-4-0	--	--	12-6-8	--	1-6-8	2-0-0	--	--	24-17-4	--	--	

Apparel	R. Money	Silver Gold	Household Goods	Debts Owed To By	Stock in Trade	Livestock	Crops	Hay	Wood and Timber	Grain	Misc. Items	Sum Total	Leases	Real Value	Notes
Parsons Francis -- Spinner -- 1628															
18- 3*			1- 0- 0	28- 0- 0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29-18- 3†	—	—	
Hawthorne, Isabell -- Spinner -- 1629			15- 4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	40- 0- 0	47- 2- 2	—	—	
6- 6- 8				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Spier, Rich. -- 1630			8- 3- 2	—	—	2- 0- 0	—	—	2- 0- 0	—	—	12- 3- 2	—	—	
Bottom, John -- 1630			8-14- 8	—	—	4- 6- 8	—	—	—	—	—	16- 1- 4†	2- 0- 0	14- 1- 4	
1- 0- 0*				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Smith, Jas. -- Tallow Chandler -- 1630			5- 0- 0 45- 0- 0 3- 0- 0 51- 9- 0	101- 0- 0 352-14- 4	1- 0- 0	—	—	—	5-10- 0	—	—	575-12- 6	—	—	
5- 0- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Ted, John -- Baker -- 1630			4- 0- 0 6-13- 8	—	—	6- 0- 0	—	—	20- 0- 0	5- 0- 0	—	91- 6- 2	—	—	
4- 0- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Bate, John -- 1630			13- 6- 7 31- 7- 0 30- 0- 0 485-17- 4+	17- 6- 8	—	6- 0- 0	—	47- 0- 0	40- 0- 0	13- 0- 0	—	789- 3- 4	89-13- 4	—	
Grant, Hen. -- Lab. -- 1630			5- 0*	—	—	1-13- 4	—	—	—	—	—	5-14- 0	—	—	
3-10- 6				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Jackman, Thos. -- Gent. -- 1630			10- 0- 0*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	347- 4- 0	428-14- 8	—	—	
11- 0- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Buckin, Wm. -- Houseman -- 1630			25- 0- 0*	—	66- 3-11	14- 8- 8 10-13 4	—	5- 0- 0	5- 6- 8	—	—	175-18-11	—	—	
47- 4- 8				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Lightfoot, Wm. -- Weaver -- 1630/31			1-12- 8	—	5- 6- 6	—	—	—	1-13- 4	—	—	39-19- 0	—	—	
29-18- 6				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Downall, Jer. -- Gent. -- 1633			4- 0- 0 10-12- 0	43- 0- 0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64- 3-10	—	—	
5-11-10				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Smith, Eliz. -- 1633			4-17-10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5-12- 0	—	—	
2- 4				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Bayle, Robt. -- Plumber -- 1633			41- 0- 0*	—	381-11- 8	39-14- 3	3- 0- 0	10- 0	1-10- 0	1- 3- 4	—	529-14- 8	5- 0- 0	524-14- 8	
3-10- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Clark, Jane -- Widow -- 1634			15-10- 0*	—	—	—	—	—	8- 0	—	—	56-12- 0	—	—	
4- 9- 2				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Harp, Wm. -- Joiner -- 1634			3- 0- 0*	—	3- 7- 0	4- 0- 0	—	—	—	—	—	58-12- 0	30- 0- 0	28-12- 0	
18- 5- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Fairchild, Wm. -- Carpenter -- 1635			1- 5- 0*	—	—	6- 0	3- 0- 0	—	15- 0	—	—	7- 0- 2	—	—	
4- 9- 2				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Robt, W. -- Tailor -- 1635			4- 0- 0*	—	—	1- 5- 0	—	5- 0	2- 0- 0	1- 4- 0	—	32-16- 8	4- 0- 0	28-16- 8	
17- 3- 4				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Clifford, Peter -- 1636			4- 0- 0*	—	—	12-13- 4	13- 0- 0	3- 0- 0	1- 0- 0	—	—	65- 1- 6	2-10- 0	62-11- 6	
12- 5- 8				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Cade, John -- Tailor -- 1637			INCOMPLETE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Edred, Hl. -- Turner -- 1638			22- 0- 0*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	128-16-10†	—	—	Items missing
15- 0- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Vance, Wm. -- Shoemaker -- 1638			11- 8 7- 0- 0	—	—	—	13- 4	—	6- 8	—	—	27- 6- 2	10- 5- 0	17- 1- 2	
8- 8- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Cowdrey, Thos. -- Doctor -- 1639			60- 0- 0*	—	14- 0- 0	—	—	—	—	—	—	87- 8- 4	—	—	
2- 0- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Billington, Rich. -- 1640			4- 0- 0*	—	5- 0- 0	4- 2- 7	—	—	1- 0- 0	15- 0	—	39-12- 5	4- 0- 0	35-12- 5	
21- 3- 0				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Hardy, Deb. -- Widow -- 1644			1- 5- 0	—	16-10- 0	—	—	—	—	—	—	21- 3- 9	—	—	
3- 8- 9				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

\* Ready money included

+ Actual total exceeds that given (some values missing)

† Assumed total (no total given on inventory)



TABLE YLETTERS PATENT RELATING TO STAMFORD1461/2 - 1714

<u>NO</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Monarch</u>	<u>Regnal Year</u>	<u>Nature of Grant</u>
1	12th	February	1461/2	Edward IV	1	Charter of Incorporation
2	21st	November	1481	"	21	Additional privileges
3	16th	August	1484	Richard III	2	Inspeximus (1 & 2)
4	11th	May	1504	Henry VII	19	Inspeximus (1 & 2)
5	12th	July	1510	Henry VIII	2	Inspeximus (1, 2 & 4)
6	30th	June	1542	"	34	Adjudication on status of St. Martins.
7	22nd	November	1547	Edward VI	1	Inspeximus (1,2,4,5)
8	13th	May	1549	"	3	Union of churches Foundation of School.
9	29th	May	1549	"	3	Disposal of Chancery lands to Corporation.
10	20th	January	1555	Philip & Mary	1 & 2	Inspeximus (1,2,4,5,7)

<u>NO</u>	<u>Day Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Monarch</u>	<u>Regnal Year</u>	<u>Nature of Grant</u>
11	28th February	1558/9	Elizabeth I	1	Inspeximus (1,2,4,5,7,10)
12	22nd November	1593	"	36	Additional privileges
13	2nd July	1605	James I	3	Part confirm- ation/Part revision of 1
14	19th February	1664	Charles II	16	Re-incorpora- tion, includes part 1, 12.
15	3rd March	1685	James II	1	Confirmation of 19 with revisions
16	13th June	1714	Anne	13	Additional privileges

FREEMAN'S OATH

This hear ye sir Alderman I shall be true and  
faith bear to you alderman and to your successors  
aldermen and truely stand by you and maintain you to  
my power in all manner of points that longeth to the  
Aldermancy and be ready at Scot and Lot and truely pay  
it and come to the Common Hall when I hear the Common Bell  
knell and all times when I have warning to the Alderman and  
not absent myself without a true excusation the which  
excusation may be found reasonable afore you Alderman  
your peers and all the commons and there I shall appear  
and attend and see and true counsel give and show to  
my coming And I shall not take clothing livery nor  
token of any gentleman for maintenance nor seek  
maintenance nor complain me for any remedy to any manner of  
persons but only to you, your successors and to your brethren  
and be obedient under your rule and the council  
of this town well and truly keep and leyn so help me god  
And by this book † And then kiss the book etc. And this  
oath to be truly kept upon pain of every of the first xii  
13s 4d And every of the second xii 6s 8d And every  
of the commons, 3s 4d and corporal imprisonment

S.C.R., The Hall Book, 1461-1657, p.12v.



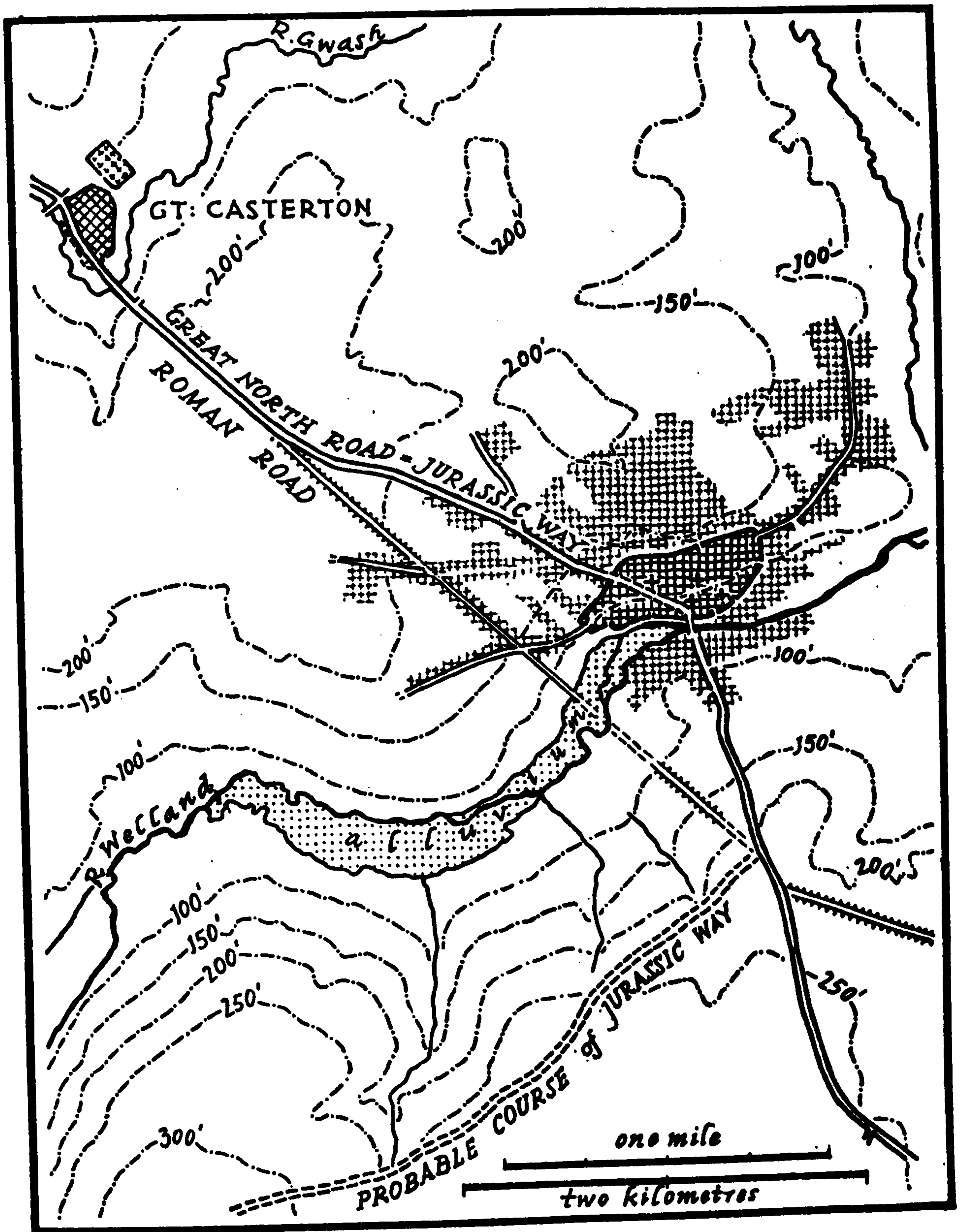
Letters Patent of James I, 1605Example of terminology, Clause 15.

And further of our more abundant special grace and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, we do for us our heirs and successors grant and confirm to the aforesaid alderman and burgesses of the town or borough of Stamford aforesaid and their successors all and singular the same such and the like messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments now in the tenure or occupation of the aforesaid alderman and burgesses of the town or borough of Stamford of any of the farmers or tenants of them and all and singular the same and such liberties, privileges, franchises, markets, marts, fairs, fines, amerciaments, profits, commodities, customs, immunities, quittances, exemptions, rights and jurisdictions whatsoever which the alderman and burgesses of the town or borough of Stamford aforesaid or any one or more of them, or any their predecessors, by whatsoever names or name, or by whatsoever incorporation or by pretext of whatsoever incorporation heretofore had, held, used or enjoyed, or ought to have hold use or enjoy to them and their successors for an estate of inheritance by reason or force of any charters or letters patent of any of our progenitors or ancestors late kings or queens of England in any wise heretofore made confirmed or granted or by protest of any prescription, use or custom, or by whatsoever other

legal manner, right or title heretofore had, used, or accustomed, so as the same liberties privileges, franchises, uses and customs be not contrary or repugnant to the aforesaid grants, ordinances and constitutions in these our letters patent by us granted to the aforesaid alderman and burgesses although the same or any one or more of them have or hath not been heretofore used, abused, or misused or have or hath been discontinued and although the same or any one or more of them hath or have been forfeited or lost to have, hold and enjoy the same lands, tenements, hereditaments, liberties and privileges, franchises rights and other the premises to the said alderman and burgesses of the town or borough aforesaid and to their successors forever rendering therefore to us our heirs and successors such the same the like and such sort of rents, services, sums of money and tenures which therefore to us hertofore have been accustomed or of right ought to be rendered or paid.



Map I

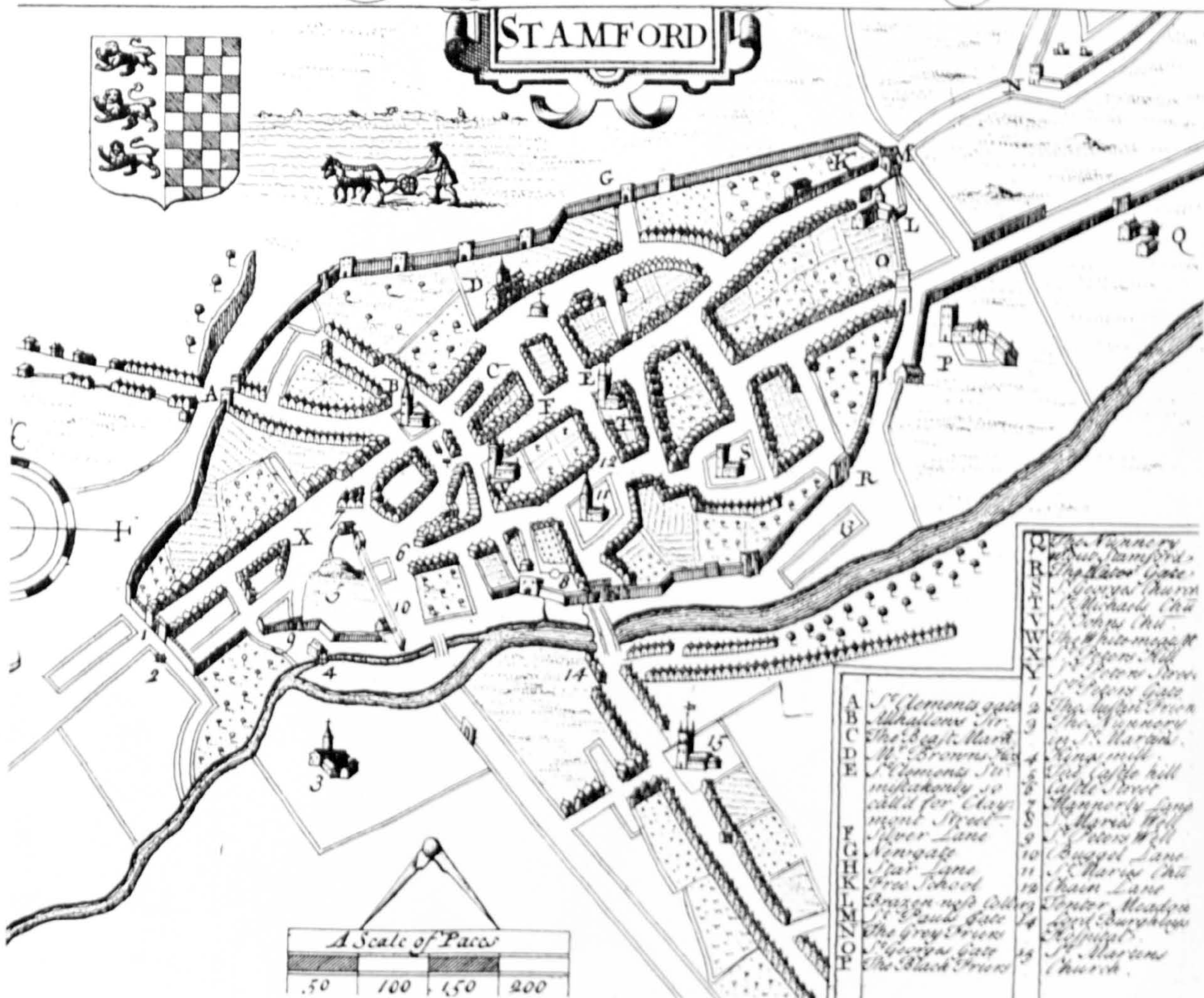


Jurassic Way

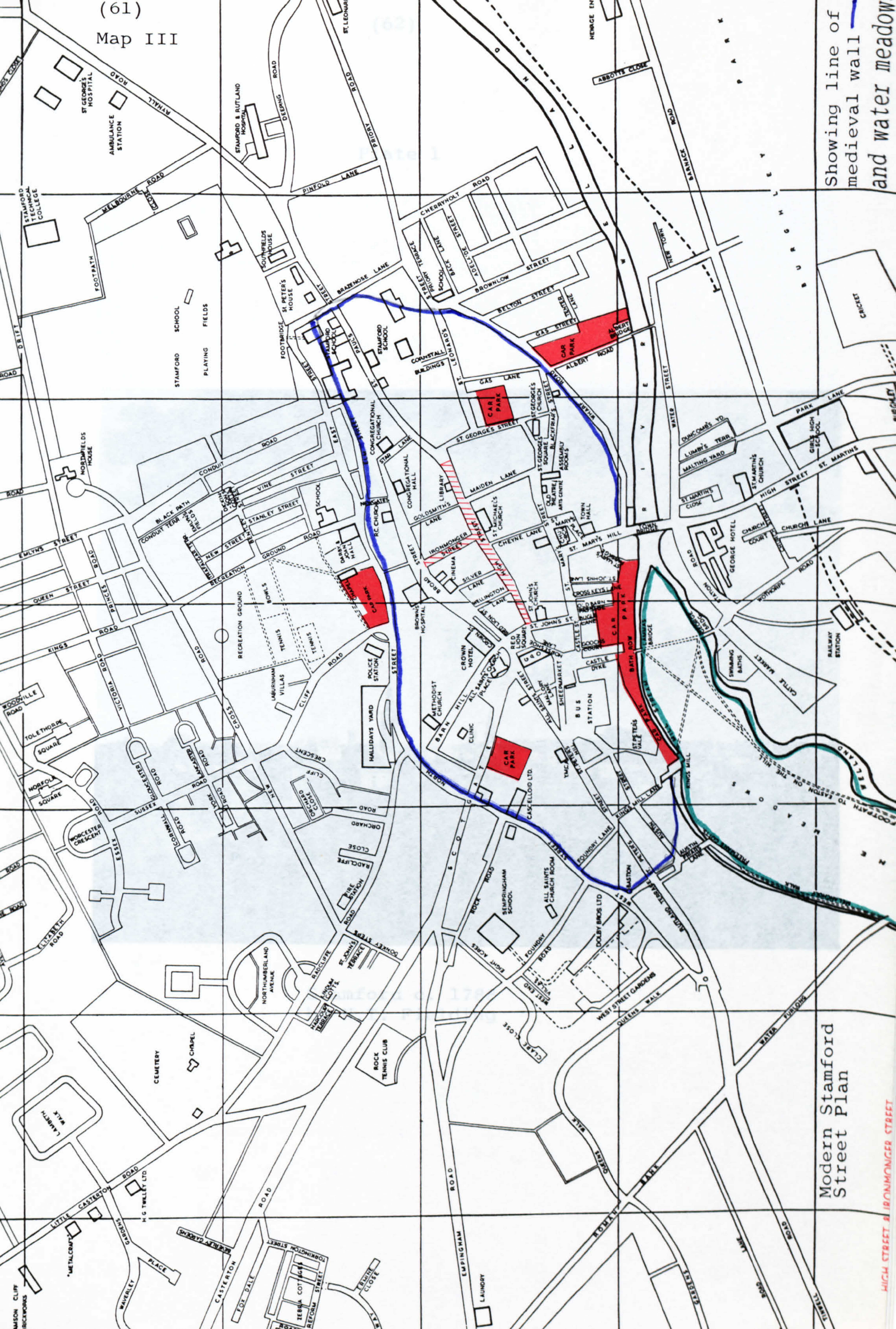


Map II

*M. Speeds Draught of Stamford taken about the Year 1600.*







Modern Stamford  
Street Plan

Showing line of  
medieval wall  
and water meadow

HIGH STREET & IRONMONGER STREET



Plate 1



Stamford c. 1788  
by N.T. Fielding



Plate 2



*Harding del*

*Clamp sc*

RICHARD

ANTIQU



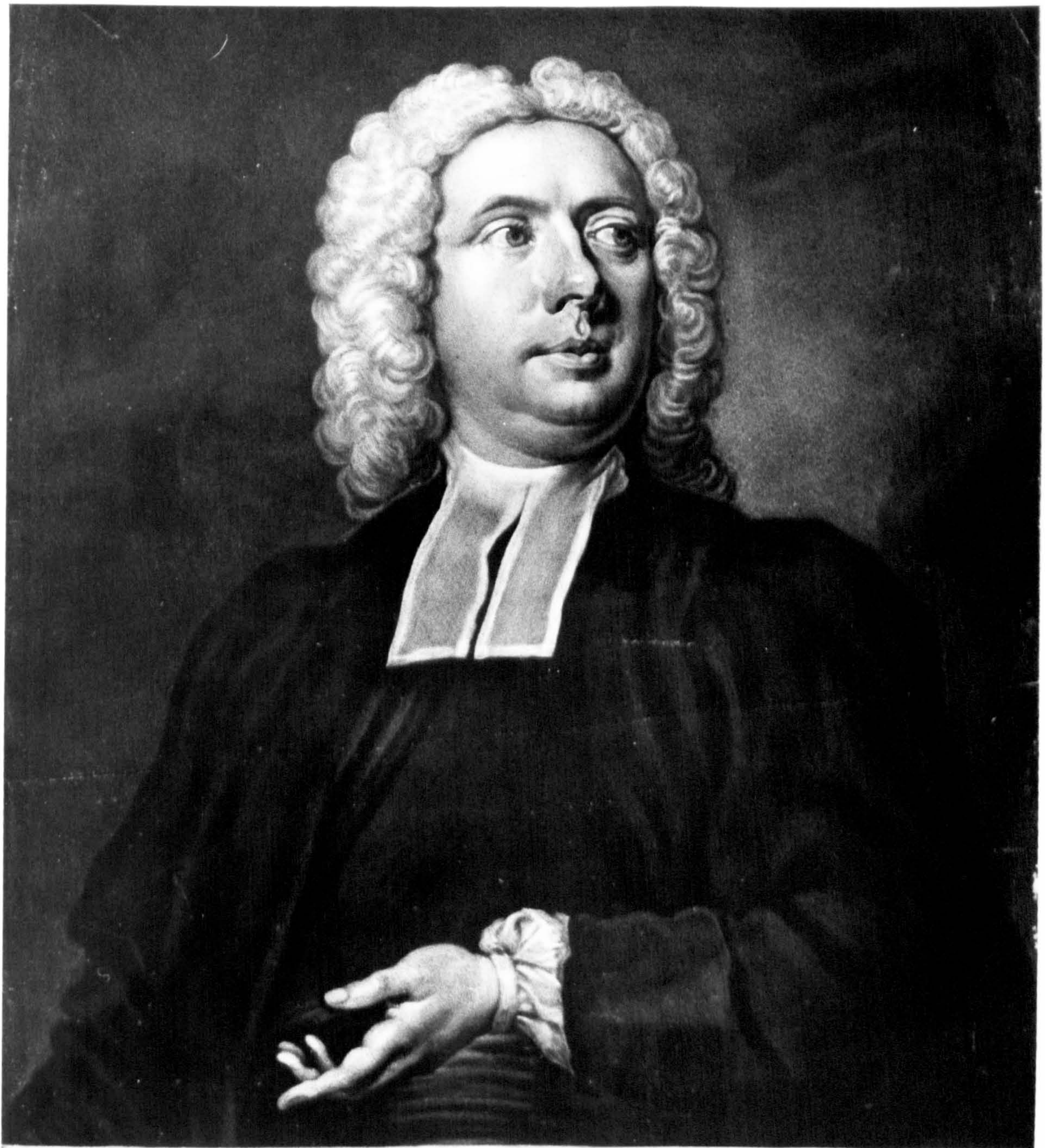
BUTCHER.

ARIAN.

*Published 1 April 1793 by E & S Harding Pall Mall*



Plate 3



*J. Highmore pinx. 1735.*

*J. Faber fecit.*

*Francis Peck, M.A.*



*M<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. Brown's gravestone in S<sup>t</sup>. Maries Chappel in All Saints Church.*







Charter of Incorporation sealed 12th February 1461/2



The Common Seal



Indorsed with the Common Seal



*The Arms of the Town or Borough of STAMFORD as anciently carved upon the South and North Gates of the Town from a Book in the Heralds Office touching the Visitation of Lincolnshire Anno 1634. marked C. 23. 1. Index Fol. 3. b.*





In nomine Amen  
 Anno Regni Henrici octavi Anglie & francie Regis fidei defensoris et  
 in hinc quarto decimo henricus lacy genos etor of Aldermans  
 & Anno futuri

In nomine Amen post festum sancti Michaelis Anno Regni Regis Henrici octavi  
 xiii<sup>mo</sup> coram dilectis Radetoff deputat Johanne husey alyt cap<sup>l</sup>  
 Quosdam ibi in capto et amissos per henricum lacy Aldermans  
 In fuit ad officium dñi dñi

In nomine Amen  
 In nomine Amen

William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey
William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey
Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff

In nomine Amen  
 In nomine Amen

William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey
Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff
Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff	Johanne husey	William Radetoff

Et deinde omnes burgenses et ceteri tunc presentes in eadem villa ibi in fuit  
 et deinde omnes burgenses et ceteri tunc presentes in eadem villa ibi in fuit



In nomine Amen  
 In nomine Amen

In nomine Amen  
 In nomine Amen



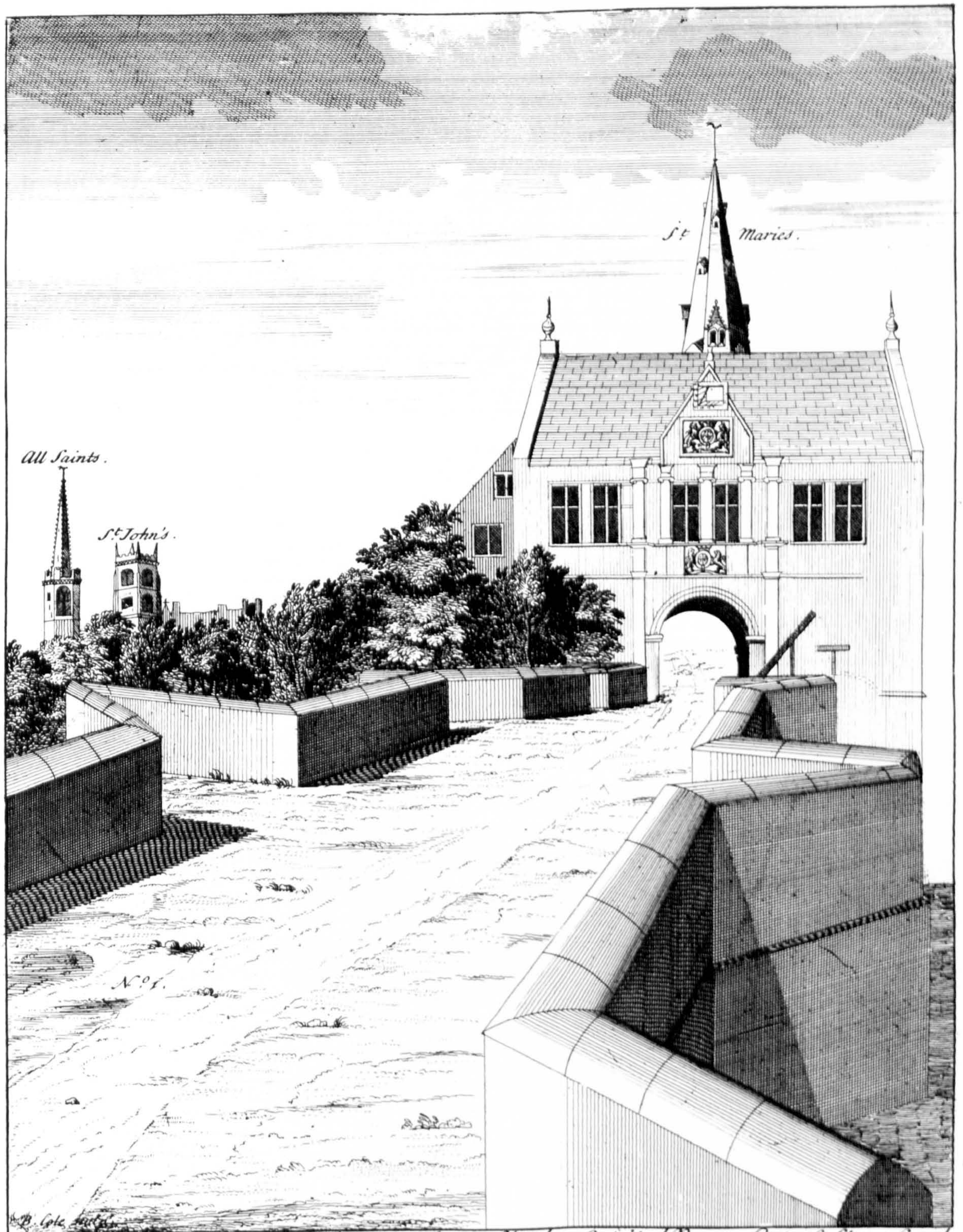
Plate 8



Bastion of Town Wall,  
West Street, Stamford.



## Plate 9



*To y<sup>e</sup> Worshipfull y<sup>e</sup> Mayor, Aldermen, Town Clerk, & Capital Burgeses of Stamford.  
This Plate, representing their Comon Hall, in Acknowledgm<sup>t</sup>. of their Favour, is gratefully Inscribed  
by F. P.*

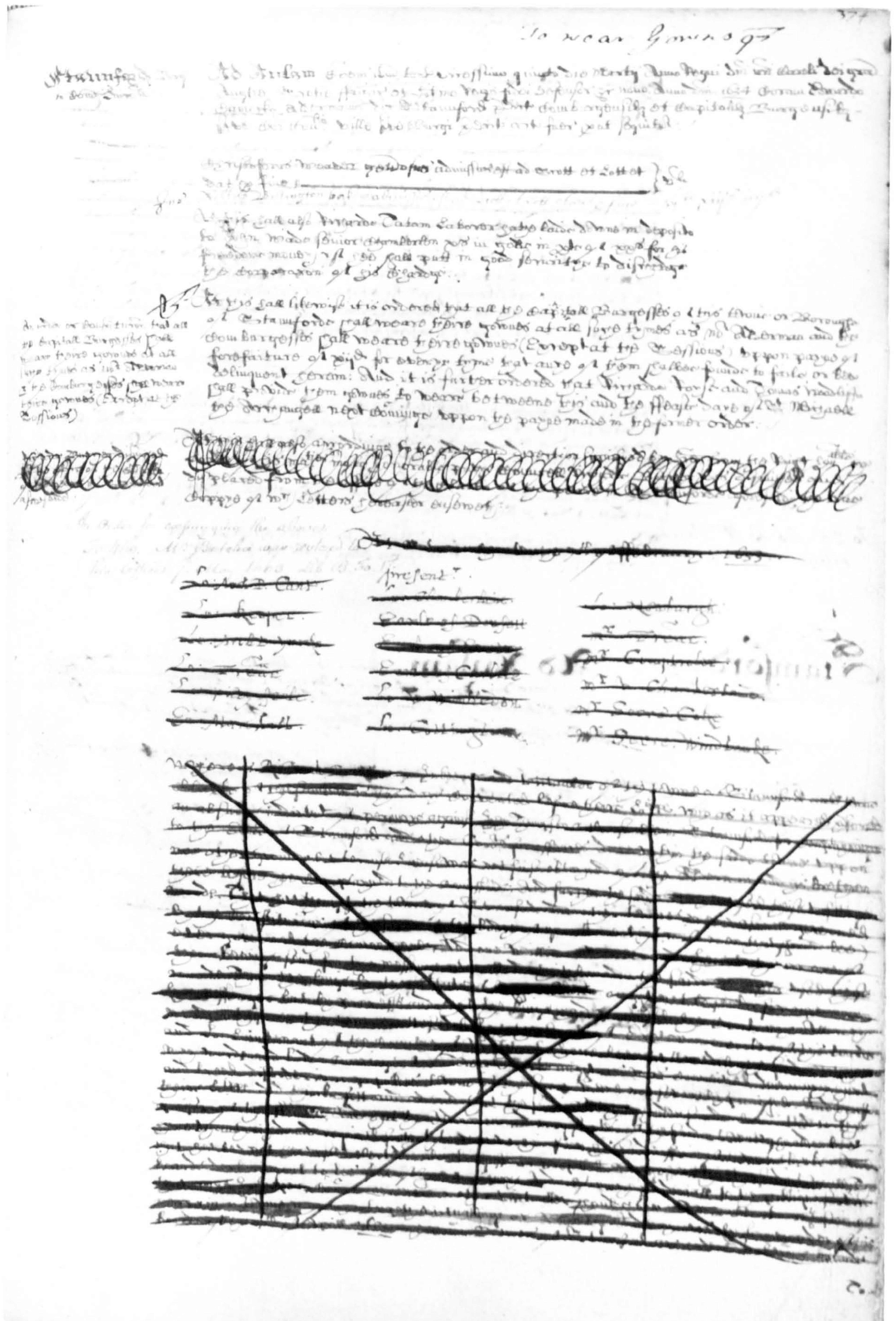


250

Notable trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 1. The first trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 2. The second trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 3. The third trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 4. The fourth trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 5. The fifth trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 6. The sixth trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 7. The seventh trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 8. The eighth trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 9. The ninth trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of  
 10. The tenth trouble in the town of London is not without to the place of Althambygh on Friday of

Indictment of Tobias Loveday,  
 September, 1593





H.B.

The dismissal of Richard Butcher,  
25th March 1634





Remains of lock at Deeping



BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Manuscript

Records of the Corporation of Stamford

Town Hall, Stamford.

Charters and Letters Patent (13 items)

The Charter Book

Hall Books    I    1461-1657

                 II    1657-1721

                 III   1721-1772

                 IV    1773-1805

                 V    1806-1835

Bye-laws,    1631

Records of the Sealing of Hides, 1563

List of arms and weapons, 1571

Muster Certificates, 1580-3

Assessment of the second fifteenth, 1581/2

Apprentice Indentures, 1560-1602

Freemen's Roll (3 vols), 1663-1940



(75)

Bonds of Freeman, 1676-1751

Deed for Triggs Charity, 1593

Triggs Charity Accounts, 1664-1762

Register of Leases, 1576-1813

Portfolio of Leases and Covenants

Papers relating to weights & measures, 1626-1846

Constable's bill of presentments, 1650

Document concerning water supply 1571

Accounts of the mayor, chamberlains and bailiffs, 1697-1835

Court Rolls of the manor of Stamford, 1695-1916

Quarter Session Rolls, 1629-30, 1633, 1657, 1666, 1710,  
1723/4, 1732, 1740, 1748, 1750-59.

Parish Registers, Stamford

All Saints

St. George's

St. Martin's

St. Mary's

St. Michael's

Lincolnshire Archives Office

Diocesan Probate Records

Inventories from 1515

Wills from 1506

Administrations

Bishops transcripts of Parish Registers

All Saints

St. Georges

St. Martins

St. Marys

St. Michaels

Register 2, f.24

Register 14, f. 281

Register 17, f. 36

Register 20, f. 126d.

Register 27, f. 26

Northamptonshire Record Office

Diocesan Probate Records

Inventories

Wills

Public Record Office

Wills of the Perogative Court of Canterbury

Hearth Tax Returns

OTHER SOURCES

Instrument c. 1551, St. George's Stamford Chest.

M.s. letter

Muniments Room, St. Johns College, Cambridge.

Casewick Document

Journals of the House of Commons.

PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

(Authorities referred to in text)

J. Brownlee, The History of the Birth Rates of England & Wales,  
N. Bacon, Annals of Ipswich, 1844. 1916.

M. Bateson, The Records of Leicester, I, 1899.

F.B. Bickley, The Little Red Book of Bristol, 1900.

B.M. Harl, M.S. 618.

R. Butcher, The Survey and Antiquity of the Town of Stamford,  
1646.

Calendar of Charter Rolls

Calendar of Patent Rolls

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series

W. Camden, Britannia, 3rd Edit, I, 1753

Cat. Anc. Deeds, III, (D427)

C.H. Cooper, Annals of Cambridge, 1842

J.D. Dolby, Dolbys Directory of Stamford, 1967

M.D. Harris, Coventry Leet Book, 1907-13

W. Hudson & J.C. Tingey, Records of Norwich 1906/10

A.F. Leach, Beverley Town Documents, 1909

J. Leland, ed. by T. Hearne (1510-12) Itinerary  
ed. by L. Toulmin Smith (1905-10)

Lincoln Record Society,

Vol.3 Rotuli Hugonsis de Welles (ed. W.P.W. Phillimore)

Vol.10 Lincoln Wills Registered in the District  
Probate Registry at Lincoln AD 1505-May 1539.  
(ed. C.W. Foster) 1918.

Vol.23 State of the Church in the reign of Elizabeth  
& James (ed. C.W. Foster) 1926.

Vol.54 Records of the Commissioners of Sewers  
in Parts of Holland, 1547-1603 (ed. A.M. Kirkus)



London Gazette, October 28th, 1971.

G.H. Martin, The Royal Charters of Grantham, 1963.

Notes and Queries, 6th Series.

Prynne, Brevia Parliamentaria.

C. Gowen Smith, Domesday Book, Lincolnshire & Rutland, 1870.

Stamford Mercury, from 1714.

Statutes of the Realm, 1810.

W.H. Stevenson, Gloucester Corporation Records, 1893.  
Records of Nottingham, 1882.

D. Whitlock, The Anglo Saxon Chronicle, 1961.  
The Peterborough Chronicle,  
The Bodleian Manuscript Land. Misc. 636, 1954.

Willis, Notitia Parliamentaria

#### SECONDARY SOURCES

(Authorities referred to in text)

A. Ballard, The English Borough in the Twelfth Century, 1941.

A. Ballard and J. Tait, British Borough Charters, II, 1923

B.W. Beckingsale, Burghley, Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598, 1967.

R. Blome, Britannia, 1673.

E.H. Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hoskins, Wage rates and prices: Evidence for Population Pressure in the Sixteenth Century, Economica Vol, XXIV, 1957.

E. Coke, The Second Part of the Institutes, 1671.

C. Creighton, A History of Epidemics in Britain, I, 1965.

B.L. Deed, History of Stamford School, 1954.

F. Drake, Eboracum, 1736.

J. Drakard, History of Stamford, 1822.

- A. Dyer, The City of Worcester in the Sixteenth Century  
(Ph.D. Thesis, 1966).
- E. Ekwall, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names, 4th Edit. 1960.
- Mrs.J.R. Green, Town Life in the Fifteenth Century, 1894.
- W.F. Grimes, Aspects of Archaeology in Britain & Beyond, 1951.
- C. Gross, Gild Merchant, I, 1890.  
The Court of Pie Powder in the Quarterly Journal  
of Economics XX.
- W. Harrod, The Antiquities of Stamford and St. Martins,  
I & II, 1785.
- W.G. Hoskins, Provincial England, 1963.
- A.S. Ireson, The Mayor's Chain of Office and Stamford Civic Regalia, 1968, n.p.
- S. Kramer, The English Craft Gilds, 1927.
- F. Liermann, Die Gesetze der Angelsachen, 1898.
- E. Lipson, The Economic History of England, I, 1962.
- W.T. MacCaffrey, Exeter, 1540-1640, 1958.
- W.S. McKechnie, Magna Carta, 1914.
- F.W. Maitland, Constitutional History of England, 2nd Ed. 1898.  
History of English Law, 2nd Ed. 1898.
- C.M. Matthews, English Surnames, 1966.
- J.H. Matthews, The Records of Cardiff, 1898.
- R.H. Morris, Chester
- J.E. Neale, Essays in Elizabethan History, 1958.
- Northamptonshire Record Office, Wills and other probate records, 1971.
- Notes and Queries, 6th Series, II.
- W. Page, Victoria History of Counties of England,  
Northamptonshire, II, 1906.

- J.M. Palmer, The Welland Navigation Historical Notes,  
Railway & Canal Historical Society, 1959.
- J.G. Pease & H. Chitty, The Law of Markets and Fairs, 1899.
- F. Peck, The Antiquarian Annals of Stamford, 1727.
- N. Pevsner & J. Harris, The Buildings of England,  
Lincolnshire, 1964.
- A. Rogers, The Making of Stamford, 1965.  
This Was Their World  
The Medieval Buildings of Stamford, 1970.
- W. Savage, The Making of Our Towns, 1952.
- M. Sellers, York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers, 1918.
- J.T. Smith, The English Gilds, 1870.
- F.W. Steer, Farm & Cottage Inventories of Mid-Essex, (1635-1749),  
1950.
- F.M. Stenton, The Danes in England, 1927.
- L. Stone, Social Change & Revolution in England, 1540-1640, 1965.
- J. Tait, The Medieval English Boroughs, 1936.
- J .H. Thomas, Town Government in the Sixteenth Century, 1933.
- M. Weinbaum, British Borough Charters, 1307-1660, 1943.  
The Incorporation of English Boroughs, 1937.
- T.S. Willan, River Navigation in England, 1936.
- H. Wright, St. John's Church, Stamford, 1968.





Thesis

D.G. TEALL

Synopsis

The Corporation and Tradesmen

of Stamford

1461 - 1649

(with an indication of developments until 1750)

This thesis examines critically the corporation of Stamford, from the granting of its Charter of Incorporation in 1461/2 to 1649, a period extended in specific instances to approximately 1750.

The emphasis of Section I, 1461/2-1558, is upon a comparative study of Stamford corporation and other similar bodies elsewhere; that of Section II, 1549-1649 (1674 in certain matters) is upon the inter-relationship between the corporation as a legal entity and those individuals and authorities who were involved with it, namely; the burgesses and town dwellers of Stamford on the one hand; the county, aristocracy, crown and parliament on the other. Section III concludes a number of issues still outstanding in 1649. In each section, an analysis is made of the powers

derived from the royal charters sealed during the period.

The bye-laws enacted by the corporation are examined, together with its administrative and ceremonial procedures. Challenges to the sancity of the freeman's oath are interpreted. An appraisal is made of the many problems which beset the corporation: the poverty of the town, the visitations of the plague, the influx of foreigners, the need for new industries, difficulties in making the river Welland navigable.

The trade structure of the town is looked at in detail by making comparative analyses of the occupations of freemen for the two centuries 1475-1574, 1575-1674. Their surnames are analysed with a view to determining the relative proportions of those burgesses who belonged to well established dynasties and those who were migrants. The length of service by burgesses in the first and second companies is calculated to ascertain the stability of the ruling oligarchy.

Through the medium of wills and inventories, a look is taken at the private lives of some of the town's principal tradesmen.

In short, this thesis seeks to illuminate with the help of contemporary material, the working of the corporation and the lives of the tradesmen of the borough of Stamford over a period of two, and in particular instances, three centuries.