

Part 5. Lives of the Common People, HLF project, January 2012 - July 2013

10. Castleton and Hope; Names and a Notable Family

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Castleton and Hope Surnames *Angela Darlington*

When researching land transactions, wills, taxation records and other documents over the medieval period relating to the parishes of Castleton and Hope, certain names crop up regularly, and some of these persist in the area today.

According to Professor David Hey each county has its own distinctive surnames that originated there in the Middle Ages (Hey 2003). Names were starting to become hereditary in the late 14th century, and their origins were variously derived from occupations, place-names, offices, pet-names, as well as derivatives of e.g. Scandinavian names. The 1381 poll tax (Fenwick 1998) is an excellent source of examples. Derivations from place-names are evident in e.g. “de Abbonay” (of Abney), “de Needham” (probably of Needham near Buxton (Needham 2002)) and “de Touneshend” or “of the Townend” as for William in a 1463 quitclaim from Hope Parish (Hall 1946). The numerous surnames that derive from occupations include Glover, Skynner and Webster. The unusual “Symkynman” in the 1381 poll tax for Castleton area may have been a pet name meaning “Little Simon” (Reaney & Wilson 2005).

Drawing on information from these key references, a few of the notable local names that turned up regularly in medieval documents are expanded on here. In his paper cited above, David Hey described how by mapping the distribution of surnames and combining the data with genealogical evidence it may be possible to pinpoint where surnames originally arose. He used an interactive CD-ROM of the 1881 census as a source of relatively recent data of surname distribution (*The British 19th Century Surname Atlas ver 1.10*, Archer Software 2003), and this piece of software has been used below to generate national distributions of the selected Hope Valley names in 1881.

1. Eyre

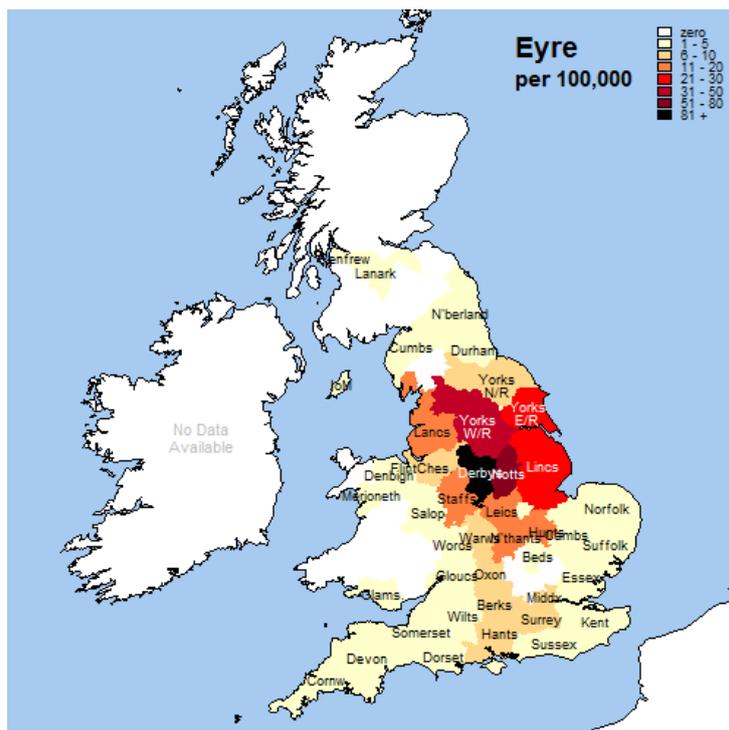


Figure 18. Incidence per head of population of the name “Eyre” in the 1881 census

The surname “Eyre” is well known as a local name in Castleton and Hope today, and it dates back to the 13th century. The name probably meant literally “the heir” (Reaney & Wilson 2005). William Eyre held an hereditary serjeanty of Hopedale in the Forest of the Peak in 1284 (Turbutt 1999) and in 1299, he was mentioned as the deceased tenant in chief in the context of an “escheat” (Great Britain 1911a, p424). Tenure of lands directly from the king as tenant in chief was a great honour, (Wikipedia 2013e). If the holder died without an heir or committed a felony, the lands reverted to the crown by way of the common law doctrine of escheat. However in William’s case, he did in fact have a son, Robert, to whom the lands reverted in the following year (Great Britain 1911a, p428).

A few years later in 1305 Robert le Heyr was a witness in a land charter involving land named Trayokes of Castleton (Hall 1946, p1) and in 1306 he was witness to a grant for land "sub Okelis" (probably meaning “under the Eccles”) in Hope (Jeayes 1906, #1430, p176). In the 1381 poll tax three “le Eyres” were recorded, Nicholaus, Johannes and Robertus, all taxed 2s 6d which was close to the highest tax band recorded. The numerous records of Eyres in land transfers indicate the high status held by the family in medieval times. In the 1881 census, Derbyshire had 168 Eyres per 100,000 head of population, by far the highest county density in Great Britain (Figure 1).

2. Savage

No Savages were listed in the 1381 poll tax for the Castleton area and the earliest record of this family that our documents have shown for Castleton/Hope area is of George Savage, chaplain (also named as “prest” or priest) in a rental roll, sometime between 1412 and 1431 (Yeatman 1946, p331). Whilst there were a number of named wardens or masters, George

Savage is unusual in being a named chaplain of Castleton’s Hospital of Blessed Mary of the Peak, or “Hospital de Spetill” as referred to in the rent roll transcript. Oddly, over a century later, another George Savage was one of the last wardens of the hospital (1532-1542) and in 1548 Thomas Savage was named “of the Spytell” in the Augmentations. The Savages built New Hall in Castleton and were an important family in the area until the Civil War. In the 1881 census the Savages were widely distributed across the counties of Great Britain with highest densities in the Lake District and Nottinghamshire.

3. Woodroffe

The local modern surname is Woodroffe (as in the Woodroffe Arms in Hope) but there are several variations on the spelling in early documents such as Woodrove, Woodrofe, Woderoue etc. According to Reaney and Wilson (2005) the name derives from the sweetly scented herb woodruff that was carried by women with their prayer books to church, and may have been an “ironical” nickname for someone that used perfumes. Our earliest record of the surname is from 1284-5, concerning Roger Woodroer of Hope (Yeatman 1886). Three “Woderoues” – Gervaisus, Johannes and Johanna – appeared in the 1381 poll tax for Castleton area, almost certainly including Hope, and a Gervase Woderove appeared as a witness in documents from 1359, 1361 and 1376 concerning transactions of land around the Eccles in Hope (Jeayes 1906, #1435, p177). The name persists in the area today but in the 1881 census had a fairly wide distribution with a higher concentration in other counties notably Wiltshire.

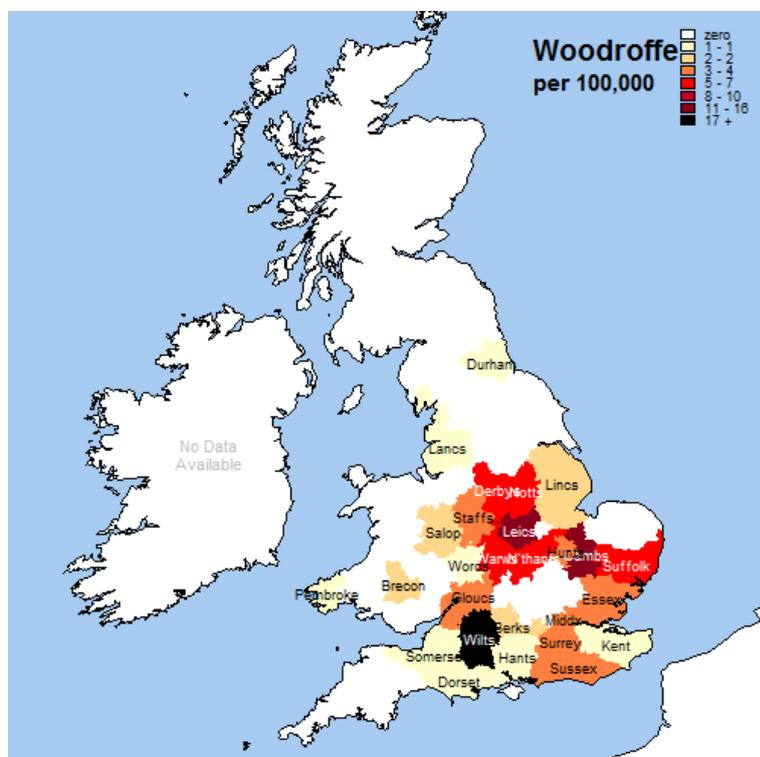


Figure 19. Incidence per head of population of the name “Woodroffe” in the 1881 census

4. Trickett

An interesting surname, as although it isn't one of the commonest in historical documents, Castleton has Trickett Gate on Hollowford Road that leads to Edale at the northern side of village. The earliest record of this name found so far is in 1381, a poll tax entry (20d) for Willelmus Triket. A William Trickett of Hope was mentioned in the rent roll of 1412-1431 (Yeatman 1946) "for the House of the Blessed Mary at Castleton". The name derives from Norman-Picard names Trichet or Trichot which themselves probably originate from the Norman-Picard word *Tricard* meaning "cheat" or "deceiver" (Cameron 1959). As the map shows, the name was common in the West Midlands including Derbyshire in the 1881 census.

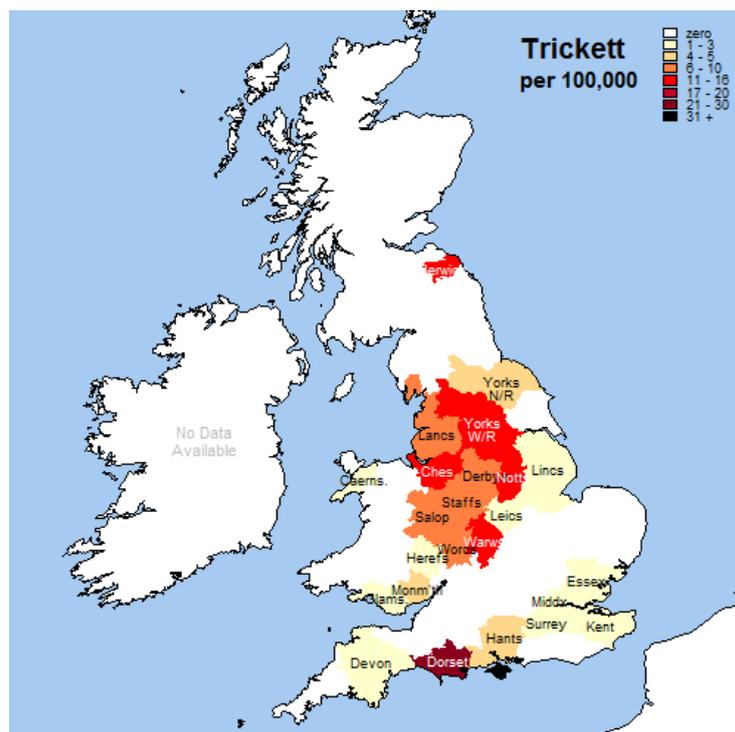


Figure 20. Incidence per head of population of the name "Trickett" in the 1881 census

5. Balguy

The Balguys were one of the hereditary forester families of Hopedale and the family were living at Aston in the 12th century. In 1285 Robert Balguy held (in sergeant) four bovates of land in Hope, and had to provide for a man to perform labour services at Peak Castle (Turbutt 1999, p575). This surname (variously Balgy, Balgi, Balge, etc.) also occurred in a number of early 14th century land transactions, when Robert Balgy of Castleton and his sons Robert and John were named as recipients of land for instance in Spitulfeld, Trayokes and Hopegate. Three Balgys, Thomas, William and Richard, were named in the 1381 poll tax (taxed 2s, 2s 6d and 6d respectively, therefore of mixed fortunes). In 1439, William le Eyr, Robert Balgy and Roger Woderove "whose ancestors were [made] foresters of old time by William Peverel" were all foresters in fee in the bailiwick of Hopedale (Great Britain 1907c, p354).

In the 1881 census there were only 10 Balguys in Great Britain (3 of these in Derbyshire), suggesting that the family had not flourished despite their apparent success in medieval times.

The Woodroffe Family of Hope Di Curtis

The History of the Woodroffe family of Hope is excellent example of the history of the common people searched for in this project. The Woodroffes are first mentioned in the 12thC, when a Woodroffe was appointed Forester of Fee, an early example of local government officer. Later Woodroffes of the 17th and 18thC, held the hereditary role of Parish Clerk. Many generations of the family thus held successful local office in Hopedale without ever accumulating sufficient land or wealth to become landed gentry. Whilst the main branch of the Woodroffe family died out in the 17thC, a descendant of the Hope Woodroffes, in the maternal line, still lives in Hope village.

The name Woodroffe, is that which is used in the village as the current name of the Inn, but the spelling appears in many forms in earlier documents. The meaning of the name may be from the Old English Wudu meaning wood and derived from the occupation of Forester as Wood Reeve or Wood Stewart (Smith Porter 1923).

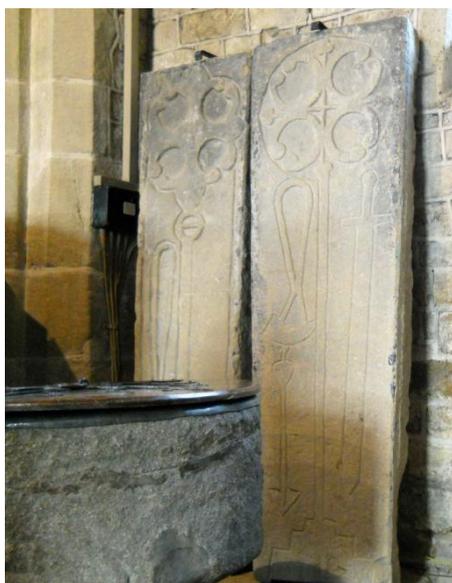


Photo 21. Medieval grave slabs in Hope Church; the carving represents, swords, arrows and hunting horns suggesting the dead were Foresters in Peak Forest.

Photo Ann Price

The name of **Roger** Woodrove first appeared during the reign of Edward I in 1284–5 when he was one of eight named foresters in fee in Hopedale, who held two bovates of land in Hope worth 6s a year. But the position held by this family dates right back to the days of William Peveril and is confirmed again in 1439 (Great Britain 1910a, p416; Great Britain 1907c, p354).

this document is the inspeximus of 1439 to the earlier document of 1284). The early history of this family is told in documents relating to the inheritance of this land held as a payment for services rendered to the King and in the Forest Courts held locally to hear offences relating to the Kings management of the Royal Forest of the Peak.

Despite his position of Forester, **Roger** Wooderove was fined by the Forest Courts for keeping six horses in the forest and for offences of Vert and abusing his rights of pasturage (Yeatman 1886).

By 1306 **Robert** Woderoue is named as a witness in a land transaction (Jeayes 1906, #1430, p176). Interestingly the Wooderooves are not named as foresters in the Court Rolls of Edward II (Yeatman 1886).

In January 1353, **Thomas** Woderoue of Hope, son of Nicholas, inherited a messuage and a bovate of land in Hope and the post of Forester in Fee in Hopedale in the forestry of the High Peak. It cost him 6s 8d, which he paid to the King, to be admitted to his inheritance (Great Britain 1907a, p382).

Thomas Woderoue died in about 1370, when it appears that he had increased the land he held to three bovates of land for his forestership and a bovate of land for service at the castle. His son and heir was only 7 years old and not entitled to inherit. John Woderoue was made a ward of the King who took back the land directly under his control (Great Britain 1938, p412).

This matter was not resolved until 1387 when King Richard II ordered the escheator of Derbyshire, not to take the matter any further since it was resolved that John Wooderoue had (as had been rumoured in 1377) entered a monastery and the next rightful heir was **William** Wooderoue, Parson of the church of Spofford and brother of the deceased Thomas (Great Britain 1974, p178-179).

Meanwhile a **Gervase** Woderowe, who may be another branch of the family, is named as a witness in a number of land charters between 1359 to 1376 (Jeayes 1906, #1433, 1434, 1435, p176-177).

In the Forest Court proceedings of Richard II (1377-1399), both **Robert and William** Wooderowe are named as Forresters (Yeatman 1886).

Robert Woderoves appears as a witness to a land charter in 1394 (Jeayes 1906, #1437, p177); whilst in 1402, **William** Woderowe of Hope is arrested for threatening some of the king's tenants of Tadyngton, but we are not told why (Great Britain 1905c, p131). The consequence of the arrest did not affect his standing in the community as he appears as a witness in a land charter of 1409 (Jeayes 1906, #1440, p177).

However in 1411 both **William and Robert** Woderoue of Hope are in trouble again for failing to surrender an underage heir to the Queen. It appears that the child is the offspring of Emma and Nicholas Ketoun and the widowed Emma has remarried one of the Woodroffes (Great Britain 1932a, p143). This incident is important because it emphasizes the importance to the Crown of keeping control of inheritance at a time when childhood survival was limited and it is only one of several such matters which are reported for other families in the Court Records of this period.

William Wooderowe of Hope died in 1427 when a new coroner was elected to replace him

(Great Britain 1932b, p309). This William Woodroffe must have been an old man at his death if this is the same William, brother of Thomas, first mentioned in the inheritance of 1353.

In the years between 1434 and the end of the century a **Thomas** Woderoffe and a **Robert** Woderoff of Windmill (near Hope) are named (Great Britain 1907b, p410-413). Thomas Wodroffe appears in the Forest Court proceedings when he paid rent for an intake, attended the court and was fined 4d when he made an affray in court (Yeatman 1886).

In 1495 a Land Grant of a parcel of land called Le Redsettes, in Castleton, is recorded by **Edmund** Wodrofe, to Nicholas Eyre (Jeayes 1906, #561, p73). This is the first of several concerning this parcel of land in Castleton and is referred to elsewhere.

During the Tudor period the Woodroffes were men of property and must have been of some importance in the High Peak as they were listed in the Herald's visitation of 1569 and as landowners in the 1570 list for the High Peak. Their coat of arms, described as "a chevron between three crosses with the crest (a woodpecker russet) above" is painted on the North wall of the chancel of Hope church together with their motto "Quod transtuli, retuli" (Cox 1877).

The Subsidy rolls for the period list land value and tax paid as :-

1535 Nicholii Woodroffe qui het bona ad vall xxli, tax xs

1546 Georgio Woodrofe pr bonis xxxLI tax ls

1571 Nichus Woodruffe in terr lxs tax iijs

1599 Edmund Woodrofe senior gent in land ijli tax xiis (Kirk 1919).

However the 16th C wasn't entirely without problems for the Woodroffes.

In 1559 there is an example of how difficult it was for the average man to pay the fines imposed by the courts when another **Edmund** Woodruff together with one Nicholas Ashton, shoemaker, were made outlaws for non-payment of a debt of £20. They were pardoned after surrendering themselves to the Fleet Prison (Great Britain 1986, p140).

Disasters also occur in the Woodroffe family, when in 1561, **William** Woodroffe was assaulted and died of his injuries, no details are given. Both his attackers, described as Husbandmen, were subsequently (Great Britain 1986, p140).

In 1579, **Nicholas** Woodtrove had a licence to alienate land (described) in Hope to **Edward** Woodtrove and his heirs and Nicholas Howe at a cost of 8s 10½d (Great Britain 1986, p242). This appears to be the beginning of a series of transactions between 1582 and 1599, when the Woodroffe family had interests in the manor of Great Hucklow and when the suffix "gent" is attached to their names (Anon. 1599a, 1599b).

By 1606 this tenure in Great Hucklow had passed to **Thomas** Wooderowe of Hope (Anon. 1606) and was subsequently sold out of the Woodroffe family by **Ellis** Woodroffe in 1616. (Kirk 1919).

Ellis Woodrofe, barrister-at-law in London, but buried in Hope in 1634, was the last male heir of the main branch of the family; although one branch of the Woodroffe family gave rise to the Woodroffes listed as Parish Clerks in the 18th C (Smith Porter 1923).

11. Occupations in Castleton and Hope

Angela Darlington

Evidence from the 1381 Poll Tax

The 1381 poll tax for “Villa de Castulton” (Fenwick 1998) has 225 entries for “Castleton” although from the names these are likely to cover other villages in the area. Only 31 out of the 225 entries have occupations and 4 are not legible. Definitions of the occupations for the remaining 27 entries (Fenwick 2005; Callum 2012) break down as follows:

Occupation	Number	Definition
carpen'	2	carpenter
cult'	1	farmer
faber	1	smith
ferrou	1	smith (esp one working with iron)
glover	1	maker or seller of gloves
heust	1	dyer (or could be woodworker)
scheperd	1	shepherd
s'eius	6	servant
serviens	1	servant
sissor	6	shearman (of woollen cloth)
skynn'	1	skinner
sout'	1	shoe-maker
swynherd	1	swineherd
tailour	1	taylor
textor	1	weaver
webst	1	weaver

Figure 22. Occupations as listed in the 1381 poll tax for “Villa de Castulton”.

Compared with Castleton, other villages in the High Peak Wapentake have a much higher percentage of occupations listed against names. The commonest is cult' (farmer) followed by artifex (craftsman). For instance Villata de Baslow listed at least 20 cult' and 17 artifex. Baslow also had 1 carnifex (butcher), 1 drapor (draper) and 4 chapmon or chapman (merchants); Baslow's occupations suggest a growing community and thriving commerce. There are a number of other occupations mentioned in villages of the High Peak Wapentake however none of them are listed often. The only flecher (maker or seller of arrows) listed in the wapentake was from Eyam.

At around the time of the 1381 poll tax, surnames were starting to become hereditary (Hey 2003), however, returning to the entries for Castleton, some of the surnames reflect occupation; the ferrou is Robertus Smyth, the Glover is Willelmus Skynner, and the heust is Willelmus Walker (surname derived from the work of the fuller who “walked” on his cloth).

Although the occupations are not given, there are other surnames that may indicate occupations in the Castleton entry for the 1381 poll tax. These are:

SURNAME	1st NAME	INFERRED OCCUPATION
le Pedder	Nicholas	pedlar
Bagger	Ricardus	one who makes bags
Walker	Margareta	fuller
Webster	Henricus	weaver
le Herdeman	Willelmus	one who tends sheep, cattle
Clerke	Johannes	cleric,clergyman, particularly common for one who had taken only minor orders
Herdeman	Willelmus	one who tends sheep, cattle
Pedder	Johannes	pedlar
Chapman	Ricardus	merchant
Walker	Willelmus	fuller
Smyth	Robertus	smith
Glover	Henricus	glover
Wryght	Robertus	carpenter or joiner
le Warde	Johannes	guard, watchman
Skynner	Willelmus	skinner
Ward	Willelmus	guard
Carpenter	Thomas filius Roberti	carpenter
Fischer	Willelmus	Fisherman (however his occupation is given as sissor)
le Milner	Adam	miller
le Ward	Adam	guard, watchman
Scheperd	Johannes	shepherd
Webster	Ricardus	weaver
Taleour	Robertus	tailor
Thacher	Robertus	thatcher

Figure 23. Occupations inferred from the 1381 poll tax for “Villa de Castulton”.

Taken together with the first table of given occupations this creates a picture of a society significantly reliant on wool and cloth-making or production of skin goods. However the highest tax-payer out of all 225 Castleton tax-payers is Robertus de Needham who is the only “cult” or cultivator/farmer, at 40d.

The distribution of taxation levels in the 1381 poll tax is given below.

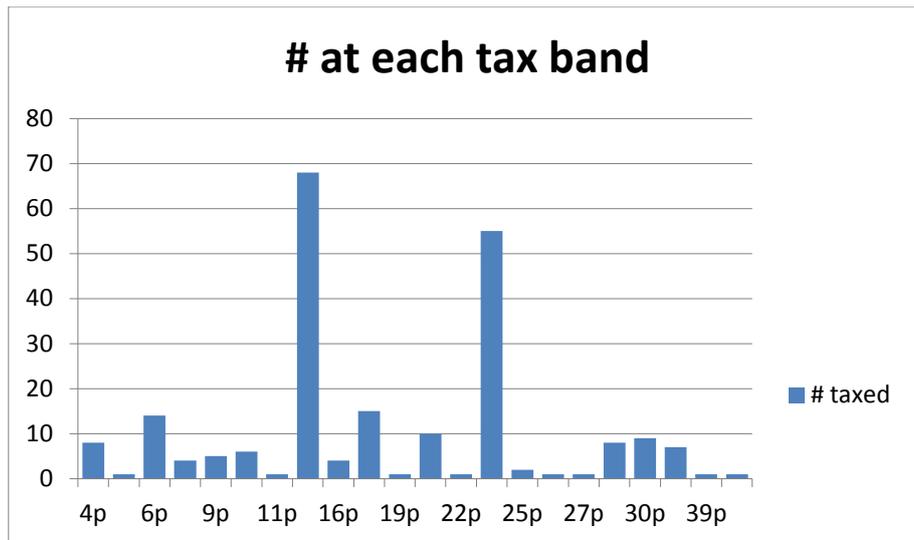


Figure 24. The distribution of taxation levels in the 1381 poll tax.

Evidence from Court Rolls

A series of Court Roll transcripts (Yeatman 1886) provide an insight into additional occupations, in particular for those brewing ale, baking bread and butchering. Some background to the information in the Court Rolls is given in Judith Bennett’s *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England* (1996):

“In most communities, local officers (often called aletasters or aleconners) supervised commercial brewing and presented brewers at court sessions.... The Assisa (Assize) regulated the prices set for ale, which were to vary according to both the cost of grain and the place of sale. Brewers were to be amerced for their first three offences and punished physically thereafter. These limited statutory provisions changed in actual practise, with officers supervising not only the price of ale but also its quality and measurement. Brewers were therefore liable for punishment if they committed any of three offences: selling ale in false or illegal measures, selling ale of poor quality, or selling ale at excessive prices. Brewers could also incur punishment for trying to escape supervision by, for example, failing to summon the aletasters or selling without proper publicity. Yet as the scope of enforcement widened, the scope of punishment narrowed. Local courts infrequently punished brewers on the cucking-stool or by other public humiliations, preferring instead to profit from amercements”.

Commercial brewers, bakers and butchers were all required to be presented to the court and a number of names associated with Hope and Castleton are to be found in Court Rolls, examples below.

In 1438 at Castleton Court, Robert Balgy, butcher, was fined 12d for selling corrupt meat. At another court session a few months later, it was reported by the Bailiff “that when he seized the carcasses of Robt. Balgy..., the same Robt. without license carried away and sold the said flesh, therefore he is fined 40d”.

In 1442 Margareta Thomasson and Margarita Bradwall were mentioned as selling ale in Bradwall and Haselbache. In Hope and Aston a number of brewers were mentioned in 1452: “John Fumes, for brewing, and Thos. Balgy, Nich. Balgy, John Staneryng, John Harford, and Robt, Aley for the like”.

In 1463 at Castleton, Resius Fumes was mentioned as a “common baker” and Rich. Wethe as a brewer. Ten years later in 1473 the Court Rolls recorded that “Rees Fumes, Thurston Dunn, Roger Marshall, Rd. Withey (probably the Rich. Wethe from 1463), Jo. Stanryn, Hy. Dunn, Thos. Glover, Katherine Balgy, are brewers and bakers”. At the same court, were present “John Slack and Robt. Barker, as butchers against the Assize”; this term indicating that they were being tried for offences.

One brewer, an Agnes Page, appears 8 times as presented at the local Castleton court, between 1507 and 1531. She appears to be a Castleton brewer, along with (but not always) other brewers Catherine Sykes, Isabella Howe and Thurstan Newton.

In April 1509, the vill of Hope incurred a penalty of 40d for “not presenting the brewers and bakers from Pentecost”. This apparently refers to the timing of a previous court, presumably from the previous year.

Nich. Smith and Jo. Trykett of Hope both presented several times at the court as brewers, and John Balgy of Hope as butcher, between 1515 and 1531.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to David Hey and Pat Callum for help in interpreting the Court Rolls.

12. Wills and Inventories

John Talbot

Introduction

The wills and inventories of people in Castleton and Hope are stored for the most part in the Cathedral archive of Lichfield, with a few in the National Archives. They start in 1547 and tell us nothing about medieval life, although they do give a good insight into the early modern period in the Hope Valley.

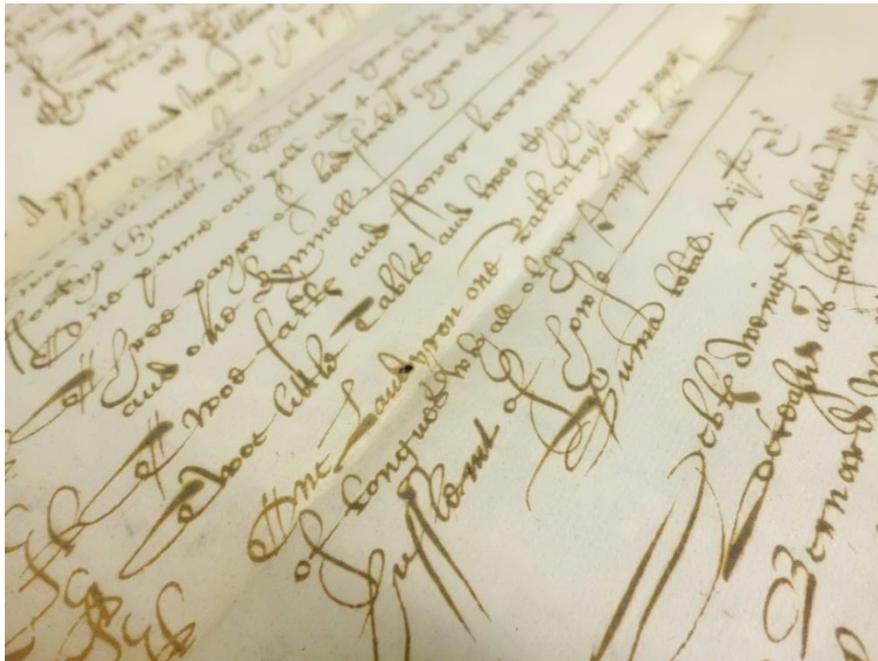


Figure 25. Inventory of Thomas Tym who left left little tables on his death. Listed below the tables are a land iron (to support wood in a fire) and a rackentail an (iron bar for hanging a pot over a fire). Photo: Bill Bevan, courtesy of Lichfield Record Office.

These documents were written during the most revolutionary period of English history, and it is interesting to map the change, or lack of it, in the attitudes and social habits of this rural community. They span the period of the ardent Protestantism of Edward VI, the equally ardent Catholicism of Mary I, into the 44 years of relative peace during Elizabeth I's reign. With the accession of the Stuarts, at first riven with plots during James I's reign, then during the disastrous conflict between Charles I and Parliament leading to the Civil War from 1642 to 1651, it might be expected that these documents would reflect the turmoil. By and large, however, none of these events impacted upon the papers reviewed here.

The parish of Castleton was under the administration of the Archdeacon of Lichfield, and that of Hope under the Dean and Chapter, qualifying the latter as a Peculiar. A peculiar parish is exempt from the jurisdiction of the archdeaconry, sometimes as here or on occasions under the local Lord of the Manor or some other jurisdiction such as an Archbishop or a monastery. This appears to have made a difference to this study because, while the documents from Castleton are available from 1547, they start in Hope in 1620 apart from those proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and now in the National Archives. Why this should be is

unclear. Further and also inexplicably, people from Hope often died intestate and letters of administration of their estates were issued, which were invariably much less informative than wills. There are no surviving inventories from Hope before 1620, and only a few wills, so that comparisons between the two villages must be approached cautiously.

The Documents

The papers available from the Lichfield archive fall into three groups: wills, inventories and letters of administration of estates. Those from the National Archives are copied wills from the Canterbury Prerogative Court, without any inventories. It appears that testators could choose to have their wills proved there, or they owned property in more than one parish. On the whole the Canterbury documents are from relatively wealthy estates. There 3 from Castleton from this period in the National Archives, and 5 from Hope, 4 of which date from before 1620, the earliest of the Hope documents in Lichfield.

There are very many additional documents listed under the two parishes but from people not living in Hope or Castleton themselves, such as Edale or the many hamlets in Hope Woodlands. All of these have been excluded from this review.

There are 74 wills, 12 from Hope and 62 from Castleton. As noted, for unknown reasons, many Hope residents died intestate and letter of administration of their estates had to be issued.

There are 87 inventories in all, 17 from Hope and 70 from Castleton.

There are 17 estates with letters of administration from Hope but only 2 from Castleton. If the deceased died intestate, a person, sometimes a relative, was appointed to administer the estate. These documents followed an absolutely standard format, often word for word the same, and written in a catch-all way so that the deceased's name and that of the appointed administrator could be written into the gaps of a pre-written document. They were issued in Bakewell, often under the authority of John Rowlandson, vicar of Bakewell, and written by the clerk Reginald Pynder. Occasionally, a similar format was used to ensure the education and care of children of the dead person, usually when he or she died intestate but sometimes also if the will had not provided sufficiently for them.

Wills

Form of wills

The wills followed a generic pattern. They started with a religious invocation, occasionally in Latin: "In the name of God Amen." Then followed information about the testator and the date of the will. The latter often included reference to the year of reign (the regnal year) and this was occasionally the only indication of the date. There was always a statement that although the testator was "sicke in bodye" he or she was of good "remembrance" or "memorie". Then followed variably pious bequests of the owners' soul to God and, in the period 1553–1558 to the Virgin Mary, although usually not thereafter. An exception was Martin Hall (1608 Castleton) who dangerously invoked "the felicitie & blisse of heaven in the comunion of Sayntes and Angels". A desire for the testator's body to be buried in either Hope or Castleton followed, with the exception of William Hall (1605 Castleton) who wanted to be interred in Sheffield. After this, the wills diverged as they dealt with the meat of the estates but ended by naming executors and, often, supervisors to see fair play. Finally, witnesses were named and often made their marks or signed the document. In this regard, there was a slight increase in literacy through the 100 years. Many wills had seals.

Some wills listed debts but these are considered with the inventories.

John Bramall (Castleton 1640), Mary Furnies (1630 Hope) and Ellis Stalley (1570 Hope) had wills that were nuncupative, that is written by witnesses when the person was in extremis and unable to write, or have written, a will.

Status and occupation

In a minority, the will, and occasionally the inventory, labelled the testator as to his status in society. Women were invariably described as widows, if anything. There were 12 husbandmen, 10 yeomen and two gentlemen (John Eyre of Hope 1567, and Rowland Mortwood of Castleton 1637). These documents are from people with goods and chattels, not the very poorest in the villages.

The few with identified occupations were:

Name	Date	Village	Occupation
Henry Bocking	1608	Hope	Webster (weaver)
Edmund Eyre	1616	Castleton	Weaver
Edmund Goldsmyth	1547	Castleton	Vicar
John Hall	1570	Castleton	Clerk
Richard Hallam	1599	Castleton	Blacksmith
Andrew Hallom	1591	Castleton	Blacksmith
Richard Needham	1617	Castleton	Shoemaker
Thomas Savage	1590	Castleton	Vicar
Richard Slack	1581	Castleton	Schoolmaster

Figure 26. Occupations of testators.

This demonstrates that wills were written by most sectors of society although they do not include the very poorest. Nevertheless, this paper uses them and their inventories to interpret the lives of ordinary people at this time.

Content of wills

Wills, in general, are less informative about the lives of ordinary people than inventories. However, some do give insights that lists of goods cannot. They also provide valuable numbers of names that can help towards understanding the population of the two villages and enable the construction of family histories that can occasionally be cross-linked between testators.

As expected, bequests were made principally to immediate family, particularly wives and children. In 17 wills there was no evidence of children but it is impossible to say why this may have been. Notably, although he left no will, Thomas Savage (1590), who was vicar of

Castleton, did have a son John, as mentioned in Humphrey Furniss's will (1613 Castleton). Equally it is difficult to judge if the male testators were married as, if they had lost their wives, no mention was made of it, unlike the women who were stated to be widows.

Particular care was taken to ensure that under-age children would be properly fed, clothed, housed and educated; for instance Henry Berlowe (1640 Hope) left £20 specifically for this purpose until his children ended their minority at the age of 14.

The wills sometimes gave a glimpse of family relationships. Generally, husbands conveyed their respect for their wives, but this is less clear when it came to their children. Even so, Thomas Bocking (1615 Castleton) initially willed most of his estate to his wife but changed his mind immediately and an alteration to the will is written sideways in the margin reducing the bequest to a third. John Mellor (1632 Castleton) had 6 daughters and one under-age son. He carefully bequeathed the bulk of his estate to his fifth daughter Dorothy until his son became of age, and made her his executor. It is possible that he had made financial provision for his other children before death, but the will hints at the relative merits of Dorothy over the others. Henry Bocking (1608 Hope) left £20 to his nephew Ralph Bocking (he had no recorded children) provided that he gave up gaming within 4 years. Mary Furnies (1630 Castleton) made clear in her nuncupative will that her daughter should not have her best "apron, cuiffe and kerchief", which she bequeathed to her daughter-in-law. She also left only 6 pence to her son, as his child's portion.

It was common for surprisingly small amounts to be left to a testator's children, in satisfaction of their "childes porcion". As Hey points out, this may well have been because money had been settled on them at the time of the child's marriage (Hey 2004, p 216).

In the minority, testators nominated their wives or even daughters as executors (executrices), even if there was a son or a brother alive. However, in common with the universal practice, all the supervisors were men (Erikson 1993, p161).

Sometimes the testator's parents were still alive. In Richard Bridbury's will (1620 Castleton) he made them special provision for housing, and ensured the onus was on his other legatees to provide for them. John Eyre (1567 Hope) left most of his estate to his mother, as his children, brothers and sisters were too young.

Testators sometimes insisted that families stayed together as a provision in the will and went to elaborate lengths as to how the bequests were to be rearranged should families split up, or members marry, or simply not get on with each other. Usually these were wives and children but Nicholas Hadfield (1636 Hope) declared that his wife Margret and nephew John should live together and took around a quarter of his long will to work out what should happen if they did not. Thomas Marshall (1649 Castleton) required his wife, son and daughter-in-law to live together but, if they did not, his wife was to have possession of the house and the goods were to be divided three ways.

Six bequeathed to their or, sometimes, other people's servants. The amounts were usually small, with the exception of Ottiwell Smith (1638 Hope), who mentions neither a wife nor children in his will, and left £30 to Marie Gibson his servant but a sheep each to unnamed "servantmen". Rowland Mortwood (1637 Castleton) left forty shillings each to an unspecified number of servants. Henry Bocking (1608 Hope) left a suit of clothes to his apprentice.

Very few of these people had a declared profession with tools that were passed on to the next generation. An exception was the Hallam (Hallom) family who were blacksmiths in Castleton, and whose inventories listed their smithy tools, which were bequeathed in their wills. The schoolmaster at Castleton, Richard Slack (1581), bequeathed his books to people who were not teachers.

Perhaps because most were relatively small estates, little was bequeathed for good works. Reflecting the custom of the times, Edmund Goldsmyth (1547), vicar of Castleton, donated 4 shillings to “Saynt chad Howsse in Lichfield”. Henry Bocking (1608 Hope) gave 20 shillings to Hope Church and Ottiwell Smith (1638 Hope) 40 shillings for the repair of the Free School chambers in Hope.

Four testators bequeathed small amounts to the poor of their villages, although Roger Harrison (1614 Castleton) left £1.18.4 each to the poor of both Hope and Castleton. Rowland Mortwood (Castleton 1637), gentleman, left £5 each to Castleton and Bradfield for the poor and fifty shillings each to Eyam and Middleton (presumably Stony Middleton) for the same purpose.

Disappointingly, in neither the wills nor the inventories from the two villages is it possible to get an idea of the layout of people’s homes. The single exception is Roger Harrison (1614 Castleton) whose inventory described goods in a parlour, a buttery and the room over the parlour. Martin Hall (1609 Castleton) left a house to his brother John “conteyning ffyve bayes or thereabouts” that must have had a suite of rooms, frustratingly nowhere described.

Rarely, wills anticipated or covered legal problems. The only explicit case was that of Elizabeth Saunderson (1636 Hope) who left £10, with provision for more if needed, “to defend a sayle now depending in the honorable Cort of Chancery”. Although there was no will, there were instructions to an attorney in the case of Nicholas Jessop (1650 Castleton) by his brother and others to retrieve money that was owed to the estate. William Worrall (1604 Castleton) left money for the discharge of a debt to the estate of Thurstan Nall, as part of his duty as his executor. William Hethcote (1603 Hope) seemed to predict “strife” between his executors and children, ensuring that the supervisors of his will would act as intermediaries, although this may have been merely a more explicit way than usual of defining the role of the supervisors.

Inventories

Form of inventories

An inventory was only required if the estate was worth more than £5, although, as in 6 cases here, smaller estates could be evaluated too (Erikson 1993, p33). The inventories also followed a pattern, naming and dating the document, and listing the appraisers (“praysers”), at least two local men who were appointed as a requirement of the church court (Hey 2004, p219). There followed a tabulated and valued list of what was considered necessary to include. In the early years of these documents, the testators’ livestock was always listed, along with his “purse and apparel”, and usually “husslements of house” or “howsehold stuffe”. Only later were the latter broken down into useful listings of chattels. Undoubtedly, as the renaissance attitude to personal possessions, and their owners’ view of their status in the world, evolved and filtered into rural communities, so did the desire to list those possessions. For certain in most cases, even if goods and chattels were not listed, they did exist.

It is recognised that inventories valued only part of a person's property, excluding his house and land, if he owned them (Hey 2004, p221). Further, confusion arose if his wife's goods that she brought to the marriage were not valued with his own.

Small items were routinely excluded from inventories as being of insignificant value, even though they are of interest now. These might include many small wooden goods, rushlight holders, and much earthenware (Erikson 1993, p34). Here it is clear that inventories did not necessarily list all the chattels. There is a notable disparity, for instance, between the number of horses and the scarcity of horse gear such as saddles.

Debts were an important part of inventories. Those owed to the estate were regarded as an asset, but, equally, those owed by the estate were sometimes also carefully listed, occasionally resulting in a negative balance, although this was never acknowledged. Debts were sometimes included in the will and occasionally in both the will and the inventory, often with differences between them; in the latter case, those in the inventory are always taken as being most accurate.

The date of the inventory is taken as representing the date of death. Whilst it was the practice for the will to be written shortly before death, in this study it has been shown that this was not always the case. However, the inventory had to be drawn up close to the date of death.

Years	No of deaths
1547-1560	8
1561-1570	4
1571-1580	6
1581-1590	5
1591-1600	7
1601-1610	16
1611-1620	12
1621-1630	6
1631-1640	6
1641-1650	7

Figure 27. Year of inventory for Castleton per decade.

Given the small sample, it is dangerous to draw many conclusions from this table, but the death rate in this segment of society in Castleton at least doubled in the period 1601-1620. Further, the death rate was remarkably stable in all other decades.

Years	No of deaths
1547-1560	8
1561-1570	6
1571-1580	6
1581-1590	5
1591-1600	7
1601-1610	19

1611-1620	12
1621-1630	14
1631-1640	11
1641-1650	12

Figure 28. Year of inventory for both villages per decade.

On combining the data for both villages, the variance is not so marked and the small number in earlier years must be discounted as there are so few documents from Hope in this period.

Month of inventory

Taking the month of the inventory as a proxy for the date of death, some hint as to the cause of death can be construed:

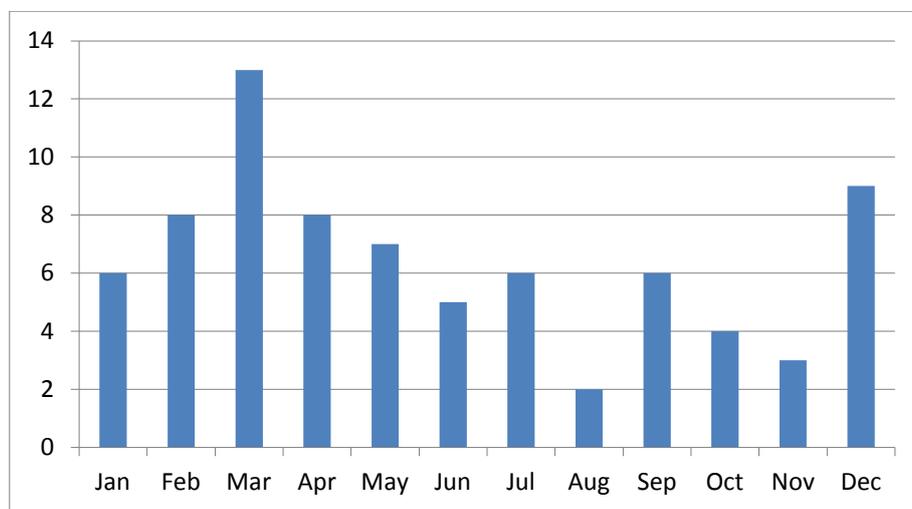


Figure 29. Months when inventories were written, taken as a proxy for month of death.

There were markedly more deaths in the winter and spring, as would be expected. This might be partly because of the prevailing climatic conditions affecting households where keeping warm was hard. There was a well-known cooling period that coincided with this period of study, known as the Little Ice Age. The first Frost Fair on the River Thames in London was in 1604. Food resources were lowest in the spring before any harvesting could occur (the hungry gap). Infectious illnesses would have been more prevalent at that time of year, and would have been exacerbated by the cold. Certain knowledge of influenza epidemics is hard to obtain but there is agreement that there was a pandemic in 1580 (Potter 2001), not reflected in the figures here. Several episodes of plague were known to have broken out during these hundred years, notably in 1604, but there is no clustering of dates that tallies with the known data and, in any case, plague was less common in the colder months.

Taking March as the month in which there were most deaths, review of the valuations of the testators' personal possessions in that month shows a range of £1.10.0 to £50.5.2, with a median of £17.18.10 (an average would be meaningless as these data derive from 100 years, during which inflation makes direct comparisons suspect). The median for all the inventories was £24.3.11. Whilst the people who died in March do not include the wealthiest and do include the poorest, there are 4 in this group whose estates were valued at more than £40.0.0. On balance, the likely explanation is a combination of cold and starvation.

Content of inventories

Whilst there are 87 inventories among the documents, many are uninformative about the various categories of livestock and chattels discussed below. 75 could be analysed for livestock, 72 for household goods and only 50 for external goods such as tools and agricultural equipment.

Overall wealth

The valuation of items in the inventories allows an estimate of people's wealth to be made. Sometimes this was displayed as a "Summa totalis" but often has to be calculated.

No-one was rich. Direct comparisons through the 100 years of this review must be read with caution because of inflation. In this analysis, account has been taken of an estate's debts, allowing an insight not only into the value of a testator's personal possessions but also their debt burden, resulting in some cases in a negative balance sheet.

The smallest total valuation of a person's possessions was £1.10.0 (Thomas Furnice 1607, Castleton) and the largest £320.8.4 (Jane Savage 1604, Castleton). However, after taking debts into account, the smallest was that of Robert Hallam (1641 Castleton) at minus £261.17.0 because his debts were at least £400.0.0 even though his personal possessions amounted to £138.3.0. The median (the midpoint of a distribution curve of valuations) before taking debts into account was £24.3.11.

Some of those whose wills were listed in Canterbury were plainly richer than those analysed here but they had no inventories. The yeoman Ottiwell Smith (1638 Hope), for example, left cash bequests amounting to £452.0.0 on top of "All my Messuages, Cottages, lands, tenements and hereditaments", and without any mention of debt.

Subsistence farming

Subsistence farming is defined as agricultural production that is only enough for the farmer's and his family's subsistence. Overton estimates that around 80% of English farmers in 1520 were subsistence farmers (Overton 1996, p22). In this survey, it is not possible to establish the proportion of testators that were in this position, but, given the relatively impoverished inventory valuations, there is no reason to suggest that in the two villages there was any difference between North Derbyshire and the rest of the country.

Small scale farmers were vulnerable to changes in the market. Those with a large acreage were able to weather variances; in bad years, the value of grain rose even if the amount fell, and it can be shown that this could result in an increased income for the larger farmer, as he could sell at a time when prices were advantageous. The small farmer, unable to store reserves, was forced to buy dear and sell cheap (Overton 1996, p20). It is not possible to assess the acreage available to those surveyed here but the period of this review was a time of great deprivation and many, perhaps the majority, would have suffered badly.

Inflation

Inflation has made it hard to make direct longitudinal comparisons between testators' wealth. Further, inflation was not evenly distributed across all commodities, although the rise in agricultural prices was predominant at the time:

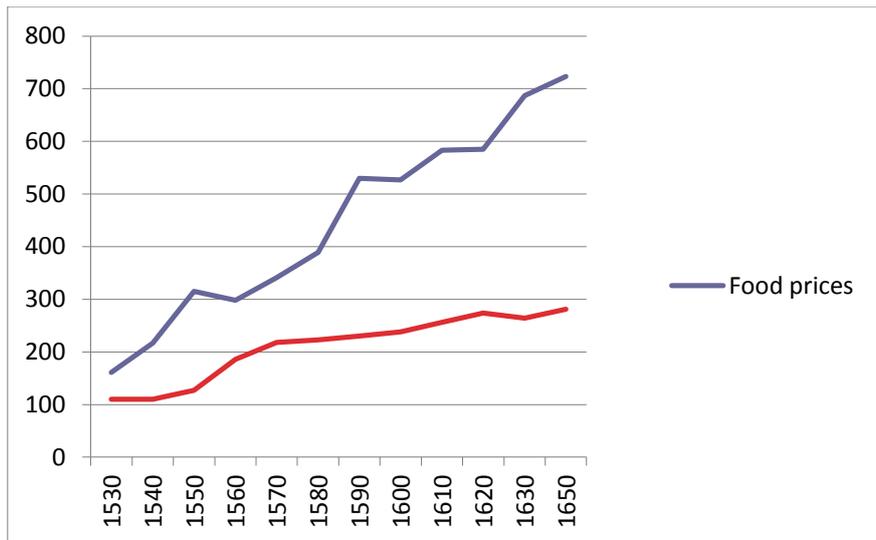


Figure 30. Rates of inflation 1530 – 1650. Drawn from Outhwaite 1982, p12

The prices in the graph are relative to a base of 100 in 1451. It shows the rise in the price of a basket of foodstuffs throughout the period of study but which was particularly aggressive in the 1540s and 1590s, with an overall approximate 2.5 fold increase between 1550 and 1650. The rise of around 4- to 5-fold in the valuations of sheep, cattle and swine in this study, let alone that of horses of 13.7-fold, however, is well above that of other commodities.

The explanations for inflation at this period are wide-ranging. However, there were severe crop failures in the 1590's, together with a rise in population. The latter, in particular, has been closely correlated with inflation (Outhwaite 1982, p60).

Livestock

All classes of people owned livestock. The vicar Edmund Goldsmyth (1547 Castleton) owned 4 oxen, 13 cattle, 43 sheep and 5 horses and his successor Thomas Savage (1590 Castleton) had 12 cattle, 2 horses and 2 pigs. Richard Slack (1581), the Castleton schoolmaster, had 2 oxen and 14 sheep. The Hallams (Halloms), the Castleton blacksmiths, owned sufficient cattle, sheep and horses to require both agricultural skills and time.

Cattle

Cattle were named in a variety of ways, partly to signify their age – calves, stirkes (yearling), twinters (two winters) and heifers (before calving), and finally the generic kyne and cows, “kyne” being the early English plural of “cow”.

Usually listed separately were oxen and sometimes bullocks. Both of these were probably castrated males, the bullocks being younger than the oxen (Overton 1996, p12). Again there are some listings suggesting ages of oxen, such as ox stirkes and twinters, and, in one case, oxen bullocks. No bulls were mentioned in any of these documents.

Oxen

Oxen were draught animals, used for heavy work. They were probably castrated to make them more tractable, although it is possible that some described as oxen were the missing bulls. Draught horses are 50% faster than oxen for lighter tasks such as ploughing, enabling a

greater acreage to be worked in a day, and required a third less labour force (Overton 1996 p126). In some areas they started to replace oxen in the mediaeval period but, during the time surveyed here, and in these remote areas, it appears that oxen were still used for the plough, perhaps as well as horses.

Nevertheless for this agrarian community, it is surprising that oxen were relatively rare animals. Only 16 of the 74 (21.6%) inventories listed them, 10 listed bullocks, and 22 had either or both. The individual holding varied between 2 and 7 animals; the latter was the exception in that every other holding was of an even number, possibly relevant to the way in which draught animals were used in pairs.

In support of the hypothesis that the ox was an “old-fashioned” draught animal is a striking bias towards inclusion in earlier inventories. Whilst inventories from the 16th century form 25.5% of the whole, 63.6% of inventories with oxen and/or bullocks were from the 16th century, over 40% more than if the distribution of oxen had been uniform over time. However, as noted elsewhere, the ownership of horses also dropped during the same period, and the value of oxen rose above other measures of inflation. An alternative is that there was a shift away from arable to stock grazing in the 17th century although there is no other evidence in these documents that supports this suggestion.

The unit value of oxen ranged from £1.0.6 in 1547 to £5.0.0 in 1614, with a gradual rise in between, except in special circumstances such as the listing of 4 “runt oxen” valued at £2.0.0 each in 1631 (George Grant, Hope) or the 4 oxen bullocks at £2.10.0 apiece in 1629 (Richard Needham, Castleton). This represents a 4.9 fold inflation, slightly higher than for other cattle, suggesting that there was no lack in demand for these beasts.

Other cattle

66 (88%) of the inventories listed cattle of one sort or another, apart from oxen. As these animals were often listed in groups, for the purposes of this study they have been considered together, with the exception of oxen.

Individual holdings of cattle were small. Only 10 had more than 10 cattle, whereas 16 had only one or two. The range was 1-16. This implies that most beasts were kept for domestic purposes, including milk and cheese, although one fully productive milking cow was likely to have produced more milk than a household could use, leaving some for sale. Only 3 owned cattle but no other animals; these were all women with only one cow each: Alice Godderd (1632 Hope), Elizabeth Saunderson (1636 Hope) and Katherine Shemett (1577 Castleton).

The average holding of cattle in the first half of the study (1547-1600) was the same as in the second (1601-1650), that is 5.5 and 5.4 respectively. The number of cattle varied through the year, with a maximum in February, presumably as a result of calving.

These beasts were of relatively high worth and in almost all cases were carefully valued. The range was £0.11.3 in 1547 to £3.10.0 in 1610. The unit values rose steadily but not smoothly through the 100 years of study, as exemplified by the anomalously high amount quoted here in 1610, whereas the average for the last decade of investigation (1640-1650) was £2.10.11. Using the latter figure, this is a 4.5 fold rise in value.

Sheep

62 of the inventories listed sheep, at 83% a lower proportion than that of cattle owners. They were classified as lambs, hoggs (from six months old until the first shearing) or sheep and “sharre” (shorn) sheep, sometimes specifying if they were ewes, although rams were never mentioned. They are all considered together in this study.

There was wide variation in the number of sheep owned by the testators, from 2 (Thomas Creswell 1624, Castleton) to 200 (Robert Hall 1555, Castleton) whose net worths were £32.6.2 and £52.6.4 respectively, both in the middle range of wealth for this group. Seven had no other animals listed in their inventories.

Sheep ownership was not as evenly distributed through the 100 years of study as that of cattle. The average holding of sheep was greater in the years 1547-1600 at 60.5 compared to 45.2 during 1601-1650, a 25% drop. The reason for this is unclear as, although Elizabeth's government had taken steps to increase the wool trade in the 16th century, there is no suggestion that the trade dropped off in the next 50 years.

The unit value of sheep rose smoothly from £0.1.8 in 1558 to £0.7.0 in 1650 (with the exception of Roger Harrison's sheep in 1614 which were valued at £0.7.3). This is a 4.1 fold increase in value.

13 inventories recorded wool. As might be expected, the largest holdings were in the inventories of those with the most sheep: Francis Barber (1650 Castleton) had 115 sheep and 15 stone of wool, Robert Hall (1555 Castleton) had 200 sheep and 13 stone and Nicholas Townrowe (1558 Castleton) had 20 stone and 160 sheep. However, 3 wool owners had no sheep at the time of death.

Horses

62 inventories recorded horses, with no-one owning more than 6, and 20 people owning a single animal. There was little indication of function; horses were sometimes only qualified as caples, mares, colts or foals (never stallions).

The value of a horse rose from £0.7.4 in 1547 to £5.0.0 in 1650, a 13.7 fold increase, far higher than the inflation in value of sheep and cattle.

Whilst horses were not labelled according to function, some clue can be obtained from the saddlery found in the documents. As noted elsewhere, there were 11 pack saddles, 4 cart saddles, 3 hackney saddles and one side saddle. The hackney and side saddles were for riding and the others for work but there is no suggestion for their use at the plough.

It might be expected that, as the number of oxen fell, the number of horses would rise, as it might have been predicted that horses were superseding oxen as draught animals. However, this is not the case. The average number of horses owned (excluding those that owned no horses) was 2.3 in the first 50 years of study, and only 1.6 in the second. Further, it might have been predicted that the number of horses would fall in the time of war, as the animals were diverted away from the land. Again, this is not so here as the average holding of horses increased back to 2.3 in the last decade of study, 1641-1650, during the Civil War.

Swine

Swine were occasional items in inventories, numbering 20 in all, and only in small numbers (1-3). Their value inflated from £0.3.0 in 1561 irregularly to around £0.12.6, with some anomalously high values in between, notably in Roger Harrison's (1614 Castleton) inventory which generally had higher valuations than elsewhere. This increase of 4.2 fold tallies with that of sheep and cattle.

It is surprising that there were so few pigs listed in that, apart from giving leather, their only purpose was as a source of relatively cheap high calorie meat, through their fat content. Perhaps their scarcity was because they are sensitive to cold and wet.

Poultry

Poultry of one kind or another were listed in 19 inventories. These were mostly chickens but 6 included geese. Once again these were in small numbers, never more than 10.

Bees

The only other listed animals were bees. Honey and wax were important but mostly luxury items in this segment of society. Six inventories included bees and hives. Two hives were valued at £0.6.8 in 1623, but a stock of bees and a swarm were worth £1.0.0 in 1640. No bees were listed before 1623, but this does not imply that no bees were kept before that.

Other assets

Corn and hay

These important items were listed in 43 inventories, usually together. The precise meaning of both terms is unclear but it is assumed that corn means threshed grain and hay has its present meaning of cut and dried grass, used as fodder. The valuations ranged between £0.2.0 and £26.6.8. Unfortunately it was very rare for quantities to be specified and so it is not possible to achieve an idea of value per unit amount. Occasionally unthreshed grain was measured in thraves or 12 sheaves. Three listed straw. There is no suggestion from the date range of inventories with corn and hay that there was a shift to or from a more arable farming practice.

Two inventories, those of John Mellor (1632 Castleton) and Thomas Marshall (1649 Castleton) valued their corn and/or hay at 3 days' work for £3.0.0.

Grain, meal and malt

Meal, which is ground grain, malt, which is dried germinated grain, usually barley, and grain itself were included in 15 inventories, again often together and therefore difficult to value. The usual unit of measurement was the bushel, hoop or strike, equalling 8 gallons of dry goods, or 4 pecks. Sometimes these assets were valued together with thraves of cereals, such as Roger Harrison's (1614 Castleton): 120 thrave oats, 30 thrave barley, 40 strike oats at £22.0.0. At the other end of the scale, Alice Godderd (1632 Hope) had meal and groats at 6 shillings and a peck of barley at one shilling. Groats were hulled and crushed oats.

Fuel

Nine inventories listed fuel, rarely by itself and often combined with peat and manure in the valuation. This confirms that peat was not the only fuel and presumably wood played an important role as well. Two listed coal.

Peat

For an area that traditionally used peat for fuel, it is surprising that only 4 had it listed in their inventories. However, there were a further 4 with peat spades and 2 with peat carts. As noted, only one sled was mentioned.

Manure

Manure was not valuable in monetary terms but 12 appraisers, all in the 17th century, saw fit to list it. The range of values was only 12 pence to 10 shillings, presumably dependent on quantity, which was never specified. It must be assumed that manure heaps would have consisted of both animal and human waste: night-soil “which buried in garden, in trenches alowe, shall make very many things better to grow” (Tusser 1557 p58). It is also possible that the term included other soil conditioners such as wood ash and lime.

Lead

Five left quantities of lead and the owners probably dealt in lead, or were directly concerned with mining, although none was identified as a miner. Thomas Bocking’s (1615 Castleton) estate was owed a fooder (also foother or 19½ cwt, just under a ton) priced at £22 as well as 2 debts of “dishes” of “owre”. All the others owned, owed or were owed pieces, piggs and spiggets of lead. See Chapter 9, *Lead Mining 1066 – 1642* for more information on lead in wills and inventories.

Household goods

Furniture

The range of furniture can be classified into bedding, seating, tables and storage, together with a number of other items.

Beds and bedding

57 inventories listed some form of bed or bedding. Beds ranged from featherbeds at the top of the range to bedstocks, merely bed frames. In between were chaff beds whose mattresses were presumably made of waste material, or possibly straw. There was one flock bed, whose mattress was made of pieces of wool.

16 had featherbeds and, not surprisingly, these were owned by the wealthier people. Roger Harrison (1614 Castleton), whose net worth was £300.15.2, had four. Featherbeds were valued at £1.0.0 to £1.13.4 but were often listed with mattresses, bolsters and blankets, making a precise valuation difficult. They consisted of a feather mattress, probably quite thin, which was laid over a straw under-mattress, then a canvas sheet in turn laid over bed slats, webbing or even rushes.

Chaff beds were listed in 12 estates, but, of these, only 3 were listed as the only form of bed. In all the rest, other beds, sometimes only bedstocks, were also listed. These three consist of two relatively small estates valued at £10.0.4 and £4.6.0. The third, however, is one of the most interesting in the canon, that of Elizabeth Saunderson (1636 Hope) whose estate was valued at £149.16.7, but whose personal possessions were only worth £19.18.8, and who is discussed in more detail elsewhere. Chaff beds also were rarely listed separately but were of low value, varying between 8 pence (1614) to 2s 8d (1649).

An important item in many inventories was a detailed list of bedding, consisting of mattresses, pillows, pillow beres (pillow cases), coverlets, bedhillings (bed coverings),

bolsters, sheets and blankets, although they were usually listed together and individual valuations are difficult to find. From the list of bedding items, the commonest were coverlets (42), blankets (41) and sheets (40). The first is surprising but may be explained by the coverlet being both an important item for keeping warm but also sometimes decorated, particularly in the wealthier households. The rarest items were bedhillings (6).

Storage furniture

Storage was clearly given priority, even among the poorer households.

Arks were found in 54 estates. These were chests with lids that could be lifted off and came in different sizes. Their principal use was for storing grain or meal.

Chests and coffers were also common, numbering 16 and 34 respectively, and 50 in total. The terms appear interchangeable as in no case did both occur. Less common were aumbries (3), cupboards (11) and presses (1), probably also signifying the same thing. They were mainly for storage of clothes, cloth and other textiles. Crockery and valuables were stored, or sometimes shown off, on shelves (4) and dishboards (12).

Tables and chairs

Tables were surprisingly unusual, occurring in 12 cases, but boards, supported by trestles, were commoner (26). Tables themselves tended to be listed in the wealthier households, although this was far from consistent, and the earliest was from 1613. It should be noted that either tables, boards or both were listed in a minority of households (35 of 72), less than items used for storage.

The table was sometimes covered by a boardcloth (13) or even a table carpet (1), in the latter case in one of the most luxurious homes in this series, that of Roger Harrison (1614 Castleton).

Chairs were found in 32, stools in 27 and forms (benches) in 20 inventories, frequently occurring together. In all, half of the households listed some form of seating. In only 2 cases were tables or boards listed without forms.

Cushions are considered here as they were presumably often associated with seating. Found in 29 inventories, these were plainly high status items, and it can be imagined that they were often made of relatively luxurious materials or embroidered. They were carefully listed and counted in many cases, and sometimes valued separately. Interestingly, they were never enumerated if there was only one cushion; the range was 2–28, the latter in the household of John Hall (1604 Castleton) whose net worth was £199.19.7.

Lighting

Lighting is generally reckoned to have been poor at this period. In impoverished households, such as many of these, either there was no light or light from the fire was exploited. Rush lights were used, as well as tallow candles, but the light from both was weak and lasted poorly, and the latter smelly. Beeswax candles were expensive. Here, candlesticks were listed in only 7 inventories and cressets, oil filled cups suspended on poles to burn for lighting, often outside, in three. Candles themselves were listed in one inventory, that of Thomas Godderd (1649 Castleton), whose net worth was only £21.1.10 yet he possessed 3 dozen.

Professional household items

There were 5 households with spinning wheels; in one case there were two (Roger Harrison 1614, Castleton). There were 2 weaving looms, 3 cards, 3 heckles and one wool wheel. Heckles and cards were wire combs for separating textile fibres. The looms belonged to a weaver, Edmund Eyre (1616 Castleton), and a widow, Ellen Howe (1630 Castleton). There is no inventory for the webster (weaver) Henry Bocking (1608 Hope) but his will does not mention any tools of his trade. Similarly the shoemaker Richard Needham (1617 Castleton), who left only an inventory, had no cobbling tools in the list of his possessions.

Only two owned books: Thurstan Hall (1650 Castleton) who owned just one, and Richard Slack who was schoolmaster in Castleton, dying in 1581. His will identifies: a Commentary on Ovid, a “vulgare boke”, “assorted horrace”, books by Vergil, another Ovid, a book on or by Augustine and one probably by Cicero.

A few inventories detailed quantities of cloth or yarn (11), although it is not possible to say whether these holdings were in a professional capacity. Woollen cloth was listed in 7, russet cloth in 3, green in 2 and linen cloth in three.

Four inventories listed hide, skins or whiteleather (2) which was horse hide cured with lime making a tough and hard product. Neither of the owners of the latter, both yeomen, had anything in their documents to suggest a professional need for this material.

Luxury items

The table carpet belonging to Roger Harrison is noted above. Also in that inventory, there was a prominent amount of pewter and brass, a Venice glass, a mirror, an hour glass, 2 pictures, 2 bottles of Aquavit but rather little silver (3 spoons). However, in no other case was there more than a few silver spoons and, rarely mentioned in wills, although never in inventories, rings and precious stones.

Kitchen ware and containers

A total of 37 items can be identified in these inventories as containers, cooking equipment (excluding tools such as spoons, skimmers, ladles and mortars), and plate for food consumption. Of all the 72 inventories with any listing of chattels, only one, that of the schoolmaster Richard Slack (1581 Castleton), declared no items in this category. In some others, very little was mentioned, often brass or pewter items, perhaps as they were the only articles thought worthy of inclusion.

A great deal of care was taken to list a very large range of containers, ranging from kimmels (12), loomes (20), barrels (4) tubs (6) and vats (6) at the top end of the size range, through kitts (9) to piggins (7). Some, such as vats and churns (11), had a specific use for brewing and butter making respectively, as did dacions (dashens) (7) used for the preparation of oatmeal.

Pots (22) and pans (20) were often of brass, carefully enumerated and presumably used mostly for cooking, as were frying pans (10), skellets (skillets) (11) which were pans on three short legs with handles, and chafing dishes (5) for keeping food warm.

There were dishes (21), often listed if they were made from pewter, doublers or chargers (1), saucers (4) and trenchers (2), which were made from wood.

The relatively few drinking vessels included cans (9), noggins (2) and porringers (2). Only one listed glass. Liquids were contained or carried in bottles (2), costrels (4), and in one case a flagon.

In 2 inventories, Ticknall ware was mentioned. This was a coarse earthenware pottery, often with slip decoration, made in and around Ticknall in Derbyshire, although wares indistinguishable from those made in the county were manufactured elsewhere.

External goods

These items can be roughly divided into those concerned with transport, cultivation, tools, implements and ironwork for fires, goods associated with horses and other professional goods such as smithy tools. As noted above, 50 inventories are available to analyse but there is some overlap in this category between household and external goods.

In every case, the value of goods identifiable for use outside the home was only a small fraction of the value of the household goods, mostly between around a half to a sixtieth. Considering this was an agricultural community, surprisingly few tools were recorded, perhaps because they had little value, even though those that were listed were in remarkable variety.

Transport

There were 31 with carts, which had 2 wheels, and 6 wains, which had four. Some indicated that carts had differing functions: dung carts or peat carts for instance. Wheels (30) were frequently separately listed, often, but not always, in pairs. Surprisingly given the number of sledways in the area, only one sled was listed (Henry Glossop Castleton, 1596), suggesting that this was, by this date, an archaic mode of transport.

Cultivation

There were 18 harrows but only 5 ploughs. The latter were not owned by the wealthiest in the group, with net valuations in the range of £-2.2.0 to £74.12.6. Curiously, of the 15 estates that had oxen, only 2 also had ploughs. These two had 4 oxen each, which was the average holding of those with oxen across all the inventories. It must be supposed that ploughs were shared out in the community. Seven yokes and 3 teams, the harnesses for oxen or horses, were listed.

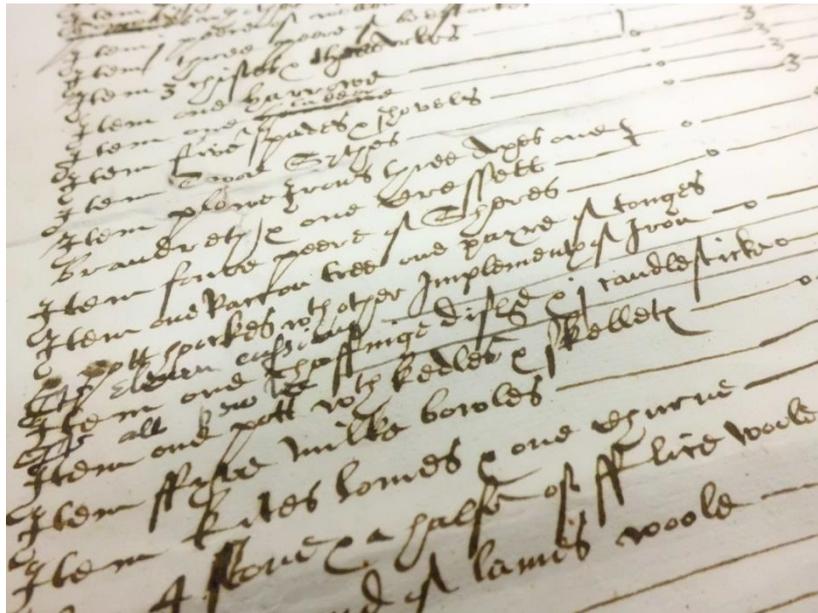


Figure 31. A harrow, plough, irons and an axe are listed in Thomas Bocking of Hope's inventory in 1635. Photo: Bill Bevan, courtesy of Lichfield Record Office.

Working tools

There were 31 types of tool with a range of functions.

Tools for cultivation included mattocks, pickaxes, crowbars, hoes, spades and shovels along with pitchforks, scythes, sickles and rakes. None of these occurred in any number in the group. Slightly more common were axes which were listed 7 times. Spades came in many varieties with different functions from a straightforward delving spade to turf and peat spades. The function of a pricking spade is obscure, but possibly was used for pricking out seedlings.

Also often listed were hand tools, the commonest of which was an auger (nogar) (6), but also hammers, mallets, chisels, saws and adzes. There were 4 inventories with ladders but only one wheelbarrow.

Horse gear

As noted above, horses were recorded in 59 inventories. It is surprising therefore that relatively little equipment relating to them was identified. Saddles were noted in 15 inventories: 3 saddles, 11 pack saddles, 4 cart saddles, 3 hackney saddles and one side saddle, with several sorts of saddles sometimes listed in the same inventory. The hackney horse was valued for riding at this time. The side saddle belonged to the wealthy Jane Savage (1604 Castleton). Also listed was a variety of equipment such as bridles, wantoos (ropes for attaching objects to the horse), garths and surcingles.

Ironwork associated with fires and cooking

Apart from the cooking tools and pots detailed above, there was a variety of ironwork associated with fires. Notably there were rackentails or rackentines (15) which were bars that hung from a gallows tree in the chimney from which to hang pots, brandreths or brandirons (14) which were gridirons or trivets for supporting pans in the fire, landirons for supporting wood in the fire and the similar but smaller cobert (1) which may have also been used for supporting a spit, 7 pot hooks and 7 spits. There were 21 inventories with tongs, although, from the context in the inventories in which tools were grouped together often with a function

in common, it may be that tongs were used for other purposes as well as in the fire. Backstones or baking stones (6) were flat stone or iron plates on which to bake oatcakes.

Professional tools

There were few obviously professional tools other than the smithy tools belonging to Andrew and Richard Hallam or Hallom (1591 & 1599 respectively) whose family were blacksmiths in Castleton. They possessed smithy tools, a smithy hammer and an anvil or stythie.

Roger Harrison (see above) owned the only listed millstone.

Leases

The precise status of testators' land holdings, or the type of leases held, is obscure in most cases. In the sixteenth century, most land was held in some form of customary tenure, of which there were several models, but of which copyhold leases, the holding of land according to local manorial custom, were the commonest (Overton 1996 p151). Practices varied but, in general, copyhold leases were held for a small annual rent but a large entry fine was imposed on, say, inheritance.

As noted above, inventories did not list property, that is land and houses, which were dealt with under common law. Leases were listed in 28 inventories and, as far as can be judged, were appraised on the basis of the length left to run. No leases were mentioned before 1590. The reason for this is unclear; it may be that it was just not the practice for assessors to include leases before this date.

They were often of considerable value, forming the bulk of the estate. The largest by far, "the Reversion of A Lease beinge the kings farme", belonged to Jane Savage (1604 Castleton) with a valuation of £220.0.0 out of a total estate of £320.84. At the other end of the scale "one lease of towe (two) Landes in Marstons" by Thomas Morten (Hope) was valued at £1.0.0 in 1629, out of an estate with a net worth of £6.0.6.

In other cases it is often unclear as to whether testators actually owned the land listed, although it is suggestive that they did. As noted before, it was not the custom to list owned land in an inventory. Robert Mellor (1610 Castleton) owned "the Right & tytle of all suche grounds as he heyld". John Needham's inventory separately listed "ground" and the "Rendition of a lease" both worth £5.0.0. Thurstan Nall's (1591 Castleton) inventory detailed his farms worth £13.6.8, without any mention of a lease. Thomas Creswell (1623 Castleton) was owed rent at death and John Eyre (1567 Hope), gentleman, owned land in 3 villages and received rent from 7 men.

In this group of documents there are only two mentions of a copyhold, and perhaps this old form of land tenure was becoming obsolete by this time. George Grant (1631 Hope) had in his inventory the "Reverssion of one coppie" at £1.10.0, as well as the reversion of a lease at £2.0.0. The wealthy Ottiwell Smith (1638 Hope) listed both copyholds and freeholds in his will. There is no mention in any will of the payment of a fine or heriot to the lord of the manor on the death of the copyholder.

Overall, these documents do not give an accurate image of the types of tenancies and land holding prevalent in North Derbyshire, although a mixture was usual in England at this time (Overton 1996, p 35).

Debts

Overall, 69% of inventories listed debts, either owed or owing to their estates, or both. In the large majority these debts were recorded as cash. In a very few instances, physical items, usually lead, were recorded as being owed, and sometimes not valued.

The sums owed to and owed by estates are summarised as follows:

	% with debts owed/owing	Owing to estate (£.s.d)		Owed by estate (£.s.d)	
		Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Hope	61.5	2.0.0	129.17.11	0.3.4	47.18.0
Castleton	74.1	0.6.8	113.2.2	1.4.7	400.0.0+

Figure 32 Table of Debts

Comparison between Hope and Castleton

It is difficult to make a safe comparison between the two villages because Hope's inventories only start in 1620. In a better analysis, review of Castleton debts between 1620 and 1650 shows that, of 13 inventories, 92.3% had debts to or from the estates outstanding at death, compared to Hope's 61.5%. The total amounts owed were also greater in Castleton. Other than suggesting that there was a more entrepreneurial spirit in Castleton than in Hope, there is no obvious explanation.

Banking

Some individuals were prominent money dealers, either or both lending or borrowing, and small-scale banking should be regarded as an occupation in some cases. Rates of interest were never recorded either in wills or inventories, although there are references to "interest" in a list of qualities of property in some wills. It can be assumed that interest was payable on the loans that feature so prominently in these documents. From 1571, the maximum rate of interest allowed was 10% per annum but this was reduced to 8% in 1624, although charging any interest at all was regarded as a matter of conscience and remained a moral issue.

There was no external source of cash in these communities. People relied on access to land mostly through leases, labour usually on their own account, and excess production and eventually cash, for borrowing and lending.

Seasonal variations in lending and borrowing

Both borrowing and lending were commoner in the winter and spring and less in the summer and autumn. This reflected the cash flow through the agricultural cycle with the need to buy seed in the spring and, perhaps, livestock, combined with the well recognised dearth of resources in the spring.

Large debts

Analysis of the 20 estates with either large debts (>£20) or large numbers of debtors or creditors (>10) shows that nearly 3 times more in this group both borrowed and lent money than the average for all estates. In other words, this is a particularly entrepreneurial subset of testators implying a positively adopted lifestyle, practice or even business.

Elizabeth Saunderson (1636 Hope) deserves particular mention as she lent £129.17.11 to a total of 46 people, without any recorded borrowing, by far the largest lender of all. Thomas Bockinge (1615 Castleton) was exceptional in lending £113.12.2 to 35 people, yet owed £268.98 to a further 23.

Estates in debt

As noted before, apparent indebtedness does not take into account the whole of a person's estate as the inventory never valued the testator's house or land. It is also likely that an estate's outgoing debts were not listed in every case (Hey 2004, p221). However here, taken at face value, substantial outgoing debts meant that several inventories showed estates that were in overall debt at the testators' death. Of all the inventories, 5 ended in that state with the addition of William Eyre (1597 Castleton), most of whose debts were to his son and, if that debt is discounted, his estate would not have been in the red. Of the rest, two estates were left in serious negative balance. Thomas Furnice (1620 Hope) left £42.0.0 of debt, with little in the way of personal possessions (£5.18.0). The outstandingly indebted estate was Robert Hallam's (1641 Castleton), although there is limited information about this. He left an estate in overall negative balance of at least £261.17.0. One senses the frustration of his appraisers who were unable to quantify the extent of his debt; after a very detailed inventory it merely states: "And his debts are £400 and upwards."

Women

There are hints that women had a positive role to play in family life at this time. They were clearly respected by their families, and in several cases were appointed executors, sometimes to the exclusion of male family members. In Castleton, there were 23 executrices, of which 18 were wives, and in Hope two. At 27%, by a large margin, compared with other national surveys, this is the lowest proportion of wives appointed either solely or jointly as executrices (Erikson 1993, p158). In Humphrey Furniss's (1610 Castleton) and Edmund Joll's (1559 Castleton) wills, both their wives and daughters were appointed and Richard Slack (1581 Castleton) appointed his mother as executrix.

Having noted this, however, there is no doubt that the law discriminated against women. On marriage, their property was forfeit to their new husbands by the Law of Coverture in which the husband and wife were, in effect, one person: the husband. Wives were unable to enter into legal contracts or keep a salary. In some of the documents here, the husband exercised his discretion in willing his wife's property back to her although, provided she did not marry again, she was entitled to a third of her husband's estate during her lifetime (Hey 2004, p 217). In contrast, however, a widower kept her whole dowry, his "curtesy", provided there was a child from the marriage (Erikson 1993, p25). Women often inherited more than the law required, although their inheritance was usually just for their maintenance. There was a tendency for the proportion left to widows to decrease with the increasing wealth of their dead husbands (Erikson 1993, p19).

This review is mainly not concerned with the inheritance of land, very rarely mentioned in wills and never in inventories, other than the value of leases. Land was dealt with in common law through the principle of primogeniture, whereby it was inherited by the sons, and, only in their absence, by daughters.

Women were often strikingly depersonalised in these documents, sometimes referred to as the wife (or uxor) of a man, omitting her first name and, often, in a list of creditors and debtors, the women's names came at the end.

There were seven women in the two villages that had a recorded inventory, as well as one with only a will and another with only a letter of administration. All were widows except Katherine Shemett (1577 Castleton) for whom there is little information. As none of the married women owned property of any kind, they left no wills and there was no purpose for an inventory.

It is noteworthy that so few of these documents related to women's estates. Presumably, roughly as many men as women died in this period although the death rate in and around childbirth was high. For those that survived to widowhood, they inherited a good part, if not most, of their husbands' estates and died with significant estates themselves. In many cases the widows' inheritances were entailed by their husbands' wills after their deaths, and probably this is the reason for the dearth of documentation. There are tentative clues as to the origin of these women's wealth in only 3 cases; they suggest that they had increased the value of their estates by the time of their own deaths, and reduced their inherited indebtedness.

The wealthiest estate of all the 87 with inventories was left by Jane Savage (1604 Castleton) and the third wealthiest by Elizabeth Saunderson (1636 Hope). Jane Savage's wealth resided largely in the value of a single lease worth £220.0.0, whereas Elizabeth Saunderson's wealth was in the value of the debts owed to her estate, £129.17.11 in 32 debts from 46 creditors. Overall, with the exception of the latter estate, fewer women than men had any debts.

Discussion

This review gives a good picture of the agrarian society of north-west Derbyshire of the period. It omits information about the poorest members of the community and gives only a hint of those on the lowest rung of the nobility, the gentlemen.

Strikingly, the documents convey a portrait of a very stable society in which little changed during one of the most turbulent centuries in our history. Not only is there little reference to the profound effects of the Reformation, but there is no hint of the Civil War at the end of the study period.

This study took in a period during which, on a national scale, there was a shift away from purely subsistence farming towards growing for the market, mostly because of the growth in the population, especially in the towns. However, here, it seems that the isolation of the area meant that the economy was still mainly concerned with self-sufficiency. Only 8 inventories showed no animals, although the majority of the rest had only small numbers of their own livestock, often ten or less cattle and as few as two sheep. A number of households had small numbers of poultry. Further, all classes of people owned at least one animal, including the vicars, the teacher and the blacksmiths.

Much could be sought to inform the historian of the economic upheavals of the time, but, again, there is not much to show for them. Nationally, there was serious and persistent inflation, severe deprivation caused by enclosures, disease and population growth. There were only hints of the shift away from arable to pastoral practice associated throughout the country with enclosure: fewer draught animals, few ploughs and harrows, and copyhold

leases, which were vulnerable to landlords reclaiming land to enclose it, were rare. In this particular locality, with its extensive upland areas, notably the Upper Derwent Valley and Hope Woodlands, as well as valley-bottom fertile land, the picture is one of a mixed agrarian economy, which was slowly changing towards grazing animals in the hundred years of the review (Bevan 2004, p107 et seq.).

This is interesting given the small quantities of pottery found in the test pits in the two villages (Bevan and Curtis 2013). Approximately 5% of the total pottery excavated came from the centuries covered by the wills and inventories. This lack cannot be readily explained by a single factor such as sheer bad luck, middening strategies or later ground disturbance, though later disturbance and tarmacking has occurred over the historical core of Hope. Could the lack of ceramic vessels in the inventories suggest low levels of pottery use in households who favoured metal, wood, skins or other organic materials for cooking, storage and serving? Was pottery a relatively high status product or something so commonplace that it did not deserve mention in inventories? Given the other household goods listed, including chaff beds, sheets and one instance of candles, it would seem strange that ceramic vessels were omitted from inventories where present.

Who were the people that populate these documents? Some feel tantalisingly close and even familiar: the hard-working and proud husbandmen ensuring their families' future after their deaths, the entrepreneurs who put their estates at risk by borrowing and lending, the blacksmith and weaver, the schoolmaster and vicar, and the strong women who not only kept their families going after the deaths of their husbands but increased their prosperity.

There was a striking interconnectedness and mutual reliance demonstrated in these documents, both at a family level and through small-scale business.

These people did not include the lowest in society. The servants benefited from their masters' generosity but did not make wills themselves. Where are the labourers in the fields? Most of these people were their own labourers, milked their own cattle, sheared their own sheep and ploughed their land, rented for the most part from the wealthy whose wills were not recorded in Lichfield.