THE ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTOURS OF AN EARLY-MODERN SMALL TOWN: LOUGHBOROUGH, 1540–1640

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A major stimulus for a detailed investigation of the role of small towns in British and European local societies occurred some score years ago under the aegis of Peter Clark and this initiative has subsequently bore tremendous fruit, providing insights into most aspects of small-town life in early-modern England. Perhaps one facet which has not been as well examined for small towns as for larger urban places is the phenomenology of the small urban world. Recent attention to the visual, spatial, auditory and experiential small worlds of early-modern England make an exploration of the small town desirable. Such a dissection of quotidian life in early-modern Loughborough cautions us against being too adamant about dichotomies between urban and rural, but equally not to exaggerate the extent to which early-modern small towns were merely appendages of the countryside. As is so often the case, complexity was the main characteristic.

One strand of historical research is concerned with the ‘experience’ of people in their past worlds, often in the contexts of society or politics. This recent revival of interest in phenomenology has stimulated a corresponding engagement with the lived experience, the process of ‘being’ in the (small) world. In turn, that emphasis has included examinations of contemporaries’ sensory perception of their environments, both auditory and visual. For the most part, however, those

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1 I would like very much to acknowledge the kindness of the baristas in Costa in Loughborough who permitted me to sit undisturbed whilst I reflected. My gratitude is, of course, extended to the staff of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and to Dr Mary Robertson of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

2 P. Griffiths, A. Fox and S. Hindle, eds, The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England (Basingstoke, 1996), and their contributors consider social and political aspects. For fuller considerations, S. J. Charlesworth, A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience (Cambridge, 2000); from the philosophical perspective, M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception trans. C. Smith (Paris, 1945; repr. London, 2003), which is more apposite here than the original contributions of first Husserl and then Heidegger.

3 The meaning here is something approaching Heidegger’s ‘unthinking comportment’: acting whilst not being aware that we are acting (in and through the lived world); H. L. Dreyfus, Being-in-the-world. Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I (Boston, 1991), 94.

4 Bruce R. Smith, The Acoustic World of Early Modern England. Attending to the O-Factor (Chicago, 1999), e.g., 47: ‘People dwelling in a particular soundscape know the world in fundamentally different ways from people dwelling in another landscape’; 48 ‘an ecology of speech’.
experiences have been elucidated for larger urban places and spaces. Efforts were made by early-modern authorities to mitigate the worst experiences of urban life, which have been assiduously described and interpreted. Demographic increase, migration into towns and the consequent problem of the poor generated their concerns about the urban environment. This urban magistracy attempted to counter the impact of the urban environment, perhaps as a strategy to pacify the disenchanted in a ‘pursuit of stability’. Contemporaries were thus well aware of and concerned about the urban environment.

By and large, there has been an inclination to address issues of the urban condition in the larger urban places, usually incorporated boroughs, often county boroughs, partly because of superior information. The implicit assumption has

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also been that in small towns there existed a less deleterious environment, assuming that they contained some of the more salubrious qualities associated with the countryside; they have indeed been considered as an integral part of the rural. Contemporaries acknowledged those differences between dense urban and some types of rural (but not all) environments, particularly in their reflections upon the causes of contagious disease.7

What exactly, however, was the urban environment of small towns like?8 The description has hitherto been rather generalised, directed to all small towns as a uniform category. We still lack, perhaps, a detailed investigation, which brings a magnifying glass to bear on the landscape, ecology and environment of an early-modern small town. From the outset too, we need to acknowledge that the category of the small town is an amalgam of heterogeneous places, with different characteristics. Loughborough, examined here, reflects the nature of some small towns, but not, for example, the industrialising Sheffield or Birmingham, or, in its own county, Lutterworth, Melton Mowbray, Ashby de la Zouch and the other small, market towns.9 It has, moreover, its idiosyncratic elements, but those should not deter us from a more detailed scrutiny of this single urban place to illuminate a more general urban experience.

In the late nineteenth century, the parish of Loughborough contained 5,460 acres – a not inconsiderable size for a parish in the heart of the lowland Midlands.10 At its centre was an urban precinct which had evolved during the middle ages, perhaps from the twelfth century. This urban centre remained an unincorporated town until towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is indeed this characteristic – a small town embedded within a large single parish – which makes Loughborough an intriguing place to consider. The parish, furthermore, consisted of polyfocal, dispersed settlement with hamlets in Knighthorpe, Woodthorpe and Shelthorpe as well as large gentry houses.

**A WATERY ENVIRONMENT**

Meandering around the parish, the River Soar remained a valuable resource for lord and tenants, sustaining the meadows and osier beds with their willows. It is not surprising then that the articles inquired of the tenants at the end of the sixteenth century investigated the attributes of the river: ‘Item wheather is the Ryver or water streame called the Soare wholly to the ladie of this manour, yea or no, and yf it bee, than howe farre Doeth her streame goe, where begynneth yt, and

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where endeth yt.’ This article – 19 – was followed by two further questions about
who should receive the profits of the reed beds and osiers and what leases had
been made of these commodities.11

Clumps of willows thus pervaded the banks of the river and the streams,
represented in the local place-names Wythibuskes, Thorp Wylewes and le three
Willowes.12 The bridgemasters accumulated a small income every year from the
sale of willows, e.g. 10s. and 6s. respectively in 1603 and 1606.13 More
substantially, in 1607, Clement Baken proffered £1 for willows.14 On the other
hand, the management of the willows incurred some costs: willows were cut by
two men for two days for 1s. 2d. each in 1603; another man was employed to fell
and set willows for the same time and then for ‘Ramping the willow set’.15 In
1612, Robert Hall was allowed half a mark (6s. 8d.) for setting willows.16 The
management of the osier beds thus involved pollarding and re-planting of this
resource which inhabited the fluvial boundary and the intersecting streams and
rivulets of the parish.

This location in the floodplain of the Soar furnished ample meadowland
within this parish dissected by streams. Meadow was particularly valuable to the
lord. This resource was leased at 13s. 4d. per acre which accounted for an income
of £56 13s. 4d. each year, supplemented by the £14 7s. 0d. annual receipt from
meadow leased at 5s. per acre.17 A rental of c. 1550 thus enumerated acres of
meadow lying in plots and closes in Stanford Way, le planko es (Stanford Planks),
Northmedowe and Northholmes (all principal locations of meadow), in Towlos,
the Overend of Tapsach, Oxlease, Tottmershe, Cotehorne, Croxton, Barrettes,
Greneholme, Hatchett, Southmedowe, Loughborough mede and Thackholme,
and, illustrating the drainage of areas transected by streams, Thorpediche and
Newdiche.18 Additional allusions to the aqueous nature of the parish occurred in
other manorial records: meadow in Stanford planks (plank bridges); meadow at
Stanford ford; meadow near Armitage (Hermitage) Poole; meadow in a furlong
shooting down to Somer Poole; meadow in a furlong called Tetbridge (the Tet
bridge); four acres of meadow in Swans Nest; meadow in Tamarshes; five acres of
land near the slate bridge; a wong of land near Burley Water Gate; a rood butting
on le three Willowes; a garden in Churchgate called the Duckhole; Woodbrooke;
Churchgate alias Bruokegate; and so on.19

11 Huntington Library, San Marino (HL), Hastings Manuscripts (HAM) Box 25, folder 3, p. 8
[paginated, not foliated].
12 HL HAM Box 25, folder 5; Box 25, folder 9, p. 47.
13 Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) DE667/112, fos 9v–10r, 20v.
14 ROLLR DE667/112, fo. 25r.
15 ROLLR DE667/112, fo. 10v.
16 ROLLR DE667/112, fo. 42v.
17 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, pp. 27–8: ‘Medowe Letter yerlie for xiijs. iiijd. every acre’ and ‘Medowe
Letter at vs. the acre by my Lords lettres & Commandment’.
18 HL HAM Box 24, folder 4.
19 HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, pp. 51, 109, 115; HAM Box 25, folder 4, pp. 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19, 26;
HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 2, 11, 18–20, 44, 47, 52, 59, 89, 135, 136, 149. For Churchgate alias
Brookegate, HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 135.
The watery environment is reflected also in the numerous smaller bridges, especially plank crossings, which transected the parish at Burley Watergate, on the way to Shelthorpe, in the Rushes, at Swangate, Armitage (Hermitage), towards Normanton, Ten Acre bridge, Woodbrook bridge, Tedd (Tet) bridge and Slat bridge. In 1613, 10s. 2d. was committed to replacing the plank bridge by a stone bridge at the end of the Rushes. Maintenance of the bridges was complemented by the scouring of ditches and the cropping of willows.

Constant attention was required for the lesser bridges in the parish and even in the urban centre. In 1603, the old bridge in the Pockey Sike was leased out. Shortly thereafter, William Clemenson received 6d. for lifting this bridge and scouring the ditches beneath it, confirming that it was a wooden construction. A full £1 was earned by Robert Wilson in the same year for planks, posts and repairing bridges. With his two sons, John Jesson expended two days laying planks in the Moor and repairing those at Burley Watergate, for 23s. In 1605, the same workers returned to the Watergate to renew some planks for 3s. 4d. Another 14s. was expended in 1605 for Lambley and his man to maintain plank bridges, whilst George Cawdwell received 2s. 6d. for the same work at other wooden bridges. A mere 2d. was offered to Thomas Wheilewright then to pin boards at the plank bridges. Two days of work on Stanford planks in 1608 incurred a cost of £1, whilst wood was required for the Hermitage bridge in 1610. The bridge over Woodbrook consisted of a single plank supplied at a cost of 10s. in 1608.

It was the bridge in the Rushes, however, which demanded constant repair and was the most complicated structure in the urban centre. Richard Cranwell, indeed, committed a trespass by blocking up one of the arches of this bridge in the Rushes. The character of this precinct was reflected in its name, of course, but also indicated by the repetitive scouring of the ditches there. In 1603, George Webster, Humphrey Ollyver, Thomas Bulworke and John Cowper spent two days each scouring the Rushes for 1s. 4d. each. They returned frequently to remedy the silting. Robert Lambley committed two days to acquire stone for the bridge in the Rushes and the causeway in The Swan. Another plank was delivered to traverse Rushes brook at a cost of 5s. 6d. Then another two loads of stone were conveyed to the Rushes bridges. In 1608, yet another plank bridge was placed there. Five years later, new stone bridges were constructed at the end of the Rushes at a cost of 10s. 2d. During that time, further scouring of ditches, new diking and ditching was necessary at Pockey Sike, in the Rushes and on the Moor.

The watery environment dissected the urban central area of Loughborough. The cottage of the late Joan Fowler was situated next to the bridge in the Bigging on the corner of Dead Lane and the Rushes. When John and Clement Fowler made arrangements about the copyhold tenure of a cottage in the Bigging, it was described as located next to the bridge (iuxta pontem) at the corner of the Bigging.

20 ROLLR DE667/112, fo. 45r.
21 ROLLR DE667/112, fos 9v, 10v, 11r, 17v, 18r, 28v, 29r, 33r, 36r.
22 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 23.
23 ROLLR DE 667/112, fos 10v, 11r, 21v, 22r, 29r, 42r, 45r.
24 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 10; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 11.
and the market place.\textsuperscript{25} Another cottage in the Bigging surrendered by George Sareson was situated beyond the stone bridge across the stream there.\textsuperscript{26}

**THE URBAN CENTRE**

Before 1540, Leland described the town: ‘yn largeness and good building next to Leyrecester of all the markette tounes in the shire, and hath in it a 4 faire strates or mo well pavid...’; Camden professed it ‘the largest and best-built town in the county next to Leicester’, according to Nichols; immediately before the fire (1622), Burton adjudged it to contain ‘many fair buildings and a large church’.\textsuperscript{27}

The four streets to which Camden referred probably comprised Highgate, Churchgate, Baxtergate and the Market Place, to which we should add Bigging, a short, but commercially important street.\textsuperscript{28} Camden probably omitted Sparrow Hill, Hallgate (now Pinfold Street), Woodgate, perhaps in his estimation peripheral to the main urban area, but which became an integral part of the built-up centre during the sixteenth century, if not before. The somewhat marginal character of Hallgate is reflected in the location of the common pinfold there.\textsuperscript{29}

The rental of c. 1550 identified the formation of these streets, for it enumerates the *Markett Sted*, Baxtergate, Kirkegate or Churchgate, Haltgate, Byging, Higegate or Hiegate, Woodgate, Sparrowbill, Swynelane, Aumbrey Gappe, Fenellstrete, Lesterlane and (one mention only) Huckster [Row] (see Fig. 2).\textsuperscript{30}

How should we consider this multiplex of streets in comparison with the topography of the early-modern village? In one sense the difference is, indeed, simply one of quantity, of the number of streets. Loughborough consisted of more streets than the normative village with a main street and a corresponding backlane. The multiplex nature composed, nonetheless, complexity, a difference which heightened sensitivity to the change of place and space. The activity on those streets, moreover, enhanced the sense of urban experience (see below).

**EXPANSION**

Since Loughborough had developed as an unincorporated town in the later middle ages, without the privilege of borough status, the boundaries of the urban centre were ecological, not political or institutional: i.e. there were no official boundaries within which the town was constrained.

\textsuperscript{25} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{26} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 157: *ultra pontem lapidem [sic] scitum trans torrentem ibidem* (beyond the stone bridge put there over the stream).
\textsuperscript{27} J. Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* (4 vols, 1795–1815), iii, 889.
\textsuperscript{28} For the occasional reference to the Bigging by confusion as (le) Bigend: HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 2, 21, for example.
\textsuperscript{29} HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 14: a croft against the Conygre and common pinfold; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 7: a tenement and croft in Hallgate next to the common pinfold.
\textsuperscript{30} HL HAM Box 24, folder 4: *Rental maneri de Loughborough percella [sic] possessio nnum nuper Ducis Suffolk.*
During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the urban precinct was expanding but very slowly. The previously unpopulated Rushes were gradually brought into habitation. The area had been acknowledged as the limit of the built-up area: ‘The Townend cald the Rushes’. \(^{31}\) Several tenants held crofts in the Rushes. \(^{32}\) In the rental of c. 1550, the only mention of the Rushes described it as a close. \(^{33}\) Some parishioners were just beginning to exploit this area for housing. Nicholas Caldwell had constructed a house in part of his croft in the Rushes. \(^{34}\) There too John Saywell had introduced a house on his croft. \(^{35}\)

The appointment of a streetmaster for Fennell Street indicates the development of this periphery of the town. On occasion, one of the streetmasters was defined as responsible for Fennell Street and Dead Lane. The latter way had been in existence, as one might expect, since at least the early fourteenth century, probably representing a lyke wake route bringing dead bodies from the parish

\(^{31}\) HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 15.
\(^{32}\) HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 11, for example; Box 25, folder 5, p. 13, for example.
\(^{33}\) HL HAM Box 24, folder 4.
\(^{34}\) HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 11, 27.
\(^{35}\) HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, p. 25.
towards Churchgate.\textsuperscript{36} Parts of Dead Lane remained rural at the end of the sixteenth century: Thomas Barrett, for example, had a croft in the Lane.\textsuperscript{37}

In other directions, waste was being colonised for new building. Robert Hall, for example, constructed a dwelling house (\textit{domus mansionalis}) on the waste near Fishpool Head.\textsuperscript{38} It might have been this dwelling house built on the lady's waste next to Fishpool Head with an adjacent parcel of waste which were surrendered by John Hall in 1608.\textsuperscript{39} This location had previously marked the western edge of the urban area, consisting of waste land.\textsuperscript{40} Nicholas Henshawe still retained a croft at 'Fishpole gate' at the end of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{41} He soon, however, erected a cottage and barn at Fishpool Head.\textsuperscript{42} In the surveys of the early seventeenth century, domestic buildings at Fishpool Head were occupied by William Jackson.\textsuperscript{43} James Whatton surrendered one of his copyholds there to the use of his son and two other lives; this tenure consisted of a parcel of waste ground at Fishpool Head with two bays of new building, the waste containing merely 81 feet by 46 feet. It was, indeed, adjacent to another piece of waste there which James retained, on which he had also erected two bays of building.\textsuperscript{44} About the same time, Edward Palmer renewed his copyhold tenure of a parcel at Fishpool Head, once a waste toft, now with two cottages erected on it.\textsuperscript{45}

Another location being developed was Aumbry Gap, appended to Hallgate. William Sandes alienated a cottage and garden \textit{in le Amerygapp}.\textsuperscript{46} Another cottage nearby was held by the brothers, Ralph and Robert Wright.\textsuperscript{47} The tenement occupied by William Banckes in right of his wife, Bridget, was described as at 'Ambrie gap in Hallgate'.\textsuperscript{48} In 1606, Henry Marriott surrendered a tenement at 'Ambrey gape in Hallgate'.\textsuperscript{49}

Frequent mentions were made to Leicester Lane where cottages were being erected. The location was often described as at the town end: 'Towne end at Leicester lane'.\textsuperscript{50} A cottage was in the tenure there of John and Richard Maynard, sons of Ralph, described as at the town end at Leicester Lane.\textsuperscript{51} Another cottage was tenanted by Helen Fowler.\textsuperscript{52} Cottages in Leicester Lane in the surveys of the

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Report on the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings Esq.}, vol. I (Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1928), 80 [447] land in a lane called 'Dedlane' [t.Edw II?]; HL HAM Box 20, folder 4 [late fourteenth-century rental] referring to a croft in 'le Dedlane'.

\textsuperscript{37} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{38} HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, p. 105; HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{39} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{40} HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 6; HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 9, 15.

\textsuperscript{41} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{42} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{43} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{44} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{45} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{46} HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{47} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{48} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{49} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{50} HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{51} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{52} HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 5.
early seventeenth century were in the tenure of Nicholas Reinoldes.\textsuperscript{53} The status of Leicester Lane was reflected in the terms of the surrender of the cottage there by James Whatton to take a new copyhold term, for the building was described as being situated in a small lane (\textit{parva venella}) called Leicester Lane.\textsuperscript{54}

Some building was being developed also along \textit{le Milne Lane}, as evidenced by the cottage, curtilage, backside and garden held in copyhold tenure by Robert Barfoote in the early seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{55} It was here that the seigniorial malt mill was located.\textsuperscript{56} On the other hand, waste ground also remained here in this marginal location.\textsuperscript{57} The existence of \textit{Rotten Rowe} suggests an insalubrious part of the town, perhaps a location of mean cottages, but it remains an enigma, rarely mentioned in the surveys or copyhold transactions. At the end of the sixteenth century there was a building of three bays and a plot of land there and two tenements under a single roof - but those are the only allusions to this street.\textsuperscript{58}

The expansion in all these peripheral locations was achieved almost exclusively by the building of cottages rather than larger buildings. In 1619, John Newton took the copyhold for three lives in six cottages with their gardens and orchards in the Rushes. It is probable that the Newtons were investing in this location and in particular in its cottages. The second and third lives in this copyhold were reserved for Thomas and John, sons of Hugh Newton of London, pewterer. Some eight years previously, Richard Newton had acquired the copyhold for three lives in a cottage and curtilage in Fennell Street, again with two remainder lives for John and Hugh. Two years previously, in 1609, the elder Hugh, the pewterer of London, invested in the copyhold tenure of three cottages in Churchgate (Kirkgate). His initial investment, it seems, had involved a cottage near Burley Park in 1606.\textsuperscript{59} This external capital finance is interesting, but as significant is the erection of cottages on the periphery of the built-up area indicative of the expansion of the town.

Another reflection of the recent construction of these cottages is the leasing of some of them for terms of 21 years by the lord rather than in copyhold tenure. So a cottage in Fennell Street was leased for this term to William Heyne in 1614.\textsuperscript{60} Cottages with their gardens in the Rushes were granted on the same terms to Richard Peale, Nicholas Phillips, Rowland Arnold, William Wallis, Thomas Fowler, Thomas Else, Richard Heathie and William Dicke, all also in 1614.\textsuperscript{61} Several cottages in Fishpool Head were similarly leased for terms of 21 years in 1614–15.\textsuperscript{62} Some cottages in Woodgate, an older-established street, were also

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{53} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 12.
\bibitem{54} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 39, 173, 196, 201.
\bibitem{55} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 50.
\bibitem{56} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 6, 37, 62.
\bibitem{57} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 37, 62.
\bibitem{58} HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, p. 106; HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 36.
\bibitem{59} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 13.
\bibitem{60} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 15.
\bibitem{61} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 15–17.
\bibitem{62} HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 17–19.
\end{thebibliography}
leased for this term of years, suggesting their recent construction. In total, 24 cottages, including those in Fennell Street (one), the Rushes (nine), Woodgate (four) and Fishpool Head (six), were leased out for this term of years rather than in copyhold, suggesting their recent construction on the edge of the urban area. Here then was exhibited residential segregation within the urban environment, the poorer inhabitants relegated to the periphery of the urban entity, whilst the more affluent congregated in the centre. Evidenced, moreover, is the dynamic aspect of this differentiation: the expansion of the built area through the construction of cottages at the margin.

THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The introduction of the offices of streetmasters in the late sixteenth century constituted an effort to improve the urban precinct. Like the fieldmasters, the streetmasters were charged with presenting their bills or presentments at each of the views of frankpledge. By 1607, each street was supervised by two streetmasters: two each for Marketstead, Churchgate, Highgate, Baxtergate, Sparrow Hill, Fennell Street, Hallgate, Woodgate and Bigging. By the next year, the streetmasters for Bigging also became responsible for the Rushes, reflecting the development of that area. The evolution of the office in the late sixteenth century denotes an enhanced interest in maintaining a salubrious centre. The officers were variously designated in the Latin of the court as escatores vicorum, guardiani vicorum, custodes vicorum and supervisores viarum. Their presentments were intended to eliminate nuisances in the central streets and to ensure that tenants in the inner urban area performed their obligation to maintain the street in front of their houses free from obstructions.

Thus several tenants were presented in 1608 for failure to clean (mundare) the street in front of their doors. Failure by the streetmasters to make their presentments was regarded as a serious default: each was fined 10s. in 1608 for failing to present inmates and landlords at the previous manorial court. Some streetmasters probably had an unenviable task: James Slacke, constantly appointed for the marketstead, was frequently amerced for failing to maintain the cleanliness of le beast markett, le markettsted and le backlane. The reason may

63 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 19–20.
65 HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, pp. 60, 62, 91, 93, 96: Et modo hoc venerunt <predictos> omnes supervisores tam Camporum quam Stratorum et [sic] et protulerunt billas suas. HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 3 (1607), 93 (1608), 124 (1609) (Hallgate known here as Pinfoldgate), 156 (now called Gardiani Vicorum; the Rushes included also Bigging and Fishpool the market place); HAM Box 26, folder 1 (1625). The changes in the naming of the locations represents the expansion of the town along Fennell Street, Sparrow Hill and the Rushes.
66 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 21.
67 For their presentments, for example, HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 4, 22.
68 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 94.
69 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 70.
have been the difficulty of ensuring its cleanliness as much as any dilatoriness on his part. Streetsmasters were ‘elected’ in the view of frankpledge and made their presentments at the two views at Easter and in October. These officers were charged with making presentments about obstructions, most notably muck heaps, and failure to clean streets (although tenants had an obligation to maintain the area in front of their own buildings). In particular, it was important to preserve the cleanliness around the Fishpool, the watering place. By the early seventeenth century, 18 men each year were required for this office.

Some of the streets were paved, unlike in rural villages, although it is probable that only short lengths of the principal thoroughfares were metalled. Robert Barfotte was indicatively amerced for not collecting stones to repair the ways in the town centre.

COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS

Whilst the built-up area expanded incrementally at its margins and attempts were made to maintain the orderliness of the existing main thoroughfares, the urban centre also became modified. In the market place was consolidated Hucksters Row with its shops or officine. It seems probable that there was investment in the shops by the larger tenants, who yet did not occupy them or exploit them directly. At one point, for example, Margaret Villers held five shops, four of which were located in the marketstead. Three officine on the corner of Baxtergate and Hucksters Row were in the tenure of John Wolley. The ownership of some of these shops regularly changed hands. One shop with a chamber over came into the tenure of William Munke, but had previously been in the hands of John Reaper, then Robert Wollandes, and subsequently Bartholomew Tisley. The sequence of the names of the tenants suggests a fairly rapid transfer over a short period of time. The transformation formed by Hucksters Row as a distinct entity accords

70 For example, HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 71 (fined 8d.): for not cleaning and scouring these places. HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 107: James Slacke non mundavit stratum in foro; James Slacke non mundavit forum; also James Dawson non mundavit stratum suum (fines of 6d., 1s. and 1s.) (1608).

71 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 4: three men fined, amongst many others, for depositing muckheaps in Woodgate; p. 22. James Slacked did not pave the area by his door in the shambles (fine 1s. 8d.); Richard Fetherston did not scour the market place outside his door.

72 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 4, e.g. the amerement of Thomas Hough for leaving muckheaps in the common streets and in le Wattering place in the market stead; p. 22. Thomas Hough left a muckheap which caused a nuisance near le Wattering place at Fishpool Head (1s. fine). For the importance of the urban water supply, including its social function, M. S. R. Jenner, ‘From conduit community to commercial network: Water in London, 1500–1725’, in P. Griffiths and Jenner, eds, **Londinopolis. Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London** (Manchester, 2000), 250–72.

73 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 23.

74 HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, pp. 11, 28, 104, 105; HAM Box 25, folder 11, pp. 5, 7, 8, 10. A few shops had been enumerated in a rental of the late fourteenth century: HL HAM Box 20, folder 4.

75 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 2; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 7.

76 HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, p. 105.

77 HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, pp. 11, 30.
with the development of shops in the market places in other and larger urban centres which, in many cases, resulted in infilling in the marketstead.\footnote{A. Everitt, ‘The marketing of agricultural produce’, in J. Thirsk, ed., The Agrarian History of England and Wales Volume IV 1500–1640 (Cambridge, 1967), 480–6.}

The market place also contained, of course, those features emblematic of urban status, the high cross and the pillory. Three shops were described as situated around the high cross.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 5; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 2; HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 66.} Decorum around the cross, a symbol of the status of the town and market, was obligatory, so James Slacke was presented for not repairing the street in front of the cross.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 94.} Tenements and cottages were located next to the Colstrige or pillory.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 6; HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 6, 11.} Dorothy Mod and her daughter Bridget had a shop in the new market house.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 16.} Although the toll booth described in a late fourteenth-century rental had been converted to another use, the reference to a shop in the new house of the market implies that a new official building had been constructed.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 14, 19, for example.}  

At an earlier time, the market place had been divided into four precincts, representing the ironmongers, drapers, mercers and butchers.\footnote{HL HAM Box 20, folder 4.} That arrangement no doubt consisted of no more than stalls. By the sixteenth century, the butchers traded from shops and encroached on the street with pentices outside their shops. They were presented for opening their shop windows on the sabbath and erecting pentices on stone blocks into the street.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 94 \textit{(inde staciones aperte super lapides)}.}

We might surmise that these shops had developed as a specialised row within the market place. The area around the market, nevertheless, still contained a variety of buildings; even tenements and cottages are listed in the marketstead in the surveys.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 14, 19, for example.} Thomas Hallyman occupied a cottage there with a barn and garden; a tenement with a garden and orchard lay adjacent to the pillory in the market place.\footnote{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 11, 14.} The market area was undergoing a transitional development from the site of tenements (with appurtenant lands in the common fields) placed around an open trading area to a complex of interspersed tenements, cottages, gardens and shops.

The rentals through into the early seventeenth century divulge this mixed nature of the domestic buildings in the urban centre, messuages with appurtenant rural holdings intermingled with shops and labourers’ cottages. Perhaps an illustration from one of the transactions in land will suffice to indicate the messuages in the urban centre which housed the rural tenantry. In 1569, William Peche alias Proctor bargained and sold for £70 his rights in Boothes Farm in Churchgate with land and 20 acres of meadow.\footnote{Report on the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings I, 81 (453).}  

\footnotetext[79]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 5; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 2; HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 66.} 
\footnotetext[80]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 94.} 
\footnotetext[81]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 6; HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 6, 11.} 
\footnotetext[82]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 16.} 
\footnotetext[83]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 16.} 
\footnotetext[84]{HL HAM Box 20, folder 4.} 
\footnotetext[85]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 94 \textit{(inde staciones aperte super lapides)}.} 
\footnotetext[86]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 14, 19, for example.} 
\footnotetext[87]{HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, pp. 11, 14.} 
\footnotetext[88]{Report on the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings I, 81 (453).}
INNS

In the market place too was situated one of the large inns of the town: The George. To some extent, the agglomeration of inns in the central precinct constituted that status of building which communicated the urban in the built environment. The complex configuration of the buildings around the market place contributed to the sensation of the urban.

The George was held by George Ragge in customary tenure for a money rent and two capons, the latter diagnostic of customary rents. In the confusion of the re-granting of tenures, however, the inn was also reserved in free tenure to Nicholas Woollandes along with two shops formerly existing as four. The George had been bequeathed by Thomas Syston in his will of 1531 to his widow, Alice, for her life, with the remainder to his son, Robert, their constituting the two remaining lives in his copyhold for three lives (the customary tenure for tenements held of the manor of Loughborough). Syston was, in fact, primarily a yeoman farmer, described in his will indeed as a yeoman, with a farm in Thorpe Hawker in Dishley parish, and a copyhold house in Shepshed.

Inns functioned as a vitally important element in urban development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their position at the apex of drinking establishments owed much to their wider roles for hospitality. Urban inns expanded in size and function in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with considerable rebuilding appropriate to their new functions: a selective clientèle, stabling, and numerous chambers for guests. By this time, moreover, urban inns had become places of commerce and exchange. Their elite status is reflected in only 12% of drinking establishments in the nation in 1577 being classified as inns.

Two other inns were located in the Bigging: The Swan and The White Hart (signum Cervi). The Swan came into the tenure of William Webster and his two sons. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the White Hart was continuously in the tenure of William Hebbe and his family as copyhold for three lives, the lives varying with the fortunes of his family: first his wife and daughter Joyce, then his sons William and Henry. Numerous surrenders and admissions to this tenement, backwards and forwards, suggest that William was compelled to enter into several mortgages of the property. Before then, however, it had been in

89 HL HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 14.
90 In the absence of a formal town hall which was a symbol of urban authority: R. Tittler, Architecture and Power. The Town Hall and the English Urban Community c. 1500–1640 (Oxford, 1991).
91 HL HAM Box 25, folder 3, p. 24; HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 5; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 2 (the claim by Ragge to have been dispossessed by Woollandes).
92 ROLLR will 1531/36.
94 HL HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 15.
95 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 9; HAM Box 25, folder 5, p. 2; HAM Box 25, folder 9, pp. 37, 161, 167–9, 173, 175–6, 203–4.
the tenure of Nicholas Jenkenson, as described in the rental of c. 1550 (the *hospicium* called the White Harte). Jenkenson occupied it along with miscellaneous small parcels of land, comprising 7½ acres of meadow in Northemewedow, two acres of land in Burley Field, and three more in Salter Crofte, which illustrates the incipient separation of townsfolk from agriculturalists in the town and parish, for he did not occupy one of the standard rural holdings.\(^96\) In c. 1550, another inn (*hospicium*) existed in the town centre, Brittons House, the tenant of which was William Henshawe, who additionally held 17 acres of meadow and two acres of land.\(^97\) In these cases, the acquisition of meadow was no doubt associated with the function of ostler at the inns. The former Unycorne in Highgate had been converted into a messuage by Nicholas Henshawe, no doubt requiring that larger domestic accommodation which was commensurate with his status.\(^98\) Less frequent reference was made to the Crosskeys, which was enumerated as one of the free tenements in the rental of c. 1550, an inn (*hospicium*) occasioning an annual rent of £1 and in the tenure of John Bell.\(^99\)

**THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

In the late sixteenth century an attempt was made to value the manorial properties – mainly those held in copyhold.\(^100\) A survey bears marginal notes briefly describing the attributes of the properties and suggesting a valuation. Unfortunately, the comments were not consistently applied: numerous properties were left without a remark. In particular, properties in Churchgate, the Rushes, Bigging and Woodgate were listed but without marginal notes. Sufficient exist, however, for some reconstruction of the built environment. Some of the comments which contributed to the valuation concerned only the backside: usually a ‘good’ or a ‘pretty’ backside. It seems unlikely that the size of the backside was considered important for building on. In some urban places backsides were developed for additional housing, but Loughborough already had sufficient resources for additional building. The backsides were perceived only as a generally desirable attribute.

Valuations were thus calculated for many of the manorial properties in Sparrow Hill, Fennell Street, Baxtergate, Marketstead, Fishpool Head and Hallgate. As an example, the first entry related to the tenement at the north end of the town held by Dorothy Pettie and her son Laurence with a toft, a grange, a croft and an oxgang of land, for which the customary annual rent amounted to 14s. 2½d. A marginal note expressed the value as £60. We can in this way recover the assessed value of about 27 properties. The valuations are, as might be expected, all rounded numbers, except for one assessment at £27. Nineteen of the properties were valued at £40 or less, 12 of which were below £30. The lowest

\(^{96}\) HL HAM Box 24, folder 4.

\(^{97}\) HL HAM Box 24, folder 4.

\(^{98}\) HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 25; HAM Box 25, folder 9, p. 15.

\(^{99}\) HL HAM Box 24, folder 4.

\(^{100}\) HL HAM Box 25, folder 4. There are reasons for assigning this undated survey to 1566 × 1574.
valuation (four properties) was placed at £20. Above £40, three properties were estimated at £50, two at £60, one each at respectively £80, £100 and £110. At the two extremes of the spectrum were a cottage at the corner of Sparrow Hill reckoned to be worth £20 (annual rent 2s. 0½d.) and a messuage, barn and orchard in Marketstead with a piece of waste at Fishpool Head and two yardlands in the fields valued at £110 (rent 38s. 6½d. and two capons).  

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Valuation (£s)</th>
<th>Number of properties</th>
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<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>of which &lt;30</td>
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<td>of which &lt;20</td>
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Table 1. Valuations of property in the urban centre.

The former – although only a cottage – consisted of eight bays, whilst the latter comprised 26 bays of building. We can recover the approximate size of 21 properties. Fourteen consisted of fewer than 10 bays, 10 of which had fewer than eight. Another five ranged between 11 and 16 bays and another of 26. The White Hart, ‘moste slated’, was valued at £60, then in the copyhold tenure of William Hebb and his sons William and Henry, on the corner of Bigging.  

The final observation which can be deduced from the marginal comments concerns the roofing material. The surveyor was obviously concerned – and rightly so in light of the fire of 1622 – with the condition of the roof. Whilst a principal property like the White Hart was mainly roofed with slate, only about six properties were recorded as being completely slated. Another six comprised slate and thatch in combination, but nine were only thatched. Since the remarks about the roofs were only recorded for some of the properties, it is not possible to evaluate the overall condition of buildings in the town centre. If the proportions above are more widely indicative, then the majority of buildings in the town centre remained thatched, although a large minority had some slating. In some cases, the slating was an obvious precaution: eight bays slated ‘for maultinge’ and six bays thatched (presumably domestic as the property was, despite its overall size, described as a cottage). The three shops enumerated were all slated.  

As well as its significance for the built environment, the extent of slate roofing, even in a location within easy distance of the Swithland quarries, separated urban from rural. The roofscape denoted an urban landscape, where the materials of polite architecture were integrated into vernacular or domestic building.

101 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, pp. 2, 6.
102 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 9.
103 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 2.
104 HL HAM Box 25, folder 4, p. 5.
STREET LIFE

The sensory experience of Loughborough was heightened by the intermittent activities in its streets consistent with its local importance. It was one of those market towns outside of Leicester where penance was performed in the market place or through the town. This ritual activity was confined to the principal market towns, Melton Mowbray and Hinckley to a lesser extent, and Loughborough. Inhabitants of Loughborough and its surrounding villages who were sentenced to penance in the archdeaconry court at Leicester were ordered to perform their penance in the market place in Loughborough in the 1560s and 1570s, although subsequently the use of the market place for this activity in the archdeaconry declined.105

Given the concentration of housing in the urban centre, altercations between neighbours were inevitable. Such contretemps occurred in village society too, especially in nucleated villages, very much face-to-face local societies. In a sense then, such defamatory interchanges were not an exclusively urban event. Perhaps, nonetheless, an urban environment fostered these differences between neighbours through the intensity and density of social relationships, and where privacy was even more at a premium. In September 1601, just such a conflict exploded in Loughborough on the doorstep of Henry Trimley.106 There, Anne Dudley alias Iveson accused Margery Burton of travelling to London to give birth to a bastard child and that she was once again pregnant.107 Three witnesses ex parte Margery proclaimed to have overheard the words, one of whom, John Holden, glover, attested that he witnessed the derogatory exchange whilst he was sitting at his own house door.

THE BRIDGE

Fundamental to the fortunes of Loughborough was the multi-arched bridge which conveyed the route to Nottingham, through Cotes.108 Its maintenance was constantly in the forefront of the minds of the parishioners. About a sixth of the testators between 1522 and 1546 made bequests towards the costs of the bridge, ranging between 1s. (two testators) and 13s. 4d., but more usually 3s. 4d. (four). The highest amount (the mark) was extended under the elaborate will of Henry Bygyng, whose personal estate was assessed at £38 17s. 5½d.109 The bridge signified the development of Loughborough as a town at the crossing point of the

105 D. Postles, ‘Penance and the market place: a Reformation dialogue with the medieval church (c. 1250–c. 1600)’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54 (2003), 441–68.
106 ROLLR 1D41/1 3 September 1601.
107 For such articulations between women, in a considerably larger urban context, L. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers. Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996). For extracts from the cause in the ecclesiastical court, see the Appendix.
109 ROLLR wills 1534/3, 1534/21, 1535/9, 1537/15, 1536/17, 1537/32, 1538/16, 1542/78, 1544/10 (Bygyng), 1544/30.
River Soar. On the other hand, large bridges existed near rural settlements too, such as Swarkestone in Derbyshire, so it did not constitute an unambiguous emblem of urban status.

THE SOCIAL IMAGINARY

It has been suggested that the social characteristics of urban places differed only quantitatively and not qualitatively from their rural counterparts: that both shared the same institutions and social organisation, merely magnified in the urban context.110 To some degree, there is veracity in that argument, but it is perhaps too narrow. It ignores the sensory perception of the urban, the social imaginary. Scale affected how people perceived the urban; the urban affronted the senses and stimulated the imagination and wonderment. What further defined the urban centre was movement, in the case of Loughborough, especially on market days, a small world in motion, hustle and bustle, activity in the streets.

Perhaps this point can be better illuminated by a narrative from another urban centre, although one larger than Loughborough, with ancient borough status. The examination of Thomas Taylour, a ship carpenter from Dublin, in 1629, indicates the possibilities. Arrested in Reading, on his way from London to Bristol, he denied that he stole a purse and money. When asked why he was in the market place, he replied ‘he did go to see the markett, beinge the waye to passe towards Bristol’.111 Whether he fabricated this excuse or not, it occurred to him that it might be accepted; if he uttered it without reflection, then the thought insinuated itself into his mind instinctively. A visitor might indeed be inquisitive about the large market place of an urban centre.

Even in a small town, the social imaginary obtained. If we are intent on dissecting every individual attribute, we will encounter the mundane, the quotidian; each attribute differed little between urban and rural. The whole of the urban – its holistic impact on the senses – was, nonetheless much greater than the sum of its parts.112 The small town even in the early seventeenth century elicited those sentiments of both excitement and fear which are associated with the urban.113


112 The opposite is also true, however; the microscopic dissection of a phenomenon will also reveal difference which allows us to perceive the bigger picture, as in the case of Walter Benjamin: E. Leslie, *Walter Benjamin. Overpowering Conformism* (London, 2000), 66 (‘micrological gaze’).

113 J. Schlör, *Nights in the Big City. Paris-Berlin-London 1840–1930* trans. P. G. Imhof and D. R. Roberts (London, 1998), is obviously concerned with the night, with the big city, and with the modern city, but perhaps we might be allowed to cite and paraphrase some of his remarks: ‘the site of encounter and confrontation’ (17) and ‘sensual stimulation’ (19) which are evoked by the extraordinary.
SOUNDSCAPES

One recent approach to the auditory landscape or soundscape differentiated the city and the country.\textsuperscript{114} In this instance, the city soundscape was largely represented by London, but even if we extend the category to other cities and the larger boroughs, we still do not quite approach the soundscape of a small town like Loughborough, a small urban central nexus with a small number of streets embedded in a very large rural parish. We might have to imagine concentric circles of sound with gradations as one moved between urban centre and the more rural exterior. Imagine the tenants of copyhold or freehold land whose messuages were located in the central urban area, as was comprehensively the case: their day would begin with the early sounds of the urban centre; as they travelled out from their messuages to work their lands, they moved from the urban soundscape to a rural auditory environment, but the transition was graduated, as town noise progressively ceded to rural sounds. Even so, if their meadows and arable were on the periphery of the urban nexus, urban noises intruded into the rural environment. As they returned later in the day to their messuages in the centre, they were translated from the comforting sounds of the rural to the noise of the town.

Conversely, those who inhabited the dispersed hamlets – Knighthorpe, Shelthorpe and Woodthorpe – predominantly experienced a rural environment, but in the case of Woodthorpe interrupted by some domestic industrial processes, such was weaving. The urban soundscape was an intermittent experience for them, on those occasions when they visited the centre for provisions.

Some other producers and the retailers constantly encountered the urban soundscape. They lived in and they contributed to it. It is a fair assumption that the urban centre reverberated with the cries of retailers and tradespeople: ‘What do you lack?’\textsuperscript{115} The urban air was penetrated too with the noise and prattle of workshops, tapping, banging and singing whilst working. Those carts transporting stone and wood from Charnwood rumbled to the main bridge.

CONCLUSION: CHARACTERISTICS

Its situation in the valley bottom resulted in Loughborough belonging to one of those low-lying, marshy environments susceptible to disease, but the adjacent uplands of the Wolds and Charnwood Forest were redeeming locations, where ague and other infections were less prevalent.\textsuperscript{116} The very large parish of Loughborough was thus dissected by numerous streams, which also transected the urban centre. This urban centre, although comparatively small by wider standards, consisted of a more complicated nexus of streets than composed rural

\textsuperscript{114} Smith, \textit{The Acoustic World}, 52–71 (the City – i.e. London), 71–82 (the country).
\textsuperscript{115} Sean Shesgreen, \textit{The Cries and Hawkers of London} (Stanford, CA, 1990).
\textsuperscript{116} For the significance of these micro-climates, Dobson, \textit{Contours of Disease}. 
villages, expanding in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, if slowly. Since it was unincorporated, the town had no official boundaries, but was constrained by ecological limits. The gradual expansion on the periphery of the urban centre complicated the topography of the town whilst also reinforcing the form of residential segregation associated with early-modern urbanism. The urban was thus sensually experienced by inhabitants and visitors to the centre of the parish. The aural soundscape of the town was complemented by the visual features emblematic of towns: large market place, a complement of inns, the high cross, a row of shops and the grammar school, although a relatively inconspicuous building. Movement and motion, especially on market days, enhanced the urban sensation.

APPENDIX

ROLLR 1D41/1 3 September 1601
Super libellum alias ex parte Margerie Burton de Loughborowe Contra Annam Dudley alias Iveson de eadem
[On the libel brought by Margery Burton of L. against Ann Dudley alias Iveson of the same place]

Johannes Holden de Loughborowe in Com’ Leic’ Glover ubi moram fecit per ix\textsuperscript{em} annos ulterios elapsos natus apud Mountsorel in Com’ Leic’ etatis xl\textsuperscript{a} annorum vel Circiter liber Condicionis testis &c
[John Holden of L. in Leics., glover, where he has lived for the last nine years, born in Mountsorrel, Leics., aged about 40, of free status, witness &c]

... That about a fourthnight before Lammes last past as he remembreth tempus alias recordatim he this deponent sitting at his owne house doore in Loughborowe aforesaide did amongst other wordes that passed betwenee the partyes articulate heare the said Anne Dudley alias Iveson utter theise wordes at the dore of one Henry Trimley in Loughborowe aforesaide or the like in effect viz The said Anne speakinge to the said Margery said has thowe hast bene at London and haste had one Bastard theare and thowe arte likely to have another

Willemus Jackson de Loughborowe predict’ Shomaker ubi moram fecit a nativitate sua ibidem natus etatis xxviii annorum vel Circiter Libere Condicionis testis &c
[William Jackson of L. aforesaid, shoemaker, where he has lived from birth, aged about 28, of free status, witness &c]

... That about a moneathe last past as he remembreth the articulate Anne Dudley alias Iveson standeinge at the Doore of one Henry Trymmell in Loughborowe articulate & speakeinge to the articulate Margery Burton did utter theise wordes or the like in effect against the said Mergy viz Thowe hast bene at London and hast had a bastard & nowe art Comme into the Countrey and theare is another towards And further said Margery had a Child of his owne she the said Anne
would gyve yt a halfepeny Loafe But for that wherwith the said Margery was nowe with child she was sure yt was none of her husbandes Theise wordes were spoken in the heareing of this deponent ...

Maria Noble de Loughborowe uxor Roberti Noble de eadem ubi moram fecit per xvi
annos ulterios elapsos natus apud Southcroson in Com’ predict’ etatis xxiiij
anos vel Circiter Libere Condicionis testis &c
[Mary Noble of L. wife of Robert Noble of the same place, where she has lived the last 10 years, born at South Croxton in the same county, aged about 24, of free status, witness &c]
... That about a moneath or fyve weekes agoe the articulate Anne Dudley alias Iveson standing at the Doore of one Henry Trimley in Loughborowe did utter these wordes or the like in effect viz & speakeinge unto the articulate Margery Burton said that she the said Margery had bene at London and had had a Bastard & she was come into the Countrey to have another Theise wordes were uttered in the heareinge of this deponent ...