



Repton Village History Group Newsletter

Winter 2023/24



<https://reptonvillage.org.uk/repton-village-history-group/>

Membership matters:

June Moore:

It is with sadness that we report the death of June Moore. A great supporter of the group and of the work of her partner Alan Kimber, who was chairman for many years. We were able to put a fuller obituary in the Village News.

June was a wartime baby born in Burton in September 1940 to Florence and Albert Fenton and had four sisters and two brothers to grow up with. In later years with two sons to raise, some members may remember her working on the pumps at Goodall's Garage, and as a Silver Service Waitress at Bramcote Lodge. This was where she met Alan and they were together for 40 years. He proposed four times, but she always declined. June began her catering career at Foremark Hall as an assistant cook. She moved back to Repton and was catering for the games at Repton School until she retired.

Alan became the driving force in the History Group and her support for him and the group was important – including legendary mince pies. She was a staunch supporter of the Group well after she could no longer get to meetings for which support the group was very grateful. Alan became increasingly unwell and June was his main support in day to day living. She had some serious health problems herself but was tough enough to withstand them. Later, supported by her sons, she moved to sheltered accommodation in Stapenhill with her dog Alfie for company.

She died in Burton Hospital on 24th October 2023. A tough lady, hardworking, generous, loyal and kind.

The Committee:

The committee have asked that their details are included here:

Treasurer - Aimee Brookes.

Secretary and Membership Secretary - John Kidd.

Publications - Tim Norman.

Contact on Website and Village News and for the committee - Tim Norman (tjnorman4@yahoo.co.uk).

Committee members - Chris Colbourne, Elaine Colbourne, Dr David Dickson, Ivor Sandars.

Others: Archivist - Russell Fisher. Newsletter Editor - Andy Austen

Programme of meetings:

A programme of meetings is being developed and the next one is on February 20th in the URC Schoolroom on Pinfold lane at 7.00pm. Andy will give a talk on Viking Repton. This was created for the Year Six classes at Repton Primary School, Foremark Prep and St Wystan's Prep as background to a Viking themed literary day with author Tony Bradman. Hopefully, we will cope with a talk aimed at 10 year olds!

Bronze Age henge at the National Memorial Arboretum

Five members of the history group have been involved in a geophysics project at the National Monument Arboretum in Alrewas.

Dr Mark Knight (Cultural Heritage Officer for the Transforming the Trent Valley Project) had been asked by Historic England if we could locate a Bronze Age monument. Its presence was known and control was exercised during gravel extraction to protect it. It is a scheduled monument but English Heritage had marked its location in the wrong place on the maps. Actually, on the ground, its location is fairly clear (but imprecisely located) by a slight mound and crop marks photographed some years ago which had indicated 3 concentric rings.

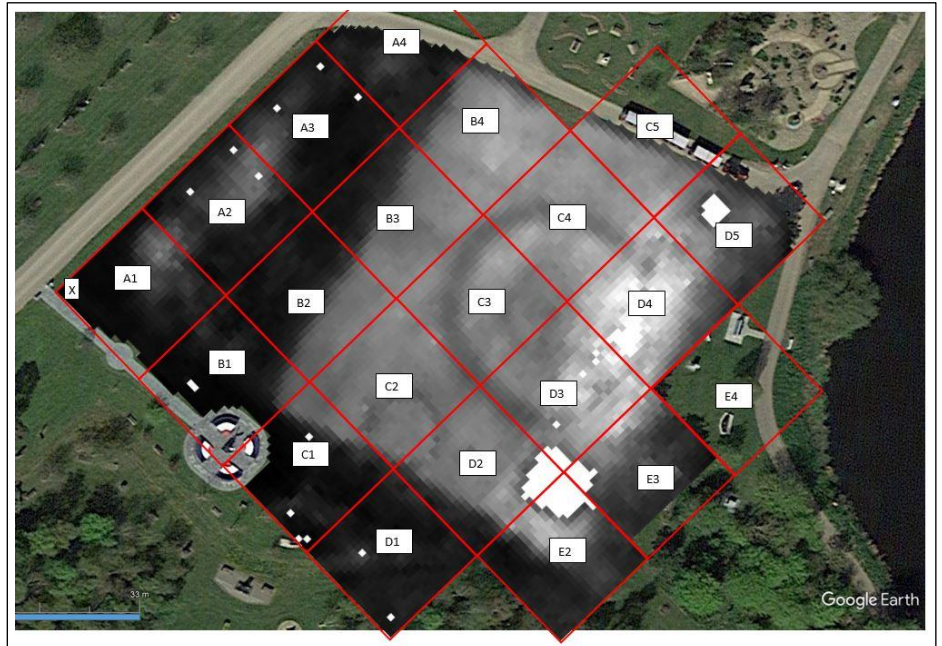
So we were asked to pin it down so it could be correctly marked and the Arboretum could avoid putting monuments or trees on it.



Crop marks photographed before gravel extraction took place.

We marked the site out in 20x20m grids and then using our normal system of metre-marked washing lines, took a resistivity reading in every square metre of every grid – some 8,000 readings in 20 grids. Fortunately, the site was big enough for two sets of kit to be used. We just had to make sure that they were never closer than 45m. It was a slow process (took 3 days) because in some areas, getting a good contact with the ground caused the meter to change range a lot which slows things down - and there were a number of obstacles from trees to seats and monuments to contend with.

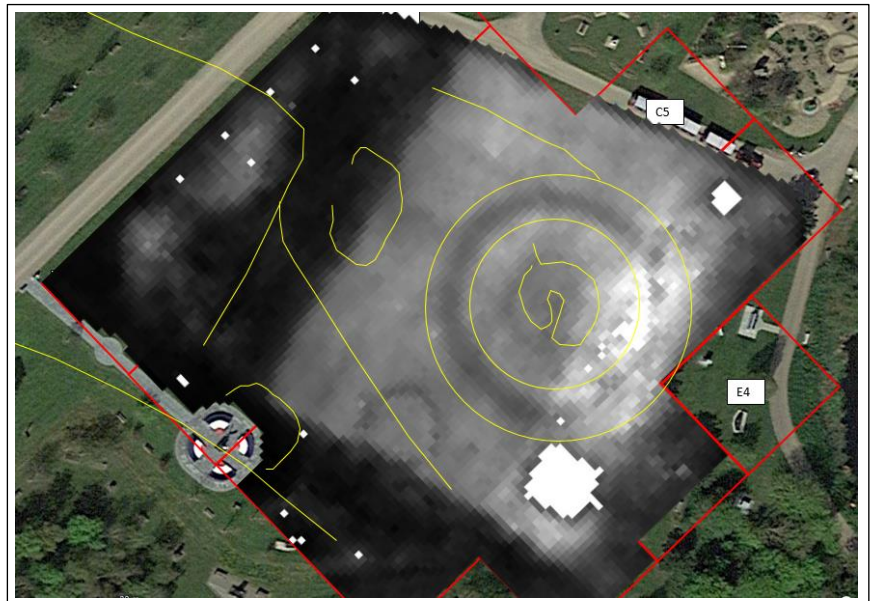
The result of this grid survey, when plotted out, did reveal the rings. These are where the ground has a lower resistivity and represents ditches. Because the metre squares are clearly visible we could accurately locate the centres relative to our datum lines.



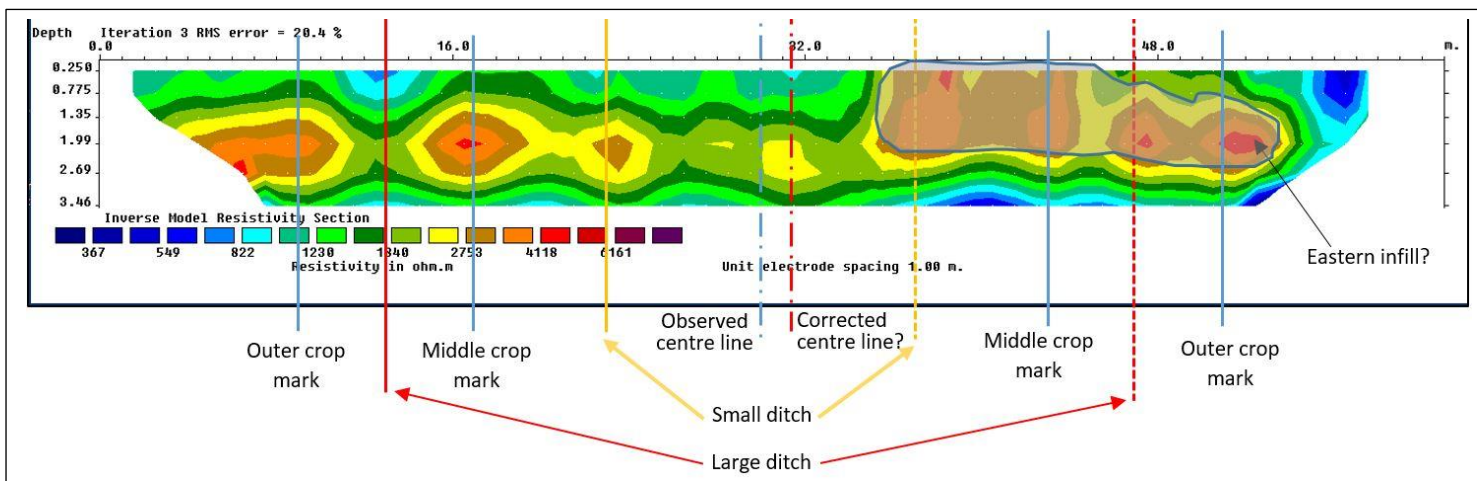
The crop marks are parch marks appearing in a very dry summer due to the ground being drier there. We traced the crop marks (in yellow) and were able to accurately locate them relative to our rings. They are larger in diameter and represent the mounds with our ditches in between.

The small circle to the south west is evidence of modern shrubbery - now gone, but leaving its mark.

The white dots and areas are where we could not log a reading – benches, trees or monuments.



We then carried out a 60m long linear survey across the rings and created a pseudo-section - like looking at the strata in the wall of a trench. This confirmed the location of the ditches and banks and that part of the earthwork had been damaged at some time - possibly river erosion or early flood prevention work.



Some years ago, workmen had found a buried pot close by and a subsequent archaeological follow-up concluded that it was from the Beaker period and thus of the Bronze Age. However, the henge could easily have earlier origins;. Three rivers meet here - the Trent, Mease and Tame and in Neolithic times this would have been a magical place. Just a mile and a half away is the stunning Catholme Neolithic ceremonial site with a starburst henge, five ring posthole Woodhenge monument and a cursus and more.

At Alrewas, the crop marks suggest an elevated central feature that the resistivity did not pick up with any clarity and a possible ridge providing access from the surrounding bank, so there is talk of a dig to try to establish a better understanding. For a giggle, try: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpTIXp6gg5E>

Ada Eunice Hibbert

Last year, Amy in High Street received a letter from a lady in Perry Bar in Birmingham. It was simply addressed "Memories of the Square, 110 High Street, Repton". In it, she enclosed a press cutting from the Derby Evening Telegraph 23rd April 1969 about Ada Hibbert who, at 90 years old, had lived in the Square at number 110 for 64 years.

The lady in question was Vivian Jean Skidmore, a great niece of Ada Hibbert and 87 years old herself. In ill health, she was clearing out odds and ends. Wonderfully she thought to send the cutting to the village:



"Mrs Ada Hibbert of 110 High Street Repton, who has lived in Repton for 70 years, and at her present home in the square, for 64 years, celebrated her 90th birthday yesterday. [Tuesday April 22nd 1969]

Mrs Hibbert, who has been blind for six years, is the widow of Mr George Hibbert, a tailor, who was a cripple for 12 years until his death 35 years ago.

Busy community.

Born at the Winshill, Mrs Hibbert was married at Saint Mark's church Winshill, in 1900. She worked as a cook in Repton for many years, and dressed - ready for the oven - all kinds of poultry for farmers and butchers in Repton.

Mrs Hibbert recalls the busy community in The Square, which included a basket maker, blacksmith, wheelwright, joiner, baker, drapery store, fish shop, cycle shop, general store, farm cart maker, garage, and her husband's tailors shop.

She tells me she remembers her husband doing repairs to the Eton suits of the boys at Repton School, and the steam cleaning of their "tall toppers" which were worn on Sundays.

Among memories of Repton in the early years of this century, Mrs Hibbert, recalls the first motorcar in the village and journeys to Winshill by carrier cart, which ran from Ticknall to Burton through Repton, taking on passengers and parcels on the way; and the day, when one of the first aeroplanes landed in a field in the village.

She recalls rod- peeling for the local basket maker, and milk being 1/2d, a pint, and bacon and cheese at 6d.lb.

Mrs Hibbert had one son and three daughters and lives with her surviving daughter and son-in-law, Mr and Mrs L. Harrison.

She is a member of Repton Evergreen club, of which she was the first member."

Ada was born on the 22nd April 1879 in Winshill (then part of Derbyshire) to Matthew and Eliza Swain. Matthew was from Theberton in Suffolk and often went by his middle name of Kerridge. We know little about her childhood - she had an older sister Annie and a number of younger brothers and sisters, but by the time she was 11 she was employed as a servant in the Walker family in Salisbury Street in Beeston, Notts. With two servants, the family must have been fairly well off. Clearly, brewery coopers were well paid. We do not know what the connection was that took her there at quite a young age. She married George Hibbert in 1900 in St Mark's parish church in Winshill when she was 21. He was a tailor, 18 years her senior and a Milton lad, and that is where they lived when first married in 1900 - on Main St. Within a year, one of her siblings, John, was boarding with them - a farm worker. Ada had a daughter Annie May but she died aged 2, and in 1905 they moved to High Street in Repton. By the 1911 census she has 2 more children - Lucy May (7) and George Eric (3) and they have two of Ada's sisters living with them. One was an invalid and the other helped around the house. There was also a 7 month old baby - William Shilton. In 1916 she had another daughter - Nancy. Sadly

George Eric died in 1919 aged 11 and he and Annie May are commemorated on a gravestone in St Wystan's church yard (Grave D77).

George had been a cripple all his life, and retired due to increasing ill-health when he was 60. He was bedridden for the last 8 years of his life and died in February 1934 aged 70. Ada died in August 1970. They are buried in St Wystan's church yard in grave E212.

The house on High Street, Repton is now number 110 and part of The Square (officially Main St) and was once named LesLou after Leslie and Lucy Harrison (née Hibbert – Ada's daughter). Until comparatively recently, the garden was the site of cottages on Well Lane – two of which were occupied by the Palmer family.

Anyone using the Blue Bus service in the 1970's will remember Les - one of the clippies who would hold the bus at the Cross if he knew you would be coming.



Ada is in the centre of this group – a reunion with relatives who emigrated to Australia 57 years previously – the year Ada married. Photo from Burton Chronicle July 1957

The Repton Constable:

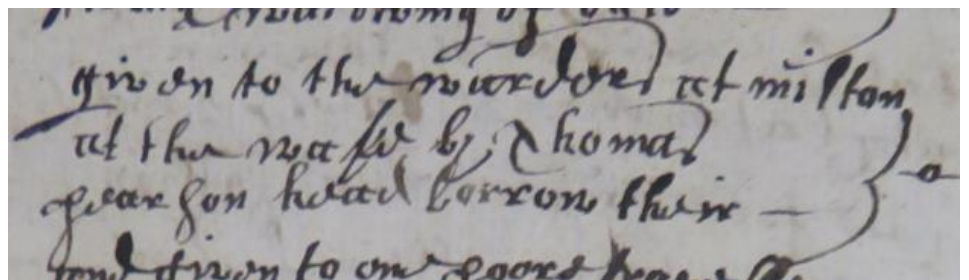
Every local landowner was expected to be prepared to take a turn at one of the roles needed to keep the community working for a year. One role was that of Constable. We are very lucky to have records of the Constable's accounts for a period and Charles has transcribed them and dug out some real nuggets of information about that time.

He writes:

In the last newsletter I looked at the Repton Constables Accounts 1651-79 and specifically at the Constables' role in dealing with the itinerant poor. In this newsletter I am looking at their responsibilities for maintaining law & order.

Given the absence of any regular police force the Constable was responsible for organising the ward and watch. Warders were employed by the Constable to keep the peace at night and at other times of likely trouble such as at the Wake.

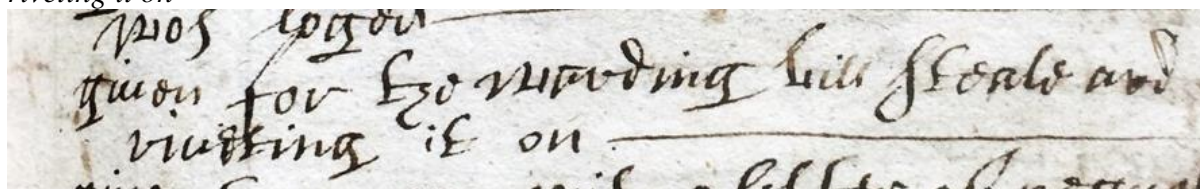
*given to the warders at Milton
at the Wake by Thomas
Pearson Headborough there*



The headborrow/headborough was the Constable's deputy who would deal with issues in Milton, especially at Wake time in early June.

The warders carried a bill, presumably to encourage good behaviour.

*given for the warding bill steale and
riveting it on*



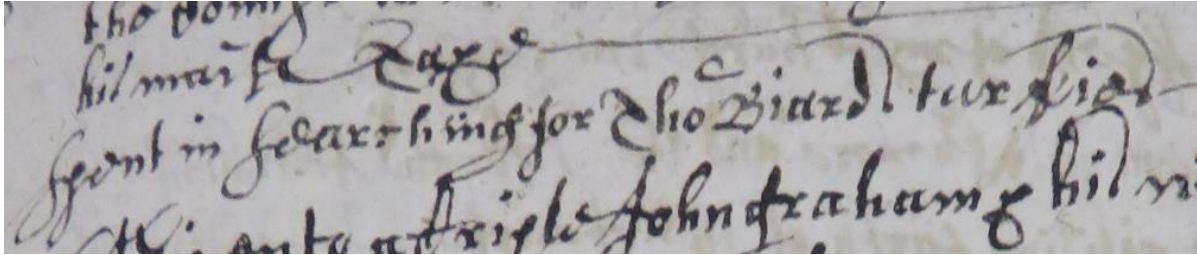
The Constable was responsible for keeping the village stocks in good order & for putting miscreants in them when occasion demanded. Punishment for minor offences was whipping which was also the Constable's responsibility

spent when I set John Anderson in the stocks

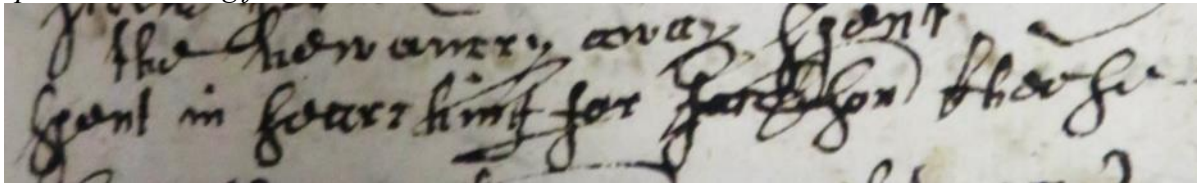
A close-up of a handwritten entry in a ledger. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "Letter of Request sent when I set John Anderson in the stocks". The entry is written on a piece of aged, slightly discolored paper.

Stealing was fairly commonplace and the Constable often went in search of stolen goods.

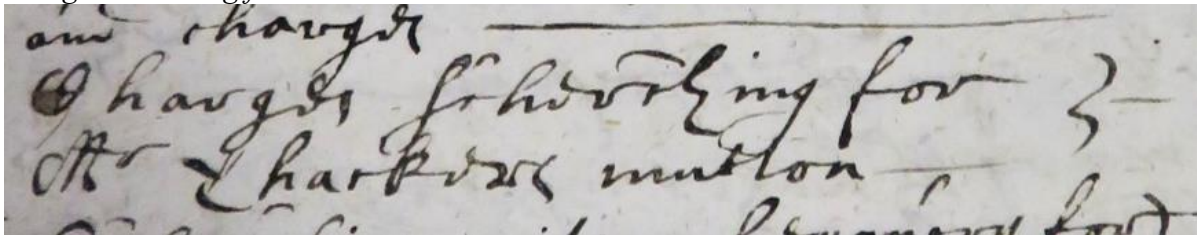
spent in searching for Thomas Biard's turkeys

A close-up of a handwritten entry in a ledger. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "The Constable spent in searching for Tho Biard's turkeys". The entry is written on a piece of aged, slightly discolored paper.

spent in searching for Jackson's cheese

A close-up of a handwritten entry in a ledger. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "The Constable spent in searching for Jackson's cheese". The entry is written on a piece of aged, slightly discolored paper.

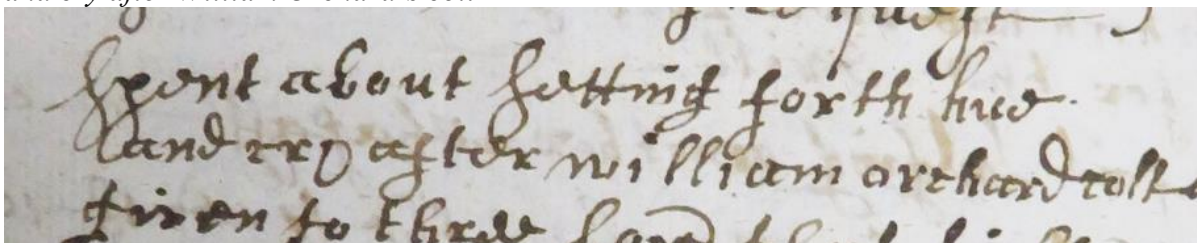
charges searching for Mr Thacker's mutton

A close-up of a handwritten entry in a ledger. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "Charges for searching for Mr Thacker's mutton". The entry is written on a piece of aged, slightly discolored paper.

When it was suspected the stolen goods had been taken out of the parish the Constable would organise a hue and cry to continue the search in neighbouring villages.

spent about setting forth hue

and cry after William Orchard's colt

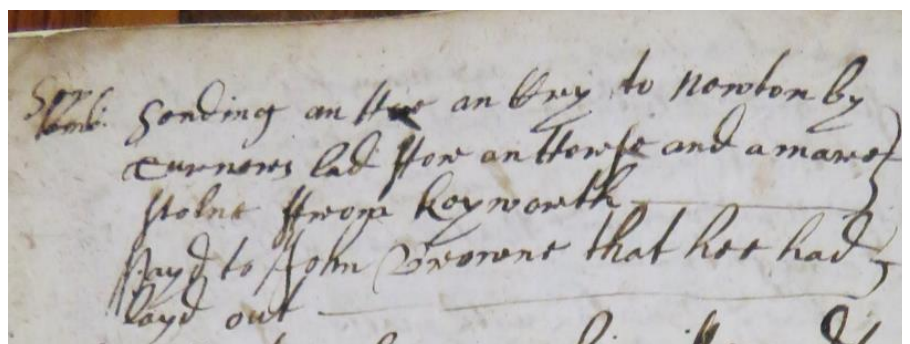
A close-up of a handwritten entry in a ledger. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "Spent about setting forth hue and cry after William Orchard's colt". The entry is written on a piece of aged, slightly discolored paper.

The Constable was also responsible for assisting any hue and cry organised by Constables elsewhere in pursuit of stolen goods or miscreants.

sending a hue and cry to Newton by

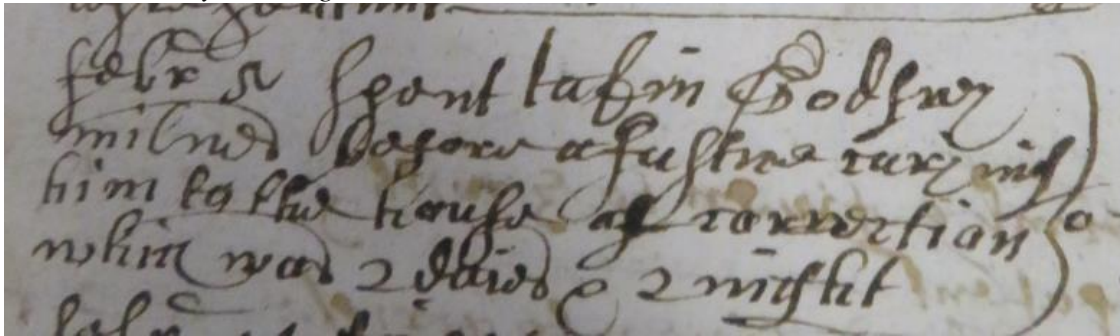
Turner's lad for a horse and a mare

stolen from Keyworth

A close-up of a handwritten entry in a ledger. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "Spent sending a hue and cry to Newton by Turner's lad for a horse and a mare stolen from Keyworth". The entry is written on a piece of aged, slightly discolored paper.

The Repton Constable's activities were overseen by the local Justices of the Peace and journeys to obtain warrants etc. are often noted in the Accounts.

*spent taking Godfrey
Milner before a Justice carrying
him to the House of Correction
which was 2 days & 2 nights*

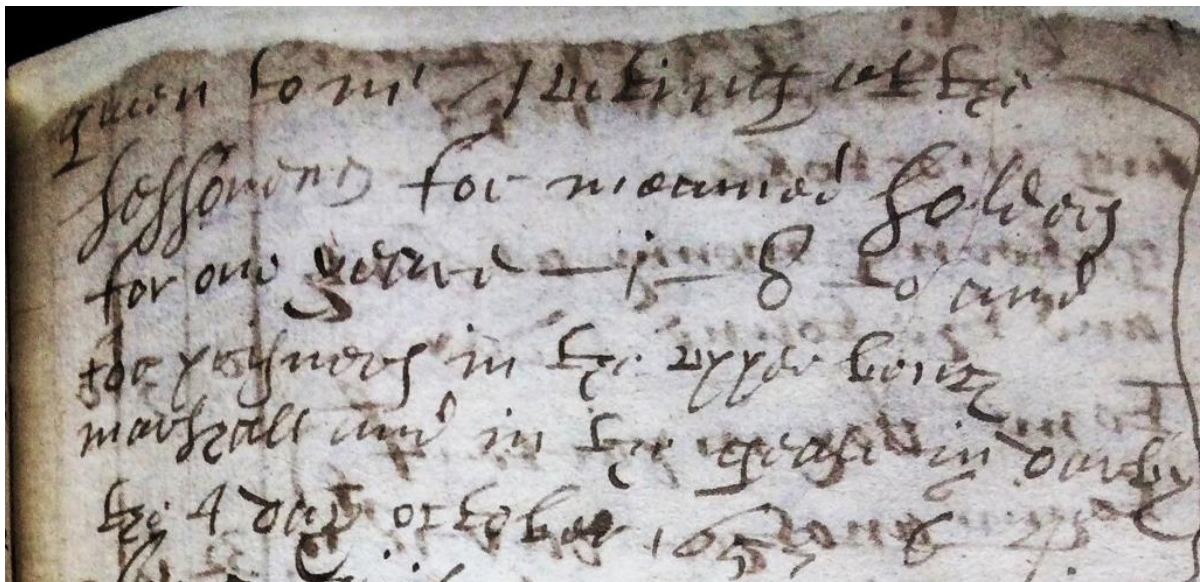


Houses of Correction were established in the early 17th Century to deal with those the authorities saw as wasters including vagrants, beggars and, in increasing numbers as the century progressed, those guilty of minor offences. Conditions were unpleasant but sentences were usually short. They were often called Brideswells after one of the very first ones in London.

Those found guilty of more serious offences would serve their sentences in the gaol in Derby. At this period the gaol adjoined the County Hall in St Peter's Street.

The local gaols were financed by levies on the Derbyshire parishes as noted in this entry from 1653.

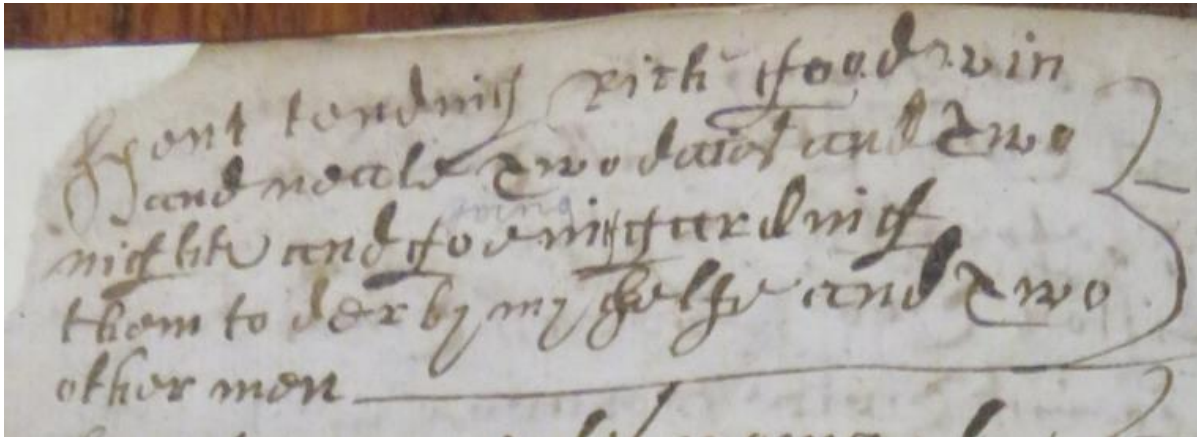
*given to Mr Whiting at the
Sessions for maimed soldiers
for one year £1 8s 0d and
for prisoners in the Upper Bench,
Marshallsea and in the Gaol in Derby
the 4th day Oct 1653*



Upper Bench was a debtors prison in London usually known as the King's Bench or Queen's Bench after the court of that name but renamed temporarily in the Commonwealth period as the Upper Bench. The Counties had to raise funds to support poor prisoners in the Upper Bench & The Marshalsea, another London debtors prison. The support of maimed soldiers was another task delegated to the Counties and hence to the Parishes by central government.

There is no mention of the Repton lock-up at this period and prisoners would be guarded at one of the local inns while awaiting transfer to Derby.

*spent tending Richard Goudwin
and Neale two days and two
nights and going guarding
them to Derby by my self and two
other men*



The Constable of Repton must have been very glad to finish his year in office

William Kesterton Sanders- Item 1

Repton's oldest man (at the time)

The author of these notes is unknown, but the first sheet is written on the headed notepaper of the master's, common room Repton School at a time when the STD code was just 0283. Clearly a record of a conversation with William.

“William Kesterton Sanders was born in a house in the High Street in 1898. His family moved to a house in Main Street in 1904, when his father was a carpenter and Joiner. His grandfather had been the fitter at Repton Mill.

William, a bachelor, still lives in the same house near to his cousin Edith, who has a house in the square. He remembers a very different Repton. Main Street was called Mill Street sometimes then, but street names were variable and houses not yet numbered. Nor were the streets tarmacaded, and William recalls a village roadman, an old man with a big beard, whose job it was to rake the road surface from side to side, with a large swivel-headed rake, smoothing the way for horses and carts. The earliest car he can remember in the village is that belonging to Mr Eden Bell of the Hayes, a two seater with the number 82.

William attended the village school in the High Street under Mr Emmett, the headmaster until he was 11. He then attended the fee-paying higher elementary school in Burton for a year travelling by train from Willington.

He then gained a scholarship to the secondary school in Abbey Street Derby, where he remained for three years, until he was 16, which was just before the outbreak of World War I.

He joined Charles Foulds in Irongate Derby, learning how to tune and repair pianos until he was conscripted into the army in 1917. By the time he had finished his training in the Royal Ordnance Corps the armistice had been signed, but he was sent to Salonica in Macedonia (Greece) until 1920. This was his one and only visit abroad and he remembers returning by train to Repton and selling his great coat for £1 at Willington station!

Back to Derby and the music business working for the Rosehill Music Store in Normanton Road. They sent him to London for a course in piano building after which he travelled to people's homes in the area to tune pianos. He remembers the Burton Road (A38) as a single track road later to be macadamed, but only down the central strip!

In 1947, he became a self-employed piano tuner and continued working until he was 71 when he finally retired.

Music is his life, and he has been a church organist since before the first world war, and still plays the electronic organ in the United reformed Church twice on Sundays. For 20 years, William was the organist in the Burton Congregational Church in the High Street, and for four years at Saint Mary's Newton Sony. He has also deputised at the churches of Repton and Willington. As a baritone voice, he has sung with the Willington coral society, a Melbourne choir, and also the Burton municipal choir in the town hall. William enjoys cooking, just plain food, he does not smoke. Bed is at about 10 o'clock and arrises at about seven and drinking is restricted to the occasional glass of wine. Obviously William with his enormous love of music and his regular habits has found a recipe for a long and healthy life."

William Kesterton Sanders- Item 2

Some years ago we researched William and below are our notes:

William was born on 5th June 1898 to William Richard Sanders and Susan Kesterton Sanders (née Boss). His birth was registered at Burton upon Trent.

Name: William Kesterton Sanders

Registration Year: 1898

Registration Quarter: Jul-Aug-Sep

Registration district: Burton upon Trent

On the 1901 census he is 2 and living with his parents and younger brother Harry on Desford Terrace, Repton. His father is a joiner.

166	do	1		John L. Sanders	Head	M	32	James Carh	Worker	Derbyshire do
				Susan K. do.	Wife	M	30			deico: Greeley ✓
				William K. do.	Son		2			Derbysh. Repton
				Harry B. do.	Son		1			do do

In 1902 when William K went to the Repton infant's school in the village, his father registered him as living in Milton. He started on the 15th August 1902 and moved up to the Elementary school in December 1905.

820	7/5/62	Makin May	17/11/1897	George	"	"	F	3/2	1896
829	5/7/62	Sanders William	18/11/1897	William Milton	"	"	I	4/11	1895 Trans.
836	4/6/62	Collins Samuel	25/8/1898	George Mount Pleasant	"	"	7	4/11	1895 well until older 7

However, the Elementary school register has him on December 1st 1904. He left in January 1910 aged 12 which suggests he went on to further schooling – perhaps Burton Grammar School.

On the 1911 census he is still at school of course but living in Repton.

[illegible]

We know very little about his war service as we only have medal cards. He would have been 18 when war broke out and could have enlisted then. We do have a photograph of him from a family tree with a good image of a cap badge. It has 3 cannons on it – the emblem of the Royal Ordnance Corps.



He was a capable musician, a piano tuner by profession, organist at the Congregational Chapel until 1950 and an agent for a friendly society and the Royal Insurance Company. He drove a Hillman car but, during the war, used a motorbike.

On the 1939 Register he is living in 10 Main Street, Repton with his father Richard and mother Susan although there is an anomaly in that Susan is listed as a widow.

William's mother Susan died on 21st June 1948.

William's father, William Richard, died at 10 Main St on 1st March 1953.

William's brother Harry died in Yorkshire in 1987.

William died aged 93 in 1992 – registered in Swadlincote.

SANDERS (William Kesterton) — Of Woodville Nursing Home, formerly of Repton, passed away peacefully 5th March aged 93 years. Funeral service Repton United Reformed Church on Wednesday 11th March at 1.15pm prior to cremation at Bretby Crematorium. Family flowers only please, donations in lieu if desired to J Hylton & Sons, 25 Market Street, Church Gresley for The Amenities Fund, Morleston Street Day Centre for the Elderly. All enquiries please to J Hylton & Sons, tel 216668.

In our churchyard lies..... (this item will also appear in the Village News)

Charles Watkins.

His grave stone impressed someone mowing the churchyard and so we investigated further. He died in 1809 aged 62, which would make his date of birth about 1747. He was a surgeon and apothecary in the village for over 40 years. According to the memorial he was very well thought of locally: *“He dispensed with a liberal hand his advice and his medicines gratuitously to the indigent poor - who feel, in his death, a loss irreparable. He lived admired as a scholar and gentleman, he died generally beloved: by his widow and his children deeply and poignantly regretted.”*

We can be fairly sure that he was effectively the doctor for Repton School as there is a note in the school archive regarding his licence from the Bishop. The staff at the school were very often clergymen and licensed by the Bishop to practice there. This applied to the surgeon too. In fact his licence could not be traced, but by that time this was not uncommon. To help confirm this, Charles is noted in headmaster William Prior's will of 1773.

It is difficult to trace him in the records but where we can find him, he is accorded the title of *Mr Charles Watkins* - pretty unique. There are two published family trees for him. They both have his birth as 1745 in Coleshill and his first child in 1762 when he was just 17 which seems a little early for a professional man - though exactly how surgeons and apothecaries were trained is uncertain. It gives his wife as Mary (one tree says Mary Price and another Mary Walker) and one lists 8 children and the other 10 - but the names of several of them are different. Given the differences between the trees, there is some doubt about their accuracy. Published family trees are notorious for their errors. It is very easy to follow the wrong family or mix them up.

However our research does support the Coleshill origins for the family and his father John, was an apothecary. So he may have been trained by him which might allow for an early marriage and a son by age 17.

It is likely the family moved to Repton about 1767/8 (perhaps to support the school) as there is a 1768 newspaper noting that Mr Watkins, surgeon and apothecary, is now settled in Repton and open for business. There is a newspaper reference from 3rd March 1769 that a house is to let currently in the occupation of Mr Wodkin, (Watkins?) surgeon. We don't yet know where the family settled in the village. This all fits well as in 1772, John (possibly their 5th child) appears to be the first child to be born here – baptised on 21st February in St Wystans. There were 3 (or 5) more born here after that but, tragically, according to the grave stone, two pre-deceased him as young adults in their 20s as a result of consumption (TB). Our research show they were both buried in Repton.

As a well-respected professional, Charles was well thought of and was a witness to a will (for Richard Mousley) in 1796 and another in 1799.

His daughter Jane died a spinster and is buried here, but daughters Ann and Elizabeth married and Elizabeth may have moved away.

He died in 1809 and was buried in the churchyard but his is the only Watkins grave with a memorial.

Although his wife, Mary, outlived him, we have no record of her death and once widowed, she might well have moved away from the village – perhaps to be with a daughter. In the Burdett rental records for 1812 (3 years after her husband's death), there is a rental of a house the Burdetts had purchased from Mary for £300 – a substantial sum for a house at that time. This suggests she sold up and probably moved away.

While his gravestone proposes that he generously treated the poor “*gratuitously*”, the accounts from a number of sources record that he was paid handsomely for looking after the medical needs of at least some of the poor:

+ Burdett rentals often include local charitable expenditures & 1771 includes:

paid Mr Watkins for inoculating [against smallpox - variolation]16 poor children at Ingleby 8^s 8^d

+ Overseers of the Poor:

Dec 26th 1788 paid Mr Watkin’s bill for Elizabeth Roberts 8^s 9^d

Feb 28th 1792 paid William Watkins for curing Dick Bull 5^s

Last payment in 1800

+ Constable’s Accounts:

1790 to Mr Watkin, surgeon, for his attendance at inquest 10^s 6^d

Last mention Dec 1807

Neither his will nor probate have been found, but he must have died a wealthy man.

With thanks to Charles Proud for his research in the records of the Overseers of the Poor, the Constable’s Accounts and the Burdett estate rentals.

Programmes of talks from other organisations.

Most make a small entry charge.

Chellaston History group:

7.30pm St Peter’s Church Hall, Chellaston - chellastonhistorygroup@gmail.com

30th January; Crich Tramway Museum

Ticknall Preservation and Historical Society. celia.sanger@btinternet.com Tuesdays at 2.00pm

30th January: Kevin Reynolds - Love and War - how we created our garden birds. A look back at how and why our relationship with the birds in our garden has changed over the last 150 years. When did we start to feed the birds, put up bird boxes and decide that some species were “garden birds”?

27th February: David Bell - Murder Cases in Leicestershire - from Earl Ferrers to the first ever use of DNA

26th March: Ashley Franklin - My Derbyshire Journey - Sir John Betjeman once said that 'Derbyshire has every kind of scenery except the sea.' In this revealing presentation, Ashley will take you on a visual journey across our rich, diverse and beautiful county, showing the many photos he has taken of towns and villages over 15 years of writing for *Derbyshire Life* magazine, with a special focus on his documenting of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

30 April: Dot Morson - Historical view of the Outer Hebrides with references to herring fishing, Iron Age Brochs and of course Callanish Standing Stones, the wreck of SS Politician and Flora MacDonald.

28 May: Peter Liddle - Burying the Dead A look at methods of burying the dead from the Egyptians to the present day and what this has taught archaeologists.

Willington History Group Thursday 11th January at Willington Old School, Castleway DE65 6BT, 7.30pm.

Alan Murray-Rust will tell us the story of the amazing Claymills Pumping Station, (which is well worth a visit if you have not been).

£3 on the door which includes refreshments.

Comments and more information about Repton and its occupants are always welcomed.
For more information on the newsletter content or the History Group please contact us on
tjnorman4@yahoo.co.uk or visit our website:

<https://reptonvillage.org.uk/repton-village-history-group/>