

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This printed version of the Gazetteer is complemented by an online version, available at <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html>. The latter will incorporate future additions and corrections to the material. Databases used for the compilation and analysis of markets and fairs listed in the Gazetteer will in due course be available through the Centre for Metropolitan History. They are described, along with some initial findings from the analysis, in section 7 of the Introduction, below.

Nicholas Herbert, County Editor, VCH Gloucestershire and Alannah Tomkins, Assistant Editor, VCH Staffordshire kindly allowed me to see draft entries for Northleach and Burton upon Trent respectively. Information for the market at Tottington was taken from a *compotus* of the estates of Henry de Lacy, which is being prepared for publication by P.H.W. Booth and the Ranulf Higden Society. Some of the information for the 1334 lay subsidy and the grid references for England was taken from a database made available by Professor Bruce Campbell of the Queen's University, Belfast.

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Samantha Letters

CONTENTS

List of figures

List of tables

List of abbreviations

Glossary

Introduction

Gazetteer

Appendix I. Unidentified places and other places which may have had a market or fair before 1516

Appendix II. General grants or confirmations of rights to hold a market or fair

Appendix III. Places with markets or fairs *c.*1600, but not recorded in the gazetteer

Appendix IV. Previous county lists and maps of markets and fairs, published and unpublished

Index/List of Places

Index of Persons

Index of Institutions

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Regional totals of markets and fairs existing in England, 1100-1516
2. Density of markets established or granted by 1516 in English counties and in Wales
3. Places in England and Wales where a market or fair had been established or granted by 1516
4. Places in the South East with a market and/or a fair by 1200, 1300 and 1516
5. Numbers of markets and fairs granted in England, 1200-1516

LIST OF TABLES

1. Markets and fairs: numbers, rate of increase and density by regions of England, 1100-1516
2. Survival rates of places with markets to 1600

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	abbot
<i>Abb. Plac.</i>	<i>Placitorum in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi Asservatorium Abbreviatio</i> (London, 1811)
<i>Actes de Henri II</i>	<i>Recueil des Actes de Henri II Roi d'Angleterre et Duc de Normandie concernant les provinces Françaises et les Affaires de France</i> , eds. L. Delisle and E. Berger, 4 vols. (Paris, 1906-27)
Apr	April
Archbp	archbishop
As	abbess
Aug	August
Ballard and Tait	A. Ballard and J. Tait eds., <i>British Borough Charters, 1216-1307</i> (Cambridge, 1923)
Beresford	M. Beresford, <i>New Towns of the Middle Ages</i> (London, 1967)
BF	M. Beresford and H.R.P. Finberg, <i>English Medieval Boroughs: a Handlist</i> (Newton Abbot, 1973)
<i>Bk of Fees</i>	<i>Liber Feodorum: the Book of Fees commonly called Testa de Nevill (1198-1293)</i> , 2 vols (London, 1920-31)
Bp/bp	bishop
C	convent
C 60/	Fine Rolls, Public Record Office, Kew
Ca	canons
CAD	<i>Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the Public Record Office</i> , 6 vols. (London, 1890-1915)
<i>Cartae Antiquae</i>	<i>Cartae Antiquae</i> , rolls 1-10, ed. L. Landon (Pipe Rolls Soc., xvii, 1939); rolls 11-20, ed. J. Conway-Davis (Pipe Roll Soc., new series 33, 1960)
CChR	<i>Calendar of Charter Rolls (1226-1516)</i> 6 vols. (London, 1903-27)
CCR	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i> , 47 vols. (London, 1892-63). (1485-1509) 2 vols., eds. R.E. Latham, S.S. Wilson (London, 1955, 1963)
CCW	<i>Calendar of Chancery Warrants (1244-1326)</i> (London, 1927), i
CDS	<i>Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland preserved in the Public Record Office (1108-1509)</i> 4 vols., ed. J. Bain (Edinburgh, 1881-8)
ch	church
Challis	C. Challis, <i>A New History of the Royal Mint</i> (Cambridge, 1992)
CIM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , 7 vols. (London, 1916-68)

<i>CIPM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and other analogous documents in the Public Record Office, (Henry III-7 Richard II) 15 vols. (London, 1904-70)</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office (1232-1509), 52 vols. (London, 1891-1916)</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III (1227-72) 14 vols. (London, 1902-38)</i>
<i>CRR</i>	<i>Curia Regis Rolls of the reigns of Richard I, John and Henry III preserved in the Public Record Office, 16 vols. (London, 1922-79)</i>
Darby	H.C. Darby, <i>Domesday England</i> (Cambridge, 1977)
Darby and Maxwell	H.C. Darby and I.S. Maxwell, eds., <i>The Domesday Geography of Northern England</i> (Cambridge, 1962)
Dec	December
<i>Defence</i>	<i>The Defence of Wessex: the Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications</i> , eds. D. Hill and A.R. Rumble (Manchester, 1996)
dep	dependent (as in Easter dep)
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
Edw	Edward
Ekwall	E. Ekwall, <i>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names</i> , fourth edition (Oxford, 1980)
Eliz	Elizabeth
Everitt	List of market towns c.1500-1640 on pp. 468-75 of A. Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce' in <i>The Agrarian History of England and Wales</i> , iv, ed. J. Thirsk (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 466-592
Ex	Exaltation
<i>EYC</i>	<i>Early Yorkshire Charters</i> , vols. 1-3, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914-16); vols. 4-10, ed. C.T. Clay (Yorkshire Archaeological Soc. record series, extra series, 1935-55)
f	feast
<i>FA</i>	<i>Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids; with other analogous documents preserved in the Public Record Office AD 1284-1431</i> (London, 1899-1920)
Feb	February
<i>FF Essex</i>	<i>Feet of Fines for Essex</i> , 3 vols., ed. R.E.G. Kirk and E.F. Kirk (Essex Archaeological Soc., Colchester, 1899-1949)
Fri	Friday
GEC	G.E. Cokayne, <i>Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant</i> , new edition, revised by V. Gibbs, H.A. Doubleday, D. Warrand, Lord Howard de Walden, G.H. White, 12 vols. (London, 1910-59)

Glasscock	R.E. Glasscock, ed., <i>The Lay Subsidy of 1334</i> (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, new series, ii, London, 1975)
gr	granted
Griffiths	R.A. Griffiths, ed., <i>Boroughs of Medieval Wales</i> (Cardiff, 1978)
Guide	F.A. Youngs, ed., <i>Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England</i> (London, 1991)
Harrison	W. Harrison, <i>The Description of England</i> , ed. G. Edelen (Ithaca, N.Y., 1968)
Hen	Henry
Hinton, 'Coins and Commercial Centres'	D.A. Hinton, 'Coins and Commercial Centres in Anglo-Saxon England', in M.A.S. Blackburn ed., <i>Anglo-Saxon Monetary History: Essays in Memory of Michael Dolley</i> , (Leicester, 1986)
Inv	Invention
Jan	January
Jul	July
Jun	June
K	king
kn	knight
Kowaleski, <i>Local Markets</i>	M. Kowaleski, <i>Local Markets and Regional Trade in Exeter</i> (Cambridge, 1995)
KW	<i>History of the Kings Works: the Middle Ages</i> , R. Allen Brown, H.M. Colvin, A.J. Taylor (London, 1963)
L and P Henry VIII	<i>Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII, 1509-47</i> , vols. 1-4, ed. J.S. Brewer; vols. 5-12, ed. J. Gairdner; vols. 14-21, ed. R.H. Brodie (London, 1862- 1910)
Lewis	E.A. Lewis, <i>The Mediaeval Boroughs of Snowdonia: a Study of the Rise and Development of the Municipal Element in the Ancient Principality of North Wales down to the Act of Union of 1536</i> (London, 1912)
M	monks
m	morrow
Mar	March
Masschaele	J. Masschaele, <i>Peasants, Merchants and Markets, Inland Trade in Medieval England, 1150-1350</i> (New York, 1997)
May	May
Medieval Religious Houses	D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, <i>Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales</i> (London, 1971)
Midgeley	M. Midgeley, ed., <i>Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, 1296-7</i> (Camden 3rd series, 66, 1942-5), vol. 1
Mon	Monday
Monasticon	<i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , ed. W. Dugdale, new edition by J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols. (London, 1846)

N	nun or nuns
Nov	November
Oct	October
P	prior
PR	<i>The Great Rolls of the Pipe</i> , 5 Henry II to 5 Henry III, various editors, PRS, 58 vols. (London, 1884-1990); given in the form: PR, king and year of reign, page no.
PRO	Public Record Office
Ps	prioress
Qu	queen
QW	<i>Placita de Quo Warranto, Edward I-Edward III in Curia Receptae Scaccarii Westm. Asservati</i> , ed. W. Illingworth (London, 1818)
Ransford, <i>Early Charters</i>	R. Ransford, ed., <i>Early Charters of the Augustinian Canons of Waltham Abbey, Essex, 1062-1230</i> (Woodbridge, 1989)
RCh	<i>Rotuli Chartarum</i> , ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1837)
<i>Regesta 1066-87</i>	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum The Acta of William I (1066-87)</i> , ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998)
<i>Regesta</i>	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum</i> , vol. 1, ed. H.W.C. Davis (Oxford, 1913); vol. 2, ed. C. Johnson and H.A. Cronne (Oxford, 1956); vols. 3 and 4, eds. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1968)
RH	<i>Rotuli Hundredorum</i> (London, 1812-18)
Ric	Richard
RLC	<i>Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum</i> (1204-27), ed. T.D. Hardy, 2 vols. (London, 1833, 1844)
RLP	<i>Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> (1201-16), ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1835)
<i>Rôles Gascons</i>	<i>Rôles Gascons, 1242-54</i> , tome premier, ed. Francisque-Michel (Paris, 1885); <i>Rôles Gascons, 1254-55</i> , supplement au tome premier, ed. C. Bémont (Paris, 1896)
Rosser	G. Rosser, <i>Medieval Westminster 1200-1540</i> (Oxford, 1989)
<i>Rot de Obl et Fin</i>	<i>Rotuli de Oblatis (1, 2, 3, 9 John) et Finibus (6, 7, 15, 17, 18 John) in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> , ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1835)
Sat	Saturday
Sawyer, 'Sussex Markets'	F.E. Sawyer, 'Sussex Markets and Fairs', <i>Sussex Archaeological Collections</i> , 36 (1888), pp. 180-92
Sept	September
sh	sheriff
Soulsby	I. Soulsby, <i>The Towns of Medieval Wales</i> (Chichester, 1983)
SS	saints
St	saint
Steph	Stephen

Sun	Sunday
Thurs	Thursday
Tues	Tuesday
v	vigil
VCH	Victoria County History. The reference is given in form <i>VCH</i> [<i>County</i>], volume, p.
Wed	Wednesday
West Riding Boroughs	'Gazetteer of West Riding Boroughs', by M.W. Beresford, appended to G.H. Martin, E.A. Danbury, P.J.P. Goldberg, B.J. Barber and M.W. Beresford, <i>Doncaster: a Borough and its Charters</i> (Doncaster, 1994)
Whit	Whitsun
Wil	William
Willis-Bund	J. Willis-Bund, ed., <i>An Extent of all the Lands and Rents of the Lord Bishop of St. David's; made by Master David Fraunceys, Chancellor of St. David's, in the time of the Venerable Father the Lord David Martyn, by the Grace of God Bishop of the place, in the year of Our Lord 1326</i> (London, 1902)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE GAZETTEER

bailiff	Local official or agent.
borough	A term (from the Old English <i>burh</i>) used to denote a place with urban characteristics and therefore likely to contain commercial institutions, including a market. The term originally indicated the defended character of the place but acquired additional connotations, including the distinctive legal customs, taxation rates and rights to representation enjoyed by the inhabitants of towns in contrast to those of the countryside. The privileged inhabitants of towns were known as burgesses or citizens. Not all settlements which functioned economically or socially as towns were recognised as boroughs.
burghal hidage	A record of defended places established under royal authority in southern England and the Midlands during the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Many of these places were later thriving towns.
calendar	A published summary in English of the contents of a document or a series of documents. For example, the charter rolls are the manuscript record of charters granted by the king; they are written in Latin in a contemporary hand. The calendar of the charter rolls is a summary of their contents with some information, such as the witness lists, left out.
charter	Document recording a grant. A royal charter is distinguished from other forms of royal instrument as it has a witness list and notifies specific groups of the royal act.
confirmation	A charter which reiterates the terms of a previous grant and perhaps grants additional rights. In the Gazetteer, most confirmations are made by the king.
<i>curia regis</i>	Literally 'the king's court', this was a royal court which progressed in circuits around the country. The cases which were brought before the court are useful as they occasionally contain information regarding markets and fairs.
demesne	Land retained by a lord for his own use; royal demesne was the land retained by the king.
Domesday Book	Detailed survey of England, conducted in 1086 on the order of King William I.
eschaet	Reversion of a holding to a lord, or ultimately to the Crown. This often happened if there was an absence of legitimate heirs.
eyre	A circuit (composed of several counties) by royal judges who were known as justices-in-eyre. Eyres were not held every year. A phrase like 'at the eyre of 1244' denotes business conducted on the circuit in that year.
fair	A trading institution held at regular intervals. In medieval England and Wales, a fair was held annually, on a set date, normally associated with the feast of a particular saint. A fair might last only a single day or over a number of days, ranging from two or three days to a week or more.
feast	An annual religious festival, often a saint's day, on which fairs were held.
feet of fines	Also known as final concords, this was a means of settling a dispute, commonly with the purpose of conveying real property.
fine	In the context of the Gazetteer, this was a payment to the Crown, in return for a royal grant. The fines proffered each year were recorded on the fine rolls; some were also noted on the pipe rolls.
formerly	Description used in the Gazetteer for a prescriptive market or fair which was subsequently formalised in a charter.
prescriptive	
grantee	The person or institution who received a grant.
grantor	The person or institution who made a grant.
inquisition <i>post mortem</i>	When a tenant who held directly from the king died, an inquest was held to determine the nature and extent of his estates. The inquest was conducted by means of sworn testimony. The findings of these inquisitions <i>post mortem</i> often include information regarding markets and fairs.

lay subsidy of 1334	The tax levied in 1334 was novel in that it replaced the previous system of direct tax on the wealth of individuals by a 'fixed quota' system in which every community agreed upon the sum it was to pay. Rural areas paid a fifteenth of their assessed wealth, whilst boroughs paid a tenth.
letters close	A means of sending a royal instruction, often to a member of the administration. The letter was 'closed', that is, was folded and sealed, so that its contents remained private. In the context of the Gazetteer, letters close are usually instructions by the king to a sheriff, ordering him to establish, publicise or close a market or fair in his county. During the minority of King Henry III, 1216 to 1227, grants of markets and fairs were made by letter close, as the king was under age and therefore could not issue charters in hereditary right.
letters patent	A means of sending a royal instruction: an open letter, with the seal attached to the bottom. In the context of the Gazetteer, letters patent were occasionally used to record royal grants of markets and fairs. The use of letters patent for such grants often occurs during exceptional circumstances, for example when the king was overseas on campaign. However, from 1517 onwards, all grants which had previously been made using royal charters were made with letters patent.
mandate	An order; in the Gazetteer, it is usually an order from the king to a royal official such as a sheriff.
market	A trading institution held weekly. At most places in medieval England and Wales a market was held on a set day, once a week. The larger towns had several markets on several days a week.
minority	Period when an individual was under age (i.e. less than 21) and therefore could not possess or control his or her inheritance. A royal minority occurred when the King was succeeded by an heir (usually) under 21. For example, in 1216 King John was succeeded by Henry III, who was only 9 years old. During a minority, the heir and his or her estates were normally under the control of an appointed guardian.
morrow <i>nova oblata</i>	The day after a feast. Meaning 'new offerings', this was a heading on the Pipe roll under which new fines were recorded. A fine enrolled under this heading had been paid for a recent charter or grant. The amount owed by the grantee is sometimes recorded, for example 5 marks for a charter.
octave	The eighth day after a feast (the feast day itself is counted).
palfrey	A horse used for everyday riding (as opposed to a war horse). The amount due for a typical late twelfth and thirteenth century fine made for a grant of a market or fair was often expressed as '5 marks or a palfrey'.
pipe roll	Name given to the Great Roll of the Exchequer. Records of the audit of accounts, made annually by the sheriff of each county and taken in by the barons of the upper Exchequer. In the context of the Gazetteer, these are useful as they often record the fine made by a grantee in return for a charter.
prescriptive	A prescriptive market or fair was held by custom (i.e. it was not set up by a grant or charter). They were usually the oldest markets and fairs.
<i>quo warranto</i>	In the context of the Gazetteer, this refers to a series of enquiries held by justices who were sent on circuits around the country, chiefly in the reigns of King Edward I and King Edward II. In an attempt to assert royal rights, the justices attempted to discover by what right (<i>quo warranto</i>) individuals or institutions were holding markets and fairs.
replevy sheriff	To restore, following confiscation Principal agent of the Crown in the local administration, responsible for the administration and finances of a specific county.
vigil	The eve, or day before, a feast.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GAZETTEER

1. BACKGROUND

Markets and fairs were trading events or institutions that met at regular intervals. Many of them were held at towns, but they were also held at a range of other settlements. In terms of function, however, it is often difficult to distinguish a small town, whose urban status is indicated by the words that contemporaries used to describe it, from a non-urban settlement with a market or fair.

Usually a market was held once a week, on a set day. Normally only the most significant urban centres could sustain a market on more than one day per week.¹ Before c.1200 many markets were held on Sunday.² This was the day that people gathered together at churches to worship: Sunday markets appear to have developed out of these regular assemblies. Markets were held at a set place: obviously it was important that buyers and sellers knew where to turn up. Older Sunday markets were often held in and around churchyards, conveniently near the church. During the early thirteenth century there was a movement against these Sunday markets and against trading in cemeteries.³

A fair was held once a year and was almost always associated with a religious festival, generally a saint's day. The date of the fair was expressed in terms of that feast. Thus in 1226 Brian de Insula was granted a fair at Saleby, Lincolnshire, to be held on the feast of St Margaret; this feast is celebrated on 20 July. Many fairs were held over several consecutive days. They were still defined in terms of one particular saint's feast, perhaps beginning the day before the feast (known as the vigil or the eve) or lasting until the day after the feast (known as the morrow). Thus in 1221 Hugh Despenser was granted a fair at Loughborough, Leicestershire, to be held on the vigil and feast of St Peter ad Vincula. That feast is celebrated on 1 August and so the fair began on 31 July and carried on until the next day. A fair might be held for anything from one day to several weeks or even a month, but from the thirteenth century onwards many seem to have lasted just two or three days, typically on the vigil, feast and morrow of a particular saint's day. In addition, a small number of grants expressed the dates of fairs by the day of the month.⁴ A significant minority of fairs was linked to Easter and to its associated feasts, such as

¹ It is difficult to identify the number of market days at urban centres. The earliest evidence may date from the thirteenth century, when at the larger centres there might be two or three market days each week. However, evidence from the late fourteenth century onwards may indicate a decline in the number of market days. This reflects the changes in population and in the amount of trade being conducted. It seems likely that before the thirteenth century there would have been fewer market days each week in urban centres.

² However, Domesday Book records that the market at Wallingford, Berkshire, was held on Saturday. Darby, p. 369.

³ J.L. Cate, 'The Church and market reform in England during the reign of Henry III', in J.L. Cate and E.N. Anderson, eds., *Essays in Honor of J.W. Thompson* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 27-65.

⁴ E.g. in 1209, a fair was granted at Harewood, Yorkshire, on 1 July and the two following days. There are an increasing number of these from the late fourteenth century onwards, e.g. in 1384 a fair was granted at Ixworth, Suffolk, on 1 May. *RCh*, p. 184; *CChR*, 1341-1417, p. 293.

Whitsun and Holy Trinity.⁵ Since the earliest possible date for Easter Sunday was 22 March and the latest 25 April, fairs associated with Easter could experience, from year to year, different phases in the agricultural cycle and significantly different weather and travel conditions. Fairs were also linked to other moveable feasts.⁶

Like a market, a fair was normally held at a set place. Urban centres almost inevitably had at least one fair; many had several, held at intervals through the year. Fairs were sometimes held outside the physical limits of the town, where there was space for large gatherings of people and animals. In some cases this was because the fair was not under the control of the town authorities and belonged to a religious house immediately outside the town or to another landlord with interests there. Such fairs nevertheless benefited from their situation close to the town. Some fairs appear to have been held at places of assembly or cult that were already ancient by 1100.

After the Norman Conquest, it is clear that the right to grant markets and fairs was considered to be a royal franchise, although this does not appear to have been comprehensively asserted until around 1200. Markets and fairs over this period acquired increasingly clear identities as institutions, as well as being places and occasions where trade took place. In England a model for market practice was provided by the customs followed at the divers markets belonging to the king, which in a precept issued between 1156 and 1171 Henry II stated were to be employed at the market of the monks of St Neots Priory. At about the same date abbeys in Normandy likewise had common customs in their markets, which Henry specified were to be followed when he granted a new market to a Norman abbey.⁷ By their grants monarchs conveyed the right to hold and to control these events and to collect from them revenues, including tolls and the profits of jurisdiction, which otherwise they would have received themselves. In England it also became the practice to make such grants on condition that the new market or fair did not interfere with an existing one, thus giving the Crown some powers of regulation after a grant had been made. The dispute over the market at Lakenheath, Suffolk, in 1202 may have prompted this innovation. From long before the Norman Conquest, however,

⁵ The seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday was called Whit Sunday, the eighth was Trinity Sunday. For further information regarding feasts, see C.R. Cheney ed., *Handbook of Dates For Students of English History* (London, 1991).

⁶ Relic Sunday, the first Sunday after 7 July, was the date of the fair granted at Fotheringhay, Northamptonshire, in 1457. *CChR*, 1427–1516, p. 128.

⁷ *Actes de Henri II*, i, p. 509, ii, p. 205.

English monarchs had received tolls and related revenues, and occasionally granted others the right to receive them. Sometimes such grants refer to places or institutions, defined by the term *cyping*, which seem very like the later markets, although they were presumably less clearly defined and may have included seasonal trading assemblies. Moreover, in nearby Continental regions Frankish kings and German emperors routinely granted markets (using the term *mercatum*, which well into the twelfth century could denote an annual or seasonal event as well as a weekly market) and fairs in ways which acknowledged their distinctive character as institutions and which often associated them with rights to tolls and mints.⁸

In England royal grants of markets and fairs in something like the precise sense of those terms that prevailed in the thirteenth century and later are known to have been made from soon after the Norman Conquest onwards, although they are systematically recorded only from 1199. Generally, these grants from the king took the form of charters. Many markets and fairs certainly existed before the period of recorded grants: these were held by custom and are described as prescriptive.⁹ A significant, but unquantifiable, number of prescriptive markets was held at places belonging to the king and so did not require a charter. Many such markets were in towns. Moreover, many towns were complex trading settlements before royal grants of market rights became common and so markets held there were often prescriptive. Many of the later charters confirming the rights and customs of those towns make no specific mention of markets or fairs, which as customary events were presumably covered by the general confirmation. The important distinction between granted and prescriptive markets and fairs is discussed in more detail below.

Prescriptive markets are usually identifiable from incidental references or from other evidence for the commercial status of the place where they were held. There may have been many for which no evidence survives. In addition, the king occasionally made a general grant of the right to establish markets or fairs at the manors belonging to a particular lord. Many of those manors may have acquired markets or fairs for which there is no other evidence, but they have not been entered in this Gazetteer unless there is a corroborative reference. Grants of this type that have been identified are listed in Appendix IV.

2. HISTORIOGRAPHY

⁸ The important discussion in F.E. Harmer, '*Chipping and market: a lexicographical investigation*', in C. Fox and B. Dickens, eds., *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe (H.M. Chadwick Memorial Studies)* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 333-60 has not been superseded.

⁹ These markets or fairs were usually described as having been held 'from time out of mind'. Occasionally it was asserted that a market or fair had been held 'since the time of the Conquest' or 'since the time of King William [I]'. E.g. in 1279, William de Breuse was holding a market at Findon, Sussex, which he claimed had been held since the Conquest. (*QW*, p. 760)

Until now, no comprehensive list of markets and fairs in medieval England has been available. In 1888, the *First Report of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls* provided information on 'charters and records relating to the history of fairs and markets'.¹⁰ Unfortunately the *Report* is difficult to use and its information is limited.¹¹

Subsequently work has focused on studies of markets and fairs in individual counties. During the 1970s there was an upsurge in interest in the study of markets and fairs and, from the 1980s onwards, a large number of these county studies have been produced.¹² There is considerable variation in the sources utilised by these county studies and in the chronological range covered.¹³ Many simply list the markets (sometimes also the fairs) granted by royal charter that are recorded in the *Calendar of Charter Rolls*; some cover the period from 1227 to 1516, but many stop c.1350. Generally, prescriptive markets and fairs and those on the royal demesne are excluded.¹⁴ Few county studies address the important issues of which markets or fairs were actually set up, or the length of time that they functioned. In recent years the significance of markets and fairs has attracted increasing attention from historians and economists, including those with a general interest in the contribution of institutions to economic development.¹⁵ Several county lists and studies have been produced, those for Devon and Huntingdon being especially comprehensive.¹⁶ There are no comparable studies for Wales, other than two general urban surveys.¹⁷

Although there are problems with many of the county studies, by combining the evidence in them it has been possible to make generalisations about markets and fairs in England from c.1200 onwards.¹⁸ This indicates that by 1200 there was a network of markets and fairs in England that was dense and highly developed. The number of markets and fairs granted rose sharply in the thirteenth century, declined after the mid fourteenth century and remained low in the fifteenth century. Setting England in a wider context, it is possible to study the development of markets and fairs there much earlier than elsewhere

¹⁰ *First Report of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls, with the Report by Mr Charles I. Elton, Q.C., MP., Commissioner and Mr B.F.C. Costelloe, Assistant Commissioner, on Charters and Records relating to the History of Fairs and Markets in the United Kingdom*, vol. 1, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 1888 session [Command 5550] (London, 1889).

¹¹ It was used to compile a card index of markets and fairs at the Public Record Office, intended as a finding aid. This in turn is not comprehensive and is not arranged in an accessible fashion. Therefore, evidence from the *Report* and the PRO card index was not used in the compilation of the *Gazetteer*. Some page references were obtained from the *Report* for markets and fairs in *Quo Warranto*, which lacks a subject index.

¹² A list is provided in the Appendix.

¹³ Some were compiled from primary sources, but others were based on the *Report* or the PRO card index.

¹⁴ Presumably because there is no single source from which evidence for these can be taken.

¹⁵ R.H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000-1500* (Cambridge, 1993); S. Epstein, 'Regional fairs, institutional innovation and economic growth in late medieval Europe', *EcHR*, second series, 47 (1994), pp. 459-82.

¹⁶ Kowaleski, *Local Markets*; Masschaele.

¹⁷ Griffiths; Soulsby. For Wales, see below.

¹⁸ J. Masschaele, 'The multiplicity of medieval markets reconsidered', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20 (1994), pp. 257-9; R.H. Britnell, 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200-1349', *EcHR*, second series, 34 (1981), p. 210.

in western Europe.¹⁹ This is due to the degree of governmental centralisation in England and to the survival of many systematic records of the royal administration, particularly from 1199 onwards.

3. THE AIMS OF THE GAZETTEER

Despite the importance of markets and fairs in England, until now no comprehensive national survey has been available. This *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516* is a catalogue that aims to provide systematic information about markets and fairs, including when they were established and how long they functioned. The English Gazetteer is arranged by county, as these were set out on the eve of the 1974 boundary changes; within each county, it is arranged by place in alphabetical order.²⁰ The Welsh Gazetteer is a unit by itself, within which the places are arranged in alphabetical order. Welsh counties are not identified as they were not established until 1536, twenty years after the end date for the Gazetteer.²¹

The Gazetteer focuses on the direct evidence for markets and fairs which becomes common from the eleventh century onwards, principally in the form of royal grants. Detailed evidence is provided for the period to 1516. After this date the main sources for such grants are not available in an accessible printed form.

In addition, the Gazetteer presents evidence for the commercial status of places in earlier periods, from Roman times onwards, when trading events comparable to the later markets and fairs were certainly held. This concerns the urban status of settlements, their role as 'central places' and other indications, both direct and indirect, of the practice of trade. After the Roman period, indications of commercial activity can be provided for some places from the seventh century onwards, and for many from the ninth.²² On the whole, this evidence is provided only for places known to have had markets or fairs in the tenth century or later. Consequently, the Gazetteer does not provide full coverage of all trading sites in the Roman and early medieval periods. Moreover, it provides no information on pre-Roman sites of assembly, commerce or exchange, some of which were reused in later times.

While the formal collection of primary evidence for markets and fairs stopped at the year 1516, information about the continuing operation of markets and fairs through to c.1600 is also provided, through reference to Alan Everitt's list of market towns published in 1967 and to William Harrison's list of fairs published in 1587.²³ In some instances,

¹⁹ S. Epstein, 'Regional fairs, institutional innovation and economic growth in late medieval Europe', pp. 463-7.

²⁰ An attempt to re-create the historic medieval counties was abandoned during the project. Many county boundaries changed quite considerably during the medieval period, for example in Gloucestershire.

²¹ The border between Wales and England was of course fluid, particularly earlier in the period. This is reflected in the fact that some places in the English Gazetteer are included in the secondary sources for Welsh urban history, e.g. Clun and Oswestry, Shropshire, both appear in Griffiths, pp. 219-42.

²² Evidence for the early commercial status of places has been taken from a range of secondary sources: see the sections on mints and boroughs below.

²³ Everitt; Harrison, pp. 391-7.

information regarding the functioning of a market or fair after the seventeenth century is included, although not on a systematic basis.

It is hoped that the Gazetteer will make a contribution to studies of continuity and change in settlement and commerce in Britain in its core period, extending from the tenth to the sixteenth century, and that it will also serve as a useful benchmark for studies of the same themes in earlier and later periods. Many pre-Roman, Roman and early medieval places of specialised production or exchange appear in the Gazetteer as sites of later markets. Moreover, the core of the network of markets and fairs that operated in 1700 and later had been established by 1300.

4. THE CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE GAZETTEER ENTRIES

a. Standard information

Each entry in the Gazetteer follows the same basic layout. It begins with standard information, to provide a context for the market and/or fair. The standard information is arranged in a set order, but it should be noted that not all of the information is present in every entry.

Each entry begins with the place-name. The identification of the place as given in the source was accepted.²⁴ Ordnance Survey Landranger maps (scale 1:50,000) and E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, fourth edition (Oxford, 1980) were used as the guide for the spelling of place-names in England. For Welsh places, both the spelling and its form has been followed from the Landranger map. Thus, Carmarthen is recorded on the Landranger map as Carmarthen / Caerfyrddin, and so it appears in the same way in the Gazetteer.

An eight-digit grid reference is provided for each place in the Gazetteer. Numerical grid references have been used, as the project is heavily dependent on analysis using computerised graphs and mapping. Some grid references for England were taken from an existing dataset, but many, including all those for Wales, were obtained by reference to Landranger maps. In general the grid reference for a place denotes the physical centre of a settlement or the site of the parish church.

²⁴ In the few cases that there was reason to query this identification, an explanation has been provided, e.g. Churchover, Warwickshire.

An important indication of whether each place was a centre of local trade and had a market is its urban status. Evidence that a place functioned as a town is often the only sign that it had some form of market, especially before 1100, although for many such early towns there are specific records of their markets at a later date. It cannot be assumed that such places also had a fair. Indications of the urban character of a place are not very precise for medieval England, but an important clue is provided by the description of the place as a 'borough' (*burh* in Old English) or by the use of that word or a cognate term to define its legal status.²⁵ In the Gazetteer, a market has therefore been recorded at every medieval borough, whether or not specific evidence of that market was found during the project. Thus, while research for this project found no specific evidence of a market at Padstow, Cornwall, a market is recorded there in the Gazetteer because Padstow had borough status from 1306.²⁶

Most boroughs have been identified using M.W. Beresford and H.R.P. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs: a handlist* (Newton Abbot, 1973) with the supplement in *Urban History Yearbook* (1981).²⁷ Although Beresford and Finberg is a good comprehensive source, a few entries overstate the case for the borough status of particular places. For example, it lists Bridlington and Pocklington, Yorkshire, as boroughs in 1086.²⁸ However, subsequent studies have questioned this convincingly and therefore Bridlington and Pocklington are not recorded as boroughs in the Gazetteer.²⁹ Therefore, the use of Beresford and Finberg has not been systematic, but reflects uncertainty where this has been brought to our attention.

For the period before 1086, however, Beresford and Finberg's survey provides unreliable coverage and has been supplemented in two ways. The first of these draws on the evidence of the Burghal Hidage, a record of defended places in southern England and the Midlands established under royal authority during the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Some of these burhs were no more than short-term places of refuge (for example Eashing in Surrey, or the later burhs of Burpham and Cissbury in Sussex), but many can be identified in the tenth century or later as thriving towns. For a few of them, including Winchester and Worcester, there are records of marketplaces or market streets from the late ninth or early tenth century. All of them probably involved some form of local exchange so as to support the people who garrisoned or took refuge in them. The Burghal Hidage thus provides important evidence for towns, and thus for markets, in a period for which few other records survive. Evidence for these burhs was taken from D. Hill, *Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981) and D. Hill and A.R. Rumble, eds., *The Defence of Wessex: the Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester Press, 1996).

²⁵ BF, pp. 36-7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80. The note 'no further information for the market' indicates that it was included in the Gazetteer because of the borough status of the place. See also the following section on mints.

²⁷ Darby was also used.

²⁸ BF, pp. 185-6.

²⁹ D.M. Palliser, 'An Introduction to the Yorkshire Domesday', in *The Yorkshire Domesday* (London, 1992), p. 21. A note regarding the Domesday evidence has been entered under both places in the Gazetteer.

A second indication of the early urban and commercial status of a place is whether or not it had a mint, for mints were established in places which were market centres (*port* in Old English) and in burhs.³⁰ In the Gazetteer, a market has been recorded at every place that had a mint in the Anglo-Saxon and/or the Anglo-Norman periods, whether or not specific evidence of that market was found during the project. Therefore, although no specific evidence for a market at Cadbury, Somerset, was found, as there was a mint at Cadbury from the late tenth to the mid eleventh century, Cadbury is entered in the Gazetteer as a place with a market.³¹ Evidence for the operation of mints was taken from C. Challis, *A New History of Royal Mint* (Cambridge, 1992), Table 2, where the operation of mints is related to reigns rather than specific years. For the purposes of closer analysis this table has been supplemented from D.M. Metcalf, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Coin Finds, c.973–1086* (London, 1998) and D. Hill, *Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981).

In order to offer a basic indicator of the relative wealth and size of the places in the English Gazetteer, the value of those assessed in the lay subsidy of 1334 was included. Some of the values were taken from an existing database, but a large number were obtained by reference to R.E. Glasscock ed., *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London, 1975). As many places were assessed jointly in the 1334 lay subsidy, it is often impossible to give a precise value for a specific place.³² The 1334 lay subsidy did not include Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland and Westmorland, and did not assess individual places in Kent.³³ Glasscock's edition of the subsidy provides figures for Cumberland, Northumberland and Westmorland from the 1336 taxation. The lay subsidy was not extended to Wales.

Many places with prescriptive markets or fairs first recorded after the eleventh century, and some with granted markets and fairs, had been important centres at an earlier date and even before the time of the Burghal Hidage. In such cases a brief account is provided of Roman antecedents and of the commercial, administrative or ecclesiastical significance of the place from the late sixth century onwards, so as to provide clues as to possible continuities or to the re-use of sites. It is clear that some of those places operated as places of exchange in a manner similar to that of later towns, but it has not been possible systematically to categorise them according to commercial function.

Many of the markets and fairs set up, or for which rights were granted, did not prosper or eventually failed. Individual failure is not often recorded, but a key aim of the Gazetteer is to provide an indication of whether a medieval market or fair survived into the sixteenth century and beyond. This evidence for continued commercial activity at a place was taken from two main secondary sources. The first was Alan Everitt's list of places, described by him as 'market towns', that had a functioning market in the period c.1500-

³⁰ F.L. Attenborough, ed., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 134-5 (II AEthelstan) and 146-7 (IV AEthelstan).

³¹ The note 'no further information for the market' is included, to indicate that the market was identified by the presence of the mint.

³² A note of this has been included in the Gazetteer where relevant.

³³ Glasscock, pp. xxvi, 36, 140.

1640.³⁴ Everitt's list covers both England and Wales and is the only source that provides such coverage at this date.³⁵ If a place was included on Everitt's list, this is included in the Gazetteer in the form: Market town c.1600 (Everitt, p. reference). A similar indication for fairs is provided by the list of those functioning in England that William Harrison published in 1587 in *The Description of England*.³⁶ He noted both the places at which fairs were held and their feasts. During the course of this project, it became clear that Harrison's list is not comprehensive, but as it is the only source providing national coverage at this date its information has been included.³⁷ If a fair was included on Harrison's list, this is recorded in the Gazetteer in the form: Fair 1587, date of the fair(s) (Harrison, p. reference).

Many Gazetteer entries also include a brief history of the manor, or an explanation of the relationship between the individuals noted, if this is necessary to understand how the market passed between owners, and there is often a reference to a fuller account of the history of the place, in the *Victoria County History* or another local study.

b. The markets and fairs

Under each place in the Gazetteer is a list of the markets and the fairs recorded there before 1516. These were identified by specific reference in the source: to a *forum* or *mercatum* (for a market) or to a *nundinae* or *feria* (for a fair).³⁸ Every reference was recorded, with as much supporting evidence as possible, within the limitations of the project.³⁹ The most basic information is the earliest date at which the market or fair was recorded. In addition to this, as much other information has been provided as possible regarding the establishment and the operation of each market and fair. The length of the entry for each place in the Gazetteer reflects the amount of evidence which was found for it in the sources used.⁴⁰ It does not necessarily reflect the relative importance of the place, its markets or its fairs.⁴¹

³⁴ Everitt. It does not include the day(s) on which the market was held.

³⁵ There are difficulties with Everitt's list, as it is not clear which sources were used in its compilation. However, it remains an extremely valuable source.

³⁶ Harrison. If a place was recorded as having a market by Everitt and/or a fair by Harrison, but no evidence was found of a medieval market or fair there, the place was not included in the Gazetteer.

³⁷ See below.

³⁸ No evidence was found for a medieval market or fair at Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, but it was included in the Gazetteer as it was an early bishopric and is known to have had a market post-1500. In Wales, no evidence was found for either a market or a fair at four places (Builth Wells, Fishguard, Mostyn and Trefilan) but they were included in the Gazetteer as secondary sources provided sufficient evidence of settlement and trade there. Twenty-five markets in Norfolk were included by virtue of their presence on a map of medieval and later county markets compiled by Dymond. D. Dymond, 'Medieval and later markets', in P. Wade-Martins ed., *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk* (Norwich, 1993), pp. 76-7. Three markets in Suffolk were included by virtue of their presence on a map of county markets compiled by Scarfe. N. Scarfe, 'Medieval and later markets', in D. Dymond and E. Martin eds., *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk* (Suffolk, 1988), p. 61.

³⁹ Other evidence of trade, such as wakes, was not recorded.

⁴⁰ There are a few exceptions. For example, Derek Keene's knowledge of Winchester allowed a more detailed and complex entry to be written.

⁴¹ Thus the entry for London is brief in comparison to many other places which were less important commercially.

Markets and fairs can be divided into two categories depending on how they were established: those that were prescriptive and those that were granted. Prescriptive markets and fairs were held by custom. These included many of the oldest and most successful markets and fairs, which were often in urban centres. The problem with prescriptive markets and fairs is that the earliest reference to each often dates from the thirteenth century.⁴² It is not clear how long the market or fair had been operating: was it set up in the thirteenth century, or had it been trading for longer? With a particular type of prescriptive markets – those that were held at boroughs – it is possible to give an indication of how long the market had been trading.⁴³ Thus, the market at Derby, Derbyshire, is first mentioned in 1204, but Derby had been a borough from 917 and had had a mint from about the same time.⁴⁴ It has been assumed that a place that was a medieval borough operated as a centre of local trade and had a market.⁴⁵ It is therefore probable that although the market at Derby is first evidenced in 1204, at that date it had already been trading for several centuries. Similarly, the market at York is first recorded in 1086.⁴⁶ York is first recorded as having borough status in the same year, but it had had a mint from about 924 and Viking coins were recorded earlier.⁴⁷ Furthermore, York had been an episcopal see from 625 and the seat of an archbishop from 735. There is a good deal of archaeological and other evidence that it was an important centre of commerce at that time and so certainly had some form of market. As a *colonia*, York had been a major centre in Roman times.⁴⁸

The second category of markets and fairs is those that were established by a grant. Most often, this took the form of a charter given by the king. As already noted, from about 1066 onwards the right to grant markets and fairs was considered to be a royal franchise although this does not appear to have been comprehensively asserted until around 1200. Before that date grants could sometimes be imprecise. In 1153, for example, Henry duke of Aquitaine granted Robert fitz Harding the manor of Berkeley, Gloucestershire, with a free market on a day of his choosing and his own mint.⁴⁹ From 1199 onwards, royal grants of markets and fairs began to be systematically recorded on the Charter Rolls. Letters patent and letters close were also used to grant markets and fairs and were likewise systematically recorded from early in John's reign. Whatever form it took, from c.1200 onwards a royal grant gave detailed and specific information about the market or fair concerned:

⁴² Due to the general expansion in record keeping at that time and presumably also to the Crown's increasing attempts to regularise markets and fairs from 1199 onwards.

⁴³ This does not apply to other prescriptive markets or to fairs.

⁴⁴ *RCh*, p. 138. *BF*, p. 85. It had a mint in 924-1154, although perhaps not in 1100-35. Challis, Table 2.

⁴⁵ Not all boroughs or mints from the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman periods survived into the later middle ages. Some ceased to function, e.g. a mint was briefly established at Cissbury, Sussex, c.979–1024. Challis, pp. 42, 62.

⁴⁶ Darby, p. 370; Darby and Maxwell, p. 158.

⁴⁷ Darby, p. 368; *BF*, pp. 184-5.

⁴⁸ Important Roman centres are noted in the *Gazetteer*, but this should not be taken as an argument for continuity of settlement or trade.

⁴⁹ *Regesta*, iii, nos. 310, 311.

i. Where it was to be held. Generally this was ‘at the manor’ or ‘at the borough’, although occasionally a precise location was specified, such as by the church, by the castle or by the cemetery.

ii. When it was to be held. For a market, this meant the day of the week. For a fair, it meant both the date and the duration. The Gazetteer records the details of the date and duration of each fair as it is given in the source. The saint’s day is recorded, along with the modern calendar date. The duration of the fair is kept in the form in which it was given, although it has been abbreviated. A fair held on the vigil, feast and morrow of a saint’s day is recorded as vfm. A fair held on the vigil and feast of a saint’s day, plus the next day, is recorded as vf+1. A fair held on the three days before a feast, plus the feast day, is recorded as 3+f.

iii. Who was to hold it. Each grant was made to a named individual or institution, known as the grantee, who received the right to hold the franchise. Personal names, titles and institutional names are generally recorded in the Gazetteer as they were given in the source. In practical terms it must have been essential for a market or fair to have an identifiable individual or institution responsible for its operation. Almost all of the grants were given in hereditary right. In the Gazetteer this has been taken as the norm and it should be assumed that every grant was made to the grantee’s heirs and successors unless otherwise specified. Details of the few exceptions, including life grants and specifications regarding the inheritance of the market or fair (limited to the heirs of the wife, for example) have been clearly noted. The most notable exceptions were those grants made during the minority of Henry III in 1216-27: as the king was under age, no royal grants could be made in perpetuity. Life grants were occasionally made to royal officials, or to members of the royal family, who may have only had a life interest in the manor at which the market or fair was to be held. Other grants were made for the life of one individual and were then to pass to another, such as the market and fair at Wotton under Edge, Gloucestershire, granted in 1252 to Joan de Berkley for life and to Maurice de Berkley, her son and his heirs.⁵⁰

Between 1199 and 1516, a typical charter granted one market and one fair at the same place.⁵¹ However, it was not unusual to receive a grant of a market and two fairs at one place, or of markets and fairs at several places. There are also grants of single markets or fairs. The means of making a grant of a market or fair, developed early in the reign of King John, continued virtually unchanged down to the sixteenth century.

In the Gazetteer, markets and fairs are coded as follows:⁵²

Markets

Prescriptive

Prescriptive: Borough

Prescriptive: Mint

Fairs

Prescriptive

⁵⁰ *CChR*, 1226–57, p. 401.

⁵¹ The most remarkable grant was that on 12 August 1315, when Edward II granted Bartholomew de Baddlesmere fourteen markets and eighteen fairs. *CChR*, 1300-26, p. 282.

⁵² All markets and fairs were treated as prescriptive unless evidence of a grant was found.

Charter
Letter Close
Letter Patent
Grant: Other
Formerly Prescriptive

Charter
Letter Close
Letter Patent
Grant: Other
Formerly Prescriptive

Occasionally, an individual or institution claimed that a charter had been granted to them, but the document could not be produced. When the claim could not be verified either by contemporaries or during the compilation of the *Gazetteer*, the market or fair concerned was treated as prescriptive. However, when contemporary officials accepted the claim, the market or fair concerned was entered in the *Gazetteer* as 'Grant: Other'; see for example, Great Wakering, Essex. The 'Grant: Other' code also has been used for markets and fairs which arise from a fine for which there is no surviving charter, letter close or patent.

One of the problems with any grant of a market or fair is whether it was actually a *new* trading institution, or whether the owner wanted to secure formal recognition of one that already existed. It is impossible to make generalisations about this issue. However, when a market was granted the local sheriff was instructed to publicise it and to invite complaints about the possible effect that it might have on established markets.⁵³ This procedure seems absurd if the market already existed.⁵⁴ Ten grants noted in the *Gazetteer* record that the recipient was to have a market or fair that already existed. These concerned the market at Axminster and the fair at Bampton, Devon; the market at Brenchley, Kent; the market and fair at Chard and the market at Wells, Somerset; the market and fair at Bridlington, the fair at Doncaster and the fair at Rotherham, Yorkshire.⁵⁵ All these grants date from the thirteenth century. For example, in 1204 King John granted a market at Axminster, Devon, to William Brewer, as it was accustomed to be held in that place (*sicut ibi esse consuevit*). This was part of the grant of the manor.⁵⁶ In 1258, Henry III granted Master Osmund, rector of the church of Bampton, Devon, a yearly fair at the chapel of St Luke without the town of Bampton, as enjoyed by his

⁵³ See below.

⁵⁴ The same system also applied to fairs.

⁵⁵ *RCh*, pp. 57b, 81b, 139; *CChR*, 1226–57, p. 123; *CChR*, 1257–1300, p. 12; *CPR*, 1281–92, pp. 216–17. Rev. C.M. Church, 'Some account of Savaric, bishop of Bath and Glastonbury 1192–1205', *Archaeologia* 51 (1888), p. 1051; *PR*, 10 John, pp. 154–5.

⁵⁶ *RCh*, p. 139.

predecessors.⁵⁷ That there are only ten of these cases indicates that securing a charter to ensure formal recognition of an existing trading institution was an exception.

A particular difficulty in compiling the Gazetteer was differentiating between markets and fairs at the same place. Attempting to determine whether a grantee was the successor to the grantee of an earlier market or fair was often complex and sometimes not possible. All grants were treated as *new* markets or fairs *unless*:

- i. there was a specific mention of a regrant, confirmation, move or change of date;
- ii. the grant reiterated the terms of an existing charter, i.e. the same market or fair was granted by the same grantor to the same grantee, or the same market and fair was granted to a descendant or assign of the original grantee (it may or may not have been made by the original grantor).⁵⁸

Where it was not possible to make a direct connection between one grantee and another, each grant was entered as a new market and fair and counted as a separate institution. In some cases, there may have been little or no practical difference between the 'old' market or fair and the 'new'.

From c.1200 onwards anyone who wanted to set up a market or fair had to secure a royal grant. However, although a charter granted the *right* to hold a market or fair, this did not necessarily mean that the market or fair was ever established. From 1200 onwards royal grants were conditional, bestowing the right to hold a market or fair only if this was not detrimental (*nisi nocumentum*) to the existing markets or fairs in the neighbourhood. The concern was that the pattern of trade should not be damaged and that a new market or fair should not divert business from its established rivals. The local sheriff was responsible for publicising new grants of markets and inviting owners of neighbouring markets to object if they felt that their own trade would potentially be damaged.⁵⁹ If such an objection was successful the new market was not set up. Therefore a grant is not sufficient evidence that a market or fair was established.⁶⁰ It is necessary to find corroborating evidence that the grant was turned into reality and that trade actually occurred there. Establishing which markets and fairs were actually set up and how long they traded has been a key aim of the Gazetteer. Many markets and fairs may have flourished during the decades following their foundation, but subsequently faded away as a result of depopulation or competition from other places. Evidence for the continuing survival of a particular market or fair is often incidental and cannot readily be traced. The fact that such institutions once flourished should not be taken as evidence that they still did so in 1516.

⁵⁷ *CChR*, 1257-1300, p. 12.

⁵⁸ Usually the king.

⁵⁹ The same system applied to fairs. This role of the sheriff is recorded throughout the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth, the period in which most royal grants were made.

⁶⁰ Masschaele, 'The multiplicity of medieval markets reconsidered', esp. pp. 267-9.

5. HOW TO READ A GAZETTEER ENTRY

Each entry in the Gazetteer follows the same basic layout:

PLACENAME 8-figure Ordnance Survey national grid reference. If the place was a medieval borough or a mint in the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman period, with first known date. Assessed value in 1334 lay subsidy. If place was a market town <i>c.</i> 1600 (as noted by Everitt). If there was a fair at the place in 1587, with its date (as noted by Harrison). References to works providing background information about the place.	
M (market)	(Type of market — either prescriptive (and perhaps also at borough or mint) or type of grant) day of week market held, date granted or first recorded, grantor, grantee, any other information including regrants (sources are given in parentheses).
F (fair)	(Type of fair — either prescriptive or type of grant) days held — in the form of vfm+1 to represent the vigil, feast and morrow plus the following day, feast name (either feast date or Easter dep, if the feast was movable and was determined by the date of Easter), date granted or first recorded, grantor, grantee, any other information including regrants (sources are given in parentheses).
Any miscellaneous information on the markets/fairs.	

Note that not every category of information will be present for each entry: a place might not have had a borough, or a mint; it might not have been valued in the 1334 subsidy; it might not have been included on either Everitt or Harrison's list.

A typical entry in the Gazetteer would have one market and one fair that were granted in the same royal charter, for example Queen Camel, Somerset:

QUEEN CAMEL 3597 1249. 1334 Subsidy £30.67. Market town *c.*1600 (Everitt, p. 471).

M (Charter) Mon; gr 12 Sept 1264, by K Hen III to John de Burgo. To be held at the manor (*CChR*, 1257–1300, p. 49). In 1275–6, it was alleged that the market raised by John de Burgo was damaging that at Somerton, Somerset (*q.v.*) and the borough of Ilchester, Somerset (*q.v.*) (*RH*, ii, p. 129).

F (Charter) vfm, Barnabas the Apostle (11 Jun); gr 12 Sept 1264, by K Hen III to John de Burgo. To be held at the manor (*CChR*, 1257–1300, p. 49).

This entry begins with standard information, which provides grid references for Queen Camel, its value in the 1334 lay subsidy and notes that Everitt included it in his list of market towns *c.*1600.⁶¹ Evidence has been found for one medieval market at Queen Camel. This was granted by charter and was to be held on Monday. The charter was dated 12 September 1264 and was granted by King Henry III to John de Burgo. The market was to be held at the manor of Queen Camel. In 1275–6, the market was allegedly damaging two other Somerset markets, at Somerton and Ilchester. Evidence has been

⁶¹ The Abbreviations section provides details of those used in the Gazetteer.

found for one medieval fair at Queen Camel. It was also granted by charter and was to be held at the manor of Queen Camel. The fair was to be held on the vigil, feast and morrow of St Barnabas the Apostle, whose feast falls on 11 June.⁶² Hereditability of grants has been taken as the norm in the Gazetteer and all grants should be assumed to be to the heirs and successors of the grantee, unless otherwise stated.

A place that had just one market (in this case, prescriptive) would look like Clifton, Derbyshire:

CLIFTON 4165 3448. 1334 Subsidy £35.25.

M (Prescriptive) *mercatum*, recorded 1222, held by Roger de Hilton, Roger Kide, Richard Cuble, Philip le Mercer and Richard Faber. They were alleged to have set up the market to the detriment of that at Ashbourne, Derbyshire (*q.v.*). The market was held in the vill (*CRR*, x, p. 283). The case continued in 1224 (*CRR*, xi, no. 36).

The entry begins with standard information, which provides grid references for Clifton and its value in the 1334 lay subsidy. Evidence has been found for one market, which was held by prescriptive right. It was described in the source as *mercatum*. The earliest evidence for it dates from 1222, when it was held in the vill by Roger de Hilton, Roger Kide, Richard Cuble, Philip le Mercer and Richard Faber. They were alleged to have set up the market to the detriment of a neighbouring market at Ashbourne, Derbyshire. The legal case concerning these two markets was continuing in 1224.

A place that had borough status, for which no information was found regarding a market would look like Wellington, Somerset:

WELLINGTON 3141 1209. Borough 1330 (BF, p. 159). 1334 Subsidy £21.50. Market town *c.*1600 (Everitt, p. 471).

M (Prescriptive: borough). No further information for the market.

This entry begins with the standard information, providing grid references to Wellington and evidence that it was a borough in 1330, with the source of information regarding the borough. The value of Wellington in the 1334 lay subsidy is given and it was included by Everitt in his list of market towns *c.*1600. No specific reference to a medieval market at Wellington has been found during the compilation of the Gazetteer. However, as Wellington was a borough, it has been assumed that it operated as a centre of trade and had a market. Therefore, a market has been noted at Wellington: it has been recorded as prescriptive and the note states that there is 'no further information for the market.'

Not all grants were made by charter. An example of a place that had a market and a fair granted by letter close is Horsley, Derbyshire:

⁶² It is important to note that the calendar date provided is that of the feast date - it is not necessarily the date on which the fair began. Thus, in Queen Camel, the fair was supposed to begin on 10 June.

HORSLEY 4375 3445. 1334 Subsidy £17.75.

- M** (Letter Close) Thurs; *mercatum*, gr 8 Sept 1267, by K Hen III. To be held at the royal manor. Mandate to the sh of Derbyshire to make the market known and cause it to be held (*CR*, 1264–8, p. 335).
- F** (Letter Close) vfm, Peter ad Vincula (1 Aug); *feria*, gr 8 Sept 1267, by K Hen III. To be held at the royal manor. Mandate to the sh of Derbyshire to make the fair known and cause it to be held (*CR*, 1264–8, p. 335).

This entry begins with the standard information, providing grid references to Horsley and its assessed value in the 1334 lay subsidy. The market at Horsley was granted by a letter close, in which it was described as a *mercatum*. It was to be held on Thursday and was granted on 8 September 1267 by King Henry III. The fact that it was to be held on a royal manor explains why there is no grantee: the market was for Henry himself. An order was sent to the sheriff of Derbyshire to publicise the market and to cause it to be held. The fair at Horsley was set up by the same letter close, with the same instructions to the sheriff. It was to be held on the vigil, feast and morrow of St Peter ad Vincula; the feast falls on 1 August. The fair was described as *feria*.

In order to determine whether a market failed it is necessary first to look at the entry for the market and then to check the standard information for the place to see whether it was included in Everitt's list of market towns functioning c.1600.⁶³ In order to determine whether a fair failed, it is necessary first to look at the entry for the fair and then to check the standard information for the place to see whether it was included in Harrison's list of fairs held there in 1587.⁶⁴ Sometimes there is an exact match between the date of the feast of the medieval fair and the date recorded by Harrison in 1587. For example, the date of the fair granted at Mitchell, Cornwall, was 4 October, which was the same date of the fair recorded there by Harrison.⁶⁵ The match is not always so obvious, for example at Penryn, Cornwall, a fair on the vigil, feast and morrow of St Thomas the Martyr (7 July) was granted in 1259 and a fair on the morrow plus 2 days of St Vitalis (28 April) was granted in 1311.⁶⁶ Harrison records one fair at Penryn, on 1 May.⁶⁷ The 1311 fair was to be held from 29 April to 1 May and therefore matches that recorded by Harrison. At other places, the proximity of the dates suggests that the date of the medieval fair might have moved. For example, at Lydd, Kent, in 1494 a fair was granted on 12 July plus two days.⁶⁸ Harrison records one fair at Lydd, held on 11 July.⁶⁹ It seems very likely that the 1494 fair and that noted in 1587 were directly related.

6. SOURCES

⁶³ Everitt's list does not give the market day.

⁶⁴ Harrison's list does not include all of the medieval fairs that survived into the sixteenth century. For example, it omits the fairs at Amesbury, Ramsbury, Southbroom and Westbury, Wiltshire, for which, see *VCH Wiltshire*, viii, p. 175, x, p. 267, xii, p. 40, xv, p. 46.

⁶⁵ *CChR*, 1226–57, p. 241; Harrison, p. 396.

⁶⁶ *CChR*, 1257–1300, p. 16; *CChR*, 1300–26, p. 183.

⁶⁷ Harrison, p. 393. Presumably, the July fair had lapsed.

⁶⁸ *CChR*, 1427–1516, p. 270.

⁶⁹ Harrison, p. 394.

a. Primary Sources

There is a wide range of potential sources for the study of markets and fairs. In order to compile the Gazetteer it was necessary to focus on those that provided the most information and gave national coverage. Therefore the research concentrated on printed primary sources, almost all of which are records of the royal administration. The principal source was the Charter Rolls which provide evidence for the majority of the grants of markets and fairs made in this period. From their inception in 1199 until the end of John's reign in 1216, the rolls have been printed in full, while the rolls from 1227 to 1516 have been printed as calendars.⁷⁰ Due to the sheer amount of evidence in the calendars it was necessary to work through each of the volumes page by page.

During Henry III's campaigns in Poitou in 1242 and in Gascony in 1253-4 royal charters were recorded on the Gascon Rolls and Patent Rolls, instead of on the Charter Rolls.⁷¹ Although the evidence in the Gascon and Patent Rolls should be identical, the printed version of the former provides more information for grants of markets and fairs than that of the latter.⁷² Therefore both of these sources were used for the duration of these campaigns. The Gascon Rolls provided evidence for grants of around fifty markets and sixty fairs in 1253-4 alone.⁷³

The Charter Rolls end in 1516: subsequently grants were recorded in the Patent Rolls, which are calendared in the *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*.⁷⁴ These volumes are large and lack a subject index, making it extremely difficult to pick out grants of markets and fairs.⁷⁵ For this reason, the systematic collection of primary source material for the Gazetteer terminated with 1516.

The Close Rolls were the second most useful source for the Gazetteer.⁷⁶ As letters close were the routine means by which the king sent instructions to his sheriffs there are many of these that relate to markets and fairs. First, when the king granted a market or fair a letter close was sent to the sheriff of the relevant county informing him of the grant and ordering him to publicise it in the county court. This provides invaluable information particularly on grants made in the years for which the Charter Rolls do not survive, for example, 1233-4. Second, there are many orders to sheriffs to publicise a particular

⁷⁰ *RCh* and *CChR* respectively. It was not possible to include in the Gazetteer the witness lists to each charter, the location where it was granted, or the occasional note that the charter was granted 'at the instance of' an individual. There are no Charter Rolls for the period 1216-27, when Henry III was a minor.

⁷¹ *Rôles Gascons*.

⁷² Few of the county studies of markets and fairs have used the Patent Rolls for these years and none have utilised the Gascon Rolls.

⁷³ As they were charters, they were coded as such in the Gazetteer.

⁷⁴ *L and P Henry VIII*.

⁷⁵ This source has only been used on a few occasions for the Gazetteer, generally when it provides information relating to markets and fairs in the medieval period. For example under Evesham, Worcestershire, there is a note that in 1546 Henry VIII granted Sir Philip Hoby the three annual fairs that had formerly belonged to Evesham abbey. *L and P Henry VIII*, 21 pt 2, no. 332 (8). It is possible that the three fairs were medieval in origin, but no other evidence was found for them.

⁷⁶ *RLC*, *CR*, *CCR*.

market or fair or to oversee a change to it, such as a change of market day.⁷⁷ Several of these letters close relate to the king's own markets and fairs, situated on the royal demesne.⁷⁸ Sheriffs also received orders to shut down markets and fairs, perhaps following a legal case, or because of the arrival of the eyre, or in a time of war. Third, letters close were used to make grants during the minority of Henry III.⁷⁹ Given the inadequate index of *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum* (which covers 1204-27) it was necessary to read through this work page by page.⁸⁰ The Close Rolls edited or calendared for the period from 1227 onwards are of much greater extent, and so for these it was necessary to rely on the indexes in the published volumes, which are of varying coverage and quality.⁸¹

Several other chancery, exchequer and legal sources were also used systematically. They include the printed collections of the grants and other royal acts made between 1066 and the beginning of the Charter Rolls in 1199.⁸² Fines made for later twelfth and early thirteenth century grants of markets and fairs have been taken from the printed Pipe Rolls.⁸³ Evidence for legal cases involving, or mentioning, markets and fairs in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries has been taken from printed sources.⁸⁴

As already noted, some grants of markets and fairs were made by letter patent. These were extremely rare in the thirteenth century; in the fourteenth century there were only a few more, mainly in the 1340s. From the mid fifteenth century onwards, however, letters patent were increasingly used to make grants of markets and particularly of fairs. The printed volumes of the calendared Patent Rolls do not have adequate indexes: a project previously carried out at the Centre for Metropolitan History revealed that they do not provide references to all the markets and fairs recorded. Therefore, it was not possible to use these volumes of the Patent Rolls systematically.⁸⁵

Other printed primary sources were used, which it was not possible to search systematically due to constraints of time and the difficulties presented by inadequate

⁷⁷ Letters close were invaluable when trying to differentiate between markets and fairs during the Gazetteer project, e.g. the Charter Roll indicates that a Friday market was granted at Combwell, Kent, in 1232 and a Tuesday market in 1233. However, letters close make it clear that the Tuesday market replaced that on Friday, rather than being a second market. *CChR*, 1226-57, pp. 148, 175; *CR*, 1231-4, pp. 27, 196.

⁷⁸ As the king did not need to grant himself a charter in order to set up a new market or fair, or to change one of his existing trading institutions, such letters close often provide the only available information.

⁷⁹ When royal charters could not be granted as the king was under age.

⁸⁰ It was these volumes that provided the majority of the evidence for grants made by letters close. Grants were also made by letter close between 1227-60, but thereafter the number of grants declines dramatically until the late fourteenth century, after which no grants were made by this means.

⁸¹ Many of the volumes covering the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries lack a subject index. In these cases it was necessary to read through the general index, searching for references to markets or fairs under individual places. It was not possible to complete this for every volume.

⁸² *Regesta*; *Regesta 1066-87*; *Actes de Henri II*.

⁸³ *PR*.

⁸⁴ *Abb. Plac.*; *CRR*.

⁸⁵ Only *RLP* was used systematically. For *Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, 1216-32*, ed. T.D. Hardy, 2 vols. (London, 1901-03) and *CPR* the subject index was used if this was available. For the volumes covering 1485-1494 and 1494-1509 the entire index was searched for references to markets or fairs.

indexes.⁸⁶ A small number of sources from institutional, episcopal and personal archives were used and occasionally evidence was taken from chronicles. The only manuscript source used was the Fine Rolls during the minority of Henry III.⁸⁷

The greatest problem faced by the project was the enormous amount of evidence available. As volumes of some of the most important sources in print lack adequate subject indexes the research took longer than originally estimated. Undoubtedly, there is a great deal more information for medieval markets and fairs to be found in a wide variety of sources. It is hoped that this will provide additional evidence for the markets and fairs already recorded in the Gazetteer rather than for new markets and fairs not listed. It is intended that this material be incorporated into the online Gazetteer as it comes to light.

b. Secondary Sources

Secondary sources were used for additional information relating to markets and fairs and for the standard information relating to each place. M. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (London, 1967) was valuable for the background information provided to many places in England and Wales. It has already been noted that some local studies were used.

As the collection of source material neared its end the evidence for markets and fairs was checked against selected volumes of the Victoria County History. It was not possible to use the Victoria County History as a systematic source for markets and fairs, as the amount of information provided for them varies considerably between counties and between the earlier and later volumes.⁸⁸ Moreover the lack of adequate subject indexes in all but the most recent volumes makes it difficult to find the information. These most recent volumes were the most useful to the project, in particular for the evidence they provided on which markets and fairs were in fact set up and how long trade continued there.⁸⁹ Likewise, it was only possible to use a small number of other local studies which may throw light on markets and fairs.

It was at this late stage of the research that the evidence compiled for the Gazetteer was checked against already published county lists and other studies.⁹⁰ In general it was the most recent, comprehensive studies that provided additional useful information.

c. Wales

⁸⁶ *CIM*; *CIPM*; *Cartae Antiquae*; *CAD*; *FA*; *QW*; *RH*. During the course of the project, it became clear that these indexes were not comprehensive. Inevitably by systematically working through the *CIPM*, *CPR*, *CCR*, *QW* and *RH* it would be possible to find more evidence for markets and fairs.

⁸⁷ These were being consulted for another project.

⁸⁸ *VCH* volumes for the following counties were used: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, Yorkshire (East Riding and North Riding).

⁸⁹ *VCH* provided information regarding the descent of manors and the families who held them, which was invaluable when attempting to distinguish between different places and the markets and fairs held there.

⁹⁰ Listed in Appendix IV.

The primary and secondary sources available for Wales are more limited than those for England. This restricted the amount and scope of evidence that could be collected for markets and fairs and for the general information for each place in Wales. However, the primary sources used for the English Gazetteer provided more information regarding Welsh markets and fairs than was expected; in particular, the *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, the *Calendar of Close Rolls* and the *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*. A number of primary sources relating to Wales were also used.⁹¹ This was supplemented by evidence from secondary sources, principally R.A. Griffiths, ed., *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, 1978) and I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, 1983) which were used for the standard information and history for each place. Additional information was taken from R.A. Griffiths, 'The medieval boroughs of Glamorgan and medieval Swansea', in T.B. Pugh ed., *Glamorgan County History*, iii (Cardiff, 1971) and R.A. Griffiths, 'A Tale of Two Towns: Llandeilo Fawr and Dinefwr in the Middle Ages', in R.A. Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (Stroud, 1994). Significantly more information was collected for the Welsh Gazetteer than had been expected. It is concentrated in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries and much of it dates from the conquest by King Edward I and its immediate aftermath.

7. ANALYSIS OF THE GAZETTEER MATERIAL: SOME INITIAL FINDINGS

The evidence for the Gazetteer was compiled in Idealist textbases, with one for each English county and another for Wales. These were reformatted in Word to produce this book and the online version of the Gazetteer.

As well as providing detailed information on 2,393 places in England and Wales where there were markets or fairs during the period, the Gazetteer is intended as a resource that will enable systematic study of these important commercial institutions. For that purpose a simplified database of information from the Gazetteer, linked to a geographical information system, has been constructed. A project currently in progress at the Centre for Metropolitan History, and supported by the Economic and Social Research Council, is using that simplified database to undertake a broad analysis of the period 700-1600, along with a more detailed investigation of the political context of grants during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.⁹²

The following brief discussion presents some results from the analysis to illustrate the potential of the material and some of its complexities and limitations. Current research is

⁹¹ *St David's Episcopal Acta, 1085-1280*, ed. J. Barrow (Cardiff, 1998); *The Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of St. David's, 1397 to 1518*, ed. R.F. Isaacson (London, 1917-20); *Ministers' Accounts for West Wales, 1277-1306*, i, ed. M. Rhys (London, 1936) and *Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales*, ed. W. Rees (Cardiff, 1975). Each was used systematically. Nevertheless, it was necessary to rely more on secondary sources for evidence for markets and fairs in Wales than for their English counterparts.

⁹² 'Markets and fairs in thirteenth-century England' (ESRC award no. R000239108).

exploring many of the issues raised by these broad conclusions. The analysis focuses on England, since the material for Wales predominantly concerns the late thirteenth century and later periods and is not comparable with that for England in earlier times.

The total numbers of markets and fairs known (either by grants of the right to hold them or as prescriptive institutions) in England by successive dates display marked regional variations both in terms of density and rate of foundation (Tables 1 and 2). Of the totals of markets and fairs established or granted by 1516, only 15 per cent of markets and 5 per cent of fairs are recorded by 1200, with the corresponding proportions for 1300 being 71 per cent and 59 per cent respectively. The greatest rate of new creations was in the twelfth century for fairs and in the thirteenth for markets. This may reflect successive stages in the intensification of commerce, but it is possible that before 1200 owners were more likely to seek royal charters for fairs than for markets and that the totals reflect the high proportion of twelfth-century markets that were prescriptive.⁹³ These figures concern the numbers of institutions recorded rather than of places where markets or fairs were held. Figures for the latter would be a little different, since some places had more than one market and a greater number had more than one fair. Relatively few places had only a market or only a fair.

The totals in Table 1, graphically expressed in Fig. 1, represent the markets and fairs recorded by the given dates rather than those actually in operation. Up to 1300 the figures perhaps roughly correspond to the numbers of operating institutions, although many of those probably did little business and a significant number may have failed by the early fourteenth century. After 1300, especially following depopulation and other changes, many markets and fairs failed. In most cases it is impossible to date such failures with any precision. Many of the grants made after 1300, and even some before that date, probably concerned institutions that replaced failures. For a small number of settlements in the *Gazetteer* it is possible to be certain that they ceased to be sites of trade, because they were washed away by the sea, were destroyed by military action, or were replaced by another more favourably-situated commercial settlement nearby. The cessation of such places has been taken account of in the statistics, and will account for some small variations in totals.⁹⁴

⁹³ For prescriptive markets and fairs, see above, p. *** and below, p. ***.

⁹⁴ The following places are counted as having ceased to have a commercial life (with the estimated date of latest activity indicated): Berkshire, Old Windsor (1109); Cornwall, St Stephens (1069); Cumberland, Waver and Skinburness (1309); Devon, Halwell (919); Kent, Lympne (1049); Lancashire, Penwortham (1099); Shropshire, Quatford (1109); Somerset, Cadbury (1049); Suffolk, Lothingland (1249); Surrey, Eashing (919); Sussex, Burpham (969), Cissbury (1029), Old Winchelsea (1283); Wiltshire, Chisbury (1029), Old Sarum (1349); Yorkshire, Ravenserodd (1369); Wales, Castell y Bere (1299), Kenfig (1469).

Even with such caveats in mind the regional variations seem significant.⁹⁵ In 1100 the South East and the South West had the highest densities of markets and the South West had the highest density of fairs. The North had by far the lowest densities. Over the ensuing century the greatest rates of increase for fairs were in the South East and the North, and for markets in the North. The twelfth century was a time of exceptionally rapid development in the North. On the other hand, this picture of the relative 'backwardness' of the North may in part reflect the relative lack of documentation for the region before 1200 and the fact that it was remote, and in some areas exempt, from royal control. During the thirteenth century the greatest rate of increase for markets was in East Anglia, and those for fairs in the Midlands and the South West. By 1300 East Anglia had acquired the highest density of both markets and fairs. The material throws important light on regional differences in the progress of commercialisation. At a county level there are some very marked differences in the overall density of markets (Fig. 2), with part of the South West and East Anglia, along with the East Midlands and part of the South East, standing out very clearly as zones of high density. The impact of London's dominant market, inhibiting the foundation of other markets, may be apparent in the low densities in Middlesex and other parts of its immediate hinterland (cf. Figs. 3 and 4, and below). The lowest densities were generally towards the extreme north and west of England, reflecting the general spread of commercialisation and urbanisation from the south and east. The low densities in Cambridgeshire and Hampshire, containing areas of sparsely-settled fens and chalk downland respectively, present striking contrasts to neighbouring counties. There are some broad correspondences between the density of markets and that of population density in 1377.⁹⁶ Closer comparison, however, indicates some discrepancies. Cornwall, for example, ranked higher for its density of population than for that of markets. For other districts, which may have been notable for the intensity of local trading, the reverse was true. These areas included the counties bordering the Thames estuary, and Dorset, Somerset and Gloucestershire in the South West. The degree to which such local densities may reflect political factors, or the incidence of new foundations replacing old ones, remains to be elucidated.

The map of all places in 1516 where a market or fair had been established or where rights to one had been acquired (Fig. 3) reveals a broadly similar distribution, but with some distinctive local concentrations which reflect patterns of settlement and trading. In the South West, for example, there was a notable clustering of markets along the rivers Axe and Parrett and extending along the western and southern edges of the Plain of Somerset into Blackmoor Vale. In the South East there were concentrations along the shores of the Thames estuary and the Medway. These and similar concentrations elsewhere indicate the importance of coastal and overseas trade, especially when associated with London, as stimuli to the development of markets. Overall, transport routes emerge as a significant

⁹⁵ The regions are those adopted in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*: South East (Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex); South West (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire); East Anglia (Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk); Midlands (Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire); and North (Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire).

⁹⁶ For maps, see H.C. Darby, ed., *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600* (Cambridge, 1976), Fig. 42 and G. Astill and A. Grant, eds, *The Countryside of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), Fig. 9.3.

influence on the pattern. In the Midlands and East Midlands, there were distinctive lines of market settlements along the rivers Nene and Welland. Along several stretches of the roads from London to the North, including the Great North Road and the present day A10 and A14, there were lines of closely-spaced market settlements whose existence was presumably a response to traffic. Similarly, several routes leading out of Wales into the Midlands were marked by very regular sequences of markets. This points to the significance of the cattle trade for structuring parts of the market network.

Close examination of these patterns in local contexts and of their evolution over time promises to be very revealing. A simple mapping of the markets and fairs of the South East at three successive dates (Fig. 4) indicates what seem to be important stages of development. In 1200 markets and fairs were on the whole widely spaced, and the south-western part of Essex and the Wealden districts of Kent, Surrey and Sussex were especially notable for their absence. Major routes, such as the roads from London to Winchester, Dover and Colchester, a stretch of the middle and upper Thames, and perhaps the Icknield Way were marked by markets and fairs. By 1300 there had been considerable infilling along some of these routes and in the areas between them, while the linear clusters along the Thames estuary had become particularly striking. The markets and fairs granted between 1300 and 1516 did not fundamentally alter this pattern. The changes up to 1300 reflect the more intensive exploitation of agricultural and other resources in the region and the development of overseas trade, especially through London. Broadly, this pattern corresponds to other indications that the South East, and especially the counties bordering the Thames estuary, was the most commercialised region of England. Those indications included the density of markets (Fig. 2), and measures from the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries concerning 'urban potential' (the degree to which towns had the potential of interacting closely with each other) and London's economic interaction with its hinterland.⁹⁷ The impact of London was not the sole force behind the emergence of markets in the South East. Despite the relative density of markets in the Weald by 1300, for example, they seem to have had little direct commercial contact with London.⁹⁸ Here, as in many parts of England, circuits of exchange may have been predominantly local, at least in their origin. It is possible, nevertheless, that intermediate commercial centres served to link London with Wealden markets.

In most cases, our information on markets and fairs will not allow us to estimate their significance as sites of trade. The 1334 subsidy valuations can sometimes provide an indication, but very often they reflect agrarian rather than commercial wealth. Another approach would be to assess the significance of market settlements in terms of their urban status. That status alone can be an unreliable guide to commercial activity, but in combination with other indicators, such as poll-tax population in 1377,⁹⁹ could provide a systematic indication of the more important market centres in the fourteenth century and thus the possibility of assessing the operation of lesser markets within regional

⁹⁷ D.M. Palliser, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 1, 650-1540 (Cambridge, 2000), Maps 22.6 and 22.7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Map 22.7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Map 22.5.

frameworks or hierarchies. Similar issues can be explored by classifying markets according to the day of the week on which they were held, and fairs according to their season, so revealing localised circuits of trade. The *Gazetteer* opens up many possibilities for exploring the commerce of medieval England and Wales.

Three-quarters of all markets recorded by 1516, and 86 per cent of all fairs, are known to have been created by royal grants. The remainder were prescriptive and were either established by custom or were set up by a grant of which no record survives. From about 1200 onwards royal grants of markets and fairs were recorded systematically and the annual totals of new markets and fairs granted can be tabulated (Figs 5 and 6). Fifty-seven per cent of all markets existing in or before 1516, and 54 per cent of all fairs, were created during the thirteenth century (cf. Table 1), almost all as a result of royal grants. From their overall incidence it is clear that there was a strong underlying demand for grants of markets and fairs up to the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Subsequently, and especially after the Pestilences, that demand fell away, although from the mid fifteenth century onwards there was a revival in the level of grants, especially for fairs. The great flow of grants during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was far from even, however, and does not seem directly to reflect a steady increase in commercial activity. There are some indications of a cycle of grants, with peaks in the 1220s, the 1250s and the first decade of the fourteenth century. This could be an economic phenomenon reflecting supply and demand, whereby the demand for grants periodically fell as new markets and fairs were set up only to rise again as further opportunities for establishing them were identified. On the other hand, some of the peaks clearly reflect the course of political events. The peak around 1220, for example, was associated with the restoration of peace after a period of civil war and with the regency of William Marshal who, along with other members of the government during the minority of Henry III, benefited from grants of market and fair rights for which no fees were charged. Another peak was associated with the end of the king's minority in 1227. Similarly, the peak in the 1250s seems to be associated with the king's urgent need for money and political support. The income to be gained from grants of market rights may not have been significant, but the political benefits of patronage arising from assignments of rights to supporters, or potential supporters, in particular parts of the kingdom could have been very valuable. The level of grants then fell severely during the baronial wars. Other peaks and troughs may also have political causes. Thus peaks in 1315 and 1318 were largely accounted for by grants to the Bartholomew de Baddlesmere and Hugh de Audele, respectively, each of whom was at that time close to the king, though they subsequently fought against him at Boroughbridge. Research now in progress is exploring these and other aspects of the political economy of market and fairs during the thirteenth century.

Some of the markets and fairs for which rights were granted may not in the end have been set up or may not have prospered for long. In a number of cases market rights were granted for places very close to other markets and certainly less than the six and two-thirds miles that in the mid thirteenth century was accepted as a rule of thumb definition of 'neighbouring'.¹⁰⁰ Such markets may have been at particular risk of failure, but since

¹⁰⁰ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 83.

they appear in especially densely populated areas of East Anglia, Kent, and Somerset (Figs. 3 and 4) there may have been sufficient local business to keep them going. The survival of markets into the sixteenth century throws some light on the question of the economic robustness of individual institutions and on regional change (Table 2). The earlier foundations, which presumably occupied the most favoured and established niches for trade in agrarian and other products, had the best chance of survival. Thus 72 per cent of places with a market in 1200, but only 39 per cent of places with a market (or a grant of market rights) in 1300, were still 'market towns', according to Professor Everitt's list, about 1600. Of the markets set up by 1200, those of the Midlands seem to have the best chance of survival, followed by those of the South West. Of the markets in 1300, those in the North stood the best chance of survival, but the chances for those in three other regions were almost as good, at around 40 per cent. In marked contrast, the markets founded in East Anglia during the thirteenth century had a much lower chance of survival than those of other regions. This topic remains to be further explored, but it is possible that a heavy loss of population during the fourteenth century, combined with an increasing concentration of overseas trade in the South East, undermined the many small markets that had proliferated in East Anglia during the thirteenth century. The material and these forms of analysis promise to throw much new light on the characteristics of regional economies both before and after the thirteenth century.

8. PRESENT DAY MARKETS AND FAIRS

It is important to note that the information in the *Gazetteer* has no bearing on markets and fairs held in the present day nor on any claims to hold markets and fairs. The rights to hold markets and fairs have been altered substantially in the subsequent centuries, by changes in land holding (for example following the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid sixteenth century) and by the re-organisation of county boundaries and of local government.