
Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume XCI
for 2002



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**Volume XCI
for 2002**

Editor Alison Taylor

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Editorial

After two themed volumes these *Proceedings* return to the usual PCAS format of mixed papers, covering excavations, local history, landscape archaeology, architecture and historical geography. Indeed, in the finest antiquarian tradition many of the papers involve more than one of these disciplines. There should therefore be something to interest all members in this miscellany.

Two departures from recent practice are the inclusion of Conference synopses and an abbreviated *Conduit*. The synopses are by popular request, rising from a realisation that many members would be grateful to have a lasting reminder of these important papers. We are grateful to the authors who supplied copy so conscientiously after the event (naturally we had not thought of this in advance), and to Derek Booth who collected them all together. *Conduit* had to be an even more last-minute construct, when it became clear that the County Council could no longer keep up with the necessary production time-scale. This year's approach is a bit of an experiment, and it will be useful to know what reaction we have both from members and from affiliated societies.

Alison Taylor

President's Address

Two years as President is too short a time to see through any substantial programme of reform for CAS. When I was elected there were a number of initiatives I wanted to start in the hope they would mature in another President's time. To this end Derek Booth as Secretary and I put out a questionnaire in the year 2000 to profile our membership and to canvas opinion on possible changes.

It has been a central part of my Presidency to re-imbue the Society and its membership with confidence in its right to express opinion on heritage issues. It is essential that there remains a well-informed independent Society to safeguard archaeological and related services at a time when other pressures and agenda take precedence within local and central governmental organisations which we perhaps naively assume will be acting in our best interests in protecting the past. It is particularly regrettable that CAS has been excluded from representation within long-established fora to discuss and scrutinise public heritage services within Cambridgeshire at this time.

Another issue I hoped we could address was to reverse the decline of amateur archaeology, perhaps by re-establishing the Society's post of Director of Fieldwork, and to encourage research-led investigation in the County once more. This latter still awaits the right person and opportunity, but I am pleased there are encouraging signs in the way local groups have attracted grants which will give them solid research foci and draw in new members. Notable amongst these are Thriplow Society, Fulbourn Village History Society, Haverhill and District Archaeological Group and Cambridge Archaeology Field Group.

We asked members if it would be beneficial for CAS to develop other venues for meetings, and would there be interest in workshops on current research topics. We have developed the workshop idea with this year's conference dedicated to the archaeology, architecture and history of Ely, a town that has had considerable investigation in the past ten years, with some startling new discoveries but little co-ordination or academic discussion. Synopses of the talks are published within this volume. From October we shall be holding our monthly meetings in more comfortable and more accessible surroundings, in the newly built Divinity Faculty at the Sidgewick Site.

Other positive steps are that, after two years I can report that the Web page is now complete and will shortly appear at www.Cambridge-Antiquarian-Society.org.uk, and that the Society has taken back full ownership of *Conduit* which, over the past ten years, had been produced jointly with Cambridgeshire County Council.

In summary there has been good progress over the past two years and the Society will continue to build upon its strengths as the paramount amenity society guarding Cambridgeshire's heritage. Government policies at central and local level are capricious and we cannot afford to put faith in them without constant scrutiny and challenge. With the advent of regional government and root and branch reform of the planning system, a Cambridgeshire focus for our heritage provided by CAS will be ever more imperative. The Society is therefore essential and I thank you all for continuing to support and contribute to it. I am pleased to leave it in the capable hands of your secretary Liz Allan, and new President, Tony Kirby.

Tim Malim

A Reconstruction of the Medieval Cambridge Market Place

Peter Bryan and Nick Wise

That the market place in medieval times occupied an area approximately twice its present size is well known to scholars. Recent research into the properties in this area and into college and town archives has brought to light considerable detail about the medieval market place and its activities. This paper builds on the research by attempting a reconstruction of that market place, showing the activities and sites associated with it.

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to recreate the central Cambridge market place and its activities as they were in the medieval period. Although it centres on the years 1150 to 1400, its scope cannot be entirely limited to these dates, as a number of important aspects of the market antedate and postdate this period. It is also the case that other activities and named sites, which are only mentioned in surviving documents of a date later than 1400, are likely to have been in existence for some considerable time before their first record. The period 1150 to 1400 was one in which markets were established all over England, and as a result documents relating both to the founding and activities of markets became more numerous. For Cambridge, both town and college archives supply evidence that particular activities were grouped within certain areas or along rows of shops or stalls. These often carried an appropriate name for the wares and produce sold there.

In common with many English towns, Cambridge has a market place which can be traced back for many centuries. Precisely how far back is not clear, for there is no written record of its origin; the earliest written references seem to be in the 13th century. The earliest reliable map evidence is found in that produced by Hamond in 1592, which was an accurate and measured plan laid down to scale, although it does have errors in detail. Earlier maps by Lyne (1574) and Smith (1588) were picturesque but scarcely reliable, for they do not provide accurate dimensions, or in some cases, relative locations. None of these maps show the market in great detail, but further discussion of the map evidence will be found later in this paper. In terms of official documents, unlike many towns in the 11th to the 14th centuries, Cambridge never acquired a specif-

ic market charter; its right to hold a market seems to have been accepted as established by right of custom. There are however oblique references in the reign of Henry I which indicate that a flourishing market was already in existence. In 1118 a grant of the monopoly of the tax on waterborne trade in the Shire loading and unloading at Cambridge was made by Henry I:

'I forbid that any boat shall ply at any shore of Grentabrugeshaira, unless at the hythe of my borough of Cantebruge, nor shall barges be laden, unless in the borough of Cantebruge, nor shall anyone take toll elsewhere but only there'.¹

It is almost inconceivable that a town which controlled so much river trade would not have had a significant market. A later charter of John in 1201 makes a similar oblique reference granting to the burgesses of Cambridge the following privilege:

'Whosoever should come to the borough of Cambridge with his merchandise, of whatever place, whether stranger or otherwise, might come, tarry and depart in safety, and without disturbance, rendering the right customs'.²

The wealth of the town is attested by other evidence, notably the presence of St Benet's church, whose Saxon tower, dating from about 1025, is accepted as proof of a wealthy post-Danish settlement. Commodities carried by the river and along local roads must have created most of this wealth. Although this cannot be stated with certainty, if a prosperous market was in existence by the 11th century it is scarcely likely that it had gained such a position overnight. A 10th century origin is therefore feasible (see Alison Taylor's *Cambridge: the hidden history* for the development of early settlement in the market area). What is certain is that by the period of which we write a large and prosperous market was operating in what we know as the market place. Other areas in the town had market functions. The main hythe for the loading and unloading of goods was at Quayside, the commodity hythes were along the east bank of the river (eg Corn Hythe, Flax Hythe and Salt Hythe), and

there was a market area at the top of Castle Hill, called Ashwykeston, which was probably older in foundation than the central market place. There must have been some economic linkage between these areas, but they are not the main concern of this paper.

Although the existence of a large central market place at an early date is certain, it has not yet been possible to establish the precise position and details of all of the individual buildings which surrounded it. Research in recent years by Dr Rosemary Horrox and by Catherine Hall has uncovered details of many of these properties, but so far it has not proved possible to show their exact relationship to later buildings. It is possible to show by comparison with Hamond's map of 1592 that in his time both the size and shape of the market place in terms of its surrounding general building lines were similar to those which still exist. Nevertheless that cannot be taken as proof that there were not shifts in the relative positions and dimensions of individual properties between the earlier medieval period and the time of Hamond's map.

There was also one additional area south-east of the market place (not shown on Fig. 1), which formed a very important adjunct to the market. This was the Fair Yard, a large roughly triangular open space lying between Corn Exchange Street and St Tibb's Row where these two lanes formerly converged, at what is now Downing Street. The Fair Yard has also been recorded as the Beast Market, later known as Hog Hill and St Andrew's Hill. Corn Exchange Street was originally Fair Yard Lane and later Slaughterhouse Lane, finally assuming its present name in 1844. The importance of the Fair Yard area was that it served to hold the beasts brought in from the surrounding countryside, which were sold here, prior to their slaughter and preparation for sale in the market. A scalding house, where animals such as pigs and poultry were placed in boiling water to enable their skin or feathers to be more easily removed, stood on the west side of the Fair Yard, and is recorded in the Treasurers' Accounts for 1423. The Fair Yard was, as is amply recorded at later dates, a thoroughly unwholesome area, and its activities were obviously unsuited to the main market place. Indeed it was customary in most, if not in all market towns, for the beast market to be well separated from the main market, often outside the town walls.

College documents of the early medieval period show that areas behind the building frontages facing the market were in use well before the mid-14th century. This is confirmed by archaeological evidence which has revealed Saxo-Norman pottery in pits associated with some of these buildings.³ These pits were dug for rubbish disposal or to provide gravel for paving and building. Gravels underlie most of central Cambridge, laid down by the Cam when it flowed along different courses and at different heights. Beneath the gravels lies the impermeable Gault clay which prevents the percolation of rain water, and the gravels were therefore a valuable source of water, and shallow wells were sunk into them. This has been cited as one reason for the early settlement of the

market area. In the earlier part of this period areas behind the street frontages were often used as gardens or yards; in later times tenements were built in many of these open spaces. These were accessed either by narrow paths leading from the frontages or more commonly from lanes parallel to the street frontages running along the back of the properties, thereby serving them all. These back lanes were a common source of dispute when attempts, usually successful, were made to enclose them by individual property owners. By the 15th and 16th centuries some of them had been completely lost. Alwynes Lane (Fig. 1: A2 & A3), parallel to and north of the Cutlers' Row, is one such back lane beyond the market place. Alwynes Lane appears constantly in local records with regard to enclosure or stopping up, as late as 1737;⁴ the earliest mention of this lane is in 1260, which refers to unauthorised enclosure: 'Thomas Tulet who is dead, obstructed a lane called Alwines Lane, which was a common thoroughfare for the whole vill'.⁵

The nature and activities of the market place

The medieval market place (Fig. 1) formed a roughly trapezoidal shape extending over a far wider area than that of the present day. Its north-south axis would have been about 160 metres (from St Mary's Street to Wheeler Street) compared with the present market north of the Guildhall, which is approximately 77 metres north-south. Its east-west dimensions would have been about 57 metres in the north, widening to some 76 metres in the south. The evidence for this, presented in this paper, is that documents name market activities and areas which can be located with reasonable accuracy within this larger area. The smaller size of the modern market is largely due to the growth of municipal buildings in the southern part of the market place since the 18th century. For this reason 19th century writers and artists showed the market place as occupying only the northern half of its former area, and the southern half gradually faded from public consciousness.

The large area of the medieval market was not an entirely open space, for buildings existed within it by the 13th century, and probably earlier. In a roughly central position there was a small cluster of 'public buildings' consisting of a gaol and a Guildhall or Tollbooth. These were not large buildings, for when the Guildhall was rebuilt in 1386, (itself implying an earlier building), the new Guildhall was only 22 feet by 17.5 feet. This was recorded by the architect James Essex late in 1781, prior to his demolition of the 14th century building and construction of the 1782 Guildhall.⁶ Further consideration is given to these buildings later in the paper, but it is clear from the small dimensions that they were not dominant physical features.

A far larger group of buildings intruded into the market place at the northern end. It is known that from at least the early 13th century houses surrounded the eastern end of Great St Mary's church, as

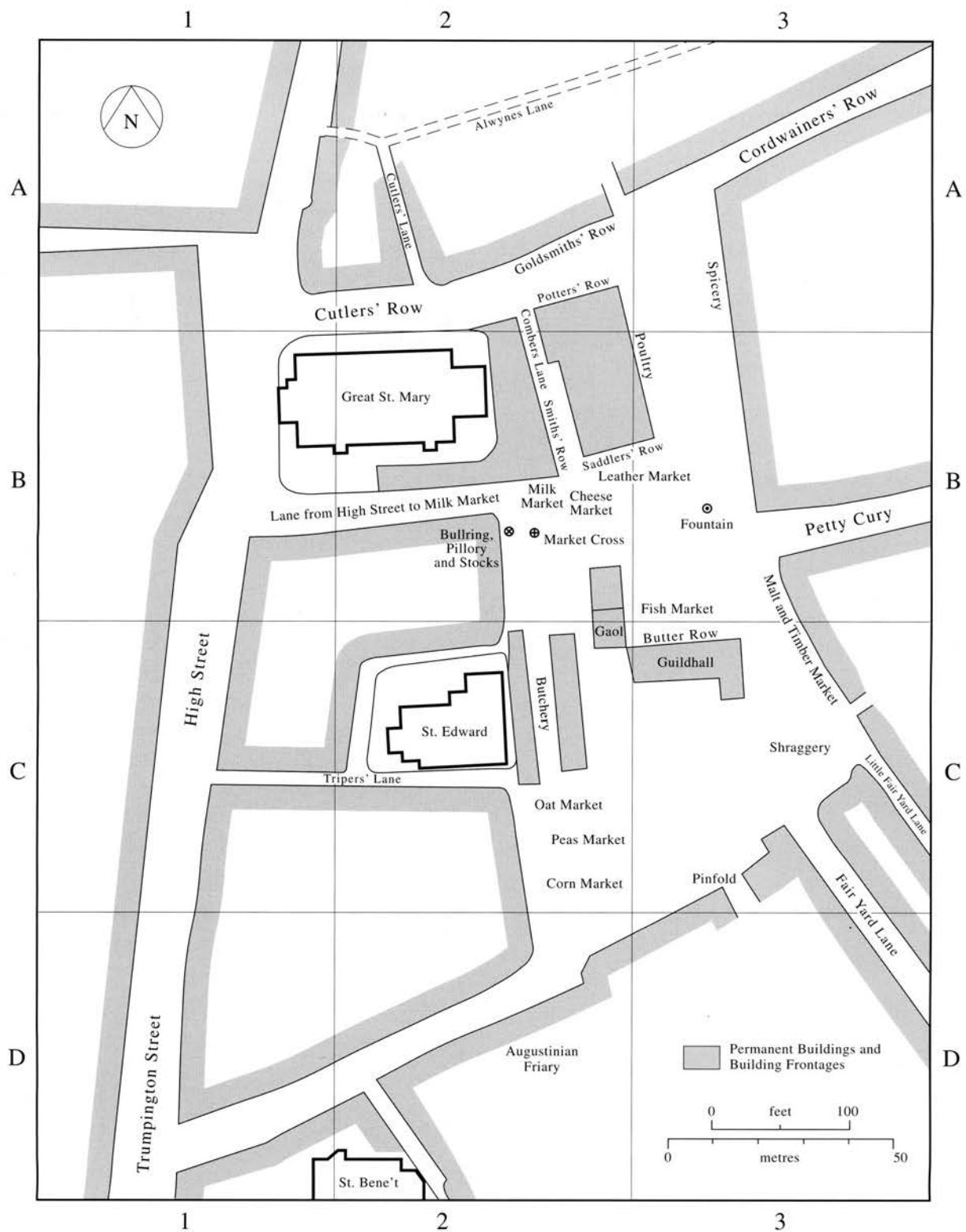


Figure 1. The central market area in Cambridge in the medieval period

shown on Figure 1, some of which abutted directly onto the church. They were separated from a much larger block of shop-houses by a street known originally as Smiths' Row, later recorded as Combers Lane and Well Lane. These were shop-houses, the homes of craftsmen such as smiths and leatherworkers, perhaps loosely organised into rows. The properties are shown on a remarkable sketch-plan drawn in the mid-15th century by John Botwright in the *Liber Albus* at Corpus (Fig. 2), which presents a picture of a densely packed and complex jumble of buildings of different shapes and sizes. The area lying to the east of these houses is named as 'the gret market place'. The drawing also shows and names as 'The welle lane' the thoroughfare which at an earlier date had been recorded as Smiths' Row. The properties in this area remained in existence, no doubt considerably modified by rebuilding,

until most were destroyed by the fire of 1849. After this it was decreed that all these buildings should be cleared away to provide an enlarged market place, but it required an Act of Parliament to give effect to this. The houses are clearly shown on several 19th century paintings (Figs. 3 & 4) and on Atkinson's map (Fig. 5). Figure 3, which dates from 1820, shows a view of the northern part of the market looking north; on the left hand side is the southern end of the block of houses, whilst on the right hand side is the fountain fed by Hobson's Conduit. This stood here until it was removed to its present position at the junction of Lensfield Road and Trumpington Road in 1856.

Cramped and bustling rows of market stalls and tables between the shop-houses and the eastern side of the market place are vividly depicted. Figure 4 dates from 1801 and shows the same area looking

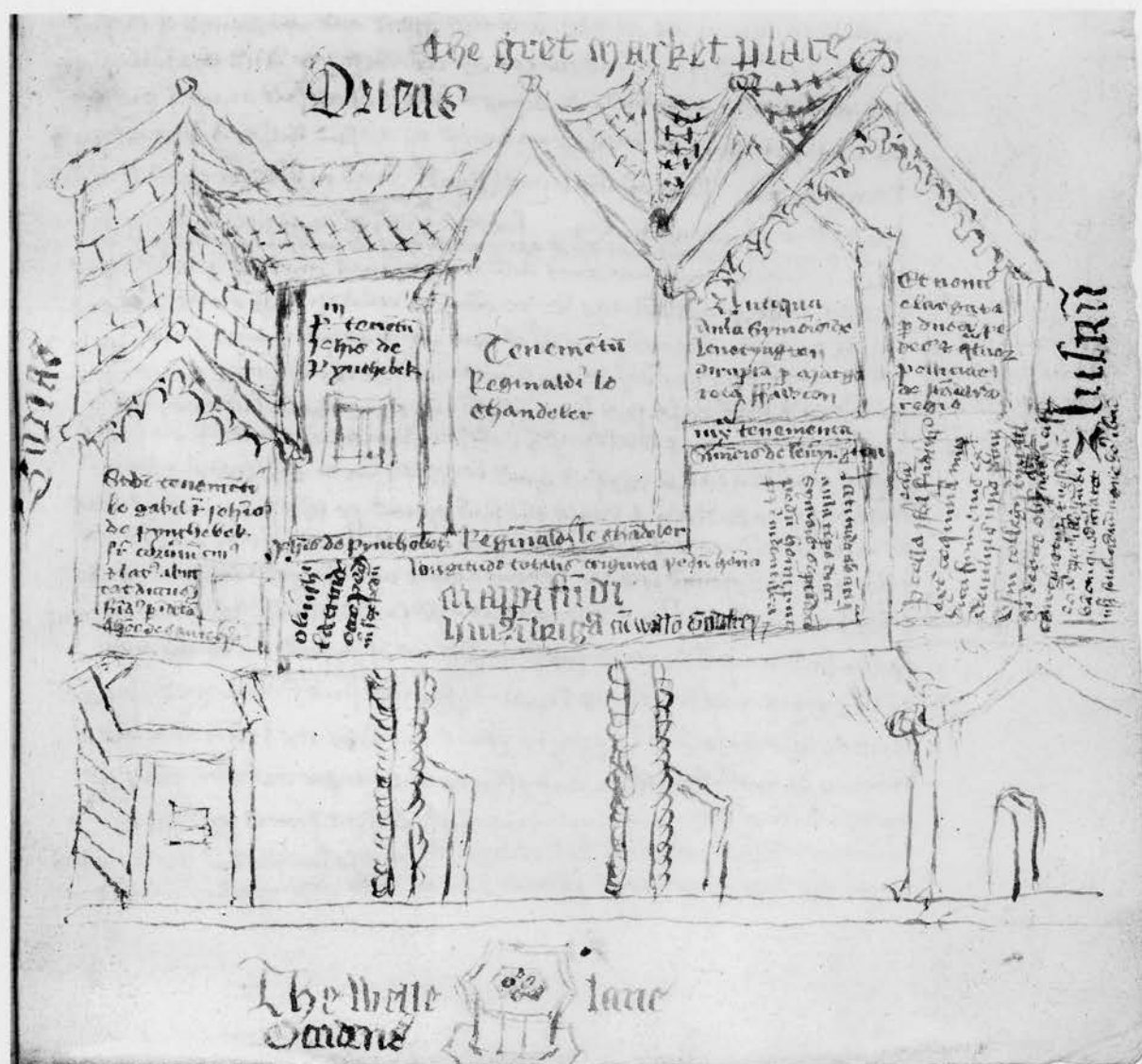


Figure 2. John Botwright's sketch in the *Liber Albus* at Corpus Christi College showing the block of shops and houses in the northern section of the market, looking east from Great St Mary's church. Copyright to the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge



Figure 3. The northern market place, looking towards Holy Trinity Church, as shown in a watercolour by JS Cotman, 1820



Figure 4. A print by Thomas Rowlandson in 1801, showing the northern market place looking south towards the Conduit or Fountain and the Shire House

market days, especially the official market day, which was Saturday. These goods were brought in from the surrounding area, including the town's open fields, and the indications are that they were predominately foodstuffs, such as meat, poultry, dairy goods, various grains (wheat, oats, barley, malt) and raw materials such as leather and wood. No doubt other goods were brought up the Ouse, including foreign imports such as wine and spices. It is unfortunate that no details are available to indicate the precise nature of this trade.

Burgesses of the town could conduct their business on any day without paying tolls, and selling would have been a daily occurrence in the shop-houses owned by them which fronted onto the market. They were likely to trade in goods such as higher quality clothing, metalwares, including precious metals, and luxury items, such as spices and wines. Many of these merchants traded not only in the town but also with surrounding estates and more distant areas, importing and exporting goods over considerable distances, mainly by river. Both the university and the religious houses in the town would have been good customers. Not all merchants and craftsmen however were to be found in the market place; there was a group of hatters in what is now Sidney Street, and other craftsmen were scattered throughout the town without necessarily forming distinctive rows or quarters.

It has been indicated that stalls or booths played an important part in the buying and selling of goods. Unfortunately there is a difficulty with these terms, because it is not always clear from documentation what kind of structures are implied, since their size, shape and degree of permanence are not referred to in surviving archives. Nor do the documents, and at later times, the maps, always make clear a precise location. Moreover it seems likely that, for some activities at least, stalls gradually evolved over time into booths or lean-tos and then into what we would now term shops. In the latter case the owners or tenants selling from such premises would have had to pay a property rent rather than payment to erect a temporary stall. For the selling of produce in the open spaces of the market local ordinances in the 14th century refer to 'tables' being hired and set up in the controlled market place.

There are references to market stalls in three documents from Jesus College, which specifically deal with property in St Edward's parish and refer to grants of land or shops near the Butchery in the 13th century; 'three shops in stallis Cantebr.',⁹ 'land in stallagio'¹⁰ and 'a shop in the Butchery, between the stalls'.¹¹ These references seem to show one example of progressive change, where the Butchery, which was originally an area of stalls, later became a collection of more permanent structures. The 16th century maps of Lyne (Fig. 6) and Hamond (Fig. 7) both show for this site two rows of buildings which look like permanent shop-houses rather than stalls or booths. The Treasurers' Accounts for 1347 record 'shoppis sub Aula' and 'shoppis juxta fratrum Sancti Augustini',¹² which must have been respectively under the old Guildhall, which was a raised building, and against the wall of the Augustinians'

house on the south side of the present Peas Hill.

Many of the local ordinances regarding the working and control of the medieval market are recorded in the Corporation Cross Book; this volume contains ordinances from 1328 to 1427, transcripts of the town charters and other material relating to the town up to 1728. The following quotation from the Cross Book for 1347¹³ gives some indications of how the market worked.

'It is ordained by the whole commonality, that no butcher having a shop, or part of a shop, have any table standing in the market on any day in the week except only Saturday, and that then the market being finished, all tables be carried away and amoved, and in some certain place, where best they can, without nuisance, be laid up, and that on other days in their shops, those having shops, or part of a shop, may sell flesh. But if any foreigner come with flesh on other days on which the market is holden who have not shops, nor part of a shop, it shall be lawful for them to hire tables from the treasurers, and to sell their flesh, nevertheless that the market being finished, the tables aforesaid being amoved, as above is said; if any tables or stocks be found standing the market contrary to the ordinance aforesaid, that the tables and stocks be confiscated, and the tenants of the tables or stocks be grievously amerced...that then the market may be held on the Lord's-day, and therefore it shall be lawful for them at that time to put their tables in the market, and to sell flesh, so that the market being finished the tables be removed as is aforesaid.'

The same day it is ordained, of the tables of fishers, tanners, and others selling cloths and mercery and other saleable things whatsoever, that they have not any tables standing in the market on any days except the day on which the market is held, and that the market being finished, they be removed as above is ordained under the same pain'.

From the quotation a number of comments may be made. It is clear that the operation of the market was strictly regulated, in the interests of both the town and the university. From the time of the university's origin in the early 13th century, relationships between the two had been difficult and at times, as in 1261 and 1332, quite violent affrays had erupted. The town resented the special privileges given to the university, which meant that it was effectively a self-governing community living within the town; for its part the university was always vigilant in protecting its rights and about fair costs for accommodation, food and drink for its members. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was the occasion of a particularly violent outburst in Cambridge, when the townspeople wrought considerable damage on the university, especially its archives. The King reacted by temporarily removing many of the town's rights. Amongst these were the control of the assizes of bread, ale and wine, which governed the prices of essential commodities, and the supervision of weights and measures. These powers were given to the university and they were not fully relinquished



Figure 6. Detail of the market area from Richard Lyne's map of 1574

until an Act of Parliament was passed in 1865.

The market tables were clearly not permanent, and had to be hired from the Treasurers. This was designed to prevent 'foreigners' (non-burgesses and people from outside the town) from slipping into the market to conduct illicit trading without paying the toll. Note the heavy penalty for trying to evade this restriction. There were firm regulations about who could trade, especially on market days, and in what manner, particularly from trestle tables. Butchers could trade from shops and have their own trestle tables, which were not hired, on market days. Hired temporary trestle tables could only be erected on market days and used by any legitimate trader.

Evidence outlined in the Appendix gives some credence to the idea that the northern end of the market contained activities of a higher-class nature, such as the Spicery, the Goldsmiths, Cutlers and Lorimers. The distribution also suggests that the southern end of the market may have been more concerned with the

sale of foodstuffs and raw materials, while the northern end dealt with more expensive craft and manufactured goods. There is also evidence of substantial mansions belonging to wealthy merchants who lived round the northern end of the market.

A brief comment on the earliest maps (Figs. 6, 7 & 8) is merited partly because they show how the nature of the market place gradually changed, especially in its southern half. They also demonstrate the persistence of site function even though the shape, size and character of features may have altered. Richard Lyne's 1574 map (Fig. 6) is reliable in the sense that the buildings depicted certainly existed, although the shape, size and interrelationship of buildings are occasionally inaccurate. In the northern part of the market his map shows the two blocks of shop-houses east of Great St Mary's, separated by the thoroughfare known as Smiths' Row. The more easterly block shows, probably conventionally, a double row of back to back shop-houses fronting north onto Cutlers' Row,

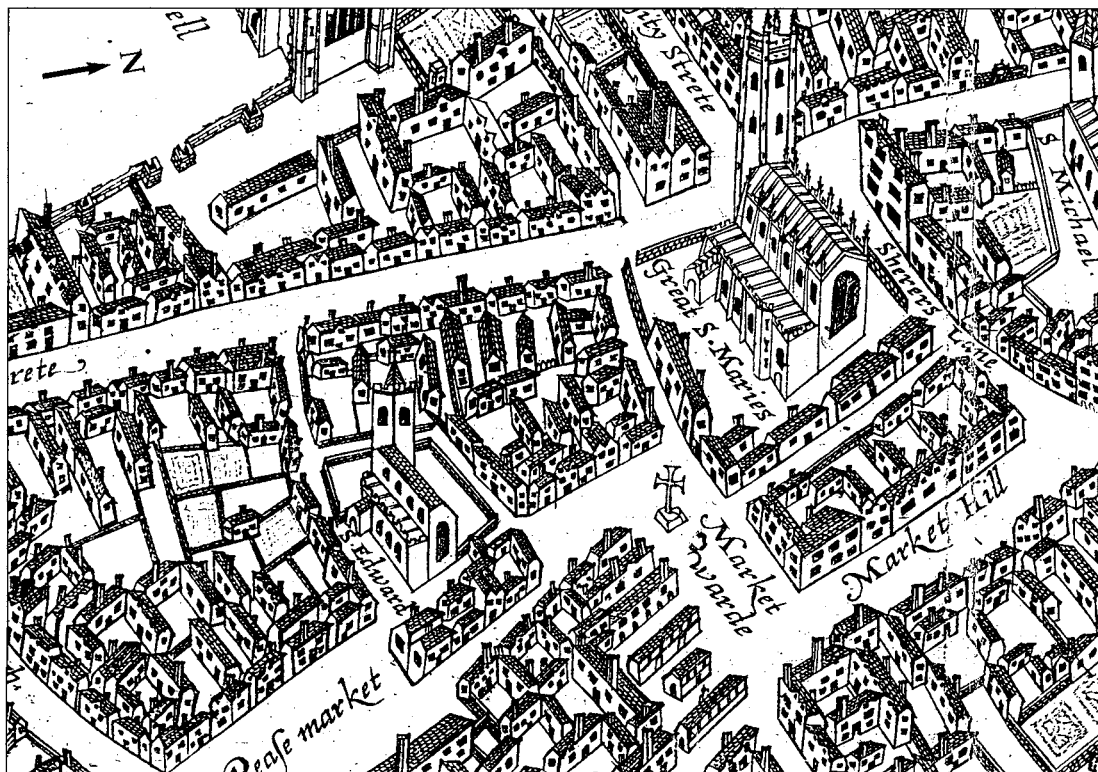


Figure 7. Detail of the market area from John Hamond's map of 1592

east onto the Poultry, south onto the Milk and Cheese markets and west onto Smiths' Row. Further south, Lyne shows the Market Cross, with its characteristic domed roof; the letters ST in a circle seem likely to represent the stocks and the pillory, which were known to exist in this area, as was a bull ring for bear baiting. South of these features the Butchery is represented, with some attempt at perspective, as a row of small properties. The main block of properties includes the Guildhall and the gaol, but it is already apparent that some other buildings have appeared in this area which are beginning to fill up the space in the southern part of the market place.

John Hamond's map of 1592 (Fig. 7) is the first accurately measured and detailed map of the town. Unfortunately it is in nine sections, eight of which have been badly damaged, but a copy of the most important central section has been preserved. It shows the market place very clearly, but part of the southern end on an adjoining section is damaged. Broadly his map shows the same features as Lyne, but in greater detail and clarity. At the southern end of the market place the number of buildings encroaching onto the former open spaces has increased dramatically. The existence of yards behind most of the building frontages is also a noticeable feature.

By the time we reach David Logan's 1688 map (Fig. 8) the market place appears in plan view, but the earlier features are still clearly visible, although there is now a solid block occupying the southern end of the market place, interspersed with several yards and passages. The two dots on the map are the market

cross and the fountain fed by Hobson's Conduit.

In recording the nature and location of market activities in this period, it should be noted that the locations of some activities have changed at a later date; a prime example would be the Butchery. The earliest reference to the Butchery is in 1279, when it lay to the east of St Edward's church, but by the mid-16th century Shambles are recorded in front of the Guildhall, although this does not necessarily mean that the Butchery had ceased to exist. Atkinson records that in the 19th century the Shambles were to be found at the corner of Petty Cury and Butcher Row. In this paper we have always recorded the date of the earliest reference traced, the majority of which lie between the 12th and 14th centuries. There are however some features for which no record has been found until a later date, but which we have included on the assumption that they must have existed at an earlier date. For example, the earliest reference to a market cross is in 1529, but as this was the site from which the market was officially proclaimed open, some such feature must have existed earlier.

Appendix of market activities

The names and locations of the market features and activities are cross-referenced with documents which have been consulted by us or by references given by Dr Horrox, who has most generously allowed us to use results from her own researches. We are also most grateful to Catherine Hall for her meticulous help in



Figure 8. Detail of the market area from David Loggan's map of 1688

establishing provenance from the Corpus archives. The market activities are set out alphabetically, and a simple grid has been placed on our reconstruction plan (Fig. 1) to allow easy reference to a particular map square; an appropriate square reference is given for each activity or site in the text. Each activity is identified both by its modern name and, where possible, by the name and date recorded in an early document. As and where it seems appropriate, a comment is made on the source or nature of the activity or its site.

*Bull Ring B2: 1564 'Bull Ryng'*¹⁴

Although this 1564 reference is the earliest we have found for the enclosure known as the Bull Ring, there is a reference in the first half of the 16th century to 'a grett Ryng whiche is ffast in the grounde upon the Markett hyll'.¹⁵ This is likely to have been the ring to which a bull would have been chained, rather than the enclosure itself. The baiting of a tethered bull was a popular sport with what Bowtell called 'the vulgar throng'. Lyne's map of 1574 appears to show the Bull Ring and the stocks in the position shown on our plan. Market regulations of 1376 state that no butcher should sell 'the flesh of bulls, unless they are baited or fed with grass in a stall'.¹⁶ Baiting of bulls was considered a reliable method of tenderising the meat before slaughter. The Bull Ring site frequently appears by name in local records throughout the 16th and 17th

centuries as the location for the pillory and the stocks.

*Butcher Row/Butchery C2: 1279 'in carnificio'*¹⁷

References in the late 13th and early 14th centuries place the Butchery immediately east of St Edward's church, where there were two rows of stalls with a lane between them.¹⁸ The Butchery was a major market activity, because it provided a staple item of food, which, unlike bread and ale, could not be produced easily in the town. Beasts, especially cattle, were brought in from the surrounding rural areas for sale in the Beast Market at the Fair Yard. Market regulations of 1376 ordered that '...no butcher kill sows in pig, nor sell flesh of murrain [diseased cattle], nor of carrion, nor the flesh of bulls, unless they are baited or fed with grass in a stall, nor any butcher keep in his shop putrid blood or flesh, nor entrails, nor sell flesh beyond the time of its keeping, and that all putrid flesh be removed from their shops...'.¹⁹ The Butchery is the best example of a market activity whose location changed over a period of time; the butchers were clearly using the Shambles (see below) in front of the Guildhall by the mid-16th century. It is known that they either moved or extended their activities to the south and east of the municipal buildings by the end of the 18th century. Wheeler Street was formerly Short Butcher Row, Guildhall Street was Butcher Row until 1870.

*Butter Row C3: 1493 'Botirowe'*²⁰

Although no earlier name has yet been traced, the activity can be located in this position for centuries after this date. It is a reasonable, but unproven, conjecture that it existed here at an earlier date.

*Cheese Market B2: 1382 'le Chesemarket'*²¹

The selling of cheese appears to have been an activity carried out in the open market, forming an extension of the milk market. Because milk could not be kept fresh, its conversion into cheese was an important way of changing it into a much less perishable foodstuff. The Chesemarket appears in a deed of 1432²² as a southern abuttal for property at Sadlers' Row.

*Combers Lane A2: 1319 'Comberyslane'*²³

There are two suggested origins for this name of the street which was in the 13th century recorded as Smiths' Row. Dr Horrox believes that this lane, which separated the two blocks of shop-houses east of Great St Mary's, may have taken its name from a major property owner here in the 1270s, William le Comber, who was a smith. It is also possible that the name is linked to wool combing by association with the makers of the metal combs used by wool combers. Such combs were used to tease out knots in the wool fibres and remove dirt and burrs prior to spinning the wool. The name Combers Lane in various forms survived to at least 1415; from the mid-15th century the lane is recorded as Well Lane²⁴, as shown and named on the Botwright sketch (Fig. 2), and from the mid-16th century it is recorded as Pump Lane. This central market lane had a further name change to Warwick Street in the early 19th century before its total removal from the market after the 1849 fire and subsequent remodelling of the market.

*Cordwainers' Row A3: 1322 'Cordwaneria'*²⁵

The occupation of a 'Cordwainer' was that of a shoemaker, and the name is derived from the Spanish town of Cordoba, where a leather, known as Cordovan leather, was originally made. The leather was greatly prized for the making of shoes for the wealthier classes because of its soft, supple character. The Hundred Rolls record a messuage at the street's west end held by Hugh le Cordwener in the mid-13th century.²⁶ The street names 'Shoemaker Row' and 'Shoemaker Lane' are of a later date.

*Corn Market C2: 1216–1272 'foro bladi'*²⁷

This reference appears in a document dated from the reign of Henry III (1216–1272), which does not give a precise date or location. The deed records that Robert Seman gave to William de Carim '...all his land with the houses standing thereupon in the Corn market at Cambridge, where the storehouses are situated, with the mill and with all the land which he held of William of St Edmund's in that place'. A Radegund deed²⁸ dated as 1263 or slightly earlier, records 'a messuage...in the Cornmarket, between land...of Nicholas ultra forum...'. Another Radegund deed²⁹ of 1388 records more precisely a 'messuage in St

Edward's Parish...abutting on the Cornmarket and on a garden of Angleseye Priory'. Cambridge was an important centre for the sale and distribution of corn; there were five granaries on the east bank of the river at the end of Cornhythe Lane. Ramsey and Ely Abbeys had regular corn carrying services from their numerous manors to Cambridge. King John in 1202 had corn shipped from Cambridge to Norway; and by 1565 London was using Cambridge as a source of corn supply. It should be borne in mind that the term corn has varied meanings. It can be used as the collective singular noun for seed from all cereals or for any single crop, according to usage. It has often been used as a synonym for wheat, which was grown widely in East Anglia. The two commonest grains were wheat, needed for white bread, and barley, which was also used to produce barley malt. Oats, rye, and dredge (a mixture of oats and barley) were probably used by the poorer people and as animal fodder.

*Cutlers' Row/Cutlery A2: 1297 'Culteller'*³⁰

Cutlers were the makers of edge tools, not just cutlery. Their products probably included a wide variety of agricultural, domestic and military instruments which required higher quality steel which could take a sharp edge. In 1412 there is a reference to property in 'Cotelerrowe next the market called le Pultrye',³¹ and in 1474 a reference to a 'tenement in Cultelersrowe next Well Lane'.³² From the 16th century this site is also recorded as Shearers' Row.

*Cutlers' Lane A2: 1361 'le Cotelereslane'*³³

It is possible that this was originally an extension of the activities in Cutlers' Row. As late as 1864 the site of the present St Mary's Court was recorded as Cutlers' Passage.

*Fair Yard Lane C3/D3: 1422 'Feyreyerdlane'*³⁴

This is the lane leading from the southern end of the market place to the beast market or 'Fair Yard'. The name 'Slaughterhouse Lane' for this road does not appear until the 16th century. The name 'Little Fair Yard Lane', for the present Guildhall Place, dates from at least 1583.³⁵

Fish Market B3

Although we have found no specific references to a 'fish market', it is clear from local records that fish were sold in the open market place from earliest times. There are references in 1376 to 'sea fish, salted or dried, or herrings for sale in the market' and regulations that foreigners selling fish should pay one penny to the treasurers for every table as well as a yearly payment of one penny, 'called a stall-penny', to the bailiff of the market. Every burgess of the town was allowed to 'have one table or only place reserved for him, for his dry or salt fish, herrings or sea fish' without any payment to the town, but if he occupied more than one table he would have to pay to the treasurers in the same manner as a foreigner did for one table.³⁶ In 1578/9 the Common Day Book records the removal of the fish stalls from in front of the old

Guildhall to Peas Hill.

*Goldsmiths' Row A2: 1285 'the Goldsmith's Row in St Mary's Parish'*³⁷

This may be an activity which later changed its location, because there is a reference to the 'Goldsmith's corner in St Benet's Parish' in 1571.³⁸ Goldsmiths were primarily engaged in the production of jewellery and ornamentation.

*Leather Market B2/B3: 1362 'Lethermarket'*³⁹

Leather was used for footwear, clothing, some domestic utensils and in agriculture.

*Malt Market B3/C3: 1337 'the market where malt and timber is sold'*⁴⁰

Malt was a staple of the diet because ale was brewed regularly in many households, since it deteriorated rapidly. Beer appeared in the 15th century, but did not displace ale until the 16th century.

*Milk Market B2: 1349 'the common market where milk is sold'*⁴¹

1360 'lane leading to the milkmarket'⁴²

The lane leading to the milkmarket is now known as St Mary's Passage.

*Oat Market C2: 1316 'a messuage... at the end of the Bucherie between a tenement of Walter fitz Thomas, butcher and the Oatmarket...'*⁴³

Oats were regarded as an inferior cereal, partly used as animal fodder, but also as a constituent of pottage for the poorer classes, who could also use it as a malt if barley was not available.

*Peas Market C2: 1485 'Pesemarket'*⁴⁴

The late date of this attribution makes it a little difficult to justify the inclusion of this activity on the map, although there is little doubt about its earlier existence in the Cornmarket area. Peas were a staple item in the diet of the poorer people, particularly in times when there were bad cereal harvests, because they were an essential ingredient in pottage, along with oats, beans, onions and carrots. Pottage is not easy to define precisely, but it was a gruel or porridge which contained, according to availability, cereals, peas and other vegetables and occasional small amounts of meat or animal fat. Hence the old rhyme:

*Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot, nine days old.*

Christopher Dyer⁴⁵ states 'most peasants before the Black Death lived on a cereal-based diet of bread and pottage'.

Unfortunately there is misunderstanding regarding the origin of the present name of Peas Hill, which derives from the former Pease market. It has been suggested that it is derived from the Latin for fish – *piscis*. It is true that at a much later date fish was sold in this area, and Atkinson's reconstruction plan⁴⁶ shows such a fish market. But the existence of a Pease

market in this location at an earlier date is entirely logical because of its situation alongside the Corn and Oats markets, so that all the staple items for bread and pottage were being sold in the same area.

It is also worth noting that the Corporation Common Day Book for 1578/9 records the removal of the fishmongers from the place where they stood 'in the market over against the newe Shambles', to their new location of 'the pease market hill'. This makes it clear that the 1485 reference we give above antedates the fishmongers removal to Peas Hill by nearly a century. There is also a reference from the Common Day Book 1571 of a plan to 'build a house where ye fishe stalls do nowe stand within the market place', for the Justices of the Assizes and Sessions. Atkinson comments 'it would appear that the site thus defined was the ground in front of the Town Hall, on which were situated the shambles'.⁴⁷ The fish market was therefore located in front of the Guildhall prior to 1578.

*Potters' Row A2: 1249 'a shop in the market at the corner of Potteres rowe'*⁴⁸

A later reference of 1306 locates the Potters' Row at the northern part of the market between the Poultry and the Cutlery: '*le culteller ubi olle venduntur*'.⁴⁹ Pottery was generally baked from local clays and or brick-earths, but better quality articles may well have been brought in from other areas. Jugs and pots were essential for storage, cooking, boiling and drinking.

*Poultry Row/Poultry A3/B3: 1364 'land near the Poultry market'*⁵⁰

There is a 1344 reference⁵¹ to '...one [messuage] in the same parish [St Mary's] by Thomas of Barnwell the poultener's, abutting on the market place...'. The site is recorded in 1388 as '*le Pulterirowe*'.⁵² In 1412 there is a reference to property in 'Cotelerrowe next the market called *le Pultrye*'.⁵³ Poultry was a common source of meat for all classes, particularly as they could be easily reared on any property without much attention.

*Saddlers' Row B2: 1370 'Sadelerrowe'*⁵⁴

This lies, not surprisingly, in close conjunction with the Leather Market. It would be equally unsurprising if the location of Lorimer's Row (see below) were also to be found in this area.

*Shraggery C3: 1438 'Shraggery'*⁵⁵

See Timber Market.

*Smiths' Row B2: 1271 'Smitherowe'*⁵⁶

Smiths' Row was an area of metal trades lying between the housing abutting on the eastern end of Great St Mary's and the adjoining free-standing block of shop houses. The 1271 deed refers to 'one piece of land with a house built thereon, stretching from St Mary's churchyard to smitherowe'. Traditional iron smithing must have been present, but the term does not exclude other metals; goldsmiths, silversmiths, cutlers and lorimers were close by in the same area. It may be worth noting that in many towns blacksmiths

were not found in central areas, possibly because of the risk of fire, to say nothing of the smoke and noise. Smiths' Row has also been recorded by the alternative names Combers Lane and Well Lane. From the early 14th century the name Smiths' Row disappears from records, and is replaced with the name Combers Lane.

*Spicery A3: 1311 'le spicerie'*⁵⁷

Many foods, such as meat, fish and dairy products had a very short life, measured in days, not weeks, and because they could not last they were often tainted. To some extent this problem could be overcome either by drying, smoking or salting or by the use of onions and garlic, herbs and spices. Spices were luxury items, nearly all imported, and the spicers were a wealthy and important group of merchants, probably located in houses on the north east side of the market.

Dyer⁵⁸ indicates that there were two groups of spices:

- a. the dried fruits (currants, dates, figs, prunes, raisins, almonds and rice) which modest households could afford to buy in small quantities;
- b. the strongly-flavoured spices (cinnamon, cloves, ginger, mace, pepper, sugar, saffron), which only the richest households could afford.

*Timber Market B3/C3: 1337 'The market where malt and timber is sold'*⁵⁹

The word 'timber' refers to standing or felled wood of considerable size used for major carpentry or building work. There is a reference at a later date to the Shraggery – 'a shop and solar in Butchery Row between tenement of Thos Hounde, one head on the row the other on the Shraggery'.⁵⁵ The term is derived from a Germanic root meaning a rag or tatter, but its meaning was extended to cover lopped branches and twigs from the cutting of underwood and the clearing of woodland. Over the centuries timber was sold less and less in the market, and was later brought in bulk to the timber market at Stourbridge Fair, but smaller sized wood, such as stakes and kindling, continued to be sold at this site in the central market place.

*Tripers' Lane C1/C2: 1295 'Triperislane'*⁶⁰

Immediately west of the Butchery or Butchers' Row and running east-west to the south of St Edward's church was Tripers' Lane, corresponding to that part of St Edward's Passage which lies south of the church. This activity was obviously closely associated in character and location with the butchery; tripe, which is derived from the stomach of ruminants, especially sheep and horned cattle, was an important foodstuff at this time. A Radegund deed of 1305 makes mention of '...a messuage in Tripereslane...' in St Edward's parish.⁶¹

Notes on market activities whose exact location is not known

*Apothecaries' Row 1286 'reugio apotechariorum'*⁶²

This is the only reference, which gives no clue to its location. Circumstantial evidence may place this

activity on the site of the present Rose Crescent.

Cloth Market

There are two references in 1295 to cloth being sold from a site in the central market place; 'Thomas de Impitone tenet unam schoppam que fuit Johannis Audr in foro Cantebrigie [in parochia Sancte Marie] ubi vendant lineam telam' and 'Elena Scherwynd tenet unam schoppam in foro Cantebrigie ubi vendant lineam telam'.⁶³ There is also a reference in the 1347 Cross Book ordinance to 'tables of fishers, tanners, and others selling cloths and mercery...'.⁶⁴

*Lorimers' Row 1299 'le Lorineresrowe'*⁶⁴

Lorimers were harness makers. This is the only reference, which gives no clue to its location, but it would seem likely that they were near the saddlers and metal trades.

*Smeremongers' Row 1330 'le Smeremongger Rowe'*⁶⁵

There is no certain location for this activity, but the following reference from John Caius⁶⁶ is suggestive – 'Ex quibus est Smeremonger Lane, ad forum pisacium'. This seems to place it near or towards the Fish Market. Smeremongers sold tallow, which was clarified animal fat, primarily from sheep. It was used to produce soap and candles and to dress leather. Tallow candles were of lower quality than those made from beeswax, because they were smoky and left an unpleasant smell.

Other market area features shown on the reconstruction plan

*Petty Cury B3: 1330 'Parva Cokeria'*⁶⁷

*1344 'le Petitecurye'*⁶⁸

This street ran eastwards from the market place towards the Barnwell Gate. In the early 14th century and before, it was clearly an adjunct to the market, housing the businesses and hostelry which provided cooked food for town's population and the market folk. From the mid-14th century the name is recorded in numerous different variations. The 1330 'Parva Cokeria' is rendered by Cooper as 'the little Cookery'.

Fountain B3

The earliest mentions of the Fountain are in the Corporation Cross Book in 1423 and 1429. It should be noted that this is not the same as the fountain of 1640 associated with Thomas Hobson. The earlier one was probably linked with a simple pump to draw water from the underlying gravels, whereas Hobson's was fed by a stream rising from Nine Wells at the foot of the Gog Magog Hills and brought into town by the famous conduit.

Market Cross B2

The earliest references appear in the 16th century, but it is clear that a market cross had been existence at this location in a much earlier period, although no precise date can be given. A proclamation was made from the steps of the cross at a set time and trading was forbidden before the market was declared officially open.

Pillory

There is a reference to the Pillory in 1346–47 '*In meremio pro pilloria et diversis expensis pro eadem xijs ixd*,⁶⁹ this does not give a site. Close to the Market Cross, at the heart of the commercial area, seems an obvious location for shaming public punishments.

Guildhall/Tollbooth C3

It is very difficult to establish the exact truth about the early group of public buildings shown on the map. It appears that the earliest recorded structure in this area was a house said to have belonged to Benjamin the Jew. There is a record of this house being leased to the burgesses in 1224 by Henry III to be used as a gaol, in itself an indication of the growing civic status of the town. More or less at the same time the Franciscans arrived in Cambridge and they were allowed to share this property, but it is not clear whether it was subdivided or was two buildings with a common entrance. In 1238 Henry rescinded his grant to the town in favour of the Grey Friars and allowed the town 10 marks to build a new prison, presumably the building mentioned as the king's prison in a writ addressed to the town bailiffs in 1248. Unfortunately it is not known where this building stood, but it is likely to have been near the Guildhall or Tollbooth. Again it is not clear whether these were alternative names for one building, the names of two buildings or a building with an upper floor. A Tollbooth was the point at which traders paid their tolls and it must have been in existence for some time before its mention in 1322,⁷⁰ Mary Lobel suggests before 1300.⁷¹ It is logical to think that it would have become a focal point for the meeting of the important merchants in the town (wholesalers and entrepreneurs, not retailers), and it may therefore have been a building which later became the official Guildhall. Cambridge first began to appoint its own civic officers about 1212, when bailiffs began to collect the town's farm, and the first Mayor is in 1231. It is therefore probably in the early years of the 13th century, sometime after John's charter of 1201, that the term 'Guildhall' came into use. This same charter confirmed the Gild Merchant of Cambridge, which in the 12th century had provided the elements of town government. It therefore seems likely that the Tollbooth may have developed as a building in which the Gild Merchant met, perhaps in an upper room over the area where goods were weighed and tolls paid. It is known that the later Guildhall was a building with this structure.

It must be stressed that although the existence of these buildings is certain, their exact location, structure and use have never been identified with absolute certainty. What is also certain is that they had a vital part to play in the functioning of the market, and that they were the forerunners of the much larger municipal complex that we see today.

Pinfold C3

A Pinfold is mentioned in property abuttals of 1396⁷² for a site placed near to the Butchery. This animal pound is also recorded by name in 1382 and 1422 and

may be that placed by Palmer⁷³ at the present Parson's Court. A pinfold was an alternative name for an animal enclosure, and here may have been either a holding place for animals due for slaughter prior to their sale in the Butchery, or a pound for stray animals.

Other market area features not shown on the reconstruction plan

Shambles B3: 1561 '*rent of flesh shambles in the market*'⁷⁴

The term Shambles takes its name from the plural of shamble, a market table or stall (ME *shamel*, OE *sceamul*) related to the Latin *scamnum*, a bench or stool. It was originally used for a board, shelf or table on which any kind of goods were displayed for sale, but later came to have the more specific meaning of a butcher's shop or stall selling meat. A number of references dating back to at least the 16th century indicate that new buildings were being or had recently been constructed to house the shambles in Cambridge, which implies that something similar had existed earlier. Possible evidence for this is a reference in 1347 for receipt from the '*novis shoppis ex opposito gilde Aule*',⁷⁵ although the location is not exact. It is likely that these new shops stood on the same site as those referred to in 1552 as 'two houses constructed for the butchers to stand in'⁷⁶; in 1578 as 'the newe shambles'⁷⁷; and in 1581 as 'two long shops, then building, called the Shambles'.⁷⁸ These shops can be seen on the maps of Lyne (1574), Hamond (1592) and Loggan (1688) on the north side of the old Guildhall, and they are also firmly indicated there on Atkinson's map. Clearly the Shambles did change position over the years, but it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that they were to the north of the old Guildhall in the 14th century. They remained here until the building of the 1747 Shire House and their subsequent removal to the Petty Cury and Butcher Row/Guildhall Street corner site, which Atkinson states 'was occupied on market days by about a dozen butcher's stalls'.⁷⁹

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