

THE ORIGIN OF THE NEW MARKET OF CHESTERFIELD

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Thanks to the publication of the first volume of the new *History of Chesterfield*, the early history of the town is now much better known than previously; not least the book has gone far to elucidate its topographical development down to the end of the middle ages.¹ At the heart of early medieval Chesterfield lay the parish church and an adjacent market place, acting as a focus for main roads leading from all four points of the compass. The origin of both institutions is obscure but may date from well before the Norman conquest.² It has long been known that at some fairly early date Chesterfield's original market place was first supplemented and then superseded by a very much larger open area to the west of the settlement.³ It is not difficult to understand this change or the choice of the new site. The earlier market was cramped, hemmed in by main roads and the church, and offered little scope for expansion. It seems likely that the area west of St. Mary's Gate between Beetwell Street in the south and Knivesmithgate or Saltergate in the north was already so densely occupied as to make the clearance of a large area for a market difficult. There is also evidence that from the end of the 11th century the dean of Lincoln, who became rector of Chesterfield in 1093, acquired a substantial part of this area as glebe, enough for him later to claim a rectory manor. It would thus have been desirable to choose a completely fresh site for the market, for which the area to the west of the town was by far the most suitable. To the north and east growth was constrained by a steep hillside; to the south, although the gradient was less, the flood plain of the Hipper may have been damp and unsuitable for development. To the west, however, lay relatively flat, slightly south-facing land which could be enclosed with less disturbance of existing settlement.

This is clearly what happened and the results are still to be seen. The market place was laid out on either side of the main road from Chesterfield to the west, forming a site that was roughly triangular. It is unlikely that the present market place, bounded by Packers Row on the east, Low Pavement on the south and High Street on the north, differs significantly from the original plan. To the north and south tenements grew up along the market place, with long backyards and crofts stretching in one case down to the Hipper and in the other up to Saltergate. The basic pattern of these tenements, which can still be recognised on a large-scale 19th century plan,⁴ is so regular that they were obviously laid out together as a conscious act of policy. As Bestall suggested, they may overlie earlier strips within the open fields. This hypothesis has yet to be confirmed archaeologically, however, while Chesterfield's open fields have yet to be located with any confidence.

It is clearly desirable to establish as closely as possible when the new market was built, since it constituted the most important change in the layout of the town during the middle ages. In Bestall's view it was the work of the first half of the 13th century. In 1204 John granted the manor of Chesterfield to an important royal servant named William Brewer by a charter which called Chesterfield a 'free borough' and granted an annual fair and weekly markets on Tuesdays and Saturdays.⁵ At his death in 1226 Brewer was succeeded by his son William, who enjoyed similar privileges in the town till his own death in 1233, when the barony was divided between coheirs. Bestall argued from the evidence of the charters of Rufford Abbey (Notts.), which held a small estate in the town, that very shortly after 1204 Brewer sought to develop his acquisition by building a larger market place. The Rufford charters include three relating to tofts in the new market which date from the first half of the 13th century and which might be as early as

1225.⁶ None of the charters calendared by Jeayes can refine this dating.⁷ Bestall examined the various other 13th and 14th century deeds and concluded that the first part of the market to be laid out was the area immediately west of the existing settlement known today as the Shambles. The market was then progressively enlarged westwards in the course of the 13th century, reaching its fullest extent by about 1300.⁸

This view of the creation of the market as piecemeal is perhaps open to question. It seems unlikely that the site of the market, well-drained, south-facing land close to the settlement, would have remained uncultivated as late as 1200; on the contrary, it may have been among the oldest arable in the manor. Its conversion to a market lined with tenements could only have happened as the result of a decisive act of seigniorial policy, which would have disturbed farming arrangements, although the disruption would presumably have been less had the market been built within the existing settlement. The disturbance would also, surely, have been minimised by a once-for-all change in land use, rather than gradual evolution. In many cases, the regularity of the market, both in its bounds and the pattern of tenements on either side, argues against the notion of piecemeal development with strips gradually being taken out of cultivation and added to the market as the 13th century wore on. Nor is there any evidence for Bestall's suggestion that the Shambles represents the oldest part of the market, or that the tenements on Low Pavement and High Street towards the east are older than those further west. The names of the grid of alleys in the Shambles do not occur in charters before the 14th century, long after the market had been laid out.⁹

Although the Rufford charters provide better evidence than any previously published for the date of the new market place, there remains another charter, unnoticed by Bestall or anyone else, which appears to provide crucial evidence of an earlier origin. Among the medieval muniments of the Borough of Chesterfield at present missing is a charter of the elder Brewer to John de Leke, which before its disappearance in the 19th century was seen, independently, by the local antiquaries Adam Wolley and Samuel Pegge in 1790. Wolley's abstract of the document is as follows:¹⁰

William Briwer by Deed poll witht. date granted & confirmed to John the Son of William de Leke for his homage and Service all the Land which the sd. William held in Cesterfeld. vizt. two Tofts in the new Market which he took from the Waste. in the time of King Richard, before the Town of Cesterfeld came into his (Briwer's) hands. one of which tofts Nicolas de Gondeford held (*tenuit*) and the other Osibert the Tanner (Pelliparius) and Richard de Bolleshouere held. & likewise one Messuage in Cesterfeld which Symon Blunt (Blundus) held. Rendingr therefore Yearly to him (Briwer) & his Heirs 12d. vizt. 6d. at the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary & 6d. at the Nativity of St. Mary for all Services saving the aids and tallages of his Men living in sd. tofts same as from his other free Burgesses living in the town of Cesterfeld. Hiis Testibz Johe' Rog' Capells'. Galfrido de Monasteriis Yvone de Heriz. Rob' Breton, Rob' de Brimenton, Symon fratre ejus, Robto' de Dinham, Hugh' Clico' de Waleton, Ric' fil Ingeram', Clem' de Grendon, Rob' de Bramle, Will' de Normonton et multis aliis.

* Seal broke away. wrote in a small & neat Character.

*Willm. Briwers Seal tho' broke from the deed is still preserved. & is a circular seal of White wax of about an inch & half diameter. the Device a Mermaid holding the tail of a little Mermaid with feet in her left hand. the feet of the little Merm'd. standing on the Great Mermaid's Tail which is curved up towards the Great Mermds. left hand. All the Inscriptn. is broke away except . . . ERRE — +".

Pegge's text reads:

13. Sans date, William grants to John Son of Wm. de Leke 2 Tofts in the new Market of Cesterfeld which he had from William in the time of King Richard before the Vill of Cesterfeld came into his hand, also a messuage in Cesterfeld for a Rent of 12d at 2 payments. Test. John Roger Chaplains, Galfr. de Monasteriis, Yvo de Heriz, Robert de Bretone, Robert de Brimenton, Symon his Brother, Robert de Dinham, Hug. Cleric. de Waleton, Ric. Fitz Ingeram, Clem. de Bronndon, Rog. de Bramle, William de Normanton, and many others. A Yellow seal, broad as half a crown, viz. a mermaid.

Since the deed was cast in a conventional formula the sense is clear enough, apart from an important ambiguity in the granting clause where the two readings are discrepant.¹¹ It is unclear whether the two tofts granted by Brewer to John de Leke had, in the time of King Richard, been 'taken from the waste' or 'had from William' (i.e. had

been granted by Brewer to William de Leke before Brewer became lord of Chesterfield in 1204). Ideally we would wish to base any discussion of this problem on a study of the original but, in its absence, we must choose one of the readings offered by Wolley and Pegge.¹² The text adopted here is Wolley's, a choice based largely on an examination of the complete corpus of lost charters seen by the two antiquaries. Although Pegge's list of medieval muniments is indispensable to a study of Corporation records, in cases where Wolley also preserved a text, the latter is usually fuller and occasionally more accurate.¹³ It may be worth noting that in 1790 Pegge, rector of Whittington near Chesterfield, was aged about 85, whereas Wolley was in his late thirties and was by profession an attorney used to abstracting medieval deeds in the course of his normal work.¹⁴ We may perhaps speculate that the vital phrase read '*cepit de uasto*', which Wolley translated correctly, whereas Pegge read '*cepit de Willo*'.

Turning to the charter itself, we may note first that it dates from between 1204, since the grant to Brewer is referred to as an event in the past, and 1226, when he died. The reference to 'my hands' precludes the possibility that it is a deed of the younger William. The charter is one of a group which mostly relate to property conveyed to the burgesses at various dates prior to the Reformation in trust for charitable uses associated with the parish church. They are described alongside later foundations in the early 19th century report of the charity commissioners, by which time memory of these medieval benefactions had faded somewhat and all are grouped together as the 'Charities of John Williamson and others, called the Church Lands'.¹⁵ Under this head was embraced income from property in Beetwell Street, Tapton Lane and Holywell Street, for which a number of deeds survived in 1790; then follows a vaguer reference to 'certain premises in Lordsmill Street, which appear to have been vested in the corporation in trust, to pay the rents and profits thereof to the churchwardens, for the repair of the church' and a final note that 'The churchwardens till within the last few years received annually thirty shillings as the rent of a butcher's shop in the shambles, adjoining the above-mentioned kitchen . . .'. The position of this property is shown on the tithe map (1849), by which date it had been vested in newly-established trustees of the town's charities. That the property may be identical with that conveyed in the 1204-26 charter is suggested by a grant from the same group of 1341-2 of a stall and messuage in the new market in the Potter Row and a messuage in Soutergate.¹⁶ It seems reasonable to suppose that at some date unknown towards the end of the middle ages the property was left for the use of the church, when the burgesses inherited a number of earlier deeds, some of which survived to be seen by Pegge and Wolley. Others are clearly missing from the series, which is no doubt why so little was known of this particular charity in the 19th century.

The property in the Shambles ascribed to the charity trustees lay just behind the market place frontage of the Cathedral Vaults public house, on the northern side of the main east-west axis through the area.¹⁷ Brewer's charter provides two pieces of information about the tofts: that they lay in the new market and that the father of the grantee took them from the waste between 1189 and 1199, which, as Brewer rightly observes, was before the vill of Chesterfield came into his hands. The deed was probably executed following the elder Leke's death, when his son sought formal confirmation from the new lord of Chesterfield of his title to the family's estate in the town, a commonplace medieval practice. Two other points need to be deduced: the relative chronology of the creation of the new market and Leke's encroachment on the waste, and the precise meaning of the word 'waste'.

It might be supposed that 'waste' here has no special meaning and that Leke simply colonised spare land on the western outskirts of the town. This, however, is doubtful on two counts. The first is the general improbability, already argued for, that a site as close to the vill as this would not be used either for cultivation or building but would literally have been waste. Secondly, 'waste' appears to mean land in the open market which had been built upon, with or without the consent of the lord. The term is used in the same sense in a survey of the manor of 1563,¹⁸ which refers to a shop and backside

in the Shambles in Ironmonger Row recently built by the burgesses on the lord's waste with his steward's consent, and again in 1675, when the Duke of Newcastle, as lord of the manor, granted the corporation:¹⁹

full and free libertye to build and erect in and upon the Market place in the said Town a decent and convenient market house and also free leave and liberty for them to break so much of my waste on the same Market place as is necessary or convenient for the setting of pillars and making a good foundation for the same, which said market house for ever hereafter shall be, and ensure to the sole use and behoof of the said Mayor

These examples, especially the second, show that the market place was regarded as part of the manorial waste and that encroachment on it required licence from the lord. It can hardly be argued that in 1675, or even 1563, Chesterfield market place was 'waste' in the common sense of the word; it must here, and almost certainly in the deed of 1204-26 also, refer to the market place. Unfortunately no medieval evidence can be adduced to support this since no other charters referring to actual encroachment on the market have been noted.

If 'waste' here refers not literally to wasteland but to the market place, it follows that the market must have been laid out either at the same time as Leke's encroachment or before. It is impossible to establish securely which was the case but a few general points may be made. The name Shambles is modern; in the middle ages this part of the market was 'The Butchery' or the 'Flesh Shambles', a common name for a feature of most medieval towns, where part of the market was not left open to accommodate temporary stalls but built upon with small but permanent shops, commonly called *seldae* in Chesterfield deeds. Since such quarters usually occupy an area within the open market, sometimes upsetting an otherwise regular plan, they have often been associated with later medieval and more recent encroachments which have similarly disturbed the presumed original plan. The idea that the Shambles gradually evolved over a long period from temporary stalls into permanent shops may seem the most obvious explanation for this and is supported by a well known quotation from Stow's *Survey of London* (1598).²⁰ Stow, however, is speaking of a *street* in the city which evolved in this way, rather than shambles; certainly in the case of Chesterfield, and no doubt elsewhere, an alternative view is at least tenable.

The Shambles in Chesterfield consist of five blocks of building, of similar size, bisected on the east-west axis by an alley from the market place to Church Lane. Five small passages run between the blocks and at the western edge stands the open market.²¹ The plan is no less regular than that of the open market itself; the block occupies a neatly defined area at the eastern end of the market place, leaving access from the rest of the town to the market at the north, south and in the middle, and is divided into shop sites of roughly equal size. Such a development may surely be seen as an integral part of the creation of a new market, most of which would be kept clear for temporary stalls but part would be built upon, with licence from the lord since the market was technically 'waste', to accommodate specialised trades. Any vendor of meat or fish in a medieval market would have stood there daily and would have needed permanent accommodation. There was, surely, a crucial difference between stallholders who came to market once a week and occupied temporary stalls and those who occupied permanent *seldae* in an area specially reserved for them. The builder of a new market such as Chesterfield's would presumably be aware of the special requirements of some traders and would plan accordingly.

It might be suggested that the Shambles in Chesterfield did in fact evolve gradually from temporary stalls since when the various alleys are named in deeds from the 14th century onwards a whole range of trade names appears, of which only Butcher Row is directly connected with meat trading. Some of the other trades named (e.g. ironmongers and potters) would not necessarily stand in the market every day. The origin and significance of these 'Row' names is still obscure; by no means all the early deeds for the Shambles have yet been examined and it is not clear how stable the names were or whether alleys changed their name several times over.²² However, considering the regularity of

both the Shambles and the entire market complex (open space, shambles and tenements) and the use of the name 'Butchery' in medieval deeds, an origin contemporary with the market place itself seems quite likely.

Returning to the charter of 1204-26, we may conclude that by 1199 not merely had the new market been laid out but the area at its eastern end had begun to be built upon. If this development was indeed contemporary with the open market then the charter suggests a date of origin for the market near the end of the century; if one takes the view that the Shambles represent later encroachment then the origin of the open space must be sought earlier.

Whichever chronology one prefers, it is likely that the medieval street plan (Fig. 1) was more or less fully laid out by 1200, although it is improbable that all the new streets had been built up by this date. Apart from the top and bottom of the market (High Street and Low Pavement), these included Glenmon Lane (Glumangate), extending north from the market to Saltergate, and a lane running down between tenements on Low Pavement, across the Hipper and into the neighbouring vill of Boythorpe. This is Wheeldon Lane today and appears to have been Steppeton Lane for at least part of the middle ages, presumably a reference to the river crossing.²³ The name Clerimont Lane occurs in a solitary 14th century charter as a road running from the market place to Saltergate;²⁴ since no other evidence for this road has been found on maps or in documents it is tempting to see it as a clerical error for Glenmon Lane. The names are orthographically similar and it is difficult to believe that another north-south road close to Glumangate was either necessary or could have disappeared so completely. Although none of these developments can be closely dated, it is quite wrong to draw any conclusions from the earliest Rufford or Foljambe charters, which are simply routine middle and late 13th century deeds relating to well established property on Low Pavement, in the Shambles and elsewhere; only in the charter of 1204-26 can we recapture anything of the original laying out of the market.

Finally, we may note that the earlier market place did not go out of use at once; in the 13th century it was called the Weekday Market, presumably because it accommodated the Tuesday market, while the no doubt larger Saturday market was held in the new market place. Later in the middle ages it first partly and then wholly becomes the Old Marketstead, presumably as it was gradually overbuilt, a process more or less complete by the early 17th century. In the 1820s part of the area was cleared once more to provide an extension to the churchyard.²⁵

II

The demonstration that Chesterfield's new market belongs not to the 13th century but to the 12th constitutes an important revision of ideas of the date at which Chesterfield became recognisably urban. It also provides an important example of 'town planning' dating from before 1200. As Bestall showed, the extension of Chesterfield to the west is a clear case of an existing settlement being enlarged as an act of policy, a planned development by a lord seeking to increase revenue from his estate. The first such towns to be recognised were 'plantations' founded completely from scratch after the Norman Conquest; since M. W. Beresford's pioneer study numerous other examples have come to light not only of plantations but, more commonly, of older, 'organic' settlements to which a planned extension was added.²⁶ Chesterfield is an example of the latter on a fairly large scale and thus it may be of interest to re-examine other evidence for the transition from rural manor to town in the light of this discovery.

Chesterfield first emerges into well recorded history in 1086 as the chief settlement on a large area of ancient demesne in the wapentake of Scarsdale, a district embracing the Derbyshire portion of the Rother valley and further land to the south. That such an important settlement should remain in royal hands is hardly surprising, although the estate appears to have been administered not from Chesterfield but from a place called Newbold, which may not have been much older than the Conquest. The estate

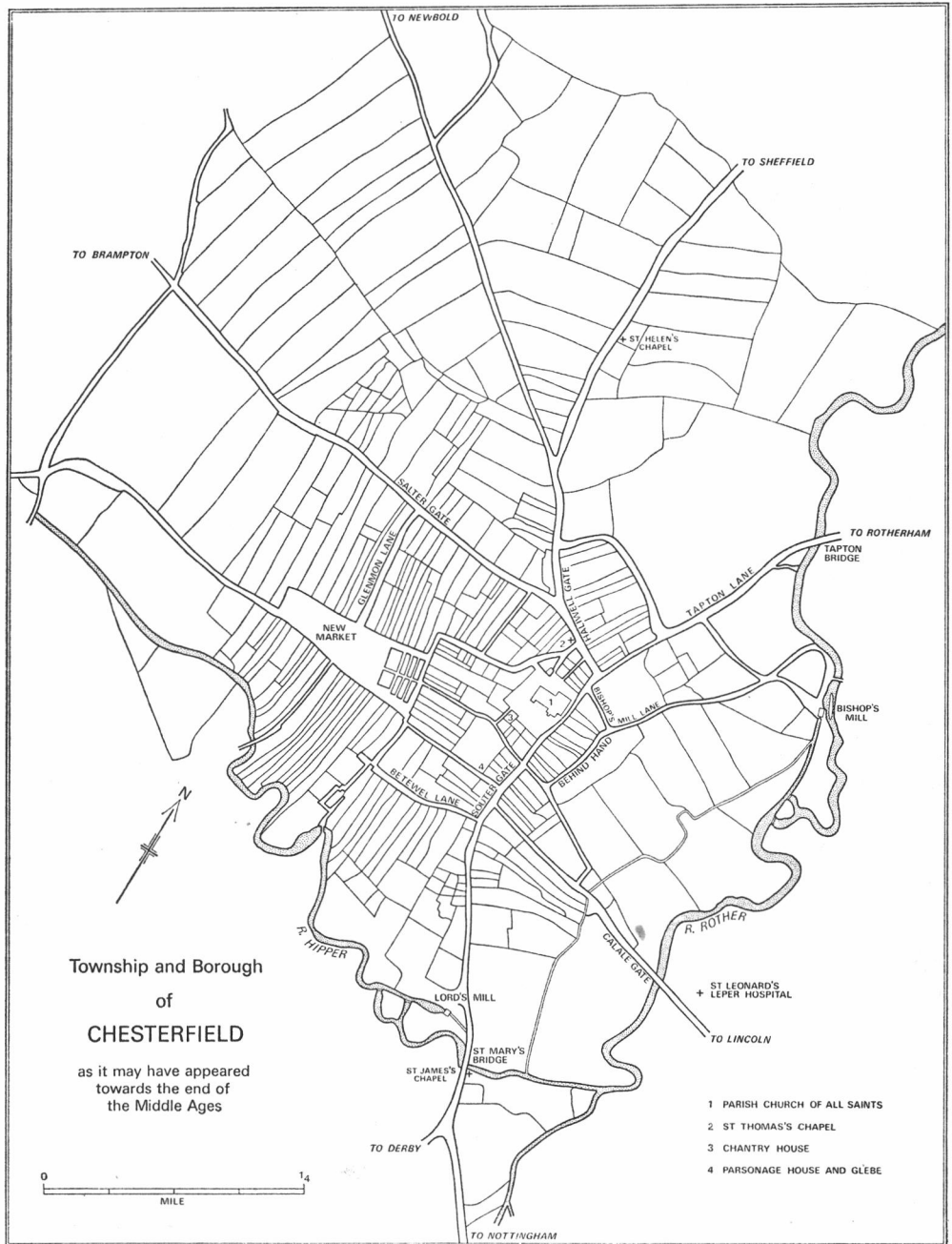


Fig. 1 Township and Borough of Chesterfield as it may have appeared towards the end of the Middle Ages.

was typical of the manorial structure of this part of the Danelaw, consisting of a central manor (Newbold) surrounded by satellite berewicks and then a further area of sokeland, over which the crown had jurisdiction but not dominion.²⁷ Chesterfield was almost certainly the largest settlement on the estate but there is nothing in Domesday to suggest any urban development. In 1093 a writ of William Rufus notifying the archbishop of York and others of his gift of Chesterfield and three other churches to Lincoln cathedral refers for the first time to a manor of Chesterfield; when this is combined with the earliest extent of the manor it becomes clear that the estate granted to Brewer in 1204 was effectively identical to that called Newbold in 1086.²⁶ The original Domesday manor was not split up until after the death of the last Brewer in 1233; the writ merely records a new name for an otherwise stable unit and presumably reflects some change in administrative arrangements on the demesne in north-east Derbyshire soon after the Domesday survey.

Throughout the period 1086-1204 Chesterfield remained in crown hands (the idea that it formed part of the honour of Peverel is mistaken)²⁹ and thus in the second half of the 12th century we may trace its development through the pipe rolls. The estate makes its first appearance in this record in 1164-5, when the sheriff renders account for 22s 7d '*de foro de Cestrefeld*', the first reference to a market and one which should probably be seen as the earliest possible date for the laying out of the new market place.³⁰ It is not clear why the market is not mentioned in earlier pipe rolls unless this entry really does mark the creation of a much larger new market, which for the first time yielded a sum worth recording separately. Receipts from the market appear each year, mostly for 29s, until the end of the reign. It should be noted that Coates is mistaken in believing that the pipe roll for 1181-2 mentions also a fair at Chesterfield, which appears for the first time on the rolls for 1195-6, admittedly in a phrase which implies that it had already existed for several years.³¹

No entry on the pipe rolls of Henry II, except perhaps the first, gives any hint of an expansion of the market, although the monotonous return of 29s may conceal increased income locally from an enlarged market. We cannot tell. At all events, there was a sharp change in 1189. Immediately on their father's death Richard granted John extensive English estates, especially in the west and midlands, including Bolsover and Peak castles, the town of Nottingham, the honour of Peverel and the county of Derby.³² Together with further gifts later the same year, John acquired virtually regal powers in several parts of the country, including Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, especially after Richard's departure on crusade. John is known to have taken a personal interest in this region, which he visited a number of times, and although he seems never to have been to Chesterfield he founded a leper hospital there between 1189 and 1194. This house was endowed at first with £6 a year from receipts from the town's markets and fairs, converted in 1195-6 to a rent-charge on the manor.³³

After the suppression of John's rebellion in 1194 custody of many of his midland possessions was entrusted to William Brewer, a point of some interest. As W. R. Powell showed, Brewer was an outstanding servant of both Richard and John who developed a particular interest in borough-making and was probably responsible for much of the achievement of John's reign in this respect.³⁴ Brewer remained sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire until 1200 and had custody of the honours of Peverel and Tickhill until 1196-7.³⁵ Thus throughout Richard's reign the administration of the important royal manor of Chesterfield was associated with two men, John and Brewer, who both had a special interest in borough development. Immediately after the resumption of the two counties by the crown Chesterfield's reappearance in the pipe rolls is marked by an increment of £8 in 1195-6, rising the following year and thereafter to £38, although half of this was regularly remitted during John's reign.³⁶ After 1195-6 no separate receipts are noted from the market; for two years the entry '*de foro de Cestrefeld*' appears with no amount shown and after that the entry itself disappears. During 1194-5 part or all of the manor appears briefly to have been farmed to William de Ferrers, who

rendered account for £4 17s 3d '*de firma de Cestrefeld et de Wurinton*' (presumably Whittington is meant).³⁷ A far more important entry is that on the pipe roll for 1198-9, in which for the first time Chesterfield is called a *burgus*, when it is tallaged 10 marks, with a further two marks for the soke of Chesterfield, five years before a royal charter calls the town a free borough.³⁸

The mere existence of a market does not, of course, constitute urbanisation; a market was an essential pre-requisite for the successful creation of a town but not sufficient alone to regard a settlement as urban.³⁹ The use of the term *burgus*, however, when set alongside the construction of a new and greatly enlarged market place about the same time, strongly suggests that by 1200 Chesterfield had completed the transition from rural manor to small town rather more completely than Bestall supposed. Although there appears to have been no development of urban institutions in Chesterfield to supplement the manor until after 1200, the evidence of the pipe rolls combined with topographical evidence seems clear enough. At some date in the second half of the twelfth century, probably between 1165 and 1199, a new market was laid out, together with tenements on either side and shambles.

It is impossible to suggest a more precise date for these changes, although it is tempting to assign them to Richard's reign, when the town was administered by men with a known interest in urban development, one of whom was later to receive a grant of the newly established borough. Arguably the sharp increase in Chesterfield's assessment on the pipe rolls after 1195-6 reflects rapid expansion in the town; on the other hand this increase may simply be the result of the crown more effectively taxing the growing wealth of the country than had been the case, or had been necessary, during the easy years of Henry II. A variant of this argument would be that the crucial years were 1189-94, when Derbyshire came under the personal rule of John, who sought to develop his midland estates, and that this explains the increased assessments after the shire's resumption by the crown. This is a possibility but not one for which evidence could ever be found, and on balance it seems better to ascribe the increments of the later 1190s to the needs of war finance rather than good work by John in the years before. Urban growth in Chesterfield, as in England generally, was no doubt a gradual process over the 12th century which cannot be closely dated.

Finally, we may try to set this revised chronology into a wider framework, although since so little has been done on medieval urban history in Derbyshire it is difficult to say much. The oldest town in the county is obviously Derby, which by 1086 was well established as the only Domesday borough and should probably be compared with Nottingham rather than smaller towns in Derbyshire.⁴⁰ The early history of the other towns is less clear. Chesterfield, Bakewell, Ashbourne and Wirksworth stand out as a group sharing the characteristics of being chief settlements in their wapentakes, of being on the demesne in 1086 at the centre of important manors, and of apparently being the site of minster churches.⁴¹ Bakewell in addition is known to have been fortified by Edward the Elder in 924 during the reconquest of the Danelaw.⁴² Ashbourne and Wirksworth clearly were not and Chesterfield cannot at present be shown to have been.⁴³ None has any urban features in Domesday and it is only in the 13th century that Bakewell and Ashbourne emerge as small towns.

Bakewell appears to have had an unchartered medieval market, received a grant of an annual fair in 1254 and developed as a mixed borough of burgesses and freeholders, who received a charter from their lord in 1286. There is no obvious evidence for a planned layout, in contrast to Ashbourne, where a planned town seems to have been newly laid out in the 13th century. The town is called a 'royal borough' in the Hundred Rolls (1279) but again the market was prescriptive.⁴⁴ Bakewell was granted first to William Brewer in 1199 and then to Ralph Gernon four years later; Ashbourne passed from the crown to William de Ferrers in 1203.⁴⁵ Both grants might be seen as the starting point for seignorial development, although the example of Chesterfield warns against too ready acceptance of this. Wirksworth was granted to Ferrers by the same charter as

Ashbourne but shows no sign of re-planning and seems to have grown very modestly; there was no market charter until 1306.⁴⁶ In the Quo Warranto proceedings of 1330 only Derby is called a borough but the men and tenants of Bakewell and Chesterfield, both called *villata*, successfully claimed the right to reply to the summons by a jury of 12. Wirksworth appears merely as a Ferrers manor with no hint of independent institutions.⁴⁷

A number of other places received grants of markets and fairs in the 13th or early 14th centuries⁴⁸ but the only ones which on present evidence can be considered truly urban in the middle ages are Castleton and Bolsover, each on the site of one of the Peverels' great Norman castles. Virtually nothing is known of Bolsover's development, apart from an apparently prescriptive market, held as early as 1226.⁴⁹ Castleton, on the other hand, was recognised by Beresford as a 'new town' and is called '*burgus de Alto Pech*' on the pipe roll in 1196, about which time the name of the surrounding wapentake changed from Bakewell to High Peak. A market was granted in 1222-3 and a second in 1245, while an extent of 1255 records both burgesses and stallholders in the borough. On the ground are remains of a large market place and a town ditch.⁵⁰

The conclusion to be drawn from this brief survey is that of the six towns mentioned, only Chesterfield and Castleton can be shown to be 12th century in origin. Ashbourne, Bakewell and Bolsover apparently became towns in the 13th century; Wirksworth perhaps not until the beginning of the 14th. As with Chesterfield, however, an earlier origin for any might be forthcoming from a closer study of all the available evidence between Domesday and, say, Quo Warranto.

To show that Chesterfield had become a town by 1200, with a major planned extension already laid out, reinforces the longstanding view that from an early date it was the second most important town in the county, but does not help greatly in explaining its development as such. As Coates observed, only detailed research into its origins will determine this and much of the explanation must lie in its history before 1086, which is not considered here and must always remain sketchy.⁵¹ On the other hand, although he may have under-estimated the advantages of the town's position at a meeting of routes from all four points of the compass, Coates was probably right to emphasise 'political and social factors' in the town's transformation. As numerous failed examples all over the country demonstrate, no amount of seignorial will could create a town where the economic potential did not exist,⁵² although active direction no doubt greatly accelerated natural processes of growth. This must in part explain Chesterfield's status in 1200; it is interesting also that the only other place in the county (besides Derby) called a borough before this date is Castleton, where there is also a combination of topographical and documentary evidence for borough-making by the lord.

REFERENCES

- ¹John Morton Bestall, *Early and medieval Chesterfield* (History of Chesterfield, I) (Borough of Chesterfield, 1974). The book was published posthumously; see the Preface for the circumstances of final production. See also the memoir of Bestall by Joan Sinar in *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* (*D.A.J.*), XCIII (1973), 1-8. The book is cited hereafter as *Bestall*; most references are from Chapter 7 'The town and its layout', 125-43. Earlier drafts of this paper were extensively revised after valuable discussion with John Blair, Dudley Fowkes, Adrian Henstock and Reg Brocklesby, to all of whom I am grateful. I should also like to emphasise that although this article in part revises conclusions drawn by John Bestall from his study of medieval Chesterfield, I remain deeply indebted to his work for providing the general background to the town's early history and for stimulating the research presented here.
- ²For the earlier history of the town see Bestall, 5-24 and 132-4, and my 'Early settlement on the site of Chesterfield', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, 8 (2), (1977), 39-46. See also Bryan E. Coates, 'The origin and distribution of markets and fairs in medieval Derbyshire' (*Markets and fairs*) *D.A.J.*, LXXXV (1965), esp. Appendix C, 110-11.
- ³This was first appreciated by the 18th century antiquary Samuel Pegge (1704-96), the first person to take an interest in Chesterfield's history, who found references to an Old Market near Tapton Lane head in medieval deeds. See his *Derbyshire Collections* in the College of Arms. For the following paragraphs see Bestall, 126-34 and 141-2.

- ⁴See, for example, the plan accompanying Chesterfield title award, which has been used as the basis of figure 1 in this article. The original award is in the Public Record Office (IR 30/8/54/I-E); the diocesan copy, which is better preserved, is in Derby Reference Library; Chesterfield Reference Library has the parish copy of the apportionment and a photograph of the original plan, the parish copy being lost.
- ⁵*Bestall*, 131, for the creation of the new market; ch. 3 (45–70) for the history of the lordship and borough in the 13th century.
- ⁶*Bestall*, 131; C. J. Holdsworth, *Rufford Charters*, I, Thoroton Society of Notts Record Series, XXIX, 1972, nos. 47, 53 and 54.
- ⁷Isaac Herbert Jeayes, *Descriptive catalogue of Derbyshire charters in public and private libraries and muniment rooms (Derbyshire charters)* (1906), nos. 679–878.
- ⁸*Bestall*, 132–4.
- ⁹Jeayes, *Derbyshire charters*, for early deeds for property in the Shambles.
- ¹⁰British Library, Adam Wolley's Derbyshire Collections, Add. MS. 6667, f. 374; College of Arms, Pegge Collections, Derbyshire, v.
- ¹¹For a fuller discussion of this charter see the forthcoming edition of the *Records of the borough of Chesterfield, 1204–1835*, edited by myself and John Blair.
- ¹²Between 1790 and 1857 most of the medieval documents seen by Pegge and Wolley passed into private hands. Some of this material, perhaps 25 per cent of the total, has recently been recovered and is now deposited in the Derbyshire Record Office (D.1622). Most unfortunately, Pegge 13 was not among the deeds recovered. The history of these muniments is discussed in the work cited in n. 11.
- ¹³See the edition cited in n. 11 for a more detailed discussion of these sources.
- ¹⁴*Dictionary of national biography*, svv. Pegge and Stephen Glover, *The History of the County of Derby*, I (Derby, 1–829), Appendix 107.
- ¹⁵*The history of Chesterfield: with particulars of the hamlets contiguous to the town, and descriptive accounts of Chatsworth, Hardwick and Bolsover Castle (History of Chesterfield)* (London and Chesterfield, 1839), 249.
- ¹⁶Pegge's Calendar of the Borough Records, no. 40. Soutergate is a medieval name for Lordsmill Street.
- ¹⁷Parcel nos. 992 and 993.
- ¹⁸Nottinghamshire Record Office, Portland MSS, Survey of the Manor of Chesterfield, 1563 (DDP/59/8).
- ¹⁹Town Hall, Chesterfield, Town Clerk's Department, Inventory no. 102; printed John Pym Yeatman, *Records of the borough of Chesterfield* (Chesterfield and Sheffield, 1884), no. lxxxiii, p. 139.
- ²⁰Quoted by Bestall, 135, and adopted as the explanation of Chesterfield's shambles. My own view owes much to a study of town plans in M. D. Lobel (ed.), *Historic towns atlas*, i and ii (1969, 1975); a good additional example is Newbury, Berks (*VCH Berks*, IV (1924), 138).
- ²¹Deduced from the tithe map (1849); the number of north-south passages has now been reduced.
- ²²Discussed by Bestall, 135–41, citing earlier work by W. E. Godfrey.
- ²³Jeayes, *Derbyshire charters*, no. 741 (1350), discussed by Kenneth Cameron, *The place-names of Derbyshire (Place-names)* (English Place-Names Society, XXVII–XXIX, 1959), 234.
- ²⁴Cameron, *Place-names*, 231, citing British Library, Harl. Ch. (1350).
- ²⁵*Bestall*, 127; Cameron, *Place-names*, 232–3; William Senior's Survey of Chesterfield, 1637 (Original MS in possession of Duke of Devonshire; reproduced on cover of *Discovering early Chesterfield*, (Chesterfield Archaeological Research Committee, 1973); *History of Chesterfield* (1839), 249.
- ²⁶M. W. Beresford, *New towns of the middle ages* (1967); for later work see Colin Platt, *The English medieval town* (1976), esp. ch. 1 and 2.
- ²⁷*Bestall*, 21–4, suggesting that the Domesday carucation of Newbold of 49 bovates may result from the addition of one bovate for Newbold itself to an earlier six carucate unit common in the northern Danelaw. Cf. F. M. Stenton, *Types of manorial structure in the northern Danelaw* (Oxford, 1910). For the town before 1086 see Bestall, ch. 2 and my unpublished paper cited in n. 2.
- ²⁸*Bestall*, 32–3; the writ is printed in C. W. Foster (ed.), *Registrum antiquissimum of the cathedral church of Lincoln*, I (Lincoln Record Society, 1931), no. 14. The extent of the manor in the Brewer era may be deduced from a text preserved by Wolley (British Library, Add. MS. 6667, f. 371–2) from the Black Book of the Corporation (now lost, but apparently a customary or cartulary), which appears to be late and corrupt but tolerably accurate. It is discussed more fully and printed in translation in the forthcoming edition of the borough records.
- ²⁹*Bestall*, 28–30, where the statement is attributed to Daniel and Samuel Lysons, *Derbyshire* (Magna Britannia, V, 1817), 76. Their authority was Pegge (British Library, Lysons' Collections, Add. MS. 9448), but the ultimate source is obscure. Chesterfield was included in the jurisdiction of the honour court of Peverel after its revival in the 17th century but this in no sense implies a connection with the medieval honour.
- ³⁰Pipe Roll, 11 Henry II (Pipe Roll Society, 87).
- ³¹Coates, 'Markets and fairs', 97, citing Pipe Roll Society, XXXI (1910), 15, which, however, merely records a payment for the market (*Bestall*, 30, is presumably following Coates rather than the original); Pipe Roll Society, new ser. VI (1929), 16, for the roll of 1195–6.
- ³²*Dictionary of national biography*, sv. John, King of England.

- ³³*Bestall*, 48–9; the boundary dates for the foundation of the leper hospital are those of John's period as count of Mortain. David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses, England and Wales* (1971 ed.), 317, give a date of 'before 1195', following John Charles Cox, 'Religious houses' in William Page (ed.), *Victoria history of the county of Derby*, ii (1907), 81–3, where the reference to the fair and hospital in the pipe roll of 7 John (1195–6) cited in n. 31 above is noted but assigned to 10 John. *Bestall*, 43, follows Cox and Knowles & Hadcock. The conversion to a rent-charge was confirmed by John in 1207. (*Rotuli chartarum* (Record Commission, 1837), 167), when the hospital was stated to have been founded by John when count of Mortain, which in turn is the authority for dates cited above.
- ³⁴W. R. Powell, 'English administrative families in the 12th and 13th centuries with special reference to the Cornhill family' (Unpublished Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1952; Bodleian Library, MS. B.Litt. d.91).
- ³⁵Powell, 'Administrative families', 20–1.
- ³⁶Pipe Roll, 7 Richard I (Pipe Roll Society, 15); 8 Richard I, 265.
- ³⁷Pipe Roll, 6 Richard I (Pipe Roll Society, 81).
- ³⁸Pipe Roll, 10 Richard I (Pipe Roll Society, 119).
- ³⁹The Derbyshire case is discussed by Coates, 'Market and fairs', 101–2.
- ⁴⁰Coates, Appendix C, 110.
- ⁴¹These comments are tentative but the position of Bakewell in High Peak and Chesterfield in Scarsdale seems fairly obvious; for the dual role of Ashbourne and Wirksworth in the Low Peak see Cameron, *Place-names*, 338–9. Their status as minster churches is deduced from the large parishes all retained until the 19th century and architectural evidence of pre-Norman origins at Bakewell and Wirksworth.
- ⁴²F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1971 ed.), 334, citing the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, *sub anno*.
- ⁴³The case for imputing the existence of pre-Norman defences at Chesterfield is discussed in my paper cited above, n.2. No evidence has ever been adduced to suggest that Ashbourne and Wirksworth were *burhs*.
- ⁴⁴Coates, 'Markets and fairs', 96 and 102; Lysons, *Derbyshire*, 24; Adrian Henstock, *Ashbourne: the historical setting* (Ashbourne UDC, 1971).
- ⁴⁵Lysons, *Derbyshire*, 24 and 9, citing the charter rolls.
- ⁴⁶Lysons, 294, citing the charter rolls; Coates, 'Markets and fairs', 98.
- ⁴⁷*Placita de quo warranto* (Record Commission, 1818), 132–63.
- ⁴⁸Coates, 'Market and fairs', 98 and Appendix A, 108–9.
- ⁴⁹Coates, 108–9, citing Lysons, *Derbyshire*, 49, in turn citing the Dodsworth Collections in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
- ⁵⁰Beresford, *New towns of the middle ages (New towns)*, 416–7, citing Cameron, *Place-names*, the pipe rolls for 1196 and later and an extent in the PRO (SC 6/1094/11).
- ⁵¹Coates, 'Markets and fairs', Appendix C, 110–11, and see the paper cited in n.2.
- ⁵²Beresford, *New towns*, ch. 10.