

THE ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION OF MARKETS AND FAIRS IN MEDIEVAL DERBYSHIRE

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MARKETS and fairs have been an important economic activity in Derbyshire since at least the 11th century. The county shared in the remarkable expansion of embryo urban centres taking place throughout England after the Norman Conquest, and the present paper directs attention to the most formative period in the creation of markets and fairs in Derbyshire, that is between 1200 and 1350. The enquiry forms part of an analysis of the changing character and distribution of market towns in England and Wales since the 11th century. To discover how the distribution of market towns has fluctuated in time, maps showing the location of market towns have been constructed for given dates. To assess the nature of regional variations within the national pattern, sample counties with marked contrasts in their geographical environment and historical development have been chosen.

Derbyshire was selected as a good example of a county straddling Lowland and Highland Britain.¹ As a consequence of the combination of such factors as climate, soils, elevation, accessibility and mineral resources the south and east are, for the most part, more highly favoured for both agricultural and industrial development than the west and north. Given such contrasts, the fortunes of individual market towns were likely to undergo considerable fluctuations and the overall distribution pattern to vary through the centuries. With the emphasis here on the distribution of medieval markets and fairs, the primary object has been to trace which places in Derbyshire held markets and fairs.² A high proportion, if not all, the places holding markets and fairs in Derbyshire between 1200 and 1350 have been traced and are listed in appendix A. The year 1350, rather than say 1500, was chosen to terminate the study because after the 1340s there is not a single reference in the Calendar of Charter Rolls (the last volume ends with the year 1516) to markets and fairs being granted to places in Derbyshire which did not already possess such rights.

¹ The distinction between Highland and Lowland Britain envisaged here is that set forth by H. J. Mackinder in *Britain and the British seas*, 1902.

² D. & S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, V, *Derbyshire*, 1817, xviii-xxi, gives a list of used and disused markets and fairs in the county. These lists have been checked and the necessary corrections and additions made before the places have been included in the list given in appendix A.

*Markets and fairs in the 13th and 14th centuries*³

It is difficult to appreciate the supreme importance which at less advanced stages of economic development, transport and communications was attached to the provision of local and regional facilities for the interchange of goods and commodities. Throughout Europe from the 10th to the 14th century, commerce passed through "a phase which can be best described as periodic".⁴ The chief means of providing a marketing organization capable of meeting the volume and type of trade taking place at the local, regional and national levels was the establishment of markets and fairs which facilitated the periodic gathering together of buyers and sellers. In England and Wales the creation of markets and fairs, by means of royal grants or the more spontaneous action of interested parties, reached its climax in the 13th century.⁵ Though this was undoubtedly a period of rapid and widespread development, the increase in documentary evidence also reflects the fact that the Crown was making every effort both to establish its claim to create new markets and fairs and also to bring existing ones within its jurisdiction.

The attorneys of Edward I and Edward III during the Quo Warranto inquests constantly asserted that "to no one in the realm is it permitted to hold a market without the licence and goodwill of the lord king or his predecessors".⁶ The Crown argued that for a market to be legal it must fulfil two requirements. First, it must be an authorized market, making it in the words of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls, "an authorized public concourse of buyers and sellers of commodities, meeting at a place, more or less strictly limited or defined, at an appointed time".⁷ At the very root of the market system lay the necessity for guarding against dishonest dealing. Markets were regulated by the Crown and its grantees to promote fair trading with regard to prices, weights and measures, and to prevent and punish chicanery in all its forms. There are many cases of owners of markets and fairs who were fined or whose liberties were seized because they had no pillory or tumbrel, and therefore were not adequately equipped to punish infringements of the assize of bread, ale and measures, in accordance with the law. Similarly, markets and fairs were seized by the Crown because their owners punished breaches of the assize of bread on market and fair days by fine rather than by corporal punishment. It was for this reason that the markets and fairs held in Derbyshire at Alfreton, Ashbourne, Aston upon Trent, Bake-

⁴ E. Lipson, *An introduction to the economic history of England*, 1915, I, 221.

⁵ For a discussion of the function and distribution of the great European fairs see H. Pirenne, *Economic and social history of medieval Europe*, 1936.

⁶ L. F. Salzman, "The legal status of markets", *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, 1928, II, no. 3, 205.

⁷ *Market rights and tolls: final report*, XI (1891), 2.

³ The nature of markets and fairs must be understood in both their legal and economic sense. We are concerned with the kind of *market* suggested by the first three definitions given in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. A *fair* was "a large market held less frequently, and commonly extending over a longer period of time" and, because it served a larger area than a market, it attracted buyers and sellers from a wider area. There was frequently a close relationship between the time at which the fair was held and the time at which (a) the surplus production of an area was ready for market and (b) stocks were replenished before and after the winter months. Both markets and fairs were held by chartered or by prescriptive rights, the latter on the grounds of being "held from time immemorial", that is, by "ancient custom".

well, Charlesworth and Higham were seized in 1330 and only returned to their owners on payment of a fine.⁸

The Crown also had a monetary interest in the system of authorized markets and fairs, for revenues accrued from tolls and the granting and regranting of the franchise. The right to levy tolls was a constant source of dispute. Periodically such disaffection came to the surface and became a part of recorded history. The Hundred Rolls and the proceedings on Quo Warranto and the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls leave no doubt on two points; first, disaffection was felt over a wide area and, second, the principles involved in the basic problem changed little in the course of seven centuries. But, as Ballard pointed out, the question of tolls must be viewed from two points of view.⁹ The king and the owners of markets and fairs were naturally interested in securing the largest possible income from tolls, whilst the burgesses and merchants, trading in many market towns and fairs, were primarily concerned with securing exemption from tolls. Yet the king did intervene, as at Bakewell in 1330, when excessive tolls were charged to the injury of the people.¹⁰

The second requirement to be fulfilled before a market or fair became legal in the Crown's view was that it must not damage existing markets and fairs. Charters granting a franchise to places other than royal manors and boroughs invariably contained a clause to the effect that the grant was subject to no injury or damage being done to neighbouring markets and fairs. The main grounds for establishing "a nuisance" were the coincidence of the day or days on which the markets or fairs were held and too close proximity. On the question of proximity the standard authority, frequently quoted, is Bracton, a 13th-century lawyer. Bracton stated that

a new market "may be called neighbouring and the nuisance tortious . . . if [it] has been raised within six miles and a half and the third part of a half [of an existing market] . . . When therefore a market has been obtained within such a limit, it will have to be levelled, since it is a hurtful and tortious nuisance, because it is so near. But if it be beyond that limit,

⁸ *Placita de Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. III*, 134, 152-4, 143, 138, 155 and 133. Yet not all market owners had the right to punish such offences. At Measham, for instance, then in Derbyshire, it is recorded that Edward de Bereford who held a market and fair at Measham did not punish breaches of the assize of bread and ale. Because of an overlap of jurisdictions the assizes mentioned came before the view of frankpledge of the hundred of Repton: *Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. III*, 146.

⁹ A. Ballard, ed., *British borough charters, 1042-1216*, 1913, lxix.

¹⁰ *Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. III*, 138. At Bakewell, the claimant, John Gernon, took tolls on market days from both buyers and sellers. The tolls were doubled at fair-time. Gernon claimed that he and all his ancestors had collected the tolls from time immemorial. The twelve jurors agree but point out that he has punished offenders against the assize of bread and beer by fine instead of by corporal punishment. Thus the franchises "are seized into the king's hands for abuse". When Gernon petitions to have them restored on a fine he is asked by the court whether he wishes to claim the old tolls, described as "superfluous and unjust, and to the oppression of the people and against the common law", and he submits to reduce them by claiming for the future, both at market and fair-times, for a horse, 1d. from the buyer only (instead of toll of 2d. at market and 4d. at fair-times), and for a cow, the like (2d./4d.), and for 8 sheep, the like (4d./8d.), and for 4 grown pigs, the like (formerly size not specified, 2d./4d.) and for 8 pigs under a year old, the like, and for every cart-load of merchandise, the like, and for every horse-load, ½d. of the buyer only (1d./2d.), and for every man's load, ½d. of the buyers only (½d./1d.). On these terms Gernon was allowed to make a fine of 40s. under the special commission to the justices for that purpose, and has the franchises restored to him to use as he ought to do.

although it may be hurtful, it will not be tortious, because it is remote and not neighbouring. Likewise a market may be neighbouring within those limits aforesaid, and not tortious, since it is not hurtful but rather advantageous, as if it be held anew on the second or third day at the most after the day of the other market. But if it be held on the second or third day before it, it will be tortious, because hurtful".¹¹

The arguments advanced by Bracton in support of a legal minimum distance between markets of $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles are dismissed by Salzman as a "typical piece of medieval confusion masquerading as logical exactitude". Salzman comments, "I cannot, and I doubt if Bracton could, produce a single legal case in which that figure is mentioned".¹² Though a number of the Derbyshire markets were within $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles of each other there is seemingly no evidence of attempts being made to suppress markets on the grounds of such proximity.¹³

Whether the royal authority over markets and fairs was based on right or might,¹⁴ by the 13th century the Crown had fully established its claim to create new markets and fairs and when regranting privileges and in the Quo Warranto enquiries scrutinized most closely all claims, especially those based on prescriptive rights. This did not, however, obliterate markets and fairs existing by custom, nor did it in practice prevent new markets and fairs coming into being in an extra-legal sense, that is without a royal grant.¹⁵ It is highly probable that many customary markets and fairs have gone unrecorded for documentary evidence is both more abundant and more readily available for chartered markets and fairs than it is for customary gatherings.

The extent to which the Crown invoked its prerogative to control markets and fairs by granting rights to individuals may be gathered from the fact that more than 2,800 grants were made between 1199 and 1483.¹⁶ This total includes regrants, made in some cases to the same grantee or his descendants. It is most significant that more than one half of these grants were made in the first three-quarters of the 13th century. In contrast, fewer than one hundred grants were made between 1700 and 1846.¹⁷

A network of chartered and prescriptive markets and fairs had been established throughout England by 1300 and Wales by 1400, and more places were petitioning for the right to hold authorized gatherings. Some of the settlements holding regular open markets and periodic fairs were already developing quite intricate urban functions, stemming directly or indirectly from the trade (including ancillary services) engendered by the traders in the markets and fairs of the town. At the other end of the scale were many settlements which,

¹¹ Henry de Bracton, *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliae*, Book 5, ed. Sir Travers Twiss, 1880, 583-6.

¹² Salzman, 210.

¹³ There are, however, many references in the *Calendar of Charter Rolls* to attempts being made in other counties to suppress neighbouring markets located from 5 to 10 miles away.

¹⁴ See Salzman's article for a discussion on this point.

¹⁵ In Lancashire, for instance, markets and fairs deriving from custom rather than charter were particularly important during the 14th century. After 1500, following a marked pause during the 15th century, custom almost entirely replaced charter as the means by which markets became established. See G. H. Tupling, "Markets and Fairs in Medieval Lancashire", in *Historical essays in honour of James Tait*, ed., J. G. Edwards, V. H. Galbraith and E. F. Jacob, 1933, 345-56.

¹⁶ *Market rights and tolls: first report*, I, 108-131.

¹⁷ *Market rights and tolls: final report*, XI, 131-162.

despite their ancient or newly acquired rights, were destined to remain as obscure villages and hamlets in the rural manors to which they belonged.¹⁸

All parts of the country conducted a type of farming with self-sufficiency as its main objective and with villages and hamlets producing the greater part of their own requirements — corn for bread and ale and beasts for meat and clothing.¹⁹ Yet, the existence of more than 1,200 places with market rights recognized by the Crown, together with an untold number holding markets and fairs by custom, itself testifies to the fact that even in the 13th and 14th centuries trading was taking place on a scale sufficient to warrant the organization of a regulated market system. The weekly markets catered for local trade, whilst the periodic fairs, together with the market towns sited close to navigable water and major roads, served the commercial needs of the region and the nation. Manifestly, the extreme form of self-sufficiency was breaking down by the 13th century with farming for family and local community gradually being superseded by farming for market. The growth of the urban areas as centres of population, commerce and industry led to a further expansion of trade to meet their own increasing demands for food and raw materials. The question arises in the case of some settlements whether the establishment of markets and fairs fostered urban growth or vice versa. Market rights were granted to rural manors and boroughs alike. Furthermore, the Crown was especially concerned with the utilization and usurpation of privileges which it regarded as falling within its sphere of ownership and jurisdiction. Despite these qualifications the Crown's grant of market rights to more than 1,200 places in England and Wales between 1227 and 1350²⁰ indicates an intense interest in trade and in the benefits accruing from trade. For many settlements the acquirement of market rights marked the first step towards urban status.²¹

The origins of markets and fairs in Derbyshire, 1200-1350

It is not known how many markets and fairs were in existence in Derbyshire before 1200. The evidence is fragmentary. For instance, none of the fifty or so markets and two fairs recorded in Domesday Book were in Derbyshire,²² although no attempt was made to give a comprehensive account. It is possible that only those markets and fairs which yielded toll to the king were returned and that free meetings did not enter into the scope of the commissioners' work. After the Conquest markets and fairs came to be regarded as a valuable franchise derived from the prerogative of the Crown and one that could yield a revenue in tolls and other profits to the king or the grantee of the franchise.

The prescriptive markets mentioned below were at places which in 1086

¹⁸ Some fairs were held outside the towns and villages and on the open moors or at important crossroads.

¹⁹ W. Smith, *An economic geography of Great Britain*, 1953, 3.

²⁰ The figure quoted is based on the grants recorded in the *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, I-V, covering the period 1226-1417. It refers to the number of *places* granted market rights. The number of *grants* is much greater because of the practice of regranting.

²¹ See below, p. 101.

²² *Market rights and tolls: first report*, I, 19 and 3.

formed part of the royal estates, suggesting that markets and fairs on the manors in ancient demesne existed for a long time before reference is made to them in the documents. Markets and fairs were also probably held on the estates belonging to the church and other powerful landowners. The close association of fairs with the feast of dedication of the patron saint of the town, village or district, clearly apparent in Derbyshire in the 13th century, is also suggestive and may even represent a continuation of pagan festivals.²³ From an early date such festivals were used for pleasure and business as well as for religious purposes.

It is certain that Derby and Chesterfield were market towns long before the granting of their first charters. Derby was the only borough in the county at the time of the Domesday survey,²⁴ and the charter of 1204 was a confirmation rather than an initial granting of rights to the borough. Such rights included the privilege of holding markets and levying tolls.²⁵ Chesterfield also received its first borough charter in 1204. Among the privileges granted were the right to hold markets on two days of each week and an annual fair lasting eight days.²⁶ However, entries in the Pipe Rolls refer to a market in 1164-5²⁷ and a fair in 1181-2.²⁸

If Derby and Chesterfield were the only market centres, then they must have served a considerable area. Parts of the county might, however, have been catered for by market towns over the boundary, such as Nottingham, Burton-on-Trent, Tutbury and Leek. Competition from an unknown, and

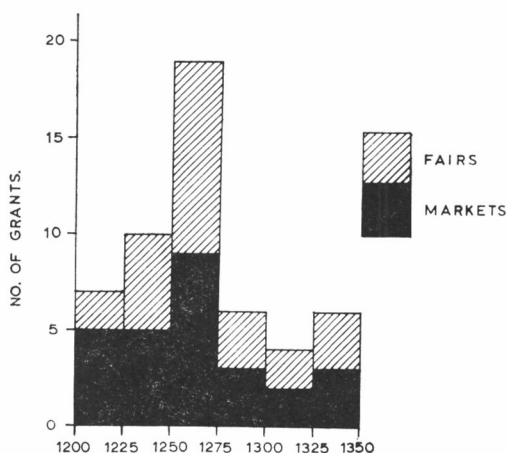


FIG. 9. Grants of markets and fairs in Derbyshire 1200-1350.

²³ *Market rights and tolls: first report*, I, 1.

²⁴ H. C. Darby and I. S. Maxwell, ed., *The Domesday geography of Northern England*, 1962, 322-3 and 500.

²⁵ Ballard, cxl.

²⁶ Ballard, cxxxix. For a partial translation see J. P. Yeatman, *The history of the borough of Chesterfield*, 1890, 15-17.

²⁷ *Pipe Roll Society*, VIII (1887), 87.

²⁸ *Pipe Roll Society*, XXXI (1910), 15.

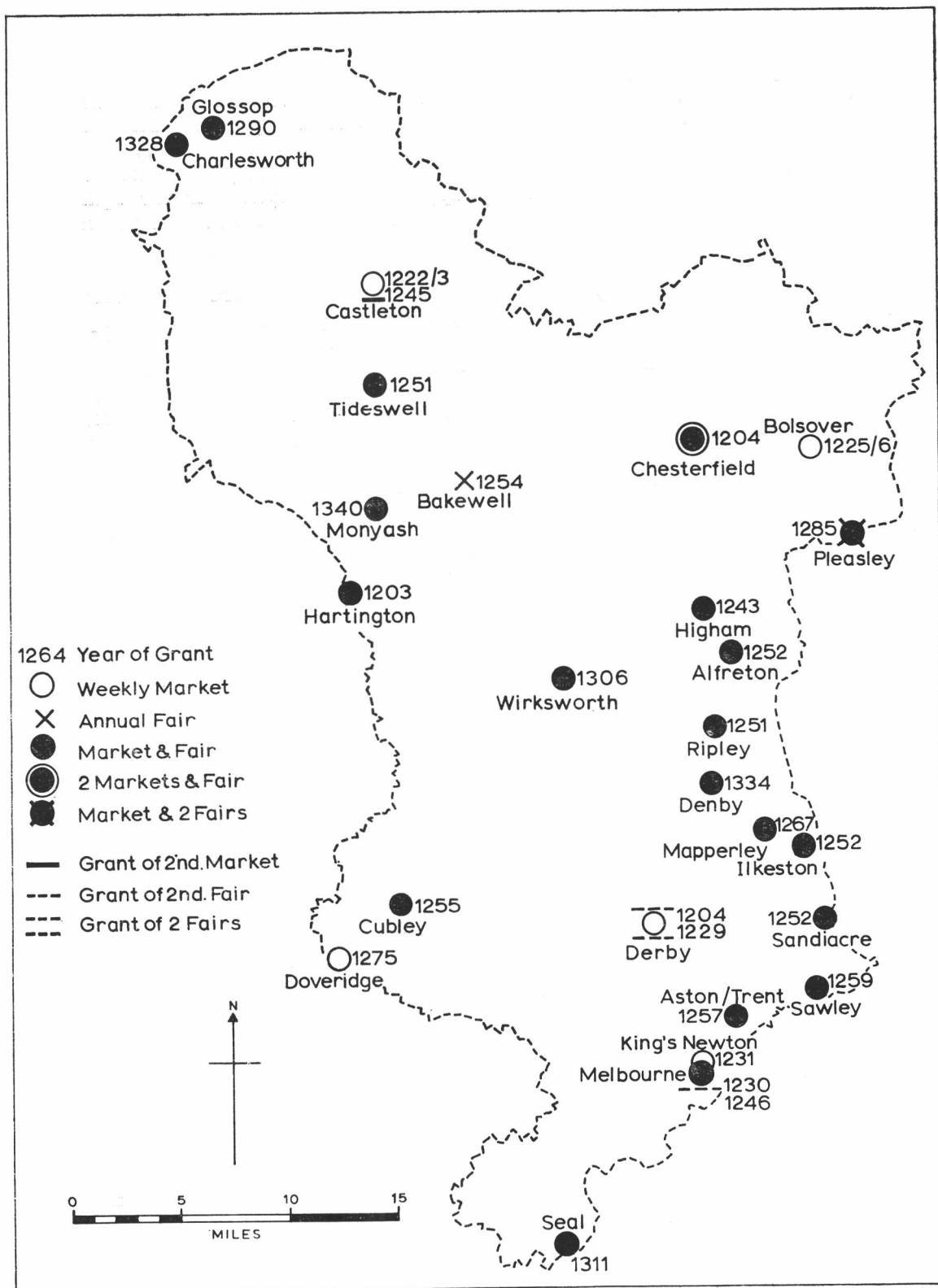


FIG. 10. Chartered markets and fairs 1200-1350.

possibly unrecorded, number of markets and fairs operating elsewhere in and close to the county would further reduce the areas served by Derby and Chesterfield.

In Derbyshire, increasing reference is made to markets and fairs in the 13th and 14th centuries. The first charter was granted in 1203. Figure 9 shows that two-thirds of the markets and fairs recorded before 1350 were established or recognized between 1200 and 1275, with more than one-third between 1250 and 1274. By the mid-14th century twenty-one Derbyshire settlements had been granted both markets and fairs, a further four markets only, and one, Bakewell, a fair only (Fig. 10). The details of these grants are given in appendix A. The dates given in the left-hand column refer to the first reference found to a market or fair at a given place, but two points should be noted. First, the entries in the Charter Rolls do not necessarily indicate the initial founding of markets and fairs. Many entries no doubt do so, but others refer to regrants of privileges or to the extension of legal recognition to prescriptive gatherings. The few Derbyshire examples of customary gatherings are given below and in appendix B. Secondly, a fuller search in, say, the Pipe, Close and Assize Rolls might take the origin of some individual markets and fairs further back in time and thus increase our knowledge of the continuity of trading at various sites, and might also add to the list of places given in the appendix.

In addition to the twenty-five market towns with chartered rights, there were at least three settlements holding markets by ancient custom. By 1297 Ashbourne had a weekly market on Saturdays²⁹ and weekly markets were claimed at Bakewell and Repton in 1330 on the grounds of their being held from time immemorial.

The 28 market towns together held markets on 33 days in each week. The most popular market day was Wednesday when 9 meetings were held in the county, followed by Monday (7), Thursday (6), Tuesday (5), Saturday (3), Friday (2), and Sunday (1). The market day was changed at Sawley, Glossop and Hartington by charter, and at Higham a market was claimed on Wednesday in 1330 though the charter of 1243 had specified Thursday.

The fairs held at twenty-four Derbyshire market towns together lasted 120 days. The four fairs, scheduled for movable feasts, extended over fifteen days. Figure 11 shows that the most popular months were September and July with thirty-seven and thirty fair-days respectively. No fairs were held in the county between 2 December and 23 April. Most fairs were held for three days, on the vigil, feast and morrow of a particular feast. The longest fair was one of fifteen days at Bakewell, and fairs lasting for more than seven days took place at Chesterfield, Derby, Melbourne and Sandiacre. No reference has been found to fairs at the market centres of Castleton, Bolsover, King's Newton and Doveridge.

Because a very high proportion of the Derbyshire markets and fairs had been granted by the Crown to individual subjects, their distribution is only

²⁹ Lysons, 6. In the inquisition of 4 Edw. I reference is made to a market at Ashbourne in 1275-6: *Rotuli Hundredorum, Temp. Hen. III & Edw. I*, I, 61.

partially explained by means of an analysis of geographic and economic factors, such as regional contrasts in agricultural practice and production, the nature and efficiency of the network of communications and the advantages and disadvantages of the site and situation of each of the market settlements. Because markets and fairs were granted to individuals who were prepared to "buy" commercial privileges from the Crown, social and political factors also had a profound influence on their distribution.

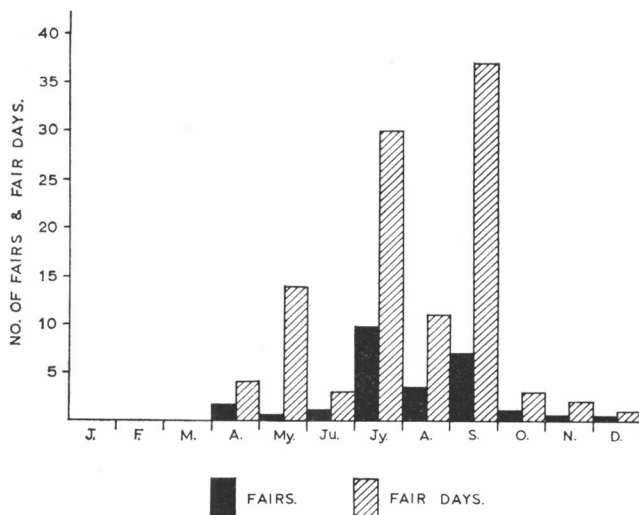


FIG. 11. Number of fairs and fair days per month in Derbyshire in 1350.

Outside the boroughs, market-rights were often acquired by the larger landowners who had sufficient influence with the Crown. Their initiative in seeking such rights was not necessarily motivated by any advantages the proposed market centre might possess for trading purposes. Indeed, against a background of widespread enthusiasm for the setting-up of markets, franchises were granted to people holding land at places most unlikely to succeed. Markets and fairs had become a status symbol. But, no doubt, some of the landowners were motivated by their concern with attempting to develop urban functions at selected settlements within their manors and, seeing others succeed, were determined to share in the benefits accruing from trade.

The distribution of medieval markets and fairs is, therefore, partly explained by the distribution of the estates of the chief landowners. Thus, the earl of Derby, a very considerable landowner in the county, obtained market rights at Hartington, while the earls of Lancaster, relatives of the king at the time of the grants, acquired rights at their manors of Melbourne and Wirksworth. Over a period of eighty years the de Greys developed markets at Higham in Shirland, Sandiacre and Derby. John de Grey was a large landowner owning land in at least six counties when, in 1243, he secured market

rights for Higham in his manor of Shirland.³⁰ A late grant for a market and fair was made at Monyash to William de Lynford "for good services rendered in Scotland and abroad".³¹ The ecclesiastical landowners were also successfully claiming the right to hold markets and fairs at several places within their Derbyshire estates. Thus grants were made to the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield at Sawley, the bishop of St. David's at Pleasley, St. Werburgh's abbey at Aston upon Trent, Darley abbey at Ripley, Tutbury priory at Doveridge,³² Basingwerk abbey at both Glossop and Charlesworth and the bishop of Carlisle at Melbourne and King's Newton.

Though the system of land-ownership played an important role in the creation, and hence in the distribution of markets and fairs in Derbyshire, many did occupy geographical sites and situations eminently suited to commerce. In applying for market rights, therefore, at least some of the landowners selected the proposed sites with care. That markets have apparently continued to be held in an unbroken sequence from the medieval period to the 20th century at about one-third of the sites proves their suitability. Conversely, a number of the sites chosen proved to be failures and some markets were discontinued or became moribund within a hundred years of the initial grant. In 1330, for instance, the right to hold a market and fair at Sandiacre had not been exercised since the time of the grant in 1252.³³ At Aston upon Trent there was no concourse to either market or fair.³⁴ Similarly, the market and fair at Ilkeston was little frequented; Nicholas de Cantilupo "holds the fair if any come, but there is no access of buyers and sellers".³⁵ It is, however, significant that Ilkeston, like Ripley and Glossop, led a chequered existence as a market town, at times being discontinued and at other times, particularly during the 19th century, being revived.

The rapid increase in the number of places in Derbyshire successfully claiming markets and fairs poses the question to what extent can the procurement of such rights be used as an indicator of the development of urban functions? In *Gloucestershire Studies* Finberg has drawn attention to the two stages in the development of towns in the early middle ages. The fundamental step was to establish a market, for "no village without an established market could hope to grow into a town".³⁶ The second stage, not necessarily following the first, was the foundation of a borough which invested in the settlement a tenurial character quite distinct from that of its rural surroundings. Such a step also involved a change in function, for it at least implied that the settlement intended to place a greater dependence on trade or handicrafts rather than on agriculture for its existence. Thus, for example, the trades of tanners, dyers, cloth-cutters, butchers, fishmongers and the like are mentioned in the

³⁰ *Calendarium Rotulorum Chartarum*, 58.

³¹ *Cal. Ch. R.*, IV (1327-1341), 466.

³² It is of particular interest to note that at the time of the Domesday survey, Doveridge was held entirely by the de Ferrers, later the earls of Derby, and that the monks of Tutbury already held it of Henry: Darby and Maxwell, 287-8.

³³ *Placita de Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. I*, 163.

³⁴ *Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. I*, 143.

³⁵ *Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. I*, 137.

³⁶ H. P. R. Finberg, ed., *Gloucestershire studies*, 1957, 62.

borough charters of Chesterfield and Bakewell. These were the trades from which "foreigners" were excluded. "Foreign" traders were also kept from buying and selling there.³⁷

Compared with Gloucestershire, where several boroughs came into existence in what Finberg has called the "golden age of borough-making", extending from the Norman Conquest to the mid-13th century,³⁸ the second stage was very much weaker in Derbyshire. Derby and Chesterfield were boroughs, whilst Bakewell was a mixed borough of burgesses and freeholders.³⁹ Ashbourne's attempt to attain borough status met with only partial success.⁴⁰ Though there were very few boroughs in Derbyshire at least twenty other settlements took "the first essential step" in the development of urban functions by obtaining charters to engage in trade by way of weekly markets and periodic fairs (Fig. 10). By so doing they acquired an important function which, if the market and fair in the particular circumstances of a given settlement met with success, would accelerate the tendency to urban growth, by giving the communities a status marking them off from the rural manors to which they belonged. Yet the fact that some markets and fairs were little used, together with the lack of statistical information on the amount and value of trade passing through the market towns, suggests that it would be unwise to draw too close a parallel between the establishment of markets and fairs and urban growth.

The distribution of markets and fairs in Derbyshire, 1200-1350

By the mid-14th century the twenty-eight market towns for which evidence has been found formed a comprehensive network of trading centres, even though not all the franchises were being used at the same time. Figures 10 and 12 demonstrate that the markets were by no means equally spaced nor was the density of market centres the same in the various geographical divisions of the county. The distance between neighbouring markets ranged from less than one mile in the case of Melbourne and King's Newton to more than seven miles separating Wirksworth from its nearest neighbour in any direction.

The most striking feature of the distribution pattern is the high proportion of markets and fairs situated close to the county boundary. No fewer than three-quarters of the market towns are within about 4 miles of the nearest point on the present county boundary. The peripheral distribution is particularly marked in the east and south where it is accentuated by the close spacing of 11 markets in the area between Higham and Melbourne. Together these 11 markets formed an arc to the east and south of Derby.⁴¹ The arc included market towns in two contrasting locations; first, to the north was a group of markets at Higham, Alfreton, Ripley and Denby occupying sites on

³⁷ A. Ballard and J. Tait, *British borough charters, 1216-1307*, 1923, lxxxvii.

³⁸ Finberg, 64-8.

³⁹ Ballard and Tait, lxxvii, lxxxv, xc and 267.

⁴⁰ There is an occasional reference made to "the royal borough of Ashbourne": see, for instance, *Rotuli Hundredorum, Temp. Hen. III & Edw. I*, I, 61.

⁴¹ In south-west Nottinghamshire only Nottingham and Lenton were established trading centres.

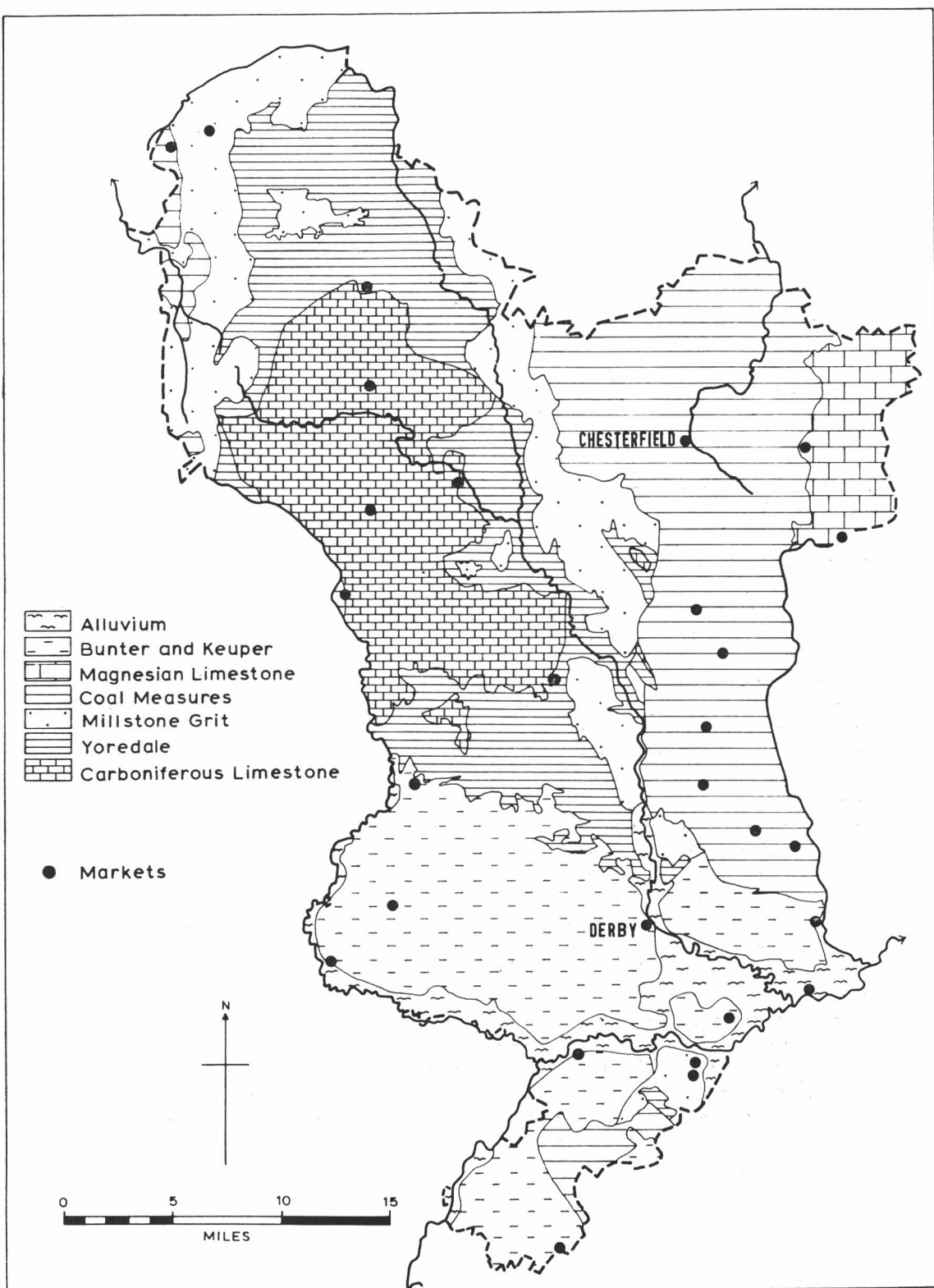


FIG. 12. Market towns, simplified geology and main drainage.

the sandstone ridges midway between the Erewash and Derwent valleys; to the south a second group had formed in the Trent valley, with markets at Aston upon Trent and Sawley to the north of the river and at King's Newton and Melbourne on the south side. This cluster was continued eastwards into Leicestershire with markets at Castle Donington and Keyworth. Only Wirksworth, Tideswell and Derby are further than $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the nearest point on the county boundary. Thus, the central parts of the county had few market towns, and this may partly explain the importance attained as market towns by Chesterfield, Wirksworth and Derby.

A suggestive feature of the distribution pattern is the "belt" of market centres cutting diagonally across the county from Ilkeston in the south-east to Glossop and Charlesworth in the extreme north-west. Included in the belt were Mapperley, Ripley, Denby, Wirksworth, Monyash, Bakewell and Tideswell. Apart from the local advantages of each of these settlements, taken together they appear to form part of a chain of market towns stretching from the eastern lowlands, and in particular from the borough and market town of Nottingham on the navigable Trent, across the southern Pennines to the north-western plains. Such a route was probably followed by a route from an early date.⁴² Unfortunately, the evidence on medieval markets and fairs does not include information on such matters as goods traded, volume of business or the market areas from which buyers and sellers were attracted, so we are unable to ascertain whether this route via the Derbyshire market towns was in fact used for the interchange of goods both between the market towns and also the areas to the south-east and north-west of the county. If it were, then this type of trading would add a new dimension to the primary function of market towns in this period, which was to serve the local area.

In contrast to the clusters and chain of markets and fairs already mentioned, there were few market towns over considerable areas of the county. Settlements with trading rights were virtually absent on the Triassic lowlands to the west of Derby, on the northern coal measure country around Chesterfield and in the virtually unpopulated areas such as the bleak moorlands to the north of a line joining Chapel-en-le-Frith and Hope and to the east of the Derwent valley above Matlock.

A prominent feature of the distribution pattern is the number of market towns situated close to the junction of areas with a marked contrast in their physical environment. For instance, there were only two market towns, namely Tideswell and Monyash, located in the carboniferous limestone country. But girdling the area in positions enabling them to include a part of it in their respective market areas were centres such as Hartington, Castleton, Bakewell, Wirksworth and Ashbourne. Similarly, Cubley was the only settlement with a market and fair within the area of the Triassic rocks whilst around the perimeter of the outcrop and close to the major valley routeways was a ring of market towns, from Ashbourne and Doveridge in the west (together with Rocester and Uttoxeter on the Staffordshire side of the Dove)

⁴² R. W. P. Cockerton in *Derbyshire Countryside*, no. 27, 62-3; no. 28, 86-7.

through the centres on the southern side of the lower Dove and both sides of the Trent valley to Sandiacre in the Erewash valley in the east. Significantly, Derby commanded an important north to south valley routeway through the Triassic lowlands. There is little doubt that the trading opportunities open to towns situated close to areas of contrasting economic activity were enhanced as geographical specialization in agriculture increased in subsequent centuries.

The distribution of market towns was in no small measure influenced by the means of transport and the network of communications. Because of the fragmentary evidence on the subject, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the pattern of communications in detail. What is clear, however, is that the multiplicity of market towns was a direct result of the difficulty and expense of moving goods, particularly by land. Thus, in the 13th and 14th centuries the majority of market towns were established to serve a relatively small and primarily local market area. Though Bracton's conclusions on the legal spacing of market towns, in particular that a new market was both "neighbouring and tortious" and must be levelled, have been demonstrated to be extremely dubious, it is pertinent to note part of his argument, namely that "according to the sayings of the elders a reasonable day's journey consists of twenty miles. The day's journey is divided into three parts, the first part, that of the morning, is to be given to those who are going to the market, the second is to be given to buying and selling . . . and the third part is left for those returning from the market to their own homes and for doing all those things which must be done by day and not by night, on account of the snares and attacks of robbers, that all things may be in safety".⁴³ It is not stated whether a day's journey of twenty miles is "reasonable" for a man walking, laden or unladen, a man pushing a cart or a man driving livestock. Nor does Bracton consider whether such a journey is "reasonable" over all kinds of terrain and at all times of the year. In general, however, it is unlikely that very many buyers and sellers travelled more than a few miles to a normal weekly market. If such was the case then a distribution pattern consisting of a market town spaced at an interval of about $11\frac{1}{3}$ miles apart would bring every point in the area within $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles of the nearest market. However, Bracton, clearly confusing the distance from any given point to the nearest market with the distance between adjacent market towns, concluded that markets should be more than $6\frac{2}{3}$ rather than $11\frac{2}{3}$ miles apart. That the spacing of markets did not conform to either of these is demonstrated by the map showing the medieval market towns of Derbyshire and of adjoining areas (Fig. 12). The extent to which the circles overlap is a measure of the varying density of market towns in different parts of the area. It was in the south-east, where competition was greatest, that the markets described in 1330 as little used or moribund were to be found.

The majority of medieval market towns served a small, local area and only with regard to the minority was the ability to travel more than a few miles at reasonable time and cost really essential. In Derbyshire only Derby

⁴³ Bracton, 585.

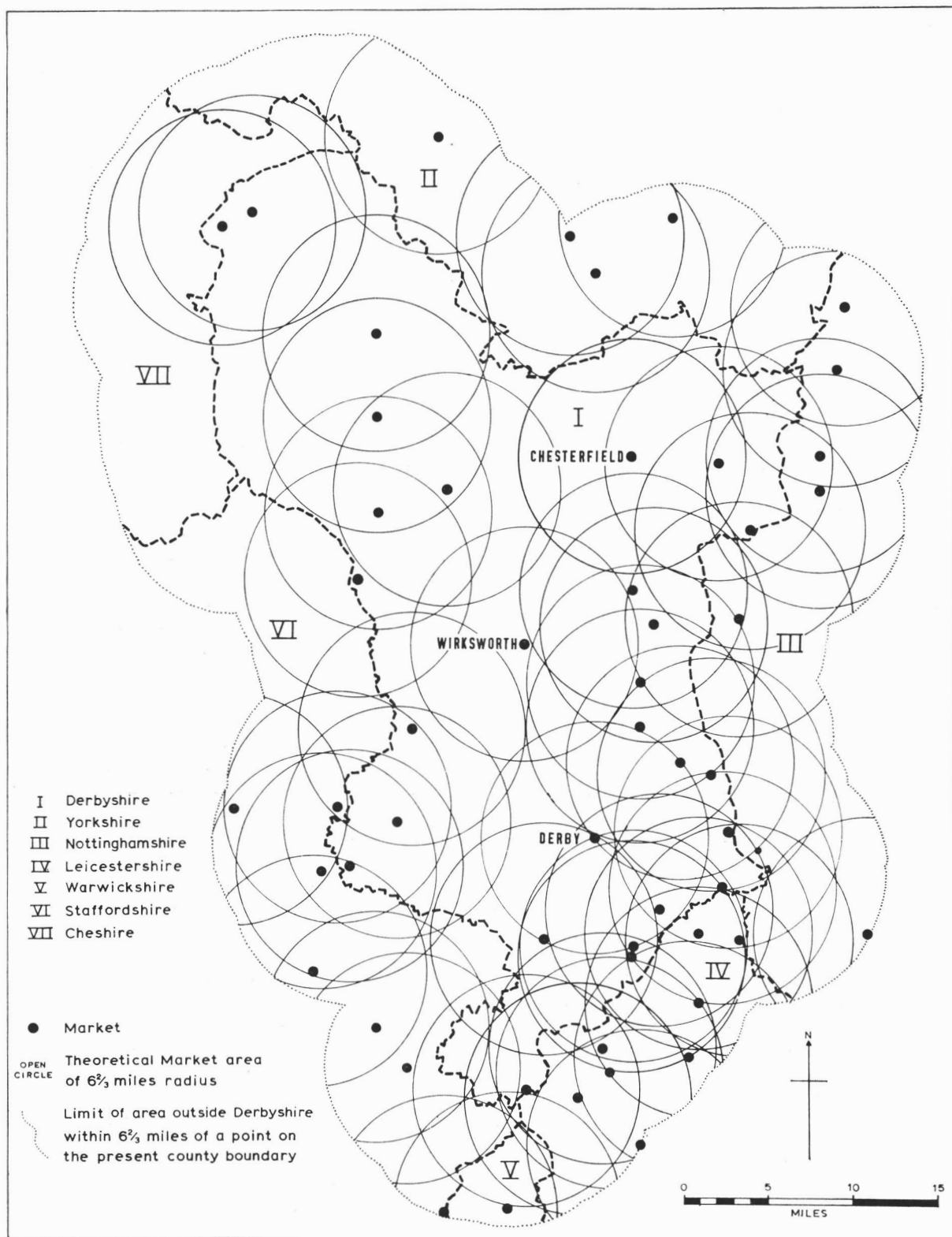


FIG. 13. Market towns of Derbyshire and adjoining areas.
 In other counties only markets recorded in the *Calendar of Charter Rolls* 1226-1350 have been included.

and Chesterfield appear to fall in the latter category and for that reason they are discussed in greater detail in appendix C. Almost all market towns attempting to extend their influence over a larger area were situated close to navigable water. The fact that almost all the medieval market towns in Derbyshire were sited either on or close to the major streams was a reflection of the distribution and density of settlement, especially in the northern half of the county, rather than a direct consequence of any widespread use of the river and valley routeways. Such factors as the relative ease of communications along the valley routeways, the availability of bridging-points and fords, the relative isolation of parts of the county by deeply entrenched valleys, bleak moorlands and areas of sparse settlement, became progressively more important in the period between 1350 and 1750 when, as a result of the steady improvement in the means of transport and communications, market towns could effectively serve a larger area than in earlier times. Thus, geographic and economic factors became more significant as competition increased, and fewer market towns were able to serve the same area. By the mid-17th century about two-thirds of the medieval market towns no longer held a regular market.

Though the evidence for the 10th and 11th centuries is fragmentary, Derby and Chesterfield were certainly market towns by 1200. As a result of the rapid expansion in the number of markets and fairs in Derbyshire and the increasing reference thereto, by 1350 one or more weekly markets were or could be held at no less than 28 settlements, and 24 of these also had at least one annual fair. The majority of places held rights by charter, and there were few prescriptive markets and fairs.

The distribution pattern was marked by, first, the more frequent occurrence of markets and fairs in the east and south of the county and, second, the apparent advantage of a situation close to areas of contrasting economic activity. Social and political factors, particularly the system of landownership and its consequences, had a profound influence on the distribution of markets and fairs. Geographic and economic factors, though not unimportant, did not affect the distribution pattern to the same extent as in later periods for the medieval market served an area of only limited extent. Finally, comparing the number of market towns in this period with that of later centuries it is found that there was a considerable decline from the 28 places recorded in appendices A and B to the 9 listed in 1673 by Blome.⁴⁴ However, during the years of rapid industrial and agrarian change the number of market towns again increased from 12 in 1792 to 18 in 1857⁴⁵ and 23 in 1927.⁴⁶ Many of the new markets were situated on or close to the productive coalfield and some of the "new" markets were at places which had first acquired rights in the period from 1200 to 1350.

⁴⁴ R. Blome, *Britannia: or A geographical description of the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 1673, 76-8.

⁴⁵ Based on information given in F. White & Co., *History, gazetteer and directory of the county of Derby* . . . , 1857.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Economic series*, no. 14: *Markets and fairs in England and Wales*, part 2, *Midland markets*, 1927, 110-3.

APPENDIX A

GRANTS OF MARKETS AND FAIRS IN DERBYSHIRE, 1200-1350

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Source</i>
1203 June 12	Hartington ¹	William de Ferrars	Wed. (Tues.)	31 Aug.-2 Sept.	<i>Rot. Chart.</i> , I, pt. 1, 108b
1204	Derby	Burgesses	Thurs. eve. to Fri. eve.		Ballard, <i>British Borough Charters</i> , lxvii
1204	Chesterfield	William Brewer	Tues. Sat.	14-22 Sept.	<i>Rot. Chart.</i> , I, pt. 1, 139
1222/3	Castleton	Simon Peché	Wed.		<i>Rot. Litt. Claus.</i> , I, 544
1226	Bolsover		Fri.		Lysons, <i>Magna Britannia</i> , V, xix
1229	Derby	Burgesses		Thurs. & Fri. in Whitsun week, 17-24 July, 26 July-2 Aug.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , I, 96
1230	Melbourne ²	Walter, bishop of Carlisle	Wed.	7-11 Sept.	<i>Close R.</i> (1227-31), 332
1231	"	" " "	"	Extended to 14 Sept.	<i>Close R.</i> , 485
1231 April 3	King's Newton ³ Higham in Shirland ⁴	John de Grey "	Sat. Thurs.	31 July-2 Aug.	<i>Close R.</i> , 485 <i>Placita de Quo Warranto</i> , 4 <i>Edw.</i> III, 133
1245	Castleton		second market on Thurs.		<i>Close R.</i> (1242-47), 368
1246 Feb. 24	Melbourne ⁵	Paulinus de Bampton	Wed.	28-30 Sept. 23-25 June	<i>Close R.</i> , 444 <i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , I, 353
1251 Nov. 25	Tideswell ⁶	Abbot & convent of Darley	Wed.	17-19 Aug.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 370
1252 Apr. 10	Ripley	Hugh son of Ralph	Thurs.	Vigil & feast of the Assumption	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 384
1252 July 16	Ilkeston	Robert de Lathun & Thomas de Chaworth	Mon.	19-21 July	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 400
1252 Dec. 16	Alfreton	William de Grey	Wed.	31 Aug.-7 Sept.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 413
1254 Feb. 29	Sandiacre	William Gernon		30 April-14 May	<i>Placita de Quo Warranto</i> , 4 <i>Edw.</i> III, 140
1255 Apr. 7	Bakewell ⁸	William de Montgomery	Thurs.	29 Nov.-1 Dec.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , I, 443
1257 Sept. 15	Cubley	Abbot & convent of St. Werburgh, Chester	Tues.	31 July-2 Aug.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 473
1259 June 2	Aston upon Trent	Roger, bishop of Coventry & Lichfield	Tues. (Thurs.)	28-30 Sept.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , II, 19
1267 May 28	Sawley ⁹	Simon de Ardern	Mon.	Vigil, feast & morrow of Holy Trinity	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 75
1275 Nov. 24	Mapperley	Prior & convent of Tutbury	Thurs.		<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 197
1285 May 9	Doveridge	Thomas, bishop of St. David's	Mon.	17-19 Oct. 24-26 Apr.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 285
1290 Nov. 7	Pleasley	Abbot & convent of Basingwerk	Wed. (Mon.)	10-12 June (21-23 July)	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 372
1306 Feb. 2	Glossop ¹⁰	Thomas, earl of Lancaster	Tues.	7-9 Sept.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , III, 66
1311	Wirksworth	Thomas de Rid- ware	Mon.	8 July	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , III, 165
1311 Mar. 24	Seal (now in Derbys.)	William de Bere- ford	Tues.	6-8 July	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 166
1328 Feb. 21	Measham (now in Leics.)	Abbot & convent of Basingwerk	Wed.	21-23 July	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , IV, 68
1334 Jan. 5	Charlesworth ¹¹	Richard de Grey of Codnor	Thurs.	7-8 Sept.	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 306
1340 Apr. 8	Denby	William de Lynford	Tues.	Vigil, feast & morrow of Trinity Sunday	<i>Cal. Ch. R.</i> , 466
	Monyash ¹²			20-21 July	

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL MARKETS AND FAIRS CLAIMED IN 1330

<i>Place</i>	<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Source</i>
Higham in Shirland ¹³	Henry de Grey	Wed.		<i>Placita de Quo Warranto</i> , 4 Edw. III., 133
Bakewell ¹⁴	John Gernon	Mon.		138, 140
Ashbourne ¹⁵	Henry, earl of Lancaster	Sat.		152-4
Repton		Wed.	1 July	139-40
Chesterfield	Thomas Wake		8 days from eve of Palm Sunday	139.
Derby	Burgesses	Sun. Mon. Wed.	25 July	158

Footnotes — Appendix A

¹ Market day changed from Wednesday to Tuesday in 1272. *Cal. Ch. R.*, II, 181.

² This grant to Melbourne is left unidentified in the index to the *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, I. The entry in the Close Rolls establishes the Melbourne referred to as the Melbourne in Derbyshire.

³ This is the only reference found to a market at King's Newton. It is not recorded in the list known as Palmer's MS. as published by the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls, and it is not mentioned by Lysons. There can be no doubt, however, that it is King's Newton in the manor of Melbourne in Derbyshire.

⁴ In 1330, at the proceedings on Quo Warranto, Henry de Grey produced a charter dated 3 April 1243. The charter rolls are missing for that date and the first reference is that of 6 April 1251. *Cal. Ch. R.*, I, 355.

⁵ In 1328 a charter granted to Henry, earl of Lancaster, confirmed the right to hold a weekly market on Wednesday and an annual fair from 29 Sept. to 1 Oct. (the fair was initially granted for 28 to 30 Sept. in 1246). *Cal. Ch. R.*, IV, 76, 78.

⁶ In 1393 a weekly market on Wednesday was confirmed and the fair was to be held on 28 and 29 August. *Cal. Ch. R.*, V, 337.

⁷ Fair reduced to 19 and 20 July by 1330.

⁸ It is not possible to check this reference in the charter rolls because no roll was kept from 28 Oct. 1253 to 27 Oct. 1254. In 1330 the claim was rejected and the fair seized.

⁹ Market day changed from Tuesday to Thursday in 1301. *Cal. Ch. R.*, III, 1.

¹⁰ A marginal note on the charter states that it was "afterwards restored and cancelled and changed, and the market granted on Monday and the fair on the vigil, the feast and the morrow of St. Mary Magdalen".

¹¹ As with Glossop, the market and fair were granted to Basingwerk abbey in Flintshire. It must be doubted that two fairs were held at the same time in the same manor. The main purpose of the second charter and of the changes in the Glossop grant might have been to secure a second market day in the manor. It might, however, indicate a movement of the Glossop market to Charlesworth since they are in close proximity.

¹² In 1348 a market on Tuesday was regranted to John le Wyne but the fair was changed to 20 and 21 July. *Cal. Ch. R.*, V, 86.

Footnotes — Appendix B

¹³ The market on Tuesday, granted by charter in 1243, was presumably discontinued.

¹⁴ Claim proved and accepted subject to detailed verdict on rates of toll levied by the owner of the market.

¹⁵ Markets and fairs claimed as being appurtenant to the manor when his ancestor acquired the manor by exchange with Edward I by charters of 7 and 8 Edw. I.

APPENDIX C

THE MARKET TOWNS OF DERBY AND CHESTERFIELD

DERBY

From an early date Derby was the most important trading centre in Derbyshire. Its importance stemmed partly from the many advantages afforded by both its site and situation. Above all, Derby was situated at a major crossroads of routeways. Sited on the right-bank of the Derwent a few miles above its confluence with the Trent, Derby commanded the south to north routeway along the Derwent valley which gave access to a large part of the county, whilst the Trent valley with its important east to west communications was only a few miles south of the town. The construction of the network of Roman roads focused attention on the crossing-point of the Derwent at Little Chester near Derby. The town's trading activity was also helped by its situation in the southern lowlands, the area of the county with the highest density of people in the medieval period.

By the second half of the 11th century Derby was an important borough, with a recorded population in 1066, which included not less than 243 resident burgesses, and with at least 700 people in the town in 1086.¹ The grants made to the borough by the Crown after 1200 recognized the importance of Derby as a commercial centre and, by granting or confirming various rights and privileges, further strengthened this aspect of the town's activities. A charter granted in 1204 confirmed Derby's borough status, the right to hold a great market from Thursday evening to Friday evening, forbade other places in the county to hold markets on Fridays, and laid down "that for 10 leagues round no one should work dyed cloths except in the borough" (and in the borough of Nottingham). A further clause stated that "the river Derwent ought to be free to voyagers as far as a perch extends from each part of the stream of water". Finally, King John granted that the burgesses "shall be quit of toll throughout my whole realm in fairs and out of fairs".² A charter in 1229 granted a franchise to hold fairs on the Thursday and Friday in Whitsun week and from 17 to 24 July and from 26 July to 2 August.³ By 1330 at the proceedings on *Quo Warranto* the burgesses were also claiming by prescription weekly markets on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday and an annual fair on 25 July (St. James' day).⁴ Derby was the only settlement in the county which claimed more than two weekly markets and annual fairs. Clearly the shire town had maintained its pre-eminence in the county. As in the 11th century, however, Derby's chief rival was the borough of Nottingham a few miles to the east rather than any settlement in Derbyshire.

CHESTERFIELD

Only detailed historical research into the origins and growth of Chesterfield will explain why Chesterfield was the second borough in the county at the beginning of the 13th century. The situation of Chesterfield was not as favourable as that of Derby. The natural routeways focusing on the town were those following the Rother valley from the north-east and south-east, whilst minor tributary valleys such as the Drone and Hipper facilitated a limited westerly extension of Chesterfield's market area. These routeways were by no means as important as those passing through or close to the town of Derby. It would appear, therefore, that social and political factors were particularly important at Chesterfield in accounting for the all-important change which

¹ Darby and Maxwell, 322.

² Ballard, lxvii, 199, 186.

³ *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, I, 96.

⁴ *Quo Warranto*, 4 Edw. III, 158.

divorced the settlement from the rural manor to which it belonged and made it an urban area with borough status.

Evidence has already been cited to show the existence of markets and fairs in the town in the 12th century. The first known charter was granted in 1204. It confirmed that Chesterfield was a free borough, and specifically mentioned the right to hold a fair at Chesterfield in each year, at the exaltation of the Holy Cross, for eight days' duration, besides a market there of two days in each week, on Tuesday and Saturday,⁵ with all "the liberties and free customs pertaining to fairs and markets from all those who do not possess privileges of exemption".⁶ The charter granted in 1213 refers to the right to collect tolls in both fair and markets.⁷ One aspect of tolls, that of stallage, gave rise to disagreement between the lord and the burgesses and attempts were made to clarify the position in 1226-7 and 1294.⁸

In 1330, Thomas Wake claimed a second fair of eight days from the eve of Palm Sunday in addition to the eight-day fair at the Exaltation of the Cross. Both claims were approved.⁹ With its weekly markets and annual fairs Chesterfield was well placed to take advantage of any increase in trade taking place in north-east Derbyshire.

Acknowledgement

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⁵ Between 1200 and 1350 the only other markets held in the county on Saturdays were at King's Newton and Ashbourne.

⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, I, pt. I, 139.

⁷ Ballard, 33.

⁸ Ballard, 177; Ballard and Tait, 275: "Moreover, the said William Brewer and his heirs have granted that the aforesaid burgesses and their heirs shall have and hold the stalls in the market place which they for the future wish to hold, rendering yearly for each stall 6d., except that the said William Brewer and his heirs shall have all the stalls at the time of the fairs every year for his own use."

⁹ *Quo Warranto*, 4 *Edw. III*, 139.