

FACTORS IN MARKET ESTABLISHMENT IN
MEDIÉVAL ENGLAND:
THE EVIDENCE FROM KENT 1086-1350

BRADLEY A. McLAIN

Although the significant role that markets played in the medieval economy by the thirteenth century is largely unquestioned, scholars remain uncertain about which factors were most influential in the spread of those mercantile institutions. Researchers employing various methodologies in many English counties have proposed a number of different explanations in their attempts to account for the growth of market networks, ranging from demographic expansion and its effects on agricultural development, to patronage and politics.¹ Broader debates about the forces that brought long-term changes to England's economy have benefited from such county-specific studies of market distribution, even though sharp divisions persist among historians. Most agree, however, that by the thirteenth century population pressure had gradually deprived many peasants of land sufficient to their needs while at the same time near constant inflation encouraged landlords to expand demesne production in search of greater profit. Those changes forced many small-holders to turn to supplementary employment, such as brewing or casual labour, in order to make ends meet and to pay the rents their lords increasingly demanded in cash.² Moreover, the growth of towns led to an increasing

¹ See, for example, Bryan Coates, 'The origin and distribution of markets and fairs in medieval Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Arch. Journ.*, 85 (1965), 92-111; J. O'Donnell, 'Market centres in Herefordshire 1200-1400', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club* 40 (1971), 190; R. H. Britnell, 'English markets and royal administration before 1200', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 30 (1978), 183-96; *idem*, 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200-1349', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 39 (1987), 209-21; T. Unwin, 'Rural marketing in medieval Nottinghamshire', *Journ. of Hist. Geo.*, 7 (1981), 231-51; P. Goodfellow, 'Medieval markets in Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Past and Present* 7 (1988), 312-15.

² J.L. Bolton, *The Medieval English Economy 1150-1500* (London, 1980), 45-46, 87-88, 111-13; C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social change in England c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge, 1989), 118-27.

specialisation of labour, expanding the class of people who were not engaged in food production at all, and who thus needed to purchase food from someone else.³ At the same time, among the wealthier classes at least, there was a growing demand for luxury items and exotic goods obtainable only from distant sources.⁴

In such a climate of growth and expansion it seems obvious that more markets should come into existence since they were presumably the most efficient venues for exchanging goods.⁵ Yet, it is not clear that economic forces alone can account for the rapid rise in the number of chartered markets in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries because much of the expansion came just as the economy began to falter. Examination of the spread of markets in Kent suggests that a mix of determinants - demographic trends, landholding customs and the expansion of trade - probably factored into the growth of the market network. Market creation in Kent generally corresponded to the patterns of growth in both production and consumption throughout the county and beyond, at least until the middle of the thirteenth century. Yet, by the end of the century the number of market licenses granted by the Crown could no longer be justified by strict economic necessity alone. The divergence between charters issued and the course of the economy is most easily seen in the development of dense clusters of markets in north-west Kent. Examination of those market groups shows that, at least by the end of the thirteenth century, political patronage had become the leading factor in the grant of charters in Kent, even though the will of Kent's landholders was unable to overcome the inexorable economic forces that determined whether their markets would survive and prosper.⁶

The principal evidence of markets and fairs in the period 1086-1350 includes references in Domesday Book, the Charter Rolls and the proceedings of the *Quo Warranto* inquisitions. While the Domesday survey of 1086 provides some direct evidence of markets,

³ E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, commerce and crafts 1086-1348* (London, 1995), 142.

⁴ Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England: rural society and economic change*, 79-83; Dyer, *Standards of Living*, 108; Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England: towns, commerce and crafts*, 143; R. Hilton, 'Lords, burgesses and hucksters', *Past & Present* 97 (1982), 3-15; C. Dyer, 'The consumer and the market in the later middle ages', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 42 (1989), 305-27.

⁵ Britnell, 'Proliferation of markets', 213-15; M. Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995), 43.

⁶ See M. Mate, 'The rise and fall of markets in southeast England', *Canadian Journ. of Hist.*, 31 (1996), 59-86, for a discussion of how many of the charters granted in Kent actually became functioning markets, and which of them earned profits for their lords and survived for any length of time.

its primary value comes from its identification of boroughs. Arising in the mid- to late Anglo-Saxon period, boroughs originated as defensive points and meeting places, and became the nucleus for many early towns. Among the distinguishing marks that set boroughs apart from other towns was the right to hold markets. It is thus safe to assume that a town designated as a borough in Domesday Book was also a market town.⁷ More specific evidence is found in the many grants of market rights recorded on the Charter Rolls, which survive in an essentially complete series from the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁸ By that time the Crown had successfully asserted its exclusive right to license trading institutions,⁹ and the Charter Rolls are thus our most comprehensive and systematic source of information about markets. They must be employed with caution, however, for two reasons. Despite their appearance of completeness, the Charter Rolls are in fact interrupted by numerous lacunae.¹⁰ Furthermore, it has become apparent that the grant of a charter did not guarantee the establishment of a market. Scholars have long suspected the ephemeral nature of many licenses, and in recent years have concentrated increasing effort in determining which licenses actually represented functioning institutions.¹¹ Perhaps the most reliable information about markets comes from the records of the *Quo Warranto* inquisition, begun in 1278 at Edward I's behest. Worried that his magnates were usurping his rights, the king instructed his justices to summon them to court to defend the authenticity of all royal franchises

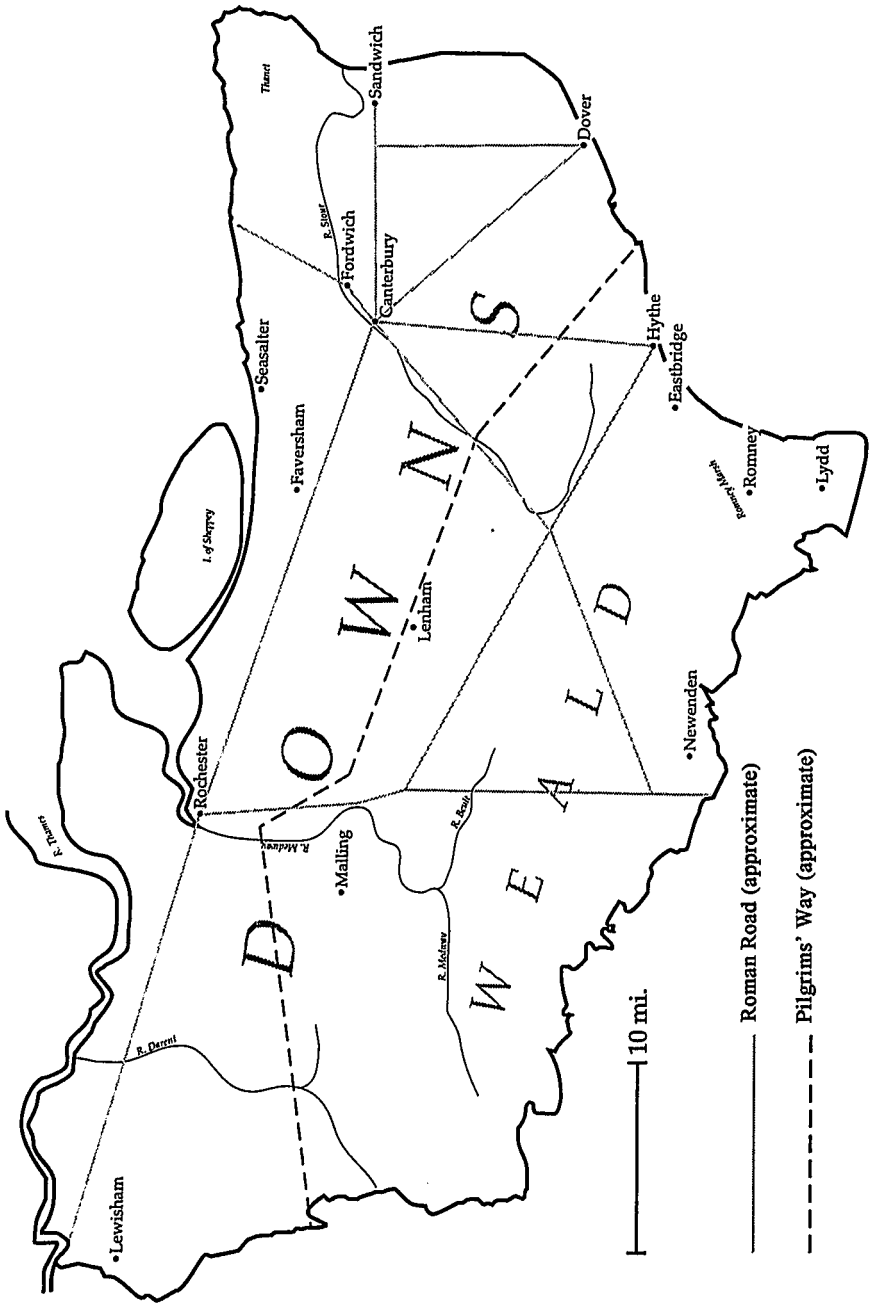
⁷ See G.H. Martin, 'Domesday Book and the boroughs' in (Ed.) P. Sawyer, *Domesday Book: a reassessment* (London, 1983), 143-63; S. Reynolds, 'Towns in Domesday Book', in (Ed.) J.C. Holt, *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1987), 295-309; R. Eales, *An Introduction to the Kent Domesday* (London, 1992).

⁸ From 1199-1215 charters are recorded in *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, (Ed.) T.D. Hardy (London, 1837) [hereafter *RChari*], and in *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati* (Ed.) T. D. Hardy, 2 vols. (London, 1838-44) [hereafter *RLC*]. The latter cover the years 1204-27. From 1216 to 1516 charters appear in the Charter Rolls themselves. They are printed in *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 6 vols. (London, 1903-27) [hereafter *CChR*]. See also *First Report of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls* (London, 1889), 77-80, 108-31.

⁹ Britnell, 'English markets and royal administration', 190-94; J. Masschaele, 'Market rights in thirteenth-century England', *English Historical Review*, 107 (1992), 79-80.

¹⁰ For example, there are numerous references to charters in the *Quo Warranto* proceedings that do not appear on the Charter Rolls, thereby demonstrating their incompleteness. See Coates, 'Markets and fairs in medieval Derbyshire', 109.

¹¹ See J. Masschaele, 'The multiplicity of medieval markets reconsidered', *Journ. of Hist. Geo.*, 20, 3 (1994), 255-71, for a potent critique of the notion that the issue of a market licence necessarily resulted in a functioning market. See also Unwin, 'Medieval Nottinghamshire', 233; Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, commerce and crafts, 159*; Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, Appendix 2.



———— Roman Road (approximate)

- - - - - Pilgrims' Way (approximate)

Map 1. Early markets in Kent

they claimed to hold, including their right to hold markets. Baronial opposition blunted the effect of the inquiries, and many deals were probably struck behind the scenes, but *Quo Warranto* represents a medieval attempt to ascertain the legitimacy of market charters, and it is thus more likely that the markets identified from this source actually functioned.¹²

Thus, although the sources provide ample information, its character can vary considerably and it must be weighed carefully to arrive at a balanced and defensible picture. Malling, the site of an early Kentish market, illustrates the process. The Charter Rolls record that in 1347 Edward confirmed a charter of 1105 to the Abbess of Malling which granted the abbey and convent a market on Saturday. Since the original charter is not extant there would normally be no way to confirm its veracity independently but for an entry in the *Quo Warranto* register. The incumbent abbess appeared before the royal justices in 1290 to defend the charter. She claimed, and successfully defended, the right to hold markets on both Tuesday and Saturday, however, and fairs on the vigil and feast of St. Peter, St. Martin and St. Leonard.¹³ Thus, for a single foundation we are aware of three sources, only two of which are extant, each separated from the others by many years and providing information which is similar but also slightly divergent. It is from such disparate sources that we must construct a coherent picture of existing markets, a task that becomes increasingly difficult the further we proceed into the past.

Because of the nature of the sources, historians usually divide their discussion of markets into two distinct time periods. Markets identifiable before 1200 often held their rights by prescription or 'by ancient custom', although some charters have survived from that period.¹⁴ The Domesday survey predominates in the identification of early Kentish markets in two ways: first, the commissioners noted three markets or their revenues specifically, and second, they named the towns that were considered boroughs in 1086. Domesday Book thus provides evidence of eleven markets in Kent at the end of the eleventh century. Four additional markets are known from other types of evidence, making a total of at least 15 markets spread around Kent before the year 1200¹⁵ (see Map 1). Most of Kent's population resided in the eastern and northern districts of the county in the highly fertile

¹² *Placita de Quo Warranto* (London, 1818) [hereafter *QW*]; Masschaele, 'Multiplicity of medieval markets', 262-64; see Table 2, below.

¹³ 1st August, 4th July and 6th November. *CChR5:57*; *QW312*, 343.

¹⁴ Britnell, 'English markets and royal administration', 185-6.

¹⁵ See M. W. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs: A handlist* (Newton Abbot, 1973), 128-31.

region known as the foothills,¹⁶ and it is not surprising that most of the markets were located in those areas, usually on or near an old Roman road. Many of the early markets also lay along Kent's long coastline, from Lydd to Dover and from Sandwich to Faversham and Rochester, reflecting the ancient Kentish orientation toward the sea and its role as an important conduit of trade from the Continent. Inland markets appeared at Canterbury, the principal city of Kent and the hub of its trading and transport network, as well as at Lenham along the Pilgrims' Way and Malling, in the fertile and populous Medway valley. Only in the far west of the county, between Rochester and Lewisham, does the number of identifiable markets fail to correspond to population density, although residents of that area may have had access to nearby Sussex, Surrey or London markets. The relationship of Kentish settlement patterns and markets is perhaps best illustrated by reference to the ancient forest in the south of the county. By 1200, the market of Newenden lay on the southern edge of the Weald, while Lenham and Malling lay just to the north. Between them lay the forest, the settlement of which is visible over the course of the thirteenth century as residents established new markets there.¹⁷

Evidence of markets after 1200 is dominated by royal licenses, which, it must be noted, merely gave the grantee conditional permission to set up a market.¹⁸ Since it has become clear that the existence of a charter did not necessarily mean a market was established, such evidence permits us only to gauge the intentions of the Crown and the lords who sought charters, while leaving it difficult to determine how far their intentions corresponded to reality. If, in fact, most or all of the charters granted in Kent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries became functioning markets, then their numbers swelled from under 20 in 1200 to somewhat more than 80 by 1350 (see Map 2 and Table 1). Such an increase, if in fact real, indicates high optimism among the lords who sought charters, perhaps encouraged by the success of earlier markets and hoping to profit by charging tolls and rents in their own establishments.¹⁹ In comparison to other southern counties, the number of charters granted in Kent appears quite remarkable. Of

¹⁶ (Eds.) H. C. Darby and E. M. J. Campbell, *The Domesday Geography of South-East England* (Cambridge, 1962), 514; A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: the evolution of Kentish settlement* (Leicester, 1986), 45.

¹⁷ Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization*, 54-5.

¹⁸ R. Britnell, 'King John's early grants of markets and fairs', *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 90-96.

¹⁹ The increase in charters was a common phenomenon. See D. Farmer, 'Marketing the produce of the countryside, 1200-1500' in (Ed.) E. Miller, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, v.3 (Cambridge, 1991), 331.

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TABLE 1: MARKET CHARTERS GRANTED IN KENT AND SELECTED COUNTIES, 1200-1350

	1200-24	1225-49	1250-74	1275-99	1300-24	1325-50	Total	No. of Acres ^a per market
Kent ^b	7	17	15	13	15	6	73	13,287
Devon ^c	26	16	24	22	14	6	108	15,277
Essex ^d	8	10	19	6	8	3	54	17,777
Surrey ^e	2	6	3	3	6	4	24	18,750
Sussex ^f	3	5	11	8	18	3	48	18,750

Source: ^a Beresford and Finberg, *Medieval Boroughs*, 50 for county acreage.

^b Appendix.

^c Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, Table A2.1.

^d R. Britnell, 'Essex markets before 1350', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 3rd ser. 13 (1981), 18, Table 1.

^e Mate, 'Rise and fall', 84-85.

^f Mate, 'Rise and fall', 79-83.

the counties surveyed in Table 1, only Devon received more licenses than Kent, while the counties contiguous with Kent generally received far fewer. Overall, however the market density of Kent was significantly greater than Devon, Essex, Surrey or Sussex.²⁰ The high number of charters in Kent relative to its neighbouring counties may be explained in several ways. Because Kent contained many important international ports, we might expect the commercialisation of the Kentish economy to be more advanced than elsewhere. Furthermore, the relatively high population of Kent may have encouraged commercial exchanges between people who might not have done so had they lived farther apart. Neither of those explanations is completely satisfactory, however, because both Essex and Sussex possessed major ports, and Essex at least was probably as densely populated as Kent, if not more so.²¹ The best explanation, which became increasingly important as Kent's population flourished, comes from the unique landholding custom in Kent known as gavelkind tenure. In general, property in Kent did not pass intact from father to eldest son, but was divided equally among all sons.²² This practice accelerated the fragmentation of holdings that was a common feature of the thirteenth century throughout England, and it could have contributed to the spread of markets in Kent in two ways. Because their land was insufficient to their needs, there was additional pressure upon Kentish residents to

²⁰ Table 1; Mate, 'Rise and fall', 62, Table 2.

²¹ See, however, H.C. Darby, R.E. Glasscock, J. Sheail and G.R. Versey, 'The changing geographical distribution of wealth in England: 1086-1334-1525', *Journ. of Hist. Geography*, 5 (1979), 249-56, which shows that Kent was generally wealthier than Essex.

²² F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law before the time of Edward I*, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1968), 1:186; J. E. A. Jolliffe, *Pre-feudal England: the Jutes* (Oxford, 1933), 19-26.

participate in the cash economy. Gavelkind tenure also stimulated the Kentish land market that may have accustomed people to commercial transactions more readily than elsewhere.²³

When we turn from describing the location of markets (or, by the thirteenth century, places authorised to hold markets), to an analysis of the factors determining market placement, we must begin by going more deeply into the clear differences visible between the eastern and western halves of the county. A quick perusal of the map of market places makes it clear that in the eastern half of Kent market licenses were sought and granted only in areas located some distance from the established market centres, with particular deference paid to Canterbury.²⁴ As we move farther westward, market placement exhibits two characteristics which distinguish it from the east. First, an increasing proportion of the market evidence dates from the thirteenth century - often quite late in the century in the most western districts. This is consistent with the general fact that western Kent, particularly the Weald, experienced the latest settlement. Second, western markets were usually established far closer to each other than eastern markets. This might show that it was easier to secure licences in a region of fewer 'ancient' markets, and that there was a greater likelihood that new markets might survive since trading patterns in the west might not have been as deeply ingrained as in the east. Taken together, those two characteristics suggest that both the circumstances, and the criteria used to determine market placement, in west Kent in the latter part of our period were different from those prevailing earlier in east Kent.

The changed criteria are most evident in Kent's most western districts, in areas where the high number of licenses, had they all resulted in functioning markets, would have established an intense concentration of trading venues in a part of the county not especially noted for its productivity, high population or wealth.²⁵ That feature is

²³ F.R.H. Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury: An essay on medieval society* (New York, 1966), 144-9.

²⁴ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, 60, demonstrates how Exeter had a similar effect on its marketing hinterland. Canterbury is perhaps a special case within Kent because markets dealing in specific commodities were held throughout the week, not on one day only. See W. Urry, *Canterbury Under the Angevin Kings* (London, 1967), 108.

²⁵ A. Smith, 'Regional differences in crop production in medieval Kent', *Arch. Cant.* lxxviii (1963), 147-60, esp. map on 150; R. Smith, 'Human resources, in (Eds.) G. Astill and A. Grant, *The Countryside of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), 196-202, esp. 200; R. E. Glasscock, 'The distribution of lay wealth in Kent, Surrey and Sussex in the early fourteenth century', *Arch. Cant.*, lxxx (1965), 61-8, shows that the wealth of Kent, as measured by tax assessments on lay people, generally corresponded with its most populous regions in the east.

especially apparent in the development of two clusters of markets in north-west Kent that came into existence in the latter half of the thirteenth century. The first group included Lesnes (1256), Charlton (1268), Plumstead (1270) and Eltham (1284), all located quite close to the older market of Lewisham. The average distance between them in a direct line was a mere 2.5 miles, and the congestion only became worse in the early fourteenth century with the founding of Dartford market in 1305,²⁶ and Erith and Bexley markets in 1315. Just south of them was another group of markets which began with the single market of Orpington (1206), but which suddenly became a dense cluster of markets at the end of the century with the addition of Eynsford (1278),²⁷ Farningham (1270), St. Mary Cray (1281) and Farnborough and Chelsfield (1290). Two fourteenth-century markets, Ash (1302) and West Wickham (1318), completed a belt of markets in an area approximately twelve miles by four miles in size (see Map 2).

Both of those groups of markets arose in a period when the long medieval expansion was beginning to falter. Not only was inflation creating pockets of distress among a population that had reached the limits of its ability to expand, but also the stresses of international conflict, war finance and domestic political intrigue exacerbated (and in part caused) the economic dislocation. By the latter part of the thirteenth century, and especially after 1290, many parts of England had entered a noticeable economic decline that was worsened in the early fourteenth century by political instability and environmental disaster.²⁸ That was clearly not the ideal environment for expansion of the Kentish trading network, yet it was precisely at that time that most of the licenses for the two aforementioned groups were granted. In their defence it might be argued that markets close to London may have been involved in supplying corn to the city, thus justifying their existence despite the difficult economic climate. Kent indeed provided much grain to London, but royal purchases made in 1295 show that most of it came from markets which lay in the more productive east,

²⁶ Dartford market probably operated for some time before 1305, as it is another market known from the confirmation of an earlier charter whose details are unclear. The original charter was probably granted by Edward I.

²⁷ Sometime before the *Quo Warranto* proceedings, perhaps in the reign of Henry III, QW310.

²⁸ I. Kershaw, 'The great famine and agrarian crisis in England 1315-22', *Past and Present*, 59 (1973), 3-50; M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and state in England 1272-1377* (London, 1980), Chapters 1-3.

most importantly Faversham. It is thereby unlikely that western markets were important in this regard.²⁹

The rapid expansion in the number of charters also meant that before long the markets within those groups failed to meet medieval criteria regarding proximity and day held, prescriptions which apparently prevailed at the founding of earlier and more easterly Kentish markets. In the mid-thirteenth century Henry Bracton, drawing from court records in his possession, proposed general guidelines restricting both the temporal and spatial placement of new markets relative to older ones. He suggested that markets be located no nearer than 6 2/3 miles apart, and that nearby markets not be scheduled for the same day, or even within one day of each other.³⁰ It had also been customary in earlier licence grants, as well as in the *Quo Warranto* proceedings, to create or confirm a market charter 'nisi sit ad nocumentum aliorum', unless it be harmful to others.³¹ When such harm was alleged, the plaintiff usually claimed that the new market was siphoning business from an older market. The royal officials who fielded requests for market licences clearly had at one time found it advisable to evaluate the economic need for new markets, and to consider the effect of new markets on old ones, yet the market licences in the two market clusters in north-west Kent conformed to none of those restrictions. As they were made up largely of later charters, both market groups indicate that by the time of their creation the earlier criteria were no longer strictly enforced.

We must ask, however, whether those charters represented actual markets, or if their appearance as clusters is merely an illusion created by plotting charter locations on a map. There often is no way to determine from surviving sources whether a charter became an enduring market, but historians usually assume their actual existence

²⁹ B.M.S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian production and distribution in the London region c. 1300* (London 1993), 52-68-9. M. Mate, 'The estates of Canterbury Cathedral Priory before the Black Death, 1315-1348', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 8 (1987), 3-30, gives details about the relative intensity of cultivation on priory estates around Kent, including the north-west. See especially p. 10, Table 3, which shows that the amount of cultivated demesne acreage on two north-west estates was declining after 1275.

³⁰ *Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England* (Ed.) G. E. Woodbine, rev. and trans. S. E. Thorne, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1968), 3:198-9. Few historians believe that Henry Bracton wrote this treatise. Nevertheless, his name has become permanently attached to it. See Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*, 1:206-10.

³¹ Britnell, 'King John's early grants'; *RChart*, 163b, '...unum mercatum apud Orpington, scilicet, die Mercurita tam quam non sit ad nocumentum vicinorum mercatorum'; *QW312*, '...nisi mercatu illud & feria illa sint ad nocumentu &c.'

if they continued to function at the end of the Middle Ages. When we compare the charters just enumerated with the list of sixteenth-century markets compiled by Everitt,³² the suspicion immediately arises that either most of the markets in those groups did not survive the economic disruptions of the late Middle Ages, or that despite their charters they never in fact became functioning markets. In the northern group only Dartford survived into the sixteenth century, perhaps because of its strategic location on the London road at the crossing of the Darent river, and in the southern group, only St. Mary Cray and Orpington functioned at the end of the Middle Ages. The other markets disappeared without trace. Either they were poorly placed to take advantage of trade, their owners never acted upon their charters, or they were prevented from doing so by litigious nearby market-owners or the sheriff himself.³³ Such apparent disparity between lordly aspiration and economic reality as is evident in the two market groups must force us to a further reconsideration of what was meant by the grant of a market licence. In fact, we would do well to subject all of the charters granted in Kent during the thirteenth century to the same test. Upon doing so, we find that the majority never resulted in functioning markets, or, if they did, then they had been extinguished by the end of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, when we compare the survival rate of markets in place before 1200 with those chartered after 1200, we also find that the later markets were far less likely to survive. Historians have long known that market durability is closely linked to date of foundation. The earlier the market, the more likely it was to endure successfully the economic difficulties of the late Middle Ages.³⁴ The evidence from Kent certainly bears this out, for most of the markets that survived into the sixteenth century were already in place by the thirteenth century (see Map 2 and Table 2). Thus, as both Dyer and Masschaele have warned, we must beware of making too much out of the charters the Crown handed out in the thirteenth century.³⁵

³² A. Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', in (Ed.) J. Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, v. 4 (Cambridge, 1967), 474.

³³ Farmer, 'Marketing the produce', 337-39; Masschaele, 'Market rights', 85-88.

³⁴ See M. Reed, 'Markets and fairs in medieval Buckinghamshire', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 20 (1978), 576; D. Postles, 'Markets for rural produce in Oxfordshire, 1086-1350', *Midland History*, 12 (1987), 21-22; Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, 50.

³⁵ C. Dyer, 'The hidden trade of the middle ages: evidence from the West Midlands of England', *Journ. of Hist. Geography*, 18 (1992), 152-3; Masschaele, 'Multiplicity of medieval markets', 261-2.

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TABLE 2: SURVIVAL RATE OF MARKETS BY TYPE OF FOUNDATION, 1086-1350

Type of foundation	Pre-1200 Total	Survived	%	Post-1200 Total	Survived	%
Prescription	11	7	64			
Charter	4	3	75	73	14	19
Total	15	10	67	73	14	19

Source: Appendix

Nonetheless, we are still presented with the fact that the Crown issued licences for the markets that failed to materialise, and that each charter represented a lord who hoped to gain by it. Presumably, the owners of the market licences had paid something for them,³⁶ and consequently were loath to accept dead letters in return. Yet, if the grant of a market licence had by that time become part of an ordinary array of rewards given to faithful retainers, then we can imagine how the disappointment over a failed or unusable market licence might not be that great. A royal supporter might recognise that a market privilege was only potentially valuable, to be exercised should the opportunity arise. Given the high profits that were known to accrue to the owners of successful markets,³⁷ the receipt of such a privilege would be acceptable even if its value could not be guaranteed. This point is difficult to prove, but if we look at some of the men who obtained the charters in the north-west market groups, and the way they lost them, then the obvious political connection becomes apparent and such an hypothesis more believable.³⁸ William de Wilton received a charter for a market in Lesnes in 1256. His prior association with the Crown was as a retainer and minor official in Henry III's government, serving primarily as an itinerant justice. Wilton seems to have been associated in many of his duties particularly with Lincoln, and in 1250 the king appointed him justice in that area. In 1257, he accompanied Edward, the crown prince, to Ireland, and in 1264

³⁶ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, 51, suggests that five marks was commonly paid for charters. See also Masschaele, 'Multiplicity of medieval markets', 264-5.

³⁷ Mate, 'Rise and fall', 66-68.

³⁸ See Coates, 'Markets and fairs in medieval Derbyshire', 100; Masschaele, 'Multiplicity of medieval markets', 267-68.

Henry III sent him to Otford, in Kent, to perform an inquest into a killing.³⁹ Another minor official was William Page, who received a market in Eynsford in the 1270s. He was a merchant in the wool trade who, over the years, sought and received a number of export licences, and by 1281 he had been appointed keeper of Newgate Gaol.⁴⁰ Men at the top of the political hierarchy also obtained market licences in the north-west market groups. Otto Grandson, a Savoyard who served both Henry III and Edward I in important posts, was granted markets in both Chelsfield and Farnborough in 1290, towns that formed part of the second market group discussed above.⁴¹ Another of Edward's top advisers, a man who worked closely with Grandson, was John de Vescy. De Vescy was a northern knight who had joined numerous rebellions against Henry III, and who had sided with Simon de Montfort during the Barons' Revolt, but who subsequently became fast friends with Prince Edward.⁴² In 1284, Edward granted to John the market in Eltham, which formed a part of the first market group addressed above. From this brief summary it is evident that a high proportion of royal retainers, often men who had no other interest in Kent, received many of the new market licences in the north-west corner of the county. Du Boulay notes that by the later part of the medieval period this corner of the county had become a coveted location for the powerful and well-to-do to acquire holdings.⁴³ The market charters granted to men such as Wilton, Page, Grandson and de Vescy may illustrate that trend.

Perhaps the most convincing example of royal patronage to come from those market groups, one that clearly demonstrates the political and ephemeral nature of market charters in that period, is the case of Bartholomew de Badlesmere. Badlesmere was a Kentish knight who played the chaotic political events of the early part of Edward II's reign adroitly, and as a result he ultimately achieved the office of steward of the king's household. After 1320, however, his luck began to turn. As the dispute between Edward and his chief antagonist, Thomas of Lancaster, degenerated into violence, Badlesmere tried once again to maintain links to each, but he only succeeded in alienating

³⁹ CChR 1:452; *Calendar of Patent Rolls* [hereafter CPR] 1247-58, 62; *Ibid.*, 223; *Calendar of Liberate Rolls* 1251-60, 167; CPR 1247-58, 202; *Ibid.*, 366; CPR 1247-58, 552; CPR 1258-66, 356.

⁴⁰ QW310; CPR 1272-81, 24, 38, 65; *Ibid.*, 458; *Calendar of Close Rolls* 1272-79, 195.

⁴¹ M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (Berkeley, 1988), 54, 110, 151, 440; CChR 2:346.

⁴² Prestwich, *Edward I*, 57, 64.

⁴³ Du Boulay, *Lordship*, 148-9.

himself from both parties. After the battle of Boroughbridge, in which the king's forces prevailed and Lancaster himself was executed, Edward had Badlesmere hunted down and hanged in Canterbury at the end of 1322.

Badlesmere held many manors around Kent, including his ancestral home a few miles south-west of Canterbury. In 1315, on the eve of the disastrous harvests and while he was steward, Badlesmere acquired charters for markets in Erith, Ringswoud and Chilham. At the same time, Edward granted him market licences in more than a dozen places outside of Kent.⁴⁴ It would be difficult to surmise whether he ever earned substantial profits in any of those places, although it is quite possible that he, like some other lords, may have profited from the initial price fluctuation brought on by the crop failures.⁴⁵ He did not have more than a few years in which to earn profit, however, because by the end of 1321 Bartholomew de Badlesmere had become one of the most wanted men in England, and he spent his last year a fugitive. In November 1321, the king instructed the sheriff of Kent to seize all of Badlesmere's 'lands, goods, and chattels...in the counties of Kent and Sussex' and to deliver them into the keeping of one Gilbert Rishton until further notice.⁴⁶ Edward confiscated all of Badlesmere's lands all over the realm, and over the course of the following years granted them to new tenants. The three market charters Badlesmere received in 1315 are never mentioned in any of the subsequent grants and charters.⁴⁷ Erith does not appear in official records again until 1360 when Edward III granted free warren there to the current tenant, James de Burford.⁴⁸ It appears that the fate of Badlesmere's market licences mirrored his own, for they appeared during his political rise and they vanished with him when he fell.

⁴⁴ *CChR* 3:282.

⁴⁵ Kershaw, 'The agrarian crisis', 29-35, asserts that the difficulties of 1315-21 affected landlords in widely varying ways, some earning profits and others incurring losses.

⁴⁶ *Calendar of Fine Rolls 1319-27*, 79, 80, 84, 88.

⁴⁷ See, for example, *CPR 1321-24*, 206. 'Grant to David de Strabolgi, earl of Athol, of all the goods late of Bartholomew de Badelsmere, a rebel, in the castle and manor of Chilham and its members at the time of the caption thereof into the king's hands, and which have been forfeited.' The Chilham market is not mentioned. There are other indirect examples of the king's grants of Badlesmere's properties to new tenants (without mention of markets) in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, v. 6, nos 620, 635 and 644.

⁴⁸ *CChR* 5:168.

The examples of Bartholomew de Badlesmere and the other retainers who acquired royal market charters provide clear evidence that by the late thirteenth century the grant of a licence in Kent probably had more to do with royal favour than economic necessity. This is so because the same examples also show that the licences granted at that time were unlikely to result in functioning and enduring markets. The spread of markets in Kent, and the factors influencing market establishment and survival, were in this way quite similar to many other English counties. Despite some of the differences in Kent - such as the high number of charters relative to nearby counties or the influence of *gavelkind* tenure - there were nonetheless important similarities. Markets established before the Crown asserted its right to issue licences, that is before the thirteenth century, were more likely to survive the Middle Ages. Their existence and durability are more believable than their later counterparts, because they were not created by administrative fiat alone but arose to fulfil a real economic need. As such they represent the true backbone of Kent's medieval marketing network. Markets established by charter in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, were more likely to have been largely the wishful thinking of optimistic lords who sought to profit from patterns that had already become well established. For its part, the Crown employed market charters as tools of patronage, handing them out liberally by the late thirteenth century, with little reference to need. Thus, the evidence from Kent confirms the conclusions of researchers in other counties who have found that the expansion of the market network in the thirteenth century was not as substantial as the raw number of charters indicates. The growth of Kent's market network undoubtedly received a boost from demographic expansion and increased monetisation, but our estimate of its magnitude must be tempered by the realisation that such growth was more apparent than real. Market charters were only potentially valuable and carried no guarantee, and royal supporters only intended to invoke them should the opportunity arise. Unfortunately, for some of the landlords of north-west Kent, such as Bartholomew de Badlesmere, the opportunity may never have come.

APPENDIX
MARKET CHARTERS GRANTED OR CONFIRMED IN KENT

Market	Day	Fair	Grantee	Date of Grant or Confirmation	Source/Ref
Canterbury	Wed/Sat	25-6 May		7th c.	DB Bor ^a , QW 318
Rochester		9-10 Jan	Ch. of St. Andrews	7th c.	CChR 2:195, DB Bor ^a , QW 320
Faversham		1-9 Aug	Abbot of Faversham	1086	DB 2d ^a , QW 315
Dover			Hubert de Burgh	1086	DB Bor ^a
Eastbridge				1086	CChR 1:82, QW 360
Fordwich				1086	DB Bor ^a
Hythe				1086	DB ^a
Lenham	Tue		Abbot of St. August.	1086	QW 318
Lewisham				1086	DB 12d
Newenden	Thu		Godfrey le Walys	1086	DB 4a, QW 324
Romney				1086	DB Bor ^a
Sandwich				1086	DB Bor ^a
Seasalter				1086	DB Bor ^a
Malling ^b				1086	DB Bor ^a
Lydd	Tue/Sat	10 Nov	Abbess of Malling	1105	CChR 5:57, QW 312, 343
Stonar			Abbot of St. August.	1154	Charter of Henry II ^a
Bromley	Tue			1203	RChart 106a
Orpington	Wed		Christ Church	1205	RLC1 1:42b
Folkestone ^c	Wed	1 Sep	William de Abrinches	1206	RChart 163b
Stowing	Wed	15-17 Aug	Stephen Haringod	1214	RChart 201a
Kemsing	Mon		Fulk de Breaute	1214	RChart 201b
Ashurst	Wed		Nicholas de Gerunde	1219	RLC1 1:393a
Clecombe	Fri	31 Oct	Barth. of St. Leonards	1220	RLC1 1:444b
Edenbridge	Sat		Robert de Camutt	1225 ^d	QW 313, 316
Elham	Mon	31 Oct	William de Leyburn	1225 ^d	QW 350
Minster/Thanet	Fri	13 July	Abbot of St. August.	1225 ^d	QW 329, 342, 366
Mentilyng	Sun/Tue		Abbess of Mentilyng	1225 ^d	QW 318, 367 QW 343

Market	Day	Fair	Grantee	Date of Grant or Confirmation	Source/Ref
Stonilden	Thu	17-19 Oct	Bertram de Kyriell	1225 ^d	QW 343
Wye	Thu	11-13 Mar	Battle Abbey	1225 ^d	QW 333, 364
Yvingham	Thu	17-19 Oct	Bertram de Kyriell	1225 ^d	QW 343
Brasted/Eldyng			Gilbert de Clare	1227	QW 332, Bor by 1227 ^a
Thanet, Stanores			Abbot of St. August.	1227	CChr 1:12, RLCI 2:172b
Westerham	Wed		Thomas de Camvill	1227	CChr 1:52, RLCI 2:194a
Whitfield/Beausbergh			Hosp. St. Mary, Dover	1228	CChr 1:78
Combwell	Fri ^e	1-3 May	Christ Church	1232	CChr 1:148, QW 314, 366
Brenchley	Sat	22-23 July	Hamo de Crevequer	1233	CChr 1:182, QW 332
Seal	Wed	31 Oct-2 Nov	Eleanor, C. of Pemb. ^f	1233	CChr 1:186
Aylesford	Tue	15-17 Sep	Richard de Gray	1239	CChr 1:241, QW 365
Tonbridge		28 June		1241	PRO ^a
Headcorn	Thu	28-30 June	K's Hosp. of Ospringe	1251	CChr 1:362
Mongeham ^g	Thu	17-19 Oct	Bertram de Crioll	1251	CChr 1:356, QW 343
Lesnes	Thu	27-31 Oct	William de Wilton	1256	CChr 1:452
Hunton	Tue	v/f Ass. +3 ^h	Nicholas de Lenham	1257	CChr 1:463, QW 313, 323
Street	Fri	9-11 Nov	Nicholas de Hadlou	1257	CChr 1:464, QW 347
Teynham	Tue	v/f/m Ass. ^h	AB of Canterbury	1259	CChr 2:25
Maidstone	Thu		AB of Canterbury	1261	CChr 2:37
Mote	Tue	31 Oct-2 Nov	Roger de Leyburn	1266	CChr 2:61
Orlestone	Thu	2-4 May	William de Orlestone	1267	CChr 2:67, QW 329
Charlton	Mon	v/f/m H. Trin. ⁱ	Prior of Bermundsey	1268	CChr 2:115
Paddock	Sat	28-30 Apr	Robert de Paddock	1268	CChr 2:89
Farningham	Mon	28 Jun-1 Jul	Ralph de Farningham	1270	CChr 2:155
Plumstead	Tue	8-10 May	Abbot of St. August.	1270	CChr 2:138, QW 318
Hoo	Tue	30 Oct-1 Nov	Abbot of Reading	1271	CChr 2:175, QW 361

FACTORS IN MARKET ESTABLISHMENT IN KENT 1086-1350

Market	Day	Fair	Grantee	Date of Grant or Confirmation	Source/Ref
Shorne	Thu	28-30 Jun	John of Northwood	1271	CChR 2:169, QW 327, 365
Cray	Wed		Christ Church	1278 ^j	QW 348
Eynsford	Fri		William Page	1278 ^j	QW 310, 363
Westwell	Wed	25 Mar	Christ Church	1278 ^j	QW 325, 348, 367
Allington	Tue	9-11 Aug	Stephen de Penecesstre	1280	CChR 2:233
Warehorne	Tue	20-22 Sep	Richard de Bedford	1280	CChR 2:233
St. Mary Cray ^k	Wed	14-16 Aug	Gregory de Ruxley	1281	CChR 2:253, QW 317*
Eitham	Tue	v/f/m H. Trin. ⁱ	John de Vesey	1284	CChR 2:279
Shipbourne	Mon	31 Aug-2 Sep	Adam de Bavent	1285	CChR 2:319, QW 312*
Groombidge	Thu	5-7 May	Henry de Cobham	1286	CChR 2:329
Chelsfield	Mon	24-26 July	Otto de Grandson	1290	CChR 2:346
Cranbrook	Sat		AB of Canterbury	1290	CChR 2:343
Farnborough	Tue	31 Aug-2 Sep	Otto de Grandson	1290	CChR 2:346
Chilham ^l	Tue	v/f Ass. +6 ^h	Alexander de Balliol	1291	CChR 2:404, QW 321
Ash	Thu	28-30 Jun	William le Latimer, eld.	1302	CChR 3:26
Newnham	Thu	28-30 Jun	John de Campinia	1303	CChR 3:37, QW 313*
Eastling	Fri	13-14 Sep	Fulk Peyforer	1304	CChR 3:40
Dartford ^m			Edmund, earl of Kent	1305	CChR 4:3
Preston	Mon	2-4 May	William de Leyburn	1307	CChR 3:83
Wateringbury	Tue	23-25 Jun	Henry de Leyburn	1311	CChR 3:160, QW 312*
Hawkhurst	Tue	9-11 Aug	Battle Abbey	1312	CChR 3:189, QW 333*
Reculver	Thu		AB of Canterbury	1314	CChR 3:235
Wrotham	Thu	22-24 Apr	AB of Canterbury	1314	CChR 3:271
Bexley	Tue	13-14 Sep	AB of Canterbury	1315	CChR 3:289
Erith	Thu	2-4 May ⁿ	Bartholamew de Badles.	1315	CChR 3:282
Igham	Mon	28-30 Jun	William Inge	1315	CChR 3:289

Market	Day	Fair	Grantee	Date of Grant or Confirmation	Source/Ref
Ringswold	Tue	8-10 May	Bartholomew de Badles.	1315	CCHR 3:282
West Wickham	Mon	21-22 July	Walter de Huntingfield	1318	CCHR 3:376
Yalding	Wed	28-30 Jun	Hugh de Audese, young.	1318	CCHR 3:395
Ifield	Mon	9-10 Aug	Thomas de Hevre	1331	CCHR 4:199
Smarden	Mon	28-29 Sep	AB of Canterbury	1332	CCHR 4:260
Gillingham	Thu	3-10 May	AB of Canterbury	1336	CCHR 4:360, 373
St. Nich./Thanet	Mon	9-10 Sep	AB of Canterbury	1336	CCHR 4:360, 373
Smeeth	Tue		AB of Canterbury	1337	CCHR 4:423
Ashford	Sun	28-29 Aug ^o	Juliana de Leyburn	1348	CCHR 5:86, QW 329, 342*
Appledore	Sat	1 Aug ^p	Christ Church	1358	CCHR 5:157, QW 325*
Gravesend	Thu	20 Jun	Men and Town of G.	1366	CCHR 5:194
Queenborough	Mon/Thu	25-31 Jul ^q	Men and Town of Q.	1368	CCHR 5:211
Tenterden	Fri			1449	Incorporated ^a
Sevenoaks	Sat		AB of Canterbury		See note r

NOTES TO APPENDIX

- ^a See Beresford and Finberg, *Medieval Boroughs*, 128-31.
^b Confirmation of *Monasticon* 3:383; *Registrum Roffensorum*, 486.
^c Charter issued to John de Segrave in 1348, markets on Tue/Thurs (CChR 5:86).
^d Charter granted by Henry III.
^e Grant of Tue market in 1233 (CChR 1:175) - presumed changed.
^f Sister of the king. Re-granted to Otto Grandson in 1285. Market Mon, Fair 29-30 Jun (CChR 2:284).
^g Charter also grants market and fair in Sholden.
^h Approximately six weeks after Easter.
ⁱ Approximately eight weeks after Easter.
^j First year of *Quo Warranto* inquisition, thus presumed to date from this year or earlier.
^k Market also served Sandlings and surrounding villages.
^l Market granted to Bartholomew de Badlesmere in 1315. Fair 14-16 Aug (CChR 3:282)
^m Confirmation of charter of Edward I.
ⁿ Second fair in Mon-Wed of Whitsuntide, approximately seven weeks after Easter.
^o Grant dates at least from time of *Quo Warranto* inquisition. Fair granted in 1348, 25-27 July.
^p Fair on 1 Aug dates from *Quo Warranto* inquisition. New fair granted in 1358, 11 June.
^q Town founded in 1368. Second fair held 4-11 March.
^r Sevenoaks and Otford were both possessions of the Archbishop, and it seems likely that a single market served both villages. See Du Boulay, *Lordship*, 138, 191.
* These markets were mentioned in the *Quo Warranto* inquisition and thus must have existed sooner than the charter dates.