

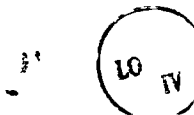
**THE MARKET PLACE AND THE MARKET'S PLACE
IN LONDON, c. 1660 - 1840**

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Abstract

THE MARKET PLACE AND THE MARKET'S PLACE IN LONDON, c. 1660 - 1840

This study explores the contemporary collective significance of over seventy London markets in the 'long' eighteenth century. Markets are loosely defined as those institutions which were publicly recognized as places of regular trade in basic commodities: meat and livestock, fish and corn, fruit and vegetables, hay and straw, cloth, coal and animal skins. Their characteristics and development were shaped by a range of factors: principally 'market forces', but also political concerns and the growth and modernization of the metropolis. This thesis represents the first attempt to consider the markets of London during this period collectively and eclectically. One of its principal elements, therefore, is the classification of markets according to various criteria (e.g. size, ownership, location) over time (Chapter Two). One key trend is the apparent rise and fall of food market retailing, which is explained by various economic and cultural factors (Chapter Three). The economics of wholesaling demonstrate that formal market mechanisms generally adapted to changing times and performed the task of distribution with reasonable efficiency (Chapters Four and Five). Political influences on the geography and development of the markets - the role of market rights and regulations - highlight the distinctive and complex political economy of the metropolis (Chapter Six). A final dimension of inquiry concerns the relationship between markets and the city environment, and the extent to which metropolitan growth and 'improvement' impinged on the traditionally focal and symbolic status of markets (Chapter Seven). In general, markets' collective identity was fragmenting: some prospered whilst others declined; wholesale-retail distinctions established themselves; the boundaries between formal marketing and other forms of exchange became increasingly blurred. Nevertheless, the market place was not made obsolete by the process of metropolitan modernization. The abiding impression of the study is one of London's commercial, topographical and political complexity and diversity.

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Thankfulness and praise are due to all kinds of people when one finally completes a thesis.

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My daily bread of archival research over much of the last four years has been made more palatable by the helpful and efficient staff of the Corporation of London Records Office, London Metropolitan Archives, the Guildhall Library and Westminster City Archives. I would also like to put on record my thanks to the appropriate custodians for permission to reproduce various prints and pictures: to the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London (Figures 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11), the Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London (Figure 13), the Governor and Company of the Bank of England (Figure 9), Borough Market Trustees (Figure 12) and Westminster City Archives (Figure 4). The custodians of Figure 3 are unknown. My warmest thanks also go to Tom Horwood for technical help with the map (Figure 1) and the visual reproductions.

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I brim with affection for London, past and present, warts and all. That is why I have researched it and written about one aspect of its life. My historical imagination has been kept aflame by its pervading topographical eccentricities, and particularly by those few traces of eighteenth century market places which remain. In the same breath I must thank all those friends and relatives who have never failed to remind me that there is a world beyond the archive and the study. Last autumn I finally crossed that threshold. My new profession as economist in the Ministry of Agriculture has, I think, made its own contribution to this thesis.

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July 1999

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List of abbreviations

BL	British Library Manuscripts Add. = Additional Manuscripts collection Harl. = Harleian Manuscripts collection
CBA	Camden Borough Archives
CLRO	Corporation of London Records Office
CLRO, <i>CC mins</i>	Minute books of the Court of Common Council, City of London
CLRO, CC papers	Loose papers of the Court of Common Council, City of London
CLRO, City Lands	Journal of the City Lands Committee
CLRO, Jor.	Journal of Court of Common Council
CLRO, Rep.	Repertories of the Court of Aldermen
<i>CSPD</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic</i>
Defoe, <i>Tour</i>	Daniel Defoe, <i>A tour through the whole island of Great Britain</i> (2 vols., 1724-6; rep'd, 1927)
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography: from the earliest times to 1900</i> (ed. L. Stephen & S. Lee, 21 vols., Oxford, 1908)
GH	Guildhall Library, Manuscripts
GH Noble	Guildhall Library (Maps and Prints), Noble Collection
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office, Palace of Westminster
<i>JHC</i>	<i>Journal of the House of Commons</i>
<i>JHL</i>	<i>Journal of the House of Lords</i>
LCC (1893)	London County Council, Papers (17), 17 Jan - 28 Mar 1893: 'London Markets. Special Report of the Public Control Committee relative to existing markets and market rights and as to the expediency of establishing new markets in or near the administrative county of London'
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives, Clerkenwell
LTS	London Topographical Society
Mayhew, <i>London labour</i>	Henry Mayhew, <i>London labour and the London poor</i> (4 vols., 1851, 1861: reprinted facsimile, 1967), vol. 1
<i>Morning Chronicle survey</i>	<i>The Morning Chronicle survey of labour and the poor</i> - vol. 6: the metropolitan districts (Horsham, 1982) - Henry Mayhew's letters to <i>The Morning Chronicle</i> , 1850
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew
Royal Comm. (1888)	<i>Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls: Minutes of Evidence</i> , vol. ii (1888), LIII [5550-1]
Royal Comm. (1891)	<i>Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls: Final Report of the Commissioners</i> , vol. xi (1891), XXXVII [6268]
<i>Smithfield Report</i> (1828)	<i>Second Report of the Select Committee on the State of Smithfield market</i> (1828), VIII [551]
<i>Smithfield evidence</i> (1828)	<i>Minutes of evidence of the Select Committee on the State of Smithfield market</i> (1828), VIII [551]
Strype, <i>Stow's survey</i>	John Strype, <i>Stow's survey of London, brought down from 1633 ... to the present time</i> (2 vols., 1720)
WAM	Westminster Abbey Muniments
WCA	Westminster City Archives

Notes on the text

Punctuation and capitalization of quotations have been modernized; spelling remains in its original form. The capitalized word 'City' refers either to the City Corporation, or to its ancient jurisdiction, according to context. Although 'London' was often used by contemporaries to refer to the City of London only, it here refers to the whole built-up area - City, Westminster, Southwark, and all contiguous suburbs to the east, west and north - as does 'the metropolis'. The calendar year is taken to begin on 1 January. Full references to published works cited or used in the text are given when they first appear in a chapter's footnotes. Subsequent citations in the chapter are abbreviated. No page references are given for articles in journals or collected essays. Place of publication is London unless otherwise indicated. Chapter numbers of Acts of Parliament are given in arabic, whether local or general.



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Aldersgate St | 37 Hungerford |
| 2 Bankside | 38 Islington |
| 3 Bear Key | 39 Leadenhall |
| 4 Bermondsey | 40 Mortimer |
| 5 Billingsgate | 41 Newgate |
| 6 Bishopsgate | 42 Newgate St |
| 7 Bishopsgate | 43 Newport |
| 8 Blackwell Hall | 44 Old Fish St |
| 9 Bloomsbury | 45 Oxford |
| 10 Borough | 46 Paddington |
| 11 Broad St | 47 Portman |
| 12 Brook's | 48 Queenhithe |
| 13 Brookfield | 49 Rag Fair |
| 14 Butcher Row | 50 Red Lion |
| 15 Carnaby | 51 Shadwell |
| 16 Chapel St. | 52 Shepherd |
| 17 Cheapside | 53 Smithfield |
| 18 Clare | 54 Southwark |
| 19 Clerkenwell | 55 Southwark (hay) |
| 20 Coal Exchange | 56 Southwark (skin) |
| 21 Corn Exchange | 57 Spitalfields |
| 22 Corn Exch (new) | 58 St. George, Mayfair |
| 23 Covent Garden | 59 St. George, Southwark |
| 24 Cumberland | 60 St. James s (cattle) |
| 25 Eastcheap | 61 St. James' s |
| 26 Farringdon | 62 St. James s (new) |
| 27 Finsbury | 63 St. Nicholas Shambles |
| 28 Fish St Hill | 64 St. Paul's Churchyard |
| 29 Fitzroy | 65 Stocks |
| 30 Fleet Ditch | 66 Wapping |
| 31 Fleet | 67 Warwick La. |
| 32 Gracechurch St | 68 Westminster |
| 33 Grosvenor | 69 Westminster |
| 34 Haymarket | 70 Westminster (fish) |
| 35 Holborn Bars | 71 Whitechapel (hay) |
| 36 Honey Lane | 72 Whitechapel |

Figure 1 The formal markets of London, 1660-1840

1 INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHOD

This study explores the contemporary significance of London's numerous markets in the 'long' eighteenth century. The definition of markets in the thesis is necessarily loose, but is limited to those institutions which were publicly recognized as places of regular trade in basic commodities: meat and livestock, fish and corn, fruit and vegetables, hay and straw, cloth, coal and animal skins. The characteristics and development of such markets were shaped by a range of factors: principally 'market forces', but also political concerns and the growth and development of the metropolis.

The place of the market place

Markets and marketing lie at the heart of English economic and social history. In the middle ages, markets numbered hundreds, if not thousands. They brought together production and consumption; they transformed villages into towns; they provided the basic network which would later underpin a national market economy. Many changes in food marketing nationwide from the sixteenth century were geared to the demands of London.¹ Our knowledge, however, of London's own markets, particularly after 1700, is scrappy and partial. Upon them only a modicum of scholarly ink has been spilt. Sir John Summerson's classic *Georgian London* cites them only in passing; Dorothy George's vintage account of eighteenth century London is largely silent on the subject, as is L. D. Schwarz's more recent *London in the age of industrialization*.² General biographies of London cite only the few which were illustrative of growing metropolitan consumption; histories of retailing tend to be equally superficial.³ The most detailed observation, for the seventeenth century at least, was made in an unpublished M.A. thesis of 1948; more recently the London Topographical Society has provided useful detail on the City markets before

¹ E. Kerridge, 'Early modern English markets' in B. L. Anderson & A. J. H. Latham (eds.), *The market in history* (1986); R. Britnell, 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200-1349', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 34 (1981); B. M. S. Campbell et al., *A medieval capital and its grain supply: agrarian production and distribution in the London region, c. 1300*, Historical Geography Research Series, no. 30 (1993); F. J. Fisher, 'The development of the London food market, 1540-1640', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 5 ii (1935); N. S. B. Gras, *The evolution of the English corn market from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (Camb., Massachusetts, 1915; reprinted New York, 1967).

² J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (1945; Harmondsworth, 1962 edn.); M. D. George, *London life in the eighteenth century* (1925; Harmondsworth, 1966 edn.); L. D. Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialization: entrepreneurs, labour force and living conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1992). See also G. Rudé, *Hanoverian London, 1714-1808* (1971); G. E. Mingay, *Georgian London* (1975); J. Lindsay, *The monster city: Defoe's London, 1688-1730* (1978).

³ See, for example, R. Gray, *A history of London* (1978); R. Porter, *London: a social history* (1994; Penguin, 1996), F. Sheppard, *London: a history* (Oxford, 1998); S. Inwood, *A history of London* (1998); A. Adburgham, *Shops and shopping, 1800-1914* (1964); D. Alexander, *Retailing in England during the industrial revolution* (1970); D. Davis, *A history of shopping* (1966).

and after the Great Fire.⁴ Isolated accounts of particular markets or their neighbourhoods can be found in various, often obscure, places.⁵ In short, little attempt has been made to view all London's markets, well-known or not, as a single subject. Our collective knowledge of them seems to be received as much as researched.

Why this neglect? In part, it is arguable that London history itself has not gained its rightful share of scholarly treatment - too many books have erred on the side either of antiquarianism or overgeneralization. More specifically, the markets of London do not readily present any obvious set of historical problems: no single market predominated; no great discontinuities occurred in their collective history; food riots were also rare. The focus of London's commerce appears to be elsewhere - in the Port, the City, the coffee houses, and in the growth of shopkeepers. In a commercializing and consumerizing age, markets seem to occupy only the margins of metropolitan society. Indeed, eighteenth century London - the fastest growing and largest city in Europe, England's political, mercantile and manufacturing centre - was the premier stage for conspicuous consumption, and played a pivotal role in the 'birth of a consumer society'.⁶

On the other hand, the market place has undoubtedly appealed to a variety of historical perspectives and locations. There is the commercial question, to be sure - how much marketing was undertaken in markets? In particular, a growing interest in the history of urban distribution has spawned various provincial studies of retailing.⁷ A topographical slant has also been

⁴ P. V. McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock in London area in the seventeenth century', M. A. thesis (University of London, 1948); I. Archer et al., *Hugh Alley's caveat: the markets of London in 1598*, LTS No. 137 (1988); B. R. Masters, *The public markets of the City of London surveyed by William Leybourn in 1677*, LTS No. 117 (1974).

⁵ J. Bird, 'Billingsgate: a central metropolitan market', *Geographical Journal*, 124 (1958); J. Gage, 'Bloomsbury Market: a unit in the Earl of Southampton's pioneer town planning', *Camden History Review*, 14 (1986); J. Power et al., *An illustrated history of the Borough market* (n.d. c. 1995); W. M. Stern, 'Clements Inn Passage (Clare Market), 1687-1921', *Genealogists' Magazine*, 15 (1968); idem, 'The Baroness's market: the history of a noble failure', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 2 no. 8 (Sept 1966); J. L. P. Denny, 'The coal market', *Guildhall Historical Association Transactions*, 4 (1969); A. B. Robertson, 'The foundation of Mark Lane Corn Exchange', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 1 (1952-9); idem, 'The Smithfield cattle market', *East London Papers*, 4 (1961); C. E. Wallis, 'The history of Covent Garden market', *Economic History*, 2 (Jan, 1932); R. Webber, *Covent Garden: mud-salad market* (1969); J. Ashton, *The Fleet: its river, prison and weddings* (1888); A. Stratton, 'Two forgotten buildings by the Dances', *Architectural Review*, 40 (1916); G. Stamp, 'The Hungerford market', *Annals of the Architectural Association*, 11 (1986); J. Taylor, 'Charles Fowler: master of markets', *Architectural Review*, 135 (March 1964); C. Eastwall-Naijna, 'St. George's Market and the Hedger family and St. George's Fields (typescript, 1968: Southwark Local Studies); W. Capon, *Views of Westminster sketched by William Capon, 1801-1815*, LTS No. 14 (1923-4); M. Lewis, 'Papers relating to the Westminster fish market, 1750-1', *Mariner's Mirror*, 18 (1932).

⁶ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J. H. Plumb, *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialization of eighteenth century England* (1982). H. C. Mui & L. Mui, *Shops and shopkeeping in eighteenth century England* (1989); D. Barnett, *London, hub of the industrial revolution: a revisionist history, 1775-1825* (1998); L. Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour and material culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (1988).

⁷ J. A. Chartres, 'The marketing of agricultural produce' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, 1640-1750* [vol. 5.ii] (Cambridge, 1985); W. Thwaites, 'The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire', Ph. D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1980); J. Benson & G. Shaw

employed through investigation of the locations and configurations of market places.⁸ Then there is the political perspective: markets traditionally were granted by royalty, and their possession signified privilege.⁹ Social and symbolic issues have also been identified in the market place, notably the tensions between ‘moral’ and ‘political’ economy.¹⁰ This thesis attempts to gather these various threads as they relate to London in the long eighteenth century. The need for such a synoptic and substantial study is warmly suggested in Fernand Braudel’s *The structures of everyday life*. Braudel, who has written about markets all over the world and their integral relationship to the life of the town, comments effusively on the markets of Venice and Paris: ‘But’ he continues, ‘a whole book could equally be written on London and the many markets which were gradually organized there. A list of these markets fills over four pages of the guide drawn up by Daniel Defoe and his successors’.¹¹

Defoe indeed recognized the prevalence of markets, old and new, in Augustan London. Certainly early modern London had been the greatest market town in England, and according to the City Corporation, ‘markets in the City of London were probably coeval with the City itself.’¹² Many of them enjoyed the ancient and prescriptive status which the Corporation itself claimed. As its population soared after the Reformation, London drew on an ever wider hinterland for its supplies, and its markets became famous: general country produce was sold in Cheapside, Newgate Street and Gracechurch Street; butcher’s meat in the Stocks, Eastcheap and St. Nicholas Shambles; fish in Fish Street Hill and Old Fish Street. Leadenhall dealt in general country produce, beef and leather. Blackwell Hall housed the weekly cloth market, Queenhithe dock

(eds.), *The evolution of retail systems, c. 1800-1914* (Leicester, 1992); J. Blackman, ‘The food supply of an industrial town: a study of Sheffield’s public markets, 1780-1900’, *Business History*, 5 (Liverpool, 1963); I. Mitchell, ‘Urban markets and retail distribution, 1730-1815: with particular reference to Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester’, D. Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1975); M. Phillips, ‘Market exchange and social relations: the practices of food circulation in and to the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse, 1800-1870’, Ph. D. thesis (University of Exeter, 1991); R. Scola, ‘Food markets and shops in Manchester, 1770-1870’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1 (1975).

⁸ Masters, *The public markets in 1677*; Gage, ‘Bloomsbury market’; see also the *Survey of London* volumes listed in the bibliography.

⁹ A. R. Bridbury, ‘Markets and freedom in the Middle Ages’ in Anderson & Latham (eds.), *The market in history*; Britnell, ‘The proliferation of markets in England’.

¹⁰ E. P. Thompson, ‘The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century’, *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), reprinted in *Customs in common* (1991; Penguin, 1993); idem, ‘The moral economy reviewed’ in *Customs in common*; A. Randall and A. Charlesworth (eds.), *Markets, market culture and popular protest in eighteenth century Britain and Ireland* (Liverpool, 1996); W. Thwaites, ‘Dearth and the marketing of agricultural produce: Oxfordshire, c.1750-1800’, *Agricultural History Review*, 33 (1985); S. L. Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris* (1984).

¹¹ F. Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century - The structures of everyday life: the limits of the possible*, vol. i (1979; tr. 1981), p. 503.

¹² Corporation of London, *The Corporation of London: its origin, constitution, powers and duties* (Oxford, 1950), p. 134.

received bargeloads of meal, while increasing supplies of coal were discharged and sold at Billingsgate, together with corn and fish.¹³

From the middle of the seventeenth century, London's food traversed ever greater distances within the British Isles: cattle from the farthest reaches of Wales and Scotland; corn from East Anglia, the East Midlands, Kent and Surrey; dairy produce from Suffolk and Cheshire; poultry from Lincolnshire and East Anglia; fish from around the coast; fruit and vegetables from market gardens and orchards in the Home Counties. Whilst London's overseas trade was global, and its supremacy for the marketing of new products and fashions undoubted, the ongoing provisioning of the metropolis was hardly less impressive. It was a huge private operation, as extensive as it was atomistic, stretching to the distant parts of the kingdom; bringing together farmers, market gardeners, graziers, country factors, numerous market towns, a whole host of transport operations - coasters, steamships, hoys, barges, waggons, carts, even packhorses, and at the end of the period, railways; and reaching into London and its consumers - man and beast - through the activities of specialist salesmen, porters, bankers, innkeepers, warehousemen, slaughtermen, dairymen, butchers, fishmongers, poulterers, greengrocers, hucksters, higglers, basketwomen, fishwives and costermongers - the list could go on. Collectively they formed the 'commissariat of London'.¹⁴ London's formal market places may not have monopolized this traffic, but many of them were fundamental to it.

It is almost a truism to describe early modern London as a huge consumer market. It is equally presumed that London was a forcing house of economic and social 'modernization': financial revolution, conspicuous consumption, liberalized trade and the rise of town-planning. The doyen of London historians has dated the birth of 'modern metropolitan civilization' to the period 1530-1700, with the Georgian century a time of its consolidation.¹⁵ Modernization, however, is itself a slippery concept. Miles Ogborn in particular has argued that it must be grounded in time and topography. He explores, for instance, the Westminster Paving Commission and Vauxhall Gardens as localized evidence of innovation, rational knowledge, and the forging of new identities.¹⁶ Whilst collectively London's markets do not fit neatly into these highly specific pockets, the theme of modernization provides a useful focus for their study. The market place was a quintessentially traditional urban institution. Yet in London it did not disappear with the rise of a modern metropolis, with its numerous shopkeepers, merchants and improvements. Rather it adapted in various ways, and subtly generated new identities and rationales.

¹³ Fisher, 'The development of the London food market, 1540-1640'; Archer et al., *Hugh Alley's caveat*; Sheppard, *London: a history*, p. 106.

¹⁴ 'The Commissariat of London', *Quarterly Review*, 95 (September 1854).

¹⁵ Sheppard, *London: a history*, pp. 125, 205.

¹⁶ See M. Ogborn, *Spaces of modernity: London's geographies, 1680-1780* (New York, 1998).

Against that backdrop this thesis explores the significance and status of the public market. What was the place of the market place in long eighteenth century London? And how does it reshape our understanding of the nature, development and identity of the metropolis? In this study a complex and frequently ambiguous picture is drawn of market development: one finds growth and decline; both structural and ad hoc influences; the primacy of commercial forces alongside political and environmental factors; changing definitions and mutating identities; the coming of the modern and the continuity of tradition. What is certain is that markets were not anachronisms in the first world metropolis. By drawing on a range of perspectives and sources this thesis seeks to place the market place squarely in the narrative of metropolitan history.

Documents and difficulties

Investigating London's markets offers a good case study in the problem of doing London history. The obvious barrier to systematic research is London's sheer magnitude. The eighteenth century metropolis was a quite different animal from a Georgian county town - more complex and disparate - and the relevant sources for the history of its markets reflect this. Moreover, unlike many provincial towns, London had no single market authority or owner and therefore generated no outstanding body of evidence.¹⁷ The ancient City Corporation was London's principal market authority, but this was a period in which new markets under new owners and managers sprang up in the expanding suburbs. Since many of these, as in the City, were at some time leased out to private individuals, there are numerous gaps in the archives. Administrative records relating to the City markets are generally good, and they are the mainstay of this research. Outside the City only the prosperous fruit and vegetable markets of Southwark and Covent Garden have comparable documentation. Elsewhere, estate and legal sources provide fragments for individual markets, but many have left no extant records. Exploring such basic matters as their appearance and operation have required considerable factual excavation before any generalizations might be made. Such burrowing has relied heavily upon an array of material: contemporary topographical accounts, newspapers and pamphlets; parliamentary and state papers; maps and prints; parish vestry minutes and rate books; county and guild records. Consequently, one is tempted to skew emphasis towards the better-documented, usually more prosperous markets.

Defining chronological limits for economic or urban histories can be problematic, for the continuities are often more impressive than the 'turning points'. The Great Fire of 1666 was a significant moment for the City's markets, yet even before this, markets were appearing in the new suburbs. Market creations continued periodically into the nineteenth century; Victorian

London, however, with its explosive growth and main line railways, was a very different place to the Georgian capital. Certain snapshot dates are employed in Chapter Two's analysis of various trends, and for this purpose at least 1660 and 1840 represent convenient, if crude, bookends. The use of the term 'long eighteenth century' in this study will refer to the period 1660-1840.

There are several reasons for this long chronological sweep. Firstly, the nature of markets and marketing generally change only slowly over time. Secondly, the longer perspective makes more distinct the links between the development of London and developments in markets. Thirdly, it unclogs the researcher from the archival minutiae, and facilitates a clearer consideration of the broader issues. On the debit side is the temptation to excessive narrative, and to give unequal treatment to different periods within the chronology according to source availability.

The decision to undertake a collective, London-wide study of the markets (rather than, say, a microscopic analysis of a single institution), was partly a reflection of source availability, but its principal rationale was to move away from a set of localized and antiquarian market histories. Individual accounts have tended to lack context; references may have been made to local population and the odd neighbouring market, but little sense has been given of general external influences. Thus, to take one instance, we are told that St. George's market in Southwark (opened 1789) failed in 1834 to capitalize on an Act of Parliament to enlarge it as the 'South London market', but that the proposal itself 'shows enough that then the market was a success, well provisioned (sic) and well patronized by the local population'.¹⁸ No substantive evidence, however, indicates that it prospered after 1789, and it is more likely that the project's explanation lies not in the market's previous success, but in the context of a burst of market improvements in London (and elsewhere) in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Knowledge of other London markets also suggests that those which never really flourished did not readily revive, whatever the authority and capital behind it. In the event, the 1834 Act was allowed to lapse and the old market continued to decline.¹⁹ Each market may have had its own 'story', but none ever operated in a commercial or urban vacuum. Certain markets really were distinctive in commercial or cultural terms, but individual peculiarities are most readily identified within a more general and collective context. In an analogous way, the general urban historian has constantly to judge whether evidence from an individual town is typical or merely peculiar, and to avoid drawing impressive

¹⁷ The complexity of London's sources mirrored the diversity of a growing metropolis, see V. Harding, 'From compact City to complex metropolis: records for the history of London, 1500-1720' in M. V. Roberts (ed.), *Archives and the metropolis* (1998).

¹⁸ Eastwall-Naijna, 'St. George's market'.

¹⁹ For other examples of this nature, see note 5 above.

conclusions from an unrepresentative sample of towns.²⁰ London's markets, being fewer in number and perhaps more finely differentiated than England's towns, demand care before generalizations are made. Of course, markets, like towns, can be grouped and classified. This study attempts to balance and combine the unique experiences and aspects of individual markets with the distinctive themes they raise in their collective history, so that the combined 'whole' will be greater than the sum of the individual 'parts'.

Definitions

What is a market? A most basic question, certainly, but an unavoidable one. One of the objectives of this study is to offer an answer for a particular time and place, yet no progress can be made until a working definition is settled. The basic ambiguity is summed up by retail geographer Martin Phillips: 'It is not easy to define a market. In fact, the term "market" has been perceived in two basic ways: "physically", in terms of a zone of exchange, and "abstractedly", as a process of exchange. These two meanings have interpenetrated each other in complex ways'.²¹ This study leaves aside the epic question of 'the market' as a *process* of exchange, and is primarily concerned with markets as institutions of *physical* exchange in the life of London.

Like eighteenth century towns, there was no simple definition of what constituted a market.²² Towns at least can be gauged by population or economic function, but no single or simple criteria seems to exist for defining 'a market'. Contemporary guide books tended to describe rather than to define them - perhaps observers knew a market when they saw one, although there is no body of contemporary literature to which one could appeal to formulate a definitive grouping of markets. To be sure, there was the legal definition given by the Victorian Royal Commission: a market was an authorized public concourse of buyers and sellers of commodities meeting at a defined and limited place, at an appointed time. The Commissioners' Report acknowledged that this simplistic definition excluded 'many so-called markets which are mere private associations or meetings of traders and others, and also other marts or sales which are popularly called markets'.²³ Dr. Johnson proffered three definitions: 'a publick time of buying

²⁰ F. Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century - The wheels of commerce*, vol. ii (1979; tr. 1982); P. Borsay, *The English urban renaissance culture and society in the provincial town, 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1990); P. J. Corfield, *The impact of English towns, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982).

²¹ M. Phillips, 'The evolution of markets and shops in Britain' in Benson & Shaw (eds.), *The evolution of retail systems*, pp. 56-7. See also J-C. Agnew, *Worlds apart: the market and the theater in Anglo-American thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 17-56.

²² See, for instance, Corfield, *The impact of English towns*, pp. 4-6.

²³ Royal Comm. (1891), p. 2.

and selling'; 'purchase and sale'; and 'rate; price'. Such usages were found in Shakespeare and Dryden. The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers no less than ten meanings for the noun.²⁴

Small wonder, then, that no self-defining club of markets existed in the long eighteenth century, rather an assortment of types and categories, interpreting in different ways the essential attributes of buying and selling, physical congregation. For there are street markets, covered markets, open markets, municipal markets, wholesale markets, retail markets, specialist markets, commodity markets and exchanges, private marts, shopping arcades, bazaars and fairs. (There was, strictly, no typical 'London market place', only 'London's markets'.) A tension thus arises. On the one hand, all these variants are in some way relevant to the subject. On the other, a precise definition of markets that makes for a meaningful and manageable analysis will necessarily exclude some of them. For instance, to confine analysis primarily to 'public markets' would exclude private marketing institutions such as the Corn Exchange, and unofficial arrangements such as street markets. Similarly, a study confined to food markets would ignore skin, cloth and coal markets, all of which share similar characteristics and points of interest to food markets.

Perhaps the most meaningfully inclusive (though still imperfect) approach is to be found in the concept of the 'formal' market. Formal markets include not only authorized institutions but any which were regularly and visibly organized, but for some reason lacked the traditional legal sanction. These can be roughly distinguished from a penumbra of 'informal' markets which were more casual or esoteric in nature: those held in and around inns, in the streets and among riverside warehouses, as well as the 'forestalling' cattle markets that ringed the capital.²⁵ Also excluded are the official 'fairs', which functioned seasonally rather than weekly, and whose entertainment value dwarfed any commercial substance; so too are marketing institutions such as the coffee houses and the Stock Exchange which dealt in 'invisible' goods, (stocks, insurance, etc.). Geographically, the thesis is primarily concerned with the continuous built-up area of London. Markets which existed or were established around, but not contiguous to London, as at Greenwich, Romford and Southall, are not considered to be 'London markets' because their function was essentially local and subsidiary, and detached from the town itself.

These principles appeared to underlie contemporary references to markets. For this reason, particular markets so mentioned or listed by contemporary guides have generally been included in the corpus of 'formal' markets. There are exceptions. For instance, William Maitland included the White Horse Inn in his list of markets in 1739 (and in subsequent editions) as a meal

²⁴ S. Johnson, *Dictionary of the English language* (1755 edn.); *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989 edn.), ix, pp. 384-5. The related term 'mart' is addressed in the concluding chapter; the two terms are generally not used synonymously during this thesis.

²⁵ Of course, an informal market can evolve into a more formal market; the distinction is meant to be practical, not definitive.

market.²⁶ This was the only inn mentioned by such lists, although inns and related institutions often provided good facilities for salesmen and dealers.²⁷ Nothing more is known about the White Horse and its marketing practices, and for these reasons, the market has been omitted from the class of formal markets. By the same token, the Victorian street ‘markets’ were too shadowy (though still significant) before 1840 to warrant inclusion; similarly for Covent Garden before its charter of 1670.²⁸ The alleged market at Three Cranes Wharf mentioned by Defoe and Strype has been excluded because no evidence suggests that it had the regular status of, say, Bear Key. The few pages of Defoe’s *Tour* devoted to London’s markets cannot in any case be taken as a definitive guide. His ironic reference to ‘Change Alley as ‘the Bubble market’ (also omitted) is enough to indicate a rather elastic definition of markets.²⁹ In any case, observers like Defoe were more concerned to illustrate London’s size and trade rather than to provide a systematic exposition of its markets. Yet I have included Rag Fair, that rather celebrated assembly of second-hand clothes dealers near Tower Hill, originating probably in the later seventeenth century and continuing till the end of the nineteenth century. Though listed neither by Maitland nor Defoe, it is prominent in City and county records, operated on a daily basis, and traded both wholesale and retail. Still, if Rag Fair is included, why not Monmouth Street’s clothes dealers? If the Corn Exchange, why not the London Commercial Sales Rooms? In these cases, the excluded ‘markets’ were hardly defined as such by contemporaries. The former was a locational concentration of dealers, the latter an auction house.

Table 1 sets out all ‘formal’ markets in four snapshots: 1660, 1700, 1760 and 1840. Given the problems just discussed such a table has obvious enough limitations. The dates are not equally spaced (180 years neatly divides into three or six, but three snapshots would not be meaningful enough; six too many); they are intended only as clear chronological markers. Often contemporary sources can be mistaken, or out of date (one reason why the ‘snapshots’ should be spaced out). In some cases there is uncertainty when a market starts or ceases to function. Should Eastcheap, Old Fish Street and Fish Street Hill count as markets after the Great Fire of 1666? Their ambiguity makes either choice problematic. Inhabited by a declining number of butchers and fishmongers once new City markets were built after the Fire, they were hardly mentioned as markets again in the way they once were. Hence their exclusion from 1700. They were no longer ‘markets proper’ as McGrath has observed, although shopkeepers there undoubtedly continued to

²⁶ W. Maitland, *The history of London from its foundation by the Romans to the present time* (1739), ii, p. 527.

²⁷ See, for example, J. A. Chartres, ‘The place of inns in the commercial life of London and western England, 1660-1760’, D. Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1973), ch. 8.

²⁸ LCC (1893), p. 7.

²⁹ Defoe, *Tour*, i, pp. 114, 342-6.

sell much meat and fish, as did other thoroughfares such as Bishopsgate.³⁰ The run down flesh market of Butcher Row near St. Clement Danes apparently had its origins in Edward I's reign, became a fixture under Elizabeth, and seems to have accommodated a range of trades in the eighteenth century, but its significance was noted only after its demolition for the Temple Bar improvements of the 1790s - how functional it was, say, in 1760, is a matter of argument. Whitechapel had probably contained slaughterhouses for centuries (it was just outside the City boundary), but as a formal wholesaling and retailing market, it only gained recognition in the early eighteenth century.

There is also the problem of function. For instance, Smithfield entertained cattle on Mondays and Fridays, horses on Friday afternoons, and a hay market on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. So was Smithfield one market or three? The better answer seems to be one - there was one market place, and one market authority. Leadenhall likewise. The great thoroughfare of Whitechapel boasted a meat market, a hay market and a skins market in the late eighteenth century (and later a huge street market), but the hay market was spatially separate from the other markets which were held in the Aldgate area. Hence two markets for Whitechapel, and for similar locational reasons three markets for Southwark (hay; general; skins). In Chapter Four, however, all 'multiple' markets are counted by their constituent wholesale trades.

³⁰ Eastcheap, Fish Street Hill and Old Fish Street were considered freemen's markets in the late sixteenth century and the last two were later noted by Defoe in the 1720s. But these were supplemented, if not replaced by the four new City markets after the Great Fire (Stocks, Honey Lane, Newgate and Leadenhall), all of which consisted of stalls, standings and shops. See Strype, i, p. 173; ii, pp. 180, 190; iii, pp. 219; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 343; J. Entick, *A new and accurate history and survey of London, Westminster, Southwark and places adjacent* (1766), iv, p. 4; Archer et al., *Hugh Alley's caveat*, pp. 4, 7-9; McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', pp. 58-9, 73, 267. In the years 1729-34, eighteen butchers resident in Eastcheap paid quarterage to the Butchers' Company, compared with seventy-six in Whitechapel, forty in Honey Lane, seventy in Newgate and 109 at Leadenhall, GH, Ms 6452/1.

Table 1 *The formal markets of London, 1660-1840*

	CITY	OUTSIDE CITY	
1660	Billingsgate (fish, coal) Bishopsgate (meal) Blackwell Hall (cloth) Cheapside (general) Eastcheap (meat) Fish Street Hill (fish) Gracechurch St (general) Leadenhall (skins, bays, meat etc) Newgate Street (meal) Old Fish Street (fish) Queenhithe (meal, flour) St. Nicholas Shambles (meat) St. Paul's Churchyard (f & veg) Smithfield (cattle, hay) Stocks (meat, fish)	Butcher Row, Temple Bar (meat etc) Clare (meat etc) Haymarket (hay and straw) Southwark (meat etc) Southwark (hay) Westminster (meat etc)	
1700	Bear Key (corn) Billingsgate (fish, coal) Blackwell Hall (cloth) Holborn Bars (meat etc) Honey Lane (meat etc) Leadenhall (skins, bays, meat, etc) Newgate (meat etc) Queenhithe (meal, flour) Rag Fair (old clothes) ^b Smithfield (cattle, hay) Stocks (meat, fruit and veg)	Bloomsbury (meat etc) Brook's (meat etc) Brookfield (cattle) Butcher Row (meat etc) Chapel St, Westminster (hay) Clare (meat etc) Covent Garden (fruit and veg) Haymarket (hay) Hungerford (meat etc) Newport (meat etc)	Red Lion (meat etc) St. James's (meat etc) Shadwell (meat etc) Southwark (meat etc) Southwark (hay) Spitalfields (meat etc) Wapping (meat etc) Westminster (meat etc) Whitechapel (hay)
1760	Billingsgate (fish, coal) Bishopsgate Street (hay) Blackwell Hall (cloth) Corn Exchange (corn, seeds) Fleet (meat etc) Honey Lane (meat etc) Leadenhall (skins, bays, meat, etc) Newgate (meat etc) Queenhithe (meal, flour) Rag Fair (old clothes) ^b Smithfield (cattle, hay)	Bloomsbury (meat etc) Borough (meat, fruit & veg etc) Brook's (meat etc) Butcher Row (meat etc) Carnaby (meat etc) Clare (meat etc) Clerkenwell (skins) Covent Garden (fruit and veg) Haymarket (hay) Hungerford (meat etc) Newport (meat etc)	Oxford (meat etc) Red Lion (meat etc) St. James's (meat etc) Shadwell (meat etc) Shepherd (meat etc) Southwark (hay) Spitalfields (meat etc) Westminster (meat etc) Westminster (fish) Whitechapel (meat) Whitechapel (hay)
1840 ^a	Billingsgate (fish) Coal Exchange Corn Exchange Corn Exchange, New Farringdon (meat etc) Leadenhall (poultry, meat etc) Newgate (carcase) Rag Fair (old clothes) ^b Smithfield (cattle, hay) Tyler's, Warwick Lane (carcase)	Bermondsey Leather Co. Borough (fruit & veg, etc) Brook's (meat etc) Clare (meat etc) Covent Garden (fruit & veg) Cumberland (hay) Hungerford (meat, fish, corn) Islington (cattle) Mortimer (meat etc)	Newport (meat etc) Oxford (meat etc) Portman (fruit & veg, etc) St. James's (meat etc) Shepherd (meat etc) Southwark (hay) Spitalfields (fruit & veg, etc) Whitechapel (meat) Whitechapel (hay)

^a The 1840 section omits the early Victorian 'street markets' e.g. Leather Lane, Whitecross Street. 'Meat, etc' signifies that the market may have sold (usually by retail) fish, dairy and garden produce, poultry, as well as butcher's meat. Other (specific) designations indicate specialization or reputation for a particular product.

Sources: see Appendices 2, 3

^b Rag Fair was in fact situated outside the City boundaries (see Appendix 3; Table 3)

Where precisely the definitional lines are drawn must necessarily be debatable, but without an inclusive definition that must also be exclusive, no initial quantitative assessment is possible. The listings given here, based upon careful selection, have the virtues of being both analytically malleable and historically meaningful. Whilst the umbrella of ‘formal’ markets subsumes most markets of prominence in London, it would be perilous to ignore those left out in the rain. Table 2 outlines a typology of these. It is to be read as illustrative rather than exhaustive, since by definition ‘informal’ markets, which account for much of the typology, are difficult to get at. Nor does it take account of so many unquantifiable itinerant vendors, selling all kinds of perishable foods and household goods, as well as clothing items, entertainment and services.³¹

The following chapter, therefore, provides various quantitative assessments of formal market trends and themes. Subsequent chapters adopt a more analytical and qualitative approach that addresses the economic, political and urban dimensions within which the markets existed and developed. In this way an overall assessment of the place of markets in late Stuart and Hanoverian London can be made.

³¹ Unquantifiable, that is, before the coming of Henry Mayhew, *London labour*, pp. 4-10. A useful summary of seventeenth century street cryers’ trades, gleaned from Pepys’ collection of prints, is given in L. Picard, *Restoration London* (1997), p. 298.

Table 2 Other known marketing institutions, 1660-1840

TYPE AND INSTITUTION	FUNCTION-REPUTATION	DATES (approx.)	
FAIRS^a			
St. James	All of these fairs during this period had no identifiable marketing function. They were for the most part given over to amusements and the sale of fancy goods, gingerbread, etc. Not all these fairs were apparently authorized.	1290 - 1664	
Bartholomew		1133 - 1855	
May Fair		1688 - 1764	
Southwark (Lady Fair)		1402 - 1762	
Tottenham Court		Early - mid 18th c.	
Welch (Clerkenwell)		Early - mid 18th c.	
Hampstead		Mid 18th c.	
Paddington		Mid 18th c.	
Green Goose (Bow)	1664 - 1850s		
INN MARKETS^b			
George Inn, Little Britain	Lace	Late 17th - early 18th c.	
George Inn, Aldersgate Street	Meal, lace	Early 18th c.	
Bell Inn, Aldersgate Street	Meal	Early 18th c.	
Cock Inn, Aldersgate Street	Meal	Early 18th c.	
Thanet House, Aldersgate Street	Lace	Late 17th - early 18th c.	
Bull and Mouth Inn, Aldersgate Street	Lace, honey, hops	Early 18th c.	
Ram Inn, Smithfield (and others)	Livestock, honey	18th c.	
King's Arms Inn, Holborn Bridge	Meal, butter, spa waters	Early - mid 18th c.	
George Inn, Holborn Bridge	Butter	Late 17th - early 18th c.	
Swan Inn, Holborn Bridge	Butter	Late 17th - early 18th c.	
White Horse Inn, Holborn Bridge	Meal	18th c.	
Bell Inn, Ludgate Hill	Spa waters	Early 18th c.	
Bell Inn, Newgate market	Butter, cheese, poultry, meat	Mid 18th c. - early 19th c.	
White Hart Inn, Southwark	Hops, honey	Early 18th c.	
George Inn, Southwark	Hops	Early 18th c.	
Half Moon Inn, Southwark	Hops	Early 18th c.	
Spur Inn, Southwark	Hops	Early 18th c.	
Greyhound Inn, Southwark	Hops	Early 18th c.	
'FORESTALLING' MARKETS IN AND AROUND LONDON^c			
Islington	Knightsbridge	Cattle	Variously mentioned from late 17th c. - early 19th c.
Mile End	Hounslow	Cattle	
Whitechapel	Paddington	Cattle	
Newington	Kentish Town	Cattle	
Three Cranes Wharf, Paul's Wharf, Blackfriars		Fruit	Early 18th c.
STREET MARKETS (c. 1840)^d			
Leather Lane, Holborn			Miscellaneous (produce, household wares, etc.)
New Cut, Lambeth			
The Brill, Somers Town			
St. George, Oxford Street			
Whitecross Street, Cripplegate			
Strutton Ground, Westminster			
Whitechapel High Street			
<i>Continued overleaf . .</i>			

TYPE AND INSTITUTION	FUNCTION-REPUTATION	DATES (approx.)
OTHER NOTABLE MARKETS NEAR LONDON^c		
Hounslow, Middlesex	Cattle	est. 1686
Brentford, Middlesex	Corn	ancient
Southall, Middlesex	Cattle	est. 1698
Romford, Essex	Cattle	ancient
Greenwich, Kent	General	est. 1700
SHOPPING ARCADES AND BAZAARS^f		
Royal Exchange, City (the 'Pawn')	Hosiery, drapery, millinery	1570 - 1684
New Exchange, Strand	Hosiery, jewellery, books, etc.	1609 - 1737
Middle Exchange, Strand	As above	1671 - 1696
Exeter Exchange, Strand	Hosiery, drapery, books, etc.	1676 - 1830
Westminster Hall	Books, prints, trinkets, etc.	17th - early 18th c.
Royal Opera Arcade	Shops	1817
Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly	Shops	1819
Lowther Arcade, Strand	Trinkets, toys	1830
'Bazaars' in: Soho Sq., St. James's St., Pall Mall, Piccadilly, Leicester Sq., Strand, Fleet St., Holborn, Moorfields	Trinkets, textiles, books, jewellery, perfumery, pictures, etc.	Early 19th c.
OTHER SPECIALIZED MARKETING INSTITUTIONS^g		
Royal Exchange	Commercial contracts, information, etc	est. 1570
Coffee houses	Insurance, information, stocks, etc.	1650s - late 18th c.
London Commercial Sale Rooms	Rum, sugar, (1833) tea, imports, etc.	est. 1811
Stock Exchange	Government stock, company shares	est. 1773
Auction Mart	Art work, landed estates	est. 1809
Royal Exchange (Lloyds)	Insurance	est. 1774

Notes and sources:

^a See, for example LMA, 60.225, Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books and Orders of Court, vol. xxi (1744-7), pp. 49-59; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 16 September 1815, 6 March 1816, 6 April 1816; H. Cunningham, 'The metropolitan fairs: a case study in the social control of leisure' in A. P. Donajgradzki (ed.), *Social control in nineteenth century Britain* (1977); C. Walford, *Fairs past and present: a chapter in the history of commerce* (1883); Royal Comm. (1888), App. to vol. 1, p. 135 (list of fairs in 1792).

^b See Chartres, 'The place of inns', pp. 296-307; Maitland, *History of London*, ii, p. 527; *London and its environs* (1761), iv, p. 261; CLRO, Misc. Mss 332.2; Journal of the Markets Committee (1737-43), pp. 451-2; City Lands, vol. 50 (1758), f. 90; vol. 54 (1762), ff. 43b, 58; vol. 62 (1770), ff. 58-9; vol. 65 (1773), f. 145; vol. 66 (1774), f. 202; vol. 67 (1775), ff. 109, 118.

^c See p. 94, n. 40.

^d GH, Ms. 496, p. 25; LMA, E/BER/CG E 10 42; Mayhew, *London labour*, p. 10. See Appendix 5 for street markets in 1850.

^e CSPD (Jan 1686 - May 1787), p. 24; (1698), p. 422; (1700-2), p. 78, *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 168-9.

^f On exchanges, see A. Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange*, LTS No. 152 (1997); *Survey of London. the Strand*, xviii (1937), p. 96; on arcades, Summerson, *Georgian London*, pp. 265-6; on bazaars, E. W. Brayley et al., *London and Middlesex* (1810-16), iii, pp. 639-40, 658-65.

^g D. Keene, 'The setting of the Royal Exchange: continuity and change in the financial district of the City of London, 1300-1871' in Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange*, pp. 265-6; F. Sheppard, *London, 1808-1870: the infernal wen* (1971), pp. 195-6.

2 THEMES, TYPES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Markets, then, provide a rich if slippery field of study. But to make sense of the landscape at all, one must first ascertain its contours and perspectives. This involves isolating certain variables and establishing certain facts and trends. Using the categorization detailed in Appendix 3 and the snapshot year methodology adopted for Table 1 (p. 20), it is possible to quantify and classify, albeit very crudely, a good deal of the subject. The first considerations will be the number, size and incidence of markets during this period, as well as what sorts of things they sold. Then the discussion moves to the kinds of markets that existed and what sites they occupied; upon what authority, and under whose ownership and management, did they lie; and what kinds of people used them. The final section widens the canvas by considering the broader metropolitan context within which markets existed and developed, and proposes how their complex and diverse history might be explained.

The dimensions of market trade

The crudest means of adumbrating the London market scene in the period 1660 to 1840 is simply to count, and in total no less than seventy-two markets have been identified (see Appendix 3). Yet even counting is not simple because of the definitional ambiguities highlighted in the previous chapter. The numbers given in Table 3 (derived from the listings in Table 1) do no more, therefore, than provide useful snapshots of London's market situation and the trends indicated.

Table 3 *Numbers of markets, 1660-1840*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Numbers of markets</i>		
	<i>City of London</i>	<i>Outside City</i>	<i>Total</i>
	%	%	
<i>1660</i>	15 (71)	6 (29)	21
<i>1700</i>	10 (33)	20 (67)	30
<i>1760</i>	10 (30)	23 (70)	33
<i>1840</i>	9 (32)	19 (68)	28

Source: see Appendices 2, 3.

Thus the second half of the seventeenth century saw a substantial rise in the numbers of public markets in London, slowing down during the eighteenth and then falling markedly in the early decades of the nineteenth. The decline in number within the City contrasted to a striking expansion in the newer areas of town. In fact the whole period was a fertile time for the

establishment of markets. Many others, at least three dozen, were publicly or officially projected and proposed, but for one reason or another, did not materialize (Table 4).¹

Table 4 *Markets publicly proposed in and around London not materializing, 1660-1840*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Source</i>
1664	East Smithfield	CLRO, Remembrancia, ix, 82
1664	Ratcliff	CLRO, Remembrancia, ix, 82; <i>CSPD</i> (1664-5), p. 22
1672	Millbank	CLRO, Rep. 77, f. 150
1676	Salisbury Court	CLRO, Rep. 81, f. 298b
1677	Soho	CLRO, Rep. 82, ff. 272, 278
1677	Little Moorfields (hay)	CLRO, Small Ms Box 30, no. 4/4; McGrath (1948), p. 294
1683	Conduit Mead (cattle)	CLRO, Rep. 88, ff. 71, 87, 92, 96b, 119
1683	Clerkenwell Green	CLRO, Rep. 89, f. 6
1684	Rotherhithe ^a	<i>CSPD</i> (1684-5), p. 206
1686	Edmonton, Midds.(cattle)	CLRO, Rep. 91, f. 204
1687	Hoxton	<i>CSPD</i> (Jan 1686 - May 1687), pp. 424, 425
1698	Westminster (corn)	<i>JHC</i> , xii (1698), pp. 554, 585, 603, 612
1699	West Smithfield (meal)	CLRO, Jor. 52, f. 246
1699	Knightsbridge (cattle)	CLRO, Alchin's Collection, no. 246
1700	St. John Street (green, skins)	<i>CSPD</i> (1700-2), p. 186
1704	Cow Cross, Smithfield (skins)	CLRO, Rep. 110, ff. 144, 149b
1708	Bishopsgate (hay)	CLRO, Jor. 54, f. 694
1708	Hounslow, Midds (cattle)	CLRO, Alchin's Collection, no. 255
1708	Isleworth, Midds	CLRO, Alchin's Collection, no. 255
1708	Croydon, Surrey (cattle)	CLRO, Rep. 112, f. 417
1716	Barnet (cattle)	CLRO, City Lands (1716-17), f. 46b
1718	Knightsbridge (cattle)	CLRO, Rep. 122, ff. 291, 384
1727	Gt. Conduit Fields	CLRO, Rep. 131, ff. 192-3, 229
1727	Murrell's Field (Fair)	CLRO, Rep. 131, f. 330
1736	Smithfield Bars	CLRO, Rep. 140, ff. 94-5
1742	Dowgate (green)	CLRO, Jor. 58, ff. 242-4
1745	Mile End (cattle)	CLRO, Rep. 149, f. 262
1758	Minories (corn)	CLRO, Rep. 162, ff. 112-13; Jor. 61, ff. 294-5
1758	Westminster (corn)	<i>JHC</i> , xxviii (1758), pp. 85, 118-9; 31 Geo. II, c. 25
1766	Tottenham Court (cattle)	<i>JHC</i> , xxx (1766), p. 581
1801	Southwark (hops)	<i>JHC</i> , lvi (1801), p. 328
1812	Regent's Park (various)	<i>HM Woods, Forests and Land Revenues</i> (1812), xii, p. 86
1817	Westminster (fish)	<i>JHC</i> , llxxii (1817), p. 60
1824	Limehouse	CLRO, CC papers, 17 June 1824
1830	Regent's Park (various)	11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 14
1833	Farringdon (skins)	GH, Ms 6443 15, Butchers Co. mins (1832-9), pp. 64, 69-70
1834	South London	4 Will. IV c. 45; LMA, Acc 2058 1 23, pp. 71, 72
1834	Knightsbridge	<i>JHC</i> , lxxxix (1834), pp. 56; CLRO, City Lands (1834-5), pp. 111-13
1837	Strutton Ground, Westminster	CLRO, City Lands (1832), p. 951; <i>JHC</i> , xcii (1837), pp. 61, 190

Notes: Specialized markets are indicated in parentheses. References to attempted markets to be found in CLRO, Misc. Mss 90.8, 187.7 (appendix) and McGrath (1948), part iii (seventeenth century only).

^a It is uncertain whether Rotherhithe market actually functioned, see McGrath (1948), p. 308.

¹ By 'proposals' it is not meant to include official considerations of removing specific markets from one site to another (as was the case in the City after the Great Fire), nor general calls for more markets.

The fact that over half of the attempts listed in Table 4 occurred before 1720 testifies partly to the more intensive efforts made in that period to establish markets, and partly to the success with which the Corporation of the City of London frustrated many of these (Chapter Six).

Most proposals, fulfilled or not, were related to areas outside of the City. This meant that the geographical pattern of London's markets took on an increasingly centrifugal, though lopsided, appearance. Markets tended to be thin on the ground in the large and populous 'East End' and to the south of the river. The 'West End' had fewer complaints: in the district bounded by the New Road, Park Lane, The Mall, St. Martin's Lane and Tottenham Court Road, there were no less than eight food markets around 1800. In the City, the Great Fire of 1666 had facilitated a rationalization and reduction of the old markets there. Whereas in 1650 London's public markets had been evenly spaced *within* the City and confined to it, a century or so later, they were spaced out across a wider metropolis.

Not only were new markets proposed and established during this 'long eighteenth century', but there are indications that markets were becoming more frequent and substantial events. A chronological selection of markets and their trading days is given in Table 5 (admittedly based upon the imperfect evidence available). Typically only two or three weekdays were usually specified in the grant or Act of Parliament: Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays were the most popular. If the City markets (Stocks, Newgate, Honey Lane, Leadenhall) were ignored - they were only allowed to sell beef four days a week - it would become apparent that markets established later in the period tended to be more frequent events.² Covent Garden's daily market chartered in 1670 was exceptional. Anecdotal and other isolated evidence suggests that from the late seventeenth century retailing in markets gradually came to operate on a daily basis. 'Market days' came to refer primarily to those mornings when incoming supplies would be sold by wholesale. As early as 1722 the travel writer John Macky praised the 'daily markets' that bespotted the capital. Insofar as shops formed a vital constitutive element of market places, then markets could be described as daily. Pigot & Co's London directory for 1839 described Borough, Brooks, Fitzroy, Newport and Portman markets (among others) as 'daily'. Ten years later Henry Mayhew noted that Oxford market, originally licenced in 1732 to be held every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, was in fact held daily.³ The old notion of the 'market day' as the moment when country people invaded town with their wares - freemen shopkeepers could sell all week - was in retreat by 1800 as 'the Freedom' lost practical significance and countrymen no longer dominated the market place. In London, trading days were not so clear-cut or relevant as

² CLRO, P. D. 22.14, Acts of Common Council for regulating the City markets, 5 September 1672, 17 September 1674.

³ Clare market was a similar case in point, *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 220; *CSPD* (1661-2), p. 58; Pigot & Co, *A directory of London and its suburbs* (1839), 'Public Markets'.

in town markets elsewhere, which were readily listed in the county directories. The broad conclusion is that market retailing was becoming an ongoing feast.⁴

Table 5 Official market days of selected London markets, 1660-1833

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Clare (1662)	•		•			•
St. James's (1664)	•		•			•
Stepney (1664)						•
Bloomsbury (1666)	•		•		•	•
Newgate (1669)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Covent Garden (1670)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stocks (1670)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Honey Lane (1671)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Leadenhall (1677)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Shadwell (1670s)			•			•
Hungerford (1680)			•			•
Brooks (1682)	•		•		•	•
Newport (1686)		•		•		•
Red Lion (1688)			•		•	
Spitalfields (1688)				•		•
Haymarket (1697)				•		•
Billingsgate (1699)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Carnaby (1723)		•			•	•
Oxford (1732)	•		•			•
Fleet (1737)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Westminster Fish (1749)	•					
Corn Exchange (1751)	•		•		•	
Borough (1756)	•		•		•	•
Mortimer (1784)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Finsbury (1802)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Limehouse (1824) ^a	•	•	•	•	•	•
Farringdon (1829)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Coal Exchange (1830)	•		•		•	
Hungerford (1833)	•	•	•	•	•	•
% of all selected markets	76	55	79	52	65	86

^a Authorized but never functioned.

Source: see Appendix 2.

Sundays remained officially sacrosanct although trading on that day was a perennial, if not an increasing problem. Like crime, fluctuating efforts to suppress Sunday marketing say more about the perceptions of the ruling classes than the extent of the practice itself. Most markets outside the City walls carried on some kind of Sunday retail trade throughout the period.⁵ Clare

⁴ M. Phillips, 'The evolution of markets and shops in Britain' in J. Benson & G. Shaw (eds.), *The evolution of retail systems* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 61, 62.

⁵ In 1718, Whitelocke Bulstrode informed Middlesex's Grand Jury that the butchers in all the principal meat markets outside the City killed and sold their sheep and calves on a Sunday, G. Lamoine, *Charges to the Grand Jury, 1689-1803* (Camden Society, 4th ser., 93, 1992), p. 114.

and Fleet appear to have been the most notorious.⁶ By the nineteenth century, it appears that a wider range of goods than before could be obtained on the Lord's Day, epitomized in the 1830s by the Sunday morning street marts in Lambeth and Somers Town, in which butchers, bakers, barbers, greengrocers and clothes shops vied with a galaxy of barrows and stalls selling fruits, nuts, vegetables, fish and household items.⁷

Market hours were likewise loosening up. By-laws of 1672 and 1674 specified times of trading in the City markets. There was a tendency for wholesaling to start earlier and retailing later. Billingsgate and Covent Garden, for instance, did business well before dawn which continued into daylight hours, when retailing would take over. The Act of 1674 allowed buying and selling to continue until 8 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; and 10 p.m. on Saturdays. These regulations were never subsequently tightened, although in practice they were relaxed. Armed with their weekly wages on Saturday evening, working Londoners - at least those who avoided the public house - thronged the food markets up to and beyond midnight.

Size, another important variable, is difficult to quantify and generalize, particularly when there are so many different kinds of markets to consider, and relatively little evidence. Spatial size says nothing about how that space is allocated, whether there were more than single-storey buildings, or what fixed capital the market contained; but it does provide a tenuous indicator of expected or actual trade. Much depended upon a market's origin or function. It would be too much to say that sizes were increasing throughout the period. Though the later Hanoverian years saw the creation of very large markets, there had been spacious market sites from an earlier period, most notably the piazza of Covent Garden (Table 6). City markets could be smaller than some of their West End counterparts; and even the Corn Exchange, London's premier grain market, occupied an area no larger than Honey Lane market. Cattle markets were necessarily roomier than others, a distinction confirmed at the end of the period by the enlargement of Smithfield and the creation of a huge rival at Islington. Piecemeal and periodic rebuilding characterized growing markets, both large and small. Without concomitant increases in capacity, trade threatened to seep into neighbouring thoroughfares. In general, however, no overriding trend in new market size seems to stand out.

⁶ In March 1765, seven butchers of Fleet market were penalized at the Guildhall, and in 1780 the butchers there were presented by the local ward inquest to the City Lands Committee. See also GH, Ms 6443 12, Butchers' Co. minutes, 1 October 1801, 7 August 1806, 12 October 1808; CLRO, CC papers, 21 April 1831, 12 April 1832, 26 June 1832, 4 October 1832, 21 February 1833, 8 July 1836; *CC mins*, 19 January 1832; *Times*, 8 October 1832, p. 3; 23 August 1833, p. 3; W. B. Whitaker, *The eighteenth century English Sunday: a study of Sunday observance from 1677 to 1837* (1940), p. 58.

⁷ *Report from Select Committee on Observance of the Lord's Day* (1831-2), qq. 2, 124; Mayhew, *London labour*, pp. 10-11.

Table 6 Ground sizes of selected markets

Year ^a	Market	Dimensions (feet, approx.)	Area (acres, approx)	Sources
1660	Smithfield (cattle) ^b		4.72	Royal Comm. (1850), xxxi, p. 14
1660	Clare		0.37	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 220
1664	St. James's		1.17	PRO, CRES 6/19, p. 255
1666	Bloomsbury	260 x 120	0.72	J. Gage (1986), p. 21 (1720 map)
1670	Covent Garden	420 x 316	3.04	LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10/18a (grant)
1671	Newgate	148 x 194	0.66	Strype, iii, p. 195
1671	Honey Lane	193 x 97	0.43	Strype, iii, p. 50
1671	Stocks	230 x 108	0.57	Strype, ii, p. 199
1677	Leadenhall (3 courtyards)	(164 x 80) (170 x 90) (140 x 140)	1.10	Strype, ii, p. 89
1682	Brook's		0.25	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 221
1682	Spitalfields ^c	362 x 338	2.81	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 234
1686	Newport (enlarged c.1800)		0.26	<i>Surv. of Lon.</i> , xxxiv (1966), p. 365
1735	Carnaby (enlarged)		1.50	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 238
1737	Fleet	1050 x 44	1.06	CLRO, Jor. 58, f. 1b seq.; GH Noble 223/FAR
1784	Mortimer	175 x 132	0.53	Est'd from Horwood (3rd edn, 1813)
1789	St. George's, Swk.	120 x 99	0.27	<i>Times</i> , 17 Sept 1789, p. 3
1791	Fitzroy	132 x 120	0.36	Est'd from Horwood (3rd edn, 1813)
1816	Oxford (rebuilt)		0.75	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 221
1829	Farringdon	280 x 246	1.58	GH Noble, C 45/T 1829, cutting
1829	Borough (enlarged)		3.00	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 232
1831	Portman		2.50	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 238
1833	Hungerford (rebuilt)		1.21	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 237
1835	Islington (cattle)	800 x 800	14.69	T. Allen (1839), v, pp. 449-50
1849	Smithfield (cattle)		6.09	Royal Comm. (1850) xxxi, p. 14

^a Where a market site existed before the start of the period, 1660 is given.

^b This also refers to the size of Smithfield up to 1834, the year in which it began to be enlarged.

^c Mayhew gives four dimensions: 327'(N), 349'(S), 380'(W) and 345'(E). I have taken averages.

The temporal dimension - *lifespans* - can also be crudely quantified, using the dataset drawn up in Appendix 3. It would be incorrect to speak of an 'ageing' corpus of markets over the period, since a long-established market is not synonymous with decrepitude. In fact Table 7 reveals no clear trends. Whereas at the start of the period most markets in London were of ancient origin, by 1700 the majority were of younger foundation, a pattern which declined thereafter. The reasons for this development are dealt with in Chapter Three. Beyond 1750 a mix of generations prevailed, although almost half in 1840 had their origins in the seventeenth century.

Table 7 *Relative ages of London's markets, 1660-1840*

<i>Age since establishment</i>	<i>1660</i> %	<i>1700</i> %	<i>1760</i> %	<i>1840</i> %
Less than 40 years' old	3 (14)	18 (60)	8 (24)	8 (29)
40 to 150 years' old	1 (5)	2 (7)	18 (54)	7 (25)
More than 150 years' old	17 (81)	10 (33)	7 (21)	13 (46)
Total	21	30	33	28

Source: see Appendices 2, 3.

To be sure, the numerical turnover of markets was considerable, approaching 100 in total (Table 8). Turnover in the early decades was particularly high, but throughout the period different kinds of markets lost trade or were simply eliminated. In addition, we have noted the many markets proposed which did not materialize. The celebrated longevity of Billingsgate and Smithfield was numerically exceptional. In fact, only these and two others - Clare and Leadenhall - existed and survived *in situ* throughout the whole 180-year period.⁸ Longevity did not necessarily imply a flourishing market. This makes it difficult in retrospect to assess when a market no longer

Table 8 *The turnover of London markets, 1660-1840*

	<i>1660-1700</i>	<i>1700-1760</i>	<i>1760-1840</i>	<i>1660-1840</i>
New markets ^a	21	13	17	51
Discontinued ^b	12	10	22	44
Net increase	+9	+3	-5	+7
Total turnover	33	23	39	95
Decennial average	8.3	3.8	4.9	5.3

^a Excludes rebuilt markets (e.g. Stocks, 1670), but includes resited markets (e.g. St. James's, 1816-18).

^b A problematic term. Markets indicated in this row were either demolished or had fallen into desuetude, which may have been some time before their formal termination or demolition.

Source: see Appendix 3.

functioned as such. It was a stock criticism of Victorian commentators that many of London's extant but tumbledown markets were hardly worthy of the name. Shepherd market, for instance, was condemned by *The Builder* in 1867 as a 'sad misnomer'.⁹ The London market scene was characterized by flux and fluidity, the reflection of a dynamic metropolis.

There is no unique way to measure how financially successful were individual markets, and to give proxy measurements of every market's trade would be impossible. Owing to their

⁸ One might add Covent Garden, but this is taken as a formal market only after 1670.

⁹ *Builder*, 2 November 1867, p. 796.

diversity, no unequivocal index of market prosperity existed, a fact acknowledged by the Royal Commission of the late nineteenth century. A simple measure of profit (receipts minus expenses) might reflect monopolistic charges as much as a flourishing trade. Should one take into account fixed costs of establishment and extension, which varied substantially according to historical and local conditions (e.g. the need to purchase land)? For the 1891 Report a prosperous market was simply one where business done was continually growing, and revenue exceeded expenditure.¹⁰ A more sophisticated formula might relate current profits to capital expenditure thereby giving an investment rate of return, but this would be a highly complex task for which sufficient evidence is lacking. Revenue seems to be a less problematic and more comparable indicator of trade than profits which can fluctuate according to costs and investment. The fragments of evidence that do exist have been cobbled together in Table 9, which includes averages of several annual revenues to emphasize the general trends and orders of magnitude; other entries are one-offs. Each total is placed in the appropriate column for that particular period.¹¹ These figures do not account for trade that has seeped beyond the market boundaries; not can it be certain that each entry reflects the total amount of market trade in its different forms (tolls on produce, stallage for stands and rents for shops). Their magnitude also is to some extent dependent upon efficiency of collection. Nevertheless, it is clear that a few markets (Borough, Covent Garden, Leadenhall, Newgate, Fleet, Smithfield and Billingsgate) commanded large trades by the early nineteenth century. This period also witnessed strong growth among the City markets, reflecting a more professional management and the growing importance of the trades in which they specialized. Moreover, not all markets were in decline, at least in absolute (nominal) financial terms; the impressive receipts of St. James's market guards one against an overly City-centred view of the metropolitan market scene, and at the same time leaves the researcher wishing for far more extensive and reliable data than has actually been uncovered for the lesser-known markets.

¹⁰ Royal Comm. (1891), p. 58. The Report did not indicate whether 'expenditure' included capital as well as current spending.

¹¹ For instance, there are returns for Fleet market for 1740-7 and 1751-4; averages are combined to give an entry for the 1740-59 column of £1709.

Table 9 Average revenues (£ p.a.) of selected markets, 1680-1839

	1680-99	1700-19	1720-39	1740-59	1760-79	1780-99	1800-19	1820-39
<i>Foodstuffs</i>								
Bear Key ^a			718		-	-	-	-
Billingsgate ^b						1029		3809
Borough ^c			258	159			2200	2614
Clare ^d					530			
Covt. Garden ^e				1618		2975		7734
Honey Lane			976	799	653	334	336	344
Leadenhall ^f			2045	1803	2111	2000	1862	2631
Newgate			1720	1285	1689	1800	2465	3577
Newport ^g	262	381						
Oxford ^h							530	682
St. James's ⁱ		1428					1937	
Smithfield ^j					3182	3769	5027	6627
Stocks ^k			1103	1709	2388	2652	2904	1484
Westminster ^l					404		-	-
<i>Other goods</i>								
Haymarket tolls ^m		111	126	125	148	189	211	290
Clerkenwell skins ⁿ					181			

Notes and sources:

^a Gross receipts for July 1722 - July 1723 of 'marketage' and wharfage taken by riverside commeters, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 18 (1724-5), f. 67a.

^b Sources for the six City markets are all in CLRO: Orders of the Markets Committee (1676-7), pp. 59, 63, 67; Alchin's Market Book, p. 60 n. 15; Misc. Mss 332.2, 332.6, 333.1; Journal of the Markets Committee, vol. 2 (1743-50), p. 262; City Lands, vol. 47 (1755-6), f. 111a; vol. 71 (1779-80), ff. 45-9 (Fleet); vol. 93 (1801), f. 169 (Billingsgate); vols. 72 - 126 (1780-1833), audited accounts of the markets; Markets Committee Journal, vol. 1 (1835-8), pp. 64-5, 228-9, 397-9, 571-3; vol. 2 (1839-41), pp. 48-50, 236-7, 434-6.

^c CLRO, City Lands, vol. 26 (1733-4), f. 223; vol. 27 (1734-5); Jor. 60; ff. 53-4; Jor. 66; f. 125. Borough market was removed from the High Street and taken over from the City by St. Saviour's parish in 1756. Figures to 1759 are revenues net of collectors' wages. The income figures for the new market also includes rents for houses around the market, LMA, Acc 2058/1/21-4, Minutes of the Borough Market Trustees, Treasurer's accounts (1811-50).

^d Net profits (i.e. probably revenue minus wages), BL, Add. Ms 33169-70.

^e LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 3 4, 6, receipts 1745-8, 1756; E 10 11/1 (1789); E/10/29 (loose), receipts 1828-31; D. J. Olsen, *Town planning in London* (1982), p. 222.

^f Excludes leather tolls.

^g PRO, C.5 251/11. Figures do not include rentals of shopowners or rents of vaults in the market, see *Survey of London*, xxxiv (1966), p. 366.

^h WCA, Acc 449 176-9, Portland estate accounts 1812-84.

ⁱ PRO, C/114/173, rents and pickages received Christmas 1712 to Christmas 1713; PRO, CRES 26/140, no. 1128.

^j Includes hay duty, animal rails and ties, and tolls on incoming beasts.

^k Figures include entries for Fleet, which replaced Stocks in 1737, and Farringdon, successor to Fleet in 1829.

^l WAM, 24888B (1766).

^m LMA, MJ SP, Haymarket accounts, 1701-9; M & WA/HM/266-364, 396, 423; Haymarket Committee minutes (1773-6), pp. 22-6, 29-33; MJ OC 23, p. 324; MJ/OC 24, p. 258.

ⁿ LMA, E/NOR/E 1, Northampton estate accounts, 1759-91.

Produce sold

There was no hard and fast distinction between goods sold through formal markets and goods traded by other means. As with modern commodity markets, *unprocessed* materials - livestock, coal, grain, fish - typically went through the market places. On the other hand, tropical commodities like tea and raw sugar appear to have had their own, more private, marketing arrangements, as did domestically produced raw materials such as lace and hops (cf. Table 2, p. 22).¹² Within the City of London, there was an identifiable division between ‘provisions’, which were generally edible and perishable, and were to be sold in public markets; and ‘goods and merchandizes’ (other than hides, leather, tallow and wool), which were not.¹³ Although high class retail goods such as jewellery, furniture and drapery, and industrial raw materials like timber or metal were sold through private shops, the market place was not limited merely to a narrow range of edible wares. Moreover, the presence of fixed shops within and around market places not necessarily selling foodstuffs further muddied distinctions.

Meat, fish, dairy products, fruit and vegetables were the staples of retailing markets. The public market was also traditionally seen as critical for the fair sale of grain. Meal and malt came to the market place, though little bread was traded there. Flesh in its live and dead forms - beef, veal, pork and mutton - was formally marketed at wholesale or retail level, as were the superior delicacies of poultry and game. There is a revealing list of tenants’ occupations of 136 ‘shops, stalls and standings’ in the City’s Fleet market, newly built in 1737, which may serve as a suggestive, and not unrepresentative, example of the kinds of trades going on in markets at that time. The document is partly obliterated, so only 102 occupants are identifiable, the individual totals thereby approximating to percentages. Flesh in its various forms accounted for around 60% of standings.¹⁴

Butchers	37	Gingerbread bakers	2
Buttermen/women (also sold eggs)	19	Bacon sellers	2
Poulterers	8	Fishmongers	2
Fruiterers	7	Florists	2
Hog/pork butchers/vendors	7	Greengrocers	2
Tripemen	4	Coffee sellers	1
Herb women	4	Cooks	1
Bakers	4		
		<hr/> <i>Total</i>	<hr/> <i>102</i> <hr/>

¹² For the private marketing of sugar, see R. Pares, ‘The London sugar market, 1740-1769’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 9, (1956-7).

¹³ 1694 Act of Common Council, reprinted in W. Besant, *London in the time of the Stuarts* (1903), p. 124.

¹⁴ CLRO, Misc. Mss 31.20, 332.3. Several of the thirty-seven butchers occupied two shops.

As well as sheltered accommodation, Fleet market contained ground space for country carts and a market for garden produce. Surviving accounts from 1687 of quarterly tenants in Brook's market show three butchers, two tripemen, two poulterers, two costermongers, two fishmongers, but also a vintner and turner.¹⁵ Ordinances concerning the positioning of traders in Southwark market in 1753 before its removal offer further insight into what was sold. At the northern end next to London Bridge, the country sellers of butter, eggs, milk and meats were stationed; south of them, sellers of poultry, then fish; then the country butchers; then the 'hucksters and higlers and those that sell bacon, Kingston bread and dish wheat'; further south stood 'such people that sell tripe, trotters and all sorts of soused wares', followed by the gingerbread men and bakers; retailers of butter, cheese, fruit and garden wares were next, and finally 'wholesale gardeners and country people selling boughs and flowers'.¹⁶ Similar evidence of actual traders within other markets throughout the period is surprisingly small.¹⁷ Some seem to have lost their diversified country trade as time went by, but it was generally the butchers who formed the mainstay of retail markets into the nineteenth century.

'Provisions' were not the only wares to be seen. Herbs (for medicinal purposes) and flowers were to be found in some markets. The skins of slaughtered livestock were marketed - and the processed commodity, leather, was traded at Leadenhall as well. At Smithfield, horses were sold on Friday afternoons, whilst their own sustenance was obtained from various hay markets as well as from the corn market. Billingsgate, renowned for its fish, also accommodated the coal trade until 1770, when a private consortium of coal factors established their own market nearby. Blackwell Hall for most of the period figured prominently in the nationwide cloth trade, as did Leadenhall in Essex bays. Covent Garden's 1670 charter authorized only the buying and selling of 'fruits, flowers, roots and herbs' but over the following century-and-a-half the market would also accommodate bakers, haberdashers, cooks and coffee houses, and those who sold butcher's meat, bacon, pork, butter, poultry, cheese, gingerbread, glass, earthenware, ironmongery and other 'divers goods, wares and merchandizes'.¹⁸ This miscellaneous trade disappeared with the rebuilding of 1830, but thereafter market days continued to produce a host of tea and bread and butter stalls, with hawkers amongst the market people proffering cakes and buns, combs, knives and pocket books.¹⁹ Some charters even explicitly authorized 'the buying and selling of all and all manner of goods, wares and merchandizes commonly bought and sold in

¹⁵ GH, Ms 459, f. 17.

¹⁶ CLRO, Jor. 60, f. 135b.

¹⁷ The evidence of trade directories is not terribly helpful, as they only list the permanent and most important occupants, and then only for the later years of this study, see P. J. Atkins, *The directories of London, 1677-1977* (1990), pp. 121-31.

¹⁸ J. C. Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records, 1667-1689* (vol. iv, old ser., 1892: rep'd 1975), p. 321; E. Hatton, *New view of London* (1708), p. 21; LMA, E BER/CG/T/11/G3/17; E/BER/CG/E/10 1 3, 10 4, 10 1 12, 10/16, 10 18a (bound printed volume), 10/21 (loose in bundle).

markets', a somewhat ambiguous formula.²⁰ The widespread sale of earthenware in markets reflected the complementarity between 'the articles of provision, and the vessels daily in use on which they are served up at our daily meals', and the increasing domestic taste for tea and coffee drinking. Indeed, the Portman Market Act of 1830 specifically permitted the sale of glass, earthenware and crockery.²¹ The sale of tallow (candles and soap) figured notably in St. James's and Clare markets in the early nineteenth century, with prices listed each week in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *London Chronicle*. Drapery, confectionary and hardware were paraded about market places by hawkers banned from selling in the City streets.²² Cooks, grocers, oilmen, victuallers, cheesemongers and other provisions dealers would inhabit the passages adjacent to many market places, both in the City and in the West End. It was in St. James's market in 1707 that Hugh Mason and William Fortnum began their partnership in groceries, importing and selling all manner of exotic goods.²³

On the whole, markets constituted the most notable foci for food retailing and wholesaling in long eighteenth century London. Shops, in the sense of fixed or enclosed retail outlets were certainly to be found within, as well as without, markets. The development of specialized and wholesale markets meant that certain kinds of goods, such as grain, would only be traded in certain places. In general, the market place, whether at wholesale or retail level,

¹⁹ *Penny Magazine* (26 August 1837), in GH Noble, B W2/COV/B.

²⁰ e.g. Brook's market, 1681; Newport market, 1686; Carnaby market, 1720; Limehouse market, 1824. See LMA, Midds. Deeds Register 1726/3/119, 2 March 1725-6; PRO, PC 2 69, p. 242; *House of Lords Manuscripts*, iv, new ser. (1699-1702), p. 155; Royal Comm. (1891), Appendix: 'Calendar of the Applications for grants of markets and fairs, and of the grants thereof enrolled on the patent rolls between 1700 and 1846'. In 1664, a thrice-weekly market in East Smithfield was almost established, 'for all manner of wares and merchandizes', CSPD (Addenda, 1660-1685), p. 514; and in 1684, licence was given for a general goods market in Rotherhithe, but this seemed never to materialize, P. V. McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock in London area in the seventeenth century', M. A. thesis (University of London, 1948), p. 308. The South London market Act of 1834 also authorized the buying and selling of foodstuffs and 'other commodities, goods, wares and merchandize', 4 Will. IV c. 45. For examples of contemporary descriptions, see *London and its environs described* (1761), ii, p. 68; W. Harrison, *A new and universal history, description and survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and their adjacent parts* (1775), p. 539.

²¹ GH, Ms 496, p. 34; CLRO, Journal of the Markets Committee, 1737-1743, pp. 153, 158; City Lands, vol. 91 (1799-1800), f. 18v; J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1804), i, p. 378; LMA, Acc 2058/1/22; 1 Will. IV c. 71. The eighteenth century saw the rise of numerous china ('earthenware') shops all over London, A. Adburgham, *Shopping in style: London from the Restoration to Edwardian elegance* (1979), pp. 64-5.

²² B. R. Masters, *The public markets of the City of London surveyed by William Leybourn in 1677*, LTS No. 117 (1974), p. 13; 1695 Act of Common Council reprinted in Besant, *London in the time of the Stuarts*; W. Maitland, *The history of London from its foundation by the Romans to the present time* (1739), i, p. 317; CLRO, Journal of the Markets Committee, 1696-8, f. 22v; City Lands, vol. 68 (1777-8), f. 320r; LMA, Acc 2058 1 21, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 6 September 1813.

²³ Hatton, *New view of London*, p. 52; Strype, *Stow's survey*, ii, p. 89; iii, pp. 50, 195; Maitland, *The history and survey of London* (1756 edn.), ii, p. 1003; *London and its environs described*, iii, p. 300; J. Entick, *A new and accurate history and survey of London, Westminster, Southwark and places adjacent* (1766), iv, p. 191; W. M. Stern, 'Clements Inn Passage (Clare market), 1687-1921', *Genealogists' Magazine*, vol. 15 (1968), p. 482; WCA, St. James Piccadilly, vestry minutes, 12 June 1809, 19 April 1810; Adburgham, *Shopping in style*, p. 32.

continued to accommodate a varied trade that was not confined to perishable foodstuffs. Table 2 (p. 22) hints at the very complex typology of commerce in London within which the formal markets were situated. Just how significant their place was in that setting is the concern of Chapters Three and Four.

Market types and sites

Classifying markets can be done in various ways. One might initially think in terms of apparent dichotomies: retail/wholesale; specialized/general; open/covered; authorized/unauthorized. There was, however, much overlap between categories. A market might engage in both the retail and wholesale trade; general markets might be well reputed for particular trades. Contemporaries like Defoe and Maitland distinguished between ‘flesh’ (or general) markets, and those that specialized. A typical ‘general’ eighteenth century London market, if there was one, would comprise shops for butchers, fishmongers and poulterers, among others; there would be a ‘country market’ for higglers and farmers’ wives, and a ‘green market’ for garden produce; perhaps also a market for hay.²⁴ Loosely speaking, the later seventeenth century saw an increase in general markets, but a large number of commodity-specific markets existed. Some sought to specialize in several trades, notably Hungerford, rebuilt on a grand scale in 1830. ‘It is of too general a character’ wrote Cunningham in 1850, ‘and attempts too much in trying to unite Leadenhall, Billingsgate and Covent Garden’.²⁵ There was no conscious lurch towards specialized markets, but increasing specialization among general markets signified the expansion of wholesale trading in particular commodities, as Chapter Four will show. In 1660, whilst there were various specialist markets, they did not necessarily dominate their trades. From the late seventeenth century, certain markets began to gain reputations for particular goods. In 1670 Covent Garden was chartered a daily green market, the Stocks market in the City became noted for its fruit produce, and Billingsgate was confirmed a free fish market by statute in 1699. The inland meal trade slipped from the City markets into the inns but the wharveside at Bear Key became the premier metropolitan corn market, complemented by the corn market upriver at Queenhithe - ‘monsters for magnitude’, Defoe called them.²⁶ New markets for animal skins and provender were established during the eighteenth century, and Aldgate (Whitechapel) emerged as a serious arm of the meat trade, both retail and wholesale. After 1750 the Corn Exchange in Mark Lane came to dominate the metropolitan grain trade; Leadenhall and Newgate became noted for

²⁴ See for example the advertisement for the new Shepherd market in *London Evening Post*, 25-27 June 1741. Daniel Defoe noted that ‘flesh markets’ also contained a ‘part set by for a fish market, and a part for an herb market’, *Tour*, i, p. 343.

²⁵ P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), p. 240.

²⁶ Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 345. Defoe noted that Queenhithe was chiefly a market for malt and meal.

their respective poultry and deadmeat trades, whilst the old general markets at Spitalfields and Borough prospered through the sale of garden produce. By the 1830s London's markets had experienced diverse fortunes, and performed different functions.

The physical fabric of markets was also diverse, depending on the amount and type of trade, although trends can still be discerned. As well as the traditional pitches, collapsible stalls, and butchers' shambles, permanent facilities multiplied, in the form of market house, piazzas, arcades, quadrangles, common slaughterhouses and purpose-built enclosed and numbered 'shops', often with individual storage facilities. Collectors' offices, water pumps, residential accommodation and the presence of coffee house or tavern were also increasingly in evidence. Eighteenth century London market places were not merely empty spaces. Table 10 crudely classifies the extent of covered accommodation of the markets using the categorization employed by the 1888-91 Royal Commission. Covered accommodation was generally partial - even in open market squares there might be surrounding covered shops and houses, often as part of the market property. In 1829, for instance, Spitalfields market (with franchise and patent) was sold for over £18,000, the estate including '140 houses, public houses, shops, warehouses, stalls, &c, together with the ground upon which the market stands'.²⁷ Entirely exposed markets, to be sure, were in decline. Fodder and livestock markets lacked cover, but this was not inevitable, as proved by the covered hay market built in 1831 by Lord Portman in Marylebone, and the Bermondsey leather warehouses of 1833.²⁸ Before an age of glass construction and gas lighting, the marketing of produce had necessarily to be something of an open-air performance. Properly formed markets tended to enjoy greater accommodation, although the nineteenth century figures in Table 10 exclude a growing number of informal street markets, which were exposed to the elements. Nevertheless, Table 10 clearly delineates the trends in this period towards greater market accommodation.

Table 10 Trends in market accommodation, 1660-1840

Form of accommodation	1660		1700		1760		1840	
		%		%		%		%
Chiefly in covered buildings ^a	2	(9)	2	(7)	4	(12)	9	(32)
Partly covered / uncovered buildings	5	(24)	14	(47)	17	(51)	13	(46)
Entirely open air	14	(67)	14	(47)	12	(36)	6	(21)
Total	21		30		33		28	

^a Includes quadrangled markets such as the Corn Exchange. Source: see Appendices 2, 3.

²⁷ *Times*, 7 February 1829, p. 3.

²⁸ T. Smith, *A topographical and historical account of the parish of St. Mary-le-Bone* (1833), p. 218; WCA Ashbridge, 432 1454, 11 October 1831 cutting; GH Noble, A 344 4 P. T., 1833 newspaper cutting relating to London Leather Warehouses and Hide Depository.

Topography and location offer another, similar, means of classification. Again, totally objective or unique categorization in this instance is not possible. There are however, logical guidelines one can follow. Street markets are self-evident. They are linear arrangements of collapsible or fixed stalls (e.g shambles), sharing street space with passenger and vehicular traffic. A second distinct form is what one might call the enclosed, or nucleated market. This essentially refers to a market in its own space, typically purpose-built. Of course, no market could be totally enclosed since vehicular as well as pedestrian access was required. St. James's (1664) and Bloomsbury (1666) are considered enclosed markets since they were clearly sited in purpose-built spaces. Riverside markets do not easily fit into either of these two classes, so they have been treated as a separate topographical type. A fourth distinct category was the 'agora' - the Greek term for market place - described by Lewis Mumford as 'primarily ... an open space, publicly held and occupiable for public purposes, but not necessarily enclosed. Often the adjoining buildings are thrown about in irregular order ...'.²⁹ Such a label far better describes the large and panoramic sweep of Covent Garden or Smithfield than does enclosure.³⁰

The 'enclosed' market place came to dominate the market scene in London (Table 11), whilst the thoroughfare as market place lost ground, both relatively and absolutely.³¹ The Restoration and late Georgian periods particularly were moments of transition. Table 11 implies that old as well as new markets were enclosed, and positioned out of the main thoroughfares. The coming of unofficial street markets in the 1830s and 1840s served to muddy the distinctions

Table 11 *A topographical typology of markets, 1660-1840*

	1660 %	1700 %	1760 %	1840 %
Street	12 (57)	9 (30)	8 (24)	4 (14)
Enclosure	7 (33)	16 (53)	22 (67)	22 (79)
Riverside	1 (5)	2 (7)	1 (3)	1 (4)
Agora	1 (5)	3 (10)	2 (6)	1 (4)
Total	21	30	33	28

Source. see Appendices 2, 3.

between the categories. What remained clear throughout the period was the lack of a dominant market 'district' as existed, for instance, in Les Halles of Paris. The greatest concentration of

²⁹ L. Mumford, *The city in history: its origins, its transformations and its projects* (1961: Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 176.

³⁰ The new buildings of Covent Garden in 1828-30 sought to bring order to the irregular market there, so that after 1830 the market is best described as enclosed.

market activity was arguably to the north-west of St. Paul's Cathedral, where in the early nineteenth century, the burgeoning animal trades of Smithfield, Newgate and Fleet (later Farringdon) were centred. Indeed Smithfield was decades later to become the site of 'London Central Markets'.

Authorization, ownership and management

Four categories of market authorization can broadly be distinguished (Table 12). The traditional means was royal charter or letters patent conferred upon an individual and his heirs, and most of the new public markets of the period enjoyed this sanction. Then there was the unique status of the City of London (Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty), widely renowned for its ancient privileges, and whose markets existed as much by prescription and immemorial usage as by Crown grant.³² Thirdly, there was the legislative route, whereby a market owed its creation to a specific Act of Parliament. A final category encompasses those markets which originated from none of these sources - they might be prescriptive, or simply (strictly speaking) unauthorized, yet regular, proper and well-known markets.³³ Again, there is some potential overlap between categories. Statutes might facilitate, yet not create, new markets, as in the 1670 Rebuilding Act for the City of London. Also a chartered market might later take on a revived existence under an Act of Parliament (e.g. Hungerford market in 1830). If the change is radical enough (as in the case of Hungerford) then the new dispensation is given.³⁴

Table 12 Types of market authorization, 1660-1840

	1660 %	1700 %	1760 %	1840 %
Royal grant	3 (14)	16 (53)	15 (45)	8 (29)
Statute	1 (5)	1 (3)	4 (12)	10 (36)
City privilege	15 (71)	9 (30)	8 (24)	4 (14)
Unclassified	2 (9)	4 (13)	6 (18)	6 (21)
Total	21	30	33	28

Source: see Appendices 2, 3.

³¹ The top row figures in the 1840 column in Table 11 arguably understate the true 'street market' picture. Precision as to how many substantial street markets existed in 1840 is elusive, but there were probably several.

³² *The Corporation of London: its origin, constitution, powers and duties* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 134-5.

³³ Mayhew's street markets, if included, would all be necessarily unclassified.

³⁴ Farringdon, successor to Fleet market after 1830, owed its existence both to the ancient privilege of the City and to the power of Parliament. For tabular purposes Farringdon has been included under statute for 1840, as have Covent Garden and Hungerford, in order to demonstrate the growing importance of legislation. Legislation for Billingsgate market, on the other hand, was more strictly regulatory.

Two trends in Table 12 stand out. The most striking figures are the City's, its relative and absolute decline reflecting the disappearance or loss of some markets, and the rise of royal authorization. The continued importance of the Crown grant up to and beyond the mid-eighteenth century militates against conventional wisdom regarding the relative roles of monarch and legislature after 1689. Nevertheless the impact of Parliament in the sphere of market creation (and regulation) from the mid-eighteenth century is equally apparent in the table. More will be said on this in Chapter Six.

Ownership provides another tricky categorization. Some of the City markets enumerated in Table 13 were effectively owned by private individuals by virtue of long-leased offices, although this practice was later in decline. The ratio was clearly changing in favour of private market ownership, not terribly surprising when one considers the fragmented nature of Georgian metropolitan government. More remarkable is the relative insignificance of the parish and county. Only the Piccadilly Haymarket fell into the latter category, its tolls going to Middlesex. Parishes generally figured only in the complaints they might make about sprawling or disorderly markets.

Table 13 *Types of market ownership, 1660-1840*

	1660 %	1700 %	1760 %	1840 %
Publicly owned	17 (81)	13 (43)	12 (36)	8 (28)
City	15	9	7	6
Institution ^a	2	2	3	1
Parish	-	1	1	1
County	-	1	1	-
Privately owned ^b	2 (9)	12 (40)	16 (48)	17 (61)
No clear owner ^c	2 (9)	5 (17)	5 (15)	3 (11)
Total	21	30	33	28

Notes:

^a A non-governmental, non-commercial body or committee e.g. Christ's Hospital (Blackwell Hall); Westminster Abbey (Westminster market); Commissioners of Westminster Fish market.

^b e.g. manorial lords, individuals, families, joint-stock companies.

^c Attributed where there is ambiguous evidence (in which case the market is unlikely to be in public ownership); where ownership is fragmented; or where the market is prescriptive e.g. Rag Fair.

Source: see Appendices 2, 3.

Most privately owned markets belonged to individuals: aristocratic developers, merchants, individual speculators. Wealthy landlords apart, proprietorship was likely to change hands quite often among individuals through inheritance or sale - hence categorization of private ownership is not feasible. The City Corporation remained the dominant market authority throughout the period: though it managed fewer markets, most of these were important among their trades.

Similar diversity characterized market *management*, which was often divorced from *ownership*. Three kinds can be identified, if not quantified: leasing the rights to market revenues;

owner-management; and company directorship. Farming out the tolls and profits to wealthy individuals or partnerships for fixed terms (up to twenty-one years) was widespread. It relieved the owner of daily responsibility and promised a certain income, but ran the risk of giving power to roguish lessees. Contracted management need not be private - for many years the City let the tolls of the Smithfield hay market to the local parish of St. Sepulchre. Direct management was practised by the City during the 1740s and permanently from the 1770s. The Bedford estate also ran Covent Garden's affairs after its rebuilding in 1830. In some cases only the tolls on produce would be farmed, with the owner collecting the rents for market and accommodation. Alternatively, legislation could establish an incorporated company, separating share ownership from managerial control, as occurred in the revival of Hungerford market. Although technically not a distinctive *form* of management - since they could also let tolls - supervision by appointed trustees usually for public benefit was a peculiarly Georgian phenomenon which characterized some markets established by legislation. The magistrates of Middlesex and Westminster jointly managed the hay market near Piccadilly after an Act of 1697, and a statute of 1755 empowered the parish of St. Saviour in Southwark to manage the Borough market, through a board of trustees, for the benefit of its ratepayers. Westminster's ill-founded fish and corn markets respectively enacted in 1749 and 1758 were of a similar vein. The Corn Exchange, effectively a joint-stock company, was managed by a committee of three trustees who were chosen by the body of shareholders in 1747. Lack of evidence prevents a more precise tabular breakdown, but it is clear that private enterprise, both at management and proprietorial levels, was a major driving force behind market development in London.

A prosperous market could be a healthy source of income to its owners. If farmed out, the owner would receive an agreed annual rent to be paid by the lessee, perhaps boosted by an initial fine. Risks were thus transferred: if trade subsequently expanded, the increment would be creamed off by the farmer; a declining trade, by contrast, would threaten the lessee's investment and send him pleading to the owners for a rent reduction. The expiry of a lease allowed the proprietor to resume direct control or to achieve higher rents through competitive tendering. The Duke of Bedford leased out the tolls and revenues of Covent Garden market generally every seven years, rising from £5 per annum in 1670 to £80 in 1677, £500 in 1705, £1400 by 1758 and £2900 by 1805.³⁵ Revenues were traditionally generated by customary *tolls* levied on the quantity and class of produce brought into the market to be sold. With the growth of fixed capital assets in markets, periodic *rents* payable by anyone occupying those facilities became increasingly important. Variable tolls might be commuted into fixed rents; and where a market lost its casual

³⁵ LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 15, 'Extracts from the leases' (1808-12).

and country trade, shop rents became the only source of income.³⁶ Disused market buildings might still produce a rental income under other auspices, but the market lived on only in name.

Set against the revenues generated, the proprietor or farmer had to meet various costs. The establishment of a market by grant or Act involved various legal fees, also the fixed costs of land purchase, construction and publicity. There were running costs of cleansing and maintenance, and the salaries of beadle, collector and other market employees to be paid. In markets like Covent Garden where business flourished, facilities would periodically need expanding and improving, often at unexpected cost. The need for a new site might make expenses escalate, as in 1829 when the City expended some £80,000 to build Farringdon market, and a cool £200,000 for the land.³⁷

Table 14 *The construction costs of selected markets, 1671-1855*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Class of construction</i>	<i>Approximate construction cost (£)^a</i>	<i>Sources</i>
1670	Blackwell Hall	Rebuilt/enlarged	10,360	Reddaway (1940), p. 262
1671	Newgate	New	+ 490	Masters (1974), p. 43
1671	Honey Lane	New	+ 780	Masters (1974), p. 38
1671	Stocks	Rebuilt	+ 350	Masters (1974), p. 34
1671-7	Leadenhall	Enlargement	1530	Masters (1974), pp. 22, 28-9
1705-6	Covent Garden	Improvement	1200	<i>Surv. of Lon.</i> , xxxvi (1970), p. 131
1726-37	Oxford	New	1880	BL, Add. Ms 18240, f. 42v
1737	Fleet	New	10,250	CLRO, Jor. 58, f. 4b
1748	Covent Garden	Rebuilt	2200	<i>Surv. of Lon.</i> , xxxvi (1970), p. 132
1750-2	Westminster	New	7500	WAM, 24888B
1786	Grosvenor	New	1500	<i>Surv. of Lon.</i> , xl (1980), p. 68
1787	Honey Lane	Rebuilt	2550	CLRO, Jor. 70, f. 220
1798-01	Billingsgate	Improvement	5750	Stroud (1971), p. 149
1813	Leadenhall (leather)	Improvement	5590	Stroud (1971), p. 192
1817	Oxford	Rebuilt	4000	WCA, Acc. 449 176, pp. 7-8
1818	St. James's ^b	New	20,000 ^b	<i>Surv. of Lon.</i> , xxix (1960), p. 218
1826	Borough	Enlarged	3000	LMA, Acc 2058 1 19. (15.9.1826)
1824-9	Farringdon	New	80,000	<i>Gents. Mag.</i> , 20 Nov 1829
1828-30	Covent Garden	Rebuilt	61,000	<i>Surv. of Lon.</i> , xxxvi (1970), p. 136
1830-1	Portman	New	35,000	WCA, Ashbridge 432 (1454)
1831-3	Hungerford	Rebuilt	64,000	Taylor (1964), p. 181
1835-6	Islington (cattle)	New	100,000	<i>Gents. Mag.</i> , 16 Nov 1833
1835-8	Smithfield	Enlarged	30,000	<i>Morning Chron. survey</i> , p. 187
1851-5	Met. Cattle Market ^c	New	278,000	<i>Gents. Mag.</i> , Sep 1853, p. 301

^a All figures rounded to nearest ten; + sign indicates a minimum figure.

^b Estimated cost - may include site purchase.

^c Cost figure excludes £65,000 paid by the City Corporation for the land.

³⁶ *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 221.

³⁷ BL, Add. Ms 36137, f. 251v; R. Thorne, *Covent Garden market: its history and restoration* (1980), p. 20; T. Allen, *The history and antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark and parts adjacent* (5 vols., 1839), v, p. 229.

To some extent new markets, major rebuildings and enlargements were becoming greater investments (Table 14), but much depended on size. The relatively small amount of capital, for instance, ploughed into the diminutive Grosvenor market in 1786 was dwarfed by expenditure on the extensive Fleet market half a century earlier (see Table 6, p. 29, for ground sizes). Blackwell Hall, enlarged after destruction in the Great Fire, was particularly exceptional.³⁸

Related to ownership and management was jurisdiction. No single regulatory body existed for the well-ordering of markets and for enforcement of the numerous rules and regulations of marketing. The City Corporation was again prominent, if not predominant, in this area, possessing jurisdiction over markets both within and without their boundaries, whether they owned them or not. Its own Acts of Common Council in 1672 and 1674 set out the policy framework for the next century or so (the 1674 Act being reissued in 1754 and 1771). And if the City could legislate policy through Common Council, it could administer justice and the Assize of Bread through the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. Parliament played an increasingly important role in making policy on and regulating all kinds of London markets, as demonstrated in Table 15, which summarizes and classifies all the various pieces of legislation that have been traced for this subject.

Table 15 Acts of Parliament relating to London markets and marketing, 1661-1840

	<i>New markets & improvements^a</i>	<i>Regulations^b</i>	<i>Terminations^c</i>	<i>Total^d</i>
1661 - 1720	1	13	-	14
1721 - 1780	6	8	2	16
1781 - 1840	16	27	3	46
1661 - 1840	23	48	5	76

^a Includes amending legislation, market enlargement and rebuilding. The two categories are not separated because of the overlap between them. In some cases market improvement also meant improved regulation and management, as in the Covent Garden Market Act of 1828.

^b Includes legislation relating to the Assize of Bread and deregulating legislation.

^c Legislation authorizing the abolition of a market or market rights.

^d Excludes renewing legislation.

Source: Appendix 4

There were various other interests: the City's ward inquests and Livery Companies, most notably the Butchers; Westminster's Court of Burgesses and their amercement juries; at the county level, the magistrates, with the Grand Juries and their informers, and the constables and beadles at parish level ready to enforce orders of the Justices. Beyond such formal authorities existed the voluntary trade associations and Reformation of Manners Societies which sought to suppress

Sunday trading, as did the Metropolitan Police after 1829.³⁹ Finally there was the crowd, for some historians perhaps the most important market regulators at times of high food prices, though by and large, it was provision riots, not provisions, which were scarce in eighteenth century London.

Potentially, many dimensions of marketing were subject to regulation: the price of bread, weights and measures, market days and hours, types of commodity traded, food quality, slaughtering, waste. The traditional officer concerned with such matters was the Clerk of the Market, although in this period market management became a more differentiated phenomenon than the traditional model of supervision. Beyond the market place the sale of foodstuffs in the streets (from fixed shops as well as from hawkers) was under periodic scrutiny; so too was cattle driving. The distinction between regulation of the market place and the regulation of the trade was often fuzzy, sometimes non-existent. But if legislation was wide-ranging and comprehensive, enforcement of the rules was at best patchy.

Market users

Those who attended markets comprised a variety of social groupings appropriate to the different types of markets in London. Marketing structures were quite flexible and there was significant change over time. On the vending side in the larger markets the country producer was giving way to more permanent tradesmen stationed in the market place. Also multiplying in the animal trades were the wholesalers, who sometimes overlapped with the role of salesman. The salesman sold produce in bulk he did not himself process in any way: he merely sold the goods of others for a fixed commission. By the mid-eighteenth century he was operating in Newgate, Leadenhall Covent Garden, the Haymarket as well as at Smithfield, where he had been prominent for some time, and had been the subject of ineffective legislation in the Restoration period.⁴⁰ Salesmen were initially regarded with suspicion by some quarters of the City Corporation, as perpetrators of high prices and scarcity, but they soon entrenched themselves in the markets. London-based factors also acted as agents for country dealers and farmers. Cloth factors at Blackwell Hall and corn factors at Bear Key emerged at an early stage.⁴¹ In the coal trade, 'crimps' received shipments of coal and sold it in Billingsgate's 'Roomland', and after 1770 on the Coal Exchange.

³⁸ T. F. Reddaway, *The rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (1940), pp. 261-2.

³⁹ Whitaker, *The eighteenth century English Sunday*, pp. 27-8, 121-3, 259.

⁴⁰ 22 & 23 Car. II c. 8; 25 Car. II c. 19. See also R. B. Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business, particularly between 1660 and 1760* (New Haven, 1915; reprinted New York, 1968), pp. 194-8.

⁴¹ Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 296-304; for the role of Blackwell Hall in the western cloth trade, pp. 279-82; C. Gill, 'Blackwell Hall Factors, 1795-1799', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 6 (1953-4), 268-81; D. W. Jones, 'The "hallage" receipts of the London cloth markets, 1562-c.1720', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 25 (1972), 567-87. In the corn trade, the Kentish hoymen stood out by combining the roles of supercargo and factor for Kentish farmers.

At Billingsgate dock, fish salesmen began to edge out the primary producer, the fisherman, from the market. In the second half of the eighteenth century there were between sixteen and thirty of them, but they were not finally given unmolested status until legislation in 1846.⁴² Salesmen were notorious for dealing on their own account as well as on others, and this was seen as particularly odious by legislators, whether in the cattle, fish, grain or hay trades.⁴³ They developed most slowly in fruit and vegetables, although distribution here was still complex. At Covent Garden, there were two levels of exchange: 'all articles of common consumption', it was noted in 1813, 'have constantly been sold twice in the market, first by the grower to the wholesale dealer and again by the wholesale to the retail dealer. The town could not be supplied in any other way'. Such wholesale markets were invaded on market days by gardeners and growers well into the nineteenth century, although salesmen did appear in the fruit and potato trades.⁴⁴

Buyers in the great markets were equally varied. There were the retailers in their various forms - cutting butchers, fishmongers, private shopkeepers, market traders, 'higglers', itinerants such as the 'fishwives' of Billingsgate, and, later on, hoards of 'costermongers'. As well as retailers, there were private and government purchasers, agents ordering for provincial towns, and those who procured bulk provisions for large wealthy households.⁴⁵ At Smithfield, 'carcase' butchers were more in evidence than the 'cutting' (retail) butchers, and were identified by the House of Lords in 1765 as a cause of expensive meat. They generally sold joints and quarters to the retail butchers at Newgate, Whitechapel, or Leadenhall, and during the eighteenth century, at Honey Lane, Clare and St. James's as well.⁴⁶ Only the largest retailers, at least in the middle of the period, bought live and sold dead.⁴⁷ In 1850, Henry Mayhew estimated that of all the fish traded at Billingsgate, about a third was sold to retail fishmongers, a third sold and sent into the country, and a third to costermongers.⁴⁸ Mark Lane Corn Exchange after 1750 had a wider range of buyers than sellers, although again agents were prominent. Country and metropolitan millers bought wheat, jobbers dealt in oats, agents of stable keepers and carriers obtained oats and beans, malsters and distillers their barley; shipping factors sent corn abroad and to the outports. At Queenhithe, for long the major meal market, bakers and mealmen obtained their inputs, as well as

⁴² *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), pp. 324, 364.

⁴³ For instance, 31 Geo. II c. 40, and 33 Geo. II c. 27 which sought, *inter alia*, to restrain salesmen of hay and straw, cattle and fish, from dealing on their own account.

⁴⁴ LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 19 (loose in bundle), p. 3.

⁴⁵ For government purchases, see for example *London Evening Post*, 20-22 February 1729; 22-25 November 1735; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 75, 96-7, 201.

⁴⁶ *JHL*, xxi (1765-7), p. 57; *Low life, or one half the world knows not how the other half lives* (1764 edn.), p. 101.

⁴⁷ See, for instance, *A general description of all trades* (1747), p. 45, although the definition of a carcase butcher as one who kills attenuated later in the period, as they increasingly dealt in the country-killed meat trade centred on Newgate e.g. see *Smithfield evidence* (1828), Mr. Benjamin Stubbing, p. 113.

⁴⁸ *Morning Chronicle survey* (12 December 1850), p. 247.

distillers. The coal trade was less complex - Billingsgate's crimps tended to deal only with large wholesale merchant buyers.⁴⁹

It is, therefore, rather misleading to speak only of 'wholesale' and 'retail' markets in the sense that retailers bought in the former and householders in the latter. As Westerfield long ago demonstrated, there were many links along the chain from stable to table. The markets of London might be represented at different, or several stages in that chain. At the lowest level - retail exchange - there were again a variety of market sellers and buyers, at least in terms of class and status. The encounter between town consumer and rural producer in the market place was vanishing in this period. Newport and St. James's, for instance, had 'country markets' (that of the former was rebuilt in the 1830s) in which perhaps town consumer might meet a casual country dairy producer. Stallholders were to be found in many retail markets, whether selling on a casual or more professional basis. In a sense the presence of higglers was a barometer of a market's performance; less successful markets would be left with merely shopkeepers anchored in the market place or house. That said, market shopkeeping could be associated with respectability, like the new Farringdon market in 1829 which was full of 'respectable tradesmen', many applications having been consciously rejected by the City's Improvement Committee.⁵⁰

Consumers were equally varied. It was not just the poorer Londoners who used markets. Arguably, the really poor could not afford the fresh produce that markets supposedly sold. Although impossible to quantify, many must have resorted to street sellers and hawkers of inferior produce: provision of the poor by the poor. On Saturday evenings the working classes were out in force in the markets, when cash was at hand and stocks were sold off cheap. During the day, however, the middle ranks would be more prominent, even in a place like Clare market, a district unsavoury in reputation if not in provisions. Above a certain level of income, a household would send servants to market, although as the period wore on there were hints they preferred to patronize single private shops. At different times, markets might accommodate particular social groups, but mainstream marketing at large lacked class distinctiveness.

Women's market presence, on both sides of the stall, was not insignificant. There were, for instance, some two dozen female tenants in Fleet market in 1737, about a quarter of the known total.⁵¹ By and large, they did not engage in the wholesaling or butchery trades, but whether as country farmwives or town fishwives, they were prominent in their hundreds, as Peter Earle has shown for the early eighteenth century.⁵² Contemporary paintings convey their presence particularly in Covent Garden. Women accounted for almost a third of the names in the rental

⁴⁹ *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), pp. 146ff; x (1803), p. 538; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 232-4.

⁵⁰ GH Noble, Fleet Market C 45/T 1829, cutting entitled 'Great Improvements in the City of London'.

⁵¹ CLRO, Misc. Mss 332.3.

⁵² P. Earle, *A city full of people: men and women of London, 1650-1750* (1994), pp. 144-6.

accounts of shops and sheds there in 1748, although multiple holdings favoured men.⁵³ The abusive ‘damsels’ of Billingsgate were some of the most famed members of their sex in London at this time, and there and at places like Fleet and Covent Garden, quarrelsome women could easily turn into violent women.⁵⁴ The extent to which women rather than men were consumers at the markets is debatable. There are hints that the wives or daughters of middling tradesmen would generally do the marketing, and given that domestic service accounted for the lion’s share of the female employment market, many no doubt frequented the markets on behalf of their employers.⁵⁵

Interpreting the variables

Previous sections have sought to highlight the key variables and trends that characterized London’s formal markets in the period 1660-1840. Variety and change are the dominant motifs in this picture. Numbers of markets rose and fell; yet their sheer diversity serves as a warning against simplistic notions of ‘decline’. Various kinds of market were establishing themselves in a more physical and permanent way in the economy and townscape of London, yet only a handful remained *in situ* throughout the period, and there was a distinctive trend away from open-air and street markets towards more sheltered accommodation. There was no standard market size, and direct comparisons are made difficult by the heterogeneity of the subject matter. Whilst some specialization was taking place equally remarkable was the number of markets selling a range of goods. The royal sanction continued to underpin most new markets in London, and only in the early nineteenth century did the legislature come to appropriate this role. The City of London apart, market ownership and management was an increasingly private sector affair. By the end of the period, certain individual markets were clearly conducting a burgeoning trade, and many older ones had discontinued, but new markets continued to be established. In their various forms, markets were a pervasive numerical presence in the metropolis during this period. One was never more than walking distance away. They were in the back streets and in the main streets. They were an integral part of the urban scene as well as the urban economy.

In order to understand and interpret these complex and interrelated features and developments, there are, broadly speaking, three possible frames of reference. The first is an essentially economic, or ‘market forces’ explanation. ‘Market forces’ has nothing intrinsically to

⁵³ LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 3 6, 10 4, rental accounts, March 1747(8), 1756.

⁵⁴ P. Egan, *Real life in London*, ii (1821; 1911 edn.), pp. 93-4; *London Evening Post*, 29-31 July 1760; 23-25 May 1751.

⁵⁵ Commenting on the practice of Saturday night marketing, George Dodd noted that the wife of the journeyman ‘as soon as a portion of the week’s earnings is placed in her hands, bethinks herself of the Sunday’s dinner’, *The food of London* (1856), p. 515. On the increasing importance of female domestic service, see Earle, *A city full of people*, pp. 124-30.

do with physical markets - it is a more abstract concept which relates to the influence that patterns of demand and supply have on variables such as prices, output, incomes and the location of economic activity. In this perspective markets as a whole compete with other forms of commercial exchange, and they provide critical links in the production-distribution chain. It is private agents who build, operate and patronize markets. If markets as a whole endure, or particular markets flourish, it is because they are meeting the needs of buyers and sellers. A second, but not necessarily alternative, approach, is 'political'. Markets, after all, were established by political procedures, and the privilege of holding a market counted for a lot. Moreover, they were subject to regulation and some public ownership. Both perspectives will be employed in this study, but neither can be understood without reference to a third angle - the wider demographic and urban context - which also raises its own questions about the place of markets in London.

What precisely was this wider context? Population figures for London before 1801 are not precise, and estimates for the second half of the seventeenth century are particularly uncertain, and subject to debate. What is clear is that during the 180-year period under consideration London grew very rapidly, probably fivefold (Table 16).⁵⁶

Table 16 *Estimated population figures for London, 1600 - 1860*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Estimated Population</i>	<i>Source</i>
1600	200,000	Wrigley (1967); Finlay & Shearer (1986)
1650	375,000	Finlay & Shearer
1700	575,000	Wrigley
1750	625,000	Wrigley
1801*	959,000	Census
1821*	1,379,543	Census
1841*	1,949,277	Census
1861*	2,808,494	Census

* County of London as defined by 1888 Local Government Act

Area as well as mass expanded. During the century up to 1660, ribbon and riverside development to east and west was supplemented by speculative building between Lincoln's Inn and Covent Garden. Not until the Restoration period, however, did the metropolis really burst its ancient

⁵⁶ E. A. Wrigley's figures in 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy, 1650-1750', *Past and Present*, 37 (1967) were later scaled down by R. Finlay & B. Shearer, 'Population growth and suburban expansion' in A. Beier & R. Finlay (eds.), *London, 1500-1700: the making of a metropolis* (1986). Their findings in turn have been criticized by Harding who thought their 1700 figure too low, thereby implying that London grew faster in the second half of the seventeenth century than previously thought, V. Harding, 'The population of London, 1550-1750: a review of the published evidence', *London Journal*, 15 (1990).

seams, and so establish the 'West' and 'East' Ends as they were later called. Further development of a more cyclical fashion graced the eighteenth century, and by 1800 the capital stretched, save for a few interstices of undeveloped land, from Hyde Park in the west to Limehouse in the east, from Islington in the north to Kennington in the south. The building boom that followed Waterloo plugged the gaps and pushed out the metropolitan frontier. By 1840, two million souls filled the largest metropolis in the world.

London's primacy was not merely quantitative. It was the hub of a growing empire, the entrepôt of world trade, the home of the monarchy and Parliament and the nerve centre of government and the legal system. The greatest manufacturing and finishing centre in the kingdom, and the magnet for so much wealth and foppery, it provided the key market for all the fashionable trades and industries. Georgian London was also notable for improvement, modernization and integration. Earlier, the rebuilding of the City after the 1666 Fire and the beginnings of aristocratic estate development had set new standards of urban design. The churches of Wren, Hawksmoor and Gibbs added dignity to the capital; so did Dance's Mansion House. As a product of Enlightenment optimism and rationalism, the rage for 'improvement' was not confined to London, but arose in many towns. A more 'civilized' and orderly urban environment required better communications, better infrastructure and better utilities, which involved both public and private enterprise. In London the trend accelerated after 1750: paving, lighting and street cleansing professionalized; a ring road constructed; ancient walls and gates demolished; old London Bridge revamped; new bridges thrown across the river; houses numbered; building design standardized; commercial docks cut. After Waterloo the pace intensified. In the provinces, 'improvement' legislation poured out of Parliament. In London John Nash's urban visions embodied in the Regent's Park and New Street schemes contrasted with the utilitarian wonder of the new wet docks. A rash of Anglican churches were erected, and public or quasi-public buildings multiplied: the National Gallery, the British Museum, the London University, more bridges, theatres, markets.⁵⁷

Eighteenth century London was intimately linked with a hinterland that could cover most of the kingdom. Good transport connections were crucial. London's prosperity had always rested

⁵⁷ On urban improvement, see Reddaway, *The rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*; J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (1945; Harmondsworth, 1962 edn.); P. J. Corfield, *The impact of English towns, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982); P. Borsay, *The English urban renaissance: culture and society in the provincial town, 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1989); S. E. De Beer, 'The early history of London street lighting', *History*, 25 (1941); M. Falkus, 'Lighting in the dark ages of English economic history: town streets before the Industrial Revolution' in D. C. Coleman & A. H. John (ed.), *Trade, government and economy in pre-industrial England* (1976); M. Falkus & E. L. Jones, 'Urban improvement and the English economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Research in economic history*, 4 (1979); reprinted in P. Borsay (ed.), *The eighteenth century town, 1688-1820: a reader in English urban history* (1990); H. J. Dyos, 'The objects of street improvement in Regency and early Victorian London' in D. Cannadine & D. Reeder (eds.), *Exploring the urban past: essays in urban history by H. J. Dyos* (Cambridge, 1982); P. Langford, *A polite and commercial people: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), ch. 9.

upon its port and the river Thames, which was navigable inland to Oxfordshire. The Port was the gateway for all coastal shipping, as well as the destination for ever-increasing volumes of the more exotic oceanic trade. Turnpiked trunk roads facilitated cross-country access and provided the template for the future geography of railways. Regional carriers weighed in among the great inns of Aldersgate, Holborn, Southwark and Whitechapel which formed London's 'provincial eyes' by acting as financial, commercial and information exchanges for specific English regions.⁵⁸ Better and faster transport facilities - flying waggons, mail coaches, steamships, Macadam - reduced the distance between metropolis and regions from days to hours even before the railway age and confirmed London's commercial primacy in an increasingly integrated national market.⁵⁹

There were a number of political and social qualifications to this modernizing and coherent picture. London remained a high-pressure demographic structure with a high death rate. The failure to establish a single metropolitan authority for the growing town in the seventeenth century meant that the original 'City of London', whose jurisdiction barely stretched beyond the ancient walls, presided over a rapidly declining share of the growing town to east, west and south. These areas depended largely upon parish administration and the magisterial benches of Middlesex, Westminster and Surrey. Diversity and contrast were dominant motifs in eighteenth century London. The prosaic and commercial City, the gridiron elegance of the West End, the squalor and dignity of old Westminster and the maritime settlements downriver were all distinctive districts. The wide variations in environment, personal wealth and comfort among Londoners were axiomatic. There was a world of difference between St. Giles's and St. James's, between Bermondsey and Bloomsbury.

The rest of the thesis explores the various dimensions of marketing outlined in this chapter in the light of these perspectives and contexts. Chapters Three to Five consider the economics of market retailing and wholesaling and their development. Chapter Six focuses upon the political and administrative angle. Chapter Seven adopts a more social and topographical perspective on the market places, and assesses their urban status in a changing metropolis. These three broad categories have been kept apart as much as possible for purposes of exposition and analysis, but the degree of overlap between each should become clear enough.

⁵⁸ J. A. Chartres, 'The capital's provincial eyes: London's inns in the early eighteenth century', *London Journal*, 3 (1977), p. 38.

⁵⁹ D. H. Aldcroft & M. J. Freeman (eds.), *Transport in the industrial revolution* (Manchester, 1983); M. J. Daunton, *Progress and poverty: an economic history of Britain, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1995), chs. 10, 11.

3 THE RISE AND FALL OF MARKET RETAILING?

A 'market forces' approach to the history of retailing markets might centre upon three groups or 'interests': developers, retailers and consumers. Theoretically, in the long run (i.e. allowing all necessary adjustments in economic decisions) the amount of market accommodation supplied by developers would adjust to meet the needs of retailers, whose planned supplies are fully sold to consumers. The preferences of developers, traders and consumers are in equilibrium. Causality seems to run from the 'sovereign' consumer: if more consumers prefer to purchase their provisions at markets (or a particular market) rather than through the alternatives of shops or hawkers, traders will find their receipts rising, leading in the long run to greater market accommodation, additional markets or both. Conversely, if consumers go elsewhere, traders will soon abandon the market which may then be reduced in size, demolished or turned over to another use. In reality, consumer preferences are not nearly so decisive; causation may also run from the supply side. If for exogenous reasons, developers create additional market accommodation, retailers may then be attracted to the new premises, and consumers may well follow. Again, householders may prefer markets but if sufficient market accommodation is not forthcoming, they may only be able to reveal preferences for alternatives. What is admittedly patchy evidence suggests that none of the interest groups had a clear-cut preference for or against market retailing, which is why the historical circumstances are so important in understanding the trends of relative growth and decline. In particular, the fivefold rise in London's population (see Table 16, p. 48) would have had three possible effects on London's market system: new markets created; the expansion of existing markets; or a growth in other forms of retailing. In fact all three developments occurred. This chapter focuses upon the reasons why new retail markets were established and to what extent and why market retailing in London subsequently declined relative to private shops and costermongers. For this reason it is not a direct study of either shops or hawking. It is also chiefly a study of *food* retailing. Markets did sell other things, but the *raison d'être* of virtually all retail markets in the long eighteenth century was to supply Londoners with provisions.

Market creation and the building of London

General retail markets were established for a range of motives under a variety of conditions during this period. At the heart of market creation was London's growth, for inhabitants needed provisions. There was no simple equation, however, between numbers of markets and numbers of Londoners.

Population growth and market numbering

Table 17 lists the formal markets that appear to have functioned in London in each of five snapshot years (1660, 1700, 1760, 1800 and 1840). Dividing these totals into simple rounded estimates of population provides a rough trend of mean population per markets (Table 18).

Table 17 The retailing markets of London, c.1660 - c.1840

1660 (16)	1700 (20)	1760 (23)	1800 (24)	1840 (17)
*Billingsgate	*Billingsgate	*Billingsgate	*Billingsgate	*Billingsgate
*Bishopsgate	Bloomsbury	Bloomsbury	Borough	Borough
Butcher Row	Brook's	Borough	Brook's	Brook's
*Cheapside	Butcher Row	Brook's	Butcher Row	Clare
Clare	Clare	Butcher Row	Carnaby	Covent Garden
*Eastcheap	Covent Garden	Carnaby	Clare	*Farringdon
*Fish Street Hill	*Holborn Bars	Clare	Covent Garden	Hungerford
*Gracechurch St	*Honey Lane	Covent Garden	Fitzroy	*Leadenhall
*Leadenhall	Hungerford	*Fleet	*Fleet	Mortimer
*Newgate Street	*Leadenhall	*Honey Lane	Grosvenor	*Newgate
*Old Fish Street	*Newgate	Hungerford	*Honey Lane	Newport
*St. Nich. Shambles	Newport	*Leadenhall	Hungerford	Oxford
*St. Paul's Ch'yard	Red Lion	*Newgate	*Leadenhall	Portman
Southwark	St. James's	Newport	Mortimer's	St. James's
*Stocks	Shadwell	Oxford	*Newgate	Shepherd
Westminster	Southwark	Red Lion	Newport	Spitalfields
	Spitalfields	St. James's	Oxford	Whitechapel
	*Stocks	Shadwell	St. George's	
	Wapping	Shepherd	St. George, Swk	
	Westminster	Spitalfields	St. James's	
		Westminster	Shepherd	
		Westminster (fish)	Spitalfields	
		Whitechapel	Westminster	
			Whitechapel	

Rag Fair is designated 'Retail - wholesale' in Appendix 3 but is excluded here because it did not retail food.

* indicates markets situated within the City

Source: see Appendices 2, 3.

Table 18 London's retail markets compared with London's population, c.1660-1840

Year	Population estim.	Numbers of retail markets			Population per market	
		City	Outside City	Total	Mean*	Average increase p.a.
1660	400 000	12	4	16	25 000	
1700	575 000	6	14	20	28 800	0.35%
1760	700 000	5	18	23	30 400	0.09%
1800	1 000 000	5	15	24	41 700	0.79%
1840	2 000 000	4	13	17	117 600	2.59%

* To nearest hundred.

Source: see Appendices 2, 3. The population figures are derived from Table 16.

New food markets appeared during the population growth of the second half of the seventeenth century. Although markets continued thereafter to be created, others fell into desuetude and by 1840 London possessed only seventeen effective food markets.

The figures in Table 18 are not definitive, but they do illustrate the fact that market numbers, slowly at first, more quickly later, were not keeping up with a rising population.¹ One might question whether specific markets ought to be excluded or included for a particular year.² Markets such as Westminster, Hungerford and Grosvenor were rather poor affairs by 1800, and if they were omitted, the average would increase to 48,000 (implying an average growth of 1.1% p.a. for 1760-1800). Choosing alternative snapshot years might also bring some adjustment, but the same kind of trend would obtain, the critical period being the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The trend itself takes no account of changes in market size and trade. Enlargement did occur in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but primarily to accommodate expanding *wholesale* trade. No huge central retail market emerged in Georgian London, nor did any dominate the retail scene as did Manchester's Smithfield market, or Liverpool's St. John's market, or even as London's own Leadenhall had in the seventeenth century. Typical of the trend was Oxford market, described in 1833 by the historian of Marylebone: 'However this market may have answered the expectations of the projectors at the time of its erection does not appear, but it is certain that its trade has not kept pace in a proportionate ratio with the increase of population'.³

The significance of numbers was not lost upon contemporaries. Appeals to a rising population buttressed new market proposals. Eighteenth century London guides invariably listed or quantified markets, as they might do churches or almshouses. In 1725 Defoe numbered fourteen flesh markets, 'seven of them of antient standing', and twenty years later another broadbrush guide to Britain counted seventeen butchers' markets. Other figures given were nineteen, twenty and thirty-three, depending on which classes of market were counted.⁴ Quantification facilitated analytical and prescriptive precision. One observer in 1826 calculated that, on the basis of urban experience elsewhere, '20,000 persons might be accommodated at one commodious market place' - a ratio never attained in our period (Table 18). Thus with a population upwards of a million

¹ This population-outlet ratio approach has been used by historians of shop retailing H-C. Mui & L. Mui, *Shops and shopkeeping in eighteenth century England* (1989), ch. 5; R. Scola, 'Retailing in the nineteenth century town: some problems and possibilities' in J. H. Johnson & C. G. Pooley (eds.), *The structure of nineteenth century cities* (1982), pp. 159-60.

² See for example, note 30, p. 20.

³ T. Smith, *A topographical and historical account of the parish of St. Mary-le-Bone* (1833), p. 159.

⁴ Defoe, *Tour*, i, pp. 345-6; G. Miège, *The present state of Great Britain and Ireland* (1745), p. 102; *London in miniature* (1755), pp. 2, 54; *The London guide* (1782), p. viii; *Fores's new guide for foreigners* (1789), p. vii; J. Weale, *London exhibited in 1851* [1851], p. 612.

there should be 50 daily covered in large and commodious market places open for the sale of every description of provisions from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. except Saturday when they should remain open until midnight ... containing accommodations and stalls for butchers' meat and fish, cheese, butter, bacon &c, vegetables, flowers and fruit, poultry and eggs, game, rabbits and wild ducks &c, and in fact every perishable article of daily consumption.⁵

A pamphlet of 1834 to promote a new market for Southwark included a map of London to illustrate 'an extraordinary fact': seventeen 'markets and reputed markets' were marked north of the Thames and just one to the south. When the Borough market was created in 1756, the text explained, south London's population did not exceed 40,000 persons, now there were upwards of 320,000 souls and no second market had since been legally established. Numbers mattered for contemporaries, and they matter also for the historian.⁶

The numerical growth up to 1760 of food markets is all the more remarkable if one allows for the decline within the City walls arising from the Fire of 1666. At least ten new food markets emerged outside the City in the four decades after the Restoration, and after 1700 markets continued to be projected and erected. Until at least the later eighteenth century, observers generally agreed that the metropolis was well endowed with these outlets. 'For a constant supply of provisions', Guy Miège wrote in 1691, 'here are abundance of markets, the best furnished of any in Christendom'. In the 1720s John Macky thought London 'extremely well supply'd with daily markets at proper distances, all the way from Westminster to the Tower', and Defoe was so impressed that he named them all for his readers. Thirty years later *London in miniature* acclaimed 'the several markets, which are very numerous in this City', so numerous that they were to be found within a half-mile or so of each other. A more comprehensive guide in 1761 produced a separate section headed 'Markets', and declared: 'As one of the principal advantages of a city are commodious markets, this metropolis may, in this particular, be said to exceed most, if not all the cities in Europe'. As late as 1805 it was said that London was 'amply supplied with markets for provisions'. Thereafter, such praise was less forthcoming, and criticism took the place of commendation.⁷

Why markets were established

Demographic growth provides a necessary context but not a sufficient explanation of market creation, which, after all, did not keep up with a rising population. New retail markets were as much a product of supply-side factors as they were of consumer demand. Elsewhere in London

⁵ GH, Ms. 496, 'An address on the necessity of providing more markets in London and also on the macadamizing of roads', pp. 48-9. My italics.

⁶ *Reasons and observations relative to the proposed South London market* (1834).

⁷ G. Miège, *The new state of England* (1691), p. 332; J. Macky, *A journey through England* (1722), p. 308; Defoe, *Tour*, pp. 345-6; *London in miniature* (1755), p. 7; *Publick nuisance considered* (1754; 1760 edn.), pp. 23-4; *London and its environs described* (1761), iv, p. 261; R. Phillips, *Modern London* (1805), pp. 111-12.

general markets were established for a variety of reasons by developers and landlords, even if sparse evidence makes precise answers hazardous. Like estate-building generally, uncertainty and speculation were integral aspects of the rise (and fall) of London's retail markets.

One way or another, the creation of new retail markets was tied up with the building of the metropolis. Whilst Table 17 may seem to indicate that market numbers in London underwent gradual expansion and decline, the urban development of London in the long eighteenth century was a cyclical, not linear, phenomenon (see Table 19).⁸ Restoration London stretched west to Bloomsbury, Soho, St. James and Piccadilly, and also expanded east of the City to Spitalfields, Wapping and Shadwell, although the pace of growth probably eased in the 1690s. After 1700 levels of construction in London were subject to the impact of wars and the costs of borrowing (the two factors were themselves linked). The coming of peace in 1713 ushered in the first of the great Georgian building booms. Large areas of Mayfair were built up, as well as more tentative development north of the Oxford Road in Marylebone. Building stagnated from the later 1720s as fears of war, bad winters and actual conflict after 1739 dampened housebuilding and demand. The pick-up coincided with the lowering of yields on government stock to 3% but the second great Georgian building boom only came with the Peace of 1763 and the loose monetary conditions that prevailed. 'Improvement' was all the rage - commissions, paving acts, professional architects. The American War then triggered an abrupt downturn as government borrowing crowded out private investment, and yields reached their legal maximum at 5%. The return of peace and financial stability under William Pitt facilitated the third great boom of the century, which peaked in 1792 and then collapsed as another revolutionary war broke out. Recovery came in the 1800s, peaking

Table 19 *The building cycle in London, 1710-1848*

<i>Upswings (trough to peak)*</i>	<i>Downswings (peak to trough)*</i>
1710-1725	1740-1745
1762-1767	1767-1770
1770-1777	1777-1782
1782-1792	1792-1799
1799-1811	1811-1816
1816-1825	1825-1833
1833/5-1846	1846-1848

* All dates are approximate

Source: Derived from F. Sheppard et al. (1979).

⁸ J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (1945; Harmondsworth, 1962 edn.), pp. 24-5; F. Sheppard et al., 'The Middlesex and Yorkshire Deeds Registries', *London Journal*, 5 (1979); T. S. Ashton, *Economic fluctuations in England, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 84-105.

in 1810. The peace dividend after Waterloo took a while to come through, but when it did, and when interest rates fell again, building in London was frenetic, with all kinds of new improvement schemes and public works as well as vast amounts of housebuilding. Financial crisis in 1825 and rising interest rates scuppered the boom and a trough was again reached in the early 1830s. In this context, markets were a very specific form of investment for individual landlords and developers. Many new general retail markets were conceived during the upswings of the building cycle and when interest rates were falling, as in the early 1720s and 1780s. Others seem to have arisen at less heady times. In fact four waves of market activity can be identified: 1660-89, 1720-40, 1785-1802 and 1824-37. Table 20 provides the details. It seems highly likely that these peaks were conditioned in part by the cyclical pattern of war and interest rates, although these were not the only influences upon developers.

Much also depended upon new expectations, which made market creation an intrinsically *speculative* activity. No one could be quite sure how much need or preference there would be for suburban retail markets. The likelihood that developers undertook active research on these matters seems small. The Restoration was a time when restrictions on new building schemes softened, and suburban building thereafter was increasingly seen to be irreversible: if London

Table 20 *Food retailing markets created or proposed in London outside the City, 1657-1837*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Proposed, not established</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Proposed, not established</i>
1657	Clare		1727		Gt. Conduit Fields
1662	Bloomsbury		1731	Oxford	
1664	St. James's		1736		Smithfield Bars
1664		Ratcliff	1739	Shepherd	
1664		East Smithfield	1749	Westminster (fish)	
1666	Wapping		1758		Westminster (corn)
1669	Shadwell		1784	Mortimer	
1670	Covent Garden		1786	Grosvenor	
1672		Millbank	1786	St. George, Mayfair	
1676		Salisbury Court	1789	St. George, Swk	
1677		Soho	1791	Fitzroy	
1679	Hungerford		1792		Finsbury
1682	Brook's		1802	Finsbury	
1682	Spitalfields		1817		Westminster (fish)
1683		Clerkenwell Grn	1824		Limehouse
1686	Newport		1830		Regent's Park
1687		Hoxton	1831	Portman	
1688	Red Lion		1833	Hungerford (new)	
1698		Westminster (meal)	1834		South London
1700		St. John Street	1834		Knightsbridge
1721	Carnaby		1837		Strutton Ground

Sources: Appendices 2, 4; Royal Comm. (1891), Appendix of market grants, 1700-1845; CLRO, 90.8; Misc. Mss 187.7.

could expand as far as St. James's fields, why not further west to Soho and Brookfield, or further north into Mary-le-Bone and Bloomsbury? Rising population did not automatically produce new markets, but it did furnish a strong speculative motive and justification for developers to supply them. Printed petitions in support of the Earl of Clare's new market in Clements Inn Fields in the 1650s emphasized the recent increase of numbers in the district.⁹ In 1665 the inhabitants of Hackney and Stepney told the Crown that a local market would benefit 40,000 families. The following decade saw the establishment of Hungerford market near Charing Cross, which its proponents argued would not injure neighbouring markets because of continued suburban growth: 'Now there's another towne to be supplied ... as long as new buildings increase, marketts must be multiplied. Buildings must have inhabitants. Inhabitants must have marketts'.¹⁰

This simple equation was cited again a century later when population was accelerating. The development of Marylebone in the later eighteenth century - 'still increasing with astonishing rapidity' it was noted in 1800 - provided the impetus for the Earl Grosvenor and some builders to erect a small retail market just south of Oxford Street in 1786.¹¹ Unfortunately for them, other builders at the time were equally encouraged by the potential demand. 'St. George's market' was established a couple of blocks away, 'the situation of which', according to the angry tenants of its rival, 'intercepts our intercourse with the new buildings of St. Marylebone parish which was the original intention of Grosvenor Market to supply'.¹² Early nineteenth century schemes for Finsbury, Limehouse and Knightsbridge were likewise conceived in the light of local growth.¹³ Similarly in the case of new Hungerford market, whose prospectus expressed surprise that two markets had recently been abolished at a time of rising population.¹⁴ Optimistic speeches at its relaunch suggested that the proprietors hoped to meet the potentially enormous demands of 'the inhabitants of Westminster in particular'.¹⁵ The market did not prove a success, but the reasoning was logical. In the same way the 1834 Act for establishing 'South London market' began by calling attention to the 'greatly increasing' population of the various parishes in Southwark.¹⁶ Indeed, Acts of Parliament that authorized market construction or improvement elsewhere in

⁹ 'Reasons wherefore a new market in Clements-Inne Fields should be established by Act of Parliament' in *A brief of the papers touching a market ...* (1654), one sheet; CLRO, Jor. 41x, ff. 75b-76b.

¹⁰ M. J. Power, 'The urban development of East London, 1550 to 1750', Ph. D. thesis (University of London, 1971), pp. 203, 239; PRO, SP 29/366, p. 531.

¹¹ [G. Griffin], *Domestic union: or, London as it should be* (1800), p. 15.

¹² *Daily Universal Register*, 8 March 1786, p. 3, 10 March 1786, p. 1; WCA, Acc 1049 10/Box 30 4, loose in bundle.

¹³ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 94 (1801-2), f. 234; CC papers, 17 June 1824; City Lands, vol. 126 (1834-5), pp. 111-12.

¹⁴ Noble, C 45/T 1825; see also C. Fowler, *A description of the plan for the revival of Hungerford market* (1829; 1830 edn.).

¹⁵ *Times*, 3 July 1833, p. 6.

¹⁶ 4 Will. IV c. 45. Full printed copy in LMA, Acc 2058 1/1/1.

Britain were usually prefaced by reference to the recent expansion of the town's population as well as trade - as was the case at Sheffield, Liverpool and Exeter to name but three of many.¹⁷

Although some markets were conceived and constructed during downswings in housebuilding, it is doubtful whether they were built as counter-cyclical investments, partly because such projects were small relative to the metropolitan economy and partly because individual and private developers were unlikely to harbour such altruistic intentions. Not even the City's sizeable but necessary investment in new markets after the Fire can be ascribed to these motives. Nor would it be correct to say that markets were the motor of London's physical expansion - after all, areas without market provision continued to grow (such as the eastern suburbs), particularly in the nineteenth century. In the West End, however, they certainly influenced the character and attraction of Georgian estate building.

Retail markets were established by developers great and small. Both were driven to some degree by speculative motives, because of the uncertainties in future levels and avenues of trade, and because markets were novel, and hence speculative, investments. Indeed, new markets themselves could foster expectations of self-sustaining metropolitan growth and become potentially lucrative investments. The establishment, for instance, of Clare market around the time of the Restoration finally broke the City's market monopoly and encouraged others to follow suit. Building speculators like Nicholas Barbon and Thomas Neale got involved in such ventures in the Restoration period, whilst new market outlets were built over sites of town houses. Rakish baronet Sir Edward Hungerford typified the new mentality: finding his town house had burned down in 1669, rather than rebuild it, he decided to establish a market in its place in an attempt to restore his family fortunes.¹⁸

The speculative nature of estate development itself encouraged the establishment of markets. A landlord would issue building leases, together with guidelines on design and layout; then it was generally up to small-scale independent craftsmen to build for a profit.¹⁹ In this context a well-designed market on the part of a landlord or building speculator acted as a public good which conferred amenity value on the surrounding site and encouraged builders to take ground leases. In the case of Oxford market - like Clare built in anticipation of royal authorization - residential building formed both context and consequence of its construction. According to one nineteenth century commentator, 'the proposition for erecting a market near

¹⁷ 24 Geo. III s. 2 c. 5; 59 Geo. III c. 9; 1 Geo. IV c. 78.

¹⁸ J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1804), iv, p. 308; *DNB*, x, p. 255. An amusing contemporary ditty on Hungerford was reproduced in *Gentleman's Magazine*, cii (June-Dec 1832), p. 115:

Thriftless him selfe, but, lyke the goode manure,
His rotten waste did fertilise the lande;
And others' thriftye toile hathe wrought the cure,
A goodlie mercatt joines the busie Strand.

Oxford Street was made during the mania for building at the commencement of the last century', as part of the Lord Oxford's scheme to develop the Cavendish estate by building a square with adjoining gridiron streets:

but the failures of the South Sea year put a stop to the improvements for a time, and it was several years before the square was completed. As an inducement to the builders to go on, a chapel and a market were projected for the convenience of the inhabitants of the new streets. Mr. Gibbs gave the design, and they were both finished in 1724, but the market was not opened till 1732.²⁰

In the same period, the Treasury Secretary William Lowndes secured the freehold to a dilapidated estate north of Piccadilly, and in 1720 procured a grant for a market (Carnaby). Significantly this was before the expiration of the sub-lease under which the first-generation houses were built in the 1680s, and therefore in anticipation of the redevelopment of the estate. The market house itself was erected 'with shops and other conveniences' by 1726.²¹ There are other suggestive examples. Edward Shepherd built a market in Brookfield amongst newly laid out streets. In 1789, the building speculator James Hedger tried to establish one in St. George's Fields even before much building was done, in order to hasten the process - in fact a market site was planned there as early as 1771.²² The little-known Fitzroy market was to form part of the estate laid out by Colonel Fitzroy south of the New Road. According to Malcolm, the project began in the early 1790s 'when certain speculative builders commenced Fitzroy Square': whilst the square itself remained incomplete 'Grafton Street, Warren Street, and Fitzroy market, near Tottenham Court Road, succeeded better; where residents assembled *as soon as the houses and stalls of the market were finished*'.²³ The establishment of a market therefore was perceived to be an important encouragement to the success of an estate development, and also served to attract new residents. Even if not strictly *necessary*, such markets were nevertheless considered *convenient* and desirable, as was argued by Hungerford's counsel in 1678 in an attempt to defend charges that his proposed market was unnecessary and thus a nuisance.²⁴ This probably explains why most new markets did not specialize in one line of produce. After 1670 general retail markets characterized the City, an example no doubt noted by the new developers. Moreover, by depending upon a variety of trades, general markets limited the risk to developers of commercial investments: if a specialized market lost its trade, then all was gone. Equally consumers could purchase all of their provisions in one place, particularly if miscellaneous shops gathered round.

¹⁹ Summerson, *Georgian London*, pp. 38-44, 125-6.

²⁰ C. F. Partington (ed.), *National history and views of London* (1835), ii, p. 39; D. Hughson, *London: being an accurate history and description of the British metropolis* (1805-9), iv, p. 358.

²¹ *Survey of London: St. James, Westminster, part II*, xxxi (1960), pp. 190-1.

²² LMA, Acc 2058/1/19, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 17 December 1789; *SOL: St. George's Fields*, xxv (LCC, 1955), pp. 52-4; *London Evening Post*, 3-6 August 1771.

²³ Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv, p. 350, my italics. See also D. Lysons, *Environs of London* (1795-6) iii, p. 342.

²⁴ PRO, SP 29 366, pp. 533-4

New market proposals were also rooted in a qualitative context of urban planning and 'improvement'. Refinements in provincial townscape and culture in the century to 1760 may have amounted to an 'English urban renaissance', but London was anything but an exception to the trend.²⁵ The Earl of Clare's residential development with market set an example for future estate improvement. The fact that new markets materialized in clusters suggests a strong emulative factor. The rebuilding after the Fire and the City's own rearrangement of markets both reflected and reinforced the improving quality of urban design. The spirit of enlightenment and improvement made the laying out and erecting of new market places culturally acceptable and commercially viable, and this in turn fostered the attractive notion that a new locality could be self-sufficient. A market was thus a distinctively modern urban amenity in the great estates of Restoration and Georgian London, but it also signified, more than most other infrastructure, the autonomous and self-contained nature of the new 'suburbs', particularly if it acted as a more general retailing focus. A suburb which contained a market was something more than a suburb - 'without a market, a town is inconceivable', as Braudel has said.²⁶ The diarist John Evelyn could not have characterized the Earl of Southampton's building scheme in the 1660s as 'a little town' had it not included a market place.²⁷ According to Barbon, the new buildings of Bloomsbury, Leicester-fields, St. James's, Spitalfields - all which boasted local markets - 'are like so many new towns'.²⁸ The suburb of Shadwell had existed for a century before it finally achieved some cohesion and identity by keeping a market from the 1670s.²⁹ The eighteenth century saw new bridges, improved building standards, new roads, better paved and better lit streets. New markets were at home in this context, and it should be no surprise that many more were established up to the accession of Victoria.³⁰ In truth new market creations were never the foremost expressions of metropolitan improvement, but they were one expression nevertheless. What they did not express was civic pride or energy. For the City Corporation, the chief guardian of civic consciousness in London, was hardly concerned to provide such amenities outside its own territory, whilst inside it tended only to build new markets out of necessity. Outside the City, parish and bench played a minimal role; the principal exception was the Southwark parish of St. Saviour's, which gained the right to hold and manage by trustees the City's ancient Borough market in 1755. Otherwise, like

²⁵ Borsay, *The English urban renaissance*, pp. 104-9, 313.

²⁶ F. Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism, 15th - 18th century - The structures of everyday life: the limits of the possible* (1981), pp. 501, 503.

²⁷ *The diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. DeBeer (6 vols, Oxford, 1955), 9 February 1665. See also the suggestively titled article by J. Gage, 'Bloomsbury market: a unit in the Earl of Southampton's pioneer town planning', *Camden History Review*, 14 (1986-7).

²⁸ N. Barbon, *An apology for the builder* (1689), p. 22.

²⁹ M. J. Power, 'Shadwell: the development of a London suburban community in the seventeenth century', *London Journal*, 4 (1978), pp. 42-3.

³⁰ A useful summary of town-planning and the 'golden age' of Georgian architecture is S. Jenkins, *Landlords to London: the story of a capital and its growth* (1975), chs. 4, 9

building and planning generally in the long eighteenth century, market creation was not conditional upon the municipal impulse.

The parameters of consumer preference

Whatever the motives for market creation, they appear to have weakened in the latter part of the period, and together with the decline and disappearance of several markets - Carnaby, St. James's and Westminster were the most notable examples - produced the worsening ratio identified in Table 18 (p. 52).³¹ Later in the nineteenth century a London County Council Report could make a telling point:

London differs in one very striking particular from perhaps every other important city, in the fact that *it has no general retail markets*. In Paris and other large continental cities and in many of the towns throughout England, general markets at which the retail purchaser can obtain his market supplies are generally to be found on a large scale. Practically no market of this kind exists in London ... The only semblance to the retail markets which exists in London are the informal markets, established by the costermonger in the public streets, which, as is well known, are quite unauthorized.³²

It was an observation that could have been made decades earlier, and it is an historical question that has never been addressed. It is easier to talk of the modern triumph of shops over more 'primitive' forms of distribution, of the growth of classier food shops - butchers, fruiterers, cheesemongers, grocers, bakers and confectioners - in the Georgian West End.³³ Certainly a declining share of foodstuffs was being obtained through formal markets, and more via private shops and costermongers; but this was by no means a necessarily inevitable or 'efficient' outcome, nor even a quintessentially 'modern' development. The reality of a modernizing metropolis was not as simple as proponents of consumer and retailing revolutions might have us believe.³⁴

If consumers were not simply patronizing shops and costermongers, on what basis were they doing so? Very patchy evidence makes definitive assessments impossible, but one can still gain a sense of the parameters of consumer preference - transaction costs, disposable income, hygiene and environment, competition and choice. On these grounds, the relative attractions of the shop and street over the market were far from assured.

Transaction costs

Transaction costs - the time and inconvenience incurred in buying provisions - were clearly important in an age of suburban growth and long working hours, but shops and hawkers held no

³¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, cii (Jul-Dec 1832), p. 201.

³² LCC (1893), p. 7, my italics.

³³ D. Davis, *A history of shopping* (1966), p. 203.

³⁴ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J. H. Plumb, *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialization of eighteenth century England* (1982); D. Barnett, *London, hub of the industrial revolution: a revisionist history* (1998).

clear superiority over markets by this criterion. All three outlets had their pros and cons. Backstreet chandlers and provisions shops no doubt obtained the convenience status of the 'corner shop'.³⁵ Guy Miège noted a dozen markets for butchers' meat but also praised the 'abundance of private butchers up and down, for the conveniency of families that are at too great a distance from any market'.³⁶ Equally, itinerant traders could also reduce travel costs for householders, as Cesar de Saussure noted: 'Besides ... large public markets, quantities of vendors go through the streets, especially in the morning, calling out their wares for sale; thus, if you prefer it, you need not leave your house to buy your provisions'.³⁷ 'The poor people would suffer a great loss of time in going to market if there were not hawkers who go about streets with meat', argued a witness to a Lords Committee in 1765 in defence of the wholesale carcase butchers who sold numerous cuts to hawkers.³⁸ On the other hand, public markets could also offer time-savings. Those who petitioned in the 1650s and 1660s for markets in St. Clement Danes and Stepney parishes claimed, with some justice, that the labour of 'many poore tradesmen' suffered by the time spent travelling to market for their provisions (not having servants).³⁹ Westminster's inhabitants told Parliament in 1749 how they were 'deprived of the great use and benefit' of a local market since the construction of Westminster Bridge, and now were 'frequently obliged to go to other distant markets to buy their provisions, to their great inconvenience, and loss of their time in business'.⁴⁰ Early nineteenth century attempts to establish markets in Finsbury, Regent's Park and Limehouse also sought legitimation in these terms.⁴¹ In short, markets were only convenient and time-saving if they were nearby, but that implied more markets were needed, not less.

Retail markets could answer various needs of consumers no less than backstreet shops. Throughout the period Saturday night - pay night - was the favourite time for doing the week's shopping. From the 1670s the City markets were open until at least ten at night and throughout it became a standard argument against Sunday trading that butchers' shops and markets stayed open until very late on a Saturday night so that poorer workers still had time to get their provisions.⁴²

³⁵ Mui & Mui, *Shops and shopkeeping*, p. 120.

³⁶ G. Miège, *The present state of Great Britain* (1707), i, p. 136.

³⁷ C. de Saussure, *A foreign view of England in the reigns of George I and George II* (1902), letter dated 29 October 1726, p. 171.

³⁸ HLRO, Main Papers H. L., Committee on Dearthness of Provisions (19 March 1765), f. 12v.

³⁹ *A brief of the papers ...* (1654); *The petition of the inhabitants of Clement Danes, Savoy, &c* (1654), one sheet; *The humble petition of the inhabitants of the severall parishes ...*(1654); Power, 'Urban development of east London', p. 239.

⁴⁰ *JHC*, xxv (1750), p. 974.

⁴¹ CLRO, Jor. 80, f. 146b; [J. Fordyce], *Fourth Report of the Surveyor General of Land Revenues* (1809), App. 15, p. 89, quoted in J. Summerson, *The life and work of John Nash, architect* (1980), p. 61; CLRO, *CC mins*, 17 June 1824.

⁴² Act of Common Council for regulating the City markets, CLRO, P.D. 22.14; LMA, 60.225, Calendar of Sessions Books and Orders of Court, vol. xxi (1744-7), p. 65.

Only at a market, however, could one swiftly purchase all the meat, dairy products, potatoes, fruit and vegetables one needed for mealtimes:

The truth is the mechanics and other working class of the community who receive their weekly wages at perhaps a late hour on Saturday night generally feel such an invincible propensity to attend markets where they can purchase their requisite provisions in a short space of time, that they invariably prefer a public market to a shop ... and hence, we may account for the very crowded state of the present established markets, more particularly on a Saturday night at a very late hour.⁴³

In 1830 City householders, together with taverners, greengrocers and the like, protested at the proposed removal of the gardeners out of Newgate meat market on the grounds that they would lose 'valuable time' and pay extra portorage by having to visit more than one market for their requirements.⁴⁴ Home delivery was also possible from markets as well as from private shops: one could always hire a basket woman or porter at a market (though lack of vigilance could risk theft), or even employ the parcel post.⁴⁵ Credit seems to have been more forthcoming from private shops than market traders, but this disadvantage requires two qualifications. First, market places were not just assembly points for barrows: some substantial shops, 'private' or 'market', were situated in and around them. Many a wealthy butcher had his shop in St. James's market, for instance, and he would almost have certainly provided credit.⁴⁶ Second, credit (and familiarity) usually came at the cost of higher prices. Thus the retail market place offered a *choice* between more expensive, credit-offering food retailers and cheaper, cash-only traders.⁴⁷

Income

Incomes are potentially another determinant of shopping preferences. The actual course of living standards and real wages itself is a controversial subject, so it is not surprising that one can no more than hypothesize about the implications for markets. Leonard Schwarz has argued for a declining trend of real wages in London in the second half of the eighteenth century, increasing thereafter in the early decades of the nineteenth century, a trend apparently at odds with notions of an eighteenth century 'consumer revolution'.⁴⁸ Falling real wages after 1750 may have increased hours worked to maintain incomes and so increased the transaction costs to shopping - thereby opening up a larger role for perambulating costermongers or backstreet shops. In their work on shops in eighteenth century England, the Muis speculated that market retailing remained relatively unimportant until ordinary people's real incomes rose sufficiently in the nineteenth

⁴³ GH, Ms 496, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁴ CLRO, Jor. 104, f. 39b.

⁴⁵ J. Trusler, *The London adviser and guide* (1790), pp. 31-2, 157.

⁴⁶ See, for example, obituaries in *London Evening Post*, 25-27 February 1729; 12-14 March 1730; 4-7 November 1738.

⁴⁷ Trusler, *The London adviser and guide*, pp. 27-8.

⁴⁸ L. D. Schwarz, 'The standard of living in the long run: London, 1700-1860', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 38 (1985).

century to afford the meat, fish, fruit and vegetables that markets typically sold.⁴⁹ How far this applies to London is rather questionable. Firstly, artisans' wages in London were arguably higher than elsewhere.⁵⁰ Secondly, so much contemporary evidence suggests that eighteenth century Londoners really were a carnivorous lot, at all income levels.⁵¹ If only the privileged few ate meat, the ideology of John Bull and Roast Beef could not have endured; nor would so many head of cattle trooped the drove roads of England en route to Smithfield market. Of course much meat was consumed in ordinaries and taverns, but the joints were still obtained from markets. Poorer Londoners would have boiled rather than roasted their meat and may have purchased cheap and nasty cuts from hawkers but they were unlikely to be strangers to the formal markets.⁵² There is no indication that retail market trade fell and rose with real wages after 1750 (rising real wages earlier in the century coincided with the establishment of new markets). In short, markets were not exclusive to rich or poor. Potentially they could accommodate a range of purse-sizes. Falling real wages may have made the costermonger more welcome to many householders, but cheap food was readily available from markets on Saturday nights, particularly later in this period.

By the same token, it was not quite true that higher income householders were deserting public markets in favour of private shops. Dr. Trusler's *London adviser and guide*, published in 1790, proffered advice for its middle-class readers with respect to spending money in the metropolis. Trusler reckoned the best markets for meat were St. James's, Newport, Clare and Honey Lane, as well as Leadenhall, which was also recommended for fresh Epping butter and cream cheese. For those 'as live convenient', Billingsgate was worth a visit to purchase sea fish at a third of the price of the fishmongers' shops. In the 1800s, Honey Lane market in the City supplied 'many of the first families in its neighbourhood'. The popularity of St. James's market was long based on middle-class custom, and its proposed demolition in 1816 would prove, according to the parish vestry, 'a great inconvenience to the many families in the parish and make a considerable difference to the middling and lower orders in supplying themselves with the necessaries of life'.⁵³ As late as 1850, Mayhew noted that 'all classes' frequented Farringdon, Newport, Oxford and Portman markets, whilst Hungerford market was generally favoured by the 'higher classes of society, though the market is visited by all classes'. Even Clare market, situated in the undesirable district east of Drury Lane, served middle-class purchasers in the daytime, and

⁴⁹ Mui & Mui, *Shops and shopkeeping*, pp. 156-7.

⁵⁰ E. Gilboy, *Wages in eighteenth century England* (Harvard, 1934), pp. 39-41.

⁵¹ See Peter Linebaugh's discussion of the great age of roast beef in *The London hanged: crime and civil society in the eighteenth century* (1991), pp. 192-3.

⁵² See also the role of meat in the eighteenth century diet in J. C. Drummond & A. Willbraham, *The Englishman's food* (1957), pp. 218-25.

⁵³ WCA, St. James's Piccadilly vestry minutes, 7 May 1813.

the poorer classes in the evening.⁵⁴ As the nineteenth century wore on, however, the benefits of a local market were cutting less deep on the suburban middle classes: one fictional clerk in his new Islington residence observed that ‘very common people do not live in semi-detached houses; they like to congregate near a [street] market, and so ought we, as a matter of economy, but I think fresh air better than very cheap food’.⁵⁵ It was partly this mentality which dissuaded developers from establishing new markets in such areas, and to this extent, consumer preferences did count.

Environment and hygiene

Retail markets were by no means less hygienic than their alternatives, although the market environment was susceptible at times to various nuisances. In principle, they facilitated ‘a more general and immediate inspection’ of food to guard against the sale of unwholesome provisions. Formal markets signified formal mechanisms of regulation and supervision by local magistrates, managers or livery companies. Those who patronized private shops in the backstreets lacked this protection:

These shops are under no power of inspection, as the market is, and ought to be: if the shopkeeper sells bad meat, he defies you to punish him for it; you saw what you bought, and he will tell you, he did not warrant it; but, that he may not quite lose you, he will comfort you with a promise to make you amends another time. If any man should call on him, to shew his meat for inspection, such a one would no doubt be treated as a trespasser, and he would turn him out of his doors.⁵⁶

The food shops of the nineteenth century were often guilty of adulteration, particularly bakers, who rarely sold in open market.⁵⁷ For their part the street vendors could hardly be considered hygienic: unwholesome produce was a standard argument against the hawking of foodstuffs around the streets. The nascent street markets of the early nineteenth century were infamous for putrefied fish - proper markets guaranteed proper fish.⁵⁸

Retail markets themselves were not necessarily unattractive places. Nineteenth century drawings of Oxford market do not suggest a slum (Figure 2). St. George’s market, opened in 1786 in the northern heart of Mayfair, was conceived and regarded as a ‘respectable’ establishment, an ‘elegant little market ... unrivalled for neatness, convenience, the choice and goodness of the articles on sale’. John Malcolm described Honey Lane market as a ‘neat and

⁵⁴ Trusler, *The London adviser and guide*, pp. 27-36, 157; R. Seymour, *Stow’s survey of London* (1734-5), ii, p. 663; Hughson, *London*, ii, p. 423; *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), pp. 220, 221; (5 December 1850), lxxxi, pp. 236, 237-8.

⁵⁵ Cited in R. Porter, *London: a social history* (1994: Penguin, 1996), pp. 282-3.

⁵⁶ *Publick nuisance considered*, pp. 15, 19; CLRO, *Jor.* 62, f. 176b.

⁵⁷ J. Burnett, ‘The baking industry in the nineteenth century’, *Business History*, V (Liverpool, 1962), pp. 104-7; idem, *Plenty and want: a social history of food in England from 1815 to the present day* (3rd edn., 1989), pp. 93-8; J. C. Drummond & A. Willbraham, *The Englishman’s food* (1957), pp. 186-90.

⁵⁸ W. M. Stern, ‘The Baroness’s market: the history of a noble failure’, *Guildhall Miscellany*, ii (Sept 1966), p. 354; see also ‘Reasons wherefore a new market in Clements Inne fields should be established by Act of Parliament’ in *A brief of the papers*; GH, Ms. 496, pp. 24-5.

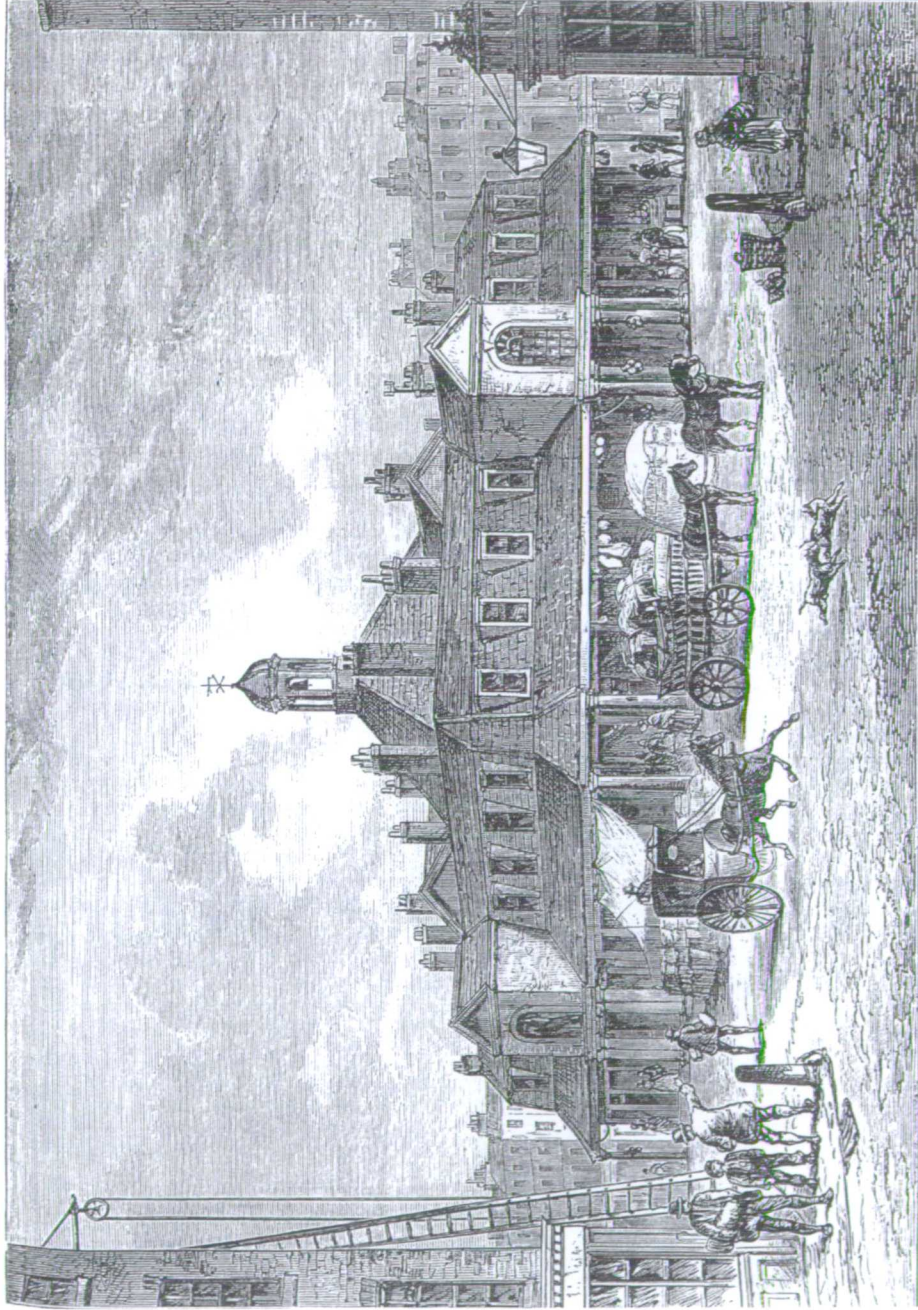


Figure 2 Oxford market (Guildhall Library)
Taken from *Old and new London* (6 vols., 1883), iv, p. 463

cleanly receptacle for all kinds of provisions', and markets generally as 'those public and most useful receptacles'.⁵⁹ The fact that sites were formally laid out, formal buildings designed and constructed, suggests that markets were not without distinction. Alleged architects of note were Sir Christopher Wren (Hungerford) and James Gibbs (Oxford).⁶⁰ Fleet market (George Dance, 1737) and Westminster market (Henry Keene, 1752) were the efforts of renowned surveyors which sported progressive and elegant arcaded designs that incorporated fixed shops (Figures 3 and 4).⁶¹ Judging from street maps, other market places appear to have possessed substantial buildings, if probably not as striking.⁶² The principles underlying the design and layout of these purpose-built markets were not lost on subsequent and more celebrated retail developments, such as Burlington Arcade (1819), Woburn Walk (1822) and Lowther Arcade (1830).⁶³ Indeed, according to one architectural historian the new Hungerford market of 1833 'anticipated modern "shopping precincts" by over a century and executed the idea with rather more elegance'.⁶⁴ Such considerations undermine facile distinctions between 'markets' and 'shops'.

Market configuration and positioning also mattered. When Fleet market was relocated in 1829, its replacement (Farringdon) was immediately criticized for its steep slopes and its dark buildings, even though it had much architecturally to recommend it.⁶⁵ Farringdon's failure later led the *The Builder* to suggest that 'any market for provisions of a retail character of trade ought to be in the leading street of the district, having the whole of its interior open to the street, and not closed in by a curtain of shops', as was clearly the case at Farringdon. Other markets that were particularly insulated from adjacent thoroughfares - notably Grosvenor, Red Lion and Brook's - also found life difficult.⁶⁶

As the eighteenth century wore on, the shopping environment of the older market places in London probably deteriorated to the detriment of their retail trade. Without proper upkeep or

⁵⁹ *Daily Universal Register*, 8 March 1786, p. 3; Hughson, *London*, iv, p. 362; Malcolm, *London redivivium*, ii, pp. 162-3; iii, p. 390; iv, p. 335

⁶⁰ *Gentlemen's Magazine*, cii (July-December, 1832), p. 113; Hughson, *London*, iv, p. 358; T. Friedman, *James Gibbs* (Yale, 1984), p. 307. On Oxford market, see *Morning Chronicle* (28 November 1850), p. 221; WCA, Acc 449/176, pp. 7-8 of Portland estate accounts for 1817; Ashbridge 431/1449 and 431, box 47, no. 40 (plan of interior); H. Phillips, *Mid-Georgian London: a topographical and social survey of central and western London about 1750* (1964), pp. 240, 242.

⁶¹ D. Stroud, *George Dance, architect, 1741-1825* (1971), pp. 38-9, 42; H. Colvin, *A biographical dictionary of British architects, 1660-1840* (1995 edn.), pp. 571-2; A. Stratton, 'Two forgotten buildings by the Dances', *Architectural Review*, 40 (1916); CLRO, Jor. 58, f. 4b; Noble, 223/FAR; W. Maitland, *The history and survey of London* (1756), ii, p. 987; *London and its environs described*, ii, p. 308; WAM, 24889, 51667B, (P) 733, 733B, 734, 735A; W. Capon, *Views of Westminster sketched, 1801-1815*, LTS No. 14 (1923-4).

⁶² For St. James's market, see WCA, Prints and drawings D138 Haymarket (1); *Survey of London: St. James, Westminster: part I*, xxix (1960), p. 216.

⁶³ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 265-6.

⁶⁴ G. Stamp, *The changing metropolis: earliest photographs of London, 1839-1879* (Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 134.

⁶⁵ *Times*, 27 August 1830, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Builder*, 2 November 1867, p. 796.



Figure 3 Fleet market

Taken from A. Stratton, 'Two forgotten buildings by the Dances', *Architectural Review*, 40 (1916)
Pencil sketch by J. Buckler, 1828 (Custodian unknown)

refurbishment a few decades was enough time for a market to become rather shabby. For one correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1773, markets, like London's hospitals and graveyards, were 'sources of insalubrity', for they were 'situated in hollow quadrangles, where a stagnant air produces putrefaction'.⁶⁷ Hungerford (Figure 10) was a typical example whose unpopularity by 1800 partly owed itself to the 'extremely narrow and unpleasant' passages which surrounded it.⁶⁸ In the 1820s it was argued that the disorder to be seen around the established markets and prescriptive street markets in the evenings deterred 'the respectable class of tradesmen' from sending their wives, daughters, or even servants there, who had then to resort to the private shops.⁶⁹ Yet aesthetic criticisms of markets did not presuppose them to be outdated commercial institutions. One must consider 'what has induced purchasers to desert markets, and consequently, obliged sellers to abandon them'. For *The Times* the answer was clear:

They have generally been nothing but a collection of wretched looking huts, whose exterior gave no promise of cleanliness within. In fact, filth and dirt lying in heaps at every turning - the masses of rotten vegetables and other putrid matter allowed to accumulate, the appearance of great disorder in the transactions carried on.⁷⁰

No doubt some less well-managed markets suffered from the incentives individual traders had to allow waste build up around the market, incentives which backstreet shopkeepers arguably lacked. Once dilapidation began to limit retail custom, there was even less impetus for proprietors to rebuild and refurbish.

Finally, the extent to which the proximity of slaughtering deterred many from markets should not be exaggerated. Consumer sensibilities were probably not so tender then as now; in any case many private shops had their own killing 'facilities' - out the back or down the cellar - and the most prosperous concentration of private butchers' shops at this time, Whitechapel, was in fact well-known as a 'market'. Public markets with common slaughterhouses made for a more efficient arrangement, and they also enabled cattle bought at Smithfield to be driven together, which caused far less mischief than the one which was driven alone.⁷¹ In all these aspects of retailing there was nothing inevitable about the relative or absolute decline of markets.

Competition

Public retail marketing, as opposed to alternative forms of food distribution, was essentially a matter of space, location and regulation. Shops, stalls and barrows could disperse into streets and suburbs, but proper markets - which could comprise all three - were nucleated, regulated forms. They might accommodate literally dozens of butchers, as well as substantial numbers of

⁶⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine*, xliii (1773), pp. 598-600, 633-4.

⁶⁸ Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv, p. 308.

⁶⁹ GH, Ms. 496, pp. 37-8.

⁷⁰ *Times*, 19 December 1829, p. 4.

⁷¹ *Smithfield market: an essay* (1796), pp. 34-5; *Publick nuisance considered*, pp. 22-3.

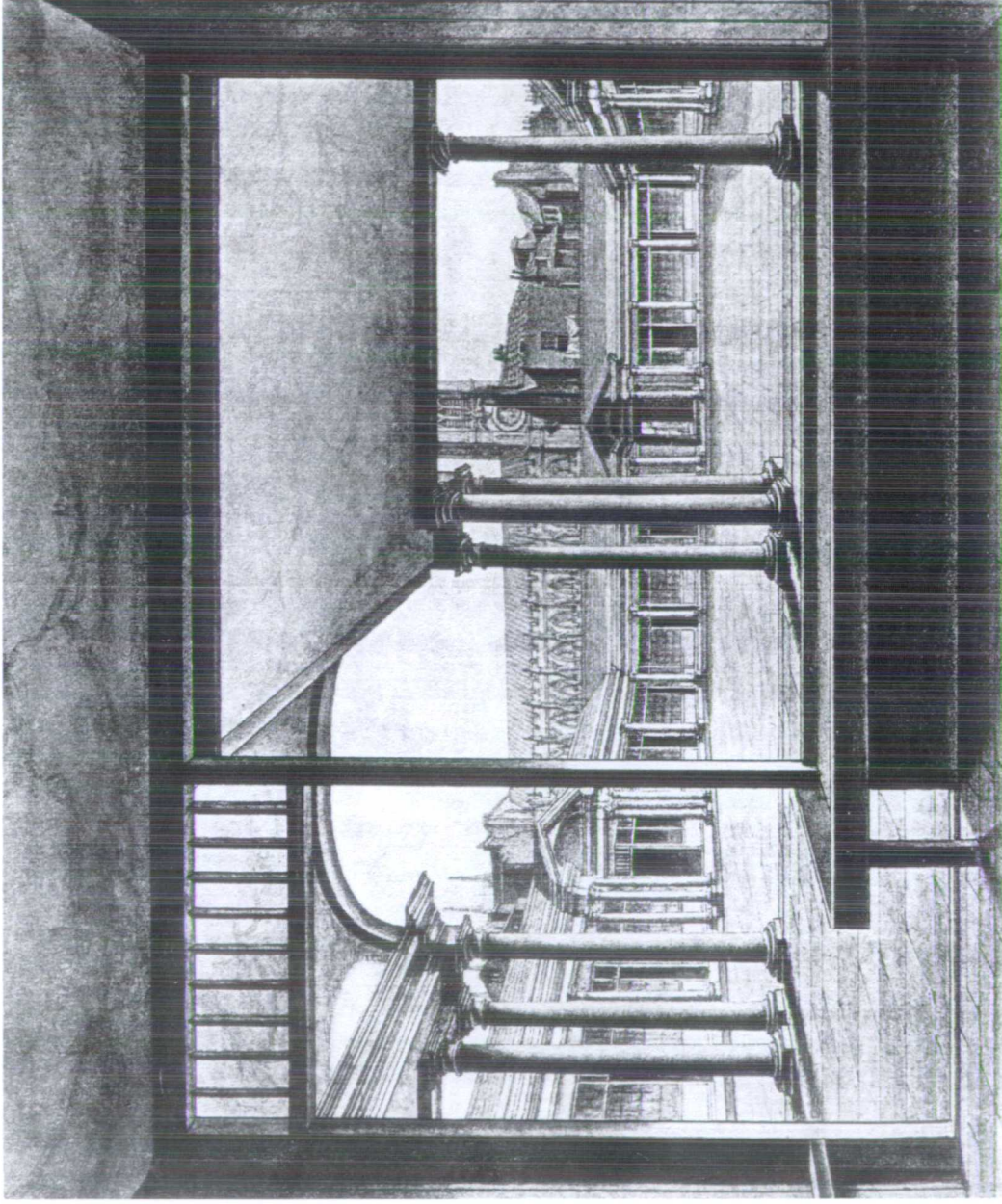


Figure 4 Westminster market (Westminster City Archives)
Views of Westminster sketched by William Capon, 1801-1815 (LTS, 1923-4), No. 14

other vendors of provisions. Markets thus ensured that many traders would be gathered together in one spot, and this was held to be their chief blessing: 'the providers have the speediest vent for their goods, are encouraged to bring a constant supply, which produces plenty; plenty furnishes the inhabitants with choice, and cheapness follows it'.⁷² In the markets of London 'any sort of goods may be purchased at a convenient and reasonable rate', according to De Laune in 1690.⁷³ Whereas moderate rates prevailed at markets, the man of middling rank who sought out the private shopkeeper became vulnerable to monopolistic prices:

Is it not in the seller's power to enhance [price] when he pleases? Is it not notorious that he does so, and that the street butcher raises a half-penny, or penny in the pound, upon the market price, on all his meat, and the poulterer 3d or 6d in every piece of poultry he sells? Thus the buyer is deceiving himself, while he is complying, under a kind of forced necessity, to take what a single shop affords, and takes what does not suit him, rather than go to the market; although he could be sure of choice, cheapness and plenty, and lay out his money more to his fancy, and more to the advantage of himself and family, and at the years' end would find it a sensible saving in his accounts. It may be said, why does he lay out his money there, at a private shop, if it is prejudicial to him? I must answer, that the temptation should be removed, and he would never think on it.

Dr. Trusler's home economics echoed this view.⁷⁴ Trade dispersal out of the markets was bad for competition. The putative tendencies to monopoly of the retail fishmongers were facilitated, according to one commentator in 1784, by the scattering of their shops in Westminster, Southwark and Wapping. The remedy was to open up new fish markets.⁷⁵ Twenty years later, *The Times* opined that the practice of opening food shops in the streets was 'very unfavourable to the cheap selling of all sorts of food, as it takes away much of the rivalry of adjoining shopkeepers'.⁷⁶ The revival of Hungerford market in the early 1830s was the greatest commercial act of faith in the tradition of market retailing. In sketching out the plan in 1829, its architect professed how markets minimized transactions costs and generated efficient pricing:

The advantage of markets will be found to proceed mainly from the facilities they afford both to buyers and sellers, by which the business done is effected on terms more advantageous to both parties ... the vendor avoids the numerous expenses of attending all other modes of sale ... whilst the buyer, by purchasing at first hands, is not called upon to pay more than the original and proper value of the article.⁷⁷

⁷² *Publick nuisance considered*, p. 14.

⁷³ T. De Laune, *Angliae metropolis, or the present state of London* (1690), p. 305.

⁷⁴ *Publick nuisance considered*, p. 18; *London in miniature*, p. 7; see also Trusler, *The London adviser and guide*, pp. 27-8, 30. Dorothy Davis notes the vulnerability of consumers among London's shopkeepers in the eighteenth century, *A history of shopping*, pp. 182-3.

⁷⁵ *London Chronicle*, 23-25 December 1784, p. 609; See also GH, Ms 496, p. 27, in which London is compared unfavourably to other port towns where consumers pay a market price for fish, and do not buy from shopkeepers.

⁷⁶ *Times*, 20 January 1804, p. 3. See also WCA, St. James Piccadilly, vestry minutes, 7 May 1813.

⁷⁷ Noble, C 45/T 1825; Fowler, *Description of a plan for the revival of Hungerford market*, pp. 7-10; *Times*, 3 July 1833, p. 6. See also the arguments behind the South London market proposal in 1834, *Reasons and observations relative to the proposed South London market*, p. 2.

What form this competition took may have altered towards the end of the period, when there were signs that the traditional method of calling and bargaining was supplemented by the practice of price ticketing.⁷⁸ What was crucial was the atomistic nature of vending in markets.

Whilst markets changed in character and accident during the long eighteenth century, their substance did not change: markets were places where buyers and sellers *gathered* together, not only providing a variety of consumers with the opportunity to buy a range of foodstuffs, but also leading to competitive pricing and an efficient allocation of resources. It would be tempting but misleading to argue the paradox that markets were declining in the same era as ‘the market’ (as a descriptive process and ideology) was gaining ground. In truth, the latter phenomenon ensured that the original referent - the town market - remained a vital organ of retail exchange. It is possible, though tricky, to speak of ‘a market’ for retail markets. The preceding discussion has shown that the consumer demand for markets was far from dying. The real problem was on the supply-side. To the extent that consumer preference was constrained, retail development in London did not proceed among the most efficient lines.

Retailers, developers and market decline

However uncertain were the relative merits of shops, hawkers and markets, it seems that many retailers preferred not to sell in the market place. This was not inevitable: many of the new markets of the period allowed the town butcher or poulterer to live, kill and trade in the same place. Also, the disadvantage of surveillance from overseers and competition from rival vendors might be outweighed by the level playing field and the certain demand afforded by the presence of so many consumers in one place. With one or two exceptions, retailers did not appear actively to campaign for new markets, though it might be that any sensible developer would take soundings of potential business in a prospective market.⁷⁹ The private interest of sellers inclined them to disperse among the streets and suburbs, a practice which was underway early in the eighteenth century. In 1731 London’s market proprietors, later backed by the parishes and inhabitants, sought legislation to confine street butchers and all food trades to the public markets, because of the ‘insufferable nuisance’ caused in local streets and lanes by them.⁸⁰ Such calls seem to have fallen upon deaf ears, and by 1804, when *The Times* condemned the tendency for food shops opening in every public street, the practice, whilst still contentious, had clearly gathered momentum.⁸¹

⁷⁸ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 121 (1829), pp. 545-6; *Times*, 4 December 1829, p. 3, 9 December 1829, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *SOL: the Grosvenor estate in Mayfair: part II - the buildings*, xl (GLC, 1980), pp. 68-9, 172.

⁸⁰ *London Evening Post*, 9-11 March 1731; 28 April - 1 May 1733; *JHC*, xxiv (1741), p. 119. See also LMA, 60. 225, Calendar of Sessions Books and Orders of Court, vol. xxi (1744-7), p. 65; WCA, WCB 59.

⁸¹ *Times*, 20 January 1804, p. 3.

Just why such dispersal occurred is not altogether obvious. One angry pamphleteer thought such dispersal began when a butcher or poulterer married a maidservant in a good neighbourhood, where she was known among the servants of other families there:

And by this acquaintance, and the never-failing considerations to the marketing cook or footman, they are to give him what price, and take what kind of provisions he pleases; his shop is something nearer than the market, the servant is saved the great trouble of going so far; and this temptation to idleness succeeds so well, that no matter what the master pays or suffers for it, the butcher, or poulterer, soon gets established. And under such a combination, I do not wonder the imposition continues without discovery, or perhaps complaint, even from those who are most concerned and abused by it.⁸²

How general this kind of behaviour was is unclear; but the practice of servants buying in provisions for their masters undoubtedly privileged convenience, credit and constancy of supply over choice and value, and hence undermined the putative virtues of the public market. Lack of housing and slaughtering facilities in the City markets encouraged dozens of butchers to leave them. In 1762, the Butchers Company opposed the Corporation's petition to Parliament to confine their trade to the public markets.⁸³ In June 1780 the City Lands Committee reported that 'the practice of butchers, poulterers and fishmongers quitting the markets and taking houses in the publick streets which has increased of late years' was principally due to 'the want of accommodation within the markets and to the inconvenience which persons who keep shops there find in their habitations being distant from their business'.⁸⁴ Although the West End markets provided housing and slaughtering space butchers were not obliged to retail there. Preferring their own private slaughtering receptacles, and without any effective restrictions, there was nothing to prevent them dispersing.⁸⁵ The fact that the by-products of backshop slaughtering - blood and guts in the streets, screams and smells in the air - may have offended locals was neither here nor there since they were costs which fell upon others and did not appear in butchers' calculations about where to locate. Conversely, the advantages to the consumer of retailer concentration - cheapness and choice - might not also accrue to individual vendors. Market forces may therefore have, from an efficiency point of view, provided excessive incentives for traders to disperse from the market place.

The late Roger Scola thought that urban food retailers would begin to move out of a central market area to peripheral, private shops once rising incomes and population increased demand sufficiently to sustain a neighbourhood trade.⁸⁶ Market forces may have generated something similar in later Georgian London, but it was neither an efficient nor necessary outcome. In Georgian Oxford, municipal regulation was effective in keeping butchers within the

⁸² *Publick nuisance considered*, pp. 17-18.

⁸³ CLRO, Jor. 62, f. 176b-177; *JHC*, xxix (1762), pp. 149, 217, 220, 291, 340.

⁸⁴ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 72 (1780-1), f. 71.

⁸⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine*, xliii (1773), pp. 598-9.

public market in contrast to the laxer approach in neighbouring towns.⁸⁷ In London, many contemporaries perceived the dispersal of traders as a recent, partial and potentially reversible problem, as we have seen. Market management had a lot to answer for. The desertion of Westminster market by traders earlier in the century was blamed both by local inhabitants and the incumbent lessees not on the butchers and poulterers but on the neglect and indolence of the previous proprietors and lack of proper regulations.⁸⁸ In the City, many retailers left the formal markets because of various controversies with the farmers of the markets over rents, rates and upkeep. By the 1750s it was said the Corporation had allowed ‘this nuisance of butchers infesting the street go so long unregarded’, that now it was almost too late to arrest. Had dispersal been nipped in the bud

no freeman would afterwards have set up his privilege of carrying on trade in his house, if that trade was a common offence and nuisance to his fellow citizens; nor would the community have endured it for the sake of his private interest ... but would have been content to have carried on his trade in the place assigned for it, and where his fellow citizens (and himself too) had thought most proper.

The possible claims of precedent and privilege meant that nothing was done, and this in turn encouraged further dispersal.⁸⁹ Outside the City the evidence is less clear, but given that the practice of farming the markets was widespread suggests that the profit-maximizing practices of extortion and maintenance neglect could well have led market traders and shopkeepers and/or consumers to desert the market places.

Dispersal into the suburbs might also have been mitigated by the creation of more retail market accommodation as consumer demand increased. Table 21 summarizes the possible private and public sector responses to this increased demand. Little was done in the left hand column, largely because market responsibility across London was so fragmented and fuzzy. Smaller provincial towns suffered less from this fragmentation.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ R. Scola, ‘Retailing in the nineteenth century: some problems and possibilities’ in J. H. Johnson & C. G. Pooley (eds), *The structure of nineteenth century cities* (1982), p. 164.

⁸⁷ W. Thwaites, ‘The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire’, Ph. D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1980), p. 121.

⁸⁸ WCA, WCB 59.

⁸⁹ *Publick nuisance considered*, p. 21; CLRO, City Lands, vol. 54 (1762), ff. 8-9.

⁹⁰ D. Alexander, *Retailing in England during the industrial revolution* (1970), pp. 42-6, 56-60; W. Thwaites, ‘The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire’, Ph. D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1980), pp. 23-4; I. Mitchell, ‘Urban markets and retail distribution, 1730-1815: with particular reference to Macclesfield, Stockport and Chester’, D. Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1975), pp. 164, 176.

Table 21 *Supplying the demand for distribution of food to consumers*

<i>Public Sector</i>	<i>Private Sector</i>
City Corporation - markets	Incorporated market companies
Individual parishes - markets	Private landlords and individual speculators
County magistrates - markets	Single private food shops
Parliament - markets	Street traders

From the seventeenth century the City not only washed its hands of all responsibility for the growing suburbs it had tried unsuccessfully to restrain but did its level best to prevent anyone else providing markets for these areas.⁹¹ Other public bodies, like the county benches (including Middlesex, Westminster and Surrey), individual parishes and improvement commissions, were generally not involved in market creation. Parliament (and central government) only authorized private sector proposals, never established any market of its own. Westminster's Court of Burgesses was in terminal decline. Had co-ordinated metropolitan government existed from the eighteenth century with the necessary will to establish large and well regulated markets, the London consumer's experience might have been different. Left to private capital, markets tended only to be established during favourable economic conditions. The coming of war, higher interest rates, a decline in building, a financial crisis - all these could interrupt, postpone, or put paid to new market creations. For instance, John Nash's intended markets for Marylebone Park in 1812 foundered because the private funds they depended upon were not forthcoming.⁹²

The basic problem was a lack of *consistent* market creation in the face of continuous growth in demand for foodstuffs. No new general market was established between 1740 and 1785, a time of rising population. Proposed markets at Limehouse, Regent's Park, Southwark, Knightsbridge and Westminster between 1824 and 1837 never materialized.⁹³ Not until the 1860s did a fifth 'wave' of creative activity come in. According to Table 17 (p. 52) the total number of

⁹¹ See p. 140 ff.

⁹² *First Report of the Commissioners of HM Woods, Forests and Land Revenues* (1812), pp. 12, 73, 86; A. Saunders, *Regent's Park: a study of the development of the area from 1086 to the present day* (1969: 1981 edn.), pp. 105-6.

⁹³ Limehouse gained a market grant, in 1824 Appendix to Royal Comm. (1891), 'Calendar of the Applications for grants of markets and fairs, and of the grants thereof enrolled on the patent rolls between 1700 and 1846'. An Act of 1830 authorizing various markets alongside Regent's Park only produced Cumberland haymarket, which replaced the Piccadilly haymarket, 11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 14. The South London Market Company failed to raise the funds authorized by legislation in the 1830s, LMA Acc 2058 1 23 pp. 71-2; Eastwall-Najna, 'St. George's Market', pp. 18-19. A market was locally proposed for Westminster (Strutton Ground) in 1832 but a bill of 1837 sponsored by local tradesmen and inhabitants failed to progress, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 124 (1832), p. 951; *JHC*, xcii (1837), pp. 61, 94-5, 190. A similar unsuccessful petition came from locals in the Knightsbridge area, which had 'long suffered from the want of a proper hay and general market where the inhabitants may be accommodated', *JHC*, lxxxix (1834), pp. 56, 111, 113. A plan of the proposed market was published in c.1840 by J. R. Robbins, GH (Maps and Prints, 'Collage Database').

effective food markets declined from twenty-four to seventeen in the forty years after 1800. Back in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, markets were established on many newly developed estates as fashionable and profitable investments. From the early nineteenth century on, however, developers were less interested in laying out integrated and self-contained suburbs. The Bedford estate in Bloomsbury, progressively developed over the first half of the nineteenth century, was conspicuously free of a retail market, and lacked retail facilities generally, on the grounds that such activities lowered the tone of the neighbourhood and encouraged slumming.⁹⁴ The north-west corner of the very large Eyre estate in Marylebone hinted at a sort of local 'service area', but this was far from the wealthy residential climes of St. John's Wood.⁹⁵ The Grosvenor, Foundling, and Northampton estates were also market-free. 'Sub-urbanity' was about retreat from urban life to the single villa, an image which excluded markets.⁹⁶ What attempts there were to establish markets in the nineteenth century emanated from private consortia and wealthy individuals rather than improving landowners. The need for legislation rather than a royal grant may also have acted as a deterrent to landlords, as did the jealous importance of the City of London.⁹⁷ Whilst failing to create new suburban markets, free enterprise also encouraged the elimination of some of the older centrally located ones. Rising land values and a reduced appreciation of the need of retail markets meant that some succumbed to housing projects in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries whilst others were turned over into business premises. With private sector provision of new markets so uncertain, small wonder that dispersal of butchers, fishmongers and the like proceeded apace.

Markets and costermongers

Much has been said about private shopkeeping, but in fact it was informal street trading which was the most striking 'private' response to the demand for retail outlets. Street selling had existed in London for centuries, and after the Restoration a renewal of street life was immortalized in 'the cries of London' artistic genre.⁹⁸ Not until the early nineteenth century, however, did it really make its presence felt, when gatherings of costermongers in specific localities had 'established a sort of prescriptive right ... to vend their commodities in the street'.⁹⁹ The publication in 1823 of *The new cries of London* reflected a new era of audible ambulatory commerce. In 1841 attention

⁹⁴ On restrictive planning, see D. J. Olsen, *Town planning in London: the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (1964; 1982 edn), ch. 6.

⁹⁵ F. M. L. Thompson, *Hampstead: building a borough, 1650-1964* (1974), p. 251.

⁹⁶ H. J. Dyos, 'Urbanity and suburbanity' (1973) in D. Cannadine and D. Reeder (eds.), *Exploring the urban past: essays in urban history by H. J. Dyos* (Cambridge, 1982).

⁹⁷ See below, p. 146.

⁹⁸ Shesgreen, S. (ed.), *The criers and hawkers of London: engravings and drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Aldershot, 1990), p. 22.

⁹⁹ GH, Ms 496, pp. 25, 34-5, 37-8; CBA, St. Pancras vestry minutes, 2 March 1825, 29 March 1832.

was brought to those thoroughfares where all kinds of foodstuffs and household goods had long been sold: Strutton Ground, Oxford Street, Tottenham Court Road, White Cross Street, Leather Lane, Whitechapel High Street, New Cut.¹⁰⁰ London's experience was not unique but it was exceptional, given rapid suburban growth and its highly atomistic casual labour market.¹⁰¹ The rise in costermongering was also predicated on the growth of the central wholesaling markets. One fish salesman in 1800 thought that thousands of poor people were engaged in purchasing and perambulating the vast majority of cheap fish arriving at Billingsgate, and another believed the number had lately shot up.¹⁰² Fifty years later Henry Mayhew counted 3,801 hucksters in thirty-seven informal markets and estimated at least 11,000 itinerant food sellers (most of whom dwelt in the neighbourhoods of the street markets). The northern suburbs had most stallholders; the West End had fewest.¹⁰³

From an institutional perspective, however, the increasing presence of street trading in the nineteenth century was largely a product and cause of the relative decline of *formal* market retailing. It served to diminish both the rationale and the prestige of new public markets, and the process then spiralled downwards. Fewer markets, more street trading, so fewer markets. The lack of formal market accommodation in the new suburbs weakened the hand of parish and police who sought to rid local streets of hawkers. One of the Borough magistrates, giving evidence to the Select Committee on Sunday Observance in 1832 reckoned that 'if more markets were established in populous districts, the nuisances in the streets, of baskets &c would be removed, and the cheapness of provisions would be the probable consequence'.¹⁰⁴ With street selling and private food shops both commercially and culturally entrenched from the early nineteenth century, formal retail markets rather lost their place in London. In a passing comment upon the failure of covered market developments in London, David Alexander rightly noted that the Hungerford market of 1833 suffered from the fixed shopping habits of Londoners who were already well served by shops, street markets and itinerant distributors.¹⁰⁵ No one seriously worried that London's teeming millions would not be fed. Local markets were less essential when armies of costermongers obtained cheap supplies at markets like Spitalfields and then perambulated the suburbs. By 1840 there was little public or private sector could do to rescue retailing from the streets. According to *The Builder*, market decline in London was attributable to

¹⁰⁰ LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 42, Memorial to St. Paul's Parish, Covent Garden (1841).

¹⁰¹ Scola, 'Retailing in the nineteenth century town', pp. 163-4; D. R. Green, 'Street trading in London: a case study of casual labour, 1830-1860' in J. H. Johnson & C. G. Pooley (eds.), *The structure of nineteenth century cities* (1982), pp. 130-2.

¹⁰² *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), pp. 368, 369.

¹⁰³ Mayhew, *London labour*, pp. 10, 47; see Appendix 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Report from Select Committee on Observance of the Lord's Day* (1831-2), q. 1146.

¹⁰⁵ D. Alexander, *Retailing in England during the industrial revolution* (1970), p. 58-60; P. V. McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock in London area in the seventeenth century', M. A. thesis (University of London, 1948), p. 54.

poor management, poor locations, and costermongers. Its answer: 'make the market fair and reasonable; and, having done so, force every dealer into it, or mercilessly "wipe him out" of street hawking as an act of public safety'.¹⁰⁶ Draconian stuff to be sure, but in view of London's history, quite logical. The expansion of street trading, though not without substantive causes, was the most striking manifestation of the failure of public and private sectors to expand market provision.

Itinerant retail distribution has been seen as an efficient means of distributing provisions to lower-income groups: costermongers eschewed paying the rents which proper market accommodation demanded.¹⁰⁷ It is, however, a questionable interpretation since markets could also provide cheap provisions. Also, as in the case of shopkeepers, private interests do not always fully reflect the economic costs of an activity. Many contemporaries thought that street selling fostered congestion, disorder and the sale of unwholesome food - real costs which were not borne by costermongers who occupied the streets for free. Conversely, formal public markets seem to have provided various external benefits both to consumers and the wider environment. To the extent that this was the case, some charge laid upon costermongering (which was impractical) and/or more extensive suburban market accommodation, publicly financed and provided rent-free, might have made more economic sense. The question of efficiency is arguably complicated by cultural and class-values, but the presumption that so much street marketing was an 'optimal' outcome for nineteenth century retailing is by no means proven.

The continuity of market retailing

Impressive though the multiplication of private shops and itinerant trading from the late eighteenth century was, retail markets were still widely used, and their shops and stalls were open every weekday. In any case, the picture was a mixed one, outside as well as inside the City. Whilst some old markets declined and disappeared, others were enlarged and new ones were proposed. The expansion of wholesale markets also played an important role in providing a continuing role for market retailing into the Victorian period. Granted that markets overall did suffer a shrinking share of retail distribution, it was not passively accepted by commentators as 'progress'.

So long as the City of London maintained a large residential population - depopulation did not set in until 1850 - its markets were likely to remain significant retail outlets.¹⁰⁸ Fleet

¹⁰⁶ *Builder*, 2 November 1867, p. 797.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander, *Retailing in England during the industrial revolution*, pp. 84-5; Mitchell, 'Urban markets', p. 13.

¹⁰⁸ Between 1800 and 1850, the City's population never fell below 120,000, see F. Sheppard, *London: a history* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 363-4.

market flourished in the Georgian period as a large retail dispenser of meat, fish, poultry, dairy goods, fruit and vegetables right up until its removal in 1829, when it was found necessary to build a direct replacement. The old Honey Lane market which had been created after the Great Fire lost its country and wholesale trade during the eighteenth century, but it was rebuilt in 1789 precisely 'for the benefit and convenience of the neighbourhood' by George Dance. 'Famous for the choice quality of the provisions brought to it', Honey Lane retained a small trade until it made way for the City of London School in 1835.¹⁰⁹ The City's wholesale markets were perhaps even more important retail outlets; the two functions had long been combined. In 1763 the wholesale butchers of Newgate retailed unsold country meat, and by the nineteenth century, evening sales at Newgate to working Londoners were well-known and increasing. 'We have a very extensive retail trade more so now than ever', enthused the market beadle in 1850, 'After the wholesale business is over many salesmen let off their premises to a second party to come in as a retail butcher ... and some of the wholesale likewise allow their men to retail. We have thousands of persons now on a Saturday as retail buyers.'¹¹⁰ At Billingsgate retailing had often been confused with 'regrating' (the unlawful re-selling of produce within the same market) but fish was resold to consumers not fishmongers, and this only after wholesale trading had finished, which was about 7 a.m. After debates in 1795 a committee of Common Council opined that fish retailing at Billingsgate was a good thing, and sought to repeal any preventative laws. The rebuilding of the market in 1826 confirmed the prominence of the retail trade. By 1850, Henry Mayhew noted no less than one hundred retail dealers in the market, and thirty wholesale.¹¹¹ Leadenhall likewise increased its retail trade into the nineteenth century. In 1819 and 1822 retail butchers there complained to the City Lands Committee and the Court of Aldermen that although from 'time immemorial there hath been a distinct wholesale market and retail market held at Leadenhall ... for the sale of butchers' meat', in recent years retailing was being carried on after trading hours in the wholesale market. Coming to be rivalled and overtaken by the butchers of Newgate and Whitechapel in the later eighteenth century, Leadenhall market increasingly specialized in poultry, lost much of its wholesale function, and was finally transformed in 1881 into an elegant retail market, poultry alone being sold in bulk.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ B. Lambert, *The history and survey of London* (1806), ii, pp. 530-1. See also Hughson, *London*, ii, p. 423;

¹¹⁰ CLRO, Journal of City Lands Committee, vol. 55 (1763), ff. 66b-67a; *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 667, 670.

¹¹¹ CLRO, Rep. 199, ff. 558-79; *Times*, 18 December 1795, p. 3; 7 January 1823, p. 2; *Morning Chronicle survey* (December 1850), p. 250.

¹¹² CLRO, City Lands, vol. 111 (1819-20), f. 213; Rep. 226, ff. 184-6; *Report of Royal Commission on Smithfield market* (1850), p. 18; LCC (1893), p. 10. In the Royal Commission evidence of 1888, Leadenhall was described as 'almost entirely a retail market. It is more what you would see in many places called an arcade', Royal Comm. (1888), pp. 21, 26.

Where there was wholesaling outside the City in the early nineteenth century, there was usually retailing too. Whitechapel's collection of butchers' shops was described in 1761 as a market 'for meat by wholesale or retail' and George Dodd later described it as 'an example of a market in which the wholesale and the retail have grown up together no one knows how'.¹¹³ At Borough market, retailers competed with salesmen and growers for stands, and there were retail dealings every day with local workers.¹¹⁴ Spitalfields east of the City not only supplied East End dealers and costermongers with fruits and potatoes, but directly served local labourers and the servants of better-off households.¹¹⁵ To the west, Newport market in Soho was rebuilt in the 1830s and consolidated its role as both a wholesale and local retail centre for butchers.¹¹⁶ The markets created by Acts of Parliament between 1830 and 1834 were conceived as integrated wholesale and retail outlets. Covent Garden possessed a very strong retail function throughout the nineteenth century, with a daily retail trade in fruit and vegetables. In 1888 the Royal Commission was told that it was 'the only large market which is substantially retail'.¹¹⁷

Not all retail market trade outside the City stagnated. In 1804 *The Times* expressed satisfaction that the recent enlargement of Newport market had 'already occasioned the removal of many stalls and wheelbarrows from the neighbouring streets'. Shadwell's old market was also reconstructed at this time.¹¹⁸ In 1816 the Duke of Portland enlarged Oxford market in Marylebone to accommodate twenty-eight shops, thereby boosting the annual receipts by some fifty per cent and doubling the market's insurance value to £4,000. It may also have engendered (together with St. George's market) the extensive line of stalls on the south side of Oxford Street in the nineteenth century, though this remains unclear.¹¹⁹ The loss of St. James's market in 1816 caused by the construction of Regent Street alarmed the vestry, and its significance was reflected by the £22,000 compensation paid to the Duke of Leeds as proprietor; and by John Nash, who considered an open market to be 'indispensable', and saw to it that a smaller replacement was built nearby. Whilst the new market, like the rebuilt Shadwell market, never apparently prospered, contemporary recognition of retail markets' role was not in doubt.¹²⁰ The anonymous observer who in 1826 forwarded proposals for new retail markets, did so precisely because he

¹¹³ *London and its environs described* (1761), iv, p. 262; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 151.

¹¹⁴ LMA, Acc 2058/1/21, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 20 June 1827; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 385.

¹¹⁵ C. Knight (ed.), *London* (1841-3), ii, p. 399; v, pp. 143-4; *Morning Chronicle survey* (December 1850), pp. 234-5; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 383.

¹¹⁶ CLRO, *CC mins*, 28 May 1830; WCA, St. Anne Soho Rate Books, A757; P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), p. 357.

¹¹⁷ LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 18a, Parliamentary report on the 1813 Covent Garden market bill (bound printed volume), pp. 65-6; Royal Comm. (1888), p. 24.

¹¹⁸ *Times*, 20 January 1804, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ D. Lysons, *The environs of London* (2nd edn., 1810-11), ii, pp. 655, 837; WCA, Acc 449 176, Portland Estate Accounts; GH, Ms 496, p. 29.

thought existing ones were well-utilized and even overcrowded, and we have already noted the various attempts to establish new markets in various parts of London in the early nineteenth century.¹²¹

In central London, by and large, the public markets held their own, whilst Mayhew's street markets tended to be in precisely those peripheral areas which lacked formal market provision, particularly to the north and east. At Whitechapel, 258 stalls vending fish, fruit and vegetables were more likely to complement rather than rival the nearby butchers' market. St. George's market in Mayfair was demolished in 1820, but its trade continued to flourish along nearby Oxford Street - Mayhew counted 177 costermongers there in 1850. In this instance the trade seems simply to have been transposed from the market place into the street.¹²² In 1841 Newport market's adjoining streets were noted for the sale of all kinds of food and goods.¹²³ Clare market provided the most striking testament both to the vitality and the inadequacy of the formal market. Having long flourished to the east of Drury Lane since Cromwell's time, Clare was famed for its butchers, and despite a poor aesthetic reputation, continued to prosper, attracting the attention of the artist George Shepherd in the 1810s (Figure 5). For reasons that are not clear, no formal expansion or rationalization of facilities for its growing trade ever took place: consequently the original market place and houses became the nucleus of a five-acre warren of shops and street stalls, called Clare Street market.¹²⁴ Not until the 1890s were ideas floated to rationalize the whole market area under one roof.¹²⁵ Clare thus typified the paradoxical experience of London's retailing markets: on the one hand growth and longevity; on the other a failure of accommodation over time which engendered the sprawl of the street-sellers. In this case at least the market became a victim of its own success.

Conclusion

Whilst London boasted more markets than any other city, collectively these markets became increasingly inadequate for consumer needs. Just what proportion of food consumption was procured outside the market place is impossible to quantify, and much depends upon one's definition of market - often the boundaries between markets, hawking and shops were fuzzy. By 1840, however, the majority of the food retailing trade was almost certainly bypassing the formal

¹²⁰ *Survey of London: St. James, Westminster: part I*, xxix (1960), pp. 218, 220; WCA, St. James's Piccadilly vestry minutes, 7 May 1813; H. Hobhouse, *The history of Regent Street* (1975), p. 41.

¹²¹ GH, Ms 496, pp. 29-30.

¹²² Mayhew, *London labour*, p. 10; *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 220; *Survey of London: the Grosvenor estate in Mayfair: part II - the buildings*, xl (1980), p. 172; *Builder*, 2 November 1867, p. 796.

¹²³ LMA, E/BER/CG E/10 42.

¹²⁴ *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 221; Mayhew, *London labour*, p. 10.

¹²⁵ LCC (1893), p. 26.



Figure 5

Clare market (G. Shepherd, 1815, Guildhall Library)

markets considered here. Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to argue that formal markets were therefore primitive or irrelevant institutions in a modernizing metropolis. It was not, for instance, so much a question of progressive and rational middle-class consumers consciously opting to shop outside anachronistic markets. Nineteenth century London markets may have suffered from consumers' 'fixed shopping habits', but these habits were themselves conditioned by the lack of retail market centres for a growing and changing population. The fragmentation of retailing was underpinned more by retailers' preferences and the lack of market accommodation and regulation on the supply-side, than consumers positively preferring to obtain their provisions in other ways. Lacking coherent and single government outside the City, London's retail distribution was largely shaped by commercial forces which did not always reflect consumer preferences or produce efficient outcomes. Once consumers began increasingly to patronize private shopkeepers and street sellers, then the playing field sloped even more against the formal markets. Nevertheless, the principle and practice of market retailing in London from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries remained extensive and significant even as it failed to keep up with the growing population of the metropolis.

Retail markets came and went, but they did not belong to a pre-modern age: it is more useful to speak of a vibrant and evolving, if unpredictable, retail market tradition. Their perceived utility was again awakened in the 1860s, a decade of feverish building activity, when there were entrepreneurial and philanthropic attempts to establish markets in Leicester Square (1863), Southwark (1863), Bethnal Green (1866 - Columbia market), Whitechapel (1867 - the 'People's market'), Kennington (1868), Lambeth (1868) and Chelsea (1869). In 1872 an Act was passed to rebuild Newport market. Yet complacency and inertia remained insurmountable. Those which managed to gain authorization failed commercially. The City Corporation toyed with the idea of expanding market accommodation but declined in view of the entrenched position of costermongers.¹²⁶ In 1867 *The Builder* condemned the mishmash of street selling that had taken root in London. Other towns were throwing up splendid new market halls, and London could only blush:

Is it not a reproach to the public spirit of the age and its boasted intelligence, that there is not, within a radius line of four miles from Charing Cross ... anything fit to be called a market for retail produce? Are we for ever to be dependent on the mind-gauge of some private individual or other for our provision 'exchanges'? What is the reason that Londoners, the knowing, the 'go ahead' ... are stolidly content with markets that comparatively poor, struggling, third rate towns would blush for? ... As the ancient philosopher said to the would be student: 'If ye know not geometry, then ye are not yet on even the very threshold of knowledge'; we say, that if ye know not marketing, ye are not yet on even the very threshold of civilization.

¹²⁶ CLRO, App. to Misc. Mss 187.7, 314; *Times*, 27 April 1863, p. 6; 28 April 1863, p. 10; 10 December 1867, p. 5; 20 August 1868, p. 7; Stern, 'The Baroness's market'; 27 & 28 Vic. c. 141; 29 & 30 Vic. c. 2; 31 & 32 Vic. c. 44; 31 & 32 Vic. c. 168; 32 & 33 Vic. c. 157; 35 & 36 Vic. c. 82; CLRO, *CC mins*, 5 March 1868, 16 December 1869 (App. 31).

Twenty-six years later a special committee of a progressive London County Council was advising that all street markets be taken into public hands and proper retail facilities erected in their place.¹²⁷ Markets - proper markets - were anything but archaic institutions, in the long eighteenth century or in the Victorian age. They were at the forefront of metropolitan modernization.

¹²⁷ *Builder*, 2 November 1867, pp. 796, 797; LCC (1893), pp. 26-7.

4 THE RISE OF MARKET WHOLESALING

In contrast to much of the retail situation, market wholesaling - selling in bulk or for resale - in London became firmly established and flourished in this period. As in the retail sector there were attractive alternative means of buying and selling in bulk, but sufficient incentives existed for traders to patronize wholesale markets and for developers to establish and enlarge them. London in the long eighteenth century formed an expanding 'single market' within which wholesale 'markets' had their place. They traded domestic agricultural and primary produce (both raw and semi-processed), but very few manufactured goods. The fact that new and exotic commodities like tea, coffee, sugar, wine and cocoa were generally marketed by more private and esoteric means might suggest that formal markets fell behind the march of modern commerce, but then notions of 'consumer revolution' are almost by definition preoccupied with the decencies and luxuries of life.¹ A growing consumer metropolis could not survive without the necessities too, and these were the staples of the wholesale markets. This chapter considers the patchy evidence that exists for the ways in which market wholesaling expanded; it then outlines other possible avenues of bulk trading and assesses various reasons why formal markets adapted in an age of change to meet the demands of users; and finally argues against making too heavy a distinction between formal and informal marketing. Its subject matter is broadly based, since many markets were involved; individual markets are explored in more depth in the following chapter.

The expansion of trade and of market wholesaling

In terms of number, size and personnel, wholesale markets underwent substantial change between 1660 and 1840. Table 22 outlines as fully as possible the numerical situation in London. Unfortunately the evidence as to when or whether a particular market possessed, gained or lost a wholesale function is not always clear, and so the categorization below should not be taken too precisely.²

¹ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J. H. Plumb, *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialization of eighteenth century England* (1982).

² Strong hints, for instance, that Clare and St. James's sold whole pigs and carcasses in the mid-eighteenth century, and Newport carcasses in the nineteenth, qualify them for inclusion. W. Maitland, *The history of London from its foundation by the Romans to the present time* (1739), ii, p. 553; *Low life* (1764), p. 101; P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), p. 357.

Table 22 Probable wholesaling markets in London, 1660-1840

	1660	1700	1760	1840
	Billingsgate (fish)	Bear Key (corn)	Billingsgate (fish)	Berm'sey Leather Co
	Billingsgate (coal)	Billingsgate (fish)	Billingsgate (coal)	Billingsgate (fish)
	Blackwell Hall (cloth)	Billingsgate (coal)	Bishopsgate St. (hay)	Borough (f & veg)
	Haymarket	Blackwell Hall (cloth)	Blackwell Hall (cloth)	Coal Exchange
	Leadenhall (leather)	Bloomsbury (hay)	Borough (f & veg)	Corn Exchange (Old)
	Leadenhall (bays)	Brookfield (cattle)	Clare (meat)	Corn Exchange (New)
	Queenhithe (malt, meal)	Chapel Street (hay)	Clerkenwell (skins)	Cov Garden (f & veg)
	Smithfield (cattle)	Cov Garden (f & veg)	Corn Exchange	Cumberland (hay)
	Smithfield (hay)	Haymarket	Cov Garden (f & veg)	Farringdon (f & veg)
	Smithfield (horses) ^b	Leadenhall (meat)	Fleet (f & veg)	Hungerford (fish)
	Southwark (cattle)	Leadenhall (leather)	Haymarket	Hungerford (meat)
	Southwark (leather)	Leadenhall (bays)	Honey Lane (meat)	Islington (cattle)
	Southwark (hay)	Leadenhall (meat)	Leadenhall (meat)	Leadenhall (poultry)
		Queenhithe (meal)	Leadenhall (leather)	Leadenhall (leather)
		Smithfield (cattle)	Newgate (meat)	Newgate (meat)
		Smithfield (hay)	Queenhithe (meal)	Newport (meat)
		Smithfield (horses)	St. James (meat)	Portman (hay)
		Southwark (hay)	Smithfield (cattle)	Portman (f & veg)
		Stocks (f & veg)	Smithfield (hay)	Rag Fair (apparel)
		Whitechapel (hay)	Smithfield (horses)	Smithfield (cattle)
			Southwark (hay)	Smithfield (hay)
			Whitechapel (meat)	Smithfield (horses)
			Whitechapel (hay)	Southwark (hay)
				Spitalfields (f & veg)
				Warwick Lane (meat)
				Whitechapel (meat)
				Whitechapel (hay)
Total	13	20	23	27
% appearing in next column ^a	85%	75%	61%	-

^a Includes markets deliberately removed viz. Stocks → Fleet (1737); Fleet → Farringdon (1829); Haymarket → Cumberland (1830).

^b Horse sales at Smithfield are counted wholesale by virtue of the bulk nature of the transaction.

Sources: see Appendices 2, 3

Skin and hay markets are presumed to be wholesale.³ As in previous tables, significant change occurred between 1660 and 1700, although bulk selling of deadmeat or meal may have gone on in some markets not listed for 1660. Certainly wholesaling became more apparent in the late seventeenth and during the eighteenth century, and unlike in the retail sector, these specialized markets continued to grow in number into the nineteenth century. Whilst certain markets lost their trade, others emerged, and larger volumes of business were carried on by 1840.

Over the whole period, the number of wholesaling markets more^{than} doubled. Broken down by commodity, however, the table offers a more varied picture. Whilst there were never more than two markets dealing in fish, cattle, corn, cloth and leather, wholesale carcase and horticultural markets each increased from zero to five between 1660 and 1840, and the number of

hay markets multiplied in the late seventeenth century. Yet an absence of numerical growth did not indicate a stagnant trade. Some markets enjoyed rising revenues, notably Covent Garden, Smithfield, Newgate, Borough and Billingsgate (Table 9, p. 31). Smithfield in particular dominated the livestock trade and trebled its business between 1732 and 1846 (Table 23), a rate which matched the demographic trend.

Table 23 Sales of cattle and sheep in Smithfield market, 1732-1846

Year	Cattle	Sheep
1732	76, 210	514, 700
1762	102, 831	722, 160
1795	131, 092	-
1828	161, 600	1, 438, 790
1838	199, 369	1, 540, 280
1846	213, 525	1, 527, 220

Source: *Morning Chronicle survey* (November 1850), pp. 184-5. The figures include foreign cattle.

Two associated factors underpinned wholesale market expansion: the growth of the inland trade and the rise of the middleman. From the early sixteenth century, London's rapidly growing demand for foodstuffs was satisfied by an ever wider geographical range of supplies.⁴ This facilitated the emergence of certain large and dominant food markets, which were increasingly supplying smaller markets, shops and street retailers as much as they were consumers. In the same way that prosperous market towns specialized in particular trades and acquired a regional rather than merely local reputation, so the larger markets of London expanded and specialized and deprived lesser suburban markets of a direct country trade - a process of rationalization through hierarchical development which occurred largely independent of political interference.⁵ The growing distance between the loci of production and consumption opened up a historic role for the middleman who bought off regional producers and sold on to processors or vendors in or near the metropolis. Middlemen bore risks and facilitated the integration of regional

³ Hay markets may also have existed at Newington Causeway and Paddington in 1840 as listed in Pigot & Co.'s 1839 edit on of *A directory of London and its suburbs*. Their inclusion in Table 22 would reinforce the general trend of expansion.

⁴ F. J. Fisher, 'The development of the London food market, 1540-1640', *Economic History Review*, 5 no. 2 (1935); E. A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy, 1650-1750', *Past and Present*, 37 (1967); J. A. Chartres, 'Food consumption and internal trade' in A. Beier & R. Finlay (eds.), *London, 1500-1700: the making of the metropolis* (1986).

⁵ On the hierarchical development of English market towns, see W. Thwaites, 'The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire', Ph. D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1980), p. 42; J. A. Chartres, 'The marketing of agricultural produce' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, 1640-1750* [vol. 5.ii.] (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 409-20.

economies.⁶ Whilst they may have undermined town markets elsewhere, the multiplication of middlemen was arguably a cause and consequence of the expanding trade of the London markets.⁷ As agricultural output increased, the opportunity cost of country producers coming to market also rose, so that employing a specialist reduced risks and saved time:

In the days when farming was extensively carried on near to London, and when facilities of public transit were slow and irregular, the neighbouring agriculturalists brought their meat in their own carts to London, and sold it themselves, at Leadenhall, for instance. This entailed a great loss of time; and as these country dealers had their station, in the midst of the London butchers, they gradually fell into the way of employing these butchers as their agents for sale, and so the commission trade became first established.⁸

The presence of wholesalers became ever more insistent in various London markets during the eighteenth century. The most celebrated were the carcass butchers, who numbered about fifty by 1828.⁹ Probably originating in the early eighteenth century, they bought cattle, pigs, sheep and calves at Smithfield or in the country, had them killed (either by themselves or by slaughtermen) and sold whole or part carcasses to the retail or 'cutting' butchers in the wholesale markets.¹⁰ Wholesale fishmongers dominated Billingsgate from an early stage.¹¹ Dealers in fruit and vegetables were also noted at Newgate and Fleet in 1784 and at Covent Garden in the early nineteenth century.¹² Jobbers bought and resold cattle and grainstuffs on a purely speculative basis, but they did not strictly perform a wholesaling function.¹³

Of more significance were the operations of 'salesmen' or 'factors' in each of the main market trades, specializing in the practice of selling consigned goods at the best prices for their employers.¹⁴ They provided necessary credit to buyers and rudimentary banking facilities to their sellers, something country producers were less able to do.¹⁵ The Smithfield salesmen, who emerged in the seventeenth century, were employed by breeders, graziers and even jobbers to take responsibility for their livestock in the London area, estimate market prices and obtain a good sale. Later on came the rise of the meat salesmen, based in Whitechapel, Newgate and Leadenhall markets. Loaded waggons sent from over fifty miles away appeared to be consigned

⁶ R. B. Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business, particularly between 1660 and 1760* (New Haven, 1915; reprinted New York, 1968), pp. 119, 124-7, 155-6 & *passim*.

⁷ Chartres, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', p. 469.

⁸ *Morning Chronicle survey*, (28 November 1850), p. 214.

⁹ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 113.

¹⁰ There was an Act in 1706 forbidding butchers to sell cattle to other butchers in and around London, 5 Anne c. 34. See Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 199-200.

¹¹ See the 1699 Act for making Billingsgate a free market, 10 & 11 Will. III c. 24; McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', pp. 186-8.

¹² CLRO, City Lands, vol. 76 (1784-5), ff. 195v, 197r; LMA, E BER/CG/E/10 19, Brief for an Act relating to Covent Garden market regulation (loose in bundle), p. 3.

¹³ On jobbers, see R. B. Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business, particularly between 1660 and 1840* (New Haven, 1915; reprinted New York, 1968), pp. 156-8, 190-4.

¹⁴ Distinctions between salesman and wholesalers were not always clear, since the former sometimes bought and sold on their own account.

¹⁵ CLRO, Misc. Mss 112.8, Committee relating to high prices of provisions, book 1 (7 August 1786).

to Newgate salesmen in the 1750s.¹⁶ A City Lands Committee report of 1760 blamed enhanced prices on the ‘modern custom of higlers and other country people who formerly used to attend the markets and vend their own provisions transmitting their commodities such as beef, veal, pork, mutton, lamb, poultry, butter, eggs and other things to agents or salesmen’.¹⁷ In the early decades of the nineteenth century market salesmen in the deadmeat trade underwent a remarkable expansion. In Newgate their numbers rose from twelve in 1818 to fifty in 1830 and at least 140 by 1850.¹⁸

Salesmen also operated in other sectors. The marketing of broadcloth was controlled from the 1660s by the factors of Blackwell Hall.¹⁹ The complexity and size of the expanding corn trade offered excellent opportunities for factors who emerged in the Port of London in the later seventeenth century. As late as 1829, one commentator remarked that ‘the business of a corn broker is one of modern growth and doubtful utility’.²⁰ Fishermen at Billingsgate had turned over their catches to salesmen at a commission of 3.5% by the middle of the eighteenth century, if not before. A century later only 1% of Billingsgate’s trade consisted of fishermen conveying and disposing their own cargoes.²¹ One of the earliest factors in the fruit trade was a woman. Richard Steele relates how he travelled downriver in a fruit boat which received produce at Nine Elms including melons ‘consigned by Mr. Cuffe of that place, to Sarah Sewell and Company at their stall in Covent Garden’. Consignments to regular salesmen were more usual by the early nineteenth century and many gardeners continued to market their produce themselves.²² In the great seacoal trade, broking began with the Thames lightermen in the early eighteenth century; from the 1730s the factors proper emerged at Billingsgate, protected as they were with legal status, and in 1761 they formed a Coal Factors’ Society.²³ Salesmen in the leather and hide trade, however, did not appear in any numbers until the early nineteenth century.²⁴

¹⁶ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 51 (1759), ff. 15-18.

¹⁷ CLRO, Jor. 62, f. 177.

¹⁸ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 122 (1830), p. 706; *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 652, 1103.

¹⁹ Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 296-304; C. Gill, ‘Blackwell Hall Factors, 1795-1799’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 6 (1953-4).

²⁰ See, for example, J. A. Chartres, ‘Trade and shipping in the Port of London: Wiggins Key in the later seventeenth century’, *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser., 1 (1980), pp. 43-5; T. Allen, *The history and antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark and parts adjacent* (1827-9), iii, p. 749.

²¹ The 1699 Billingsgate Act forbade fishmongers to ‘ingross or buy, in the said market ... any quantity of fish, but what shall be for his own sale or use, and not for on the behalf of any other fishmonger to expose to sale, under pain of forfeiting ... 20 *l*, 10 & 11 Will. III c. 24; *JHC*, xxviii (1758), p. 204; *Morning Chronicle survey* (12 December 1850), pp. 241-2.

²² *The Spectator*, no. 454 (11 August 1712), p. 98; J. C. Loudon, *An encyclopaedia of gardening* (1825 edn.), pp. 1041, 1061; M. Thick, *The Neat House Gardens: early market gardening around London* (Totnes, 1998), p. 151.

²³ F. R. S. Smith, *Sea coal for London: history of the coal factors in the London market* (1961); J. L. P. Denny, ‘The coal market’, *Guildhall Historical Association Transactions*, 4 (1969), pp. 21-2.

²⁴ CLRO, Jor. 84, f. 362; Jor. 86, f. 3; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 216-17.

The rise of wholesalers generally and commissioned salesmen in particular inaugurated the decline of the casual traders. Similarly, the traditional designation of 'market people' was steadily losing currency after 1750, a term evidently too flimsy to describe the middlemen with their capitalist clout. The growth of middlemen encouraged many markets to acquire more fixed capital. The commercially-minded lessees of the City markets were ready, willing and able to accommodate larger traders with enclosed stalls, shops and warehouses.²⁵ New wholesale markets

Table 24 *Improvements to London's wholesale markets, 1748-1841*

Year	Market	Produce	Type of improvement	Approx. cost (£) ^a
1748	Covent Garden	Fruit and veg.	rebuilding shops	4,000
1786	Borough	Fruit and veg.	building 7 new shops	500
1793	Borough	Fruit and veg.	new buildings and alterations	2,900
1792	Leadenhall	Poultry	improvements	1,000
1798-99	Leadenhall	General	rebuilding market house	450
1800	Borough	Fruit and veg.	widening of access lane	2,000
1798-1801	Billingsgate	Fish	embankment and market house	5,750
1801	Newgate	Butchers' meat	rebuilding market house; sheds	300
1813	Leadenhall	Leather	warehouses and shops	5,600
1824	Newgate	Poultry	covering and improvements	1,050
1826	Billingsgate	Fish	covering and improvements	
1826	Borough	Fruit and veg.	enlarged	3,000
1828-30	Covent Garden	Fruit and veg.	rebuilding	
				61,000
1829	Corn Exchange	Grain etc.	enlarged	
1835	Borough	Fruit and veg.	enlarged	
1835-9	Smithfield	Livestock	enlarged	
				30,600
1838	Farringdon	Fruit and veg.	new sheds and improvements	800
1838	Newgate	Butchers' meat	building 12 shops and alterations	3,100
1841	Billingsgate	Fish	covering and enlargement	600

^a Figures rounded to nearest fifty.

Sources: Covent Garden: LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10/4; *Surv. of Lon*, xxxvi (1970), pp. 132, 136; Borough: LMA, Acc 2058 1/19-22 (30 Mar 1786, 8 Jan 1793, 13 Mar 1800, 15 Sep 1826, 23 Jan 1835); Corn Exchange: J. Watson, *Neighbourhood of the Corn Exchange* (1879), p. 16; Leadenhall: CLRO, Jor. 73, f. 171; Jor. 78, f. 141; D. Stroud, *George Dance, architect* (1971), p. 192; Newgate: CLRO, Jor. 79, f. 277; CC papers, 12 Feb 1824; *Times*, 19 Feb 1824; *CC mins*, 11 May 1838; Billingsgate: Stroud, *George Dance*, p. 149; *CC mins*, 8 Feb 1826, 30 Nov 1826, 14 Dec 1826; Smithfield: *Morning Chronicle survey*, (21 Nov 1850), p. 187; Farringdon: CC papers, 6 Aug 1838.

were built; older ones were improved or enlarged, open standings were covered with immovable stalls, stalls and market houses transmuted into sheds and shops; greater warehouse and shop

²⁵ See, for example, CLRO, Jor. 52, f. 92b (19 December 1696); City Lands, vol. 14 (1716-17), f. 62; Misc. Mss 332.2 (9 August 1737).

space was provided, including residential accommodation (Table 24).²⁶ More markets, larger markets, market salesmen: the period 1660-1840 witnessed the coming of age of market wholesaling.

Alternatives to the wholesale market

Formal open and competitive markets had no monopoly of wholesaling in this period, and a clearer assessment of their commercial role must consider what alternatives existed. One traditional alternative was the fair. Other, less conspicuous options, included marketing in warehouses and in the parlours and courtyards of inns; 'forestalling' on the road to market, and buying directly at the farm gate. The rise of private and informal marketing, highlighted in the work of Westerfield and Gras, and more recently in that of Everitt and Chartres, is one of the motifs of early modern English economic and social history. Regulated market structures throughout England became vulnerable in the face of an expanding inland trade, widespread urbanization and the demands of London. Periodic complaints against clandestine trading, the inadequacies of the open market place, the proliferation of commercial intermediaries, and the existence of certain well-known private markets together point to the prevalence of the phenomenon.²⁷ How significant were these alternatives in London? Scrappy evidence may make precise answers impossible, but the question cannot be ignored.

Fairs

The traditional institution for bulk and long-distance trading in England was the fair. In medieval times market and fairs often originated together in the same royal charter. In the early modern period some fairs began increasingly to specialize in certain agrarian products (especially in the south-east), but others lost out to merchants' exchanges and the regular open market, particularly in London, where they became commercially redundant:

Fairs ... prove, undoubtedly, convenient and useful throughout the country, as they afford an opportunity for the sale of cattle, and supplying the community with articles of hardware and domestic merchandizes ... The regular markets of London have long since superseded the local utility of such institutions, and when held, the leading use (if any) is

²⁶ For instance, the fruiterers of Covent Garden market in the later eighteenth century added a second residential storey to their little shops, LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 1/12; see also CLRO, City Lands, vol. 72 (1780-1), f. 71r.

²⁷ N. S. B. Gras, *The evolution of the English corn market from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (Camb., Massachusetts, 1915; reprinted New York, 1967); Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*; J. A. Chartres, 'The place of inns in the commercial life of London and Western England, 1660-1760', D. Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1973); idem, 'City and towns, farmers and economic change in the eighteenth century', *Historical Research*, 4 (1991); idem, 'The marketing of agricultural produce'; A. M. Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, 1500-1640* [vol. 4] (Cambridge, 1967); idem, 'Urban growth, 1570-1770', *Local historian*, 8 (1969), pp. 121-3; idem, 'The English urban inn, 1560-1760' in Everitt (ed.), *Perspectives in English urban history* (1973); Thwaites, 'The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire', pp. 314-17.

to disperse toys and gingerbread among children, exhibit the shallow tricks of jugglers, idle feats of rope dancers, with other useless but wonderful sights, and to fill the pockets of itinerant showmen.²⁸

Thus there was little role for a seasonal cattle fair in London when every Monday morning in Smithfield were to be seen the best of British fatstock. The May Fair in Brookfield, granted by James II in 1688 for sixteen days, had the right to sell all kinds of merchandise, but it could also trade livestock twice a week. The prevalence and permanence of specialist retail outlets as well as the Royal Exchange and New Exchange had overtaken the fair's consumer-oriented role. Even the food markets were known to sell hardware and gingerbread.

During the long eighteenth century, fairs and markets became quite dislocated and distinct. Whilst both historically were public concourses of commercial exchange, fairs usually boasted the greater gathering of people: 'an old woman and a goose make a market - two old women and two geese make a fair', ran an old proverb.²⁹ Braudel has characterized the coming of the fair to the early modern town as an invasion of revelry and disorder, a carousel of capitalism, consumption and carnival.³⁰ At best tolerated as popular entertainment, London's fairs were more widely regarded by the authorities as snares of vice and seedbeds of plebian disorder. Since they concentrated the various entertainments, spoofs, diversions and vices of the capital into a small outdoor space for a few days only, fairs became objects of ruling class disapproval.³¹ May Fair was 'only a FAIR in name, but indeed a RIOT', and the magistrates feared worse during the time of the Jacobite rebellion in 1746.³² Samuel Pepys had often attended 'Bartlemew Fair', but by the 1690s the Fair was under attack from the authorities, and civic proceedings against it in 1708 goaded the Grand Juries of Westminster and Middlesex to present May Fair as another common nuisance.³³ 'Unlawful games and plays', riots and misdemeanours, disturbance of the peace and

²⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 6 April 1816; J. Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex* (1807), p. 536; W. Addison, *English fairs and markets* (1953), pp. vi, 59-60; Chartres, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', pp. 420-42; P. J. Corfield, 'The social and economic history of Norwich, 1650-1850: a study in urban growth', Ph. D. thesis (University of London, 1976), p. 108. For a list of London's fairs in this period, see Table 2 (p. 22).

²⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 6 June 1823.

³⁰ F. Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century - The wheels of commerce*, vol. ii (1982; trans. by S. Reynolds), pp. 82-94.

³¹ The frost fairs which sprouted up on the frozen Thames in 1683, 1715-16, 1740, 1788 and 1814-15 were exceptional events in every way, and performed a genuine marketing role when snow and ice rendered roads and passages impassable and waterborne supplies were held up in the Port of London. In 1684 one print ran:

Behold the wonder of this present age
A famous river now becomes a stage
Question not what I now declare to you
The Thames is *now both fair and market too*.

W. Andrews, *Famous frosts and frost fairs in Great Britain*, p. 26 [my italics].

³² *Reasons for suppressing the yearly fair in Brook-field, Westminster; commonly called May Fair* (1709), p. 31; LMA, 60.225, Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books and Orders of Court, vol. xxi (1744-7), p. 50.

³³ P. Burke, 'Popular culture in seventeenth century London', *London Journal*, 3 (1977), p. 146; *Reasons for suppressing the yearly fair in Brook-field*, pp. 34-41.

moral debauchery were standard criticisms of fairs.³⁴ From the late eighteenth century *The Times* campaigned against Bartholomew Fair and its corrupting effects among the ‘industrial classes’.³⁵ Theatrical disorder had become the antithesis of commerce. The City aimed in 1708 to restore Bartholomew Fair to ‘its primitive institution, and the traders resorting thither, to the full enjoyment of their trades’. ‘Pity it is not abolished!’ cried the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1785, ‘What was once a profitable institution, is now become a nuisance’. Such were the dangers of public concourse without legitimate exchange.³⁶

After 1688 fairs were no longer authorized alongside markets. Those which did have market connections - May Fair, Bartholomew Fair, Southwark - were curtailed in the eighteenth century.³⁷ As institutions and urban spaces, fairs belonged more to recreational than economic life, and were subject to the kinds of moral objections targeted at gaming, horse racing, diversions and disorderliness. Whereas from the 1820s fairs became vulnerable to urban sprawl as well as magisterial attacks, renewed attempts at this time were made to establish and improve markets.³⁸ For most if not all of our period, London’s fairs offered little practical alternative to the formal markets in the business of wholesale trading.

Forestalling, contracting and warehousing

The ancient crime of forestalling - ‘buying up commodities by the way, before they come to market’ - was by definition an alternative means of marketing.³⁹ Long believed to enhance the price of provisions, the practice was widely suspected in the inland corn trade but was particularly notorious among London cattle jobbers and carcase butchers. Jobbers forestalled for speculative reasons - they aimed to buy cattle en route to London from the drovers or graziers, in order to resell later at a higher price. Livestock bound for Smithfield market in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were frequently bought up by London butchers at ‘resting’ places - they were rarely called markets - in Islington, Hounslow, Knightsbridge, Paddington and

³⁴ See for example, LMA, MJ/SBB 1028 13 March 1745, pp. 51-2.

³⁵ *Times*, 3 September 1792, p. 2; 5 September 1796, p. 3; 5 September 1803, p. 3.

³⁶ *Reasons for suppressing the yearly fair in Brook-field*, p. 42; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 3 September 1785.

³⁷ *London Evening Post*, 19-21 August 1760; J. Fletcher, ‘Statistical account of the markets of London’, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, x (1847), p. 346; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, lxxxv (1815), pp. 198-200. The City Corporation also suppressed Southwark Fair. May Fair was abolished at the behest of the wealthy vestrymen of St. George Hanover Square, WCA, C771, St. George Hanover Square vestry minutes, 4 April 1763, 18 April 1763, 23 April 1764.

³⁸ *The Times*, 4 September 1823, p. 2; 14 April 1826, p. 3; 28 April 1826, p. 4. For an account of the suppression and endurance of metropolitan fairs, see H. Cunningham, ‘The metropolitan fairs: a case study in the social control of leisure’ in A. P. Donajgrodzki (ed.), *Social control in nineteenth century Britain* (1977).

³⁹ G. Lamoine (ed.), *Charges to the Grand Jury, 1689-1803* (Camden Society, 4th ser., 93, 1992), p. 235 (July 1728).

Mile End.⁴⁰ Exactly why is not quite clear: perhaps butchers found their bargaining power was greater at such lairs than at market. If so, then there were grounds for contemporaries' suspicion that forestalling and monopolistic prices went together. In the high-priced years of the 1790s, such charges were renewed.⁴¹

It was not just cattle that was forestalled. In 1737 - probably not an exceptional year - the collector of the City markets reported that 'abundance of provisions are bought on the road coming to market by dealers in all parts of the town', depriving him of market dues. Live poultry was sold at Bow, Tower Hill, St. Katherine's Dock and Bear Key.⁴² Animals marched along the road to market were particularly suited to forestalling, since they became easy 'targets' for buyers, whilst drovers might have been glad not to have gone all the way to the final market place. Since forestalling was not just noted during times of scarcity (such as the 1760s and 1790s) it was probably an ongoing phenomenon. There is little evidence of it in the nineteenth century, but then it may not have been so censured; certainly little was said on the subject at the Smithfield inquiry of 1828.

Logically connected to forestalling was directly contracting for supplies between town and country. There is evidence throughout the long eighteenth century that some high quality garden produce was sold direct from the suburban market gardens or privately contracted to fruit shops in London.⁴³ In 1786 the City market collectors believed that the high prices of butter and cheese testified to the recent fashion for London dealers and West End shopkeepers contracting these goods direct from the country dairies.⁴⁴ Even so, it was quite possible for market shopkeepers to contract butter or eggs, even from foreign sources. Fussell and Goodman long ago noted that the larger Essex dairies in the eighteenth century usually made arrangements with a Clare market butterman for their whole stock of butter.⁴⁵ The well-documented backwards-marketing power of the London cheesemongers, wherever they were, appears to be the most spectacular instance of the contracting phenomenon which made a specialist wholesale cheese market in central London redundant.⁴⁶ The expanding London brewers also by-passed markets and went straight to farmers in their search for regular supplies of malt. Even so, many brewers

⁴⁰ *House of Lords Manuscripts*, iv, new ser. (1699-1702), pp. 156-7; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 343; CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 73 (1781-2), f. 159; vol. 74 (1782-3), f. 151; A. B. Robertson, 'The Smithfield cattle market', *East London Papers*, 4 (1961), pp. 83-4; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 191-4.

⁴¹ See, for example, *JHC*, li (1795-6), pp. 551, 636-8; CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 88 (1796-7), ff. 31, 38.

⁴² CLRO, Misc. Mss 332.2, Remarks on the City markets by the collector Mr. Boulton, 9 August 1737.

⁴³ Loudon, *An encyclopaedia of gardening*, pp. 1041, 1061; Thick, *The Neat House Gardens*, p. 147.

⁴⁴ CLRO, Misc. Mss 118.2, Committee to consider the high prices of provisions (1786-7), book 1.

⁴⁵ *London and its environs described* (1761), v, p. 32; H. Barty-King, *Making provision: a history of the provision trade* (1986), pp. 13-14; G. E. Fussell & C. Goodman, 'The eighteenth century traffic in milk products', *Economic History*, 3 (1937).

⁴⁶ W. M. Stern, 'Where, oh where, are the cheesemongers of London?' *London Journal*, 5 (1979); idem, 'Cheese shipped coastwise to London towards the middle of the eighteenth century', *Guildhall*

still attended Bear Key and Mark Lane, and it was not as if markets lost a large trade which they had once enjoyed.⁴⁷

Another option was for London traders to buy wholesale from established hinterland markets. Yet there is little actual evidence to suggest that market wholesaling outside London ever became a substitute for market wholesaling inside London. For instance, the nearest cattle markets to London, at Romford and Southall, were ten miles away and largely catered for localized demand. Southall's midweek market did attract some custom from London butchers, but at best its role was subsidiary. The famous Barnet Fair channelled stock to local farmers who fattened them for the London market.⁴⁸ The nearest corn markets were even further, at places like Uxbridge, St. Albans and Reigate. They tended to act as marketing points en route to the dominant London market which set the prices for the hinterland, although they could perform a complementary role in supplying suburban millers when grain at Mark Lane was low.⁴⁹ The eighteenth century market at downriver Greenwich dealt in the fruit and vegetables of Kent, but nothing on the scale of the London market at upriver Southwark.⁵⁰ Even where metropolitan market power negated formal wholesale markets, as in the cheese trade, there was no corresponding rise of large provincial wholesale markets in Chester, Liverpool or Hull. Generally speaking, large wholesale markets were situated close to the buyer; that is, within London.

A similar practice to forestalling was warehouse marketing, evidence for which spans the whole period. In 1698 and 1710 it was claimed that meal and flour were secreted and sold at inns and private warehouses rather than market, a complaint which preambled an Act of Parliament in 1650 on the subject.⁵¹ In the 1730s fruit was landed at Three Cranes, Paul's Wharf and Blackfriars by the Thames, installed in warehouses and 'not brought to market, though sold for the country; and thus the duty is lost'. Strype had earlier noted Three Cranes Wharf as 'of some account for the costermongers, where they have their warehouses for fruit'.⁵² The sale and delivery of woollen cloth to London had long been carried out and regulated at the public market of Blackwell Hall. In the eighteenth century, however, the dominant factors and others began to

Miscellaneous, 4 (1973); G. E. Fussell, 'The London cheesemongers of the eighteenth century', *Economic History*, 1 (1926-9).

⁴⁷ P. Mathias, *The brewing industry in England, 1700-1830* (1959), pp. 465-6; idem, *The first industrial nation: an economic history of Britain, 1700-1914* (1969; 1983 edn.), p. 137.

⁴⁸ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 50-1; K. J. Bonser, *The drovers: who they were and how they went, an epic of the English countryside* (1970), p. 47.

⁴⁹ *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), p. 146; Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex*, p. 537; Chartres, 'Food consumption and internal trade', pp. 180-1.

⁵⁰ See for example LCC (1893), p. 19. Defoe's *Tour* makes no mention of the markets at Greenwich and Woolwich.

⁵¹ CLRO, Rep. 103, ff. 80-2; *Reasons humbly offer'd for passing a clause to the Bakers' Bill concerning the public markets* [1710], broadside.

⁵² CLRO, Misc. Mss 332.2; Strype, *Stow's survey*, iii, p. 13.

gravitate to independent warehouse facilities nearby to create a ‘marketing district’.⁵³ In the early nineteenth century the failure of Leadenhall market to accommodate the expanding leather trade encouraged dealers to rent adjoining warehouses, ‘and being so near the market they don’t use it but conduct their business in own warehouses and not in the market’, a practice which subsequently gravitated to Bermondsey.⁵⁴ Warehouse marketing later flourished in the provisions trade, along the south banks of the river.⁵⁵

Inns

English inns, according to Chartres and Everitt, were versatile institutions. They doubled as auction houses and as centres of local administration and political discourse; they might provide banking and warehouse facilities and accommodation for balls, assemblies, concerts, lectures, card-parties, cockfights, reformist meetings and friendly societies as well as the usual refreshment and lodging facilities.⁵⁶ In London, the great inns, clustering in areas such as Smithfield, Holborn and Southwark, acted as points of regional orientation within the capital. As termini for provincial carriers and coaches, providing storage and other amenities, they naturally tended to become informal market venues for a range of agricultural products.⁵⁷

Inn-marketing was most prominent in the meal trade. Various efforts to keep such articles within the public markets were made after 1650. Six meal markets were planned on the outskirts of the City, but none flourished. After the Great Fire Honey Lane, Newgate and Leadenhall were to be the only public places of resort for meal and flour brought to London by land carriage.⁵⁸ In 1676, however, the two City mealweighers thought ‘they could in no wise compell the mealsellers now selling in inns and other prohibited places to bring their meal into the places appointed for the same within the publique marketts of this City’.⁵⁹ Despite various attempts to increase the number of meal markets in the late seventeenth century (including Hungerford off the Strand), country mealmen complained to the Aldermen of insufficient marketing accommodation and of being molested for bringing meal elsewhere. Prohibited sales in ‘inns and other private places of meal, flower, corn, peas, beans, tares and all sorts of graine and bread by

⁵³ The market was finally abolished by 55 Geo. III c. 93; D. W. Jones, ‘The “hallage” receipts of the London cloth markets, 1562-c.1720, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 25 (1972); Gill, ‘Blackwell Hall factors, 1795-1799’; I. Black, ‘The textile district of London in the nineteenth century’, paper given, Centre for Metropolitan History study day, ‘Business space in the City of London, 1680-1870’ (Institute of Historical Research, 5 June 1997).

⁵⁴ CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 124 (1832), pp. 654-5.

⁵⁵ Barty-King, *Making provision*, pp. 24-7; G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), p. 124.

⁵⁶ Chartres, ‘The place of inns’, *passim*; Everitt, ‘The marketing of agricultural produce’, pp. 559-62; *idem.*, ‘The English urban inn, 1560-1760’, pp. 104-20.

⁵⁷ J. A. Chartres, ‘The capital’s provincial eyes: London’s inns in the early eighteenth century’, *London Journal*, 3 (1977); *idem.*, ‘The place of inns’, ch. 8.

⁵⁸ McGrath, ‘The marketing of food, fodder and livestock’, pp. 130, 268, 279, 306, 317, 339, 346; CLRO, *Rep.* 103, f. 82.

⁵⁹ CLRO, *Orders of the Markets Committee*, 1676-7, pp. 30, 38, 51, 54, 95

innholders, chandlers, and others contrary to law', continued.⁶⁰ Frequent calls to stop the 'forestalling' of the markets by selling meal at inns fell on deaf ears.⁶¹ When prices rose again in 1710, the same complaints were made: prosecutions by the Middlesex Justices increased and Parliament was implored to add a clause to the Bakers' Bill that year to compel all incoming meal and flour to be sold in the public markets.⁶² By that time the principal inns for the sale of meal were the George, Bell and Cock in Aldersgate Street, together with the King's Arms and White Horse near the Fleet market at Holborn Bridge, all well situated as termini of carrier services from the northern and western regions.⁶³

Acts of Common Council in 1663 (Inns and Osteries Act) and 1672/4 (Regulation of Markets Acts) sought to reduce marketing at inns and testified to its importance. Chartres identified informal inn markets in Augustan London not only for meal but for lace (Aldersgate Street), cattle (Smithfield), honey (Aldersgate Street and Holborn Bridge), hops (Southwark), spa waters (Ludgate Hill, Holborn Bridge, 1720) and even shovel handles (Gracechurch Street, 1758).⁶⁴ The 'White Horse Inn meal market' continued to be listed in successive editions of Maitland's London survey during the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ In 1742 butter was also found to be sold at the Kings Arms, George and Swan Inns at Holborn Bridge. Twenty years later the Bell Inn off Newgate market harboured vendors of cheese, butter and live ducks from Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Newgate's collector thought this sufficient explanation as to why the market 'is so thinly supplied which must with reason keep up the price of the few goods which are brought into market'. By the 1770s, waggoners were still selling provisions (and so avoiding toll) within the inn yards of the City, including sheep, cattle and calves at Smithfield's Ram Inn.⁶⁶ Given that the volume of such trading was probably greater than its historical documentation, the inn was clearly a major marketing venue.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ CLRO, Rep. 83, f. 260; Minutes of the Markets Committee, 1676-1680, f. 67; Jor. 52, ff. 246-7, 320; Rep. 103, ff. 82, 440; McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', p. 283.

⁶¹ The lease renewed in 1707 for the meal market by Fleet Ditch did not oblige the lessee henceforth to keep it as such, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 11 (1705-8), ff. 214b-215a, 261b.

⁶² E. G. Dowdell, *A hundred years of quarter sessions: the government of Middlesex from 1660 to 1760* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 169-70; *Reasons humbly offer'd for passing a clause to the Bakers' Bill concerning the publick markets* [1710], broadside.

⁶³ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 9 (1698-1701), f. 39a; Chartres, 'The place of inns', p. 296; Maitland, *The history of London* (1739), p. 527; (1756 edn.), ii, p. 728.

⁶⁴ Chartres, 'The place of inns', pp. 296-307.

⁶⁵ Maitland, *The history of London* (1739 edn.), p. 527; (1756 edn.), ii, p. 728; idem, *A continuation of the history and survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (1775 edn.), ii, p. 728.

⁶⁶ CLRO, Journal of the Markets Committee (1737-43), pp. 451-2; City Lands, vol. 50 (1758), f. 90; vol. 54 (1762), ff. 43b, 58; vol. 62 (1770), ff. 58-9; vol. 65 (1773), f. 145; vol. 66 (1774), f. 202; vol. 67 (1775), ff. 109, 118.

⁶⁷ Railway depots offered another marketing outlet for bulk commodities in the Victorian age, and they eventually undermined London's formal hay markets, Royal Comm. (1888), p. 21.

The economics of wholesale markets

Although precise assessments of trade shares are not possible, the growing internal provisions trade of the period ensured that several kinds of marketing, formal and informal, public and private, could prosper. But why, specifically, did market wholesaling flourish in the face of alternatives? In other towns, various factors apparently favoured private and informal marketing among dealers and middlemen: the incapacity of traditional markets to deal with expanding volumes of trade and the absence of existing specialist markets; the avoidance of tolls and inflexible market practices; and the convenience, regularity and accessibility of private marketing.⁶⁸ In London, these disadvantages were far less in evidence.

Accommodating the wholesale trade

Whilst formal market facilities in London were unable fully to service a vastly expanding provisions trade, investment in wholesale markets was not wanting from the later eighteenth century (see Table 22, Table 24). Provision of private sales facilities, according to Everitt, may have depended somewhat upon the enterprise of innkeepers, but wholesale markets were not short of promoters either.⁶⁹ So long as some existing wholesale markets flourished and whilst trade and population were growing, then it was both likely and reasonable for developers to invest in markets. Wholesale markets had the advantage of generating substantial toll revenues which increased directly with the amount of business, as well as rent receipts.⁷⁰ Specific improvements and enlargements to existing markets were expected to increase rental income.⁷¹ Moreover, retail and wholesale facilities were by no means mutually exclusive investments. As we saw, the large wholesale markets conducted a significant retail trade, and in the early nineteenth century, several markets sought to combine the two trades. For the developer, joint investment offered a means of spreading risks between trades; if one declined, its facilities might be transferred to the service of the other.

In a sense, London's problem was too much rather than too little market accommodation. Excellent facilities did not guarantee a healthy business, as the proprietors of the Islington cattle market and Hungerford market in the 1830s discovered. Capacity, not demand, was the dependent variable. Conversely, once a particular market gained an established reputation, new rival markets, which faced start-up costs and the resistance of settled trading patterns, found it difficult

⁶⁸ Chartres, 'The place of inns', pp. 34-7, 294, 306-7, *idem*, 'The capital's provincial eyes', p. 32; Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', p. 506; *idem*, 'Urban growth, 1570-1770', pp. 121-2; *idem*, 'The English urban inn, 1560-1760', pp. 97-100, 105; Thwaites, 'The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire', pp. 115, 154.

⁶⁹ Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', pp. 560-1.

⁷⁰ Retail markets also received tolls from their 'country trade', but this was in decline in the eighteenth century.

⁷¹ See for example CLRO, CC papers, 12 February 1824 (improvements to Newgate market).

to compete.⁷² A well-established market could afford to lack adequate amenity or accommodation in the short run, for there was little incentive for any individual buyer or seller to go elsewhere; in the long run, expanded accommodation was usually forthcoming. This ensured that there was a bed of continuity that underlay the turnover of markets outlined in Table 8 (p. 30). The final row of Table 22 (p. 86) indicates that 85% of the wholesaling markets in 1660 were still there in 1700; three-quarters of those in 1700 remained in 1760; and 61% of the wholesale markets in 1760 were around eighty years later. These are crude, but suggestive, figures. By 1850, London's largest markets - Smithfield, Billingsgate, Covent Garden, Borough, Newgate, Leadenhall, Spitalfields - were generally also London's oldest. The Corn Exchange, itself a unique institution, was a comparative newcomer, arriving in 1751.

Nor did any lack of specialized accommodation mean that marketing lost much trade. The multifaceted inn was predicated, argues Chartres, upon the absence of specialized institutions such as town halls, proper markets and exchanges, concert and assembly halls.⁷³ This was less the case in London than in the provinces. The marketing of inland and riverside corn, for instance, remained centred upon the specialist market at Bear Key.⁷⁴ Formal outlets for cattle, cloth, coal, fish, fruit and vegetables, hay, malt, poultry, animal skins and leather ensured that public markets would remain commercially important in London. Dairy products were sold in bulk at Leadenhall and Newgate in the nineteenth century though much was channelled direct to shops or through inns.⁷⁵ Whilst specialist markets for meal and cloth did decline, others emerged to accommodate particular salesmen.⁷⁶ The corn factors of Bear Key, for instance, impatient with quayside trading, clubbed together in 1747 to build their own 'Corn Exchange' (another exchange followed in 1828). Two decades later the London seacoal factors built their own exchange after they had found the congested open market place at Billingsgate dock increasingly disagreeable and local taverns not ideal; the Exchange was taken over by the City in 1803 which sought to set the market on a proper public footing.⁷⁷ In 1831 a separate meat market was established adjacent to Newgate to accommodate the increasing ranks of wholesale salesmen. Newgate itself (Figure 6) underwent a concentration of activity when its substantial fruit and

⁷² C. Knight (ed.), *London* (1841-3), v, p. 137; P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), pp. 240, 452; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 346. According to John Strype, the original Hungerford market had lost out to Covent Garden because the latter 'hath got the start', *Stow's survey*, vi, p. 76. Other white elephants were Westminster fish market (1749), Islington cattle market (1835), and, later in the nineteenth century, Columbia market and Shadwell fish market, *JHC*, xxvii (1756), p. 380; *LCC* (1893), pp. 18-19.

⁷³ Chartres, 'The place of inns', p. 450.

⁷⁴ BL, Add. Ms 33459, f. 169; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 347.

⁷⁵ E. W. Brayley et al., *London and Middlesex* (1810-16), i, p. 36; *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 212; Pigot & Co., *A directory of London and its suburbs* (1826-7 edn.), p. 22.

⁷⁶ The demise of Blackwell Hall may well have been due to traditional factors: strict regulations, too much trade to handle, and also changes in manufacturing technology, I. Black, 'The textile district of London in the nineteenth century'. On the decline of Queenhithe, see p. 125.

⁷⁷ Smith, *Sea coal for London*, chs. 9, 15; 43 Geo. III, c. 134.

vegetable market was transferred a few years later across the Fleet valley to Farringdon market, in order to free up space for the expanding deadmeat trade.⁷⁸

Flexibility

The growth and longevity of market wholesaling in London was partly based on its adaptability. The existence of many general markets and the fact that authorizing documents tended not to distinguish between wholesale and retail functions opened up the possibility that specialized markets might be fashioned out of them. Tolls and regulations remained, but, interestingly, onerous obligations and restrictions have not generally been cited as an impetus to private marketing.⁷⁹ In theory, traders might seek to reduce costs and hassle by marketing outside the formal venues. Certainly tolls or commission charges periodically ignited disputes at the larger markets, but in general they did not drive suppliers or salesmen away. Toll levels, being 'customary', probably increased less than rents in an expanding market, but even the latter seem to have been willingly paid.⁸⁰ When, for example, the traders at Covent Garden market were obliged to pay higher rents after its rebuilding in 1830, no shops or stands were left untenanted.⁸¹ Market restrictions tended to concern times, hygiene and weights and measures rather than prices or market practices.

Formal wholesale markets were flexible enough to adapt to the coming of salesmen and changing times. Newgate, for instance, had been built after the Great Fire as a meeting place for country producers (as well as City butchers) with town consumers. A freeman butcher could make the transition to salesman without the need to leave the market.⁸² When the City Corporation considered doing away with salesmen in its markets in 1760, the inquiry reported that their suppression would be 'attended with so many inconveniences and tend to diminish the quantity of provisions usually exposed to sale in the said markets that we think it best to decline any further thoughts on that head'.⁸³ The presence of salesmen and wholesalers actually strengthened the position of particular markets like Billingsgate where suppliers were tied to

⁷⁸ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 122 (1830), pp. 706, 761-2; *CC mins*, 27 October 1831; CC papers, 19 July 1833; *CC mins*, 11 May 1838, 19 July 1838.

⁷⁹ Chartres, 'The capital's provincial eyes', p. 32; Everitt, 'The English urban inn, 1560-1760', p. 105; Thwaites, 'The marketing of agricultural produce in eighteenth century Oxfordshire', p. 154. The loss of toll revenue was nevertheless a concern to the authorities as when livestock were sold in the Ram Inn, Smithfield, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 65 (1773), f. 145a.

⁸⁰ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 49 (1757-8), f. 64b; vol. 76 (1784-5), ff. 191r-192v; *London Evening Post*, 12-14 December 1758; 13-16 December 1760; LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 19, Evidence of lessees and frequenters of Covent Garden market in counsel's brief for 1813 Bill, loose in bundle; LMA, Acc 2058 1/21, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 16 July 1828; *Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxxviii (1818), p. 78; cuttings from *London Chronicle*, 1, 18, 21 August 1783 inserted in *London and its environs described* (1761), ii.

⁸¹ R. Thorne, *Covent Garden Market: its history and restoration* (1980), p. 21.

⁸² There were, however, several disputes between salesmen and collectors as to whether, as freemen, they were exempt from tolls levied upon the country goods they handled, see note 80 above.

⁸³ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 52 (1760), f. 236a.

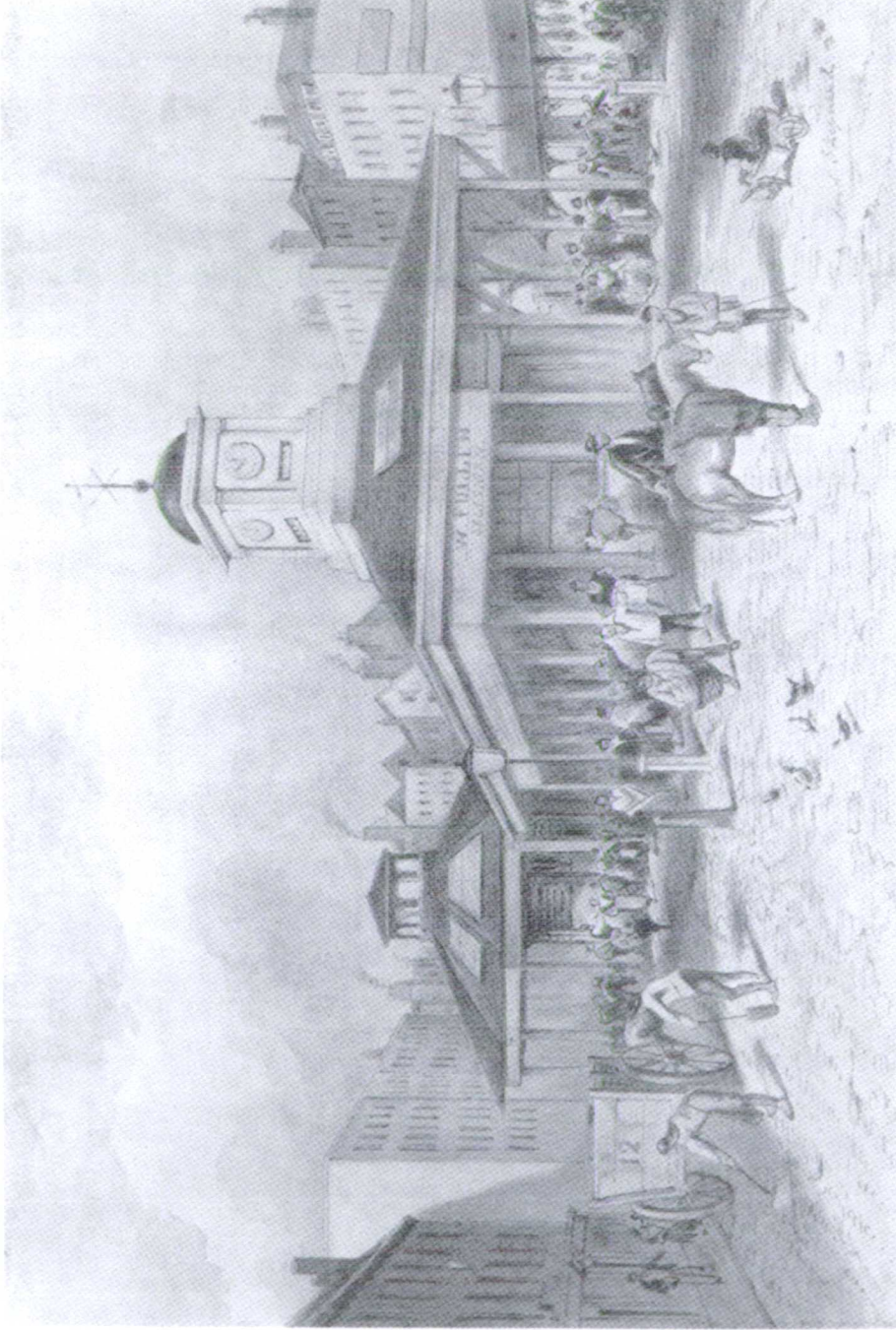


Figure 6 *Newgate market in the 1830s* (F. Shepherd, Guildhall Library)

them. Their growing professionalization in general gave impetus to the expansion of Georgian London's formal markets.⁸⁴

Progressive practices were in turn facilitated by the rise of the salesmen. The medieval innovation of sale by sample was in full swing among the Thameside cornfactors in the Restoration period. When the City sought to establish an official corn market in 1758, allowance was made for cornfactors, non-freemen, and the sale of grain by samples.⁸⁵ At Billingsgate the salesmen engaged in the innovative art of auctioning which has been more associated with inns: cod fish in lots of up to four or five dozen were sold to the best bidders among the wholesale fishmongers. Auctioning was an efficient means of disposing of large quantities of perishable produce quickly. On the other hand, it may have provided a veneer of openness to the selling process that in fact concealed the exercise of market power: buyers were encouraged to bid prices up to their maximum willingness to pay.⁸⁶

Market times became more flexible and facilitated wholesaling in otherwise retail markets. Newgate market hours officially began at 6 a.m., but salesmen were trading as early as 2 a.m. in the mid-eighteenth century, despite protests. Cattle sales at Smithfield began even earlier, at midnight.⁸⁷ Hay markets had no precise opening hours whilst Billingsgate commenced trading every morning at three (five in winter).⁸⁸ Of Covent Garden it was observed in 1841,

there is no particular hour for commencing business, but it varies at different seasons, and by daybreak there are always a few retailers present. Waggons and carts have been arriving for some time before, and porters are busied in transferring their contents to the different stations of the salesmen while the dawn is yet grey. The houses of refreshment around the market are open at one-thirty [a.m.] in summer.⁸⁹

For wholesaling purposes, market days generally continued to be periodic, but this was by no means a disadvantage or inefficiency for those involved. Smithfield in particular suited the retailers, for it was held on Mondays, an ideal time to buy, kill and dress meat in time for a fresh sale on Tuesday - one of the great meat-eating days of the week. The Friday market was perhaps too close to Saturday for some retail butchers who called for the market to be switched to Thursday; moves opposed by the Butchers Company.⁹⁰ Merchants in the early nineteenth century coal trade were opposed to non-market day trading at the Coal Exchange because demand would

⁸⁴ *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), p. 324; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, p. 212.

⁸⁵ T. DeLaune, *Angliae metropolis* (1690), p. 355; CLRO, Jor 61, ff 294-5; B. Campbell et al, *A medieval capital and its grain supply: agrarian production and distribution in the London region, c.1300* (1993), p. 175.

⁸⁶ *JHC*, xxviii (1758), pp. 204, 206; *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), p. 324: the 'Dutch' auctioning method (p. 364), in which a high price is proposed and then reduced until the lot is sold, was an even more effective way of maximizing owner income. On the inn's role as auction house, see Chartres, 'The place of inns', ch. 7.

⁸⁷ CLRO, Rep. 162, ff. 367-9; *City Lands*, vol. 67 (1775), f. 128r.

⁸⁸ 36 Geo. III c. 88, s. 15; J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1802-7), iv, p. 425.

⁸⁹ Knight, *London*, v, p. 140.

⁹⁰ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 117, 248-9; CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 88 (1796-7), ff. 31, 38, 60-2, 344-6.

be less certain; in fact it suited many of them to come down on corn market days (Mondays and Fridays), whose trade they were also involved in.⁹¹ The principal thrice-weekly hay markets - St. James, Smithfield and Whitechapel - were busiest on Saturdays which suited traders well. Buyers, for instance, would be less able to come to market on Friday, because inn yards were not generally clear until Saturdays, and proprietors would have no opportunity to stack the hay properly.⁹²

Convenience

Markets did not necessarily lack the convenience and comfort of the inn. Traders might well patronize inns and drinking houses for refreshment near the market place after they had done their trading and buyers left their horses at particular nearby inns.⁹³ One of the distinctive features of the Corn Exchange was the pair of coffee houses erected above its trading floor.⁹⁴ Better accommodation and storage facilities increasingly belied the traditional association of open market with open air (see Table 10, p. 37). Such improvements may perhaps have benefited buyers more, but they were not obliged to go to markets; they had the options of frequenting the inns, scouring the warehouses and incoming roads or even visiting the farm gate for supplies.

Public wholesale markets offered both buyers and sellers the advantages of simply being large. The retail buyer benefited from regular supplies and maximum choice. Whatever the benefits of forestalling or contracting, one's choice as a buyer was limited to the stocks of one particular supplier or group of suppliers - that was why contracting became significant in the highly specialized trade in quality garden produce.⁹⁵ In markets like Smithfield or Newgate, every conceivable class and quality of livestock and deadmeat was to be found. Direct contracting with suppliers probably favoured the monopsonistic purchaser who was not so choosy about type and quality. Thus it was the wholesale rather than the retail butchers who tended to forestall Smithfield and Newgate by buying outside the capital. Yet where the wholesale butchers needed a variety of meats to furnish the local needs of retailers, Smithfield remained the prime centre.⁹⁶ In the second half of the eighteenth century the cutting butchers complained that the carcase men used their buying power to obtain all the live cattle, which they then sold on at enhanced prices.⁹⁷ At the other end of the scale stood the growing army of costermongers, who relied for supplies

⁹¹ Smith, *Sea coal for London*, pp. 172, 174.

⁹² *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 197-8, evidence of Mr. James Tarling, Smithfield hay salesmen.

⁹³ Strype, *Stow's survey*, iii, pp. 218, 284-5 (Queenhithe, Smithfield); *London Evening Post*, 10-12 January 1751.

⁹⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxvi (1753), p. 111.

⁹⁵ Loudon, *An encyclopaedia of gardening*, p. 1061.

⁹⁶ *A general description of all trades* (1747), p. 45; see below, p. 113.

⁹⁷ See, for example, HLRO, Main Papers H. L., Committee on Dearness of Provisions, 19 March 1765, ff. 8-10; *JHC*, li (1795-6), pp. 551, 636-8; *Monopoly ... The cutting butcher's apology to the legislature upon the high price of meat* (1795).

upon the great markets. Wholesale trading between market gardeners and itinerant retailers was in full swing by 1760, if not before; and the latter also depended upon the cuts and credit of the carcase butchers.⁹⁸ In view of the casual, often impoverished, localized and highly atomistic nature of their trade, any other method of obtaining produce was inconceivable. For their part, suppliers and salesmen were offered some certainty of sale. A grazier might supply all to a jobber in Hertfordshire, say, but he could not be sure he was getting the full market price for his stock.⁹⁹ Where no tradition of clandestine marketing was established, as in the fruit and vegetable or fish trades, and where hinterland markets were lacking, there was little alternative for the gardener but to take or send his produce to one of the specialist markets in town. Even in the early nineteenth century coal trade, the importance and reputation of the public market undermined the possibility of informal trading insofar as potential buyers feared being disadvantaged by using such channels.¹⁰⁰

Product characteristics exerted some bearing on the relative merits of formal and informal marketing. Proper markets with adequate storage and selling facilities were best fitted for bulky produce like cattle, hay, fish or fruit; less lumbering items favoured clandestine trading. That was why sample-selling appeared to threaten the existence of the formal open market. Bone lace was sold through inns partly because its delicate and expensive nature made it more convenient to market it that way, though it was also because no formal lace market existed.¹⁰¹ Perishability, particularly of fish and garden produce, made the certainty of the public market all the more useful for both buyers and sellers and put a limit on the activities of jobbers and forestallers.¹⁰²

Locational factors could also favour the formal venues. Hay markets were generally held in broad thoroughfares where many of the great inns had easy access, as in Southwark, Whitechapel, Smithfield and Bishopsgate. The peripheral locations of both hay and skin markets helped to minimize forestalling (which tended otherwise to occur on the outskirts of town). On the other hand, the central situation of the eponymous 'Haymarket' off Piccadilly was favoured by sellers and growers so much that they opposed its suggested removal in 1802.¹⁰³ Within the City, Billingsgate's Thameside location made it the natural, as well as the official, terminus for incoming fish supplies. Further inland, the proximity of the deadmeat markets at Newgate,

⁹⁸ CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 52 (1760), ff. 108-10; HLRO, *Main Papers H. L., Committee on Dearness of Provisions*, 19 March 1765, ff. 12v-13.

⁹⁹ Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, p. 191.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Sea coal for London*, p. 173.

¹⁰¹ Chartres, 'The place of inns', pp. 306-7; see also p. 106 below.

¹⁰² Thick, *The Neat House Gardens*, p. 151.

¹⁰³ *JHC*, lvii (1802), pp. 341-2.

Leadenhall and Whitechapel to Smithfield collectively offered butchers a convenient choice of supply outlets and so strengthened the public nature of marketing in the London meat trade.¹⁰⁴

Blurred boundaries

However pertinent these arguments may be, it is probably fair to say that formal and informal marketing were, in a sense, far from mutually exclusive alternatives. In practice the two concepts were becoming increasingly uncertain and indistinct, and less relevant, in this period.

In the first place, those who ‘forestalled’ did not necessarily negate the market, since forestalling simply referred to the practice of buying produce en route to and prior to the market. Jobbers may have bought cattle on the outskirts, but often as not they resold them again at Smithfield. For their part Smithfield salesmen sold only inside the market. There was never any question where the heart of this great trade was located; and there could be no forestalling unless there was a market to forestall.¹⁰⁵ If traders believed that Smithfield was likely to be overstocked, they bought animals in places like Holloway and put them into the marshes until prices increased.¹⁰⁶ Dealers in corn who contracted for supplies with country producers and provincial merchants still sold through the Corn Exchange in Mark Lane. Fishmongers may have contracted with fishermen for their whole cargoes at Gravesend, but only in order to gain control over the quantity of supplies finally arriving at Billingsgate. The best winter fruit grown around London may have been sold by private contract to the town fruit shops, but many of these were situated in Covent Garden market.¹⁰⁷ Wholesaling was in fact no different in essence from the old crime of engrossing - ‘buying up great quantities of corn, or other victuals, and selling the same again’.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, despite the absence of hard evidence, it is highly likely that retail traders exploited several forms of media to obtain their goods. Butchers, for instance, might attend both livestock and deadmeat markets; they might even visit the out-of-town lairs. If a trader bought butter from the farm gate, he may also have frequented the wholesale markets for supplementary or complementary suppliers. Thirdly, markets and inns were by no means dislocated marketing institutions. At the inns around Smithfield butchers not only refreshed themselves but many also paid their credit for cattle market purchases of three weeks’ earlier (there were few cash sales at market) - which inn depended on the region whence the animals came.¹⁰⁹ The innkeepers of

¹⁰⁴ See below, p. 116.

¹⁰⁵ *Times*, 11 May 1792, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ CLRO, Misc. Mss 118.2, Committee to consider the high prices of provisions (1786-7), book 1; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 191-4.

¹⁰⁷ Loudon, *An encyclopaedia of gardening*, p. 1061.

¹⁰⁸ J. S. Girdler, *Observations on the pernicious consequences of forestalling, regrating and ingrossing* (1800), pp. 138-9; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 211-12; Lamoine, *Charges to the Grand Jury*, p. 235 (July 1728).

¹⁰⁹ Bonser, *The drovers*, p. 221.

Gracechurch Street and Whitechapel were said to have developed the skill of cornfactoring in the early eighteenth century by holding farmers' samples of corn, but they still resorted to the open riverside market at Bear Key before setting up in Mark Lane.¹¹⁰ Innkeepers accommodated the carrying trade and whilst this could lead to the emergence of an unofficial market, their usual practice was to organize delivery to the respective markets to which the goods were consigned.¹¹¹ London's haymarkets were located near some of the great inns.¹¹² And it was the Innholders' Company who in 1758 petitioned the City Aldermen to establish a legal market for grain, themselves acting in their own interest as buyers of oats.¹¹³

Private marketing was never far from becoming formalized. Lace goods were traded at inns in Aldersgate Street from the seventeenth century, but in 1687 and 1692 there were attempts to obtain a licence from City or Crown for a market at Thanet House in that thoroughfare.¹¹⁴ The creation of the Corn and Coal Exchanges in the eighteenth century, ensured that the trading of those commodities found a recognizable home.¹¹⁵ In 1801 the hop-planters of Sussex and Kent petitioned the House of Commons for a formal market because 'the system hitherto adopted of selling hops in the private houses of factors, has tended to the encouragement of monopoly, and consequently ... the want of a public market in or near the metropolis, has long been universally acknowledged'. Hops were also sold at private venues 'in the neighbourhood of the Borough market', which itself contained a hop warehouse (the brewers did not control hop supplies as they did malt). When a hop and malt exchange was finally erected in Southwark in 1867 it was appropriately located adjacent to Borough market.¹¹⁶ In 1832, deputants of the 'Bermondsey Leather Warehouse Company' told a suspicious City that they were 'not going to establish a market but warehouses'. Yet a market it was: the complex consisted of 'large handsome buildings' for the storage of leather, 'so constructed as to open into each other, and on Tuesdays form a public market. Thus they unite the advantages of a public market one day, and on others those of the most complete private establishments; and all at only the expense of private warehouses'.¹¹⁷ The carcase butchers of Whitechapel were never subject to formal supervision (public or private), yet from early in the eighteenth century, their shops-cum-slaughterhouses were designated 'market', a label explicitly confirmed by several witnesses to the parliamentary

¹¹⁰ *Times*, 11 October 1826, p. 3; Allen, *The history and antiquities of London*, iii, p. 749.

¹¹¹ W. M. Stern, *The porters of London* (1960), pp. 154, 161; CLRO, City Lands, vol. 122 (1830), p. 706.

¹¹² See, for example, Strype, *Stow's survey*, vi, p. 83.

¹¹³ CLRO, Rep. 162, f. 112.

¹¹⁴ *CSPD* (1686-7), pp. 352, 359; *PRO*, PC 2 72, pp. 452, 457, 478, 480; CLRO, Jor. 51, ff. 186b, 208-9, 210.

¹¹⁵ Allen, *The history and antiquities of London*, iii, p. 749; Smith, *Sea coal for London*, pp. 90-1.

¹¹⁶ *JHC*, lvi (1801), pp. 328, 360, 398, 466; *Penny Magazine*, 26 August 1837 in GH Noble, B W2 COV B; LMA, Acc 2058 1 22, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 7 September 1832; *Builder* (1867), p. 731; Mathias, *The brewing industry*, pp. 523, 529-30.

¹¹⁷ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 124 (1832), p. 655; GH Noble, A 344 4 P.T., 1833 newspaper cutting relating to London Leather Warehouses and Hide Depository.

committee of 1828. Never authorized, this market had grown up ‘conventionally, without any very precise corporate or official control’, yet by the nineteenth century it had become an established centre of the wholesale meat trade.¹¹⁸

Private but formal marketing was on the increase even within the City. In 1750, the lessee of Leadenhall market complained that revenues received were less than expected because ‘the principal part of the market is not the property of the City’. It was reported in 1784 that part of the market ground had been leased from the Skinners’ Company in 1678 but not renewed on expiration in 1729, ‘the Company or their lessees have ever since received the rents from the tenants’, so that ‘at present the best part of the butcher’s stalls and part of the poultry market are lost to the City’.¹¹⁹ Private control was also conspicuous in Newgate market. In the 1750s various lawsuits were fought between the City and salesmen located in the avenues leading to the market over the latter’s liability to tolls.¹²⁰ Bell Inn Yard, adjacent to but not legally part of the market, became a haven for its overspilling trade: by 1822, salesmen there claimed that barely one half of all supplies sent to the market could be sold on Corporation property, ‘the business of the meat salesmen having been transacted round and contiguous to Newgate market on private property for more than a century’. Disgusted at first that marketing was going on in the ‘new market’, the City complied once tolls were paid.¹²¹ With supplies of country-killed meat to Newgate in the 1820s expanding, a regular privately established market opened up in nearby Warwick Lane to accommodate the unsatisfied demand for space, which the City opposed but never suppressed.¹²² By 1849 it could be asserted that ‘the greater part of the business is done out of the market, not upon ground belonging to the Corporation, but in the streets and lanes leading to it’, and the salesmen were no longer paying tolls. The City had somewhat missed the bus, for they themselves had in 1821 considered the Warwick Lane site suitable for Newgate’s extension.¹²³

Above all, the new ‘exchanges’ for corn and coal epitomized the new overlap between old-style public marketing and modern private trading. The very term aped Sir Thomas Gresham’s icon of commodity commerce.¹²⁴ They provided the model for other branches of commerce to establish new market forms. The miscellany of coffee houses and informal dealing premises in and around Exchange Alley, as well as those of the Royal Exchange itself condensed from the later eighteenth century into new institutional arrangements: the Stock Exchange (1773);

¹¹⁸ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 36, 37, 64; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 271; *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 221.

¹¹⁹ CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 42 (1750), f. 143; vol. 76 (1784-5), ff. 192r-193v.

¹²⁰ *London Magazine*, xxiv (1755), pp. 575-7; CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 50 (1758), ff. 63, 90

¹²¹ CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 112 (1820-1), ff. 137v, 176r; vol. 113 (1821-2), ff. 280r, 286r; vol. 114 (1822-3), f. 164-5r; vol. 115 (1823-4), f. 175r.

¹²² CLRO, *CC mins*, 27 October 1831, 11 May 1838.

¹²³ *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 204-5, 233; *Times*, 27 July 1821, p. 3.

¹²⁴ A. Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange*, LTS No. 152 (1997), chs. 18, 19, 21, 22.

Lloyds Insurance at the Royal Exchange (1770s); the Auction Mart in Bartholomew Lane for the sale of landed estates and works of art (1809); the London Commercial Sale Rooms in Mincing Lane (1811) for the sale of West Indian rum and sugar, and, after the East India Company's monopoly ended, for tea (1833); and the Hall of Commerce (1840s).¹²⁵

By the mid-nineteenth century, all manner of wholesaling trades had become characterized by what was called 'the bazaar principle, that is, the congregation in one spot of many dealers engaged in one trade'. Blackwell Hall factors in and around Basinghall Street (the site of the now defunct market), hop dealers in the Borough, grocers in Mincing Lane, orange merchants in Botolph Lane, provisions dealers in Lower Thames Street, potato merchants in Tooley Street, wine merchants around Crutched Friars - the locational structure of these trades reflected the extension of the principle of the market place, which provided individual dealers with the various internal and external economies that have been noted in this chapter. They were not formal markets but as 'bazaars' they reproduced and refashioned the concept of the formal market without rarefying it; and without supplanting 'the public markets', around which salesmen and factors continued to congregate.¹²⁶

Conclusion

At the outset of the railway age, London's leading markets had already attained the supremacy that was to continue, despite various newcomers, into the twentieth century.¹²⁷ They were spearheads of growth in a period sometimes associated with the decline of formal marketing. Market wholesaling fared better than retailing because there were fewer alternatives, because wholesale exchange was not so easily dislodged, and because expansion of trade was less dependent on additional *numbers* of outlets. In the long eighteenth century wholesale markets emerged as convenient and flexible trading mechanisms in a variety of trades. What share of total provisions was traded through formal markets is impossible to say, but they were expanding and not without good reason. In the face of commercial forces, some markets did disappear, but others adapted to the new challenges. In so doing, however, they left behind forever the old ideal of 'market overt' (see p. 161) and increasingly meshed with other forms of marketing, thus making precise distinctions between formal and informal exchange rather slippery. By the 1840s, Billingsgate, Borough, Covent Garden, Mark Lane, Newgate, Smithfield and Spitalfields were

¹²⁵ D. Keene, 'The setting of the Royal Exchange: continuity and change in the financial district of the City of London, 1300-1871' in Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange*, pp. 265-6; F. Sheppard, *London, 1808-1870: the infernal wen* (1971), pp. 195-6.

¹²⁶ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 504-5; D. Barnett, *London, hub of the industrial revolution: a revisionist history, 1775-1825* (1998), p. 174.

¹²⁷ For a digest of London's wholesale market arrangements in the late nineteenth century, see Royal Comm. (1888); LCC (1893), pp. 7-21.

operating on a scale of business that placed them firmly within the hugely complex commercial geography of Victorian London.

5 THE GREAT MARKETS OF GEORGIAN LONDON

The growth of market wholesaling chiefly involved the growth and longevity of a handful of specific markets, what might be called the great markets of Georgian London (which was itself a huge market for the nation). Each of these has its own individual history, but since that history can never be isolated from the experience of other markets, nor from the economic character and development of the specific trade which each served, various questions pose themselves. Why was there not greater fragmentation among market wholesaling in London? How efficient was the wholesale market structure? In what ways did the forces of supply and demand condition (and be conditioned by) these markets? How far was their supremacy maintained into the Victorian period? In exploring such questions one discovers both patterns and peculiarities which narratives of individual markets have overlooked. Broadly speaking, the dominance of a few wholesale markets was conditioned and consolidated by market forces, and produced a tolerably efficient arrangement, though other problems arose. Four of the principal food trades are here considered: meat, fish, corn and garden produce. They were not the only primary trades of course, but they were all highly prominent at the time and as case studies they illustrate some of the key economic issues. (Major specialist markets not explicitly dealt with are: Blackwell Hall for broadcloth, which declined rather than expanded in the Georgian period; Leadenhall leather market, which grew with the cattle trade; the haymarkets, which shared structural similarities to horticultural marketing; and the Coal Exchange, which paralleled the history of the Corn Exchange.) The two most enduring and ancient markets, Smithfield and Billingsgate, are treated first; then the corn trade and the Corn Exchange; finally, the most fragmented sector, horticulture, is considered, where the main focus is Covent Garden.

Smithfield and the meat trade

Smithfield market was London's oldest, greatest, and only enduring cattle market throughout the period 1660-1840 (Figure 7). Given the expansion of the metropolis during this time and the growth of market numbers generally, its pre-eminence seems *prima facie* surprising. Yet there were powerful factors explaining, if not justifying, the dominance of 'Smithfield', as it was simply called.

In existence for centuries, Smithfield occupied over four acres of open space, and had long been surrounded by inns and butcheries. Even as the town grew, Smithfield remained centrally positioned with direct access from north, east and west. Problems of congestion caused by such a large weekly trade generated improvement or market enlargement which in turn

reinforced its position. Another notable response was the construction of the New Road from Paddington to Islington, promoted by local landowners and opened in 1757. The road ran roughly parallel to the north of Oxford Street and Holborn, providing a safer alternative route to the West End and Holborn for incoming drovers from the west bound for Smithfield. *The Gentleman's Magazine* believed the bypass would increase the Smithfield traffic.¹ These gains were supplemented by the Blackfriars and London Bridge improvements a few years later which provided a direct route into Smithfield from the south.

Smithfield's suitability, however, was increasingly questioned and its position frequently contested. Potential rivals were ever present. The 'forestalling' lairs just outside the town noted in the last chapter appeared threatening, but by the early nineteenth century John Middleton believed that their dealings 'sink to nothing when compared to the sales at Smithfield'.² In the 1690s, an authorized livestock market functioned in Brookfield north of Piccadilly, but did not survive long into the next century. Its establishment was justified on the grounds that Smithfield could no longer accommodate a growing cattle trade.³ During the high food prices of 1765 a House of Lords committee was told how Smithfield was 'too small for the reception of a sufficient number of cattle for the weekly consumption', a remedy for which might be the 'addition of another market at the west end of the town'. In the following year a landholder at Tottenham Court petitioned the Commons for a bill to establish such a market on his estate.⁴ Thirty years later *The Times* criticized the congestion and chaos and put forward a more radical solution:

Were markets established at the four extreme parts of London, Westminster and Southwark ... it would remedy the inconvenience ... Cattle would not be driven in such numbers through the City ... and above all, monopoly would not so easily be erected from the distance of each market. At present it is in a few hands. Every care has been taken by the magistrates to regulate the hydra-head, but so large a metropolis requires its being divided into different branches.⁵

'Monopoly' was always a dirty word to the Georgians, particularly at a time of high prices, but as the extract indicates it was not so much the monopoly of Smithfield in livestock marketing that was wrong, but the monopoly power *within* the trade (of jobbers and carcase butchers) which the single cattle market arguably encouraged. More proposals followed in the new century to erect rival markets. The Grand Junction Canal Company managed to establish a cattle market near

¹ C. Durrant, 'London's first northern by-pass: urban development and the New Road from Paddington to Islington', *Camden Historical Review*, 15 (1989), pp. 15-16; 29 Geo. II c. 88; *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxv (1755), pp. 577-8; *JHC*, xxvii (1754-7), p. 472. Smithfield was linked to the New Road at Islington via St. John's Street.

² J. Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex* (1807), p. 542.

³ *JHC*, xiii (1699-1700), p. 232.

⁴ HLRO, Main Papers H. L., Committee on Dearness of Provisions, 19 March 1765, f. 44; *JHC*, xxx (1766), p. 581. That same year John Gwynn had also called for the removal of Smithfield, *London and Westminster improved* (1766), pp. 18-20.

Paddington in 1802. The project was unsuccessful, as was John Perkins' immense market at Islington in the 1830s, situated on the northern route into Smithfield, which posed an even greater threat.⁶

By the nineteenth century there was much agreement in the meat trade that a single metropolitan cattle market was in fact the most efficient arrangement. 'It is a general opinion among the butchers,' observed Middleton, 'that they can buy live cattle in Smithfield market cheaper than at any other place'.⁷ Even government purchases were made there, large herds then being driven off to the naval victualling offices downriver.⁸ Smithfield's commanding position in the official metropolitan livestock trade was upheld by the manifold sources and types of supply on the one hand and by the sheer size and demands of the London populace on the other:

It is most desirable for the convenience and interest of all parties concerned, that we should have one great emporium for the general supply, to which the buyers may go, and see what the supply is, and make their selection. If you divided the market, I should not know where to go for my different kinds of stock. Every butcher wants various kinds of stock, according to his trade from various quarters, some from the south and some from the north. We want Southdown sheep, and we want large half-bred sheep for family purposes. We want live calves, and we want lambs. In fact, there is no one compass from which I could get a supply of all those things. It is a general supply from different neighbourhoods which furnishes us with exactly what we want.⁹

Salesmen certainly demanded the greatest concentration of buyers. As one of them testified to the select committee of 1828, even if additional markets were created, market forces would ensure the triumph of a single market. Each cattle salesman, who had connections in various parts of the country,

would, as a matter of course, say to each of his friends, 'Send to this market; here are more butchers ... more stock ... and consequently the best market'; and I am convinced that that opinion given would be more powerful than any Act which Parliament could make ... If you were to establish four markets tomorrow, in six months, I am convinced as I stand here, there would be only one market.¹⁰

In the case of Perkins' market, such words were prophetic. Proposals to establish rival cattle markets were flawed. Cattle and other markets tended to develop by way of a virtuous or vicious circle of increasing or decreasing attractiveness to users who were chiefly concerned with perceived choice and reputation. 'It is no use to establish a market unless there is a demand',

⁵ *Times*, 20 January 1796, p. 3.

⁶ CLRO, Jor. 80, f. 230b; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 50; J. Fletcher, 'Statistical account of the markets of London', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, x (1847), p. 359. See also the proposals for new cattle markets in GH, Ms. 496, pp. 8-15.

⁷ Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex*, p. 542.

⁸ See, for example, *London Evening Post*, 20-22 February 1729; 22-25 November 1735; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 75, 96-7, 201.

⁹ *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 1106, 1920 - evidence of Mr. William Giblett, butcher; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 45-6, 73, 94.

¹⁰ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 45-6 - evidence of Mr. Charles Merritt, Smithfield salesman.

declared one cattle feeder to the Committee, 'and if there is a demand, the market will establish itself'.¹¹

Whilst Smithfield was a 'monopoly' in the sense of being the only market supplying the distributive 'demands' of the livestock trade, in practice it functioned more like a *single, integrated* market *within* which competitive demand and supply might operate. A single market probably implied higher average travel costs for buyers, which helps to explain why some cattle was bought unofficially elsewhere, as well as why alternative markets were proposed.¹² Nevertheless, the select committee of 1828 was convinced that if Smithfield was to be removed one large market was preferable to a decentralized system: purchasers would enjoy maximum choice; sellers a certain demand. It was not a novel argument: back in 1700 the City had claimed that 'goods are cheaper at one general market than in several'.¹³ All parties probably benefited from transparent market prices that were regularly quoted in a single market. How far competition was undermined by the collusive practices of dealers and salesmen remained debatable, although little was said about it in the 1828 inquiry.

A similar principle underpinned Newgate's ascendancy in the deadmeat trade and the economic rationale of the carcase butcher, who had been so much criticized for high meat prices during the eighteenth century.¹⁴ Metropolitan demand for beef and mutton was not homogeneous. One end of the town wanted different cuts from another. Spitalfields and the workhouses, for instance, sought the inferior pieces, Mayfair the best. Larger butchers purchased hind quarters of beef, poorer people came for the forequarters. Newgate on Saturday afternoons specialized in supplying the butchers of Bermondsey and Lambeth with the coarser cuts, but in general it was able to furnish a range of qualities and prices to butchers from all over the metropolis. Those joints which a retail trader could not sell, he traded in at Newgate or Leadenhall in order to obtain more of the right quality pieces which were in local demand. Breasts of mutton, for example, were brought to Leadenhall market and then 'fetched away in barrowfuls to Spitalfields'. 'An exchange of articles', this neat arrangement was termed.¹⁵

Market forces arguably favoured a single market, but it was less clear whether that market should remain in the increasingly congested arena of West Smithfield. Concerns over its suitability became chronic after 1800. A later age might have subjected the proposed removal of the great cattle market to a more objective cost-benefit analysis, but in the early nineteenth century economic arguments were ranged alongside and sometimes got caught up with wider

¹¹ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 221.

¹² Brookfield market in the 1690s was said to benefit the butchers of the western suburbs who saved time and trouble avoiding Smithfield, *JHC*, xiii (1699-1700), p. 232.

¹³ *Smithfield report* (1828), p. 5; *The case of the City of London against the Bill for confirming a patent for a market for live cattle in Brookfield* (1700).

¹⁴ *JHL*, xxi (1765-7), p. 57; *JHC*, li (1795-6), pp. 551, 636-40.

¹⁵ *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), pp. 203, 210; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 113.

issues. Some arguments did focus on the relative expenses of removal or enlargement - the status quo was no longer an option - and the consequent effects on tolls and prices, the adequacy of market space and its implications for competitive trading.¹⁶ The economics of location certainly helped to explain the failure to relocate. A significant asymmetry characterized the distribution of spillover costs and benefits from removal: on the one hand locals would lose five million pounds' worth of annual expenditure by the weekly Smithfield crowds; on the other no emerging suburb wanted a huge cattle market planted on its doorstep.¹⁷ Moreover, Smithfield's association with the City at large was an undoubted asset. Witnesses told the 1828 inquiry that removal would inconvenience the many butchers and buyers at the market who travelled long distances to do business on Mondays not only at Smithfield but at the City corn market as well.¹⁸ It would also deprive market users of the advantages of a nearby post-office, and of the clearing banks, through which over six million pounds of cattle sales flowed each year to towns all over England. Smithfield was also well-placed to receive increasing supplies from the pool and the docks.¹⁹ Similar notes were struck by those in the leather trade who argued for the retention of Leadenhall market, which was situated close to the 'banks, Exchange, docks, coach and waggon offices, and other public establishments'.²⁰

Nevertheless, the locational arguments were coloured by deeper conservative sentiments of place and prescription. Against accusations of unruly cattle, street obstructions and general noise that stemmed from a central livestock market, one Common Councillor made a remarkable and popular riposte, expressing

his astonishment at the coolness with which it was proposed to deprive the Corporation of one of its greatest sources of profit. There really was no knowing how far they might gallop on their hobby of improvement (Hear). Perhaps they would take it into their heads that it would render the City more quiet to remove the Royal Exchange (Hear). For his part, he liked the crowded streets, the obstruction, and even the dirt which was occasioned by great traffic, better than all the modern improvements (Applause). He would be sorry to see the streets of London as clean and quiet as those of York.²¹

More will be said about the 'hobby' of improvement in Chapter Seven, itself not solely based on efficiency concerns. Yet those who opposed removal were not simply resisting modern fashions; the most remarkable line taken in the debates synthesized economic ideas with historical practice. By 1800, Smithfield had become the centre of gravity for multifarious points of supply far distant

¹⁶ See BL, Add. Ms 27937, f. 47; 37888, ff. 148-9; 37889, f. 63; 38379, f. 143; *Times*, 30 November 1804, p. 2; 19 April 1809, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Times*, 27 February 1809, p. 3; 19 April 1809, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 200-1, 237.

¹⁹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Smithfield market* (1850), pp. 12-13; *Morning Chronicle survey* (21 November 1850), pp. 194-5.

²⁰ CLRO, CC papers, 14 July 1832. When the removal of the cattle market became imminent in 1850, the 'City of London Markets Protection Association' was set up to maintain all the great City markets in the belief that 'the vast trade of the City of London is very much connected with its different markets', GH Noble, C.45/T.1850.

from London, including the furthest parts of Wales and Scotland.²² For the cattle buyers who petitioned Parliament in 1809, to tamper in any way with the prescriptive complexities of the free market could spell trouble:

Upon the regular and uninterrupted supply of this market by the graziers, and the constant attention of the butchers of London and Westminster, in numbers sufficient to buy up the whole supply sent every market day ... depends the regular distribution of provisions to support this great metropolis; and when the very serious consequences of any interruption in the usual supply on the one hand, or of the regular attendance of purchasers (who are the agents between the grazier and consumer, and without whose aid the cattle so sent to market cannot be put in a state to be distributed out to every part of this metropolis, to the voluntary purchase of the consumer) on the other; when all this is done without the interference of any legal order or regulation whatever upon the subject, but effected by a system that has grown out of the wisdom and experience of ages, and so completely organized in all its parts, the petitioners cannot but feel that any alteration which would tend to disturb the smallest portion of the arrangement, may prove a most dangerous experiment.²³

With its Burkean overtones, this resistance to reform appealed to conservative minds in a politically conservative period in British history. The Master Butchers used a similar argument in 1833 when they claimed that Smithfield's removal 'would be the means of destroying that which has taken centuries to establish, and which has proved to the inhabitants of the metropolis, to the agricultural interest, and to the country at large, a source of affluence and wealth'.²⁴ Even when in 1850 pressures for the abolition of Smithfield became irresistible, two of the seven Royal Commissioners believed that removal would be accompanied by

a great and expensive disarrangement and dislocation of extensive commercial interests connected directly or indirectly with the existing market. Such an experiment would also be likely to affect the regular, certain, and cheap supply of animal food - a question of vital importance to a population of two millions of persons. We therefore do not feel ourselves justified in resorting to so extreme an experiment.²⁵

The language of 'dangerous experiments' was far from fanciful. Feeding London consisted of millions of unco-ordinated and unregulated private transactions along the production chain from stable to table. The longevity of Smithfield and the growth of London had entrenched the market into this network of self-interests that spanned the whole of the British Isles. The deadmeat trade had yet to take off and the City Corporation itself opted most of the time for enlargement rather than removal, a choice which redoubled the vested interests and the prescriptive arguments. Even the reformist parliamentary committee of 1828 in the end had to acknowledge the inertia of market forces in its *Second Report*:

The sanguine expectation of those who aim at the sudden reform of abuses, without reference to the habits and prejudices of the people, may be disappointed with this

²¹ *Times*, 20 January 1826, p. 2.

²² See K. J. Bonser, *The drovers: who they were and how they went - an epic of the English countryside* (1970).

²³ BL, Add. Ms 37888, f. 148. The petition was printed.

²⁴ Quoted in *Times*, 19 December 1833, p. 1.

²⁵ *Report of the Royal Commission on Smithfield market* (24 May 1850), p. 25.

Report ... while your Committee had to guard against the too zealous wishes of the philanthropist, they had also to contend with much personal interest, confirmed habit, and inveterate prejudice.

With its moderate conclusions, the 1828 inquiry did little for the cause of reform.²⁶

Many observers held no truck with the 'confirmed habit' that prescribed only Smithfield's enlargement. Stephen Munday, joint lessee of Newport market (also a Leadenhall salesman) criticized the public 'lethargy' which maintained Smithfield, held back the carcase trade and deprived the West End of wholesale meat markets.²⁷ The statistician Joseph Fletcher claimed that such attempts 'to squeeze the live cattle market of the metropolis into Smithfield will ultimately fail as signally as the notable attempt to squeeze the metropolis itself into the City, after the Great Fire'. It was a vivid and suggestive image, since it implied that the 'cattle market' had an essential existence extraneous to the market place that was merely its container. If the appeal to prescription evoked Burke's creed, this recalled Paine's: rationalist, functionalist, impatient with history, and sensing the inevitable. Smithfield, like aristocracy and monarchy, was bound to fall.²⁸ Those well-established in the trade, however, remained content and conservative to the last. Five years before Smithfield traded its last beast, one veteran meat salesman told Henry Mayhew how 'all this mystery of removing away Smithfield market is one of the worst things that can happen to the City of London; for when I look at it ... it is Providence that has ordered all these sort of things to come here ... we are getting that supply directly that God has intended that we should be fed with, and at so little expense'.²⁹ Such outlooks make it less surprising that London retained its central cattle market far longer than the fashion for 'improvement' would have prescribed.

It was not new cattle markets, but existing deadmeat markets which came to compete with Smithfield for the purchases of London butchers. They provided a competitive check upon Smithfield, offering retailers choice with few prohibitive transaction costs, and consumers protection against high livestock prices, and so effectively widened the 'single market'. This was clearly brought out during the 1809 removal debate:

It would seem ... one of the most extraordinary things imaginable, that the persons who send the cattle for sale should not consider ... the convenience of the persons whom they expect to attend as purchasers: for it appears that the situation of the present market being so central, it enables the buyer to go to Smithfield, and, if the market is reasonable, to purchase livestock there; but if he finds the price kept up there unusually high, he resorts to the different carcase butchers in Newgate market, and to those butchers who kill on commission in Whitechapel and other places within moderate distance of the present market ... and if he finds their prices lower, he buys of them; but if their prices are higher than Smithfield market, then he is within the possibility of returning again to

²⁶ *Smithfield Report* (1828), p. 9; S. Munday, *An important improvement in the supply of wholesale meat markets* (1832), pp. 2-3.

²⁷ Munday, *An important improvement in the supply of wholesale meat markets*, pp. 19-20.

²⁸ Fletcher, 'Statistical account of the markets of London', p. 359.

²⁹ *Morning Chronicle survey* (21 November 1850), pp. 195-6.

Smithfield, to buy livestock. If the market is to be removed to the distance now proposed, it will be impossible for the butcher to have this check upon the livestock market; and whatever the prices are at the new market, if he goes to it, there he must buy, for time will not admit of his trying the others.³⁰

As the deadmeat trade flourished in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, largely due to transport improvements, this convenience - acknowledged again in 1828 and 1850 - could only have become more significant. Newgate, Whitechapel and Leadenhall were the chief trading venues. Whitechapel initially prospered by functioning as a great slaughtering house for Smithfield cattle and by being well situated to receive fatstock driven in from Essex. In the 1840s Scottish-killed meat was also regularly consigned there.³¹ Leadenhall's wholesale function was declining steadily from the 1820s; by contrast the country-killed trade at Newgate took off in the 1820s. The number of parcels of deadmeat delivered there in October 1830 was more than double that in October 1818.³² Increasing trade brought about rebuilding in the market and a noticeable surge in the City's receipts. Newgate salesmen numbered around 200 at mid-century. One prominent butcher in 1828 attested to the 'much greater quantity of dead meat brought to London than used to be, owing to the improvement of the roads, and the reduction in the price of carriage'. Transport improvements even before the railways were crucial to the trade. Medium-range supplies to Leadenhall and Newgate were considerable in the winter months when meat did not deteriorate so quickly.³³ In his evidence to the committee Joseph Pocklington, banker and Newgate salesman, believed that Smithfield's trade had recently stagnated because

dead meat has been considerably increased in the last five years by the conveyance of light vans and carriages of all descriptions coming as far as Bristol; if I could dispose in our market of five tons in a morning I could have it from Bristol, such is the ease of access to that market from that distance, and that is a check upon the increased supply of Smithfield.³⁴

Demand also played its part. West End consumers generally favoured country-killed deadmeat from their butchers, and Newgate was their nearest wholesale market. Newgate came to be so important that it began to attract East End trade away from Leadenhall.³⁵ The advent of steam railways threatened in time to do away with the need for a metropolitan livestock market

³⁰ BL, Add. Ms 37888, f. 148 v.

³¹ *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 219; see also G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), pp. 255-6.

³² *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 1739-43; CLRO, City Lands, vol. 128 (1830), p. 706.

³³ R. Seymour, *Stow's survey of London* (1734-5), ii, p. 279; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 113, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 128 (1830), pp. 706-11; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 273; E. W. Brayley et al, *London and Middlesex* (1810-16), i, p. 37; Munday, *An important improvement in the supply of the London wholesale meat markets*, pp. 8-10; C. Knight (ed.), *London* (1841-3), ii, p. 325; *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 652, 654, 1103.

³⁴ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 80, 211. See also T. Barker & D. Gerhold, *The rise and rise of road transport, 1700-1990* (1993), pp. 45-8.

³⁵ *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 1741-3, 1751; 'The commissariat of London', *Quarterly Review*, xcv (September 1854), p. 289.

altogether. In the meantime, the limited consumption of country-killed meat in London was put down to the lack of wholesale meat outlets west of the City. According to this view, London wanted not more livestock markets, but more deadmeat markets.³⁶

The extent and growth of Newgate's trade was implicated in the fierce debate over metropolitan meat consumption some years ago.³⁷ In his efforts to refute claims that London's per capita meat consumption increased in the half century after 1790, Eric Hobsbawm cited the lower growth of livestock numbers at Smithfield compared to population.³⁸ Yet as we have seen there is much evidence that deadmeat supplies were increasing before 1840 (Hobsbawm claimed they only rose after 1840), and increasing carcase weights had also been a long term phenomenon.³⁹ On balance it seems that meat consumption increased broadly in line with London's population, no mean economic and logistical achievement in a period of extremely rapid metropolitan growth.⁴⁰ At the centre of this achievement was Smithfield, and increasingly Newgate also. Together they provided a common market for the butchers of early nineteenth century London. By 1850, they had become such complementary sources of supply that the City proposed to remove both markets and combine them on one huge site to the west of Smithfield Bars.⁴¹

Meat and livestock markets, then, cast an ambiguous image: arguably efficient, arguably inefficient. Economic and locational factors go a long way to explaining Smithfield's dominance and longevity. These market forces had become 'locked in' to Smithfield according to the 'confirmed habit' of its users and the costs and risks of arranging viable alternative regimes. Nevertheless, the spillover costs generated by the existence of the market, notably the hazards of congestion, counterbalanced the entrenched nature of the trade and generated ongoing tension and controversy. In the long eighteenth century, Smithfield was undoubtedly a 'great' market; whether a great nuisance or a great blessing was somewhat more disputable.

Billingsgate and the fish trade

Billingsgate, like Smithfield, dominated its trade. For virtually all of the period, Billingsgate was London's only wholesale fish market where fishermen landed and sold their catches. In the

³⁶ Munday, *An important improvement in the supply of London wholesale meat markets*, pp. 13-14, 19.

³⁷ E. J. Hobsbawm, 'The British standard of living, 1790-1850', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 10 (1957-8); R. M. Hartwell, 'The rising standard of living in England, 1800-1850', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 13 (1960-1); Hobsbawm, 'The standard of living during the Industrial Revolution: a discussion' and Hartwell, 'The standard of living', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 16 (1963-4).

³⁸ Hobsbawm, 'The British standard of living', pp. 50, 58.

³⁹ Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex*, p. 541; Knight, *London*, ii, p. 318.

⁴⁰ Of more significance for workers themselves would have been changes in incomes and meat prices, Knight, *London*, ii, p. 325.

⁴¹ BL, Add. Ms 37888, f. 148v; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 80; *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), q. 1752; *Report of Royal Commission on Smithfield market* (24 May 1850), pp. 22-3; *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 203.

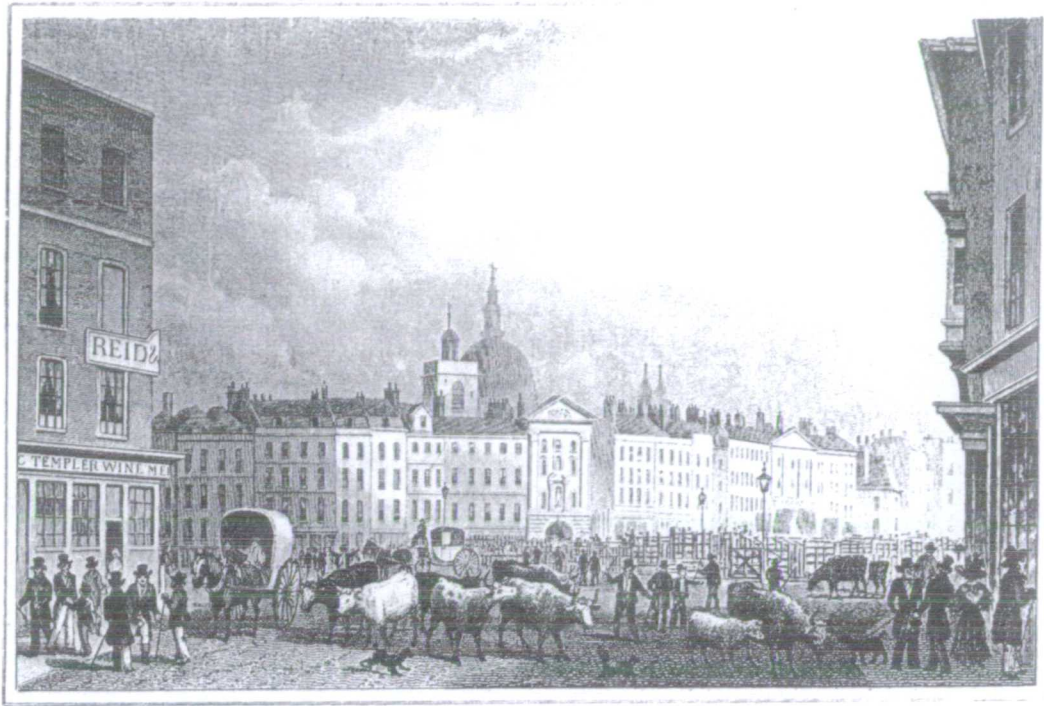


Figure 7 Smithfield cattle market, from *Smithfield Bars* (Guildhall Library)
Taken from J. Elmes and T. H. Shepherd, *London (and its environs) in the nineteenth century* (1830)

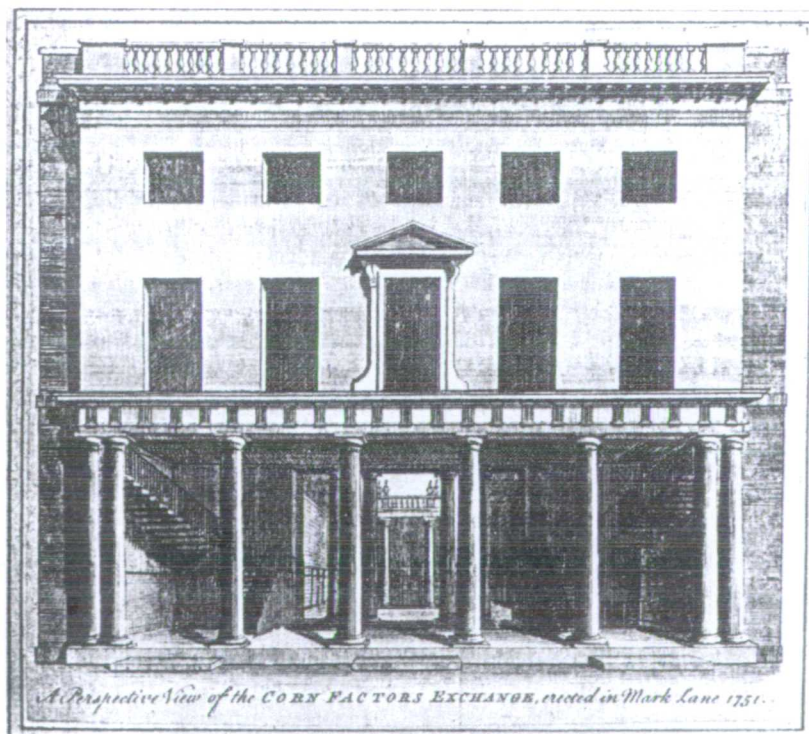


Figure 8 The Corn Exchange, Mark Lane (Guildhall Library)
Gentleman's Magazine, 23 February 1753

eighteenth century, the overland trade in fresh fish played a very minor role.⁴² By the early nineteenth century, however, this trade had grown - all of it went to Billingsgate - to around a fifth of the 100,000 ton annual waterborne trade.⁴³ Fishmongers' and fishwives may have retailed their wares from shops, stalls or street, but wholesale demand and supply were focused upon this small dock and patch of ground just below London Bridge. Like Smithfield, Billingsgate was criticized as too cramped and poorly located. Unlike Smithfield, Billingsgate endured into the twentieth century. Far more than in the meat trade, calls to expand the *production* and *consumption* of fish tended to revolve around the issue of market provision.

Such provision was intimately tied up with the state of the British fisheries on the supply side, and with concern for the consumption of London's poorer citizens on the demand side. The Act of 1699 which confirmed its fish market status clearly set out Billingsgate's association with the welfare of the fisheries:

Whereas the publick wealth, honour and safety of this kingdom, as well as the maintenance of trade, and support of navigation, as in many other respects, depend on the improvement and encouragement of the fishery, and Billingsgate having, time out of mind, been a free market for all manner of ... fish ... nevertheless divers abuses, evidently destructive to that trade, have been of late years practised ... to the great discouragement of the ... fishermen.⁴⁴

The demands of consumers and the needs of the fisheries and the security of the nation were by no means in conflict. Yet neither was necessarily to blame. In an age when the rapid supply of fish distant from London was not feasible, much of the problem was laid at the door of Billingsgate and its collusive fishmongers. After all, Londoners wanted to eat more fish (provided it was decent) and fishermen wanted to supply more. Contemporaries believed, not without justification, that the key to the problem was the expansion of market provision which would free up supplies and increase competition. True, the perishability of fish (more so than meat, which can be kept alive for longer) undoubtedly put a constraint on both supply and demand. But the Georgian age had not the benefit of hindsight, and given the fact that fish was highly perishable meant that the provision of marketing facilities in London became all the more crucial a variable.

Supply and demand factors were central to the establishment in 1749 by Act of Parliament of a riverside fish market upriver at Westminster. The project originated in a nationwide debate over the fisheries. As Walter Stern has remarked, 'That the English fishing industry had declined, was declining, and ought to be resuscitated, was a matter of public

⁴² For the exception, see W. M. Stern, 'Fish supplies for London in the 1760s: an experiment in overland transport', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 118 (1970); P. V. McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock in the London area in the seventeenth century', M. A. thesis (University of London, 1948), p. 181.

⁴³ Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex*, p. 543.

⁴⁴ 10 & 11 Will. III c. 24.

consensus in the mid-eighteenth century'.⁴⁵ In the wake of an appeal by the King that the wealthier classes aid the fishing industry, eighty petitioners from the well-heeled parish of St. George Hanover Square called for a second London fish market.⁴⁶ The actual scheme would assist English fishermen's efforts in the turbot, white herring and cod fisheries which foreigners had appropriated. Subscribers to the project resolved to lend funds to fishermen at 5% interest to fit out cod and other vessels on condition that they serve only the new market.⁴⁷ The preamble of the Act declared that a free market in Westminster 'would greatly tend to increase the number of fishermen, and improve and encourage the fishery of this Kingdom'.⁴⁸ A healthy British fishery would in turn ensure a 'great nursery for seamen' at a time when the Navy's strategic importance was increasing.⁴⁹ Demand factors were equally critical. The coming of peace in 1748 had failed to reduce the price of fish as expected; at the same time the occurrence of the century's worst outbreak of cattle distemper had increased the price of meat. West End fishmongers were having difficulties obtaining fresh fish; the framers of legislation believed that Billingsgate's command of wholesale distribution encouraged its principal fishmongers to manipulate the quantity and hence price of supplies which London received. A rival fish market would undermine this forestalling oligopoly by providing another outlet for incoming supplies. Cheaper fish, vibrant fisheries, absorption of discharged sailors: the Westminster fish market scheme, though a local and private enterprise, was predicated upon horizons wider than the market place.⁵⁰

The scheme was not a success. Fishermen travelling upriver beyond Billingsgate were baulked by London Bridge; and many suppliers remained tied to Billingsgate fishmongers and salesmen.⁵¹ It was a failure of supply, not of demand. Better market provision nevertheless remained central to the perceived expansion of the supply and consumption of fish in London. Captain Blake's fish carriage scheme of 1762, funded by the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, attempted radically to improve fish supplies and so negate the manipulation of the Billingsgate fishmongers. The success of the experiment depended not

⁴⁵ Stern, 'Fish supplies for London', p. 360. See also Stern, 'Fish marketing in London in the first half of the eighteenth century' in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (eds.), *Trade, government and economy in pre-industrial England: essays presented to F. J. Fisher* (1976).

⁴⁶ *JHC*, xxv (1748-9), p. 785; M. Lewis, 'Papers relating to the Westminster fish market, 1750-1751', *Mariner's Mirror*, 17 (1932), pp. 32-4. The unrelated Free British Fishery Society (with a capital value of £500,000) was established around this time, A. B. DuBois, *The English business company after the Bubble Act, 1720-1800* (New York, 1938), pp. 127-9.

⁴⁷ Lewis, 'Papers relating to the Westminster fish market', pp. 35-6.

⁴⁸ 22 Geo. II c. 49.

⁴⁹ *JHC*, xxv (1749), pp. 911, 919, 921. The Marine Society for boys was established in 1756 for the purposes of recruitment. See M. D. George, *London life in the eighteenth century* (1927: Harmondsworth, 1966 edn.), pp. 146-7.

⁵⁰ Lewis, 'Papers relating to the Westminster fish market', pp. 34-5.

⁵¹ *London Evening Post*, 3-6 November 1750; 3-5 July 1760; R. B. Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business, particularly between 1660 and 1840* (New Haven, 1915; reprinted New York, 1968), p. 212; *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), p. 364; see also J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1802-7), iv, p. 426.

only on technology but also on proper places appointed for the reception of fish by land carriage within the reach of London's consumers. Outlets were secured at St. James's, Oxford, Newgate, and Honey Lane markets, and later in 1765 (by Blake's successors), from shops in Shepherd's market, Clare market and Leadenhall, generally serving wealthier customers. The scheme widened the variety and supply of fish to Londoners, and it dampened the monopoly power of the fishmongers, but it ultimately foundered on its technical expense. Better market provision was a necessary, if not a sufficient, ingredient to success.⁵²

By the 1780s little had changed in the fishing trade. Billingsgate commanded the incoming supplies and the City fishmongers commanded Billingsgate. *The London Chronicle* quoted a 'North Briton' who deplored the lack of fish consumption in London (two-thirds of the population subsisted on butchers' meat), highlighted the smallness of Billingsgate compared to provincial fish markets, and called for the establishment of proper facilities throughout London as antidote to oligopoly and to expensive foreign fish imports. The rationale was identical to that of 1749: 'If once effectually done by parliamentary authority, under regulations to secure the supply of such markets from the interference of the London fishmongers; a door of consumption would be opened, that would give spirit to the British fisheries to the remotest parts of the world'.⁵³ In an otherwise sanguine report of 1800 on the fish trade a House of Commons Committee recommended the removal or considerable enlargement of Billingsgate in order to facilitate a larger supply.⁵⁴ Renewed philanthropic efforts at the end of the French Wars to expand the supply of fish to London's undernourished working population focused in particular upon Billingsgate's unsuitable size and location. Scarcity of markets underpinned scarcity of supply. Not surprisingly the first aim of one subscription scheme was to establish 'new depots or fish markets' as well as to enlarge Billingsgate.⁵⁵

Perhaps as a sequel to this last scheme, Westminster's influential residents again petitioned Parliament in 1817 - when food prices were high - for permission to establish a riverside market 'for supplying the metropolis with sea fish, by which a more abundant supply may be obtained, and sold at a cheaper rate'. They duly criticized the status quo whereby the Billingsgate fishmongers manipulated supplies and enhanced retail prices. The petition also contained a proposal to 'build and employ vessels with wells on hydrostatic principles, by which fish may be brought from sea to market in a live state ... and that it will create additional employment for the fishermen and watermen'. Referred to a committee, no report was made, and

⁵² *London Evening Post*, 25-27 May 1762; 5-8 June 1762; CLRO, City Lands, vol. 54 (1762), ff. 96a, 104-6, 132b-133a; vol. 56 (1764), ff. 35b, 40a, 151b; Stern, 'Fish supplies for London'.

⁵³ *London Chronicle*, 23-25 December 1784, p. 609.

⁵⁴ *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), p. 325.

⁵⁵ *An address to the inhabitants of St. Pancras, St. Mary-le-Bone, St. Giles and St. George Bloomsbury, and St. George Hanover Square, pointing out the means of obtaining a plentiful supply of fish* (1815); Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 340-1.

nothing more was heard of the scheme.⁵⁶ A radical suggestion in 1826 for *several* riverside fish markets aimed to expand demand rather than supply by providing greater access to West End retailers and householders. At present, it was shameful that in ‘the first and most magnificent sea port in the world’ fish could only be obtained either overpriced from shopkeepers or putrid from street vendors. West End householders and retailers alike were excluded from the fresh fish market by time or geography.⁵⁷ Practical progress was eventually made with the revival of Hungerford market, which included plans for a large fish market. The prospectus of 1825 damned Billingsgate in the usual manner, and claimed the new market would provide ‘the inhabitants [of Westminster] with a wholesome article of food at a much cheaper rate than at present, and at the same time open a new source of encouragement to our fisheries’.⁵⁸ A letter to the editor of *The Times* rejoiced in the prospect ‘that the public are likely at last to have the benefit of a wholesale fish market at the west end of town’ and went on:

many of your readers are probably not aware for how long a time the establishment of such a market within the limits of Westminster has been a favourite object with the public and the legislature ... [Now] the fishmonger ... in the western districts of the metropolis, will ... have the advantage of getting his supply some miles nearer to his residence, at a great saving of time and expense, and the further advantage arising from competition among the wholesale dealers’.

Yet Hungerford too failed to tame the City market and within a couple of decades the fishmongers there, like fishmongers elsewhere, obtained their produce from Billingsgate.⁵⁹

All these schemes were essentially private sector initiatives to deal with the relative scarcity of reasonably priced fish in London and underemployment in the fisheries. It is true that only improvements in technology in the nineteenth century - first the steamships, then the railways and refrigeration - revolutionized metropolitan fish consumption, made Billingsgate ‘the wholesale fish market for the world’, and relieved pressure on prices and quantities.⁶⁰ Prior to this, however, it was also true that the lack of market provision was reckoned a large obstacle to the broader aims. How accurate this perception was is hard to judge in view of Billingsgate’s stranglehold on the trade and the insufficient opportunities for new fish markets. Billingsgate’s trade itself certainly expanded but not in any revolutionary way. The demands of London consumers and retail fishmongers were by no means fully satisfied by the single market, the openness of which was itself questionable. Unlike Smithfield, efficiency arguments in favour of a single dominant fish market were not forthcoming during this period. Like Smithfield, the entrenched nature of the trade and the commercial difficulties facing new rivals go far to

⁵⁶ *JHC*, lxxii (1817), p. 60. See also Memorial of the ‘Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor’ to the Corporation, CLRO, *CC mins*, 3 November 1815; *CC papers*, 3 November 1815.

⁵⁷ *GH*, Ms 496, pp. 23-9.

⁵⁸ *GH Noble* C.45/T.1825.

⁵⁹ *Times*, 17 July 1834, p. 5; 6 August 1834, p. 6; 29 November 1834, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Royal Comm.* (1888), p. 24.

explaining Billingsgate's supremacy. Curiously, as Billingsgate flourished and was enlarged, the economic rationale of its position became increasingly tenuous. Originally serving the needs of the City, it had become by 1840 a central market that was not central enough. Removal much further downriver would have exacerbated the distributional problem; removal inland was not an option when supplies came by river. This anomaly evolved into paradox by the twentieth century when Billingsgate, still a riverside fish market, no longer received its fish from the river.⁶¹

Mark Lane and the corn trade

Many changes occurred in the English grain trade during the long eighteenth century, but there was no more signal development than the erection in 1751 of the Corn Exchange in Mark Lane, near Tower Hill (Figure 8). Yet the Corn Exchange has figured relatively little in the literature. Gras' narrative ended before 1750, Westerfield said little of it, while Fay described it only as a digression from his main story; more recently Chartres and Everitt have chosen to focus upon the inns that preceded it.⁶² Thin though the evidence is, this market quickly became the undisputed centre of a national trade and, according to London corn merchants in 1802, 'unquestionably the greatest market in the world'.⁶³

Before 1750, grain marketing in London was a rather fragmented affair. The bulkiness of the grain favoured the coastal trade, and as this extended up the eastern seaboard, Bear Key became an increasingly important London market. Inland carriage of grain made more sense when the corn had been milled locally, and brought to London in processed form. Meal, flour and malt barged downriver from Farnham and the Upper Thames Valley had to be landed and sold at Queenhithe above London Bridge (according to City regulations); while all overland cargo was to be brought to Newgate, Honey Lane or Leadenhall.⁶⁴ By the end of the seventeenth century, much of the inland meal trade found its market place among the London inns around Aldersgate and Holborn Bridge, the western and northern carriers' first ports-of-call - hence the regulations.⁶⁵

⁶¹ This asymmetry is noted by J. Bird, 'Billingsgate: a central metropolitan market', *Geographical Journal*, 124 (1958), p. 464.

⁶² N. S. B. Gras, *The evolution of the English corn market from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (Camb., Massachusetts, 1915; reprinted New York, 1967); Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 153-5, C. R. Fay, *The corn laws and social England* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 52-62; J. A. Chartres, 'The place of inns in the commercial life of London and Western England, 1660-1760', D. Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1973), ch. 8; A. M. Everitt, 'The English urban inn, 1560-1760' in Everitt (ed.), *Perspectives in English urban history* (1973). A. B. Robertson's note on 'The foundation of Mark Lane Corn Exchange', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 1 (1952-9), is useful, but very brief.

⁶³ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 95 (1802-3), f. 70v, Cornfactors' petition for widening the approaches to the Corn Exchange.

⁶⁴ T. De Laune, *Angliae metropolis, or, the present state of London* (1690), p. 355; Defoe, *Tour*, i, pp. 145, 345; CLRO, Rep. 103, ff. 80-3.

⁶⁵ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 9 (1698-1701), f. 39a; Chartres, 'The place of inns', p. 296.

The growth of middlemen and sample-selling noted in the last chapter facilitated the integration of metropolitan corn marketing in which corn factors could co-ordinate their trading in one place however the corn actually reached London. Although itself a product of such developments, the Mark Lane Corn Exchange, the first of its kind in Britain, elevated the trade into the higher echelons of commerce. It formed arguably the next stage in the 'evolution' of metropolitan corn marketing outlined by Gras.⁶⁶ Prior to 1751, cornfactors had sold their goods along the riverside wharves, as unsatisfactory a trading floor as Lombard Street had been for merchants before Gresham gave them an Exchange. Bear Key itself, though a regular market, had few amenities and no official status. In 1707 the cornfactors and corn merchants vainly petitioned Common Council for 'some proper place' by the riverside to be specifically assigned to corn marketing. Nor was anything done when complaint was made in 1724 that the deputy corn meters were raising money from the riverside market without the City's consent.⁶⁷ Small wonder, therefore, that the cornfactors finally clubbed together and established their own market. In 1747 thirty-four signatures sealed the following covenant, a landmark in the history of the corn trade:

Whereas the cornfactors living in and about the City of London have for some time past found and do still find great inconveniences and interruptions in carrying out their business for want of a proper and convenient place to meet in for redressing which inconveniences Samuel Birch; John Northcott; John Edwards; John Harries and Stephen Wear (trustees of the subscribed) have proposed and undertaken ... to purchase ... a piece of ground and thereon to erect and build ... a convenient place for the said cornfactors to meet and transact their business in ... That so soon as such convenient and proper place ... be erected ... they will not afterwards at any time meet at or use or frequent Bear Key or any other public place to sell their corn in but shall and will ... meet at and use and frequent the said place so to be erected and built and sell their corn therein ...⁶⁸

The new institution carried all before it. *The Gentleman's magaazine*, which listed 'Bear Key' corn prices every month, quoted 'Mark Lane' prices from June 1753.⁶⁹ A parliamentary committee in 1757 confirmed that Bear Key had been eclipsed by the new insitution.⁷⁰ By 1756 if not earlier the Corn Exchange was selling malt, meal and flour as well as grain, and also peas, beans, tares, clover, hemp, rape and linseed, in addition to wheat, barley, rye and oats, and the weekly wheat returns were calculated there.⁷¹ To what extent Home Counties millers used the Exchange to sell their meal and flour is unclear, although it seems that much country-milled flour was sent direct to London bakers. Malted barley was sold through Mark Lane rather than

⁶⁶ Gras, *The evolution of the English corn market*, ch. 4.

⁶⁷ CLRO, Jor. 54, f. 614; Jor. 57, f. 115.

⁶⁸ GH, Ms 902.

⁶⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxvi (1753), p. 300.

⁷⁰ *JHC*, xxviii (1758), p. 118; *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), p. 144.

⁷¹ See, for example, *London Evening Post*, 20-23 March 1756; H. Chamberlain, *A new and compleat history and survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark, and parts adjacent* (1770), p. 553; GH, Ms 5183 1-11.

Queenhithe although increasingly the brewers dealt with the sources of supply.⁷² Queenhithe seems to have declined from this time as a market, if not as a landing quay. The west country barges 'still' resorted there, and Hughson in 1805 noted that 'Queenhithe has still a resort of corn, and other merchandize', but this hardly compares with its earlier renown as a 'monster for magnitude'. That it had the same market days as Bear Key / Mark Lane may have facilitated a concentration of marketing in the latter.⁷³ By 1815 its marketing function was described in the past tense.⁷⁴ Increasingly less was also heard of the inns as markets. Exactly when and why this function declined is impossible to say. Chartres and Everitt have alluded to the general decline in the inn's multiple role from the late eighteenth century and we have already noted the possibility that several innkeepers may have become full-time cornfactors.⁷⁵ Certainly, the growth in the corn trade occurred largely among the coastal ships bound for Bear Key or Mark Lane. By the end of the century the proprietors of the Corn Exchange were investing its surpluses in government stock. It had become the undisputed marketing and price-setting centre of the grain trade: it was the nationally-feared epicentre of scarcity in the quasi-famine conditions of wartime England and it became the special subject of a parliamentary inquiry in 1800-1.⁷⁶

The Corn Exchange's scope was not merely national. Grain exports, for instance, from London, Kent, Essex and Sussex were regulated by the prices there.⁷⁷ The London corn merchants had emerged alongside Dutch merchants in the surplus days of the Restoration period, obtained their grain from Bear Key factors, and remained after England reverted to net-importer status after 1765.⁷⁸ According to one commentator, the prospect of increasing imports actually favoured a return to pitching markets (surrounded by 'ample granaries') since the dubious quality of foreign grain could not be truly ascertained by purchasers who consulted mere samples.⁷⁹ In May 1774, in 'the fullest market of corn in Mark Lane that has been known for some years', one-third of all wheat sold had been imported. Yet since foreign wheat was generally thought inferior,

⁷² See *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), pp. 146, 155, 156, 158; C. R. Fay, *The corn laws and social England* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 57-8; P. Mathias, *The brewing industry in England, 1700-1830* (1959), pp. 465-6.

⁷³ Seymour, *Stow's survey*, iii, p. 726. The price of household flour until 1774 was explicitly recorded in the wheat returns as a Queenhithe price; thereafter it appears to be a Mark Lane price, GH, Ms 5138.

⁷⁴ W. Harrison, *A new and universal history, description and survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and their adjacent parts* (1775) p. 490; D. Hughson, *London: being an accurate history and description of the British metropolis* (1805-9), ii, p. 181; Brayley et al, *London and Middlesex*, iii, p. 639; see also Middleton, *A view of the agriculture of Middlesex*, pp. 544-5. All retailing of meal had long since passed over to corn chandlers' and non-specialist shops scattered throughout London, McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', pp. 128-9; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 167, 170-2.

⁷⁵ See p. 105; Chartres, 'The place of inns', p. 450, Everitt, 'The English urban inn', p. 92.

⁷⁶ GH, Ms 909; R. Wells, *Wretched faces: famine in wartime England* (1988), pp. 24-5.

⁷⁷ Hughson, *London*, ii, p. 331.

⁷⁸ Gras, *The evolution of the English corn market*, p. 196; Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, p. 161; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 345; Wells, *Wretched faces*, p. 26.

⁷⁹ [G. Griffin], *Domestic Union: or, London as it should be* (1800), p. 43.

it was not consumed in London but re-routed to the provinces, making the Corn Exchange something of an entrepôt.⁸⁰ Merchants active in the Baltic and Russian trades later came hither to deal speculatively in foreign grain. This originated the twentieth century foreign-domestic connection between the Baltic Exchange and Corn Exchange, but in the later eighteenth century, the Mark Lane establishment was on its own.⁸¹

Since grain sales were conducted by sample, and warehousing was done elsewhere, a metropolitan corn market did not need to be located at the point of the corn's arrival, as was the case with fish and livestock. For the convenience of the factors and merchants it ought to be near the Port of London, and it was logical that the Corn Exchange was not too far removed from the market it had superseded near Thames Street. It was thought that the Mark Lane site was originally a 'kind of compromise between the Essex farmers and factors who met in Aldgate and other dealers who met in Bear Quay in Thames Street, where most of the vessels which brought grain to London discharged.'⁸² The fact that the increasing ranks of large commercial millers who wanted considerable stocks of wheat were dispersed over Hertfordshire and the Thames valley suggested that a single metropolitan corn market was an appropriate arrangement.⁸³ In general, however, it seems that the Exchange, because of the magnitude of its trade, was less constrained by the geographies of demand and supply. 'Let the corn arrive in London how it may', George Dodd was later able to claim, 'nearly all the sales are effected in the Corn Exchange ... the salesman ... requires only a sample: the bulk may be in a ship, or in a dock, or more likely than either, in a granary'.⁸⁴

The erection of the Corn Exchange was a flagrant affront to the traditional *open* market, although it was never an *informal* market. Both in name and appearance it sounded a highly modern note. Market' traditionally signified the provisioning of goods, accessible, open and public. By contrast, an 'exchange' was a place where merchants 'transacted their business', like Gresham's Royal Exchange, semi-official at best, and altogether international in orientation. (Indeed, there had been a corn exchange in early seventeenth century Amsterdam which had branched off from the trade of the city's Exchange.⁸⁵) It is not at all clear whether corn had ever been traded on the Royal Exchange, but the Corn Exchange of 1751 was clearly modelled on that

⁸⁰ *London Evening Post*, 14-17 May 1774; *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), p. 144; Wells, *Wretched faces*, p. 26.

⁸¹ F. W. Sheppard, *London, 1808-1870: the infernal wen* (1971), p. 188; C. Maughan, *Markets of London* (1931), p. 39.

⁸² J. Watson, *The historic interest of the neighbourhood of the Corn Exchange and the Baltic* (1879), p. 15.

⁸³ On the rise of the millers, see Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 167-9; C. Peterson, *Bread and the British economy, c.1770-1870* (1995), pp. 50-7.

⁸⁴ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 171, 172. The *Seventh Report of the Committee on the High Price of Provisions*, dated 24 June 1801, was wholly concerned with the practices of the Corn Exchange and can be found in *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), pp. 144-5; appendices of examined witnesses, pp. 146-59.

⁸⁵ F. Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century - The wheels of commerce*, vol. ii (1982; trans. by S. Reynolds), p. 100.

great mercantile centre of trade, news, credit and gossip.⁸⁶ It was unequivocally private property, owned by a body of interested shareholders whose early minutes read like those of a club.⁸⁷ ‘A set of gentlemen agreed to build a private place to sell corn in,’ so the story went, ‘they would not call it a market; but gave it the name of the Corn Exchange on purpose to make private property of it’.⁸⁸ *The Gentleman’s Magazine* published a perspective view of the building entitled *The Corn Factors’ Exchange*, as if to underline its private status. Architecturally freed from functional constraints by the practice of sale by sample, George Dance produced a sleek, two-storey, Doric quadrangle to grace the marketing of the most basic foodstuff. Demarcated from the outside by its columned façade and iron gates, a spacious open-air courtyard allowed cornfactors ‘to meet and transact their business’ as merchants did in the Exchanges of Cornhill and Amsterdam.⁸⁹ ‘A genteel coffee house’ on each side of the building enhanced its associations with the commodity trading world of Lombard Street and ‘Change Alley, as did the increasing amounts of credit and capital cornfactors dealt in.⁹⁰ Corn had certainly been big business for some time, but under the new dispensation, it acquired a more commodity-like status; to be transacted and traded (like the exotica of the Royal Exchange), rather than a provision offered directly to Londoners. The new institution helped to redefine the very idea of a ‘market’, particularly once ‘the Corn exchange’ and ‘the Corn market’ came to be used interchangeably.⁹¹

It did not go uncontested. In 1758 there were no less than three attempts to establish rivals: all were rooted in the scarcity and high corn prices of the time, and all were geared to ensuring abundant supplies at prices not subject to the wiles of jobber or forestaller. A market ‘for the buying and selling of all sorts of corn, grain and oatmeal’ was laid out in the new Borough market and opened in May. In response to pressure from the Innholders’ Company, in the autumn the Common Council of the City of London agreed to establish ‘a common and public market’ in Minories, not far from Mark Lane. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Westminster and Middlesex had petitioned the House of Commons for their own corn market. In the following inquiry, one Middlesex farmer alleged that there was no free public corn market nearer to London

⁸⁶ A. Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange*, LTS No. 152 (1997), chs. xviii, xix, xxi, xxii.

⁸⁷ GH, Ms 903.

⁸⁸ *JHC*, xxviii (1758), pp. 118-19.

⁸⁹ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, February 1753, p. 111; *London and its environs described*, ii, pp. 188-9.

⁹⁰ Credit to purchasers (one month for wheat; two months for other grains) was so well developed by the 1780s that the cornfactors used it as justification for increasing their commission charges to farmers - cuttings from *London Chronicle*, 1, 18, 21 August 1783 inserted in *London and its environs described*, ii. The cornfactor also became a kind of banker to many farmers, A. Pulling, *A practical treatise on the laws, customs and regulations of the City and Port of London as settled by charter, usage, by-law and statute* (1842), p. 470.

⁹¹ See, for example, the language used in W. Maitland, *The history and survey of London* (1756 edn.), ii, p. 728; *London and its environs described*, iv, p. 261, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 4 January 1771; Harrison, *A new and universal history*, p. 493; J. Feltham, *The picture for London for 1802* (1803), p. 119; Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv, p. 556. The Corn Exchange also became known, confusingly, as ‘Bear Key market’, *Times*, 11 October 1823, p. 3.

than Brentford, now that Bear Key had been superseded. The farmers hoped that a market in Westminster would enable them to carry manure back to their fields which would in turn encourage and cheapen supply. The bill was enacted for a 'free and open market .. for all sorts of .. corn and grain, seed, malt, meal and flour'. None of the three succeeded. The Westminster Corn Market Act was never apparently executed, and the City records are silent on the Minorities market after December 1758. The Borough corn market did get up and running, but little was heard of it.⁹²

The Corn Exchange was not, in fact, necessarily uncompetitive in its trading. The weekly wheat returns between December 1756 and December 1758 listed forty-three factors and dealers and around 110 different buyers. Wheat sold in quantities of a dozen quarters to over several hundred. Both buyers and sellers appear to have dealt with a range of people. The range of prices paid each day and weekly price fluctuations points to a flexible market.⁹³ Nevertheless, entry barriers were high and restrictive practices developed. Leases of cornfactor stands had been under the control of the proprietors, and although there were seventy-two stands, lessees dwindled through death and bankruptcy, and others were physically barred from the Exchange. Market manipulation was more likely when some corn factors dabbled in trading themselves.⁹⁴ The 1801 Report recognized that factors and dealers could expose as few or many samples as they pleased, so that no buyer could know what was the total market supply. In principle, sale by sample maximized the amount of grain that could be marketed in a relatively confined space, so that a growing trade did not necessarily require enlargement of the premises. In reality, there was substantial unsatisfied demand for factor stands in the Exchange around 1800, as these were jealously guarded by fourteen proprietors who were engaged in the trade, and large sums had to be paid to fill any vacancy. Non-standholders could still expose samples, but their business was trivial. The degree of competition between cornfactors was therefore doubtful, as many observed. One Dartford miller attested that the Corn Exchange was an open market for prospective buyers, but not for sellers; were there more stands, there would be more factors and more competition to the public benefit. The presence of jobbers also added to the atmosphere of profiteering.⁹⁵ High wheat prices in 1800 put the salesmen under further suspicion. In September rioting smouldered in Mark Lane for several days. For the hungry populace the Exchange was not a mercantile club but a market of public accountability - hence the handbills which called for assembly, and the

⁹² LMA, Acc 2058 1 18, Minutes of the Borough market trustees 16 January, 7 March, 25 April 1758; CLRO, Rep. 162, ff. 112-13, 130; CLRO, Jor. 61, ff. 218b, 294-5, 313; *JHC*, xxviii (1758), pp. 85, 89, 118-19, 125; 31 Geo. II c. 25; *London Evening Post*, 19-21 January 1758; 21-24 January 1758.

⁹³ GH, Ms 5183/1-11, Bakers' Company Wheat Returns on the London Corn Exchange, 1756-1824.

⁹⁴ *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), pp. 149, 151, 153.

⁹⁵ *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), pp. 144, 148, 150, 154, 156; Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv, p. 556.

threats when assembled to pull down the symbolic gates of the Exchange. Reforms were subsequently made, entry to the Exchange was freed up, and thereafter tension subsided.⁹⁶

The confined space of the Exchange and the restrictions on stands nevertheless continued to limit competition.⁹⁷ One possible solution was the creation of decentralized corn markets where all classes of buyers could purchase for their retailing or household needs.⁹⁸ In the end market forces provided their own remedy. A smaller extension (for the seed trade) was opened opposite to the original premises and in the late 1820s the Exchange itself was enlarged, apparently in response to a more radical initiative - the 'New Corn Exchange' of 1828.⁹⁹ This was another private venture, predicated on the claim that when the original Exchange was erected, 'there was not above a fourth of the quantity of corn sold in London which is now sold there; the want of accommodation, both for factors and the public attending it, is apparent to everyone who visits it in the hours it is open'. Unlike its predecessor, 'the London Corn Exchange Company' owed its existence to Act of Parliament. Partly for this reason the new Exchange presented a more public and elaborately designed façade, on which its legislative origins were inscribed, surrounded by agricultural emblems, wheat-ear chaplets and the royal arms.¹⁰⁰ Whereas new entrants in the fish and livestock sectors failed, this institution became a commercial success in the face of a very strong incumbent. The reason was quite simple, and quite consistent with the dynamics in play elsewhere. The New Corn Exchange was established immediately adjacent to the original - the incumbents had in fact rejected a joint venture - to mop up its overspilling trade among the houses and taverns of Mark Lane and thus relieve the pent-up demand for stands. It was as if the old Exchange had been enlarged.¹⁰¹ Whilst the trade of ^{the} original 'Corn market' grew in size and reputation - 'the great corn market of the metropolis', Cunningham called it - the two jealous rivals could hardly ignore each other, and they were complementary as much as competitive. Later in the century relations thawed and they eventually amalgamated in 1929, a century after co-operation was first proposed.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Griffin, *Domestic union*, pp. 43-4; Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv, p. 556; CLRO, Rep. 204, pp. 412 ff.; *Times*, 16 September 1800, p. 2.

⁹⁷ Pigot & Co., *A directory of London and its suburbs* (1826-7 edn.), p. 22.

⁹⁸ GH, Ms 496, pp. 3-8.

⁹⁹ Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv, p. 556; J. C. Loudon, *An encyclopaedia of gardening* (3rd edn, 1825), p. 1063; Watson, *The historic interest of the neighbourhood of the Corn Exchange*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁰ T. Allen, *The history and antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark and parts adjacent* (1827-9), iii, pp. 749-50.

¹⁰¹ A similar case of 'free-riding' was the Warwick Lane carcase market opened in 1831 adjacent to Newgate market. Another successful interloper, Bermondsey leather market (1831) was contingent upon the local presence of leather tanners and factors rather than an established market, e.g. *Times*, 6 September 1833, p. 4.

¹⁰² 7 Geo. IV c. 55; GH Noble C.45.3/T.1894, extract from *The Ludgate Illustrated Magazine*, viii (1894), pp. 406-8; W. Passingham, *London's markets: their origin and history* (1935), pp. 207-8; P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), p. 314; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 171.

Progressive developments in the corn trade like sale by sample and factoring helped bring about the establishment of the Corn Exchange, they did not arise as a consequence of that establishment. Nevertheless, the Exchange brought coherence and sophistication to the metropolitan corn trade and marked a new departure in the environment and status of corn marketing in England. It was an efficient arrangement for those who possessed stands there, but the threat of restrictive and abusive market practices was heightened by the restrictive size and management of the Exchange itself. The coming of a rival, whilst alleviating the restraints, also confirmed the supremacy of the exchange-marketing principle. The Mark Lane Exchange of 1751 had set a new trend and created a new motif for the English corn trade: similar institutions were established in manufacturing towns like Leeds, Norwich and Stockport in the early nineteenth century, and the numbers of provincial corn exchanges multiplied with the coming of the railways and the mid-Victorian golden age of agriculture. Corn marketing, in the new guise of the corn exchange, had attained a public and highly modern legitimacy.¹⁰³

The fruit and vegetable trade

Unlike fish, corn and cattle, the trade in market gardening did not centre upon one great central market. Covent Garden was the most celebrated in Georgian and Victorian London, but it was not alone. There were a number of reasons for this situation, which was by no means economically inefficient.

Much can be explained by the expansion of horticulture before and throughout our period, as the gentry dropped its prejudice to garden stuff and the poor adopted it as an increasing part of their diet. Market gardening - the commercial cultivation of vegetables and fruits - was a concomitant of urbanization. As early modern London grew and prospered, there was increased need and desire for the trade. Rents and employment rose during the seventeenth century, and the City Gardeners' Company, chartered in the reign of James I, became more assertive. By 1700 London was almost encircled by market gardens which met most of its requirements. Most of them were to be found close to the Thames, in order to minimize the costs of transporting bulky produce - fruit and vegetables were carried up or down the river from places such as Brentford and Twickenham, Battersea and Fulham, Bermondsey and Hackney.¹⁰⁴ Small wonder, then, that

¹⁰³ K. Grady, *The Georgian public buildings of Leeds and the West Riding*, Thoresby Society publications, No. 133 (1989), p. 69; P. J. Corfield, 'The social and economic history of Norwich, 1650-1850: a study in urban growth', Ph. D. thesis (University of London, 1976), p. 400; Mitchell, 'Urban markets and retail distribution, 1730-1815', p. 157. See also M. Girouard, *The English town* (Yale, 1990), p. 15; C. Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian town halls* (1981), pp. 252-99.

¹⁰⁴ McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', pp. 195, 199; J. C. Drummond & A. Willbraham, *The Englishman's food* (1957), pp. 182-3; R. Webber, *Covent Garden: mud-salad market* (1969), p. 31; M. Thick, 'Market gardening in England and Wales' in J. Thirsk (ed.) *The agrarian history of*

all four new markets built in the City after the Great Fire contained substantial accommodation for the 'country' gardeners. Stocks market, before 1666 a meat and fish outlet, became London's premier fruit market, whilst space and amenities for herbsmen and gardeners were made available in Newgate, Leadenhall and Honey Lane. In the West End, the south side of Covent Garden piazza became the scene for casual trading of garden stuffs. The decision of the Earl of Bedford in 1670 to obtain a charter for the market was a historic turning point in the trade, and from the 1680s, the market grew rapidly.¹⁰⁵ It was the only specialized market of its kind in that feverish period of market creation, although most of the others made provision for a fruit and vegetable trade. Hungerford market in particular sought some of Covent Garden's business, situated as it was on the banks of the Thames. Further down the river Three Cranes Wharf in the City earned something of a reputation in the early eighteenth century as a mart for fresh fruit, particularly cherries.¹⁰⁶

The strong and growing demand for fresh fruit and vegetables by all sections of society brought significant changes in the eighteenth century. For many people good fruit was income elastic - spending on it rose faster than incomes in general - and garden stuff in general complemented meat and fish, in terms of both diet and palate. The expanding consumption of vegetables and fruit was arguably as much a part of the 'consumer revolution' as pottery or coffee: they were all novel, fashionable, and subject to social emulation and rising real wages.¹⁰⁷ For the poor, vegetables, particularly potatoes, substituted for expensive grain and bread.¹⁰⁸ In this context the expansion of Covent Garden market right across the piazza was not surprising, but nor was it not unique. Since the majority of general markets accommodated green or 'country' produce there was always the possibility that rising demand for garden stuffs could transform a general market over time into a more specialized one. This could not happen with livestock, because general markets were for the most part not authorized to sell cattle; and although they sold fish, very little arrived direct from source. Others emerged with particular reputations for the garden trade. Spitalfields to the east of the City began life as a general market like many in the seventeenth century, but by the 1760s was specializing in the coarser kinds of fruit and famously in potatoes.¹⁰⁹ Borough market in Southwark had also been a well-known

England and Wales, 1640-1750 [vol. 5.ii.] (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 504-6, 509-10; idem, *The Neat House Gardens: early market gardening around London* (Totnes, 1998), chs. 1, 2.

¹⁰⁵ The growth of trade is testified by the annual rents paid by the lessees of the market: in 1677, £80; in 1705, £500; in 1758, £1400, LMA, E/BER/CG E/10 15, 'Extract from the leases' (1808-12).

¹⁰⁶ Stype, *Stow's survey*, iii, p. 13; vi, p. 76; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 343; CLRO, Misc. Mss 332.2

¹⁰⁷ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J. H. Plumb, *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialisation of eighteenth century England* (1982); Thick, *The Neat House Gardens*, pp. 25-38.

¹⁰⁸ Thick, 'Market gardening in England and Wales', p. 508.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, *London and environs described*, iv, p. 54; CLRO, City Lands, vol. 57 (1765), f. 143b; B. Lambert, *The history and survey of London* (1806), iv, p. 80; Knight, *London*, v, p. 137.

general market but after its relocation in 1756 became more noted for its vegetables and greens.¹¹⁰ In the City Newgate's horticultural trade flourished until it was removed in 1838 to Farringdon, a move made to free up space for its deadmeat market.¹¹¹ The new markets authorized in the 1820s and '30s - Hungerford, Portman and South London - also sought to conduct a large garden trade. Only Portman, however, prospered, located as it was in a new part of the town far from any rivals.¹¹² By the end of the period there were at least five substantial fruit and vegetable markets, for both wholesale and retail purposes, although only Covent Garden remained purely specialized.

Unlike other great food markets, Covent Garden and the others were not generally levelled with charges of monopoly. Fewer middlemen were involved and the perishability of produce favoured a simpler system. Whilst the powerful fishmongers of Billingsgate also dealt in perishable produce, in the fish trade there was only one principal supply route and one principal market, characteristics that did not apply to the garden trade. The sheer number of vendors at Covent Garden - around 200 gardeners in the 1820s - reflects the competitiveness of ^{the} market, although there were still accusations of engrossing there and elsewhere.¹¹³

Belying the concerns associated with several livestock markets, the garden markets offered a wide array of produce (no doubt with seasonal variations): apples, pears, cherries, plums, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, carrots, cabbages, potatoes, broccoli, peas, watercress. Individual lines of produce were not so regionally-specific as in livestock - technology and production techniques were more important than locality - so that product variety at local retail level was not dependant upon a single central market, and a more decentralized system was both feasible and desirable. An important market retail trade also favoured several markets, as did the fact that there were numerous different routes of supply into London. Most of the markets were located at strategic points, although they did not have to be by the river, particularly as the speed of overland transport improved in the later eighteenth century.¹¹⁴ Covent Garden, north of the Strand, was well positioned to receive supplies boated down the river and from the market gardens of western Middlesex, unloaded at places such as Strand and Ivy Bridge

¹¹⁰ Compare comments on Borough/Southwark market made by E. Hatton, *New view of London* (1708), p. 10; *London and environs described*, iv, p. 262; Harrison, *A new and universal history*, p. 508; Allen, *The history and antiquities of London*, iv, p. 526.

¹¹¹ CLRO, *CC mins*, 11 May 1838.

¹¹² Hungerford Market Act, 11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 120, Portman Market Act, 11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 121; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 386; *Times*, 6 January 1830 (advertisement), p. 4. The South London market never materialized.

¹¹³ LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 21, loose in bundle, Report on the present state of Covent Garden market, c. 1827; extract from T. Smollett, *The expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771), reprinted in X. Baron (ed.), *London, 1066-1914: literary sources and documents* (Mountfield, 1998), i, p. 800; CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 79 (1787-8), ff. 21r-22v.

¹¹⁴ By the late eighteenth century, produce from market gardens in Pimlico was coming up by horse and cart, Thick, *The Neat House Gardens*, pp. 157-9.

Stairs, but it was feasible in 1766 for John Gwynn to suggest that the market be removed south of the Strand to Durham Yard, by the river.¹¹⁵ Hungerford market was closer still to the Thames, but this strategic advantage did not seem to pay off.¹¹⁶ Spitalfields market on the other hand acted as receptacle to the produce of Essex to the east and Middlesex to the north. Borough market, south of the river, was well positioned for receiving garden produce coming up the Thames landing at St. Saviour's Dock not far away, and also supplies arriving by the main road to Southwark from Surrey and Kent.¹¹⁷ Contemporary estimates of the garden acreage around London (Table 25), indicates the geographically segmented nature of the trade that was reflected in a triangle of dominant markets - Covent Garden to the west, Borough to the south and Spitalfields to the east.

Table 25 *Acreage of market gardens within ten miles of London, from D. Lysons (1792)*

Region	Parishes with over 50 acres	Total acreage
West	Fulham, Kensington, Isleworth, Chiswick, Ealing, Chelsea, Twickenham, Paddington	4144
South	Deptford, Battersea, Mitcham, Lambeth, Mortlake, Wandsworth, Greenwich, Barnes, Putney, Newington Butts, Plumstead, Bromley St. Leon	2358
North	-	50
East	West Ham, East Ham, Barking, Bethnal Green, Little Ilford	2058
Grand Total		8790

Source: Derived from M. Thick, *The Neat House Gardens* (Totnes, 1998), p. 56.

There was nevertheless significant competition between the three partly because so much produce came up the river and could be landed at different points for different markets. Suppliers easily switched from Stocks to Spitalfields after the former's closure in 1737; the Fleet market lessees in 1765 feared that strict regulations would push their fruiterers to supply Spitalfields, Covent Garden or Borough instead; Covent Garden itself faced actual or potential competition from Hungerford, Fleet, Portman and Farringdon.¹¹⁸

Local patterns of demand - retail and household - also helped to determine a market's character and fortunes. Borough market was to a large extent insulated from northern competition by the Thames (no other market existed in Southwark before 1789); the Borough itself resembled a large manufacturing and market town. Spitalfields was known as a 'headquarters for the sale of potatoes' in the 1830s. Charles Knight noted that one wholesale dealer there stored up to 14,000 sacks of potatoes on his premises. It became London's largest potato market since 'besides being

¹¹⁵ *The Spectator*, no. 454 (11 August 1712), p. 98; LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 1/5; J. Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved* (1766), pp. 94-5.

¹¹⁶ PRO, SP 29 405, no. 121; SP 29 366, p. 531; Strype, vi, p. 76.

¹¹⁷ *Morning Chronicle survey* (5 December 1850), pp. 233-4

¹¹⁸ *London Evening Post*, (e.g.) 3-6 September 1737; CLRO, Misc. Mss 94.23; Strype, vi, p. 76; LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 1/2; 10 29 (loose); CLRO, City Lands, vol. 57 (1765), ff. 141a, 143a.

convenient to the growers in Essex, whence the chief supply by land carriage is obtained, it is in the midst of a dense population of the poorer class'. Poverty and potatoes were close companions in the early nineteenth century. 'Spitalfields, more than any other, is the market of the poor', observed Mayhew.¹¹⁹ Its produce was generally cheaper and coarser than Covent Garden's; whilst the latter supplied exotic and out-of-season lines to cater for a more fashionable West End demand, Spitalfields became the great source for East End costermongers and street dealers.¹²⁰ Yet there was a certain degree of chance in this development. In 1741, the proprietor of Spitalfields sought an additional grant from the Crown, but on inquisition it was found that the sale of meat, and fish, but *not* 'roots, herbs and garden stuff', would prejudice Leadenhall market. This outcome, together with the rise of the Whitechapel butchers at this time, may have guided Spitalfields into its more specialized trajectory.¹²¹

Covent Garden nevertheless maintained its status as London's supreme fruit and garden market. How can its commercial success be explained? There is no definitive answer to this very important question, and there is no point putting it down to 'market forces' if one does not know what exactly those forces were. In fact, much depended upon the legal framework within which the market operated. The charter of 1670 was unique in London, for it sanctioned only a specialized trade.¹²² Despite the various unauthorized activities that were carried on there from time to time, the market nevertheless remained unique. It therefore became the natural channel through which a growing garden trade might pass. By the mid-eighteenth century there were no other rival fruit and vegetable markets in this part of London to accommodate the expansion. The removal in 1737 of Stocks market left the City with no specialist green market - Fleet, its replacement, was a general affair. Spitalfields, and perhaps to a lesser extent Borough market, also benefited, but they were located in other parts of the metropolis.¹²³ Covent Garden was easily able to expand with increasing demand and production, as the 1670 grant had explicitly stated that the market area comprised the whole piazza, even though the vendors then occupied only a fraction of it. In addition, the casual nature of much of the trade facilitated the expansion of business. Unlike some others, the market site and franchise belonged to the same person, nor

¹¹⁹ *Morning Chronicle survey* (5 December 1850), pp. 233-4.

¹²⁰ *Penny Magazine* (26 August 1837), in GH Noble, B W2 COV/B; Knight, *London*, v, pp. 143-4; Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 383-4; Thick, *The Neat House Gardens*, p. 150.

¹²¹ PRO, C/202 129/1. On the butchers of Aldgate and Whitechapel, see, for example J. Noorthouck, *A new history of London* (1773), p. 664.

¹²² LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 19.

¹²³ CLRO, Misc. Mss 94.23, copy of affidavit by two gardeners relating to 'Spittle Square market', 11 August 1742; Jor. 58, f. 242.

was there any divorce of the market's freehold and leasehold.¹²⁴ Generally vigilant and sensible management of the market also ensured that its trade would at least be maintained.

More important, however, was the *evolution* of the market. A flourishing market is not created overnight. Covent Garden was 'a market which had grown up, no one knew how, or when, or by what authority'.¹²⁵ Vendors appeared soon after the piazza had been laid out, at a time when the trade itself was emerging. Bedford had left London during the Civil Wars, and by 1649, the City had got wind of the market there. So when in 1670 the Earl gained the patent, his market enjoyed a head start over others.¹²⁶ By 1725, it was claimed that the market 'is now very considerable, has been ever since kept and quietly held in the place limited and is let to a tenant from year to year who employs clerks to collect the duties'.¹²⁷ Additional accommodation was provided in 1677, 1706, 1748 and 1828 in response to, rather than in anticipation of, expanding trade, and in turn encouraged that trade. As the *London Weekly Review* remarked in 1828, 'This great depot of vegetable produce is about to be furnished with the accommodation to which its increased and increasing importance so justly entitles it'.¹²⁸ In particular, the rebuilding of 1828-30 (which caused minimal disruption) was crucial to its continued prosperity, for it came just at a time when three other spanking new markets were being designed: Farringdon, Portman and Hungerford, all potential rivals. New Covent Garden opened soon after Farringdon and well before the other two. Hungerford particularly suffered, because its potential advantage in amenities was now cancelled out by a market which already offered suppliers a guaranteed demand. Not only did rebuilding consolidate Covent Garden's horticultural trade, but the new market's distinguished design also brought it renewed favour with the public. That the piazza had long functioned not only as a market place, but also as a great public concourse and the centre of London's entertainment district doubtless enhanced its attraction to country suppliers as well as to Londoners themselves, even if most commentators thought the combination strange.¹²⁹

Of all the food trades and markets, the growth in production and consumption of horticultural products was most clearly and spectacularly reflected in the development of fruit and vegetable markets in London. In 1660, it was probably inconceivable that London's most famous market a century and more later would be one which sold garden stuffs. In general the trade was different from the others, for it was comparatively new, it accommodated more than one great wholesale market, and it engendered less controversy. Horticultural marketing

¹²⁴ Since Bedford owned the surrounding land, it was also easier for him to extend the market in the nineteenth century beyond its 1670 limits, *Survey of London: St. Paul's, Covent Garden*, xxxvi (1970), p. 130.

¹²⁵ Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 372.

¹²⁶ Webber, *Covent Garden*, p. 34; CLRO, Rep. 60, f. 1 (noted in Misc. Mss 90.8, Court of Aldermen, 30 October 1649).

¹²⁷ LMA, E/BER/CG/T 11 G3 17 (single sheet).

¹²⁸ GH Noble, B W2 COV/B.

developed along a more flexible trajectory than the other trades, although the trade could be equally 'locked in' to particular markets.

¹²⁹ See p. 201.

Conclusion

Whilst this chapter has focused in turn upon specific markets and trades with their respective peculiarities, it has sought to outline some of the distinctive themes raised in their collective history. Market forces undoubtedly played the dominant role in shaping the kinds and number of wholesale markets that existed, and the proposals that were made to supplement these. Economies of scale and reputation, together with production and distributive practices, explain why relatively few markets dominated in London. Whether this was the most socially efficient arrangement is a question without a simple answer, particularly since the economics of the markets depended on a range of factors. The corn and livestock trades, for instance, were probably best off with single central markets, but they also had their drawbacks: Smithfield was too small and lacked adequate facilities for the animals; the Corn Exchange was restrictive in both size and practice (as was its counterpart the Coal Exchange). Market forces could themselves foster restrictive marketing practices, as occurred in the fish and corn trades. In the retail sector there may have been market failure, but in wholesaling less need was felt for additional markets in specific locales. In this context, location became a particularly significant issue; strictly speaking there was no such thing as 'the London market' for any given trade. This was certainly true of the fruit and vegetable trades, and it was also true of hay and straw marketing. Old market sites, including Leadenhall's leather market, which once made economic sense now appeared less defensible in an expanding metropolis, but relocation itself was both commercially and politically problematic. None of the great markets was immune from challenge; Smithfield came to face competition from the deadmeat markets; the Corn Exchange was much contested and finally forced to accommodate a newcomer; the green markets were never quite insulated from competition with each other; Leadenhall's leather trade finally lost out to private initiatives in Bermondsey.¹³⁰ In general, however, complementarity was as much at work as rivalry, as it was the case with the public/private marketing distinction noted at the end of last chapter. As the long eighteenth century wore on, criticisms of a more qualitative nature regarding the great markets multiplied (see Chapter Seven), but by 1840 what was most noticeable was the asymmetry that had arisen between well-known and reputed wholesale markets with 'great' commercial status, and the humble and increasingly neglected retail-only markets.

¹³⁰ See pp. 96, 106.

6 THE ROLE OF THE AUTHORITIES

Economic forces - informed by the broad determinants of demography, topography and fashion - go a long way to explaining the significance and development of London's markets in this period. Yet even a long way is only so far, for the market place, almost by definition, involved the actions and values of authority and was not simply the autonomous embodiment of 'market forces'. It represented, most importantly, *privileges* or the abrogation of those privileges; it was also subject to *management* and planning; finally, the market place was, potentially at least, a highly *regulated* space that expressed the attitudes and values of authority towards commerce. These three aspects will be treated in this order since market rights provide the 'global' perspective, whilst managerial issues are discussed before regulation to avoid any confusion arising out of the overlap between them. Despite the limited extent to which authorities like the City of London could and did shape the fortunes or development of markets, the association of market place and authority remained both strong and illuminating.

The political geography of London's markets

Market privileges - and disputes over them - go back at least to Norman and early medieval times when a deluge of royal grants gave birth to over a thousand markets across England.¹ As markets then were valued commercial and symbolic assets, so too in our period they offered a badge of urban status, promised profit, local amenities, and a focus for trade generally. They throw a fascinating, if slightly oblique, light upon the attitudes and status of the City Corporation in an age of metropolitan expansion. The City's market rights were enshrined by a charter of Edward III in 1327 (confirmed by Richard II, Charles I and Charles II) which stated that neither he nor his successors would grant to anyone a market within seven miles of the City of London.² In the long eighteenth century, however, his successors did make such grants.³ This undermined the City's ancient rights in this area, although they were never extinguished. Market creation in the growing

¹ R. H. Britnell, 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200-1349', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 34 (1981); A. R. Bridbury, 'Markets and freedom in the Middle Ages' in B. L. Anderson & A. J. H. Latham (eds), *The market in history* (1986).

² CLRO, Misc. Mss 90.8, Extracts from the City Records, relating to markets, A.D. 1102-1830, p. 1; Corporation of London, *The Corporation of London: its origins, constitution, powers and duties* (Oxford, 1950), p. 135.

³ The standard procedure for gaining a royal grant was by writ of *ad quod damnum* ('to whose loss?') directed to the county sheriff whilst an inquisition jury would assess whether the 'grant will not be to the damage of Your Majesty or your lieges'. If the verdict was not *ad damnum*, then, in the words of the Commissioners' Report of 1891 'an order of reference is then made to the Attorney General as to the expediency of granting the market, and if the report be favourable Your Majesty's warrant follows'. Royal Comm. (1891), pp. 7-8.

metropolis attested to the continued importance of royal prerogative but also to the growing significance of the legislature. By 1840, the political geography of London's markets had become far more diverse and uncertain than was the case two centuries previously.

City opposition to new markets

Between 1652 and 1835, the City Corporation opposed or resisted, conditionally or unconditionally, no less than forty-six attempted markets, or roughly two-thirds of all attempts to establish markets (Table 26). The principal inroad into the seven-mile monopoly was made by the Earl of Clare's new market near Drury Lane which Cromwell's Parliament authorized and Charles II later confirmed, in the face of fierce and prolonged opposition by the City. Other markets the City managed to prevent but it became severely discredited over legally dubious tactics to undermine new markets at Holborn (Brook's) and Charing Cross (Hungerford). Then the suspension of the City's franchises between 1683 and 1689 coincided with a rash of new market creations. Remarkably, four-fifths of all occasions of City opposition to new markets occurred before 1750. This was partly because there were fewer schemes to oppose after 1750, but also because there was some adjustment in the City's stance. In earlier disputes opposition was total and tenacious; later on initial suspicion tended to give way to consent provided certain clauses in the relevant grant or Act were dropped. Several questions arise from this. How far was City opposition a structural and corporate policy rather than a set of ad hoc responses based upon sectional interests? If it is reasonable to speak of a 'City policy', then why was civic opposition so persistent, and how was it justified? What consequences did it have?

Evidence is far from ideal to answer the first of these questions. Table 26 is largely derived from brief references, devoid of recorded debate, in the administrative journals of the Corporation. From these it would seem that City opposition to particular markets was largely conducted on an ad hoc, reactive basis. There was no standing committee, for instance, geared to this end. The Court of Aldermen would usually respond upon hearing of a public inquisition into the impact of a promised market, at other times the Common Council would protest. In the eighteenth century, the Corporation's most senior managerial body of commoners, the City Lands Committee, often got wind of proposed markets.⁴ Other responses were made when prospective market proprietors directly petitioned the City for its consent. Some markets seem to have been granted or erected without even the City's apparent knowledge, including four in the later eighteenth century.⁵ Both vigilance and ignorance were demonstrated in 1823 when the

⁴ It was first appointed in 1592 to manage the City's estates, H. Deadman & E. Scudder (eds.), *An introductory guide to the Corporation of London Records Office* (1994), p. 24; *The Corporation of London*, p. 55.

⁵ St. George's market, Mayfair (1786), Grosvenor market (1786), St. George's market, Southwark (1789), Fitzroy market (c. 1791).

Table 26 *Markets and market grants resisted by the City of London, 1652-1835*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Market authorized</i>	<i>Market not authorized</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type (if known)</i>
1652		Stepney		
1652		Ratcliff		
1652-62	Clare		Earl of Clare	General ^a
1664, 67	Stepney		Earl of Cleveland	General
1664-5		East Smithfield	Thomas Barnhurst	General
1669		Shadwell	Thomas Neale	General
1672		Millbank	Mr. Billing	
1676		Salisbury Court	Earl of Dorset	
1677		Shadwell	Thomas Neale	General
1677		Soho	Richard Frith	
1679		Haymarket	Edward Warcup	Hay, straw
1679	Hungerford		Sir E. Hungerford	General
1682	Brook's		Fulke, Baron Brooke	General
1682	Spitalfields		John Balch	General
1683		Conduit Mead	John Coell	Cattle
1683		Clerkenwell Green		
1686		Edmonton, Midds.	Sir Nicholas Butler	Cattle
1688	Spitalfields		George Boun	General
1695-1701	Brookfield ^b		Nathaniel Curzon	Cattle
1698		Westminster	Inhabitants (to HoC)	Corn
1698	Southall		Francis Merrick	Cattle
1699		Knightsbridge	Nathaniel Curzon	General inc. cattle
1700		St. John Street	John Fitz	Skins; fruit & veg
1704		Cow Cross	Dorothy Rokeby	Sheep & lamb skins
1706	Clerkenwell		C. & R. Hore	Sheep & lamb skins
1708		Hounslow, Midds.	Charles Shales	Cattle
1708		Isleworth, Midds.	Charles Shales	General
1708, 13		Croydon, Surrey		Cattle
1711, 23		Rag Fair, Stepney	William Barker	Old clothes
1716		Barnet, Herts		Cattle
1718		Knightsbridge		
1720	Lowndes, Soho*		William Lowndes	General
1727		Gt. Conduit Fields* ^c	Philip Baker	General
1727		Murrell's Field (Fair)	John Thurmond	Cattle, goods, etc.
1728	Oxford, Marylebone*		Earl of Oxford	General
1736		Smithfield Bars	John Greenhill	General
1739	Great Brookfield*		Sir Nathaniel Curzon	General
1741-2		Spitalfields	Robert Moore	General
1743		East Smithfield	George Shank	Old clothes
1784	Mortimer*		H. W. Mortimer	General
1792		Finsbury	Earl of Darnley	General
1802	Finsbury*		Earl of Darnley	General
1802	Paddington [§]		Gd. Junctn. Canal Co	General, inc. cattle
1824	Limehouse* ^d		Thomas Brunton	General
1830	Cumberland* [§]			Hay, straw
1832	Portman ^{§*}		Lord Portman	General
1833	Warwick Lane ^c			Deadmeat
1835	Islington [§]		John Perkins	Cattle

*Conditional consent by City

^a 'General' = (can include) meat, fresh and salted fish, poultry, dairy, fruit & veg, herbs, hay^b Established by grants in 1686 & 1688[§] Established by Act of Parliament^c No grant recorded despite conditional consent by City^d Market not established despite grant.^e Established within City without grantSources: CLRO, 90.8; Misc. Mss 187.7; Alchin 246; *Jor.* 80, f. 230b seq.; *City Lands*, vol. 124 (1832), pp. 216, 278, 406.

Common Council launched an investigation into the erection of a market in neighbouring Finsbury only to discover that it had agreed to its establishment twenty years earlier.⁶ Some evidence suggests that individual interests influenced policy. From 1676 the City's general markets were leased out to aggressively capitalist 'farmers' who apparently urged their lessors to defend their investment by preventing the erection of rival markets.⁷ In the same way, in 1699 the farmer of Queenhithe persuaded Common Council that a proposed riverside corn market at Westminster would injure the City. That two successive aldermen farmed the City markets between 1716 and 1737 is also suggestive.⁸ To some extent, of course, City policy was necessarily reactive since new proposed suburban markets were unlikely to come to its attention until a late stage. The seven-mile charter was always there, ready to be played against prospective rivals. Yet for all that, the Corporation was both consistent and persistent in its responses, and there is no evidence to suggest that the subject caused division within or between the two Courts. When the larger and more democratic Common Council came to dominate the Corporation in the later eighteenth century, there was no ostensible change in City sensitivity to rival markets. Indeed, if the eighteenth century Corporation comprised a cohesive and distinctive civic community that identified itself with commercial sobriety and corporate privilege, then a continued robust defence of its inherited market rights was fully in keeping with such *mentalité*.⁹

It seems reasonable, then, to use the language of 'City policy' throughout this period. Why then was opposition, particularly before 1750, so persistent? Disputes over suburban markets exemplified the tensions generated by the growth of Stuart London and the City's refusal either to govern the new districts or establish markets itself in them.¹⁰ It was not merely a question of contested trade, although the financial fallout after the Great Fire (as well as the fillip to civic pride provided by the rebuilding) could only have reinforced the City's resolve.¹¹ New suburban markets undermined the exclusive rights which lay at the heart of the City's commercial well-being, ancient corporate status and self-identity.¹² They belied the specifically civic associations of the market place in London; they were products of localized, piecemeal and speculative town-planning, devoid of ancient legitimacy yet boasting royal sanction. They

⁶ CLRO, *Common Council mins.*, 9 May, 17 July 1823.

⁷ CLRO, Orders of the Markets Committee, 1676-7, pp. 29, 55.

⁸ CLRO, Comp. Deed Box 19, no. 16e; Box 43, no. 37.

⁹ S. E. Brown, 'Politics, commerce and social policy in the City of London, 1782-1802', D. Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1992).

¹⁰ On the issue of 'incorporation', see N. G. Brett-James, *The growth of Stuart London* (1935), ch. 9.

¹¹ J. R. Kellett, 'The causes and progress of the financial decline of the Corporation of London, 1660-1694', Ph. D. thesis (University of London, 1952), p. 153; W. G. Bell, *The Great Fire of London* (1923; 1994 edn.), pp. 293-4. Newgate, Honey Lane and Stocks markets were all open by 1670, while the markets at Leadenhall were not fully rebuilt until 1677, B. R. Masters, *The public markets of the City of London surveyed by William Leybourn in 1677*, LTS No. 117 (1974), pp. 17, 19.

threatened to accelerate expansion outside the City, at a time when metropolitan growth was still tentative and incremental, and when Government still thought expansion neither inevitable nor desirable.¹³ The Great Fire redoubled the City's efforts to restrain suburban sprawl by means of protests and proposed legislation; even Parliament considered various proposals to limit the new building in the 1670s. Top of the City's list of complaints to the King in 1673 were 'the many buildings erected and markets held in the suburbs'.¹⁴ New markets and new growth went hand in hand: both were anathema to the City. Market prevention would help restrain building, and it was easier to prohibit or suppress a market than to prevent the construction of innumerable dwellings.

During the early eighteenth century, the Corporation adapted the real and symbolic uses of its market monopoly to a new metropolitan situation which was characterized by two features. A growing metropolis, in which, to quote Barbon, 'every year a new town [is] added to the old one', was now an ongoing phenomenon.¹⁵ The political arithmetician William Petty predicted that the town's expanding population would reach ten million by 1842.¹⁶ The Crown no longer proclaimed against new construction and it was becoming questionable whether the prevention of markets could mitigate new waves of building when retailing alternatives such as street shops and hawkers were growing. It was also becoming clear, as Barbon had argued, that consumer demand in the 'new towns' was generating much trade for City wholesalers. The furnishing of the new suburban markets by the City's own markets was one important aspect of this development.¹⁷

In the eighteenth century, therefore, the City adopted a flexible approach that continued to uphold the power and principle of its ancient privilege whilst recognizing new realities. New markets were less threatening. Whereas in 1736 it objected to a proposed retail market close by its boundaries at Smithfield, it did not oppose the application in 1802 of a market for Finsbury close to its northern boundary. In 1706, it objected to a skin market in Clerkenwell on the grounds that it would be 'very prejudicial to the marketts and is contrary to diverse charters granted to this City'. When the same market was revived in 1751, the City did not consider it

¹² According to the Corporation's own official constitutional guide, 'Markets in the City of London were probably coeval with the City itself. They exist by prescription and immemorial usage and were not established by royal grant or authority', *The Corporation of London*, p. 134.

¹³ Brett James, *The growth of Stuart London*, ch. 12; See also D. J. Olsen, *Town planning in London: the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (1964; 1982 edn.), pp. 14-15. Back in the 1630s, the Court of Aldermen feared that a new market in St. Giles-in-the-Fields would 'draw a great number of inhabitants into those parts, and cause more erections of buildings and divided houses', W. H. & H. C. Overall (eds.), *An analytical index to the Remembrancier, 1579-1664* (1878), p. 204. The City managed to get the market grant quashed in Star Chamber, P. V. McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock in the London area in the seventeenth century', M. A. thesis (University of London, 1948), pp. 309-10.

¹⁴ Brett James, *Growth of Stuart London*, chs. 3, 4; T. F. Reddaway, *The rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (1940), pp. 42-3, 82-3; C. A. Edie, 'New buildings, new taxes, and old interests: an urban problem of the 1670s', *Journal of British Studies*, 6 (1967); *CSPD* (1673-5), pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ N. Barbon, *An apology for the builder* (1689), p. 2.

¹⁶ H. Priestley, *London: the years of change* (1966), p. 216.

¹⁷ Barbon, *An apology for the builder*, p. 22; R. Seymour, *Stow's survey of London* (1734-5), ii, p. 663.

prejudicial at all.¹⁸ It could not prevent the growing demands for new markets as the town grew, but it could and did make sure that these new markets would not engage in valuable wholesale trade - corn, meal, cattle and raw hides. Cattle markets in particular the City took issue with. Brookfield market (whose tenuous grant from James II was never confirmed) in the 1690s and Islington market (whose owner had to pay an annual sum of compensation to the City in recognition of its charter) in the 1830s were the most controversial.¹⁹ During the Brookfield dispute the City actually defined the seven-mile monopoly solely in terms of cattle, and again in 1781, 1802, 1828 and 1835 in order to confer the image (to others or to itself) that its monopoly held good in theory and practice.²⁰ In the early eighteenth century Aldermen even resisted proposed cattle markets more than seven miles away at Barnet, Croydon and Hounslow.²¹ Such focused tactics did not prevent it objecting in 1699 to a proposed corn market at Westminster with the specific claim that its ancient charter declared 'no market for *grain* should be held within seven miles of the City of London'.²² In a broadsheet published during the Brookfield dispute, the City revealed its awareness of the wider compass of its charter:

It is objected, that notwithstanding the City's grants, there are many markets in the suburbs. They are such as are for things perishable, and of immediate use, as flesh and other like things; which markets the City do not think reasonable to oppose, *altho' they might insist, that the same are within their grant.*²³

So the Corporation acted when it felt such markets materially threatened its own trade, as in the case of Smithfield Bars in 1735 and Spitalfields in 1742. In the Spitalfields case, the Attorney General acknowledged that the original grants were made during the 1680s when the City was disenfranchised, 'and as to any other grants within seven miles none were produced and none pretended to have been granted where the City had notice or gave opposition'.²⁴ That the Corporation took more control of its own markets in the later eighteenth century - a time when their trade and value were growing - could only have strengthened its vigilance. In general the City was keen to check up on new markets and at least make it clear to the applicants and itself that its privileges could not be ignored. Several petitions in the early nineteenth century for its consent to new or improved markets allowed Common Council to ensure they were confined to dead meat, fruit and vegetables, and reinforced recognition of its privileges. The

¹⁸ CLRO, Rep. 140, ff. 94-5; Rep. 146, ff. 173-4; Jor. 80, ff. 249b-50; Rep. 111, f. 44; Rep. 155, ff. 182-3.

¹⁹ CLRO, Jor. 52, ff. 43b-44b, 306, 376b-377; *JHC*, xiii (1699-1700), p. 144; *JHL*, xvi (1701), pp. 602-3, 614, 644, 651, 653; 5 & 6 Will. IV c. 111, ss. xlvi-xlviii, liii.

²⁰ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 73 (1781-2), ff. 159, 189; vol. 74 (1782-3), ff. 150-1. There was also an attempt in 1745 to put cattle sales at Mile End upon an official footing, CLRO, Rep. 149, f. 262.

²¹ CLRO, Rep. 112, f. 397; Jor. 56, f. 47b; City Lands, vol. 14 (1716-17), f. 46b.

²² *JHC*, xii (1698 9), p. 603.

²³ *The case of the City of London against ... Brookfield*. My italics.

²⁴ CLRO, Misc. Mss Box 30, No. 4 8.

continued exercising of its legal rights signified that the ancient City of London had claims upon a wider metropolis.²⁵

The City recognized the economic arguments for many new markets, which it considered ‘not reasonable to oppose’, but it also used economic arguments in its own defence, as when it claimed that Brookfield was unnecessary and would increase cattle prices (Smithfield was large enough). Economics in any case was not the true judge of the dispute in the City’s eyes: Brookfield may have proved convenient for some Westminster butchers, but ‘such conveniency will not be esteemed a reason to dispossess the City of a more ancient right’. Moreover, the conveniency argument ‘would be much stronger to erect the like markets at Southwark, Wapping and all other parts of the town; and nothing but an absolute necessity (which is not pretended in this case) will be sufficient to support such a law’. Such reasoning was quite admissible in an age which held sacred property, privileges and ancient rights, and when the Glorious Revolution was itself regarded as a conservative event of unfathomable necessity which could never justify utilitarian inroads into the status quo.²⁶

All things considered, the ancient charter weathered the storm of metropolitan modernization and expansion remarkably well, something not fully appreciated by the few scholars who have touched upon this question.²⁷ Notwithstanding the forfeiture of the City’s rights in 1683, the seven-mile charter was never the subject of litigation nor was it repealed; nor was the distance revised. Its general legitimacy continued to be acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century. Local Government and Public Health Acts of 1858 and 1875 empowered local authorities to establish markets except in London. The unprecedented importance of its own wholesale markets and the apparent lack of need for large provincial-style retail markets in London no doubt helped to sustain City privilege. For better or worse, the continued presence of London’s only cattle market until 1855 symbolized the Corporation’s privileges. Its rights were typically saved or reserved in various pieces of market legislation; not even the 1891 Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls questioned those rights. Its reputation as London’s premier market authority was affirmed by the ninth Duke of Bedford’s offer of Covent Garden market in 1883, which was not taken, and by the opportunity in 1900 to buy Spitalfields market, which was.²⁸

²⁵ CLRO, Jor. 80, ff. 146b-147b, 250 (Finsbury); *CC mins*, 5 August 1824 (Limehouse); CC papers, 28 May 1830, 6 December 1830 (Newport), 3 April 1833 (South London).

²⁶ *The case of the City of London against ... Brookfield*; H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and property: political ideology in eighteenth century Britain* (1979 edn.), pp. 78-9.

²⁷ Reddaway thought the City’s defence of its market rights a waste of time and money, *The rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*, pp. 306-7; McGrath, ‘The marketing of food, fodder and livestock’, p. 93; Kellett, ‘The causes and progress of the financial decline of the Corporation of London’, 1952, pp. 267-8.

²⁸ Mayhew, *London labour*, p. 58; Royal Comm. (1891), p. 12; *Survey of London: St. Paul, Covent Garden*, xxxvi (1970), p. 139; *Survey of London: Spitalfields and Mile End New Town*, xxvii (1957), p. 142.

The impact of the City's attitudes upon London's market development and geography can be assessed by speculating on what might otherwise have been the case. In the first place there might have been more retail markets. The City's obstructionism not only prevented the establishment of some markets but its reputation for doing so may well have dissuaded other ventures: perhaps ten more markets would have been established by the mid-eighteenth century. The one who argued in 1826 for a radical expansion of market provision hinted that the Corporation's seven-mile rights should be relinquished so as to facilitate a metropolitan-wide rearrangement of markets for the greater common good.²⁹ Ten more markets even in early Georgian London could well have made a real difference to consumers' experiences of the time (and would probably have attracted more attention from historians). In particular, the eastern suburbs might have had a different retail development. Relative to its large population, the East End was worse off for market provision than the City and West End.³⁰ East End market proposals - Stepney, Ratcliff, East Smithfield, Rag Fair, Shadwell, Spitalfields - appear to have provoked strong City resistance, and only the last two were established.³¹ A concerted strategy of civic opposition is less likely an explanation than individual applicants' lack of Court representation compared to the great West End landlords. Ironically, the lack of markets in the eastern suburbs probably assisted the retail and wholesale growth of Spitalfields market and encouraged the multiplication of petty chandlers' shops in those eastern suburbs.³² This geographical imbalance of market provision formed another aspect of the east-west division of Georgian London. Finally, had the City been utterly liberal, London would not only have had more public markets but more comprehensive public markets: markets which would sell cattle, corn, meal and hides as well as other provisions. How they would have fared and how London's market system would have developed is impossible to say, but in this the City's policy certainly made a difference to a vital aspect of London's domestic commerce. Its intransigence over cattle markets in particular contributed to the eighteenth century primacy of Smithfield.³³

²⁹ GH, Ms 496, 'An address on the necessity of providing more markets in London and also on the macadamizing of roads' (n.d. c.1826), p. 46.

³⁰ For disaggregated demographic figures for London, see R. Finlay & B. Shearer, 'Population growth and suburban expansion' in A. L. Beier & R. Finlay (eds.), *London, 1500-1700: the making of the metropolis* (1986), p. 45.

³¹ CLRO, Rep. 62, ff. 175b, 229b; Jor. 41x, f. 81; *Analytical index to the Remembrancier*, pp. 204-5; McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', pp. 321-5; CLRO, Misc. Mss 90.8. The Limehouse proposal won conditional consent, CLRO, *CC mins*, 5 August 1824.

³² CLRO, *Journal of the Markets Committee*, vol. 1 (1737-43), p. 108: T. Allen, *The history and antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark and parts adjacent*, iii (1827-9), p. 130; G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), p. 267; K. L. Buzzacott, 'London's markets: their growth, characteristics and functions', Ph. D. thesis (University of London, 1972), pp. 67-8. H-C. Mui & L. Mui, *Shops and shopkeeping in eighteenth century England* (1989), pp. 108-10, 116; D. Davis, *A history of shopping* (1966), p. 69; P. Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (1989), p. 47.

³³ The City's sustained opposition to Brookfield market was probably decisive. The market had operated since 1688 and was attracting about 200 cattle each market day, perhaps a third of the Smithfield's cattle trade. But City litigation led to a tenantless market, and after the bill to confirm the market grant failed to

The impact of Crown and Parliament

Although its ancient markets existed by prescription, the City owed its 1327 charter to the Crown, and in general markets could only be established

by virtue of the King's grant, or by long immemorial usage and prescription, which presupposes such a grant. The limitation of these public resorts to such time and place as may be most convenient for the neighbourhood, forms a part of economics, or domestic polity; which, considering the kingdom as a large family, and the King as master of it, he clearly has a right to dispose and order as he pleases.³⁴

Table 12 (p. 39) demonstrated the Crown's important role in market authorization throughout the period, and this prerogative, could and did conflict with the City's ancient privilege. This tension reflected a more general uncertainty about the utility and even validity of royal grants, which in turn opened up a greater role for Parliament. Indeed, the legal status of the City's charter remained ambiguous. It was given with the approval of Parliament, and was deemed to carry the force of an Act, but it was never made clear whether its legal basis derived from Crown or Parliament. In 1828 the City Remembrancer testified that the charter was still in force, yet he conceded that the Corporation had been precluded in 1802 from legally suppressing a market at Paddington since it had been authorized, albeit dubiously, by Act of Parliament.³⁵ The seven-mile monopoly was also specifically associated with English common law which prescribed six and two-thirds miles as the minimum distance which avoided damaging competition between rival markets (the whole City legally constituted a 'market'). This too, however, was legally hazy and possibly arbitrary. As a medieval rule formulated in a rural world, it became peculiarly unsuited to a sprawling metropolis.³⁶ Royal sanction, legislative sanction, customary sanction: the City's famous privilege rested on several stools yet by that very fact it was problematic. As new markets transgressed that privilege and acquired their own prescriptive and legal sanctions, uncertainties only intensified.

In practice, the City of London usually had recourse to the Crown to foil rival applications. But if the Crown was disposed to licence a new market, the City's wicket became a sticky one. It did not apparently bother Charles II that he had confirmed the City's 1327 charter in an 'Inspeximus' of 1663. When markets were still perceived to be a royal favour, personal acquaintance with the monarch counted for as much as ancient charters. Lord Southampton

reach the statute book, virtually no more was heard of it. Shepherd market was later built on the site, and may have briefly traded livestock, *JHC* (1700), xiii, pp. 130-1, 144, 231-2; *JHL* (1701), xvi, pp. 602-3, 614, 625, 638, 641, 644, 653; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 4 January 1750.

³⁴ W. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the laws of England* (1765-9), i, pp. 274-6. Other commercial variables within the King's prerogative were weights and measures, and the currency.

³⁵ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 194.

³⁶ H. L. Smith, *The history of East London from the earliest times to the end of the eighteenth century* (1939), p. 212. Different medieval grants in fact gave different radii within which rival markets could not be established. The six and two-thirds mile rule was traditionally explained by Bracton's rather specious theory

(Bloomsbury market, 1662, 1666) and the Earl of St. Albans (St. James's market, 1663) were established courtiers. The Earl of Cleveland (Stepney, 1664, 1667) was a zealous royalist.³⁷ In 1670 the King had conferred a patent for Covent Garden market to his friend the fifth Earl of Bedford, with the novel claim that it held good even though no warrant, or writ of *ad quod damnum* had been issued, or any inquisition taken or returned.³⁸ In three of these cases City opposition was conspicuously absent. Acknowledging that the City's charters had been confirmed by the King in 1663, the Attorney General nevertheless opined that the markets recently granted to the Earls of Clare, Southampton and St. Albans militated against this.³⁹

The King's influence was visible in the case of Brook's market in Holborn in 1681.⁴⁰ The City sheriff having tampered with a second inquisition jury, the King reprimanded the Aldermen and told them that 'although HM could grant a patent without a trial on the writ of *ad quod damnum*, yet that out of favour to them he hath hitherto made no use of his power. And therefore recommended it to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to make a fair and speedy end of that matter'. Summoned to Whitehall next day, the Lord Mayor was told by the Lord Chancellor to 'suffer Brooke market quietly, till another jury had made inquiry therein', and after further delaying tactics the following year, an exasperated Privy Council finally decided to issue Letters Patent to Lord Brooke, *without* a writ.⁴¹ The creation the following year of a market in Spitalfields - barely a potato's throw from the City boundary - indirectly emanated from the Crown's decision to sell its property called the Old Artillery Ground in Spitalfields, combined with a market grant. The Treasury secretary had informed various speculators, including Thomas Neale, Nicholas Barbon and Sir Christopher Wren, that 'none are to bid under 4000*l.* without a market and not under 1200*l.* more if a market be obtained and settled within two years after the grant is passed'.⁴² Here indeed was encouragement from the highest level. Whilst no market appeared on this particular estate it was suggestive that come the following July two weekly markets were granted to the leaseholder John Balch next door in 'Spital Square'.⁴³

that this was the maximum distance which people could walk to and from market in a day, L. F. Salzman, 'The legal status of markets', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 2 (1928), pp. 209-10.

³⁷ *Analytical index to the Remembrancier*, p. 205; *DNB*, x, p. 780; xx, p. 1195; xxi, pp. 1070-2; *CSPD* (1663-4), pp. 104-5, 208.

³⁸ Webber, *Covent Garden: mud-salad market*, p. 36.

³⁹ CLRO, *Remembrancier*, ix (1664), 82. St. James's market was integral to St. Albans' building scheme, which, according to Pepys, 'the City stomach I perceive highly, but dare not oppose it', *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham et al. (11 vols., 1971), 2 September 1663, 1 April 1666 Pepys also thought, though incorrectly, that St. Albans would replace Southampton as Lord Treasurer, 22 November 1662.

⁴⁰ Though named after Fulke Lord *Brooke*, the market is spelt here as *Brook*, which was the most conventional contemporary (and modern) spelling.

⁴¹ PRO, PC 2/69, p. 487; Rep. 86, f. 84.

⁴² *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vii (1681-5; ed. W. A. Shaw, 1916), p. 345.

⁴³ *Survey of London: Spitalfields and Mile End New Town*, xxvii (1957), pp. 29, 128; *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vii (1681-5), p. 372.

The City's high-handed actions in 1680-2 over Brook's and Hungerford markets did nothing to ease tensions with the Court.⁴⁴ They fed into the controversy that led to the City surrendering its franchises and liberties in 1683 on the Crown's successful writ of *quo warranto*.⁴⁵ Here the prerogative and influence of the King were pitched against the prescriptive rights of the Corporation, thus mirroring the battlelines drawn between the City and Crown over previous market grants. It is suggestive also that the City's ability to regulate and levy tolls in its own markets was one of the two pillars of the King's case, though it mainly served as a technical excuse for the writ.⁴⁶ And the use of the *quo warranto* itself implied that all market rights belonged ultimately to the Crown. Without its charters, the City was reduced to village status, and stripped too of its market privileges. Deprived of its rights until 1688, the Corporation was virtually powerless to resist the rash of ten grants conferred by the Crown during these years, seven of which were for new markets. In this area as in others James II readily deployed his prerogative powers; numerous markets and fairs nationwide were granted or confirmed by him; among the London beneficiaries, interestingly, were Catholics and the indispensable Sir Stephen Fox.⁴⁷ The City itself obtained a royal grant for a meal market in 1686.⁴⁸ So many markets authorized in this decade indicates how different London's market provision without the City's charter might have been.

Court patronage remained influential after James' demise. William III granted the Haymarket in 1690 to his (Dutch) body coachman. Downstream Greenwich gained a market through the Earl of Romney, Lieutenant of Kent and steward of the King's house at Greenwich. In 1706, Queen Anne gave to Charles and Richard Hoare a market for animal skins in Clerkenwell as a reward for their services in discovering frauds in the victualling.⁴⁹ Those close to the fount of privilege were inevitably involved. William Lowndes managed to obtain a royal grant for a market (Carnaby) on his Soho estate in 1720 after more than two decades' service at

⁴⁴ In the latter case the City proceeded illegally to demolish Hungerford stairs as an infringement of its Conservancy rights after failing to quash the market grant, CLRO, Jor. 49, f. 259; Rep. 91, f. 3b; PRO, PC 2/69, pp. 200, 209, 239, 245, 291, 297. The City sought to oppose the granting of Spitalfields market in 1682, but, as H. L. Smith long ago remarked, the Corporation 'at the time was in such disfavour at Court that its wishes would hardly have carried weight', *History of east London*, p. 213; Rep. 87, f. 158.

⁴⁵ The 'Exclusionist Parliaments' of 1679-81 goaded the King to manipulate the electorally influential town corporations. The 1683 case paved the way for the surrender of numerous corporations' charters without further contests, J. Levin, *The charter controversy in the City of London, 1660-1688* (1969), pp. 3-9.

⁴⁶ Levin, *Charter controversy*, p. 46-7; Royal Comm. (1887), p. 22.

⁴⁷ Henry Lord Dover, nephew of the Earl of St. Albans and a notorious, if incapable, Catholic courtier, obtained the Brookfield grant issued in 1686 without a writ of *ad quod damnum*; the Haymarket also went to a Catholic, CLRO, Jor. 52, f. 43b; *DNB*, vii, pp. 574-5; x, pp. 781-2; *CSPD* (1685), p. 413; (1689-90), p. 564. For market grants outside London, see *CSPD* for the years 1686-8.

⁴⁸ *CSPD* (Jan 1686 - May 1687), p. 278.

⁴⁹ *CSPD* (1690-1), p. 166; *Calendar of Treasury Books*, xxv (1711), p. 395; *CSPD* (1698), pp. 48, 160; *CSPD* (1700-2), p. 78.

the Treasury. Even Robert Walpole himself seems to have facilitated the granting of a hay and straw market for the vestrymen of St. Margaret's, Westminster in 1733.⁵⁰

When in 1690 a powerful Parliament annulled all Crown grants, letters patent and charters given since 1683 in derogation of the City's rights, it too had become a potential source of market authorization.⁵¹ Accordingly, several market proprietors sought parliamentary confirmation. No bill passed, however, leaving their markets in a state of legal limbo.⁵² Slowly the legislature gained influence. During the 1690s parliamentary privilege had insulated Nicholas Barbon from the City's attacks on his interest in Brookfield market. St. James's Haymarket was transferred in that decade by statute to the Middlesex and Westminster magistrates, significantly after earlier complaints that farmers were refusing to pay the tolls unless the market be settled by Parliament.⁵³ Other markets which had originally been based upon royal charter or prescription came to be defined and regulated by Act of Parliament, notably Westminster (1750), Southwark (1755) and Covent Garden (1813, 1828).⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Parliament did not, as in other spheres of activity, simply appropriate the Crown's prerogative. A petition in 1699 to the Commons for a corn market for Westminster did not succeed. No market was actually *created* by statute until the Westminster Fish Market Act of 1749. Royal grants continued to be issued as late as 1824 in London and 1846 nationwide.⁵⁵ Spitalfields, whose trade blossomed throughout the period, rested on no legislation at all, but on two royal grants, both made under dubious circumstances in the 1680s.⁵⁶

This duality of authorization was not unique to markets in the long eighteenth century. Following the Bubble Act of 1720 joint-stock companies could be incorporated only by royal charter or Act of Parliament, and like markets, the legislative option did not immediately dominate.⁵⁷ For markets, the continued attractions of the royal route relative to the parliamentary are not readily apparent. The formal costs might possibly have been less; it may have been considered more prestigious, given the venerable tradition of royal grants nationwide. For those associated with the Court it was a natural avenue to take. Nevertheless, after a time the advantages of legislation probably shifted the balance. Parliament's prestige rose commensurately with its legislative output: in particular it played an increasing role in business

⁵⁰ *Survey of London: St. James, Westminster: part II*, xxxi (1960), p. 190; WCA, St. Margaret Westminster vestry minutes, 24 October 1733; *DNB*, xii, pp. 210-11.

⁵¹ 2 Will. III & Mary II, sess. 1, c. 8.

⁵² *House of Lords Manuscripts, 1699-1702*, iv (new series, no. 1570), p. 158. The markets in question were Brookfield, Newport, Bloomsbury, Brook's and Red Lion.

⁵³ *CSPD* (1691-2), p. 107; 8 & 9 Will. III c. 17.

⁵⁴ 23 Geo. II c. 14; 28 Geo. II c. 23; 53 Geo. III c. 71; 9 Geo. IV c. 113.

⁵⁵ Royal Comm. (1891), Appendix to Final Report.

⁵⁶ *Times*, 17 September 1883, p. 3.

⁵⁷ A. B. DuBois, *The English business company after the Bubble Act, 1720-1800* (New York, 1938), pp. 3, 36-7, 105-6.

incorporation and urban improvement.⁵⁸ As in the area of incorporation, parliamentary committees may have been perceived to be more flexible in dealing with applications than Crown officers. Indeed, in the early nineteenth century, market and company creation went together. Statutes certainly facilitated the inclusion of more precise and complex clauses than a grant, and so they tended to become more important when compulsory site purchases had to be made, commissioners nominated, or large capital sums raised. By the 1830s, authorizing legislation had become the norm.

One consequence of both the inroads into the City's monopoly and the shifting roles of Crown and Parliament was an increasingly complex geography of market rights in London. The granting of new markets gave rise to disputes that did not only involve the City.⁵⁹ New localized monopolies were also created. Legislation in 1756 prohibited the sale of fish within 500 yards of Westminster's riverside fish market.⁶⁰ In that same year Southwark market fell into the hands of local trustees who enjoyed their own 1000-yard monopoly defined by Parliament, and who were at least as fierce as the City in defending their acquired rights. Together with the local vestrymen they resisted attempts in the 1780s and 1830s to erect a second market in Southwark. A bill for 'South London market' was finally enacted in 1834, after a desperate struggle. In this case however, it was the City which was the focus of pleading from both parties, the proponents of the market seeking its consent, the Trustees praying for its refusal. Having obtained certain provisos in the Bill, the City gave the nod and so disarmed the Borough market trustees against any legislation.⁶¹

There was thus no predominant source of market authorization or simple geography of rights. Grants were on the decline, Parliament had begun to legislate for new markets, the City's monopoly had been undermined but not invalidated. Some markets were established with no traditional sanction at all, most notably the Corn Exchange.⁶² Then in the nineteenth century emerged the unofficial street markets. Even on these, however, the City's shadow fell, for Mayhew noted how they antagonized the municipal laws of London 'which provide that no

⁵⁸ DuBois, *The English business company after the Bubble Act*, p. 37; E. L. Jones & M. E. Falkus, 'Urban improvement and the English economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' in P. Borsay (ed.), *The eighteenth century town: a reader in English urban history, 1688-1820* (1990), p. 131; P. Langford, *Public life and the propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 166-7, where markets are in fact noted.

⁵⁹ See, for example, WAM, 9918 (Clare - Westminster, 1661); *CSPD* (1670), p. 252 (Ratcliffe - Shadwell); PRO, SP 29/366, pp. 531-4 (Hungerford - Clare - St. James - Covent Garden, 1678); PRO, PC 2 71, p. 10 (Newport - St. James, 1685); Add. Ms 18,239, f. 28v; Add. Ms 36,137, ff. 251-2 (Oxford - Carnaby - Conduit Fields, 1727-9).

⁶⁰ 29 Geo. II c. 39.

⁶¹ LMA, 2058 1 19,22 Minutes of the Borough market trustees, Dec 1789-Aug 1790, Dec 1831-July 1834, passim. The market's 1000-yard monopoly was conferred by 28 Geo. II c. 92. Cumberland hay market, opened in 1830, was also given a 1000-yard monopoly, LCC (1893), p. 21.

⁶² Bear Key market, predecessor to the Corn Exchange, also had an uncertain and quasi-official relationship with the Corporation; compare CLRO, Rep. 103, f. 52 (Bear Key to be regulated, 1698) and Jor. 57, f. 115 (corn market erected at Bear Key without the consent of the City, 1724).

market, or public place where provisions are sold, shall be held within seven miles of the City'.⁶³ The Corn Exchange stayed out of the City's hands, but its counterpart, the Coal Exchange was handed over - by Parliament - to the Corporation in 1803. This messy and shifting political geography serves as a reminder that London's development was not simply a matter of physical evolution, but also of mutations and complications in identity and infrastructure that were contested. Decline, adaption, continuity: no single trend dominated, and so there was no single outcome to the clash between the civic tradition of medieval privilege and the modern expansion of the commercial city.

Guilds, docks and markets

How significant were these changes in the political geography of markets? Market rights were not the only City privileges that were threatened in this period. The trade and craft monopoly of the City guilds (which were closely associated with the Corporation) was weakened by suburban growth; and the City's exclusive status as Port authority and Thames Conservator was undermined by the creation of the great Dock companies at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ In all three cases, inroads were made into the 'monopolies' during the seventeenth century - legal cases over guilds, sufferance wharves on the south bank, Clare market and the rest. All three 'monopolies' were challenged by the expansion of trade in some form. In each sphere, the Corporation managed to avoid total defeat: it upheld the *principle* of craft and retail regulation during the eighteenth century; it retained its ancient Conservancy of the Thames in spite of the new docks; and it continued to defend and assert the exclusivity of its market rights. In the long run, however, the ancient charter was never abolished, unlike the City's formal monopolies of the craft and retail trades (1856), and of the Thames Conservancy (1857 - after a long dispute with the Crown). Whilst the commercial decline of the guilds was insidious and the attack upon the Port monopoly dramatic, in the case of markets there was always something tangible and realistic for the Corporation to defend. Moreover, here the City was ploughing a lonely furrow - there were no other vested interests, like guilds or wharfingers, with which it could ally. Indeed, the 'legal quays' of the Port reflected the needs of the Customs as much as the privileges of the Corporation. These are crude comparisons, but they clarify the distinctive nature of the City's market monopoly which remained active throughout and beyond this period. By that fact it became a recognizable badge of the City's corporate and commercial status and influence in a changing metropolis. It would be inaccurate to speak of the 'decline' or 'breakdown' of the City's

⁶³ Mayhew, *London labour*, p. 58.

⁶⁴ For the guilds, see J. R. Kellett, 'The breakdown of Guild and Corporation control over the handicraft and retail trades of London', *Economic History Review*, 2nd. ser., 10 (1957-8); for the docks, W. M. Stern, 'The first London dock boom and the growth of the West India Docks', *Economica*, 19 (1952).

exclusive market rights. During the period they may have lost their exclusivity, but not necessarily their potency.

Managing the markets

Management here is taken to mean the ongoing superintendence of markets by various individuals or bodies - the minutiae of rental collection, tenant complaints, keeping order and tidiness, repairs and maintenance, the improvement of facilities and so forth. Managing and regulating markets were often in practice indistinguishable, but the latter will be dealt with in a separate section focusing upon the issues of intervention and competition. In general market management failed to buck market forces, but it could, under certain circumstances, make a difference both to the fortunes and the characteristics of formal marketing.

It is suggestive that those markets which flourished during the long eighteenth century appear to have been well managed. A parallel might be drawn with estate development. Reflecting upon the residential 'planning' efforts of the likes of the Bedfords (who, incidentally, also owned Covent Garden market), Donald Olsen concluded: 'Planning, whether by landlord and private developer, or by state and municipality, is unlikely to succeed in its aims without the support of market forces and other broad historical determinants; but in certain situations, in certain periods, under certain circumstances, it can achieve something'.⁶⁵ True, the Duke of Bedford tended only to increase accommodation in Covent Garden market when trade had reached a critical point. Nevertheless, the legislation and rebuilding of 1828-30 were decidedly creative moves which put an end to toll disputes and trading of bric-a-brac, made more efficient use of market space, pre-empted the establishment of potentially rival markets at Paddington, Charing Cross and Holborn, and transformed the whole estate into a mercantile quarter. According to Olsen, it was 'a unique if momentous incident' in the history of the estate.⁶⁶ It also coincided with the transfer of management and revenue collection from frustrated lessees back to estate officials. Indeed, although the market's rents and tolls had hitherto been leased, and the lessees had caused problems, the length of leases in the eighteenth century never exceeded seven years and this ensured that the Duke never lost control of the market.⁶⁷ Salaried agents kept an eye on the lessees. This was again comparable to the leasehold arrangements deployed throughout the Bedford estate.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ D. J. Olsen, *Town planning in London: the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (1964; 1982 edn.), preface to 1982 edition.

⁶⁶ 9 Geo. IV c. 113, s. 21; LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 21 (loose in bundle), notes relating to 1828 Covent Garden Market Bill; Olsen, *Town planning in London*, pp. 184-5.

⁶⁷ See, for example, LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 1 3, Memorial of St. Paul's vestry to the Duke of Bedford regarding nuisances in Covent Garden market, 1748, and response from Bedford House.

⁶⁸ Olsen, *Town planning in London*, pp. 99-103.

A reading of the minutes of the Borough market trustees from 1756 also suggests how necessary was competent supervision in that increasingly important market. Its ancient predecessor, located in the high street, was financially disappointing to its complacent City proprietors. Under the committed management of local trustees, however, its profitability steadily increased. Whilst the Kentish trade underpinned its commercial potential, the new market was never allowed to dilapidate or become unduly congested. The trustees provided an adequate landing place for riverborne traffic from the start and regularly surveyed the market to see what repairs and upgrades were needed.⁶⁹ Lessees' contracts were long enough to encourage long-term investment in the market and tough enough to ensure that improvements and maintenance were carried out; successive lessees in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century added more shops and facilities. Relations between trustees and lessees were amicable and constructive.⁷⁰ From 1808 the tolls alone were leased out, the trustees met more regularly and improvement and refurbishment in the market were ongoing events, thanks to the issuing of annuities (permitted by legislation) for investment funds. The rapidly increasing size of the minute books from the late eighteenth century testify to the trustees' growing involvement in the market's affairs and arrangements. A statutory toll schedule was obtained in 1829, similar to Covent Garden, which reduced disputes. Like its counterpart over the river, Borough market was an increasingly important commercial institution, and the garden trades were becoming ever more dependent upon well-organized and well-furnished marketing facilities. The trustees took very seriously the Acts of Parliament upon which they and the new market were founded, invoking them at every meeting and specifically on various occasions.⁷¹ The fierceness with which they defended their local monopoly in the 1780s and 1830s has already been indicated. Whilst they lost out in the latter case, the long fight undoubtedly contributed to the failure of the rival 'South London' market to get established.

What of the City authorities? The sheer mass of minute detail in their records which relate not to one but several markets makes any kind of simple narrative hazardous, but some generalizations may be made. For much of the period the Corporation's involvement was rather mercurial. It was heavily involved during the 1660s and early 1670s on account of the reconstruction and relocation of its general retail markets after the Great Fire. Probably for financial reasons, it then farmed out the four 'public markets' - Leadenhall, Stocks (Fleet after 1737), Newgate and Honey Lane - jointly between 1676 and 1737, and again, individually,

⁶⁹ LMA, Acc 2058 1 18, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 30 March 1756, 27 July 1756, 25 April 1758.

⁷⁰ See for example LMA, Acc 2058 1 19, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 31 July 1779, 9 May 1780, 1 February 1782, 7 February 1782, 13 December 1785.

⁷¹ See, for example LMA, Acc 2058 1 19, Minutes of the Borough market trustees, 13 August 1788, 17 December 1789, 11 January 1833.

between 1750 and 1771.⁷² This inconsistent and reluctant involvement was reflected in the sporadic administrative history of the City markets summarized in Table 27. Specialist committees had been set up on an ad hoc basis in the 1660s, 1670s and 1690s to deal with specific issues: market resiting, leasing, and farmers' extortion. In default of specialist market administration, the City Lands Committee (CLC), the Corporation's premier committee which managed the City's vast estate, took over general supervision. Persistent rent arrears led to the decision in 1737 not to renew the leases but to manage the five markets (including Southwark) itself.⁷³ A specialist market

Table 27 *Market administration by the Corporation of London, 1667-1849*

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Function</i>
1667-1669	of Common Council	To consider permanent sites for new markets
1669-1675	City Lands Committee	General supervision of the markets
1675-1680	Committee for Managing the Public Markets	To consider best means of administering the new markets
1680-1696	City Lands Committee	General supervision of the markets
1696-1698	Markets Committee	To investigate abuses in the public markets
1698-1737	City Lands Committee	General supervision of the markets
1737-1751	Committee for Managing the Public Markets	Administration and business of the markets
1751-1835	City Lands Committee	Administration and business of the markets
1835-1875	Markets Committee	Administration and business of the markets
1849-1875	Markets Improvement Committee	Enlarge/remove Smithfield market (initially)

Sources: CLRO, Misc. Mss 310.6, Notes on the history and origin of the Markets Committees; CLRO subject card index, 'Committees - markets'; B. R. Masters, *The public markets of the City of London* (1974), pp. 16-19.

management committee was then installed to cope with the extra administrative burden at a time when the CLC was laden with 'a multiplicity of affairs under their care'.⁷⁴

Considerations of income alone again seem to have inclined the Committee back to private enterprise only ten years later.⁷⁵ Once the markets were again out of public hands, the special committee was wound up. The hundred years after the Fire were unsettled times for the City markets. Farming markets out to enterprising individuals relieved the Corporation of everyday administration and promised a certain income, but it was potentially problematic for owners and traders alike. Whereas the salaried 'Clerk of the Market' had been employed to ensure fair weights and measures and orderly marketing, all in a spirit of public service, market farmers were profit-maximizing agents whose efficient management threatened traditional practices. Their impact upon consumers has been compared to an imposition of a tax upon

⁷² McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock', p. 110.

⁷³ The arrears of Sir Humphrey Parsons, Alderman, were never recovered, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 76 (1784-5), f. 191v.

⁷⁴ CLRO, Jor. 58, ff. 45b, 46.

⁷⁵ CLRO, Journal of the Markets Committee, vol. 2 (1743-50), pp. 219-20, 237, 301, 314.

provisions.⁷⁶ The initial investment that lessees made in their markets upset casual country traders who found their trading spaces built over with permanent fixtures and shops for more established dealers.⁷⁷ Subsequent myopia of farmers in the eighteenth century often meant that short term profit maximization was financed by the gradual depreciation of fixed capital. Lessee management undoubtedly facilitated the transition to a more professionalized and capitalistic system of marketing which involved earlier trading hours, shop-building and untidy expansion. For Professor Linebaugh this amounted to class differentiation and the centralization of market power.⁷⁸ A supine Corporation was forced to involve itself in market affairs in the face of periodic complaints of extortion by the farmers of the markets - most scandalously in the 1690s, when the Common Council learned that over £10,000 was annually being 'collected' by a consortium of market farmers who paid an annual rent of only £3,600.⁷⁹ Lessees were also notorious for getting into rent arrears with the City, whilst disputes over the liability of individual markets to parochial rates were chronic.⁸⁰ The 1750s were years of controversy over pretended toll exemptions in Newgate and Leadenhall markets, with the Corporation establishing its right to the duties only after several lawsuits. It was not clear whether market farmers were losing out or reverting to the practices of the 1690s. Newgate was forcibly taken back into the City's hands in 1758, with thirteen of the twenty-one years still to run on the franchise.⁸¹ The additional poor performance of market operators at Fleet and Honey Lane market finally encouraged an exasperated Corporation to take back the burden to itself.⁸²

The 1770s mark a radical turning point in City market management. In 1771 the practice of farming the four markets was temporarily suspended - an arrangement which soon became permanent. In 1775, the CLC started to formalize and tighten up agreements with tenants. In 1777, the rents of Smithfield cattle market were taken back into hand after a succession of twenty-one year leases and attempts at extortion by the most recent lessees, and was now fully included in all civic affairs relating to markets.⁸³ A year later, a crucial CLC report bulleted a series of 'proper regulations for the better care and arrangement of the several City markets', all of which were implemented. Tenants and occupiers, regulating legislation, quantities of produce, the

⁷⁶ Kellett, 'The causes and progress of the financial decline of the Corporation of London', pp. 340-4.

⁷⁷ See, for example, *The petition of the oppressed market people humbly offer'd to the consideration of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of the City of London* (1699); CLRO, Misc. Mss 332.2.

⁷⁸ P. Linebaugh, *The London hanged: crime and civil society in the eighteenth century* (1991), pp. 201-2.

⁷⁹ CLRO, Jor. 52, f. 92b.

⁸⁰ See, for example, CLRO, Alchin's Market Book, p. 62 n. 169; p. 64 nn. 173, 175; p. 66 nn. 179, 180; p. 68 nn. 186, 187, 188; City Lands, vol. 46 (1754-5), f. 39; vol. 47 (1755-6), ff. 136-7; vol. 63 (1771), f. 185b; vol. 64 (1772), f. 75a; vol. 65 (1773), f. 194b seq. See also, WCA, St. Anne Soho vestry minutes, 30 June 1721 [Newport]; LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 1/2 (1737), 10 1/3 (1748), 10/14 (1803); GH Noble, B W2/COV/B (1752) [Covent Garden].

⁸¹ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 63 (1771), f. 106a.

⁸² CLRO, City Lands, vol. 55 (1763), ff. 235b-236a.

⁸³ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 76 (1784-5), f. 198r; *London Evening Post*, 21-23 July 1757.

City's rights to the markets, tolls and duties, those liable and exempt, were all fairly transcribed into special books. Weekly accounts of salaried collectors were to be fairly entered including names, rents, arrears, casual receipts and other charges. The CLC was to take greater responsibility for repairs and alterations. Rent and toll collections were to be regularized. Collectors were to receive no gratuities; they were to take care of beams, weights and scales and other market fixtures, and, together with constables, prevent encroachments and disorder. Accounts would be audited annually. An appointed superintendant would oversee the collectors' accounts, books, and regulations.⁸⁴ Although no special committee was created at this time the subsequent journals of the CLC reveal the new professional approach. Cash and audited accounts henceforth are full and complete, and the substantial rebuilding in the City markets began to take place at this time. Detailed notes and historical extracts relating to the markets were produced by the Superintendant in 1784. These included Billingsgate, hitherto overseen by the inefficient and rather corrupt 'Yeomen of the Waterside', but henceforth increasingly subject to Corporation control: in 1802, Common Council gained new powers of supervision over the market, and in the 1820s the CLC took it over and improved it.⁸⁵ It was this kind of vigilance and professionalism that ensured that the City at large remained watchful of new markets outside its borders, particularly of the wholesale kind. The process of rationalization culminated in 1834 when Common Council resolved that management and control be passed to a special Markets Committee none of whose members could sit on the CLC as well.⁸⁶

These developments coincided with increasing income from the markets after decades of flat receipts (Table 28). Whilst markets were only one source of income for the City chamber (other sources included property rents, freedom fees and investments), they never comprised less than ten per cent of total cash income and they were always listed second behind rents in the annual City Cash accounts. The Corporation was well aware, then, of their financial value.⁸⁷ Whether the administrative changes were responsible for the increase in market income is, however, a speculative question. The food trade was undoubtedly growing, but the City's new arrangements ensured that its own markets would not fail to benefit. Its lead may well have encouraged the Duke of Bedford to take Covent Garden back into hand. Although the new direction was a reaction to the previous troubled years, it coincided with growing professionalization in central government; and it was also this period during which Common

⁸⁴ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 70 (1778-9), ff. 131-3.

⁸⁵ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 76 (1784-5), ff. 185-203; *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), pp. 324-5; *Times*, 7 January 1823, p. 2.

⁸⁶ CLRO, Misc. Mss 310.6.

⁸⁷ CLRO, Printed City cash accounts from 1778. Income from 'tolls and offices' was also partly associated with particular markets such as Billingsgate. See also Misc. Mss 90.13, Abstract of the revenue and expenses of the City for each year, 1713-1728; Misc. Mss 348.7, 'A brief state of the Chamberlain's

Table 28 Audited account totals of City markets appearing in City Lands Journals, 1731/2-1840

Year	Gross revenue (£)	Notes
1731-2	6448	Collected by lessees - excludes Smithfield, leased at £450 p. a. + £3000 fine (21 yrs)
1746-7	5383	Collected by City - excludes Smithfield, leased at £500 p. a. + £3700 fine (21 yrs)
1771-2	6535	Collected by City - excludes Smithfield, leased at £560 p. a. + £5500 fine (21 yrs)
1780 ^a	9863	Collected from Leadenhall, Newgate, Honey Lane, Fleet, Smithfield
1790	9863	
1800	10,846	
1810	11,703	
1820	14,181	
1831	15,229	No data for Farringdon market in 1830
1840	19,206	Includes revenues from Billingsgate ^b

Notes:

^a Figures from 1780 are audited totals.

^b Billingsgate appeared separately in the City Cash accounts from 1823, but only appeared in the audited accounts under markets in 1834.

Sources: CLRO, Alchin's Market Book, p. 60, n. 165; Journal of the Markets Committee, vol. 2 (1743-50), p. 262; City Lands, vol. 65, ff. 126-7; vol. 73, ff. 49-50; vol. 76, f. 198r; vol. 83, ff. 293-4; vol. 93, f. 254; vol. 103, f. 142; vol. 113, f. 153; vol. 124, pp. 306-8; Markets Committee Journal, vol. 2 (1838-41), pp. 434-6. See also City Cash accounts, 1778-1840 (9 vols.).

Council became the City's chief governing body. The failure of the costly Farringdon market (1829) may be seen as 'a proof that a corporation cannot make a market "pay", unless it have other and independent means of success', but without good and active management, problems often arose, as in the era of the farmers.⁸⁸ Even then, the lessees' activities helped establish new methods of marketing. Good management strengthened market forces; poor management might well redirect them elsewhere.

Evidence of management practices outside the City is sparse, and few patterns emerge. The Corn Exchange, a novel creation of a consortium of cornfactors, was managed by a small committee of trustees for its shareholders, who controlled the factor stands in the market.⁸⁹ The governors of Christ's Hospital seem to have exercised close supervision over marketing and collecting arrangements in Blackwell Hall in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but their recorded minutes thin out dramatically in the Georgian period.⁹⁰ The trend to direct management and collection was not a universal one. The administrative history of Spitalfields market is rather obscure but it is clear that the market was leased out in the later period of the nineteenth century for an annual rent of £5,000 by Sir Julian Goldsmith and others until 1920.⁹¹

account, 1738 9-1782'. According to these earlier accounts, market income/lease rents represented up to one third of total cash income.

⁸⁸ G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), p. 151.

⁸⁹ GH, Mss 902, 904, 908. See also DuBois, *The English business company after the Bubble Act*, pp. 28-9, 218.

⁹⁰ GH Ms 12,851, Christ's Hospital committee minutes relating to Blackwell Hall, 1697-1761.

⁹¹ Royal Comm. (1891), pp. 79, 81; *The Corporation of London*, p. 148.

At Clare market, the Clerk rented the market stalls off the Duke of Newcastle, but this post had become salaried by the later eighteenth century and the receipts were directly collected. By 1801 the market seemed to have been leased out again according to the rate books.⁹² The magistrates in charge of the Haymarket in 1828 believed that letting the tolls would improve their income in the light of the fraud and evasion practised in the prevailing mode of collection and registration. Declining trade and profits after 1765 at Clerkenwell sheepskin market persuaded the Earl of Northampton to lease it for twenty-one years to its largest salesmen. The £225 p.a. rental exceeded annual net profits of the market since its inception and by 1810 the market was showing over a quarter of a million skins for inspection, almost double the numbers sold in 1771.⁹³ Lord Portman's market, established in 1830, was also leased out by its owner, and according to Mayhew not even tolls were paid there.⁹⁴

These admittedly isolated examples cover most of the larger markets. It is likely that retail-only markets, like Oxford market in the nineteenth century managed by the Portland estate, had their rents directly collected. When the merits and demerits of toll-farming were assessed in the Royal Commission of 1891, opinions were evenly divided among market owners.⁹⁵ Small wonder, then, that no overall trend to or away from leasing characterized the earlier period. Either way, however, management mattered.

Regulating the markets

Nothing illustrates the pluralistic nature of London's marketing system so well as the subject of market regulation. Market rules and policy addressed a range of concerns for a host of reasons. No analysis therefore should focus exclusively upon the extent of 'moral economy' in London.⁹⁶ The capital was remarkably free from food riots during this period; its ability to draw grainstuffs away from other localities was one good reason why disturbances generally occurred elsewhere.⁹⁷ The length of the period, the breadth of trades which used formal markets, and a variety of localized but unsystematic evidence make a detailed analysis of this subject unhelpful and

⁹² W. J. Hardy (ed.), *Middlesex County Records: Calendar of Sessions Books, 1689 to 1709* (1905), p. 271; WCA, photocopy of Notts. Record Office, DD. 4P 74/11 (1694), lease of Clare market; British Library, Lansdowne Ms 653, ff. 3-6; Add. Ms 33,169-70; WCA, St. Clement Danes vestry minutes, 10 July 1801; WCA, B223, St. Clement Danes rate book for 1802.

⁹³ LMA, E/NOR/E 1; E/NOR/L/3 738.

⁹⁴ *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 221; (5 December 1850), lxxxi, p. 238.

⁹⁵ Royal Comm. (1891), pp. 77-83.

⁹⁶ Linebaugh's assertion that by the 1730s large dealers controlled the market trades 'unrestrained by the moral economy' says too little about market policy, whilst his theory that this 'centralization of market power' produced a band of highway robbers says perhaps too much, *The London hanged*, pp. 196-201.

⁹⁷ Besides the riots of 1800 discussed below, *The London Evening Post* reported price riots in Whitechapel and one of the City markets in 1767 (25-28 April, 23-25 May), and in Spitalfields market in 1772 (4-7 April); mobs in Fleet market in 1792 were noted in *The Times* (4 May, p. 3).

unwieldy. Rather, the principal variables of market policies - who the jurisdictions and influential interests were, what might be regulated and by what means, and with what punishments - are set out in detail in Table 29. Legislation, policy, enforcement and punishment were fragmented between various authorities (Box 1) who might make or enforce market regulations in response to pressures from various groups or institutions (Box 2). Box 3 shows the numerous aspects of marketing that could be, and at times were, the object of public policy. Depending on what might be regulated, the authorities might consider blanket measures such as banning the sale of certain kinds of goods, or limiting the amount of produce individually traded, or creating better arrangements for inspection. Alternatively, traders could be liberated from external constraints (Box 4). Possible punishments for the conviction of unlawful practices occupy Box 5.

Table 29 Regulating markets: dimensions and possibilities

<i>1. Market jurisdictions and authorities</i>		<i>2. Pressures and interests</i>	
Corporation of London Livery Companies Midds. & Westmr. JPs	Parliament Privy Council Westmr. Annoyance Jury	Consumers Corporation of London Courts Environmentalists Government	Hawkers Middlemen Parish vestries Retailers (inc. Livery Cos.) Suppliers
<i>3. Objects of regulation and policy</i>		<i>4. Possible policy instruments</i>	
Animal welfare (disease, driving, slaughtering) Freemen and foreigners Hawkers Location of retailers Market days and hours Market (mal)practices	Middlemen (engrossing &c) Noise, smell, waste Quality (adulteration) Retail prices Type of produce Weights & measures	Additional market provision Competing in markets at lower prices Liberalization / deregulation Inspection	Licensing Price controls Prohibition Sales registration Specific restrictions
<i>5. Punishments for marketing offences</i>			
Fine Forfeiture Imprisonment			

What Table 29 does not show are the motivations and reasons behind regulation, and its incidence over time. With no clearly discernible ideology or trend, it is a very messy picture in which pragmatism and pluralism are the dominant shades. The impact of policy upon market forces was therefore rather limited.

Reasons and motivations

The traditional approach to market regulation rested upon the notion of ‘market overt’. Markets were to be public and open spaces in which country producers exposed and sold their produce direct to the citizens at reasonable prices in a limited time designated by the ringing of the market bell. Buying produce for speculative purposes (regrating), making transactions before or outside the market (forestalling) and buying up supplies to gain monopoly power (engrossing) were abominable offences. Prices and weights should be regulated and all produce sold must be wholesome. Concealed supplies and clandestine sales were unlawful. In the City the open market legally included the open shops of freemen in the streets. These principles were established in various laws during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and were made manifest in the *Laws of the Market* and Acts of Common Council of 1672 and 1674.⁹⁸

Regulation aimed to facilitate the fair and full provisioning of the populous City, whilst the consumer was to be protected against inflated prices in times of scarcity. The laws also condemned irregular weights and measures, unwholesome produce, and the evils of Sunday trading - considerations rooted in religious and ethical principles. The irresistible rise of middlemen and salesmen between producers and consumers/retailers during the period also widened opportunities for abuse and manipulation. The Blackwell Hall factors were particularly notorious for their manipulative practices with clothiers, their clients, problems which an Act of 1696 failed to tackle.⁹⁹ Salesmen in the Piccadilly hay and straw market were the subject of parliamentary investigation and legislation in the 1750s and 1790s which, among other things, prohibited them dealing on their own account.¹⁰⁰ In the later eighteenth century the factors who owned and dominated the Corn and Coal Exchanges were suspected and criticized of restrictive practices and enhancing prices. Selling by sample could disguise the full amount of supply at market, thereby disadvantaging the buyer.¹⁰¹ As London expanded, however, and the networks of supply and distribution grew in extent and complexity, market authorities began to take a more lenient view of the middleman which involved looking after producer as well as consumer interests. Markets also needed ordering and arranging to facilitate the inspection of goods and ensure that business could flourish. An additional consideration was the environmental impact of markets - on public health, public safety and the townscape. Unless controlled, expanding markets could become urban eyesores, obstructions in the street, and harbours of refuse. The

⁹⁸ J. G. Pease, ‘Market overt in London’, *Law Quarterly Review*, 31 (1915); I. Archer et al. (eds.), *Hugh Alley’s caveat: the markets of London in 1598*, LTS No. 137 (1988), pp. 16-27; A. B. Robertson, ‘The open market in the City of London in the eighteenth century’, *East London Papers*, 1 (1958). The two printed Acts of Common Council for regulating the markets are found in CLRO, P. D. 22.14.

⁹⁹ 8 & 9 Will. III c. 9. See also GH, Ms 12,851; C. Gill, ‘Blackwell Hall factors, 1795-1799’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 6 (1953-4), pp. 268-9.

¹⁰⁰ *JHC*, xxviii (1758), p. 119; 31 Geo. III c. 40. There were similar acts in 1791 and 1796.

unregulated driving of cattle around Smithfield and the dispersal of traders from the markets caused particular concern. One of the most practical spurs to regulation for authorities who also owned the markets (primarily the City Corporation) was the need to maintain and increase market revenues. The by-laws of 1672 and 1674 were passed in order to establish effective market arrangements and generate healthy revenues. The second Act (which repealed the first) contained an enlarged table of tolls and rents and was specifically brought about by the City Chamberlain's dissatisfaction with the revenues collected.¹⁰² Similarly, the controversial Covent Garden Bill of 1813 sought to regularize the market's configuration and toll schedule so as to facilitate both a more orderly trade and more efficient collection. That the City authorities were far from mercenary is demonstrated by the continued practice of setting the Assize of Bread from the wholesale wheat prices prevailing at the Corn Exchange which was not the Corporation's property.

An array of possible motives, reflecting a variety of beliefs and objectives, therefore determined the extent and nature of market regulation. Nevertheless, of most pressing concern to the authorities were the prices of foodstuffs, particularly corn and meat.¹⁰³

The incidence of regulation

The legal armoury against market malpractices was impressive - common law, statute law, by-law. Parliament in particular was increasingly passing regulatory legislation for individual markets and trades (Table 15, p. 43), in response to different interest groups. As with the criminal law, however, enforcement was patchy and poor - 'many good laws but badly executed', so the saying went.¹⁰⁴ Market regulation, it was claimed in 1772, needed a Fielding to execute the laws against those three ugly sisters, forestalling, engrossing and regrating; such a figure would 'do more towards reducing the price of butchers' meat than all the associations and subscriptions in the kingdom'.¹⁰⁵ London's complex political geography with its weak links beyond the City militated against uniform and widespread enforcement. Even the Corporation, which lacked a specialist court, left no systematic evidence of convicted market offences and by leasing out its markets for much of the eighteenth century meant its regulatory grip was relaxed. The Livery Companies, supposedly the spearhead of trade supervision, were in decline: the Butcher's Company remained the most active but exerted little influence outside the City. The Middlesex

¹⁰¹ CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 83 (1791-2), ff. 326-7, 340-1; *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), p. 144; *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), p. 538.

¹⁰² Masters, *The public markets in 1677*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰³ Market regulation was not the only form of public intervention into trade and commerce - issues such as taxation, debt and credit also needed to be addressed. See for example, Brown, 'Politics, commerce and social policy in the City of London', chs. 3, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *London Chronicle*, 19-21 January 1758. Enforcement of market legislation had never in fact been perfect, see, for example, Archer, *Hugh Alley's caveat*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁵ *London Evening Post*, 31 March - 2 April 1772.

and Westminster magistrates were becoming less effective after 1660, and relied on prosecutions brought by the Livery Companies or the Grand Jury. Their main concerns were the setting of benches and other obstructions in the streets for hawking purposes, and the selling of meat on Sundays.¹⁰⁶ Westminster's Court of Burgesses had lost its executive teeth by the eighteenth century, although an Annoyance Jury patrolled the markets and streets in order to destroy short deficient weights and measures.¹⁰⁷ Westminster's own market, in fact, was governed by outdated Elizabethan regulations. Calls by the proprietors in the 1730s for new laws in imitation of the City of London came to nothing.¹⁰⁸ Central government itself only intervened in times of nationwide crisis, most notably in the cattle distemper of 1745-58, when controls over the movement of cattle were imposed with mixed results. In this episode there was evidence of County and City cooperating in the purging of Smithfield market to prevent the spread of infection after market days.¹⁰⁹ The Government also sought to influence the price in the corn market in 1800 by selling imported supplies cheaply.¹¹⁰

Geographical fragmentation was coupled with intermittent implementation over time. In the main, enforcement and new legislation were determined by the infrequency of high food prices in London which threatened not just consumers but some retailers too.¹¹¹ The weight of a variety of unsystematic evidence from administrative records and newspapers suggests that policies, prosecutions and public awareness of market regulation peaked during the most difficult times: 1697-8, 1757-8, 1764-6, 1786-7, 1795-6 and 1800-1. Forestalling and regrating, unwholesome and corrupt meat, unsealed weights and measures, all came more into public view at these times, as prosecutions were stepped up by the different authorities and new inquiries made. In 1698, for instance, comprehensive regulations were set out and published by the City Aldermen for the bringing of meal and grain to the London markets; and Bear Key gained some

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, LMA, 60.225, Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books, vol. x (1710-14), pp. 6-7, 43; WCA, WCB 5, Westminster Court of Burgesses (4 September 1718); G. Lamoine (ed.), *Charges to the Grand Jury, 1689-1803* (Camden Society, 4th ser., 93, 1992), pp. 105, 113-14, 235 (April, October 1718, July 1728); *London Evening Post*, 29-31 August 1728. For the Middlesex Justices' declining role in commerce, see E. G. Dowdell, *A hundred years of quarter sessions: the government of Middlesex from 1660 to 1760* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 158-82.

¹⁰⁷ See WCA, WCB/39; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 10 April 1764.

¹⁰⁸ WCA, WCB 59, 'The case of the proprietors of Westminster Market'.

¹⁰⁹ *London Evening Post*, 11-13 December 1746; 12-15 September 1747. On rinderpest crises in the eighteenth century, see J. Broad, 'Cattle plague in eighteenth century England', *Agricultural History Review*, 31 (1983), 104-15. The activities of the Privy Council in the mid-century crisis is well-documented in the Privy Council Registers (PRO, PC 2/) for these years.

¹¹⁰ R. Wells, *Wretched faces: famine in wartime England* (1988), p. 193.

¹¹¹ Bakers (who generally sold from their own shop-bakeries) complained that rising meal prices and maximum bread prices implied by the Assize of Bread squeezed their incomes, S. Thrupp, *A short history of the Worshipful Company of Bakers* (1933), pp. 20-1. Cutting butchers, hurt by the selling power of carcase butchers, claimed that they were forced to sell at a loss to the poorer people 'in order to allay the discontents and murmurs so prevalent at the time', *JHC*, li (1795-6), p. 551.

official status when it was given a market bell and fixed hours of trading.¹¹² The Assize of Bread, an ancient and complex device for controlling bread prices and bakers' profits, was revived by statute in 1710 when prices soared.¹¹³ Price controls were lacking in other trades but it was suggestive that in 1766 and 1792 calls were made for an equivalent assize mechanism for the price of butchers' meat. Official returns of sales for the corn and coal markets in the later eighteenth century were seen as the next best safeguard; *The Times* called for the same at Smithfield in 1801, again when prices were unseasonably, if not unreasonably, high.¹¹⁴ Illegal practices had probably gone on for some time, but it was the high prices which sharpened judicial and public awareness. To some extent the temptation for butchers and corn factors to increase their prices or for retail dealers to sell bad or underweight goods was probably greater when higher costs squeezed profits. In 1764, for instance, it was observed that much bad meat had been exposed to sale since food prices had risen.¹¹⁵ Outside these periods, particularly in the early eighteenth century when real wages held up and years of scarcity were few, many controls seem to have fallen into abeyance and new practices developed long before proper investigations were later made.

Other motives indicated different chronologies. The incidence of attempts to suppress Sunday trading depended to a large extent upon the religious temperament of the ruling classes. The 1690s and 1780s were decades of moral anxiety, generated in the former by the Revolution and the Toleration Act and in the latter by colonial defeat, and reflected in clampdowns on Sunday trading, particularly after 1785.¹¹⁶ Complaints and prosecutions also ran high in the 1730s and 1760s, whilst the 1830s - years of high ecclesiastical tension within politics - saw the most intensive campaigns to beef up the Sabbath laws.¹¹⁷ The *practice* of Sunday trading was probably more consistent, perhaps extending in line with the growing secularization of metropolitan society. In 1822, fruit sales on Sundays in Covent Garden market were considered by the local magistrates to have 'existed, more or less, according as the opinion of the authorities for the time being were for or against it, for time immemorial'.¹¹⁸ New steps in metropolitan 'improvement' around 1760 - better bridges, better streets and so on - provided an additional context to the high prices for the Corporation's attempt to remove the street butchers, poulterers and fishmongers

¹¹² Add. Ms 33,489, f. 169; CLRO, Rep. 103, f. 52.

¹¹³ S. & B. Webb, 'The Assize of Bread', *Economic Journal*, 14 (1904), pp. 198-9.

¹¹⁴ GH, Ms 6443 8, Minutes of the Butchers' Company, 13 June 1766; *Times*, 11 May 1792, p. 3, 10 April 1801, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ *London Evening Post*, 20-22 March 1764.

¹¹⁶ GH, Ms 6443 10, Minutes of the Butchers' Company, 8 November 1785, 1 February 1787; GH, Mss 7335, 10041; W. B. Whitaker, *The eighteenth century Sunday: a study of Sunday observance from 1677 to 1837* (1940), pp. 23-5, 155, 169.

¹¹⁷ Thus for the 1730s, see LMA, MSP 1734/Ap 8-9, MJ SP 1737/09 90; *London Evening Post*, 12-15 October 1734; 19-21 August 1735; 3-5 June 1736; 7-9 July 1737; Whitaker, *The eighteenth century Sunday*, pp. 59, 62.

¹¹⁸ *Times*, 7 September 1822, p. 3.

into the public markets (to improve competition), and regulate slaughtering and cattle driving.¹¹⁹ The progressive climate of the 1820s also led the City to clamp down upon cattle slaughterhouses in its boundaries, and there is some evidence that the Aldermen prosecuted offenders thereafter.¹²⁰

Because provisioning London was an increasingly sophisticated business, the authorities became more pragmatic and circumspect in regulating marketing practices. There was little sign of a conscious ideology being pursued. The extent to which the authorities modified the old principles of 'market overt' was largely a *fait accompli*. Thus, for instance, the well-established Smithfield salesmen were given legal recognition in 1673 by Act of Parliament.¹²¹ By the nineteenth century, the ability of private enterprise to feed the capital was something of a marvel.¹²² When provisions were dear as in 1766, and the growth of London still a novelty (particularly at the time of a great building boom), questions might be raised:

A great town ... may very properly be compared to a large army; and it is well known that many great armies have been, as it were, defeated ... without encountering any other enemy than the difficulty of subsisting so many people together. A general never trusts that the same of so great an army being assembled at a certain place will induce all the neighbouring country to bring in provisions in so sure a market; on the contrary, it is a principal branch of the art of war to know how to prevent all ingrossing and forestalling, and to bring plenty to the camp, and many officers are appointed specially for these purposes ... London however, and its environs which use the London markets, consisting of 1,200,000 people at the least, is left to find its provisions as it can, without any public care to collect them.¹²³

In view of this critical task, the City Corporation for one never sought to do the job of provisioning itself. Rather, it began to adapt policy to the new practices. In 1758 it almost got round to creating a corn market that accommodated factors, freemen or not, and sample-selling, and in 1760, the City Lands Committee decided not to pursue the suppression of salesmen in its markets lest provisions there would diminish as a result.¹²⁴ In 1802, the Common Council successfully petitioned Parliament for a relaxation of restrictions on wholesaling in Billingsgate, in view of the recent growth of the trade. Middlemen had become necessary: they might be regulated and suspected if prices soared, but they could not be eliminated.¹²⁵

On the other hand, the Corporation was not afraid to intervene in the interests of competition and other objectives - it saw itself as the guardian of civic liberty and prosperity, and did not disregard the needs of consumers. It was this same corporate identity which was upheld

¹¹⁹ *JHC*, xxix (1762), pp. 149, 152, 217, 220, 291, 340.

¹²⁰ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 105, 167; CLRO, Rep. 234, ff. 764-6; CC papers, 9 May 1833.

¹²¹ Westerfield, *Middlemen in English business*, pp. 194-7.

¹²² 'The Commissariat of London', *Quarterly Review*, xcv (September 1854), pp. 271-2; Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 124-5, 150-1.

¹²³ Extract from *Political speculations: or, an attempt to discover the causes of the dearness of provisions*, reprinted in *London Chronicle*, 6-9 December 1766, p. 560.

¹²⁴ cf. p. 100 above.

¹²⁵ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 52 (1760), f. 236a; *JHC*, lvii (1801-2), p. 68; 42 Geo. III, c. 138.

by its defence of its market charter. The 1674 Act of Common Council was reprinted or republished in 1697, 1758 and 1766. Lord Mayor Crosby, ally of John Wilkes and famous for his heroic role in the 'Printers' Case' of 1771, made a popular regulation that year in the corn market and ordered the execution of the 1674 laws, an act which, one newspaper noted, 'cannot fail to immortalize his memory as a benefactor to mankind'.¹²⁶ Rising complaints of jobbers and monopolistic carcase butchers persuaded the Corporation to seek legislation to licence salesmen in the cattle and other trades in 1786, only to be rejected by the House of Commons. Interestingly, the petition's allegations were not examined: as Alderman Townsend argued, 'there was no need of a revival of the laws against forestalling, as London was the best supplied market in the kingdom'.¹²⁷ Orderliness and control of cattle driving, at a time when the trade in the market was growing, also required action - in 1792, the Smithfield drovers were to be badged and numbered, a measure opposed by supporters of freedom and the rights of man including the Constitutional Society.¹²⁸ In 1766, a proposal to fix butchers' retail prices to the poor in relation to Smithfield cattle prices was rejected as impractical by the Butchers' Company who nevertheless requested the Lord Mayor to find some method of reducing high prices.¹²⁹ In the wheat trades, the Corporation tried to regulate the price of flour as well as bread, and in 1800, it pressed for some kind of regulation of cornfactors and other middlemen.¹³⁰ Although it never sought directly to manage any trade, the City did consider ways of intervention that would increase competition. Its attempt in 1758 to establish a legal corn market near Tower Hill was aimed at providing competition to the Corn Exchange recently set up in nearby Mark Lane.¹³¹ In the 1790s, publicly established mills were considered as a means of undermining the monopolistic tendencies in the flour trade, only to be faced by severe resistance from millers.¹³² In 1800, in order to lower prices of butchers' meat, shops were opened up in Honey Lane market, selling at competitive prices in order to force others to do the same, a venture enthusiastically supported by *The Times*.¹³³ By contrast, in 1829, the City Lands Committee was heavily criticized by locals for ejecting a butcher from Farringdon market who had the competitive temerity to display tickets for his meat, a practice carried on in Fleet market previous to 1829, but not

¹²⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 4 January 1771; *London Evening Post*, 3-6 August 1771.

¹²⁷ CLRO, Misc. Mss 118.2, Committee to consider the high prices of provisions (1786-7), book one, 7 August 1786; *JHC*, xlii (1787), pp. 720, 780; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 16 May 1787; *Times*, 26 May 1795, p. 2, 20 January 1796, p. 3, 29 November 1796, p. 3; *Monopoly: the cutting butcher's apology to the legislature upon the high price of meat* (1795); *Smithfield market: an essay against carcase butchers, monopolizers, forestallers and regraters* (1796).

¹²⁸ *Times*, 16 November 1792, p. 2.

¹²⁹ GH, Ms 6443 8, Minutes of the Butchers' Company, 13 June 1766, 3 July 1766.

¹³⁰ Brown, 'Politics, commerce and social policy in the City of London', pp. 150-8.

¹³¹ See p. 128.

¹³² Brown, 'Politics, commerce and social policy in the City of London', pp. 153-4.

¹³³ *Times*, 8 November 1800, p. 2.

tolerated in its replacement. There were clearly limits to the Corporation's desire for free competition.¹³⁴

A similar ambiguity characterized the parliamentary inquiries of 1800-1 into the corn, coal and fish trades of London, when food prices reached new heights. The House of Commons' report into the practices of the Corn Exchange was quick to condemn regrating, speculation and profiteering. Coming only ten months after riots in Mark Lane and a year after the popular conviction of a jobber there by Lord Kenyon, it trod cautiously on the question of intervention in an effort not to be seen to take sides:

If any effectual measures could be proposed for preventing such speculations in corn, without ... interfering with the fair and necessary means which must exist in conducting commerce on a great scale, and in an advanced state of society, they might very properly and reasonably be adopted. For it is obvious the price of any commodity must be enhanced by every intermediate profit which is taken in its passage to consumption, beyond such as necessarily arise from the more convenient and speedy modes of conveying it from the first hand to the consumer. Whether these are in particular cases useful or superfluous is matter of very difficult discrimination in a legislative point of view, and the decision must in general depend on an examination and knowledge of an infinite variety of circumstances.

The committee's conclusion that the metropolitan corn trade was in need of 'regulation and improvement, with a view to the more convenient, open, fair and satisfactory mode of carrying it on', represented neither the old paternalist view of marketing nor the faith in the self-regulation of laissez-faire, but a realistic pragmatism predicated upon the basic, if imperfect, efficiency of open markets.¹³⁵ Although no specific liberalizing measures were resolved, complaints thereafter subsided, and stands appeared to be more easily obtainable.¹³⁶ The main recommendation of the fish committee's inquiry into Billingsgate was for its removal or enlargement. An Act of 1802, obtained by the Corporation eased the restrictions on wholesale lots but provided a firmer grip on the arrangements of the market and upheld wholesalers' obligation to retail. The coal trade, like corn, had suffered from high prices, which in part was owing to 'the want of a market in London which would admit of a competition, perfectly free, in the purchase of coals'. The City then petitioned Parliament to establish an open and public coal market, and, in effect, take over the management of the Coal Exchange. The ensuing Act was a victory for regulation (further regulatory legislation followed) and freer and more public competition, although its ultimate impact on practices in the coal trade was limited.¹³⁷

Debates of this ilk were absent from the rest of the period. The great markets were being managed increasingly efficiently and new market proprietors were given clearly defined powers

¹³⁴ CLRO, *City Lands*, vol. 121 (1829), pp. 545-6; *Times*, 4 December 1829, p. 3; 9 December 1829, p. 4.

¹³⁵ *House of Commons Reports*, ix (1803), p. 145.

¹³⁶ J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1804), iv, p. 556.

regarding inspection, weights and measures, and arrangements.¹³⁸ Some attempts were made, not without success, to restrain the killing of cattle in cramped slaughterhouses in the City after 1820, but real progress was not achieved until licencing legislation in 1848.¹³⁹ In the case of cattle marketing, the problem of regulating Smithfield was subsumed into the larger question of enlargement and removal, the basis of the Select Committee inquiry of 1828. Criticisms levelled at markets in the early nineteenth century tended to focus upon their size, position or appearance. 'Laissez faire' was hardly a policy option when growing markets caused concerns and complaints beyond the straightforward issue of price. Notable moves towards unfettered commerce were the repeal of the Assize of Bread (1822) which finally allowed bakers to determine prices and sizes of loaves, and the repeal of the London Flaying Acts (1824) which ended compulsory inspections in public skin markets. Hay market legislation was partially repealed in 1834.¹⁴⁰ Restraints upon the wholesaling of fish at Billingsgate enshrined in the 1802 Act were contested in 1839 but not finally abolished until 1846 by legislation which set out new regulations and conditions under which the market, now fully in the control of the Corporation, would operate.¹⁴¹

The impact of regulation

Just what effects regulations by the authorities had on the nature and development of London's markets is far from clear, given the counterfactuals implicit in such a question. There are isolated instances in which they may have actually enhanced trade volumes through specific markets. For instance, the London Flaying Acts of 1803 and 1808 obliged all cattle hides flayed within five miles of the Royal Exchange to be brought for examination and stamping at Leadenhall market, a rule which had the effect on the one hand of increasing Leadenhall's trade and led to calls after 1805 for the market's removal, and on the other of diverting more of Leadenhall's vegetable trade to the Borough and Spitalfields.¹⁴² The Corporation's clampdown on cattle slaughtering in Newgate in the 1820s may well have aided that market's reputation for the sale of carcase meat transported in from the country. Empirically, it seems that policies for the market place may either have confirmed a market's reputation, as at Billingsgate, Mark Lane or Smithfield; or they

¹³⁷ *House of Commons Reports*, x (1803), p. 538; *JHC*, lvii (1801-2), pp. 139, 450-1, 484; 43 Geo. III c. 134; F. R. S. Smith, *Sea coal for London: history of the coal factors in the London market* (1961), pp. 90-1.

¹³⁸ e.g. 11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 70 (Hungerford).

¹³⁹ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 105, 167; CLRO, Rep. 234, ff. 764-6; CC papers, 9 May 1833; *Royal Commission on Smithfield market: minutes of evidence* (1849-50), qq. 1702-4; 11 & 12 Vic. c. 163, ss. 92-6.

¹⁴⁰ Webb, 'The Assize of Bread', pp. 216-18; 5 Geo. IV c. 57; 4 Will. IV c. 21. Arguments for the repeal of the Flaying Acts in a petition to the House of Lords by the Butchers' Company can be found in GH, Ms 6443 13, Minutes of the Butchers' Company, 26 May 1824.

¹⁴¹ CLRO, CC papers, 26 September 1839, 23 March 1840, 9 October 1845; *CC mins*, 17 September 1846; 9 & 10 Vic. c. 346; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 352.

¹⁴² See CLRO, Jor. 82, f. 202; Jor. 85, ff. 4b-6b; Jor. 86, ff. 390b-392; *JHC*, lxx (1810), pp. 68-9. Sheep and lamb skins were to go to the specialist markets at Clerkenwell, Southwark and Whitechapel, all established in the eighteenth century, 43 Geo. III c. 106.

may have provided incentives to dealers to seek other forms of marketing. The stiff regulations prevailing at Blackwell Hall, for instance, may well have been a factor in the mutation of trade away from the official sphere.¹⁴³ At Westminster, by contrast, it was believed by those who were trying to make a profit from the market that the loss of trade was partly a result of poor laws. Similarly, the repeal of the Flaying Acts in 1824 may well have encouraged the Leadenhall leather trade to shift towards Bermondsey, where a market was established a decade later. Regulations and policies could therefore have ambiguous effects.

In reality, policy and legislation did not fundamentally alter the course and characteristics of market development that was determined by private commercial forces. Regulation needed to be ongoing if it was to have a lasting impact. Markets and market authorities were certainly open to changing practices; City and Parliament were particularly wary of intervention when London relied upon private enterprise for its provisions. Tensions rose at times of scarcity, when pragmatism permitted calls for enforcement of old laws and the making of new ones. Whilst market places represented sites of institutionalized control, for the most part they formed merely the boundaries within which competition should flourish. The authorities were often called to be the guardians of competition, just as modern governments employ regulators and ‘competition policy’. Regulations and their enforcement depended upon prices and crises; some liberalization occurred after the inquiries around 1800, but in other respects controls increased with trade whilst issues such as slaughtering became more pressing. As Donald Olsen pointed out in another context, there was nothing paradoxical about the concomitant expansion of both legislation and a market economy.¹⁴⁴

Stephen Kaplan’s study of the Parisian grain markets complements the sketch outlined here. In eighteenth century Paris, as in London, the authorities accepted the dictates of private commerce but nevertheless sought to channel as much trade as possible through formal markets. The tension he identifies between the concepts of ‘market principle’ (unfettered market forces) and ‘market place’ (regulated public sites of exchange) were not, however, great in London and there seems no case for arguing that the impact of the authorities equalled that in Paris.¹⁴⁵ Observers and officials in Georgian London were not so chronically paranoid about provisioning as their Tudor ancestors or their Parisian counterparts. Only with the high prices and alleged profiteering of the 1790s, which culminated in turbulent crowds outside the Corn Exchange in September 1800, did central government become really concerned for the London situation, and for its impact upon the provinces and in the light of the events in Paris scarcely a decade earlier.

¹⁴³ On legislation at Blackwell Hall, see CLRO, Misc. Mss 58.30.

¹⁴⁴ D. J. Olsen, *The growth of Victorian London* (1976), p. 62.

¹⁴⁵ S. L. Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris* (1984), ch. 1 and *passim*.

Conclusion

All three aspects of 'political' involvement with markets - rights, management, regulations - suggest that the authorities' role in their development was not insignificant. In none of these spheres could one really describe the long eighteenth century as a period of 'decline'. The City continued to make use of its monopoly rights; market management and administration remained highly important and in many places became more rigorous; regulations of various kinds came and went. Nor was the relationship between political and economic factors, except in the case of the City's market rights, necessarily tense or conflicting. At various points, and in various ways, 'political' factors may have altered the course of development, or confirmed the channels through which commercial forces operated. Good management seems to have been a necessary, if not sufficient, factor in a market's fortunes; controls generally worked best when they did not go against the grain of market forces. Moreover, these political issues highlight the distinctive and complex political economy of London that makes any other generalizations in the Georgian period hazardous, and in which the history of London's markets was unambiguously embroiled. Market places then, whilst increasingly being conditioned by economic forces, continued to represent other realities. The next chapter further explores this theme in the topographical context.

7 SPACE, PLACE AND STATUS: MARKETS IN THE TOWNSCAPE

Markets were not simply commercial and political institutions; they really were *places* and *features* in the townscape, urban institutions with a venerable tradition. ‘The establishment of markets is of the greatest antiquity’, declared the most celebrated of market architects, ‘and is probably coeval with that of civilized society’.¹ The market place was literally at the heart of the medieval and early modern town. According to Randall and Charlesworth, it was ‘the centre for community interchange, not only economic but also social and political ... the principal focus of community identity ... Much more than the church or public house, locations with relatively small and self-contained audiences, the market was the one place where all classes ... could mingle cheek by jowl’.² On the other hand, there was at work in the early modern period a broad historical dynamic, summed up by Lewis Mumford: ‘With the coming of capitalist enterprise, the older forms of the market did not entirely disappear in the Western world ... But market squares had no place in the new urban layout: neither the traffic circles of the baroque plan nor the endless corridor avenue of the commercial plan favoured that kind of pedestrian concentration.’³ London’s experience reflected an uneasy synthesis of both these characterizations, which raises interesting questions about the kind of status markets enjoyed in a modernizing townscape. How well regarded were markets in the built and spatial environment, and where did they figure in the whirlpool urban scene that was London? After a consideration of their location and relation to other urban forms, the chapter assesses how far they were influenced by the metropolitan drive to ‘improvement’; the extent of social intercourse in them; the sights, sounds and smells to be found there; the symbolic associations they raised. Much of the argument tends, by necessity, to proceed by example, for particular markets possessed their own peculiarities. Most peculiar of all was Covent Garden, which ironically testified to the the symbolic potential of the modern market place. In general, however, the collective environmental and social impact of the market places in London diminished over the long eighteenth century.

¹ C. Fowler, *Description of the plan for the revival of Hungerford market* (1829; 1830 edn.), p. 8.

² A. Randall and A. Charlesworth (eds.), *Markets, market culture and popular protest in eighteenth century Britain and Ireland* (Liverpool, 1996), p. 12. See also S. M. Jack, *Towns in Tudor and Stuart Britain* (1996), p. 8.

³ L. Mumford, *The city in history: its origins, its transformations and its projects* (1961; Harmondsworth, 1966 edn.), p. 495.

Locating the markets

London lacked a principal central market place or even a specialized marketing district. In 1660, all but two of London's markets were situated within the City. The rationalization of these markets after the Great Fire on the one hand and the creation of new markets in the growing suburbs on the other produced a striking spatial transition. Markets had seemingly spread from the walled City across the growing town. Wherever one was in London in 1750, a market of some sort was never far away. This polyfocal geography contrasted to eighteenth century Paris, where Les Halles formed its own *quartier* close to the Palais Royal, and also to other British cities such as Norwich.⁴ Great central markets there may have been, but they showed no tendency among themselves to cluster even in the City. This not only reflected the specific factors outlined in Chapter Five and the enduring retailing role of the market place, but also the continued juxtaposition of retail and wholesale trades, the lack of a single metropolitan authority, and indeed the City Corporation's own reluctance to rationalize its marketing on further radical lines. Ironically, Paris consciously moved to a decentralized marketing regime in the early nineteenth century, a trend reversed in the 1850s with the rebuilding of Les Halles.⁵ A rare suggestion for a centralized London system is found in a sketch of 1849 for a proposed 'London market', colossal in scale, which would have stretched north from Farringdon market all the way to Kings Cross, with separate accommodation for dead meat, cattle, hay and garden produce.⁶ Not until the later nineteenth century, however, did the City possess something of a specialized market district, with the creation of London Central Markets at Smithfield. Till then, at least, London's marketing lacked the focus of the traditional urban picture.

Actual market locations were necessarily varied. Whilst the main trend was away from the open street, not all were in enclosed spaces (see Table 11, p. 38). Certain markets were tucked away in quadrangles; others commanded relatively open market places; hay and straw were traded in wide thoroughfares. Prosperous markets might sprawl into neighbouring streets and highways. The embryonic Victorian street markets were linear in configuration which made expansion relatively easy. By 1840, markets were to be found in both linear and nucleated forms, as well as hybrids of the two, plus specialized centres of particular trades, as at Smithfield, Billingsgate and Mark Lane.

Nucleated market places contrasted to the shallower and linear shopping spaces of Holborn, Cheapside, Strand and Oxford Street, and they reflected the belief that urban

⁴ P. Couperie, *Paris through the ages: an illustrated historical atlas of urbanism and architecture* (1968: tr. 1970), maps 5, 6, 9, 12; P. J. Corfield, 'The social and economic history of Norwich, 1650-1850: a study in urban growth', Ph. D. thesis (University of London, 1976), pp. 105-9, 388-9.

⁵ GH Noble, C.45/T.1850.

⁶ GH Maps and Prints, Folded Maps, 1849, by I. S. Holmes.

improvement involved the removal of markets from principal thoroughfares.⁷ In London the most formative development in this regard came in the wake of the devastating Fire of 1666. Under the influence of Charles II, the City relocated its market stalls and buildings away from the streets and into proper enclosed sites, 'at once the simplest and most revolutionary' of suggestions.⁸ In the same period newly created markets in the suburbs also occupied proper sites, many away from the main streets - the earliest of these doubtless figured in the King's mind when he advised the City. Though the enclosure idea may not have been pioneered by the City fathers, their example was followed by other towns such as Edinburgh, Warwick and Guildford.⁹ Thus London entered the eighteenth century with few market-induced traffic problems. Table 30 summarizes the various public/official proposals to remove established markets from London streets between 1660 and 1840. In some cases, pressure to relocate long preceded final removal. Fleet market in particular seemed certain to go in the 1760s, but a Common Council vote was lost by one, and the subject was not raised again for another fifty years.¹⁰ Some removals were seen to support contemporaneous projects by opening up broad thoroughfares for traffic: in the case of Southwark market, the London Bridge improvements of 1757-9 (due north); in the case of Fleet, the construction in the 1760s of Blackfriars Bridge (due south); in the case of Haymarket, the construction of Regent Street.¹¹ As it was said of Fleet in 1783, 'the stalls, &c of this market are well contrived and executed, but not sufficiently so to prevent our regretting, that one of the noblest streets in London should be applied to such a purpose'.¹² The second-hand clothes market in Rag Fair was frequently condemned for the obstructions it brought to Rosemary Lane, but was never removed or abolished. The ancient Butcher Row at Aldwych was also finally demolished in the Strand improvements of the 1790s.¹³

While markets remained in the streets, metropolitan improvement, it seemed, was limited. Urban critic John Gwynn praised the new paving and lighting of his time but demanded

⁷ [John Feltham] *The picture of London for 1802*, p. 33; *Publick nuisance considered* (1754; 1760 edn.).

⁸ T. F. Reddaway, *The rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (1951), pp. 108-9; B. R. Masters, *The public markets of the City of London surveyed by William Leybourn in 1677*, LTS No. 117 (1974), pp. 15-16. As a result of the Fire and the changes, Cheapside, Newgate Street and Gracechurch Street lost their markets; Leadenhall was significantly enlarged, Stocks was moved back from the street, and Honey Lane and Newgate markets were constructed.

⁹ R. A. Houston, *Social change in the age of Enlightenment: Edinburgh, 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1994), p. 126; P. Borsay, *The English urban renaissance: culture and society in the provincial town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 107-8; Guildford Muniments, Guild Merchant Court Books, BR/OC/1 20, 21 April 1673, p. 142.

¹⁰ *Times*, 27 July 1821, p. 3.

¹¹ *JHC*, xxvii (1754-7), pp. 158-60, 349, 522; lvii (1802), p. 176; 5 Geo. IV c. 151; 11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 14.

¹² [B. Ralph], *A critical review of the public buildings in and about London* (1783), p. 65.

¹³ LMA, MJ SP 1701 Jan/1-2; LMA, 60.225, Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books and Orders of Court, vol. xi (1715-18), p. 81; vol. xxi (1744-7), p. 12; CLRO, Rep. 163, f. 433; Ward presentment summaries, 1737 (Tower Ward); M. D. George, *London life in the eighteenth century* (1927; Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 339.

Table 30 Proposed and actual market removals from London thoroughfares, 1660-1840

Year	Market removed ^a	New site	Instigator
1666-70	Cheapside	Honey Lane - Stocks markets	City of London
	Newgate Street	Newgate market	City of London
	St. Nicholas Shambles	Newgate market	City of London
	Gracechurch Street	Leadenhall market	City of London
	Aldersgate Street	Honey Lane market	City of London
1686	St. James's cattle market	Brookfield cattle market	Lord Dover, proprietor
<i>1687</i>	<i>Haymarket, Piccadilly</i>	<i>Old Soho</i>	<i>James Poullett, proprietor</i>
<i>1738</i>	<i>Southwark market</i>	<i>Bowling Green (site of Fair)</i>	
1751	Bear Key (wharfside)	Corn Exchange, Mark Lane	Cornfactors' consortium
1756	Southwark market	Borough market, the Triangle	City; St. Saviour's parish
<i>1766</i>	<i>Haymarket, Piccadilly</i>		<i>John Gwynn</i>
<i>1770</i>	<i>Fleet market</i>	<i>Fleet prison</i>	<i>City of London</i>
<i>1775</i>	<i>Haymarket, Piccadilly</i>		<i>anon. petitioner (to Justices)</i>
<i>1802</i>	<i>Haymarket, Piccadilly</i>		<i>Local inhabitants (to Parlt.)</i>
<i>1824</i>	<i>Aldgate skin market</i>		<i>Petition to City Lands Cte.</i>
1829	Fleet market	Farringdon market	City of London
1830	Haymarket, Piccadilly	Cumberland market, Regent's Pk.	Local inhabitants
<i>1836</i>	<i>Whitechapel haymarket</i>		<i>William Baker (Midds. coroner)</i>

^a Proposed removals not materializing are shown in italics - year of proposal given. Year of actual removal is given. Sources: Masters, *The public markets of the City of London*, pp. 15-16; CSPD (Jan 1687-Feb 1689), p. 93; *London Evening Post*, 14-16 March 1738; J. Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved* (1766), p. 132; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 4 May 1770, 20 Nov 1829; LMA, M&WA/ HM/396, Haymarket Committee minutes, 12 January 1775; *JHC*, lvii (1802), pp. 176-7; *Times*, 27 May 1824, p. 2; 11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. 14; CLRO, CC papers & CC mins, 11 February 1836.

also the removal of 'all kinds of business which from their nature are offensive or dangerous, such as public markets, into detached places'.¹⁴ Ideally, market places were neither to be seen nor heard. Enclosed market places insulated the prominent streets from messy food trades, whether from stalls or fixed private shops. They decongested the main thoroughfares, minimized cattle driving across the town, and - where they contained public slaughterhouses - reduced the evils of private slaughtering.¹⁵ They were thus a necessary concomitant of urban improvement. Local inhabitants petitioned Parliament in 1741 for the removal of traders into the markets, as did the City Corporation twenty years later.¹⁶ 'It would be of infinite advantage to this metropolis', declared *The Times* in 1804, 'if the shops of market people were confined (at least made more so than they are at present) to proper places'. It had been reporting Newport market's new enlargement which 'promises to become a great public convenience, as it has already occasioned the removal of many stalls and wheelbarrows from the neighbouring streets'.¹⁷

Yet even enclosed central market sites themselves became vulnerable to removal or demolition, because they generally lacked the positive or profitable attributes that an improving

¹⁴ J. Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved* (1766), pp. 17-18.

¹⁵ See above, p. 69.

¹⁶ *JHC*, xxiv (1741), p. 119; xxix (1762), pp. 149, 217, 220, 291, 340.

¹⁷ *Times*, 20 January 1804, p. 3. See also *Publick nuisance considered*, pp. 14-15, 24-5.

and commercial city demanded. Just as Cheapside, once London's greatest and central market place, was removed after the Great Fire to the enclosed Stocks and Honey Lane markets nearby, so in turn did these succumb in later periods to other civic buildings - Mansion House and the City School.¹⁸ *The Times* heartily applauded the Corporation when it decided in 1834 to remove 'the old and good-for-nothing market in the City called Honey Lane' to make way for the School.¹⁹ More importantly, Stocks was removed in 1737 after its site had been chosen for the Lord Mayor's Mansion House (Leadenhall was seriously considered as well). Stocks occupied a prestigious and nodal site opposite the Bank of England and Royal Exchange, and was flanked by the renowned equestrian statue of Charles II and the dome of Wren's St. Stephen Walbrook (Figure 9).²⁰ It formed a touring landmark - along with Charing Cross, Temple Bar and London Bridge - in *The foreigner's guide* to London of 1730. Ned Ward had earlier perceived its strategic position when on entering the City, he saw people 'running about with as much concern in their countenances as if they had received news of the French landing, or that an army of Irish Papists had taken possession of Stocks market, in order to massacre the Protestants, and plunder the City'.²¹ Stocks in fact had dated back to 1282 (its post-Fire title, 'Woolchurch market', never caught on), and its definitive removal in 1737 completed the radical transformation of urban space begun by the post-Fire rearrangements. The centre of the City was a setting for civic and architectural display and traffic flow, not markets.²² The site to which it was removed (Fleet ditch), though long, was hardly prestigious. Its removal in turn from that thoroughfare in 1829 marked a further step down the ladder of urban status.

Across in Westminster, the situation of the new flesh and green market opposite the Abbey distressed John Gwynn, who preferred a fine square which would

not only have a fine effect in point of view, but ... also be the means of removing that intolerable nuisance of a green market, which according to the unaccountable tastelessness of modern undertakers, is almost thrust under the very walls of the Church, when it was impossible to turn round without observing a number of situations better adapted for that purpose. It is hardly possible to imagine that so fine a building as the Abbey was originally intended to be crowded up with little paltry hovels.²³

The market site was eventually sold and the buildings demolished under an Act of 1804 for the

¹⁸ Part of Cheapside market had in fact been removed to St. Paul's Churchyard in 1657, Masters, *The public markets of the City of London*, p. 15.

¹⁹ *Times*, 2 September 1834, p. 6.

²⁰ *London Evening Post*, 3-5 February 1736

²¹ *The foreigner's guide ... through the Cities of London and Westminster* (1730), pp. 4-6; N. Ward, *The London spy*, ed. P. Hyland (1709 edn.; East Lansing, Michigan, 1993), p. 297.

²² One pundit proposed that the Mansion House be erected on one side of the market place, the Bank of England removed to its opposite side to create, with St. Stephen Walbrook on the third flank, 'a kind of centre of beauty to the City', but the market itself must go if the design was to be one of 'elegancy and decency', *A critical review of the public buildings in and about London* (1734), pp. 8-9.

²³ Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved*, p. 90.



Figure 9 *Stocks market* (J. Van Aken, c. 1730, The Governor and Company of the Bank of England)

erection of the Westminster Sessions House, another notable ‘improvement’ of the day.²⁴ In the following decade, Blackwell Hall, adjacent to the Guildhall, made way for civic buildings, whilst the once prestigious St. James’s market was bulldozed for John Nash’s Regent Street. A smaller replacement was built, but Nash was desperate to render the new market quite invisible (and hence inoffensive) to gentlemen using the new thoroughfare from Carlton Place.²⁵ As Peter Cunningham remarked in 1850, St. James’s ‘was destroyed for Waterloo Place and Regent Street, in the back purlieu of which a few tripe shops and greengrocers’ stalls are its only relics’. London’s markets, it seemed, were going into hiding.²⁶

Other enclosed markets had their own drawbacks. They suffered from the accumulation of refuse, and particularly from congestion and overspilling trade.²⁷ Facilities of ingress and egress in the post-Fire City markets were particularly inadequate for the large carts and waggons that increasingly unloaded there. Filth and obstructions in Stocks market itself became an ‘intolerable nuisance’ in the early eighteenth century.²⁸ The flourishing market at Newgate experienced repeated problems of congested access.²⁹ Even the genteel Corn Exchange suffered. Traders there, fed up with the narrowness of Mark Lane, petitioned the Corporation in 1802 and stressed the importance of ‘having the roads leading to all public markets as commodious as possible and are at the same time sorry to observe that the avenues to the Corn Exchange of the City of London *unquestionably the greatest market in the world* are far more confined than those leading to many of the provincial markets in the Kingdom’.³⁰ Great many of London’s markets may have been, but most of them failed to occupy suitably large and conspicuous sites in the townscape to justify their commercial importance. Some smaller markets were also unlikely by their locations to gain the recognition appropriate to traditional town markets; nor were they likely to offer points of orientation for the stranger.

The two outstanding town planning moments of the period - 1666 and 1812 - gave mixed views of markets’ status in the city. The destructive Fire of 1666 gave surveyors unprecedented opportunities to offer their own visions of a model City.³¹ Christopher Wren and John Evelyn

²⁴ JHC, lix (1804-5), pp. 223, 252; 44 Geo. III c. 61. On the site now stands the Middlesex Guildhall.

²⁵ 44 Geo. III c. 93; HLRO, Evidence, H. C., 27 February 1817, vol. 3, Report from the Committee on the petition of the tradesmen and inhabitants of Norris Street and Market Terrace, p. 13.

²⁶ P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), pp. 255-6; *Survey of London: St. James, Westminster: part I*, xxix (1960), pp. 218-20. James Burton’s plan of the new market of 1817 indicates how it was tucked in behind Jermyn Street and the Haymarket, PRO CRES 26/239.

²⁷ See, for example, BL, Add. Ms 18239, f. 26; CLRO, Journal of the Markets Committee, vol. 1 (1737-43), pp. 326, 519-20; vol. 2 (1743-50), pp. 57-8.

²⁸ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 14 (1715-16), 97b; Jor. 57, ff. 373b, 379b.

²⁹ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 54 (1762), ff. 192, 224; Jor. 82, ff. 303b-4.

³⁰ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 95 (1802-3), f. 70. My italics. Also CLRO, Ward presentment summaries, 1782, 1784 (Tower Ward) - ‘persons attending the Corn Market in Mark Lane for suffering their carriage and carts to obstruct the streets &c’.

³¹ Reddaway, *The rebuilding of London*, p. 26; W. G. Bell, *The Great Fire of London* (1923; 1994 edn.), p. 222; F. Barker & P. Jackson, *The history of London in maps* (1990), pp. 36-7.

produced the most radical plans. Wren's scheme was remarkable for its lack of market provision. Noisome trades, churchyards and green gardens were to be banished, and there is no suggestion that markets were to fill the piazzas; indeed, his concerns were principally with space, airiness and grand vistas.³² Evelyn adopted a more practical continental outlook in which markets acted as important urban nodes: he provided for a fish market in a large space immediately north of London Bridge and a cloistered fruit market around Queenhithe; he also noted that the rest of the undesignated piazzas in his plan were to be 'for markets, &c'. In the end, markets represented one of the few changed aspects in the topography of the rebuilt City. Almost a century and a half later, John Nash sought to remodel the Crown's Marylebone Park estate into a sumptuous residential environment.³³ As part of the blueprint, Nash conceived, in three separate squares,

a market as large as Covent Garden market, for the supply of vegetables; also a hay and straw market, as large as at the end of Piccadilly; a corn market, and corn exchange, as in the City; coal wharfs and coal exchange; a meat and poultry market, and butter and eggs market, on extensive scales; all of which will be supplied by the easy and cheap means of water carriage.

There would be accommodation for those connected with the market and for other tradesmen 'who should find it their interest to settle in the neighbourhood of (it is to be hoped) so much opulence and so much commerce'.³⁴ These were not, however, to be focal points of the development: rather they formed a separate eastern commercial district out of sight if not out of reach of the Park.³⁵ This kind of 'zoning' principle can also be detected in some earlier estate developments, when purpose-built markets were provided with distinctive sites removed from the principal residential focus. Another milestone in town-planning was John Gwynn's *London and Westminster improved*, published in 1766, but like Wren Gwynn gave no priority to markets, several of which in his plans were to be removed from the centre.³⁶

Though generally 'hidden', markets had a very real existence in the townscape which under certain circumstances turned them into highly strategic nodes. The Corn Exchange mobs of 15 September 1800 were increased by numbers frequenting the Smithfield Monday market.³⁷ With the real threat of full-blooded price riots in Mark Lane, the ruling elite saw other large markets as vulnerable points of disorder and insurrection, especially the following Saturday when much of the populace congregated in them.³⁸ The sheer number of market places may have

³² The 'Wood Markt' (*sic*) noted near Ludgate west of the wall seems to be the only reference to marketing.

³³ The project, commissioned by the Prince Regent was part of the plan to construct a grand artery between the new district and a landscaped St. James's Park, J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (1945; Harmondsworth, 1962 edn.), p. 177.

³⁴ *First Report of the Commissioners of HM Woods, Forests and Land Revenues* (1812), pp. 12, 73, 86.

³⁵ For the development of the whole estate, see A. Saunders, *Regent's Park: a study of the development of the area from 1086 to the present day* (1969; 1981 edn.), pp. 61-89.

³⁶ Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved*, pp. 18-20, 94-5.

³⁷ For the riots, see CLRO, Rep. 204, pp. 412-18, 434-46, 469-73; *Times*, 16 September 1800, p. 2; 19 September 1800, p. 2; 20 September 1800, p. 2.

³⁸ CLRO, Rep. 204, pp. 445-6, 469-70.

militated against the possibility of mass rioting focused upon a single central site; on the other hand the inherent *mobility* of rioting appeared in 1800 to have been facilitated by the presence of several such nodes. Rioters moved from Mark Lane to Smithfield to Fleet to Clare. Certainly intensive rioting was a more likely prospect where markets existed than when retailing was dispersed among shops and streets and wholesaling fragmented among inns and other private places. Markets were visible, real, tangible - even the private Corn Exchange was vulnerable. Hungry and angry Londoners could perceive that their dear bread was due not so much to greedy bakers but could be traced a step backwards: 'Bread will be sixpence the quartern if the people will assemble at the Corn Market on Monday' ran the handbill pasted onto the Monument.³⁹ For a few days in September 1800 London's markets had become some of the most critical sites in the kingdom.

The actual existence of markets was routinely made known in the more prosaic realm of street names. Most of the markets figured as addresses that appeared in poll books, rate books and directories and on the great maps of the period. St. James's Haymarket, for instance, gave its name to one of London's premier streets.⁴⁰ Interestingly, the original nomenclature of the smaller markets frequently outlived their trade, and survived to the present day: Brook's market, Clare Market, Finsbury Market, Market Place (Oxford market), Mortimer's Market, St. George's Market (Southwark), St. James's Market, Shepherd's Market - even the stillborn Hoxton Market.⁴¹ They are not to be confused with thoroughfares like 'Exmouth Market' (Clerkenwell) and 'Chapel Market' (Islington), where unofficial Victorian street markets eventually altered the original designations 'Exmouth Street' and 'Chapel Street', a reverse process.⁴² The very names of those seventeenth and eighteenth century markets bear witness to a city which lacked an obvious focal point. The traditional 'market place' surrounded by prestigious buildings, town hall and the best shops - widely the case elsewhere - did not exist in long eighteenth century London.

New improvements, new criticisms

Whilst the market place was losing its footing in the townscape, its role in the wider phenomenon of metropolitan 'improvement' was not insignificant, though by the same token, also somewhat ambiguous. Markets themselves exerted very little influence upon infrastructural development. A notable exception was the construction of the New Road - arguably the first 'bypass' in western

³⁹ CLRO, Rep. 204, p. 412.

⁴⁰ J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1804), iv, p. 314.

⁴¹ St. George's market in Southwark disappeared from the map when educational buildings were erected off London Road in the 1960s. For Hoxton market, see Defoe, *Tour*, i, pp. 328, 343; *Survey of London: St. Leonard, Shoreditch*, viii (1922), pp. 75-6.

⁴² See, for example R. Hyde (ed.) *The A to Z of Victorian London*, LTS No. 136 (1987).

history - from Paddington to Islington in 1758, which provided a new through route for cattle drovers into Smithfield avoiding Oxford Street and Holborn.⁴³ Smithfield itself, of course, was a rather exceptional market. In general markets had to 'fit in' as best they could into London's complex and constrained topography.

Conversely, various structural improvements implicated markets in unpredictable ways. One of the more unsung improvements of Georgian London was the covering over of the noxious Fleet Ditch in the 1730s. The valuable space thereby created was effectively utilized by the City when it laid out a market as a replacement for Stocks. This neat arrangement had a strong hint of improvisation about it, but it was clear from 1728 that the Stocks site might be a good one for the Mansion House, and although the Fleet Ditch Act of 1733 said nothing about markets, the City Lands Committee quickly recommended one. All in all, it was an intelligent piece of urban planning.⁴⁴ The days of Fleet market may have been numbered by the building of Blackfriars Bridge due south in the 1760s, but its trade probably benefited from the new crossing, as well as from the 1790s improvements to the Fleet valley from Newgate Street.⁴⁵ The building of Westminster Bridge in the 1740s had mixed consequences for marketing. Construction of the approaches necessitated the demolition of old Westminster market but it also produced a scheme to build a new market which would provide a perpetual fund for the Bridge's maintenance. This particular plan foundered but the new Bridge did facilitate (as well as delay) the establishment of the unsuccessful wharfside fish market in 1749; and a year later the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, holders of the ancient market rights, were authorized to erect a new food market north of the Abbey churchyard.⁴⁶ The revival of Hungerford market in the 1820s was made more attractive by Nash's Charing Cross improvements and more viable by the construction of a new London Bridge. The new bridge in particular would facilitate the upriver passage of fishing boats to the new wholesale market as well as the establishment of ^asteamboat station for passengers and goods. The market's embankment itself tidied up an important section of the river frontage.⁴⁷ The construction in the 1810s of Regent Street not only forced the removal of St. James's market, but may well have influenced Lord Craven's decision at that time to demolish Carnaby market to its

⁴³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxv (1755), pp. 577-8; 29 Geo. II c. 88; C. Durant, 'London's first northern by-pass: urban development and the New Road from Paddington to Islington', *Camden History Review*, 14 (1989).

⁴⁴ CLRO, Jor. 58, f. 5.

⁴⁵ *London Chronicle*, 15-17 April 1760, p. 375; *London Magazine*, xxx (1761), p. 16; Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved*, p. 123; CLRO, City Lands, vol. 55 (1763), f. 235b; *Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxiv (1794), pp. 45-7. Fleet was in fact the most remunerative of the City markets except Smithfield in the late eighteenth century, see Table 9, p. 32.

⁴⁶ *JHC*, xxv (1750), pp. 911, 918-21, 974, 985; 12 Geo. II c. 33; R. J. B. Walker, *Old Westminster Bridge: the bridge of fools* (1979), pp. 100-1, 211, 241-2.

⁴⁷ Hungerford market prospectus, GH Noble, Hungerford Market, C 45/T 1825; *Times*, 19 December 1829; *Gentleman's Magazine*, cii (Jun-Dec 1832), p. 202. The rebuilding of London Bridge also brought forth a proposal for a new City fish market, CLRO, City Lands, vol. 121 (1829), p. 562.

east in Soho (where his estate was redeveloped), and the Duke of Portland's decision to enlarge Oxford market north-east of Oxford Circus. Similarly, a proposal in 1810 to construct a new thoroughfare west from Westminster Abbey included the erection of a market house for various retailers 'thereby clearing the public way of (what is now) an intolerable nuisance; and this would be ornamental as well as useful, and protect the vendors from the inclemency of the seasons.'⁴⁸

That markets could be 'ornamental as well as useful' reflected a more positive appreciation of their aesthetic potential. At the same time, the growing trade amongst the wholesale markets in the later eighteenth century opened up the possibility of grander specialist accommodation. These themes together provided a counterpoint to the trends of removal and retreat. Certainly the new City markets laid out in 1670 were a great physical improvement, irrespective of their location: fixed stalls were numbered and properly arranged, piazzas were formal as well as functional, the whole properly paved; in 1673 the City Lands Committee thought it would be 'both pleasant and convenient' to line Stocks market with lime trees.⁴⁹ The rebuilt Blackwell Hall after the Fire was also a substantial edifice.⁵⁰ The retail markets of the eighteenth century, as noted in Chapter Three, were by no means scruffy. And there was no doubting the aesthetic merit of George Dance's Corn Exchange in Mark Lane (see p. 128), whose 'very handsome' façade and cloistered courtyard set an architectural standard for provincial corn exchanges in the nineteenth century.

This counter trend was nevertheless comparatively weak, particularly when some retail markets were in decline. By the early nineteenth century, improvements both in other spheres of metropolitan life - schools, docks, bridges, new public buildings - and in town markets elsewhere whetted collective and individual criticisms of London's markets (coincidentally, at a time when the old criticisms of marketing *practices* appear to have receded).⁵¹ 'Here, alas, we blush', sighed Pigot's London directory of 1826 as it broached the subject, 'The markets of London, with one or two exceptions, are a dishonour to it ... we are not desirous that strangers, by our means, should be guided to those paltry repositories.'⁵² Even Dance's Corn Exchange had 'nothing to boast about' when compared with its Parisian counterpart - the architecturally outstanding Halle Aux Blés (1762-6) which made Arthur Young gasp in admiration.⁵³ It was said that other British towns possessed far larger fish markets than Billingsgate; the ancient town of Canterbury was

⁴⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 20 May 1810. The informal market mentioned later came to settle in Strutton Ground, see LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 42 (Memorial of 1841).

⁴⁹ Masters, *The public markets of the City of London*, pp. 22-44.

⁵⁰ A watercolour of 1811 by George Shepherd is reproduced in F. Sheppard, *London: a history* (Oxford, 1998), pl. 32.

⁵¹ A list of new metropolitan improvements is given in *Gentleman's Magazine*, xcvi (1827), pp. 54-6.

⁵² Pigot & Co., *A directory of London and its suburbs* (1826-7 edn.), p. 22.

⁵³ *Encyclopaedia Londinensis*, xiii (1815), p. 437; H. Rosenau, *Social purpose in architecture: Paris and London compared, 1760-1800* (1970), p. 31; S. Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris* (1984), pp. 117, 119.

taken as an example whose market facilities were far more commodious than London's.⁵⁴ Edinburgh's new Stock Bridge market was thought superior to anything in London before 1829.⁵⁵ Massive new covered markets in Liverpool (1820-2) and Leeds (1824-7) were particularly admired. Compared to the former, *The Gentleman's Magazine* observed, 'the celebrated Fleet Market is a miserable shed'. Petitioners for Fleet's removal in turn called for new facilities to emulate those in other cities and towns.⁵⁶ If London in the seventeenth century had led the kingdom in urban and market design, now the reverse applied.⁵⁷

The most urgent reproaches were reserved for the great cattle market. A published argument of 1810 for its removal was elaborately preambled by reference to the long age of improvement that had dawned in Europe, manifested itself wonderfully in Edinburgh and Dublin, and graced London in recent times with new bridges, wet docks and better streets: Smithfield's removal was the latest and imminent step in the march of progress.⁵⁸ By the early nineteenth century there was much to slate: traffic snarl-ups in Smithfield lanes; misdriven beasts straying; cruel drovers bashing their charges into an increasingly cramped market place - these changes were constantly rung in the press and official inquiries in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was incompatible with 'a great city'. Irresponsible driving had long been a concern, and legislation in 1781 gave the Corporation powers of prosecution.⁵⁹ Conservatives argued that Smithfield's removal or the creation of additional markets would only exacerbate the problem by multiplying the routes to be taken. Some reformists sought to solve the problem altogether by following the recent French experiment of erecting 'abattoirs' - highly regulated public slaughterhouses - close to decentralized live markets.⁶⁰ By the time of the 1828 inquiry, Smithfield epitomized the lack of apparent progress in London's market scene. 'Improvements are going on in all parts of the metropolis except in our markets' declared one witness, a City businessman.⁶¹ Improvements were also going on in all parts of the country: during the 1820s and

⁵⁴ *The London Chronicle*, 23-25 December 1784, p. 609; GH, Ms 496, 'An address on the necessity of providing more markets in London and also on the macadamizing of roads' (c. 1826), pp. 39-44.

⁵⁵ J. Robertson, 'A descriptive account of Hungerford New Market', *Architectural Magazine*, i (1834), p. 54.

⁵⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, xcii (1822), p. 113; CLRO, CC papers, 22 January 1824; J. A. P. Architect, 'A short account of St. John's Market, Great Charlotte Street, Liverpool', *Architectural Magazine*, ii (1835); K. Grady, *The Georgian public buildings of Leeds and the West Riding*, Thoresby Society publications, No. 133 (1989), p. 22.

⁵⁷ Market creations and improvements nationwide multiplied in the 1820s and 1830s, judging by the entries in the *Journals of the House of Commons* e.g. see General Index for 1820-37.

⁵⁸ 'An argument for the removal of Smithfield market - humbly submitted to the consideration of the Members of both Houses of Parliament', *Times*, 3 April 1810, p. 3.

⁵⁹ 21 Geo. III c. 67; *Times*, 19 April 1809, p. 2.

⁶⁰ BL, Add. Ms 37888, f. 148 (printed parliamentary case); *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 94. On abattoirs, see *Times*, 9 June 1826, supplement, p. 4; 22 December 1827, p. 4; 28 December 1827, p. 2; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 134; S. Munday, *An important improvement in the supply of the wholesale meat markets* (1832), pp. 2-3.

⁶¹ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 33-4.

1830s many provincial towns obtained enabling legislation to resite and enlarge their own livestock markets, which were themselves far less hazardous than London's.⁶² At the same time it was pointed out that Smithfield-type nuisances were 'not tolerated in any other capital throughout Europe'.⁶³

In a progressive and aesthetically critical climate, the concept of 'market improvement' went beyond simply removal. The City's markets, for instance, were variously enlarged at this time. A wide acclaim greeted the structured granite and Tuscan elegance of Charles Fowler's Covent Garden and Hungerford markets in the early 1830s.⁶⁴ Covent Garden (1828-30), designed under the interested eye of the Duke of Bedford, combined 'shopping' and 'marketing' in one space. Choice fruiterers lined the arcaded 'Central Avenue' through which the well-to-do promenaded. It was considered 'one of the prettiest sights in London', whilst other colonnaded rows, the terrace and conservatory enhanced the market's overall aesthetic appeal.⁶⁵ The new building rationalized trading procedures and aligned Covent Garden 'more in accordance with the spirit of the age', or, as the enabling Act put it, gave the market 'an appearance suitable to the present improved and improving state of the metropolis'.⁶⁶ New Hungerford market, an even finer 'embellishment' to the capital, also sought to rationalize different activities within one complex (Figure 11). Considered by one architectural historian to be 'one of the best buildings ever to stand in London', it wedded elegance to function, combined retail and wholesale activities, a promenade and a pitching ground, a receptacle both for durables and perishables.⁶⁷ By creating a whole new building type (before the railway age), Fowler's markets conferred something genuinely original on London's built environment. Nor were these all. The New Corn Exchange in Mark Lane (1828) was grand and elegant enough to appear in Elmes and Shepherd's *Metropolitan Improvements*. New markets for Marylebone (Portman), the City (Farringdon) and Southwark (South London) were also drawn to elegant and progressive designs. The latter incorporated fountains and claimed to 'increase the architectural splendour of south London'.⁶⁸ Elaborate opening ceremonies for Farringdon and Hungerford markets were emblematic of the

⁶² See the General Index to the *House of Commons Journals* for 1820-37, pp. 644-6; R. Perren, *The meat trade in Britain, 1840-1914* (1978), p. 40; *Smithfield evidence* (1828), p. 34 (reference to Norwich market); GH Ms 496, p. 11.

⁶³ *Times*, 30 April 1829, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Fowler also designed markets in other parts of the country, see J. Taylor, 'Charles Fowler: master of markets', *Architectural Review*, 135 (1964); idem, 'Charles Fowler, 1792-1867: a centenary memoir', *Architectural History*, 11 (1967).

⁶⁵ R. Webber, *Covent Garden: mud-salad market* (1969), pp. 101-2, 104; P. Cunningham, *A handbook for London* (1850), p. 144; G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), p. 380.

⁶⁶ *Times*, 25 December 1828, p. 2; 9 Geo. IV c. 113.

⁶⁷ G. Stamp, 'The Hungerford Market', *Annals of the Architectural Association*, 11 (1986). See also J. Robertson, 'A descriptive account of Hungerford New Market', *Architectural Magazine*, i (1834), pp. 55-62; *Morning Chronicle survey* (5 December 1850), pp. 237-8.

⁶⁸ *Reasons and observations relative to the proposed South London Market* (1834), p. 4. The market, however, was never built.



Figure 10 Old Hungerford market (T. H. Shepherd, Guildhall Library)

Taken from J. Elmes and T. H. Shepherd, *London (and its environs) in the nineteenth century* (1830)

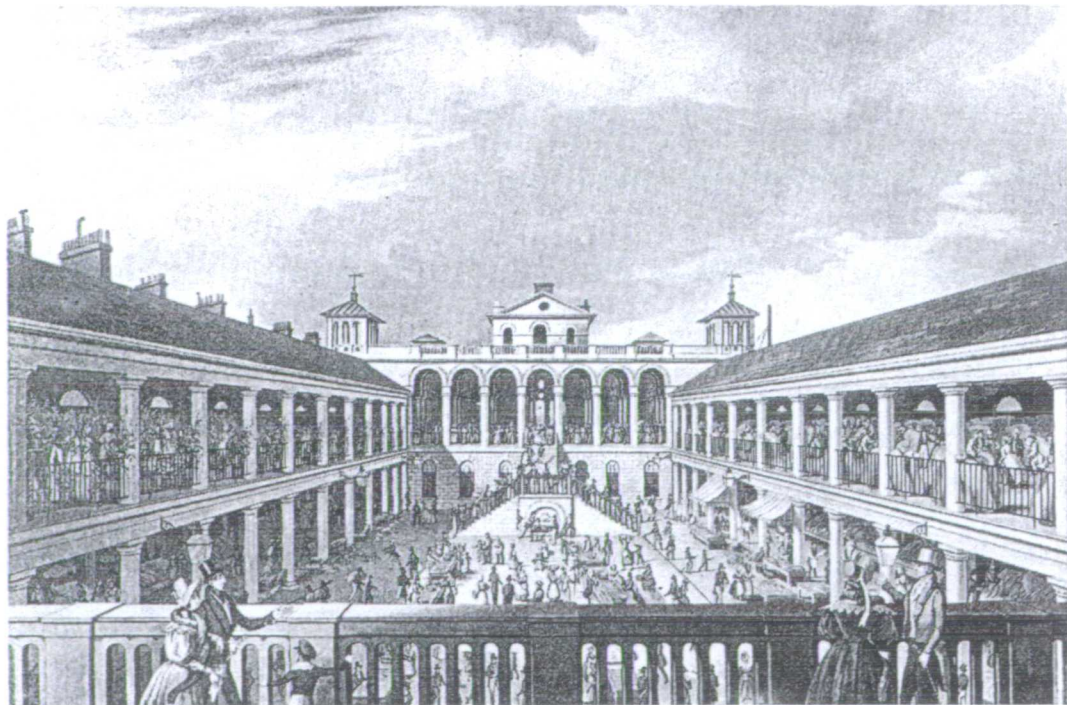


Figure 11 New Hungerford market, seen from the riverside terrace

(J. Harris, c. 1833, Guildhall Library)

new optimism.⁶⁹ So too was a plan of 1833 for a Holborn valley viaduct which included a radical improvement of Farringdon market along the architectural lines of Covent Garden and Hungerford, with an upper market resembling Burlington Arcade.⁷⁰ Yet the most ambitious scheme of all was carried out in the cattle trade. In 1833-4 a state-of-the-art livestock market, covering twenty-two walled-in acres, was constructed in Islington at the princely cost of £100,000, financed out of private wealth. Its size and facilities - lairs, abattoirs, an exchange centre, clerks' offices and dwellings - put Smithfield to shame.⁷¹

These were impressive developments but limits to qualitative market improvement were apparent by the 1840s. The sense that markets were something of a *problem* in the townscape, persisted. In particular, Londoners continued to suffer the great Smithfield until 1855, and this generated conflicting signs. Smithfield had come to represent 'a continued protest against the dictates of good sense, a continued manifestation of prejudiced adherence to an old system; a continued display of the meat buying powers of the London public; and, not less important ... a sort of perennial declaration of the wonderful improvements gradually introduced in the size, quality and condition of grazing-stock.'⁷² If the creation in 1855 of the Metropolitan Board of Works marked a milestone in the modernization of London, the removal the same year of Smithfield cattle market and its attendant evils - four years after the Great Exhibition - ought also to be considered one of the great turning points in London's history, the moment when the City was finally forced to embrace change in spite of the dictates of prescription and inertia. But by 1840, the end of our period, this *ancien régime* had yet to fall.

Nor by 1840 had the large covered and rationalized market place become a norm. Newgate deadmeat market, suffering increased congestion and criticism after 1820, stayed put until it claimed part of the site of the old cattle market in 1869 - a move advocated back in 1828.⁷³ Billingsgate was not improved on a comprehensive and architectural basis until 1850, and Leadenhall remained a hotch-potch of passages and market buildings.⁷⁴ Farringdon market's more coherent design of 1829 was criticized as well as commended, and nothing came of the

⁶⁹ GH Noble, C.45/T.1829, Fleet St., Fleet Market, newspaper cutting dated 20 November 1829; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 2 July 1833.

⁷⁰ F. Wishaw, *Holborn Hill improvements: report on the projected Viaduct from Fetter Lane to the Old Bailey, and improvement of Farringdon market* (1835); *Second Report from the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements: minutes of evidence* (1838), q. 1315.

⁷¹ 'New London Cattle Market', broadside (c.1833); *Gentleman's Magazine*, new ser., v (Jan-June 1836), p. 542; T. Allen, *The history and antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark and parts adjacent* (1839), v, pp. 449-50.

⁷² Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 233.

⁷³ *Smithfield evidence* (1828), pp. 142, 244, 245. On Newgate, see for example *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 211.

⁷⁴ 'The Commissariat of London', *Quarterly Review*, xcv (September 1854), p. 273; GH Noble, A.344 4/T. 1861.

Viaduct proposal or the ambitious South London market plan.⁷⁵ Islington's cattle market was closed within months of opening.⁷⁶ One writer in the 1840s considered Borough market 'altogether destitute of architectural pretensions'; Spitalfields - a congeries of wooden sheds - and other markets were even 'less distinguished in this way'. Newport and Clare remained aesthetically unremarkable as slaughtering there continued apace.⁷⁷ Even the achievements of Charles Fowler were relatively short-lived insofar as his classical designs were derided by Victorian taste. Struggling Hungerford was demolished un lamented in 1862 and even the lustre of Covent Garden market became tarnished by congestion and functional alteration. Smaller markets that survived came under criticism by Victorian commentators. 'The markets of the metropolis are not what a stranger would expect to find when he visits so large and wealthy a city', ran the introduction to them in *London exhibited in 1851*, 'Some of them are, by their ill construction, ill ventilation, ill location, and total want of sanitary regulations, disgraceful to a civilized nation'. Smithfield, of course, was the worst offender. Of the three dozen markets listed, 'some ... are designed with taste, others more the effect of accident in their arrangement'.⁷⁸ Not until the second half of the nineteenth century did a more rational and striking market architecture prevail which was directly influenced by the advent of glass-and-iron design, the rebuilding of Les Halles in Paris and the erection of splendid new market halls across industrial England.⁷⁹

The social role of the market place

There is not much evidence to suggest that London's market places provided the sort of kaleidoscopic community setting as assumed by Randall and Charlesworth. In a sense this is not surprising. After all, as Dr. Johnson remarked, London at large offered all that life could afford.⁸⁰ A plethora of *specialized* opportunities and places existed to engage in personal display, self-indulgence, conversation, debate, assembly. London was the definitive urban playground, brimming with pleasure gardens, shopping streets, taverns, coffee houses, cockpits, medicinal

⁷⁵ GH Noble, C.45/T.1829, newspaper cutting dated 20 November 1829; *Times*, 9 December 1829, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 253-4

⁷⁷ C. Knight (ed.), *London* (1841-3), v, p. 139; Cunningham, *A handbook for London*, pp. 123, 357.

⁷⁸ J. Weale, *London exhibited in 1851* [1851], pp. 610, 612.

⁷⁹ City architect J. B. Bunning designed the Coal Exchange (1849), Billingsgate (1850), and the Metropolitan Cattle market (1855). Equally striking were Columbia, Borough and Central Meat Markets of the 1860s. Sir Horace Jones' Billingsgate (1875) and Leadenhall (1881) can still be admired. Spitalfields finally got the accommodation it deserved in the 1880s and the splendid new Portman market was totally covered in its reincarnation of 1900, N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England - London: the Cities of London and Westminster* (1957; 1972 edn.), pp. 185, 187-8, 193, 204; *Gentleman's Magazine*, new ser. xxviii (July-Dec 1852), p. 188; Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 261-2; W. M. Stern, 'The Baroness's market: the history of a noble failure', *Guildhall Miscellany* 2 (Sept 1966), p. 356; J. Power et al., *An illustrated history of the Borough Market* (n.d. c.1995), p. 11; N. Pevsner, *A history of building types* (1976), pp. 240ff; *Survey of London: Spitalfields and Mile End New Town*, xxvii (1957), p. 142; WCA, Ashbridge 432, *The Portman market* (pamphlet). For some of the new Victorian town markets, see indexes to *Builder* after 1842.

wells and other dubious delights. Fairs also evolved a specialized leisure function which came to distinguish them from the markets.⁸¹ The streets that irrigated the capital provided ‘the urban odyssey’ *par excellence*.⁸² Moreover, London itself was too large, busy and complex to experience ‘market days’, when the country came to town, with the same intensity as in smaller places. Many markets traded continuously by the early nineteenth century, and most wholesale market activity occurred in the very early morning (though Smithfield continued into the afternoon). Thus the traditional practice of holding executions on market days in order to maximize the exemplary aspect of punishment was made redundant in London by its ‘crowded streets ... which never want spectators’.⁸³ The tactile experience of a crowded market place may have provided fertile soil for pickpockets and petty thieves, but then so did the congested streets. The constant hum and activity of the street rendered London itself the grand market place (the City itself was legally defined as such).⁸⁴ The fact that there were so many markets in London, including specialized markets for sheepskins, hay and leather, made it unlikely that all would be equally vibrant and colourful as the traditional picture would have it.

Just as they differentiated commercially, so too was there a kind of selectivity as to which of London’s market places accommodated popular and miscellaneous activity and culture. Associations with the revelry of fairs were present in a few markets. Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield, notorious for its crowds, creatures, conjurers and criminals, prevented the cattle market functioning and only finally expired when the livestock market itself was removed.⁸⁵ May Fair - which gave its name (and its reputation) to the district - began and flourished with Brookfield cattle market after 1688, and was later associated with Shepherd’s market, whose space was annually overwhelmed by performers, toy sellers, boxing matches and gingerbread bakers until the Fair’s suppression in 1762.⁸⁶ Southwark Fair, another victim of the 1760s, was held in the vicinity of Southwark market and was immortalized by Hogarth. Crowded or riotous markets were also akin to fairs. Hence the daily, if unofficial second-hand clothes market in Rosemary Lane was often described as ‘Rag Fair’: for users, the term signified its customary

⁸⁰ J. Boswell, *The life of Samuel Johnson*, 20 September 1777.

⁸¹ See p. 91ff.

⁸² J. Gay, *Trivia, or the art of walking the streets of London* (1716); P. J. Corfield, ‘Walking the city streets: the urban odyssey in eighteenth century England’, *Journal of urban history*, 16 (1989-90). See also Roy Porter’s lively account of eighteenth century metropolitan life in *London: a social history* (1994; Penguin, 1996), pp. 160-84.

⁸³ *London Evening Post*, 8-10 May 1760.

⁸⁴ Royal Comm. (1891), p. 13.

⁸⁵ R. Blome, *Britannia* (1673), p. 87; C. Walford, *Fairs past and present: a chapter in the history of commerce* (1883), p. 219; *Times*, 4 September 1805, p. 3; 29 July 1825, p. 2; 30 August 1830, p. 7; 1 September 1831, p. 4; 5 September 1838, p. 7, 5 September 1854, p. 7.

⁸⁶ H. M. Colvin, *A biographical dictionary of British architects, 1600-1840* (New Haven, 1995 edn.), p. 864; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 6 March, 6 April 1816.

status; for those who disapproved, it was consonant with riotous assembly and popular vice.⁸⁷ In the early nineteenth century, Lambeth's colourful working class Sunday market in New Cut had a similar reputation: 'I found it was more like a fair than a market,' attested a local curate in 1832, 'Not only the necessaries of life were to be sold, I mean provisions, but china shops were open, hatmakers and clothes shops, and the whole place seemed to be in a state of business'. The other great Victorian street markets were similar free-for-alls, and, as David Green has noted, serve to qualify the basic fact that inner London was bereft of fairs in 1850.⁸⁸

By and large, markets were probably not as important as taverns, clubs and eating houses for purposes of sociability, encounter and debate. Ned Ward for instance generally met his characters in the taverns and their like, including the Billingsgate women who would retreat there after a day's buying and hawking.⁸⁹ That there were far more taverns in London than markets made them more likely to become local centres. Even so, markets themselves typically contained a tavern or drinking house - 'I believe scarce any market without one' noted a Covent Garden official in the 1740s.⁹⁰ Wherever regular buyers and sellers congregated in a particular spot, a sociable dimension to market retailing was always possible, and it must not be forgotten that many of the general markets newly established during the period were intended to be specific local points of consumption. Markets whose trade all but disappeared were unlikely to animate the neighbourhoods. Yet the fact that little evidence survives does not mean that they were not lively affairs in the eighteenth century; and the insights of Dr. Earle into London's neighbourhoods adds credence to this picture.⁹¹ The fact that some were topographical backwaters may itself have fostered a neighbourhood focus, as Shepherd market is now. Brook's market off Holborn, to take another example, may have been small, but the connecting street in the eighteenth century was 'well inhabited' and the market itself 'convenient': it is difficult to believe that those who did frequent it were all anonymous figures to one another.⁹² Since Saturday night was the principal occasion for working Londoners doing the household shopping in this period, the possibility of encounter and gossip was always present. In this there may have been some class distinction, for the middle classes tended to obtain their goods earlier in the day, when supplies were fresher and when most Londoners were at work. The 'respectable' shied

⁸⁷ LMA, Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books and Orders of Court, vol. xii (1715-18), p. 81; vol. xxi (1744-7), p. 12; CLRO, Rep. 163, ff. 433-4.

⁸⁸ *Report from Select Committee on Observance of the Lord's Day* (1831-2), qq. 2, 19-20, 124; D. R. Green, 'Street trading in London: a case study of casual labour, 1830-1860', in J. H. Johnson & C. G. Pooley (eds.), *The structure of nineteenth century cities* (1982), pp. 140, 149n.

⁸⁹ Ward, *The London spy*, pp. 40-1.

⁹⁰ LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 4.

⁹¹ P. Earle, *A city full of people: men and women of London, 1650-1750* (1994), pp. 171-8.

⁹² Strype, *Stow's survey*, iii, p. 252; W. Harrison, *A new and universal history, description and survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and their adjacent parts* (1775), p. 539.

away particularly from the street and Sunday markets, which were thronged by the labouring poor.⁹³

London's markets may not have possessed the functional versatility of inns, but they were by no means watertight commercial entities. There was no obvious trend to the separation of retail and wholesale activities, or of marketing and shopping. So long as markets remained public spaces activities other than marketing were carried on there. Billingsgate and Hungerford, for instance, became points of river transport.⁹⁴ Corporal punishment was a traditional urban spectacle, so it is interesting to find evidence among the Middlesex records of whipping or pillory in otherwise insignificant places like Bloomsbury or Red Lyon markets.⁹⁵ In the second half of the eighteenth century it was 'not unusual to whip petty offenders round Covent Garden as an example to the lower class of people', but there is less evidence of this in the City.⁹⁶ In general the practice seems to have declined after 1750, as did corporal punishment itself.⁹⁷ The ritual of the 'wife-sale' was occasionally documented at Smithfield from the late eighteenth century, and also at Portman market in 1833.⁹⁸ Although wife-sales signified, as E. P. Thompson has argued, more than simply a callous exchange of chattel between men, it was the market place which provided the requisite symbolic arena - publicity, auction, halter, delivery, transaction - for the theatrical legitimation of plebeian remarriage. Since wife-sales were carried out in town markets elsewhere, London was not exceptional in this respect.⁹⁹

Many London market places were rendered more obscure by the fact that market *houses* did not, as in many market towns, accommodate legal or municipal functions.¹⁰⁰ Even so, those which had lost their traditional role for storage in the late seventeenth century were leased to

⁹³ W. M. Stern, 'Fish supplies for London in the 1760s: an experiment with overland transport', *Royal Society of Arts Journal*, 118 (1970), p. 431; GH, Ms 496, pp. 29-30; *Report from Select Committee on Observance of the Lord's Day* (1831-2), p. 4, *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 203; Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 515-16.

⁹⁴ Strype, *Stow's survey*, ii, p. 172; vi, p. 76; *Gentleman's Magazine*, cii (Jun-Dec 1832), p. 202; Stamp, 'The Hungerford Market', pp. 65, 67.

⁹⁵ Also in Brook's, Hungerford, Covent Garden, Smithfield and Spitalfields, J. C. Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records, 1667-1689* (vol. iv, old series, 1892: rep'd 1975), pp. 240-1; W. J. Hardy (ed.), *Middlesex County Records: Calendar of Sessions Books, 1689 to 1709* (1905), pp. 151, 156, 175; LMA, 60.225, *Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books and Orders of Court*, x (1710-14), pp. 49, 69, 71; xvi (1732-5), pp. 26, 51, 61, 136; xvii (1736-8), pp. 28, 33, 123-4; xviii (1739-41), pp. 50, 85, 113; xix (1741-3), pp. 14, 34; xxi (1744-7), p. 12; xxii (1748-51), pp. 38, 48, 90, 101-2, 104, 112; MJ SP/1733 Aug/49.

⁹⁶ *Annual Register*, July 1772; manuscript note in *London and environs described* (1761), ii, p. 193; *London Evening Post*, 11-14 July 1772; 10-13 January 1778. In Honey Lane market, the 'cage and stocks' were removed in 1694 because they deprived the farmers of the markets 'of the use and benefit of so much ground', CLRO, Rep. 98, f. 368.

⁹⁷ On corporal punishment in the London area, see J. Beattie, *Crime and the courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 461-4.

⁹⁸ *London Chronicle*, 26-29 January 1794; *Times*, 18 July 1797, p. 3; 22 July 1797, p. 2; 31 July 1797, p. 3; 23 November 1801, p. 3; 21 September 1802, p. 3; 10 July 1804, p. 3; 5 May 1806, p. 4; 17 February 1812, p. 3; 28 September 1819, p. 3; 25 February 1832, p. 6; 4 July 1833, p. 3.

⁹⁹ E. P. Thompson, 'The sale of wives' in *Customs in common* (1991; Harmondsworth, 1993 edn.).

¹⁰⁰ A. M. Everitt, 'The market towns' in P. Clark (ed.), *The early modern town: a reader* (1976), pp. 181-2.

religious groups, giving them a valuable base and a recognizable address. The upper floor of St. James's market house provided a stage for the famous Presbyterian Richard Baxter, whose first sermon there ended in disaster when the beams collapsed under the weight of the congregation.¹⁰¹ Groups of Huguenots established themselves for a time in various market houses including Hungerford which later became the venue for a parish charity school after the congregation there had moved.¹⁰² Other retail markets appear to have accommodated Dissenters' meetings in their age of expansion.¹⁰³ One of these, Newport, also became the base in the 1720s of 'Orator Henley', the celebrated self-styled 'Primitive Church' ranter; he later relocated near Clare market whose butchers were bribed to hear him teach.¹⁰⁴ Secular uses were also made of market houses, such as the coffee house in mid-eighteenth century Newgate, the Westminster Fire Office premises at Hungerford, or the booths in Shepherd market. When the rebuilt Hungerford market failed to prosper in the nineteenth century, it was used variously as an exhibition hall, music hall and theatre. Oxford market house accommodated the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital from 1825. In general multifunctionality failed to confer distinction upon market places; it tended more to reflect a declining trade or the redundancy of traditional market houses.¹⁰⁵

Markets and their environs generally affected each another. Clare market, with its large retail trade and numerous butchers, coloured its neighbourhood for two and half centuries, and its sleazy environment became a favoured resort for homosexuals. In a similar way Shepherd market occupied the heart of Mayfair's raffish district.¹⁰⁶ By contrast, St. James's - possibly the smartest of all markets in the early eighteenth century - was the home of many wealthy butchers.¹⁰⁷ By the early nineteenth century, however, it too had become tarnished by the low life associated with the

¹⁰¹ H. B. Wheatley, *London past and present: its history, associations and traditions, based upon the Handbook of London* by P. Cunningham (1891), ii, pp. 284-5.

¹⁰² *Survey of London: Spitalfields and Mile End New Town*, xxvii (1957), p. 132; *Survey of London: St. Anne, Soho*, xxxiv (1966), pp. 368-9; Masters, *The public markets of the City of London*, pp. 38-9; R. Seymour, *Stow's survey of London (1734-5)*, ii, pp. 650, 654; *Register of the church of Hungerford market, later Castle Street* (1928), introduction.

¹⁰³ CLRO, Rep. 97, f. 322-3; Add Ms 36,168; LMA, 60.225, Calendar of Middlesex Sessions Books, vol. xvii (1736-8), pp. 38, 114; Hardy, *Middlesex County Records*, p. 306.

¹⁰⁴ *The Historical Register*, xi (1726), pp. 240-53; *Gentleman's Magazine*, lvi (1786), p. 294; lvii (1787), pp. 875-6.

¹⁰⁵ CLRO, Journal of the Markets Committee, vol. 2 (1743-50), pp. 3-4; CC papers, 28 May 1830 (revival of Newport market); WCA, St. Martin-in-the-Fields rate books, F2917, F2933 etc; St. Marylebone rate books, reel 48; J. F. C. Phillips, *Shepherd's London: four artists and their view of the metropolis, 1800-1860* (1976), pp. 64-5; Stamp, 'The Hungerford Market', pp. 65-7.

¹⁰⁶ W. M. Stern, 'Clements Inn Passage (Clare Market), 1687- 1921', *Genealogists' Magazine*, vol. 15 (1968), 483; E. J. Burford, *Wits, wenches and wantons - London's low life: Covent Garden in the eighteenth century* (1986), pp. 30-2, 122, 165, 208; C. Kennedy, *Mayfair: a social history* (1986), p. 28.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, obituaries in *London Evening Post*, 25-27 February 1729; 12-14 March 1730; 4-7 November 1738.

Opera House, and its replacement of 1818 was a distinctly humbler affair.¹⁰⁸ The elegant Corn Exchange was established in a mercantile district and in turn ensured that Mark Lane would be inhabited by ‘merchants of opulence’.¹⁰⁹ Elsewhere, second-hand clothes marketing at Rag Fair and Houndsditch was conditioned by the local presence of Jews and Irish, whilst Monmouth Street dealers sold the best qualities because of their proximity to the West End.¹¹⁰ Some markets became refuges for the poor and indecent. Stocks was described in 1715 as ‘an harbour for rogues and vagabond persons at night ... a shelter to poor indigent persons’, which was a little surprising since this was the wealthy centre of the City and its suppliers possessed a ‘seemly sobriety’ absent from Covent Garden.¹¹¹ Its successor, Fleet market, had similar but less surprising problems, since the Fleet valley was numbered among the blackest spots of London.¹¹² ‘Whores, rogues and sodomites’ as well as the homeless sheltered in its market buildings, a key factor behind its eventual removal behind lockable gates.¹¹³ The empty green market at Leadenhall during the mid-eighteenth century was another nocturnal refuge for prostitutes and robbers; so too the short-lived market-bell house erected at Smithfield in 1776.¹¹⁴ The slaughterhouses of Smithfield, like Whitechapel, undoubtedly lowered the tone of the district, as did the Friday afternoon horse market, which by the early nineteenth century had become a magnet for shady second-hand horse dealers, rogues and thieves. ‘I had rather be there ten Mondays than one Friday afternoon’, confessed one Corporation officer in 1828.¹¹⁵ By contrast, Covent Garden’s market provided an ideal focal point for a whole entertainment district. During the eighteenth century many of Covent Garden’s female lovelies had dealt in fruit in the market, which also contained the risqué coffee houses of Tom and Moll King, and George Carpenter, under-leased from the Duke of Bedford.¹¹⁶ Market banter and market mess in turn fostered Covent Garden’s growing reputation as an oasis of debauchery and entertainment, driving respectable residents westwards to more salubrious climes.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ See *Survey of London: St. James, Westminster: part I*, xxix (1960), pp. 217-20. One Saturday night in 1806, St. James’s market was paralysed by a pitched battle between the butchers and Irish labourers, *Times*, 16 September 1806, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Encyclopaedia Londinensis*, xiii (1815), p. 437.

¹¹⁰ M. Ginsberg, ‘Rags to riches: the second-hand clothes trade, 1700-1978’, *Costume*, 14 (1980), p. 121.

¹¹¹ *The Spectator*, no. 454 (11 August 1712), p. 98; Knight, *London*, v, p. 136.

¹¹² [G. Griffin], *Domestic union: or, London as it should be* (1800), p. 16.

¹¹³ CLRO, City Lands, vol. 14 (1715-16), f. 96b; vol. 57 (1765), 20 November 1765; Journal of the Markets Committee, vol. 1 (1737-43), pp. 66, 505-6; Rep. 144, ff. 38-9; Alchin’s Market Book, p. 68 n. 187; CC papers, 22 January 1824 CC mins, 5 November 1839; *Times*, 10 October 1818, p. 3. The Corn Exchange also had gates, see above, pp. 128, 129.

¹¹⁴ CLRO, Rep. 167, ff. 93-4; City Lands, vol. 73 (1781-2), f. 76r.

¹¹⁵ *Smithfield Report* (1828), p. 8; W. Matthews (ed.), *The diary of Dudley Ryder, 1715-1716* (1939), p. 292. Monday was the busiest cattle market day.

¹¹⁶ Burford, *Wits, wenches and wantons*, ch. 4; Webber, *Covent Garden: mud-salad market*, p. 68.

¹¹⁷ Knight, *London*, v, p. 136.

In the long run, markets generally had a negative long run impact on their surroundings, and this made their social role correspondingly uncertain and doubtful. They were not the unique foci of activity and leisure that markets in smaller towns might have been, and this limited their collective urban impact. The market place, nevertheless, was not without significance in the complex social geography of late Stuart and Hanoverian London.

Sights, scenes and symbols

Further impressions of markets' impact on the urban and cultural setting can be gleaned from the market scene itself (Figure 12). Whilst Georgian Covent Garden was rather exceptional, and glamorous new Hungerford market genuinely innovative, it seems that markets in London were generally not places in which people were wont to linger for pleasure.¹¹⁸ Diaries and guidebooks are potentially the best sources for this kind of evidence, but there is precious little of it to be found in them. Pepys makes three references to Bloomsbury market, and he also drunk ale at Clare market. His visit to Leadenhall in 1663 seems to have been out of necessity. Ned Ward's perambulations at the turn of the eighteenth century took in Smithfield, Covent Garden and Rag Fair for their curiosity value, but none of the general food markets. Dudley Ryder visited the fruit shops at Stocks market. James Boswell once ambled up and down Fleet market during his first stay in London, as did Egan's Dashall and Tallyho sixty years later century. There passers-by were hounded by butchers' barks of 'What d'ye buy? What d'ye buy, buy, buy?', reiterated 'like so many parrots, unconscious of its import being unproductive in effect'. How typical such visits were is questionable. It was the taverns, the eating houses, the gambling clubs, the coffee houses, the bow-windowed shops and the pleasure gardens which were the staple places of resort: some of these might be associated with markets, most were not.¹¹⁹

One scholar has argued that marketing developments in nineteenth century Chicago such as grain elevators and dressed meat packing 'annihilated' the visible and tangible ecological links between human consumption and (nature's) production as 'the market' came to 'define' the commodity.¹²⁰ In long eighteenth century London, by contrast, the links between commerce and ecology were highly visible and recognized. In Thomas Shadwell's *Bury Fair* (1689), for instance, the city hero Ned Wildish dealt directly and revealingly with squire Lord Bellamy's boast of the self-sufficiency of rural agriculture:

¹¹⁸ *Morning Chronicle survey*, (5 December 1850), pp. 229-30.

¹¹⁹ *The diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham et al. (11 vols., 1971), 2 January 1660, 29 August 1663, 1 August 1666, 16 April 1667, 9 December 1668; Ward, *The London spy*, pp. 95-6, 165, 252; *The diary of Dudley Ryder*, p. 49; J. Boswell, *London Journal, 1762-1763* (ed. F. A. Pottle, 1950), p. 248; P. Egan, *Real life in London* (1821; 1911 edn.), ii, p. 93.

¹²⁰ W. Cronon, *Nature's metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, 1991).

All these things have we at London. The product of the best cornfields at Queen-Hithe; hay, straw and cattle at Smithfield, with horses too. Where is such a garden in Europe, as the Stocks Market? Where such a river as the Thames? Such ponds and decoys, as in Leaden-Hall Market, for your fish and fowl? Such game as at the poulterers?¹²¹

At Leadenhall, locals were losing patience as the animal skin market crowded out the general provisions trade, especially when the former was enlarged in the 1810s. One contemporary noted that the 'multitudes of tanned hides exposed to sale in the great court of Leadenhall' evinced the prodigious quantity of horned cattle slaughtered 'for the support of the metropolis'.¹²² More graphic still were the cattle themselves, herded into London from East Anglia, Hertfordshire and the West and then into Smithfield to be sold; whence they were driven, often individually, by butchers and drovers through the streets to the various markets and slaughterhouses. Rather than processed in large out-of-town abattoirs as in France, London's livestock was slaughtered in a myriad of cellars or back rooms close to the point of consumption. The most gratuitous scenes were found in Whitechapel market, where butchers shoved terrified beasts through narrow shops filled with carcasses, while rivers of blood lined the street outside. Even in 1840 London was no place of slick and sanitized animal processing from which the consumer was happily insulated, although the incidence of slaughtering probably declined as the deadmeat trade expanded and more retailers bought carcass meat. As well as the raw hides market, the nineteenth century saw Leadenhall's poultry trade - live and dead - become pre-eminent. The following description of 1861 would not have been inapplicable in 1840:

It is difficult to say whether the living or dead are most abundant, so vast is the multitude of both. The ranks of the slaughtered lie literally in tens of thousands ... while the living are crammed into every practicable kind of prison, appear to outnumber them, and assert their superiority by a deafening din that never pauses for an instant, and puts to shame the chorus of the parrot-room in the Zoological Gardens.¹²³

Live foxes might also be seen; on one occasion one got loose in Newgate and caused havoc.¹²⁴ For the big markets the traditional notion of 'market days' as times when the country came to town still existed. Smithfield's 'cattle days' were particularly notorious; more agreeable urban-rural associations were forged by Covent Garden (see below). In the fish trade, before the age of locomotives and refrigeration, the river Thames remained the primary link between Billingsgate market and fish habitats. Of all the great foodstuffs, grain, which involved sample-selling, speculative dealing and the elegance of the Exchange, was arguably the most dislocated from its natural origins.

In spite of the visible ecological signs that abounded in the capital city, the appearance of so many 'well-furnished' markets inspired wonder that such a vast agglomeration of people could

¹²¹ T. Shadwell, *Bury Fair: a comedy* (1689), p. 33.

¹²² CLRO, Jor. 85, ff. 4b-6; T. Pennant, *[Account] of London* (1790; 1791 edn.), p. 394.

¹²³ GH Noble, A.344 4/T.1861, periodical cutting.

¹²⁴ GH Noble, A.433/3/T.1830, newspaper cutting.



Figure 12 Borough market, looking north-east to St. Saviour's church (anon. 18th century print, Borough Market Trustees)

be supplied with apparent ease and continuity. 'For a constant supply of provisions, here are abundance of markets, the best furnished of any in Christendom', enthused Guy Miège in 1691. 'The adjacent counties supply the city with all manner of necessaries for food, hay, fuel, &c', explained Thomas De Laune, 'insomuch that strangers have admired the prodigious plenty of all sorts that are to be seen in the great and well furnished markets of Leadenhall, Stocks, Milk Street [Honey Lane], Newgate, Clare, South-hampton [Bloomsbury], St. Albans [St. James's], Westminster, Hungerford and Brooks with several others; so that here is a perpetual mart'.¹²⁵ 'Nowhere can you see finer markets than in London' was the verdict of one such stranger in the 1720s; 'No city in the world can equal them,' agreed Defoe, who devoted four pages of his *Tour* to them.¹²⁶ The praise accorded the food markets was partly predicated upon the status of the meat - beef, mutton, veal - sold there.¹²⁷ Maitland and his successors described virtually all the general markets by the label 'for meat, &c'.¹²⁸ 'Shall the large mutton smoak upon your boards?' asked John Gay, 'Such, Newgate's copious market best affords; Wouldst thou with mighty beef augment they meal? Seek Leaden-hall; Saint-James's sends thee veal'.¹²⁹ Yet this distinctive status was destined not to last, partly because of the increasing importance of other forms of food retailing that were detailed in Chapter Three.

General perceptions apart, it was particular markets which stood out for their own peculiarities. Even when markets were collectively admired in the earlier part of the period, commentators invariably reserved the highest accolades for the ancient Leadenhall market, which escaped the Fire and was enlarged to become the nearest thing in Georgian London to Les Halles. John Strype could 'not give it too great a praise'; others denied it any rival in the world.¹³⁰ Specializing in beef, it sold a whole host of other provisions, and also functioned as a magazine of corn, a cloth hall, and a market for raw and tanned hides. It represented, according to one observer, 'the cleanliness of English butchery' and the immense consumption of meat by Englishmen.¹³¹ Moreover, the survival of Leadenhall's Gothic medieval buildings, unscathed by the Fire, rendered it quaint and anomalous. John Malcolm, writing at the start of the nineteenth century, described a 'singular circumstance, at least at the present day; an almost perfect

¹²⁵ G. Miège, *The new state of England* (1691), p. 332; T. De Laune, *Angliae metropolis; or, the present state of London* (1681; 1690 edn.), p. 305.

¹²⁶ C. De Saussure, *A foreign view of England in the reigns of George I and George II* (1902), letter dated 29 October 1726, p. 171; Defoe, *Tour*, i, pp. 342-6.

¹²⁷ See above, p. 64.

¹²⁸ W. Maitland, *The history of London from its foundation by the Romans to the present time* (1739), ii, p. 527.

¹²⁹ Gay, *Trivia*, pp. 47-8.

¹³⁰ Strype, *Stow's survey*, ii, p. 89; G. Miège, *The present state of Great Britain* (1707), i, p. 136; J. Macky, *A journey through England* (1722), p. 308; *The foreigner's guide ... through the Cities of London and Westminster* (1730), pp. 79-80; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 344; BL, Harl. Ms 5900, f. 59, Notes on London's markets of the seventeenth century; transcribed in J. P. Malcolm, *Anecdotes of the manners and customs of London during the eighteenth century* (1811 edn.), iii, p. 232.

monastery, a modern market' - animal hides were displayed in 'the cloisters'; butchers and others sold foodstuffs out of antique 'apertures'.¹³²

Billingsgate was celebrated less for its sights than its *sounds* - insults, abuse, foul language - throughout the long eighteenth century. Colourful and combative speech were part and parcel of places where fixed traders knew one another well and when prices were usually settled by bargaining.¹³³ But there was no scene quite like Billingsgate, and in particular its female traders, whose tradition of vituperation was quite as colourful and infamous as its twentieth century male porters. Dr. Johnson defined 'Billingsgate' (*sic*) as 'ribaldry; foul language', but it had long been a byword for abusive rhetoric. In fact, 'billingsgate' meant not simply vituperation - it had to be *theatrical*, or at least eloquent.¹³⁴ For example, in 1709 the High Church cleric Dr. Sacheverell, after preaching the most explosive sermon of the eighteenth century, was sarcastically applauded for 'his incomparable talent at railing in fluent and unrefined Billingsgate'; more than a century later Daniel O'Connell's parliamentary speeches were celebrated by the (Irish) ladies of Billingsgate.¹³⁵ The reality behind the metaphor lived on; the theatrical culture of Billingsgate and Billingsgate market endured in an age when this kind of 'carnavalesque' activity was supposedly snuffed out.¹³⁶

Smithfield livestock market was veritably pregnant with meaning and history. Cattle and horse sales went back centuries, and the site itself had been the ancient field of sports outside the City walls; here the rebels of 1381 under Wat Tyler met the boy king; here were burnt the Smithfield martyrs in the reign of Mary Tudor - perhaps underpinning patriotic associations between Protestantism and beef.¹³⁷ These conferred an atavistic appeal upon the polygon in which 'Smithfield scenes' formed one of the singular spectacles of the Georgian metropolis, 'well worthy of a visit from the curious stranger'. Market proceedings in the early nineteenth century gave rise to 'much that was exciting and even savagely picturesque'.¹³⁸ The five acres into which London's live cattle trade was 'squeezed', as Joseph Fletcher put it, provided a

¹³¹ *A brief description of the Cities of London and Westminster* (1776), p. 151.

¹³² J. P. Malcolm, *London redivivum, or an ancient history and modern description of the metropolis* (1804), iv, pp. 574-5.

¹³³ *Times*, 19 December 1829, p. 4: 'The use, often by low persons, of language sufficient to offend the ears of even those who are not fastidiously nice, must have deterred many from frequenting the markets in town.' See also CLRO, City Lands, vol. 56 (1764), f. 158; LMA, E/BER/CG E/10/1 6; 10 30 (loose).

¹³⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989 edn.), ii, p. 193: 'With downright Billingsgate-rhetoric', *English Physician* (1652); A. Gib, *A new vocabulary of modern Billingsgate phrases for the use of clergymen and others* (Perth, 1782)

¹³⁵ G. Holmes, *The trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (1973), p. 50; *Times*, 26 January 1836, p. 5.

¹³⁶ M. Phillips, 'Market exchange and social relations: the practices of food circulation in and to the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse, 1800-1870', Ph. D. thesis (University of Exeter, 1991), pp. 85-7. The 'choice vernacular' of Billingsgate market was still present in 1852, *London Journal* (1852), p. 310.

¹³⁷ *Morning Chronicle survey* (21 November 1850), p. 183.

¹³⁸ *Fores's new guide for foreigners* (1789), p. 13; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 233. See the verse cited (but not referenced) in Porter, *London: a social history*, p. 175.

bewildering experience on a market morning that ‘confounded the senses’ and ‘so astonished’ Oliver Twist:

The ground was covered, nearly ankle deep, with filth and mire; and a thick stream perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle and mingling with the fog ... hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre of the large area, and as many temporary pens as could be crowded into the vacant spaces were filled with sheep; tied up to posts by the gutter side were long lines of beasts and oxen, three or four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and the roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng, rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene.¹³⁹

Before daylight broke, the Smithfield scene was wilder still as torches flashed and sticks rattled over the heads and bodies of animals, ‘a wild and terrific combination; and few, either of those who reside in the metropolis, or who visit it, have the resolution to witness the strange scene’; a ‘charivari of sound that must be heard to be appreciated’. Nothing like this was to be found in its successor at Copenhagen Fields; but then, nothing quite like it could be experienced in any other market of its time.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, it was a cosmopolitan scene, for it comprised not only every kind of British livestock, but also the many diverse types that made up the United Kingdom. ‘Here are all the country costumes that a man might find between South Wales and Northumberland or further north,’ observed a contemporary, ‘The stubby, round faced Welshman, the huge North Briton, the breeder from the fens, the London drover.’¹⁴¹

By the 1840s Newgate had come to complement and rival Smithfield not only in terms of London’s provisioning of meat, but also for its own early morning spectacle. It may have lacked the dissonance of the cattle market, but it was nevertheless, according to Mayhew, ‘peculiar, and peculiar to London’:

You walk along the narrow alleys in a perfect city of meat. The carcasses of sheep, of lambs, of pigs and of calves, and the quarters of beef, are hung, on your right hand and on your left, thickly upon one another. Meat is in some parts swinging over your head; and black, and red, and white, and particoloured calves’ heads are spread in long rows at your feet ... Along the narrow alleys trot ... the blue-jacketed porters with their loads ... The commission salesmen, or the butchers, and their customers, stand coolly by, chatting or bargaining ... with the usual indifference of men to things, however remarkable, that they are accustomed to see. On a dark morning the flare of uncovered gas lights brings

¹³⁹ C. Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-9; 1985 Penguin edn.), p. 203; J. Fletcher, ‘Statistical account of the markets of London’, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, x (1847), p. 359.

¹⁴⁰ Knight, *London*, ii, p. 320; ‘The commissariat of London’, p. 283; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 233.

¹⁴¹ *The Lady’s Newspaper*, 20 January 1849 cited in K. J. Bonser, *The drovers: who they were and where they went - an epic of the English countryside* (1970), p. 223 and in K. Robbins, *Nineteenth century Britain: England, Scotland, and Wales - the making of a nation* (Oxford, 1988), p. 18.

strongly out the red and white of the beef and mutton, and adds to the striking effect of the greatest meat market in the world.¹⁴²

Newgate had its anomalies too. The blood and guts found there contrasted oddly with the fine worsted and lace shops of Newgate Street, but even more with 'the literary labours of Paternoster Row and the ecclesiastical sobriety of St. Paul's - both of them close at hand to Newgate market'. Most singular of all was the conversion in 1830 of the old College of Physicians into an additional wholesale meat market abutting Newgate. 'Where learned physicians were once wont to meet and discuss and lecture,' George Dodd mused, 'there are now butchers and meat and sawdust ... we are reminded on all sides that the purveyors of food have supplanted the purveyors of health.'¹⁴³ By further contrast, but no less intriguing, was the thrice-weekly scene at the Corn Exchange, thronged with factors, millers and speculators, but also farmers, merchants, shippers, granary keepers and lightermen; and 'well worth a visit'. Here hardly any produce was to be seen; 'mere dribbles' of corn in sample sacks proxied for huge granaries and shiploads, a sight which fascinated George Dodd. Eighty to a hundred groups gathered round eighty to a hundred factor stalls, and the whole marketing system exchange was predicated on 'the most unquestioned and unquestioning faith'.¹⁴⁴

Although a few scenes were truly remarkable, the markets in general would have provided a variety of visual and spatial perspectives. Londoners beheld the striking vistas of Fleet, Haymarket and Southwark markets, situated in lengthy and busy thoroughfares. The clamorous cauldron of Smithfield offered a somewhat different experience to the colourful, chaotic and elegant panorama of Covent Garden. By contrast also, the compact intimacy of Brook's, Newport, Shepherd's, Mortimer, Grosvenor, St. George's, and the new St. James's markets, when bustling, would have provided an immediate and arresting spectacle to the Londoner after turning down a lane or alley. The labyrinthine passages of Leadenhall contrasted to the open and regular market places of Oxford, Bloomsbury and St. James's. Ambience mattered too: the cloistered Westminster flesh market backed by the Gothic Abbey; the conspicuous turret and cupola of Fleet's market house nicely complemented by St. Bride's steeple behind; the dock-cum-market at Billingsgate overlooked by shipmasts; the confused assemblage of early nineteenth century Newgate shadowed by the dome of St. Paul. Most distinctive of all were Fowler's markets: the colonnades, aisles and arcades of Covent Garden and Hungerford added a new perspective to market space; Thomas Allen compared the latter's great hall to the 'interior of an ancient basilica' - the best example, in fact, in all England.¹⁴⁵ These were varied prospects - how many of them ordinary Londoners would have experienced is

¹⁴² *Morning Chronicle survey* (28 November 1850), p. 204.

¹⁴³ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 256, 268.

¹⁴⁴ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 171-2.

difficult to say: the point is that London's markets added an intriguing visual diversity fitting to an irregular townscape. They also testify to the varied and often ad hoc origins and developments of markets in the modernizing metropolis.

The Garden of London

The most powerful market influence on the London scene came from Covent Garden. Of all London's markets it came nearest to providing a symbolic and real focal point for the metropolis as markets did in other towns. The following discussion does not amount to a case study, because the ambiguities, associations and mutations of Covent Garden made it unlike any other London market. For this reason also it was arguably the most revealing symbol of the Georgian metropolis.¹⁴⁶ Covent Garden scenes were very popular among eighteenth century artists and they have also been popular among historians and publishers as dustjacket images (Figure 13).¹⁴⁷ Why is this market so associated with the eighteenth century metropolis and why was it such a focal point?

Its very location was suggestively representative. Situated strategically between the commercial City and the genteel West End, Covent Garden drew on the best and worst of both worlds, as if it was London's centre of gravity. Although by no means a major nodal point for traffic, the space it occupied was large, impressive and panoramic. It offered the most kaleidoscopic of market scenes. Several British as well as foreign artists visually testified to the heterogeneous activities that were carried on besides or through the fruit and flower market that functioned six days a week.¹⁴⁸ The market square served as an arena for corporal punishment (rotten produce was ideal for the pillory, still in use in 1818) and as a primary social centre for gossip, the intermingling of classes, a place of assignation and solicitation, a stage for performers

¹⁴⁵ Allen, *The history and antiquities of London*, v, p. 287.

¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, Roy Porter relates the development of Covent Garden as an exemplar of mutation within cities over time, *London: a social history*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁴⁷ Examples are R. Porter, *London: a social history* (Hamish Hamilton, 1994); P. Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life, 1660-1730* (Methuen, 1989); idem, *A city full of people*; D. Cruickshanks and N. Burton, *Life in the Georgian city* (1990); A. Hope, *London's larder*. Non-London studies sporting images of the market are P. J. Corfield, *The impact of English towns, 1700-1800* (Oxford paperback, 1982); R. Porter, *English society in the eighteenth century* (Penguin, 1990 edn.); T. Harris (ed.), *Popular culture in England, c.1500-1850* (Macmillan, 1995). Covent Garden is not London's only market that has won dust-jacket fame. S. Rubenstein's *Historians of London* (1968) depicts Stocks market in the early eighteenth century; the *Wordsworth Dictionary of British social history* (1996) shows a mid-nineteenth century Smithfield market scene.

¹⁴⁸ See M. Warner (ed.), *The image of London: views by travellers and emigrés, 1550-1920* (Barbican Art Gallery, 1987), nos. 60, 63, 66, 67 for views by Angillis, Nebot, Van Aken and Boitard; E. Einberg (ed.), *Manners and morals: Hogarth and British painting, 1700-1760* (Tate Gallery, 1987), nos. 43, 99, 181, 214 for Nebot and Van Aken, and also John Griffer and Samuel Scott. E. J. Burford's *Wits, wenches and wantons* has three views of the piazza by J. Maurer in the 1730s and 1740s.



Figure 13 *Covent Garden market* (B. Nebot, c. 1737, Guildhall Art Gallery)

and personal display, sports matches and quarrels.¹⁴⁹ There was indeed something of the fair here. Gingerbread, a ferial motif, was sold by no less than five specialist shopkeepers in 1747. In 1772, the local parish vestry complained of ‘shows of wild beasts, exhibitions in Covent Garden and sheds and stages erected for mountebanks &c’. Remonstrating again to the Bedford Office nine years later, the vestry requested, *inter alia*, ‘that no mountebank, quack doctor or any exhibition of wild beasts, birds, shews or spectacles of any sort shall be ... allowed within the boundaries of the said market’.¹⁵⁰ There is a suggestion that these amusements continued into the next century. One draft clause which was ‘not used’ for the 1813 Covent Garden market Bill prohibited anyone to assemble or meet together for any shows, games, plays, sports, pastimes, exercises or diversions, a sure indication of what went on in the market up to that time.¹⁵¹ Even after the rebuilding of 1830 Covent Garden was ‘a place to spend a day in ... There are rough and homely scenes for the observer of everyday life ... there are picturesque bits of colour and still life and moving life, for the artist ...’.¹⁵² The piazza also had the honour of holding the election hustings for the huge Westminster constituency, one of the largest in Britain, thereby keeping electoral politics, with its diverse ideologies and powers, firmly in the market place.¹⁵³

But it was more than simply an interesting scene. It was also London’s social and economic ‘agora’, unique of its kind, continental in appearance and function, and full of atavistic appeal. A contemporary encyclopædia explained:

The market, or forum, in the cities of antiquity, was very different from the markets in our English towns, where flesh meat, &c, is usually sold ... The forum usually was a public market on one side only, or during part of the day only; and that the temples, theatres, courts of justice, and other public buildings, occupied the other sides of the area. In short, the forums were sumptuous squares ... Here the philosophers met; here laws were promulgated; and here devotions, as well as amusements, occupied the populace. The nearest approach to an ancient forum, that we can recollect in England, is Covent Garden market; where we have the market in the middle, a church at one end, a theatre at one corner, and a sitting magistrate close adjacent; if we add a school for philosophical instruction, or for divinity lectures, we have pretty nearly the composition of an ancient forum, or market-place.¹⁵⁴

The unplanned origins of the market explain a good deal. Fruit and vegetable sellers simply began to collect in the elegant piazza around the time of the Civil Wars. The fifth Earl of Bedford capitalized on this situation by obtaining a royal charter in 1670. By the mid-eighteenth century the outward incongruence between the formal elegance of Covent Garden and the impact of the market itself had come to disturb observers as much as it attracted artists. William Maitland observed ‘a magnificent square, wherein (to its great disgrace) is kept an herb and fruit market’, a

¹⁴⁹ *Times*, 30 December 1818, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10 4, 10 15 (loose in bundle), 10 1 12.

¹⁵¹ LMA, E/BER/CG/E 10/18b (loose in bundle). See also later section.

¹⁵² G. Dodd, *The food of London* (1856), pp. 380-1

¹⁵³ Webber, *Covent Garden: mud-salad market*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁴ *Encyclopaedia Londinensis*, xiv (1816), p. 373. See also Mumford, *The city in history*, p. 177.

market which, as another saw it, 'may be a matter of much profit to the ground landlord, for what I can tell; but I am sure 'tis a great nuisance with respect to the beauty and regularity of the square'. For John Gwynn the market's removal would make Covent Garden 'one of the most elegant squares in Europe'. Other commentators played a similar tune.¹⁵⁵ Yet amid the 'putrid refuse' of vegetables, it was admitted that 'the centre walk has many attractions for the botanist and the epicure, who may there feast their eyes and their appetites with rare and beautiful flowers and rich fruits'.¹⁵⁶

Precisely because of these anomalies Covent Garden market came to symbolize and play its part in realizing the pluralistic concoction of the eighteenth century metropolis. It was by no means the only possible badge of Georgian London. One thinks of Bedford Square, Tyburn fair, the London Season, the frost fairs, old London Bridge, new Westminster Bridge, new St. Paul's and Canaletto's riverside panoramas. Each of these captures specific values of the age: elegance, spectacle, commerce, rowdiness, spontaneity; but none captured all. Covent Garden portrayed London life with all its tensions and ambiguities, in microcosm and metaphor. Here was commerce, increasing all the time as the garden trades expanded; here was aristocracy, for the market and its environs were the Duke of Bedford's possession; here were gentility and spectacle, here were politics and the hustings, here abundance and filth, here business and pleasure. Covent Garden and its market epitomized Blackstone's dictum that the English were 'a polite and commercial people'.¹⁵⁷

By name a Garden, it was also by nature and association a garden. Inigo Jones' piazza had once been the garden of the Westminster monks before the Reformation, laid out amid open fields in the 1630s. The informal market that then emerged stood at the end of the Earl of Bedford's own town garden; and by the mid-eighteenth century, it became London's only market which sold nothing (in theory) but garden produce.¹⁵⁸ Flourishing from the 1730s, it came to epitomize *rus in urbe*. (The garden metaphor had in fact been applied in the previous century to the Stocks market, which it had later surpassed.¹⁵⁹) As the outskirts of London boasted market gardens and pleasure gardens (Marylebone, Vauxhall, Ranelagh), the centre of London boasted the garden market that was also a pleasure playground - in the words of art historian Malcolm

¹⁵⁵ Maitland, *History of London* (1739), vii. p. 741; [Ralph], *A critical review of the public buildings in and about London*, p. 21; Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved*, pp. 94-5; J. Noorthouck, *A new history of London*, p. 734; *A brief description of the Cities of London and Westminster*, p. 9. See also B. Lambert, *The history and survey of London* (1806), iii. p. 504.

¹⁵⁶ Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv. pp. 348-9.

¹⁵⁷ P. Langford, *A polite and commercial people: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ Strype, vi, p. 89. Had it been named 'Bedford market' after 1670 - not inconceivable (e. g. 'Hungerford' market, 'Southampton' market) - the market could hardly have been so resonant in meaning. More likely, the label would have fallen into disuse, in the same way that 'Woolchurch market' was always known as 'Stocks market' after 1671.

¹⁵⁹ See p. 192.

Warner, an 'urban garden of love' which stood at the heart of the 'Mecca of pleasure-seekers of every kind'.¹⁶⁰ The exposure and sale of fruit, vegetables, roots and herbs, most abundantly in summer, made the market colourful and fecund in all senses. It was a place of encounter between pretty flower girls, 'orange wenches', strapping porters, amorous gallants and those who had genteel pretensions. The flower market offered an excellent smokescreen for women to get away at morningtime from their menfolk - a visit to the market for the salutary scent of herbs returning home with a sprig or two provided ample excuse for infidelity.¹⁶¹ Satirists made good use of it: Hogarth in the *Morning* scene of his *Times of day* series; Louis-Phillipe Boitard in *The Covent Garden morning frolick* (1747).¹⁶² Early in the next century, Tom Dashall 'conducted his friend through every part of the market, amidst a redundancy of fruit, flowers, roots and vegetables, native and exotic, in variety and profusion, exciting the merited admiration of the Squire, who observed, perhaps justly, that this celebrated emporium unquestionably is not excelled by any other of similar description in the universe'.¹⁶³ Fruit and vegetables - market gardens - gardens - pleasure - Covent Garden: all curiously fitted together.

In the early nineteenth century the produce of the market was beyond the means of poor Londoners, who perhaps contented themselves with a visit to Spitalfields or waited for the costermongers' perambulations.¹⁶⁴ One anonymous writer in the 1820s, after exalting the market's opulence, observed

that many ... persons, who have no gardens of their own, are justified in the declaration generally made among them that they want no better garden than that near the Theatres, but the accommodation ends here, for to the poor, and middle class inhabitants, this market affords no other benefit or satisfaction, than that of seeing abundance beyond their means to partake of from its high price.¹⁶⁵

The highlights of the new market were the exhibition of greenstuffs and the central avenue of shops decorated with choice fruit. The *Penny magazine* held to the view that there was more greenery in London than people realized - foreigners apparently assumed that the poor Londoner 'unless he avail himself of modern aids to locomotion, can rarely see a green field, or obtain any other idea of the vegetable kingdom than what he can gather from a visit to Covent Garden market'.¹⁶⁶ Other large horticultural markets like Spitalfields tended to deal with the coarser fruit and vegetables. Covent Garden produce was characteristically more exotic, even if the vast

¹⁶⁰ *The image of London*, p. 121; Burford, *Wits, wenches and wantons*, p. xi.

¹⁶¹ *The image of London*, pp. 121-2; extract from H. Fielding, *The history of the adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Mr. Abraham Adams* (1742), reprinted in X. Baron (ed.) *London, 1066-1914: literary sources and documents* (Mountfield, 1998), i, p. 787; Ward, *The London spy*, p. 165.

¹⁶² *The image of London*, p. 124.

¹⁶³ P. Egan, *Real life in London* (1821: 1911 edn.), ii, p. 18.

¹⁶⁴ Malcolm, *London redivivum*, iv. pp. 348-9.

¹⁶⁵ GH, Ms 496, p. 36

¹⁶⁶ *Penny Magazine*, 26 August 1837.

majority of its supplies were grown within a fifteen mile radius of London.¹⁶⁷ Floristry's importance was also increasing. 'This out-of-door floral exhibition [is] really an attractive show,' acclaimed Knight's *London*, 'It keeps alive a taste in which in many instances would otherwise languish'.¹⁶⁸ For these reasons the sobriquet 'the Garden' endured throughout the nineteenth century; and by a nice correspondence the Spitalfields salesmen described their own market as 'the Fields'.¹⁶⁹

Despite its continued prosperity and popularity in the nineteenth century, Covent Garden market began to lose its representative significance. Whereas its early growth had encouraged its role as an entertainment centre, continued expansion served to bring about its decline, as fruit salesmen edged out the high-class bagnios and coffee houses from around the piazza. The rebuilding of the market in 1830 made the piazza a more respectable place and redoubled the commercial squeeze on miscellaneous activities.¹⁷⁰ Paintings of market scenes were no longer so in vogue, even if there was still much to marvel at.¹⁷¹ The market's commercialization, combined with metropolitan and colonial expansion, rendered it inadequate as a symbol for the imperial and monumental character of Victorian London. Whilst Henry Mayhew acknowledged that the market evoked many associations - 'antiquarian, political, literary, convivial, or theatrical' - his primary concern was its provisioning role.¹⁷² The referent had changed. Trafalgar Square, St. Paul's Cathedral, the new Palace of Westminster, Kings Cross Station: all these, visually and symbolically, articulated the new age better than Fowler's elegant market.

Conclusion

In the period 1660 to 1840, the urban and social status of London's markets was neither privileged nor prominent. Only four of the twenty-one that existed in 1660 were still to be found *in situ* in 1840. Some were removed from central and conspicuous sites; others were established away from principal thoroughfares; those that were not were increasingly criticized. It is impossible to gauge precisely how important markets were to the social intercourse of particular localities; but the presence and availability of so many other attractions and points of intercourse in the town undoubtedly limited that role compared to other urban centres. Individual markets stood out for their unique characteristics - shaped by quirks of history or geography - and none

¹⁶⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1853) ii, p. 380; *Morning Chronicle survey* (5 December 1850), p. 230-1; M. Thick, *The Neat House Gardens: early market gardening around London* (Totnes, 1998), ch. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Knight, *London*, v, p. 142.

¹⁶⁹ *Morning Chronicle survey* (5 December 1850), p. 234.

¹⁷⁰ Burford, *Wits, wantons and wenches*, p. 205; Knight, *London*, v, p. 136.

¹⁷¹ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp. 380-1

¹⁷² *Morning Chronicle survey* (5 December 1850), p. 223. See also *Survey of London: St. Paul, Covent Garden*, xxxvi (1970), p. 137 for its early Victorian heyday.

more so than Covent Garden. By 1840 London's market places were highly differentiated, not only in terms of trade, but also in location, setting and scene. The respective responsibilities of economic forces and political factors for this state of affairs was not clear cut. As earlier chapters argued, broad patterns of demand and supply determined the basic developments, for good or ill: increasing trade in particular markets helped create the problems and the idiosyncrasies; the profitability of smaller markets probably prevented them from attaining, or retaining, the lucrative central sites. Fragmentary government may have contributed to the mixed picture; on the other hand, the more disciplined city of Paris experimented with both centralized and decentralized marketing; and in London big planning schemes did not guarantee an important place for markets. There may have been more confident and coherent market designs had more of London's market places come under the aegis of civic values, but this is not to say private capital did not produce fine market architecture. Economic and political factors were in any case filtered through the cultural and topographical environment, and what other activity went on in the market place was a matter of culture. 'Improvement' itself was a cultural and fashionable, as much as an economic, phenomenon. By the same token, how visible markets ought to be depended upon value judgements - such as Nash's conviction that the eyes of gentlemen riding along Regent Street should not fall upon the new St. James's market. In sum, the markets, though not the most important element in social and public exchange in London, were more pervasive than may at first be realized. If in practice tensions and anomalies often characterized relations between market places and metropolitan modernization, the two were clearly not incompatible. London's growth and modernization undoubtedly enhanced the diversity of the markets; which is precisely what makes them so full of historical interest.

8 CONCLUSION

The dynamism and varied experience of London's markets defies easy generalization. But that they did evolve and mutate over time, in form, function, location and status, is itself of striking significance. That is why no single historical perspective can tell the whole story. Market forces were arguably the principle influence upon the establishment, function and fortunes of markets, as indeed they had often been in centuries past. But taking a longer perspective demands that other aspects of the market scene in London are revealed: the political geography of rights and charters, the spatial geography of market location; the role of regulation. Market forces are themselves, of course, a function of demographic, political and cultural developments and contexts. London's markets in the long eighteenth century arguably functioned in a richer context than ever before or since.

No single achievement could be exclusively ascribed to the markets. Wholesale and retail distribution of certain basic commodities was shared with other, less conspicuous forms of commerce, and not all markets flourished in this way. Politically, they marked the City's exclusive privilege and heritage, but then so did other commercial rights, which were also under fire in the long eighteenth century. Many new markets played an unsung role in the piecemeal town-planning that built London, but their place in the townscape at all levels was a tenuous one. A few did set new standards of architectural design; one or two provided London itself with a symbol to the outside world. But in a modernizing age, formal markets were becoming an increasingly heterogeneous species. Their collective identity and character was definitively fragmenting.

To some extent their sheer number maintained a collective identity. The fact that they were counted reflected their collective importance in the minds of contemporaries, and set alongside numerical totals of churches, almshouses, schools, livery halls and public squares, emphasized the magnitude of the metropolis - 'that the whole may be seen at one view' as the author of *London and its environs described* indicated above its list of markets in 1761.¹ That is why a quantitative approach was taken at the beginning of this study. Even so, their common identity was undermined by differentiation within their ranks and developments outside. In function, size, configuration and reputation, the markets were differentiated. Individual markets stood out for their own peculiarities. Some prospered whilst others languished; some fell into desuetude. A growing degree of overlap between public and private wholesale marketing developed, particularly as the expansion of trade and commerce, both nationwide and internationally, proceeded apace. Lower down the scale, unofficial street marts and the pervasive

growth of private food shop retailing undermined the collective identity of the older retail markets. In 1850 Henry Mayhew considered the smaller markets 'not markets in any legal sense, but ... congregations of tradesmen selling meat', what Dodd called 'meat bazaars'.² Tumbledown and extinct markets survived only as topographical illusions, anomalies which *The Builder* criticized in 1867. There was uncertainty as to which markets had official status and which did not. The listings of markets given in Pigot's 1839 *London Directory* and Weale's *London exhibited in 1851* (years between which there was little formal change in marketing) reflected the unprecedented definitional fluidities at the end of our period: the former numbered twenty-seven, the latter thirty-six, and only eighteen markets were common to both lists.³

Linguistic developments were particularly suggestive. A degree of mutation and uncertainty affected the very nomenclature of the markets, which might go under different names usually according to place or proprietor.⁴ More importantly, 'market' itself might refer to a place, an event, a concourse of shops or stalls, usually public and open in character and ownership, but with no distinction between wholesale or retail trades. During the period, it came to apply more loosely to locales of exchange; thus in 1756 'Change Alley (the environs of the Royal Exchange) was described as a 'grand market for buying and selling stocks, lottery tickets, etc', and earlier by Defoe as 'the Bubble market'. John Feltham spoke of 'the market' for City shopkeepers, 'as all that part of the metropolis may be justly called'.⁵ An even more elastic term was 'mart', an old word which gained new currency in a mutable and complex commercial world. According to Johnson, it derived from 'market' by contraction.⁶ It lent a proper suffix for institutions like the Auction Mart, it classified the unclassifiable Bartholomew Fair in its decline - 'a mere tame, spiritless and undiverting mart for toys and gingerbread' - and the unofficial Rag Fair - 'a general mart for the sale of second-hand clothes'.⁷ In London there was 'no public mart' for the sale of carriages, carts and tools, so that gentlemen were forced to send to 'one of the private marts ... before he can be supplied'.⁸ At the same time it was an august and quintessentially

¹ *London and its environs described* (1761), iv, p. 261.

² *Morning Chronicle survey*, (28 November 1850), p. 220; Dodd, *The food of London*, p. 270; *Builder*, 2 November 1867, p. 796.

³ Pigot & Co., *A directory of London and its suburbs* (1839), 'public markets'; J. Weale, *London exhibited in 1851* [1851], p. 612.

⁴ e.g. Honey Lane (Milk Street), Stocks (Woolchurch), Bloomsbury (Southampton), St. James's (St. Albans), Oxford (Cavendish), Carnaby (Lowndes, Marlborough), Clerkenwell (Wood's Close), Borough (Southwark), Mark Lane (Bear Key), Shadwell (Ratcliffe). See, for example, T. De Laune, *Angliae metropolis; or, the present state of London* (1681; 1690 edn.), p. 305; W. Maitland, *The history of London from its foundation by the Romans to the present time* (1739), ii, p. 527; idem, *The history and survey of London* (1756 edn.), ii, p. 728

⁵ Quoted in Keene, 'The setting of the Royal Exchange', p. 260; Defoe, *Tour*, i, p. 345; Feltham, *The picture for London for 1802*, p. 37.

⁶ S. Johnson, *Dictionary of the English language* (1755 edn.); *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989 edn.), ix, pp. 407-8.

⁷ *The Times*, 4 September 1805; P. Egan, *Real life in London* (1821: 2 vols. rep'd, 1911), ii, p. 18.

⁸ GH, Ms 496, pp. 19-21.

commercial word, used to describe the great markets in the early nineteenth century. Leadenhall was 'the great mart of London for provisions'; *The Times* referred to the rebuilt Covent Garden as 'this great vegetable mart'. In 1833 *The Gentleman's Magazine* informed its readers of the imminent erection of 'Islington Cattle Mart'.⁹ Newgate and Smithfield were both 'marts' to Henry Mayhew. In 1854 *The Quarterly Review* described all of the public wholesale food markets in this way. Using another expression, one eminent commentator went even further when he described Newgate as 'the Great Meat Exchange of the metropolis'.¹⁰ Taking a wider view still, George Dodd gloried in the wholesale 'marts for food at the docks, wharves, markets, vaults and warehouses ... It would be a shallow view of the question that would limit the word "mart" to the meaning of "market".' To grasp the wondrous complex of activities that fed London, he mused, one would have to examine the ship cargoes and dock warehouses, vaults and quays, count the riverside granaries and wharves, visit the new railway depots, 'trace how the supplies of livestock, dead meat, poultry, dairy-produce, fish, corn, vegetables, fruit, are arranged and sold at the markets of Copenhagen Fields, Newgate, Leadenhall, Whitechapel, Billingsgate, Mark Lane, Covent Garden' and study the colonial markets in the sale rooms of the City.¹¹

On the retail scene, we have seen that the line between 'market' and 'shops' was also fuzzy. As an organizing principle, the market place has adapted to modern developments in supply and demand. The eighteenth century market place could be open or enclosed, with collapsible stalls or permanent fixtures. Nineteenth century calls for markets reflected this, but it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the 'supermarket' renewed the retail market tradition of one-stop shopping and competition under one roof. The very name evokes the older tradition with a suitably modern prefix. Late twentieth century shopping centres and out-of-town supermarkets resonate with the designs of market houses of various kinds; and like the market place they offer an alternative to the High street, whilst high streets themselves have been pedestrianized to recapture older images of market place. All such phemonema could well be viewed as a product of a 'market' economy psyche which is well aware of its need to revive the lost image of the market place, though arguably without the animation of a Billingsgate or a Clare, and certainly without the crude ecological links.¹² Interestingly, whilst the retail market concept has revived, the wholesale market has been undermined by the rise of large multiples, direct marketing and vertical integration, something of a reversal of relative fortunes of the

⁹ Malcolm, *London Redivivum*, iv, p. 574; LMA, E/BER/CG/E/10 16; *The Times*, 25 December 1828; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 16 November 1833.

¹⁰ *Morning Chronicle survey* (21 November 1850), p. 193; (28 November 1850), lxxx, pp. 203, 212; F. Byng, *Smithfield and Newgate markets* (1851), p. 10; 'The commissariat of London', pp. 272-4, 296-7.

¹¹ Dodd, *The food of London*, pp 124-5. Copenhagen Fields replaced Smithfield in 1855 as the site for London's cattle market.

¹² The cultural anthropology of modern day shopping is discussed in D. Slater, 'Going shopping: markets, crowds and consumption' in C. Jenks (ed.), *Cultural reproduction* (1993).

Hanoverian period. Yet even here, the late twentieth century has seen the revival throughout Britain of regular ‘farmers’ markets’, in which local producer meets consumer in urban space out of sight of any middleman, to the economic benefit of both sides. Such markets are highly commercial projects with deeply historical associations.

These uncertain identities within marketing may not have affected London alone but they do emphasize the growing complexity and heterogeneity of the metropolis in an age of growth and modernization. The sheer number and turnover of markets in London in this period was unique in Britain and probably Europe also.¹³ They conferred a polyfocal aspect upon the metropolis as it expanded which affirmed, at the very least superficially, that Georgian London was a collection of little towns rather than a centripetal metropolis. By that very fact they also marked out the metropolis to be truly great in size and complexity. This study has identified different geographies of London’s markets: political, topographic, economic, cultural. They represented points of vital contact with countryside as well as neighbourhood, between far-flung and localized networks. At the same time the bias of marketing towards the City reflected, and in part fostered, the commercial distinction of the ancient square mile vis-à-vis the rest of London.

As a collective history, this study has sought to show the dimensions of a subject which hitherto historians of the long eighteenth century have only thought about superficially or partially. A collective history can still be a fragmented and diverse history. Indeed, the fragmentation can only be gauged when it is considered in the context of the whole. That is why the concept of ‘London’s markets’ is a useful one. It would indeed be surprising if their commercial and spatial history was not messy. As a collective history, this study has tried to generalize where possible, at the same time recognizing that diversity and detail are themselves part of the subject and part of the answer. In the long eighteenth century, the market place, in the physical and localized sense (to say nothing of the more abstract meaning) became a slippery concept, adaptable to changing times. It was the bewildering variety of market forms and lifestyles that held the secret to its longevity. That is why markets were never anachronisms in an age of modernization, even in London. That is why the market place provides one of the great historic links, however tenuous, between the modern or postmodern age and the ‘world we have lost’.

¹³ *London and its environs described*, iv, p. 261.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Chronology, 1650-1851

<i>Year</i>	<i>Event</i>
1650	Meal Act forbids sale of meal in shops and establishes meal markets in London
1652	City petitions against new markets erected in suburbs (Clare, Stepney)
1653-7	New market in Clements Inn established (Clare), opposed by City; authorized by Parliament
1657	Cheapside fruit and veg market removed to St. Paul's churchyard and Aldersgate St.
1661	St. Paul's market removed to Aldersgate St. and Broad St.
1662	Market granted in Bloomsbury (Earl of Southampton) Clare market gains royal patent Commissioners of Sewers responsible for Haymarket
1663	Common Council bans use of inns as unlicensed shops and exchanges City petitions King to suppress intended markets in suburbs General and cattle markets granted in St. James's
1664	Market in East Smithfield foiled by City's appeal to King
1665	Market granted in Stepney despite City opposition Fair in Mile End Green granted
1666	Great Fire destroys City markets. Temporary markets established at Leadenhall and outskirts
1667	First Rebuilding Act Market in Salisbury Court founders after City petition
1669	Thomas Neale attempts to establish market in Shadwell
1670	Market at Holborn Bars Second Rebuilding Act - purchase of land for new market sites Market charter for Covent Garden (Earl of Bedford) Rebuilt Blackwell Hall opened
1671	Honey Lane, Newgate and Stocks Markets opened in City Royal Proclamation regarding building in suburbs
1672	Proposed market at Millbank opposed by City Act of Common Council regulates City markets
1674	Second Act of Common Council for markets
1675	Southwark meal market house destroyed by fire
1676	Neale's market at Shadwell established despite City opposition City markets jointly farmed out
1677	Enlarged Leadenhall market opened City considers new hay market in Little Moorfields William Leybourn's survey of the public markets of the City
1678	City opposition to Brook's and Hungerford Markets
1679	Market granted to Sir Edward Hungerford
1682	Market granted to Baron Brooke Market granted in Spital Square
1683	City's charter surrendered to Charles II City's petition to King stops grant for cattle market in Conduit Mead Proposed market at Clerkenwell Green opposed by City
1684	Frost Fair on Thames Market granted in Rotherhithe (no further evidence)
1685	Hungerford market authorized to sell meal and corn (Sir Stephen Fox and Sir Christopher Wren)
1686	Proposed cattle market at Edmonton opposed by City Market granted in Hounslow Newport market granted
1687	Market granted in Hoxton
1688	Brookfield cattle market and May Fair granted to Lord Dover Hay market granted in Chapel Street, Westminster Market granted in Cripplegate (Red Lion) James II restores City's rights on eve of Glorious Revolution
1689	Frost Fair on Thames
1690	Parliament restores City's charter and privileges

- 1694 Common Council prohibits pedlars selling in streets
- 1695 City petitions Crown against Brookfield cattle market
Act of Common Council prohibits sale of non-perishables in City markets which are sold in shops and warehouses (aimed at hawkers)
- 1696 City's proposal for fish market in Monument Yard not adopted
City investigates abuses of market farmers
- 1697 Middlesex and Westminster J.P.s appointed by Act of Parliament to manage the Haymarket
- 1698 Proposed Westminster meal market fails in Parliament - City opposition
- 1699 Billingsgate Free market for Fish Act (retail and wholesale)
City opposes attempted market at Knightsbridge
- 1700 Bill in House of Lords to confirm Brookfield and Newport markets fails
City opposes proposed skin market at Smithfield Bars
Market granted in Greenwich
Meal market by Fleet Ditch established - quickly fails
- 1706 Skin market granted in Clerkenwell, despite City opposition
- 1708 City opposes attempted markets at Croydon, Hounslow and Isleworth
- 1710 Resale of fish at Billingsgate forbidden by Act of Parliament
- 1711 City opposes Rag Fair market at Stepney (and in 1723)
- 1715 Frost fair on Thames
- 1718 Skin market granted in Bankside
Attempted market at Knightsbridge opposed by City
- 1721 Lowndes market granted - conditional consent by City
- 1727 Proposed market near Great Conduit Fields - no grant recorded
- 1730 Herb market at Leadenhall rebuilt
Bloomsbury market rebuilt
- 1731 Oxford market granted and opened
- 1733 Hay market granted in Chapel Street, Westminster
- 1736 Proposed market at Smithfield Bars opposed by City
Lowndes market extended into Lord Craven's estate - jointly owned as Carnaby market
- 1737 Stocks market removed to covered-in Fleet Ditch (Fleet market)
Special City committee created to manage markets
- 1739 Market granted in Brookfield becomes (Edward) Shepherd's market - City's conditional consent
New green market opened at Leadenhall market
- 1740 Frost fair on Thames
- 1741 Local farmers and gardeners petition City for new green market at Dowgate Wharf
City opposes third Spitalfields grant - sale of meat there adjudged prejudicial to City markets
- 1742 Local inhabitants petition City for fruit and veg market at Dowgate
- 1743 Grant for old clothes market in East Smithfield (Rag Fair?) opposed by City
- 1745 City opposes grant for cattle market in Mile End Old Town
- 1746 Westminster market probably demolished for Westminster Bridge approach
- 1747 Corn factors form consortium to establish a Corn Factors' Exchange
- 1748 Shops rebuilt in Covent Garden market
- 1749 Westminster Fish market Act
- 1750 Sheepskin market granted in Woods Close, Clerkenwell
Westminster Bridge opened
City markets committee discontinued; markets leased out
Common Council reprints 1674 Act of Common Council regulating the markets
- 1751 Corn Exchange in Mark Lane opened
- 1752 New Westminster market opened in Little Sanctuary
- 1755 Newgate market toll disputes
- 1756 New Borough market opened west of High Street
- 1757 Poor harvest and high prices
New Road from Paddington to Islington opened
City wins verdicts against Newgate salesmen over tolls
- 1758 Corn market at Southwark opened
Westminster Corn market Act (no evidence of market established)
Newgate market taken back into City's hands after disputes
- 1759 Removal of London Bridge superstructure
Removal of Holbein Gate, Westminster

- 1760 City's idea to remove butchers into the public markets and regulating slaughtering thwarted
- 1761 Coal Factors' Society formed (35 factors)
- 1762 Westminster Paving Act
City Bill for regulating slaughtering and driving of cattle fails
Southwark Fair suppressed
- 1763 May Fair suppressed
- 1766 Fleet Ditch covered over between Fleet Bridge and Thames
John Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved*
High prices
- 1768 Skin market granted in Southwark
- 1769 Blackfriars Bridge opened
Coal Exchange opened in Thames St.
- 1771 Markets taken back into City hands after leases expire
- 1772 Repeal of 1552 legislation against forestallers, regrators and engrossers
- 1774 Building Act standardizes house design and materials
- 1775 Bloomsbury market demolished about this time
- 1777 Rebuilding in Newgate market
Smithfield market reverts into City's hands
- 1778 Regulations made for the better management of City markets
- 1784 Market granted off Tottenham Court Road (Mortimer) - City doesn't oppose
- 1785 Shop Tax
Butchers Company clamps down on Sunday sellers of meat
- 1786 Grosvenor market opened under patronage of Earl of Grosvenor
St. George's market, Mayfair opened
High prices
- 1788 Honey Lane market rebuilt
- 1789 Frost Fair on Thames
Shop Tax repealed
Market established in Southwark - opposed by St. Saviour's parish
- 1790 Leadenhall market re-roofed and buildings added
- 1791 Fitzroy market built about this time
- 1792 Market proposed near Finsbury Fields (Lord Darnley)
- 1798 Improvements to Billingsgate market by George Dance
- 1800 Poor harvest and high prices
Riots at Corn Exchange in Mark Lane
House of Commons Select Committee recommends City purchase the Coal market
- 1801 New market house at Newgate
Bill to establish a hop market in Southwark fails
- 1802 Finsbury market granted to Lord Darnley with consent of City
Grand Junction Canal Co. opens cattle market at Paddington - City protests in Parliament
City's campaign to enlarge Smithfield market (1802-8) opposed in Parliament
West India Docks opened
- 1803 City of London acquires Coal market, made free and open
- 1804 Westminster market demolished for building of Middlesex Guildhall
Newport market enlarged
- 1805 London Docks opened
- 1806 East India Docks opened
- 1808 City of London petitions against new bridge at Vauxhall
- 1809 City Corporation Bill to remove Smithfield market to Spa Fields widely opposed and postponed
- 1810 Bill to remove Smithfield market opposed and lost on second reading
City's petition to House of Commons to remove Leadenhall leather market opposed by the trade
- 1811 London Commercial Sale Rooms opened, Mincing Lane
- 1812 John Nash's plan for Regents Park includes provision for three markets
- 1813 Covent Garden market Act regulates market tolls and defines Duke of Bedford's authority
Bill to enlarge Smithfield lost in House of Lords (but City begins to buy land for enlargement)
- 1814 Frost Fair on Thames
Improvements in Leadenhall market for the leather trade
- 1815 St. James's market demolished to make way for Regent Street
Oxford market rebuilt

- 1816 Vauxhall Bridge opened
- 1817 Waterloo Bridge opened
Westminster inhabitants petition Parliament for fish market
- 1819 Southwark Bridge opened
- 1820 Carnaby market demolished
Blackwell Hall demolished
Regent's Canal
- 1822 New covered market at Liverpool opened
- 1824 Market granted in Limehouse - not established
Newgate market improved and covered
- 1825 Universal adoption of gas for lighting streets, shops and public offices
- 1826 Billingsgate market improved and covered
- 1827 Old Corn Exchange extended
Leeds Central market opened
The Times campaigns for Parisian-like abattoirs for London
- 1828 New Corn Exchange opened under Act of Parliament adjacent to old one
Select Committee report ambiguous on desirability of Smithfield's removal
- 1829 Farringdon market replaces Fleet market
City's bill to enlarge Smithfield market rejected
- 1830 Haymarket removed to Cumberland market by Regents Park
- 1831 New market buildings at Covent Garden opened
Portman market opened
New London Bridge opened
- 1833 Rebuilt Hungerford market opened
Private wholesale meat market opened near Newgate market
London Leather Warehouses and Hide Depository, Bermondsey, opened
- 1834 Islington Cattle market Act despite City opposition
Smithfield first enlarged
Petition to Parliament for hay and general market at Knightsbridge
Hungerford Fish market opened
South London Market Act - opposed by St. Saviour's parish; Act not carried out
- 1835 Islington market opened (John Perkins) as rival to Smithfield
City's bill for enlargement of Smithfield lost, but enlargements subsequently made (1835-9)
Honey Lane market demolished
Birmingham's new market hall opened
- 1836 Perkins' abortive bill to abolish Smithfield market fiercely opposed by City; Islington closed
Petitions by butchers, graziers and salesmen for enlargement of Smithfield market
London and Greenwich Railway opened
New market house (country market) for Newport market opened
- 1837 Petition to Parliament for market at Strutton Ground, Westminster
City refuses Perkins' offer to buy Islington market
- 1838 London and Birmingham Railway opened
Newgate green market moved to Farringdon market
- 1839 Improvements to Newgate meat market
- 1845 Hungerford Suspension Bridge opened
- 1847 Smithfield market enlarged
- 1848 Registration of City slaughterhouses
- 1849 Select Committee urges removal of Smithfield market in face of City opposition
Islington cattle market reopened
- 1850 Royal Commission on Smithfield market favours removal over City's plan for improvement
- 1851 Act obliges Corporation to find new market site for Smithfield
Volume One of Mayhew's *London labour and the London poor* published

Appendix 2 Sources for the existence of individual markets

The following tables give some *illustrative* sources for the existence of individual markets around the time of 1660, 1700, 1760 and 1840 (they by no means represent all the relevant evidence, as the footnotes throughout the text will make apparent). Most works cited are historical and topographical accounts of London, a fascinating genre which originated with John Stow's *The Survey of London* (1598, 1603). When systematically read in chronological order, they provide a very useful commentary of individual markets, although they are not free from the problems of plagiarism and anachronism. Abbreviated referencing is used, giving only author and date for published sources; full references can be found in the bibliography. Additional information on the existence and decline of individual markets can be found throughout the thesis.

Markets in 1660

Markets listed as existing between 1660 and 1700 can be found (with source references) in P. V. McGrath, 'The marketing of food, fodder and livestock in the London area in the seventeenth century', M. A. thesis (University of London, 1948), Part Three: 'Historical and topographical notes on the markets in the London area in the seventeenth century', pp. 243-347. Exceptions are Blackwell Hall - see D. W. Jones, 'The "hallage" receipts of the London cloth markets, 1562-c.1720', *Economic History Review*, 25 (1972); and the medieval shambles of Butcher Row - see Hughson (1807), iv, pp. 157-8; *Londiniana* (1829), ii, pp. 173-4. Southwark market was noted for its sale of leather in the mid-seventeenth century, J. Howell, *Londinopolis* (1657), p. 336.

Markets in 1700

City

Bear Key (corn)	Hatton (1708), p. 784
Billingsgate (fish, coal)	De Laune (1690), p. 355; Strype (1720) ^a , ii, p. 172
Blackwell Hall (cloth)	CLRO, Misc. Mss 58.32
Butcher Row (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 13; Strype (1720), iv, p. 118
Holborn Bars (meat)	Harl. Ms 5900, f. 59
Honey Lane (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 52; Strype (1720), iii, p. 50
Leadenhall (leather, hides, meat)	Harl. Ms 5900, f. 59; Strype (1720), ii, pp. 89
Newgate (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 59; Strype (1720), iii, p. 195
Queenhithe (meal, flour)	DeLaune (1690), p. 353; Strype (1720), iii, p. 218; Defoe (1724-6), i, p. 345
Smithfield (cattle, hay, horses)	Strype (1720), iii, pp. 284-5
Stocks (meat, fruit & veg)	Strype (1720), ii, p. 199

Outside City

Bloomsbury (meat etc)	Strype (1720), iv, p. 84; Defoe (1724-6), i, p. 343; <i>Lon. Even. Post</i> , 24-26 Mar 1730
Borough/Southwark (meat etc)	Strype (1720), iv, p. 29
Brook's (meat etc)	Strype (1720), iii, p. 252
Brookfield (cattle.)	<i>JHC</i> (1699-1700), pp. 231-2
Butcher Row (meat etc)	Hughson (1807), iv, pp. 157-8; <i>Londiniana</i> (1829), ii, pp. 173-4
Chapel St., Wstmr. (hay, straw)	Defoe (1724-6), i, p. 343; <i>London Evening Post</i> , 1-3 May 1733
Clare (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 18; Strype (1720), iv, p. 119
Covent Garden (fruit & veg.)	Strype (1720), vi, p. 89
Haymarket (hay & straw)	Strype (1720), vi, pp. 68, 83
Hungerford (meat etc)	Strype (1720), vi, p. 76
Newport (meat etc)	Strype (1720), vi, p. 86
Rag Fair (clothes)	W. J. Hardy (1905), p. 211; N. Ward (1709; 1993), pp. 252-3
Red Lion (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 68
St. James's (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 41; Strype (1720), vi, p. 83
Shadwell (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 75
Southwark (hay)	Defoe (1724-6), i, p. 343
Spitalfields (meat etc)	Hatton (1708), p. 77; Strype (1720), iv, p. 49
Wapping (meat etc)	Strype (1720), v, p. 398
Westminster (meat etc)	Strype (1720), vi, p. 63
Whitechapel (hay) ^b	Strype (1720), ii, p. 27

Notes:

^a John Strype's edition of Stow's *Survey of London* was largely completed by 1708, see J. J. Morrison, 'Strype's Stow: the 1720 edition of *A survey of London*', *London Journal*, 3 (1977), pp. 40-54.

^b Whitechapel hay market may have been held in nearby Ratcliffe under the grant of 1664 to Ratcliffe market. According to this account, the market was transferred in the 1700s to Whitechapel, see GH Noble, C 45 1/T, 'Notes on the history of Whitechapel hay market', in *The Siren* (1968), p. 16; H. L. Smith, *The history of east London from the earliest times to the end of the eighteenth century* (1939), p. 57. Due to the lack of firm evidence, these and the following tables assume that in 1700 the hay market was held in Whitechapel, without explicit authorization until legislation in 1771.

Markets in 1760

City

Billingsgate (fish, coal)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), i, pp. 303-4
Blackwell Hall (cloth)	Gill (1953-4)
Bishopsgate Street (hay)	Maitland (1739), ii, p. 527; <i>London and its environs</i> (1761), iv, p. 261
Corn Exchange (corn, seeds)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), ii, pp. 188-9
Fleet (meat etc)	Maitland (1756), ii, p. 989
Honey Lane (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), iii, p. 198; <i>Low life</i> (1764), p. 101.
Leadenhall (leather, hides, meat)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), iii, pp. 299-300
Newgate (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), v, pp. 32-3
Queenhithe (meal, flour)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), v, p. 238; Harrison (1775), p. 490
Smithfield (cattle, hay, horses)	Entick (1766), iv, pp. 251-2

Outside City

Bloomsbury (meat etc)	Noorthouck (1773), p. 742
Borough (meat, fruit & veg. etc)	Entick (1766), iv, p. 388
Brook's (meat etc)	Harrison (1775), p. 539
Butcher Row (meat etc)	Hughson (1807), iv, pp. 157-8; <i>Londiniana</i> (1829), ii, pp. 173-4
Carnaby (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), ii, p. 68; Noorthouck (1773), p. 728
Clare (meat etc)	Chamberlain (1770), p. 582; <i>Low life</i> (1764), p. 101.
Clerkenwell (skins)	Maitland (1756), ii, p. 728; LMA, E/NOR/S/1/1-3
Covent Garden (fruit & veg.)	Chamberlain (1770), p. 585
Haymarket (hay & straw)	Entick (1766), iv, p. 424n
Hungerford (meat etc)	Noorthouck (1773), p. 727
Newport (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), v, p. 36; Noorthouck (1773), p. 728
Oxford (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), v, p. 99; Harrison (1775), p. 533
Rag Fair (clothes)	CLRO, Rep. 163, ff. 433-4
Red Lion (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), iv, p. 262; Hughson (1806), iii, p. 329
St. James's (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), iii, p. 213; <i>Low life</i> (1764), p. 101.
Shadwell (meat etc)	Noorthouck (1773), p. 770
Shepherd (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), iv, p. 308; Chamberlain (1770), p. 599
Southwark (hay)	Maitland (1756), ii, p. 728 (St. Margaret's Hill)
Spitalfields (meat etc)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), vi, p. 54; Noorthouck (1773), p. 759
Westminster (fish)	<i>JHC</i> (1758), pp. 254-5
Westminster (meat etc)	WAM, 24888B (1766)
Whitechapel (meat)	Maitland (1739), ii, p. 527; <i>London and its environs</i> (1761), vi, p. 307
Whitechapel (hay)	11 Geo. III c. 15

Markets in 1840

City

Billingsgate (fish)	<i>Londiniana</i> (1829), ii, p. 190; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), pp. 240-53
Coal Exchange	Smith (1961), ch. 15
Corn Exchange (corn, seeds)	Pulling (1842), pp. 469-71; Cunningham (1850), pp. 141, 314; Loudon (1825), p. 1063
Corn Exchange, New Farringdon (meat etc)	Allen (1827-9), iii, 749-50; GH Noble, C.45.3/T.1894 Knight (1841-3), v, pp. 138-9
Leadenhall (leather, hides, meat)	Knight (1841-3), ii, p. 322; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), pp. 212-17
Newgate (meat etc)	Knight (1841-3), ii, p. 322; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), pp. 202-12
Smithfield (cattle, hay, horses)	Knight (1841-3), ii, pp. 317-28
Warwick Lane (carcase meat)	CLRO, CC mins, 11 May 1838; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), pp. 202-4

Outside City

Bermondsey (leather)	CLRO, Journal Markets Cte, vol. 1 (1835-8), p. 278
Borough (meat, fruit & veg. etc)	Knight (1841-3), v, pp. 139, 143; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), pp. 231-2
Brook's (meat etc)	<i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), p. 221
Clare (meat etc)	Cunningham (1850), p. 123; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), p. 220
Covent Garden (fruit & veg.)	Allen (1839), v, p. 294; Knight (1841-3), v, pp. 136-43
Cumberland (hay)	Pigot (1839); Cunningham (1850), p. 696
Hungerford (meat, fish, veg. etc)	Allen (1839), v, pp. 286-7; Cunningham (1850), p. 240
Islington (cattle)	Allen (1839), v, pp. 449-50
Mortimer (meat etc)	Weale (1851), p. 612
Newport (meat etc)	Cunningham (1850), p. 357; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), p. 221
Oxford (meat etc)	Allen (1839), v, p. 335; <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), p. 221
Portman (hay, meat, fruit & veg.)	Pigot (1839); <i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), pp. 221-2, 238
Rag Fair (clothes)	Egan (1821; 1911), i, p. 308; M. Ginsburg (1980), pp. 121-35
St. James's (meat etc)	Cunningham (1850), p. 255
Shepherd (meat etc)	Weale (1851), p. 612
Southwark (hay)	<i>Second Report: Metropolis improvements</i> (1838), q. 868; Pigot (1839)
Spitalfields (meat etc)	Knight (1841-3), ii, p. 399; v, pp. 143-4
Whitechapel (meat, skins)	<i>Morning Chron. surv.</i> (1850), p. 219; Pigot (1839)
Whitechapel (hay)	<i>Second Report: Metropolis improvements</i> (1838), qq. 742-3

Retail markets in 1800 included in Table 17

City

Billingsgate (fish, coal)	Malcolm (1802-7), iv, pp. 425-6
Fleet (meat etc)	Brayley (1810-16), iii, pp. 737-8
Honey Lane (meat etc)	Malcolm (1802-7), ii, pp. 162-3
Leadenhall (leather, hides, meat)	Brayley (1810-16), i, p. 37
Newgate (meat etc)	Brayley (1810-16), i, p. 36

Outside City

Borough (meat, fruit & veg. etc)	Hughson (1807), iv, p. 490
Brook's (meat etc)	Harrison (1775), p. 539; Lambert (1806), iv, p. 42
Butcher Row (meat etc)	Hughson (1807), iv, pp. 157-8; <i>Londiniana</i> (1829), ii, pp. 173-4
Carnaby (meat etc)	Brayley (1810-16), iii, p. 677
Clare (meat etc)	Lambert (1806), iii, p. 462
Covent Garden (fruit & veg.)	Malcolm (1802-7), iv, pp. 348-9
Fitzroy (meat etc)	CBA, P/PN/PA/9 (1811), p. 390; Malcolm (1802-7), iv, p. 350
Grosvenor (meat etc)	WCA, Acc 1049/5/2, Grosvenor Board minutes, 15 July 1796
Hungerford (meat etc)	Malcolm (1802-7), iv, p. 308
Mortimer's (meat etc)	CBA, P/PA/RA, St. Pancras rate books, 1805; Weale (1851), p. 612
Newport (meat etc)	Malcolm (1802-7), ii, p. 345
Oxford (meat etc)	Harrison (1775), p. 533; Brayley (1810-16), iii, p. 734
St. George's, Mayfair	Malcolm (1802-7), iv, p. 335
St. George, Southwark	<i>Times</i> , 17 Sept 1789, p. 3; C. Eastwall-Naijna (1968)
St. James's (meat etc)	Brayley (1810-16), iii, p. 656
Shepherd (meat etc)	Hughson (1807), iv, p. 353
Spitalfields (meat etc)	Lambert (1806), iv, p. 80
Westminster (meat etc)	WAM, 24889 (printed)
Whitechapel (meat)	<i>London and its environs</i> (1761), vi, p. 307; <i>Times</i> , 15 November 1802, p. 3

Other markets not appearing in above lists

Bankside (skins)	Rocque (1746)
Fleet Ditch (meal)	CLRO, Jor. 52, ff. 320-1; City Lands, vol. 11 (1705-8), ff. 101-2, 207-8, 214-15, 261b; Hatton (1708), p. 30
Finsbury (meat, etc)	CLRO, <i>Common Council mins.</i> , 9 May, 17 July 1823; Horwood (1813)
Paddington (hay)	Brayley (1810-16), i, p. 37
Southwark skins	43 Geo. III c. 106; GH, Ms 6443 12, 2 April 1807; Horwood (1813)
Whitechapel skins	<i>Times</i> , 1 June 1822, p. 3; 15 June 1822, p. 3; 27 May 1824, p. 2

London markets in 1660

Name of market	Produce sold	Function	Established	Discontinued	Area	Location	Size	Accommodation	Topography	Authorization	Ownership
Billingsgate	Fish, coal	Retail - wholesale	ancient	1982	City	Thames Street		Open	Riverside	City privilege	Public - City
Bishopsgate	Meal	Retail	1600	1673	City	Bishopsgate Street		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Blackwell Hall	Woollen cloth	Wholesale	1397	1815	City	Guildhall		Covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - Institution
Butcher Row	Meat, etc	Retail	1292	1700*	Westminster	Temple Bar		Open	Street	Grant	Not known
Cheapside	General	Retail	ancient	1668	City	Cheapside		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Claire	Meat, etc	Retail	1657	1900	Westminster	Drury Lane	0.37	Part covered	Enclosure	Statute	Private
Eastcheap	Meat	Retail	ancient	late 17th century	City	Eastcheap		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Fish Street Hill	Fish	Retail	ancient	late 17th century	City	Near London Bridge		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Gracechurch Street	General	Retail	ancient	1666	City	Gracechurch Street		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Haymarket	Hay, straw	Wholesale	17th century	1830	Westminster	Haymarket, Piccadilly		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Leadenhall	Meat, etc, cloth, leather hides	Retail - wholesale	ancient	present	City	Leadenhall Street	1.10	Part covered	Enclosure	Unclassified	Private
Newgate Street	Meal	Retail	ancient	1666	City	Newgate Street		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Old Fish Street	Fish	Retail	ancient	late 17th century	City	Near Queenhithe		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Queenhithe	Meal, flour	Wholesale	ancient	early 19th century	City	Thames Street		Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Smithfield	Cattle, horses, hay, straw	Wholesale	ancient	1855	City	West Smithfield	4.7-6.1	Open	Agora	City privilege	Public - City
Southwark	General	Retail	1406	1756	Southwark	Borough High Street		Open	Street	Grant	Public - City
Southwark	Hay straw	Wholesale	ancient	19th century	Southwark	St. Margaret's Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
St. Nicholas Shambles	Meat	Retail	ancient	1666	City	Newgate Street		Open	Street	City privilege	Public - City
St Paul's Churchyard	Fruit, veg	Retail	1657	1661	City	St. Paul's Churchyard		Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Stocks	Meat, etc	Retail	1282	1737	City	Cheapside-Poultry		Covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Westminster	Meat etc	Retail	16th century	1748*	Westminster	Round Woodstaple		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Public - Institution

* indicates uncertainty of date of establishment or discontinuation

London markets in 1700

Name of market	Produce sold	Function	Established	Discontinued	Area	Location	Size	Accommodation	Topography	Authorization	Ownership
Bear Key	Corn	Wholesale	late 17th century	1751	City	Thames Street		Open	Riverside	City privilege	Public - City
Billingsgate	Fish coal	Retail - wholesale	ancient	1822	City	Thames Street		Open	Riverside	City privilege	Public - City
Blackwell Hall	Woolen cloth	Wholesale	1397	1815	City	Guidhall		Covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - Institution
Bloomsbury	Meat etc	Retail	1682	1775*	Middlesex	Hart Street	0.72	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Brook's	Meat etc	Retail	1682	1900	Middlesex	Holborn	0.25	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Brookfield	Cattle	Wholesale	1686	1740*	Middlesex	Mayfair		Open	Agora	Grant	Private
Butcher Row	Meat etc	Retail	1292	1810*	Westminster	Temple Bar		Open	Street	Grant	Not known
Chapel Street	Hay straw	Wholesale	1688	1750*	Westminster	Broadway, Westminster		Open	Street	Grant	Public - Parish
Clare	Meat etc	Retail	1657	1900	Westminster	Drury Lane	0.37	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Covent Garden	Fruit, veg, flowers	Retail - wholesale	1670	1873	Westminster	Covent Garden	3.04	Open	Agora	Grant	Private
Haymarket	Hay, straw	Wholesale	17th century	1830	Westminster	Haymarket, Piccadilly		Open	Street	Statute	Public - County
Holborn Bars	Meat etc	Retail	1666	1708	City	Middlesex		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Honey Lane	Meat etc	Retail	1670	1835	City	Off Cheapside	0.43	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Hungerford	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1680	1862	Westminster	Channing Cross	1.21	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Leadenhall	Meat, etc, cloth, leather, hides	Retail - wholesale	ancient	present	City	Leadenhall Street	1.10	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Newgate	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1670	1868	City	Newgate Street	0.66	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Newport	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1686	1886*	Westminster	Grafton Street, Soho	0.26	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Queenthith	Meat flour	Wholesale	ancient	early 19th century	City	Thames Street		Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Rag Fair	Old clothes	Retail - wholesale	late 17th century	late 19th century	Middlesex	Rosemary Lane, Tower Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Red Lion	Meat etc	Retail	1688	mid 18th century	Middlesex	Off Whitecross Street		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Shadwell	Meat etc	Retail	1676*	early 19th century	Middlesex	Upper Shadwell		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Smithfield	Cattle, horses, hay, straw	Wholesale	ancient	1855	City	West Smithfield	4.7-6.1	Open	Agora	City privilege	Public - City
Southwark	General	Retail	1406	1756	Southwark	Borough High Street		Open	Street	Grant	Public - City
Southwark	Hay straw	Wholesale	ancient	19th century	Southwark	St Margaret's Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Spitalfields	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1682	1989	Middlesex	Lamb Street	2.81	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
St James's	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1664	1816	Westminster	Near St James's Square		Covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Stocks-Woodchurch	Meat fruit, veg	Retail	1282	1737	City	Cheapside-Poultry		Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Wapping	Meat etc	Retail	1666	early 18th century	Middlesex	Wapping Dock		Open	Street	Grant	Not known
Westminster	Meat etc	Retail	ancient	1746*	Westminster	Round Woolstaple		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Public - Institution
Whitechapel	Hay, straw	Wholesale	late 17th century	early 20th century	Middlesex	Whitechapel		Open	Street	Unclassified	Private

* indicates uncertainty of date of establishment or discontinuation

London markets in 1760

Name of market	Produce sold	Function	Established	Discontinued	Area	Location	Size	Accommodation	Topography	Authorization	Ownership
Billingsgate	Fish coal	Retail - wholesale	ancient	1982	City	Thames Street		Open	Riverside	City privilege	Public - City
Bishopsgate Street	Hay	Wholesale	early 18th century	late 18th century	City	Bishopsgate Street		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Blackwell Hall	Woolen cloth	Wholesale	1397	1815	City	Guildhall		Covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public Institution
Bloomsbury	Meat etc	Retail	1662	1775*	Middlesex	Hart Street	0.72	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Borough	Meat fruit, veg	Retail - wholesa e	1756	present	Southwark	Off Borough High Street	3.00	Covered	Enclosure	Statute	Public - Parish
Brook's	Meat etc	Retail	1682	1900	Middlesex	Holborn	0.25	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Butcher Row	Meat, etc	Retail	1292	1700*	Westminster	Temple Bar		Open	Street	Grant	Not known
Carmaby	Meat, etc	Retail	1721	1820	Westminster	Carmaby Street	1.50	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Clare	Meat etc	Retail	1657	1900	Westminster	Drury Lane	0.37	Open	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Clerkenwell	Sheep and lamb skins	Wholesale	1707	1815	Middlesex	Wood's Close, St. John's Street		Open	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Corn Exchange	Corn meal, seeds	Wholesale	1747	1929	City	Mark Lane		Covered	Enclosure	Unclassified	Private
Covent Garden	Fruit veg flowers	Retail - wholesale	1670	1973	Westminster	Covent Garden	3.04	Open	Open	Grant	Private
Fleet	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1737	1829	City	Fleet Canal	1.06	Part covered	Street	City privilege	Public - City
Haymarket	Hay, straw	Wholesale	17th century	1830	Westminster	Haymarket, Piccadilly		Open	Street	Statute	Public - County
Hungerford	Meat etc	Retail	1670	1835	City	Off Cheapside	0.43	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Hungerford	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1680	1862	Westminster	Charing Cross	1.21	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Leadenhall	Meat etc, cloth, leather, hides	Retail - wholesale	ancient	present	City	Leadenhall Street	1.10	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Newgate	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1670	1968	City	Newgate Street	0.66	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Newport	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1686	1868*	Westminster	Grafton Street, Soho	0.26	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Oxford	Meat etc	Retail	1732	1890	Middlesex	Off Oxford Street	0.75	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Queenhithe	Meat flour	Wholesale	ancient	early 19th century	City	Thames Street		Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Rag Fair	Old clothes	Retail - wholesale	late 17th century	late 19th century	Middlesex	Rosemary Lane, Tower Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Red Lion	Meat etc	Retail	1688	mid 18th century	Middlesex	Off Whitecross Street		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Shadwell	Meat etc	Retail	1678*	early 19th century	Middlesex	Upper Shadwell		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Shepherd	Meat etc	Retail	1742	present	Westminster	Mayfair		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Smithfield	Cattle horses hay straw	Wholesale	ancient	1855	City	West Smithfield	4.7-4.1	Open	Open	City privilege	Public - City
Southwark	Hay, straw	Wholesale	ancient	19th century	Southwark	St. Margaret's Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Spitalfields	Meat fruit, veg	Retail - wholesale	1682	1989	Middlesex	Lamb Street	2.81	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
St James's	Meat etc	Retail - wholesale	1664	1816	Westminster	Near St. James's Square		Covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Westminster	Meat etc	Retail	1752	1804	Westminster	Little Sanctuary		Part covered	Enclosure	Statute	Public - Institution
Westminster	Fish	Retail - wholesale	1749	1765*	Westminster	Westminster Bridge		Open	Enclosure	Statute	Public - Institution
Whitechapel	Hay straw	Wholesale	late 17th century	early 20th century	Middlesex	Whitechapel		Open	Street	Unclassified	Private
Whitechapel - Aldgate	Meat sheep and lamb skins	Retail - wholesale	early 18th century*	late 19th century	Middlesex	Aldgate High Street		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known

* indicates uncertainty of date of establishment or discontinuation

London markets in 1840

Name of market	Produce sold	Function	Established	Discontinued	Area	Location	Size	Accommodation	Topography	Authorization	Ownership
Bermondsey	Leather hides	Wholesale	1831	1960*	Southwark	Bermondsey Street - Long Lane		Covered	Enclosure	Unclassified	Private
Billinggate	Fish	Retail - wholesale	ancient	1892	City	Thames Street		Part covered	Riverside	City privilege	Public - City
Borough	Meat, fruit, veg	Retail - wholesale	1756	present	Southwark	Off Borough High Street	3.00	Covered	Enclosure	Statute	Public - Parish
Brook's	Meat, etc	Retail	1682	1900	Middlesex	Holborn	0.25	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Clare	Meat, etc	Retail	1657	1900	Westminster	Drury Lane	0.37	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Coal Exchange	Coal	Wholesale	1770	1962	City	Thames Street		Covered	Enclosure	Statute	Public - City
Com Exchange	Corn, meal seeds	Wholesale	1747	1929	City	Mark Lane		Covered	Enclosure	Unclassified	Private
Com Exchange New	Grain, etc	Wholesale	1826	1929	City	Mark Lane		Covered	Enclosure	Statute	Private
Covent Garden	Fruit veg, flowers	Retail - wholesale	1670	1973	Westminster	Covent Garden	3.04	Part covered	Enclosure	Statute	Private
Cumberland	Hay straw	Wholesale	1830	1940*	Middlesex	Regent's Park, east side		Open	Enclosure	Statute	Public - Institution
Farringdon	Meat, fruit, veg	Retail - wholesale	1829	1892	City	Farringdon Street	1.58	Covered	Enclosure	Statute	Public - City
Hungerford	Meat, etc	Retail - wholesale	1680	1862	Westminster	Chancery Cross	1.21	Covered	Enclosure	Statute	Private
Islington	Cattle	Wholesale	1835	1854	Middlesex	Lower Road	14.69	Part covered	Enclosure	Statute	Private
Leadenhall	Meat, etc, leather, hides	Retail - wholesale	ancient	present	City	Leadenhall Street	1.10	Part covered	Enclosure	Statute	Public - City
Montmar	Meat, etc	Retail	1794	early 20th century	Middlesex	Tottenham Court Road	0.53	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Newgate	Meat, etc	Retail - wholesale	1670	1868	City	Newgate Street	0.66	Part covered	Enclosure	City privilege	Public - City
Newport	Meat, etc	Retail - wholesale	1686	1898*	Westminster	Grafton Street, Soho		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Oxford	Meat, etc	Retail	1732	1880	Middlesex	Off Oxford Street	0.75	Covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Pornman	Meat hay fruit, veg	Retail - wholesale	1831	1908*	Middlesex	Church Street, Paddington	2.50	Part covered	Enclosure	Statute	Private
Rag Fair	Old clothes	Retail - wholesale	late 17th century	late 19th century	Middlesex	Rosemary Lane, Tower Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Shepherd	Meat, etc	Retail	1742	present	Westminster	Mayfair		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Smithfield	Cattle horses, hay, straw	Wholesale	ancient	1855	City	West Smithfield	4.7-6.1	Open	Open	City privilege	Public - City
Southwark	Hay straw	Wholesale	ancient	18th century	Southwark	St. Margaret's Hill		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known
Spitalfields	Meat fruit veg	Retail - wholesale	1682	1989	Middlesex	Lamb Street	2.81	Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
St James's (new site)	Meat etc	Retail	1818	late 19th century	Westminster	Off Haymarket		Part covered	Enclosure	Grant	Private
Warwick Lane	Meat	Wholesale	1831	1866*	City	Newgate Market		Covered	Enclosure	Unclassified	Private
Whitechapel	Hay, straw	Wholesale	late 17th century	early 20th century	Middlesex	Whitechapel		Open	Street	Statute	Private
Whitechapel - Aldgate	Meat	Retail - wholesale	early 18th century*	late 19th century	Middlesex	Aldgate High Street		Open	Street	Unclassified	Not known

* indicates uncertainty of date of establishment or discontinuation

The turnover of London markets, 1660-1840

	<i>1660-1699</i>	<i>1700-1759</i>	<i>1760-1840</i>
<i>New markets</i>	Aldersgate Street Bear Key (corn) Bloomsbury Broad Street Brook's Brookfield (cattle) Chapel St (hay) Covent Garden Holborn Bars Honey Lane Hungerford Newgate Newport Rag Fair (clothes) Red Lion, Cripplegate St. James's St. James's (cattle) Shadwell Spitalfields Wapping Whitechapel (hay)	Bankside (skins) Bishopsgate St (hay) Borough Clerkenwell (skins) Corn Exchange Fleet Ditch (meal) Fleet Lowndes (Carnaby) Oxford Shepherd Westminster (fish) Westminster Whitechapel (meat)	Bermondsey (leather) Coal Exchange Corn Exchange (New) Cumberland (hay) Farringdon Finsbury Fitzroy Grosvenor Islington (cattle) Mortimer Paddington (cattle) Portman St. George, Mayfair St. George, Southwark St. James's (new) Southwark (skins) Warwick Lane (meat)
<i>Discontinued</i>	Aldersgate Street Bishopsgate (meal) Broad Street Cheapside Eastcheap Fish Street Hill Gracechurch Street Newgate Street (meal) Old Fish Street St. James's (cattle) St. Nicholas Shambles St. Paul's Churchyard	Bankside (skins) Bear Key (corn) Brookfield (cattle) Chapel St, Westminster (hay) Fleet Ditch (meal) Holborn Bars King Street, Westminster Southwark Stocks Wapping	Bishopsgate St (hay) Blackwell Hall (cloth) Bloomsbury Carnaby Clerkenwell (skins) Finsbury Fitzroy Fleet Grosvenor Haymarket Honey Lane Paddington (cattle) Queenhithe (meal) Red Lion St. George, Mayfair St. George, Southwark St. James's Shadwell Southwark (skins) Westminster (fish) Westminster Butcher Row
<i>Total turnover</i>	33	23	39
<i>Decennial average</i>	8.3	3.8	4.9

Appendix 4 Parliamentary legislation concerning markets, 1657-1851

(chapter numbers after 1795 given in arabic numerals refer to General, as distinct from Local, legislation)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Act</i>	<i>Subject matter</i>
1663	15 Car. II c. 8	Prevents sale of cattle by butchers
1670	22 Car. II c. 11	City authorized to make compulsory land purchase for new markets
1671	22 & 23 Car. II c. 19	Jobbing and regrating of cattle within 80m of London banned. Renewed together with 1673 amendment, by legislation in 1685, 1692 and 1700
1673	25 Car. II c. 4	Graziers allowed to use salesmen - renewed 1685, 1692, 1700, 1706
1690	2 W & M sess. 1, c. 8	Act fully restores City's ancient market rights
1690	2 W & M sess. 2, c. 8	Regulation of hay markets re frauds (ss. 16-17)
1696	8 & 9 Will. III c. 9	Act to restore the market of Blackwell Hall to the clothiers
1697	8 & 9 Will. III c. 17	Middlesex and Westminster J.P.s appointed to manage the Haymarket
1699	10 Will. III c. 13	Billingsgate a free market for fish wholesale and retail
1704	5 Anne c. 34	No butcher to sell dead/alive cattle within 10m of London
1706	7 Anne c. 6	Butchers may sell dead calves, sheep or lambs in London to each other
1710	8 Anne c. 18	Revival of Assize of Bread (three types) - renewed in 1714
1710	9 Anne c. 26 s. 4	Resale of fish at Billingsgate forbidden
1714	1 Geo. I stat. 2 c. 15 (s. 3)	Measuring facilities at Blackwell Hall for the broadcloth trade
1738	12 Geo. II c. 33	Demolition of old Westminster market for new bridge authorized
1749	22 Geo. II c. 49	Act establishes new fish market for Westminster
1750	23 Geo. II c. 14	New place assigned for holding and regulating market in Westminster
1755	28 Geo. II c. 9	Act abolishes street market in Southwark
1755	28 Geo. II c. 23	St. Saviour's parish empowered to hold market off Borough High St.
1756	29 Geo. II c. 39	Act to improve fortunes of Westminster fish market
1757	30 Geo. II c. 31	Amendments and powers clarified re Borough Market Trustees
1758	31 Geo. II c. 25	Act establishes riverside corn market in Westminster
1758	31 Geo. II c. 29	Assize of Bread amended (two flour types only prescribed)
1758	31 Geo. II c. 40	Act relating to abuses within haymarkets and by cattle salesmen (s. 11)
1760	33 Geo. II c. 27	Regulating sale of fish at Westminster and Billingsgate
1762	2 Geo. III c. 15	Act for better supply of fish - sales to be public and first hand
1762	3 Geo. III c. 11	Assize of Bread amended
1771	11 Geo. III c. 15 (ss. 38, 44)	Whitechapel Paving Act settles tolls and hours in hay market there
1772	12 Geo. III c. 71	Repeals laws against forestallors, etc. 1552 Act, 15 Car. II and 5 Anne.
1772	13 Geo. III c. 62	Repeals 1758 Assize of Bread Act - third kind of bread authorized
1781	21 Geo. III c. 67	Improper cattle driving from Smithfield to be prosecuted by Aldermen.
1790	30 Geo. III c. 54	Discontinues powers of Westminster Fish market trustees
1791	31 Geo. III c. 40	Relating to abuses within haymarkets and by cattle salesmen
1795	36 Geo. III c. 22	Assize of Bread amended - mixed loaves authorized
1796	36 Geo. III c. 88	Regulating haymarkets
1796	36 Geo. III c. 118	Authorizes sale of fish by retail at Billingsgate
1797	37 Geo. III c. 98	Relief to London bakers under Assize of Bread
1798	38 Geo. III c. xxxiii	Grand Junction Canal Act authorizes market at Paddington
1799	39 & 40 Geo. III c. 66	Flying Act - regulation of sheepskin markets
1800	41 Geo. III c. 16	Brown Bread Act bans sale of fine wheaten bread
1801	41 Geo. III c. 53	Flying Act amended
1801	41 Geo. III c. 99	Treasury may grant bounties to supply of London fish markets
1802	42 Geo. III c. lxxxviii	Wholesale regulations eased somewhat at Billingsgate
1803	43 Geo. III c. cvi	Flying Act - market inspection of all London raw hides and skins
1803	43 Geo. III c. cxxxiv	City Corporation acquires coal exchange, made free and open
1804	44 Geo. III c. lxi	Westminster market to be demolished for site of new Guildhall
1804	44 Geo. III c. lxxxii	Coal Market Amendment Act
1805	45 Geo. III c. 23	1797 Act amended
1807	47 Geo. III sess. 2 c. lxxviii	Further provisions for the Coal Exchange

<i>Year</i>	<i>Act</i>	<i>Subject matter</i>
1808	48 Geo. III c. lxxi	Hides and skins Act - new provisions to 1803 Act
1813	53 Geo. III c. lxxi	Defines Bedford's authority over Covent Garden market and tolls
1814	54 Geo. III c. cxv	Flaying Act - further provisions
1815	55 Geo. III c. xciii	Statutory market abolished at Blackwell Hall for site of new courts
1815	55 Geo. III c. 49	Bakers free to sell fixed loaves at own price
1816	56 Geo. III c. xxi	To prevent fraudulent measurement at Coal Exchange
1817	57 Geo. III c. i	To prevent fraudulent measurement at Coal Exchange
1822	3 Geo. IV c. 106	Abolition of all weight and price regulation of bread in London
1823	4 Geo. IV c. xxxiv	Amending powers to Borough Market Trustees of holding markets
1824	5 Geo. IV c. 57	Repeals all previous Flaying Acts, now deemed counterproductive
1824	5 Geo. IV c. cli	Authorizes removal of Fleet Market to adjacent site
1826	7 Geo. IV c. lv	New Corn Exchange authorized to be built in Mark Lane
1828	9 Geo. IV c. cxiii	Rebuilding and regulation of Covent Garden Market authorized
1829	10 Geo. IV c. cxix	Enlarging powers to Borough Market Trustees
1830	11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. lxx	Act forms company to rebuild Hungerford market
1830	11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. lxxi	Market authorized to built on Lord Portman's estate (Portman market)
1830	11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. xiv	Removal of Haymarket to Regent's Park (and est. of two other markets)
1830	11 Geo. IV & 1 Will. IV c. lxiv	Further (financial) provisions relating to removal of Fleet Market
1831	1 & 2 Will. IV c. lxxvi	Act regulates delivery and sale of coals; free and open market
1832	2 & 3 Will. IV c. cxiii	Portman Market Amendment Act enlarges powers
1834	4 Will. IV c.21	Hay and Straw Act repeals 1796 Act for markets not in streets
1834	4 & 5 Will. IV c. xlv	Company formed to build market in Southwark (South London market)
1835	5 & 6 Will. IV c. cxi	Cattle market to be established at Islington despite City protests
1836	6 & 7 Will. IV c. lxxviii	Hungerford Market Amendment Act enlarges powers
1836	6 & 7 Will. IV c. cxxxiii	Suspension bridge to be built from Lambeth to Hungerford market
1837	7 Will. IV & 1 Vic. c. cxiv	South London Market Company's powers amended
1838	1 & 2 Vic. c.101	Coal Exchange Act regulates sale and delivery of coals
1846	9 & 10 Vic. c. cccxvi	Billingsgate Fish Act repeals wholesale restrictions
1851	14 & 15 Vic. c. 61	Smithfield Market Removal Act: City to find new site within 5 years

Acts of Common Council of the City of London

1661	Blackwell Hall	For better regulation of marketing there
1663	Osteries Act	Inns banned as unlicensed shops and exchanges
1672	Relating to the markets	Sale of provisions to be public and first hand
1674	Relating to the markets	Alterations to 1672 Act
1678	Blackwell Hall	All cloth to be brought to Blackwell Hall; bays, etc to Leadenhall
1694	Hawkers Act	Bans sale of non perishables in City markets sold in shops
1700	Fleet Ditch Market Act	To establish a public meal market

Appendix 5 Street markets in London listed by Henry Mayhew, 1851

London labour and the London poor (4 vols., 1851, 1861-2: 1967 edn.), vol. 1, p. 10.

MARKETS ON THE MIDDLESEX SIDE (27)

Hampstead Rd-Tottenham Court Rd.	333	Bethnal Green	100
Brill & Chapel St, Somers Town	300	Shoreditch	100
Whitechapel	258	Limehouse	88
St. George's Market, Oxford Street	177	Islington	79
Leather Lane	150	Edgware Road	78
Whitecross Street, Cripplegate	150	Camden Town	50
Crawford Street	145	City Road	49
Exmouth St & Aylesbury St, Clerkenwell	142	St. John's Street	47
Clare Street	139	Old Street (St. Luke's)	46
Ratcliff Highway	122	Knightsbridge	46
Tothill St & Broadway, Westminster	119	Marylebone	37
Rosemary Lane	119	Pimlico	32
Commercial Road (east)	114	Drury Lane	22
Mile End	105		

3137

MARKETS ON THE SURREY SIDE (10)

New Cut, Lambeth	300	Newington	45
Bermondsey	107	Kent Street, Borough	38
Lambeth Walk	104	Union Street, Borough	29
Blackfriars Road	58	Walworth Road	22
Great Suffolk Street	46	Camberwell	15

664

Total number of stalls / hucksters attending these markets

3801

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| 33489, ff. 160, 169, 173 | Papers relating to City markets and tolls (1684-1704) |
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| 37888, f. 148 | Argument (printed) against the removal of Smithfield Market to Grays Inn (1809) |
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