

CMH Centre for  
Metropolitan  
History

*Annual Report 1997–8  
& Tenth Anniversary Conference Papers*



University of London  
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SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDY  
INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

**CENTRE  
FOR  
METROPOLITAN  
HISTORY**

*Annual Report 1997–8*

(1 August 1997–30 November 1998)

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## 1. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 1998 marked the tenth anniversary of the Centre, celebrated in a conference held on 15 October. This very enjoyable day focused on the themes in metropolitan history pursued by the Centre, presented by those who had undertaken the research. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the nature of the metropolis as an idea and as a place, and on the distinctive features and turning points in London's long history which we have investigated from several disciplinary and methodological points of view. Whatever aspirations we might have for a wide-ranging, balanced and coherent research programme, the outcome is conditioned by the facts of life, among which the most important for an organisation such as the Centre are the availability of skills and the unpredictable outcomes of research grant applications. Nevertheless, the Centre has managed to explore a wide variety of topics and at the same time to address major themes through successive projects. An especially interesting feature of the conference was to experience the juxtaposition of findings made at different stages of the Centre's work and to see unanticipated connections. It was also abundantly clear that metropolitan history is a fertile and ever widening field of enquiry, and offers new ways of understanding social, political, economic and cultural phenomena which extend far beyond the boundaries of the metropolis itself. Most of the papers given at the conference are printed below. The day ended with a good party.

The other major event of the year was the rearrangement of the access to the Centre's rooms in Senate House. The Centre is now approached from within the Institute of Historical Research, and visitors to the Centre should enquire for us at the Institute's reception desk on the ground floor in the north block of Senate House.

Research this year concentrated on four major projects, three of which continued from the previous year. An important area of investigation concerned the role of London as a national market and its interaction with other towns and markets elsewhere in the kingdom, paying particular attention to the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period and to establishing the degree of economic integration which had been achieved by 1300, in comparison with the state of affairs in 1600. This process of integration, which has had a strong influence on the formation of national and regional identities and on the structure of the state, is currently of great interest to social scientists and policy makers in the context of world markets and globalisation. Most of the work so far on the project, which is at the half-way stage, has been concerned with the collection

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and preparation of data, but it is already clear that it will be possible to demonstrate and explain several significant trends in national markets over three centuries.

A related project began in March 1998, and the Centre has been delighted to welcome Samantha Letters, who is working on it. The aim is to compile, analyse, and publish a comprehensive survey of the markets and fairs of England and Wales up to the sixteenth century. The incidence of these institutions is an important indicator of social and political, as well as economic, developments, as a number of local studies have shown, but so far no attempt had been made to delineate a national picture. The project should give us a new understanding of the phenomenon and provide a research tool and work of reference of lasting value.

The 'Mortality in the Metropolis' team is now hard at work writing the book which will provide an account of the dramatic changes in causes of death in London between 1860 and 1920, relating them to living conditions in the many districts of London, and to local sanitary policies and expenditure. Having cracked one major methodological problem (concerning the distorting effect on statistics of those who died in hospitals and other institutions) the team has now solved another, by devising a robust and straightforward way of characterising districts according to their environmental conditions, which were changing continuously throughout the period. In recognition of these and other achievements the Wellcome Trust provided a supplementary grant for the project, enabling the team to continue its work until May 1999, by which date the book should be completed. After that Graham Mooney will take up a Fellowship at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, where he will pursue issues, in part arising from the project and including considerable focus on London, concerning the notification of infectious diseases and its political context in the nineteenth century. Another topic arising from the project concerns the relationship between London hospitals and their 'constituencies'. Great Ormond Street Hospital has records which are especially informative on this theme, and in the summer of 1999 Andrea Tanner will undertake a pilot investigation of whether it will be possible effectively to explore, on a prosopographical basis, the experience of patients and their families of being treated by the hospital during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In September we said farewell to Perry Gauci, who completed his study of English mercantile culture between 1660 and 1720, and moved on to Lincoln College, Oxford. The study explored the ways in which merchants developed a distinctive and effective political culture within a state where the landed interest was

dominant. It focused on London, where mercantile life was strongest, but included studies of the merchant communities in Liverpool and York. Six chapters of a book on the theme have been drafted, and we look forward to its completion.

During the year Heather Creaton's pioneering bibliography and guide to sources for London during the Second World War was completed, edited and published. Heather has now moved on to a new source-related project on unpublished diaries concerning London.

Much thought and effort during the year was devoted to identifying and developing new areas of study. The proposal to promote a programme of activities on London's interaction with the Americas, in the first instance up to the eighteenth century, was taken further, with a plan to hold an international conference on the theme, as a result of which specific activities would be defined. The programme would involve partnerships with transatlantic institutions, one of which was consolidated during a recent brief visit to the United States. Funding possibilities for the conference are now being explored. We also made a bid for funds for an interdisciplinary research programme on the theme of 'London, regions and the nation'. The bid was unsuccessful, but the process of bringing together twenty-one scholars in seven universities and at least six disciplines proved to be a tremendous stimulus to thought, out of which several individual projects are likely to emerge. One at present being planned, and involving architectural and socio-linguistic as well as historical approaches, concerns culture and identity in London suburbs between 1890 and the Second World War.

The theme of London's relationship with the nation and the regions grew out of the Centre's earlier research, which focused attention on the positive force of the metropolis, over more than a thousand years, in shaping both regional and national identities. At a time when devolution has become a political mantra, and when government caution about allowing any significant degree of self-determination to the capital becomes daily more apparent, those long historical processes, still in train today, deserve careful consideration from the point of view of assessing policy and its likely political outcome. Increasingly, therefore, metropolitan history has a practical application for its contribution towards finding solutions to the problems of the day. But whether politicians perceive the value of understanding the past in that light is another matter entirely.

Over the year the Centre has effectively collaborated with the Museum of London, especially in connection with the Museum's development of an archaeological research strategy for London and in contributing towards the interpretation of

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the archaeological material for the early history of London. There are plans for further collaborative work.

A further plan being developed concerns the production of a second volume on London in the now revived British Atlas of Historic Towns. This would cover Westminster and Southwark up to the Reformation, complementing the first volume which dealt with the City of London over the same period. The principal theme would be an interpretation of the physical character of these important suburbs from the Roman period onwards, drawing on recent detailed historical and archaeological research.

The director has also been active as general editor in planning a new history of St Paul's Cathedral. This will be a major work, sponsored by the Dean and Chapter, to be published on the fourteen-hundredth anniversary of the cathedral in 2004.

The director's research and writing over the year has concentrated on chapters concerning London and the south-east of England for the forthcoming *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, a chapter on towns and trade in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe for the *New Cambridge Medieval History*, a chapter on the medieval urban landscape, and interpretive essays on factors influencing the emergence of standard English, on the cultural and practical significance of water in medieval London, and on early medieval industrial organisation. During the year the director also spoke at eight seminars or conferences held in England, Ireland and Italy, and contributed to an extended seminar for Italian urban historians.

In addition to the tenth-anniversary conference, a study day was held on the uses of information technology in metropolitan history. The papers, edited by Jim Galloway, will be published in a forthcoming issue of *History and Computing*. During the year the papers from the international conference on 'Archives and the Metropolis' were published jointly by the Centre and the Corporation of London. The Anglo-French working group on medieval Paris and medieval London met at the Archives Nationales, where a range of documents for the history of medieval Paris was presented and discussed. Visits behind the scenes at the Archives and to the fine exhibition on the reign of Philip the Fair added to the interest and pleasure of the occasion. In two years' time the group plans to hold a more extended conference on forms of power in the two capitals.

The Metropolitan History seminar had 'Merchants, markets and city spaces' as its theme, with papers ranging from thirteenth-century London to Milan in the 1990s, via Central Park.

As well as his research writing, lectures and teaching, the Director served as a member of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, of the English Heritage London Advisory Committee, of the International Commission for the History of Towns, of the Fabric Advisory Committee of St Paul's Cathedral, of the advisory committee for the 'Winchester Pipe Rolls' project at the Hampshire Record Office, of the British Historic Towns Atlas Committee, and as managing Trustee of the *London Journal*.

During the year the nine staff of the Centre were joined by four Visiting Fellows. Bill Luckin, of Bolton Insitute, continued as team leader of the 'Mortality in the Metropolis' project. Graham Twigg, of Royal Holloway, worked on epidemics in London between 1540 and 1720. Michael Davis, of the University of Queensland, investigated the London Corresponding Society, 1792–9. Angel Alloza, of the Autonomous University of Madrid, who was with us for two years completed a comparative study of crime in European capital cities. Visitors were welcomed from Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, the USA, and Uzbekistan.

## 2. PROJECT REPORTS

### i METROPOLITAN MARKET NETWORKS *c.*1300–1600

This three-year project examines changes in London's interaction with its region, and with the wider economy of England, over the course of three centuries. It aims to delineate change from *c.*1300, when London achieved a peak in size and wealth which was perhaps not to be surpassed until 1550, through the demographic contractions, redistribution of wealth, commercial development and economic cycles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to 1600, when the metropolis dominated the realm as never before. In particular, the study focuses upon changes in the extent and structure of London's economic hinterland, its centrality within the English economy, the degree of market integration within that economy and the role of London in the process of integration.

The evidence of debt litigation in the central courts, covering both London's immediate hinterland and more distant regions of England, is being used to construct pictures of commercial networks *c.*1300, *c.*1400 and in the later sixteenth century. In this, the project builds upon work undertaken during its predecessor, 'Market networks in the London region *c.*1400', during the course of which a substantial database was compiled from Court of Common Plea records of debts 'laid' in ten counties around London in three sample Michalemas Term plea rolls. In the early stages of the current project the data collected from the plea roll for 1424, for which the best-quality data was available, was extended to include debt cases laid in the counties of Devon, Staffordshire and Yorkshire. This exercise produced a database of over 4,000 debts. During the past year a major objective of the project has been to assemble broadly comparable samples of data from the early fourteenth and later sixteenth centuries, to permit study of long-term changes in London's economic hinterland and more generally in the spatial organisation of the regional and national economies.

The collection strategy has been modified to take into account changes in the quality of data recorded in the plea rolls during the period under study. In particular, it was found that quality declined significantly after *c.*1570, with the recording of the residence of plaintiffs in debt cases — a key piece of information for reconstructing spatial patterns of interaction — virtually ceasing by *c.*1580. Rather than selecting a roll from *c.*1600, as had been hoped, it was therefore decided to use the Michaelmas 1570 plea roll for study, as being broadly comparable to that from 1424. A database of just over 3,000 debts has been compiled from this roll. In the time available approximately four-fifths of the term's roll was used. To give



an impression of change during the course of the sixteenth century, and in part to compensate for the lack of a substantial data collection from *c.* 1600, ninety-five detailed cases were collected from five additional rolls from *c.* 1500 and 106 from the Michaelmas Term roll for 1602. Some 170 parallel cases were included in the primary data collection from the 1570 roll. Such cases provide valuable information on the transaction leading to a debt, including the nature of commodities bought and the terms for payment, and on occasion specify detailed arrangements for delivery of goods. Much incidental information occurs in such cases, providing vivid insights into consumption patterns and the organisation of provisioning and distributive networks. The residence of plaintiffs can often be inferred from these detailed cases, even where it is not explicitly stated.

The rolls from *c.* 1300 are less bulky and contain much less detailed information on residences and occupations than do those of later periods. It was found, however, that by the third decade of the fourteenth century more such details were being included in the rolls, sufficient to permit at least some comparative analysis. The roll from Michaelmas Term 1329 was selected for study, and a database of some 600 debt and account pleas compiled. It seems evident that Londoners made less use of the Court of Common Pleas in the early fourteenth century than at later periods, and so this data has been supplemented by a sample drawn from two ‘London’ sources: firstly, some 300 debt recognizances from the period 1276–1304 contained in the London Letter Books and secondly, over 150 recognizances made before the Mayor of London under the statute of Acton Burnel in the years 1313–15, held in the Corporation of London Letter Books. Taken together these sources should provide the basis for at least a partial reconstruction of London’s economic hinterland at an early peak in its demographic history.

The second major group of sources collected during the course of the year concern grain price series for various parts of England, which are to be used to test for market integration at different periods. Using the Beveridge Prices and Wages collection at the London School of Economics and copies obtained from the papers of the late David Farmer deposited in the University of Saskatchewan Library, together with various other manuscript and printed collections, several dozen price series covering longer or shorter parts of the period 1300–1600 have been assembled, and collection is continuing. A priority is to locate more material for northern England where, with the notable exception of Durham, few price series are known to survive.

Much helpful information on the location of price material is being offered by colleagues, for which we are most grateful. Amongst the most valuable series

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are the precisely dated wheat prices for Exeter, which extend in almost unbroken sequence from 1316 onwards. This will form one of the bench-mark series in the analysis, and it will be possible to measure the extent of co-variation, and by implication of market integration, between London and Exeter at various periods between the early fourteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Early indications are that integration levels were high before the Black Death and in the sixteenth century, but were significantly lower in the decades after 1349. Provisional analysis of manorial price material suggests that even core grain-supply routes such as the London-Henley axis may have experienced significant disruption in the 1350s and 1360s.

Detailed analysis of this debt and price material, supplemented by a limited range of local sources, will form the next stage of the research. Already, however, it promises to yield important insights into changes and continuities in London's role within the economic life of England over the course of three centuries.

*This 36-month project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (Ref. No.: R000237253).*

*This report was presented at the CMH Conference 'Exploring the Metropolis' on 15 October 1998.*

This two-year ESRC-funded project commenced in March 1998. It has, however, been substantially delayed due to illness. It is hoped that the project can be extended commensurably and will therefore end in May 2000.

The project aims to produce a gazetteer of markets and fairs in England and Wales down to 1540. The network of markets and fairs in medieval England was one of the densest and most highly developed in Europe. The growth and development of this network is linked to trends in population and settlement, in commercialisation and economic specialisation. The history of markets and fairs also sheds light on the exercise of royal power and reflects the development of the laws affecting trade. Studying this network sheds light on our regional and national history.

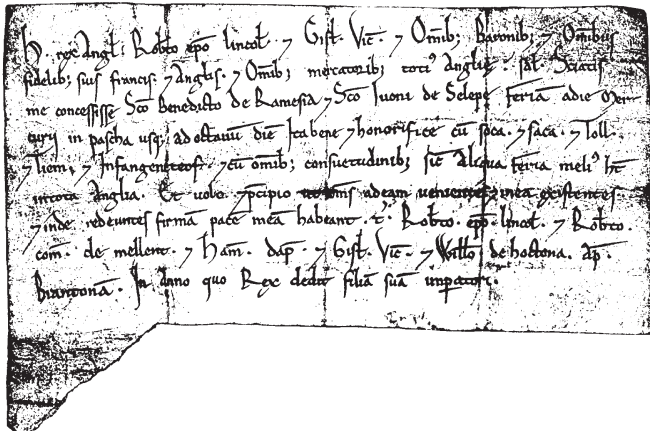


Fig. 1. Henry I's charter to Ramsey Abbey granting the right to hold a fair at St Ives (Huntingdonshire) dated 1110.

Despite the importance of medieval markets and fairs, at present lists of these have only been published for twelve English counties. These lists have been generated as part of valuable local studies and have prompted much interest in the subject. The indications are that many markets and fairs were well established by 1100. The number of markets and fairs rose rapidly in the thirteenth century, particularly in the 1250s. After around 1350 numbers declined, and this decline continued throughout the fifteenth century.

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When completed, the gazetteer will comprise detailed lists of the markets and fairs in every English county and also in Wales. The gazetteer will be in two forms: firstly published as a book and secondly as a database held at the Centre. It is hoped that the database may also be available on-line. This comprehensive national study will be of use both to those interested in markets and fairs *per se* and to others concerned with wider economic and social investigations. The project does not include Scotland and Ireland, due to the lack of comparable source material.

In order to set up the databases used to record the information, a pilot project has been undertaken using Essex as a test county. Essex was chosen as it was large and fairly densely populated, and as a pilot project was likely to raise many of the problems which would be encountered at a later date. Professor Richard Britnell had studied the numerous markets and fairs of Essex extensively and made his lists available for the project. A second list has been published by the Essex Record Office. Details of the markets and fairs were compiled beginning with the information from these lists and checked with the principal primary source material (discussed in detail below).

Useful evidence for the survival of markets and fairs beyond the medieval period was taken from Professor Everitt's list of market towns in 1500–1640, published in the *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, and the list of fairs drawn up by W. Harrison in 1587. Standard information was given for each place in the database, to provide context and a basis for comparison. The value of the place in the lay subsidy of 1334, a good indicator of relative wealth and size, was taken from a database recently compiled under the supervision of Professor Campbell of the Queen's University, Belfast. A six figure grid reference was also provided for each place. References were given to fuller accounts of the history of each location, particularly to those in the *Victoria County History of Essex*.

When the pilot project was successfully completed, a total of 88 places in Essex were found to have either a market or a fair, or both. Overall, there were 97 markets and 76 fairs. Comparison with the other county lists that have been drawn up suggests that this is a large number for both markets and fairs. This probably reflects the wealth and population of Essex.

The Idealist database package was used to collect, compile and record the information. Idealist meets the project's requirements as it is very flexible and accepts the wide range of information that has to be entered. A separate database was set up for each English county and another for Wales. Within each database

**STRUCTURE OF THE IDEALIST DATABASE**

<b><u>FIELD</u></b>	<b><u>COMMENTS</u></b>
<b>Place ID GAZ</b>	Each place will have its own ID number.
<b>MODNAME</b>	Name of the place.
<b>County</b>	County.
<b>Country GAZ</b>	England or Wales.
<b>GridX</b>	Grid refs will be entered manually later in the project. Given to six figures.
<b>GridY</b>	See above.
<b>Borough</b>	Y[es] or N[o].
<b>Borough 1st Date</b>	First date place recorded as a borough. Particularly important if pre-dates earliest known market charter.
<b>Borough Source</b>	Source of the above information, usually Beresford and Finberg, <i>English Medieval Boroughs</i> .
<b>Mint</b>	Dates when mint recorded, taken from Challis, <i>A New History of Royal Mint</i> .
<b>VAL 1334</b>	Valuation for Lay Subsidy of 1334 (£) will be entered manually later in project.
<b>History GAZ</b>	Any other information about the place.
<b>Market Town c1600</b>	Y[es] or N[o]. Important to determine whether the market survived into the early modern period.
<b>Market Town Source</b>	Usually taken from Everitt's list of market towns c.1500-1640 in the <i>Agrarian History of England and Wales</i> , iv (1967).
<b>See GAZ</b>	References to further sources of information regarding the place e.g. an account in <i>VCH</i> .
<b>M1</b>	Prescriptive (P), at a borough (PB) or mint (PM) <i>or</i> granted by charter (GC), letter close (GC), letter patent (GP) or other means (GO).
<b>M1 DAYS</b>	Day(s) market was held.
<b>M1 No Of Days</b>	Number. Of days market lasted
<b>M1 1st Recorded</b>	Date market first recorded; particularly important if it was a prescriptive market.
<b>M1 Term Used</b>	e.g. <i>forum</i>
<b>M1 Prescriptive Held By</b>	Who was holding the market, if it was prescriptive.
<b>M1 Charter Year</b>	Year the grant was made, whether by charter, letters close or letters patent.
<b>M1 Charter Date</b>	Date.
<b>M1 Grantor</b>	Grantor, usually King. (e.g. K Hen III, K Edw I).
<b>M1 Type Grantor</b>	Coding to be decided.
<b>M1 Grantee</b>	Grantee, with description given in the source (Earl, clerk, wife of Y, etc.).
<b>M1 Grantee Type</b>	Coding to be decided.
<b>M1 Source</b>	CChR; CCR etc..
<b>M1 Confirmation Year</b>	Year grant was confirmed.
<b>M1 Confirmation Date</b>	Date of above.
<b>M1 Confirmation From</b>	Who grant was confirmed by.
<b>M1 Confirmation To</b>	Who confirmation was made to.
<b>M1 Confirmation Source</b>	Source.
<b>M1 Notes</b>	Location of the market. Any change of market day. Evidence of the market being active, e.g. from Inquisitions Post Mortem.
<b>M2</b>	Second Market. All fields repeated.
<b>M3</b>	Third Market. All fields repeated.

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<b>FAIR</b>	Y[es]
<b>FAIR1</b>	Prescriptive (P), at a borough (PB) or mint (PM) or granted by charter (GC), letter close (GC), letter patent (GP) or other means (GO).
<b>Fair1 Days Held</b>	in the form vfm+1 to represent the vigil, feast and morrow, plus the following day
<b>Fair1 Feast</b>	Feast e.g. Michaelmas
<b>Fair1 Feast Date</b>	e.g. 29 Sept
<b>Fair1 Duration In Days</b>	Number
<b>Fair1 Term Used</b>	e.g. <i>feria</i> .
<b>Fair1 1st Reference</b>	Date fair first referred to; important if prescriptive.
<b>F1 Owner Prescriptive</b>	Who was holding the fair, if prescriptive.
<b>Fair1 Charter Year</b>	Year grant of fair made.
<b>Fair1 Charter Date</b>	Date of grant.
<b>Fair1 Grantor</b>	Grantor.
<b>Fair1 Grantor Type</b>	Coding to be decided.
<b>Fair1 Grantee</b>	Grantee, with description given in the source (Earl, clerk, wife of Y, etc.).
<b>Fair1 Grantee Type</b>	Coding to be decided.
<b>Fair1 Source</b>	Source.
<b>FAIR1 CONF Year</b>	Year grant was confirmed.
<b>FAIR1 CONF Date</b>	Date of above.
<b>FAIR1 CONF From</b>	Who grant was confirmed by.
<b>FAIR1 CONF To</b>	Who confirmation was made to.
<b>FAIR1 CONF Source</b>	Source.
<b>Fair1 Notes</b>	Location of the market. Any change of market day. Evidence of the fair being active, e.g. from Inquisitions Post Mortem.
<b>FAIR2</b>	Second Fair. All fields repeated.
<b>FAIR3</b>	Third Fair. All fields repeated.
<b>Harrison</b>	Mention of the fair in W. Harrison, Description of England (1587).
<b>Notes</b>	General notes.

Fig. 2. Outline structure of the Idealist database

is a record for each place. Each record has 135 fields, comprising nineteen fields for each of three markets and twenty fields for each of three fairs. There are also eighteen fields for general information (see Fig. 2). The provision for three markets and fairs in each record is sufficient for most places, except for large towns. Any extra markets or fairs will have to be typed into the gazetteer. Building the database took up a considerable amount of time. It was important to have the structure set up correctly from the beginning, in order to prevent alterations later in the project.

The Idealist database for Essex was completed as far as possible in the time allowed for the pilot project (evidence from the Close and Patent Rolls, Inquisitions Post Mortem, Quo Warranto, the Hundred Rolls and miscellaneous other printed sources, such as cartularies, will be entered at a later stage). The information the database contains was transferred into a word processing package

**FOBBING.** 571800 183900. 1334 Subsidy £63.78.

**M** (Charter), Wed, gr 16 Jul 1227 by K Hen III to Thomas de Camville (*CChR*, 1226-57, p. 52).

**M** (Charter), Thurs, gr 1318 by K Edw II to Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex (*CChR*, 1300-1326, p. 376).

**F** (Charter), vf, Martin (11 Nov), gr 16 Jul 1227 by K Hen III to Thomas de Camville (*CChR*, 1226-57, p. 52).

**F** (Charter), f+2, Martin (11 Nov), gr 1318 by K Edw II to Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex (*CChR*, 1300-1326, p. 376).

**GOOD EASTER.** 562600 212000. 1334 Subsidy £26.73.

**M** (Charter), Thurs, gr 17 Jul 1309 by K Edw II to Dean of St Martin le Grand, London (*CChR*, 1300-1326, p. 129).

**F** (Charter), vf, Peter ad Vincula (1 Aug), gr 17 Jul 1309 by K Edw II to Dean of St Martin le Grand, London (*CChR*, 1300-1326, p. 129).

**GRAYS THURROCK.** 561300 177700. 1334 Subsidy £67.50.

**M** (Letter Close), Fri, gr 15 May 1221 by K Hen III to Richard de Grey (*RLC*, i, 458a) Granted until K Hen III came of age. A permanent Fri market was granted to Richard de Grey on 2 Feb 1239. (*CChR*, 1226-57, p. 241).

**F** (Charter), vf, Peter and Paul (29 Jun), gr 2 Feb 1239 by K Hen III to Richard de Grey (*CChR*, 1226-57, p. 241).

**GREAT BADDOW.** 572900 204900. 1334 Subsidy £61.02.

**M** (Letter Close), Wed, gr 8 Nov 1306 by K Edw I (*CCR*, 1302-7, p. 421)

**F** (Letter Close), vfm, Michael (29 Sept), gr 8 Nov 1306 by K Edw I (*CCR*, 1302-07, p. 421).

Sheriff of Essex ordered to establish and publicise the market and fair. Great Baddow was a royal manor.

**GREAT BARDFIELD.** 567800 230300. Borough in 1253 (*BF*, p. 108). 1334 Subsidy £70.69.

**M** (Prescriptive), Sat, recorded in Nov 1224, held by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester (*CRR*, xi, 2805; *CRR*, xii, 45). Jury was asked if the market at Dunmow (q.v.) was to the detriment of that of the Earl at Great Bardfield. In Jan 1296, Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, held a market in Great Bardfield from which stallage worth 13s 4d was payable at the Purification. (*CIPM*, iii, p. 237).

Fig. 3. A sample page for Essex from the *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1540*

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(Microsoft Word) to produce a sample gazetteer (see Fig. 3). A complex merge file was set up to transfer the information, which should reduce the amount of editing necessary in future.

The size of the Idealist databases makes them too large and complex to allow much analysis other than very basic sorts. In order to perform more detailed analysis and produce statistics, the Idealist files were converted into dBase. This is a much simplified database with the paragraphs of descriptive text removed, leaving core data of only seventeen fields giving the name and grid reference of the place, whether or not it was a borough, its value in the 1334 lay subsidy and details of its market(s) and/or fair(s). Most of the fields were exported from Idealist, although some had to be typed in manually. The dBase database allows calculations of, for example, the survival rate of markets into the early modern period, dependant on the means of foundation, or the failure rate of fairs, dependant on the period in which they were granted.

Further analysis of the information is possible using the mapping program, MapInfo, to reveal chronological and spatial developments. Using the Essex material, a basic set of maps was produced showing the geographical spread of markets and fairs at intervals of one hundred years. It is also possible to measure the distance between markets and fairs, to determine to what extent local markets were arranged into circuits and to analyse the seasonality of fairs. It is intended that the Introduction to the *Gazetteer* will include a series of maps illustrating these points for England and Wales as a whole. It will also be possible to produce regional comparisons and to focus on individual counties as case studies.

When the Essex pilot project was complete, work began on collecting the information relating to the remaining English counties and to Wales. It was decided that, rather than work from published county lists which did not follow consistent practice, data collection should begin with the original source material. The number and range of these potential sources for medieval markets and fairs is one of the main problems when compiling this gazetteer. In the two years available, it is not possible to cover all of this material and therefore limits have been set from the very beginning. The main focus will be on the printed primary source material.

By the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the king had the exclusive right to license markets and fairs as a franchise. These royal grants are recorded in the charter rolls, which begin in 1199. Therefore the starting point was the *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, the single largest source. Five volumes of the



*Calendar* cover the period from 1227 to 1516. All references to markets and fairs have been noted page by page. The sheer number of grants made this a very slow process, taking longer than expected. There are relevant charters on almost every page of the first two volumes of the Charter Rolls, which cover most of the thirteenth century. This underlines the fact that Henry III and Edward I granted an enormous number of charters for markets and fairs. In particular, there is a very large number of grants in the 1250s. Having progressed into the fourteenth century, and particularly after around 1360, the number of grants began to decline quite dramatically. Charters dating from the fifteenth century generally alter the terms of existing markets and fairs, rather than establish new ones. These alterations to the date or duration of markets and fairs reflect the changing economic and social circumstances of the period. They are interesting, as they often provide detail as to why a market or fair was struggling (the hardship experienced by the area, the unwillingness of people to trade on a given date, the effects of war) and why it was thought another date would be more successful.

The end result was a total of 1,546 places recorded as receiving a charter in England between 1227 and 1516, with 1,417 markets and 1,874 fairs. Initially, the discrepancy between the number of fairs and of markets appeared surprising. However, it seems likely that more markets than fairs were prescriptive — set up by no known charter — long before the right to grant a market or fair became a royal franchise. There is no evidence of markets in the *Calendar of Charter Rolls* for many towns known to have had markets (Buckingham, for example). It seems likely that when the prescriptive markets are entered into the database, the number of markets will exceed that of fairs. Overall, the number of markets found from the charter roll evidence and those found by Richard Britnell in his study of markets down to 1349 are compatible.

The charter rolls provide evidence of 55 places in Wales with a market or fair and a total of 48 markets and 83 fairs. There are a few grants of markets and fairs from Henry III's reign to places such as Montgomery and Degannwy, which were under English influence. The vast majority of Welsh grants found in the Charter Rolls date from Edward I's reign. These fall into three distinct periods: 1279–81, 1284 and 1290–93. Obviously, this reflects Edward I's campaigns in Wales and the periods of English settlement afterwards. It seems that there are the most grants in the last period, 1290–93. Thereafter, the volume of grants falls off very slowly through Edward I's reign and into that of Edward II. The number of charters declines after 1350, but in the fifteenth century, there are still some grants and a surprising number of alterations to the terms of existing charters.

## MARKETS AND FAIRS

It is important to note that these are only provisional numbers from the charter roll evidence and that they will change as the project continues. It is possible that the number of chartered markets and fairs has been artificially inflated. During the compilation of the gazetteer, it has been assumed that all grants are new markets or fairs, unless there is specific mention of a re-grant, confirmation, move or change of date, or the grant reiterates the terms of an existing charter (i.e. the same market or fair is granted by the same grantor to the same grantee). However, there are numerous examples of comparatively small places which have several grants of markets and fairs. These places were almost certainly too small to sustain more than one market or fair. The difficulty in differentiating between several markets and fairs at one place is an ongoing problem. It seems likely that subsequent research and consultation of the secondary sources will demonstrate that there was actually only one market or one fair.

Moreover, whilst a charter granted the *right* to hold a market or fair, this did not necessarily mean that the market or fair was ever established. In fact, from 1200 onwards royal charters were conditional: they granted the right to hold a market or fair only if this was not to the detriment of neighbouring markets or fairs. It is therefore a necessary precaution to corroborate a charter with other material to be certain that a specific trading institution was ever set up. Therefore, in the later stages of the project, evidence for this will be sought in sources such as the Inquisitions Post Mortem and Hundred Rolls. Some of the grants in the Charter Rolls were inevitably not used, for a variety of reasons.

Even if a charter did result in a functioning market or fair, this was no guarantee that it would survive through and beyond the middle ages. It appears that the earlier a market or fair was established, the greater its chances of survival through the medieval period and into the sixteenth century. A great many of the markets and fairs established in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did not survive into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Information regarding the survival and, if appropriate, the date of the decline of each market and fair will have to be collected. As there is no single source from which this information can be gathered, essentially this involves searching for passing references to markets and fairs that are functioning. Clearly, this is an enormous task and again limits have had to be set. Evidence will be taken from the Inquisitions Post Mortem and Inquisitions Miscellaneous, from the great inquiries such as Quo Warranto and the Hundred Rolls and from the Rolls of Parliament. This information has not yet been collected for the Essex pilot project.

Finally, the figures from the charter rolls do not represent the actual number of markets and fairs, as the charters do not contain information regarding the royal

demesne. For example, there is no evidence for the market and fair at Great Baddow, Essex, on the charter rolls, as Great Baddow was a royal manor. Information for this market and fair and all the others on the royal demesne has to be taken from the Close and Patent Rolls. These will be examined later in the project.

It was originally the intention to note every *inspeximus* and confirmation of a charter which included the grant of a market or fair but once Edward I's reign had been reached it became clear that this was not going to be possible. The sheer number of these *inspeximus* charters, which increase during the fourteenth century, made noting and checking them for relevant grants far too time-consuming. It was decided that only those *inspeximus* that relate to charters from sources otherwise not checked should be noted. This helped to speed up the process of going through the later volumes of the charter rolls.

In addition to the details of the grants, the process of securing a charter is being examined and it is hoped to incorporate a discussion about the stages involved, the means of ensuring that a market or fair was not to the detriment of its neighbours and the amount paid for a charter. There are at least five examples which suggest that charters were not valid indefinitely. For example, the first charter for a fair at King's Lynn was granted in 1283. This fair was not established. A second charter for a fair was granted in 1316, which stated that the fair could be held, regardless of the fact that it had not been held since the original grant in 1283. If the right to hold a fair was granted indefinitely, there would have been no need for this second charter. There are other similar examples, where the original charter had not been used and second charters or special dispensations were granted. A 'time limit' on such may well have been linked to the need to establish that a new market or fair was not to the detriment of neighbouring trading institutions. It is not clear how long this 'time limit' may have been: in the case of King's Lynn, the charter was 33 years old. In the other examples, the two charters are over 100 years apart.

Many medieval royal documents, including the Charter Rolls, began to be systematically recorded in the late twelfth century. However, many of the most important and oldest markets and fairs were already well established by this time. Whilst some date from after the Norman Conquest, Domesday Book provides evidence for others in the Anglo-Saxon period. There is nothing in Anglo-Saxon law that corresponds to the Anglo-Norman idea of a market or fair as a specific franchise, subject to royal control. Given the absence of adequate sources, it is not possible to ascertain when these prescriptive markets and fairs originated, whether they were deliberately set up or if they developed informally.

## MARKETS AND FAIRS

For the second stage of the project, attention has turned to the most important sources for prescriptive markets and fairs. Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman places with borough status, or which possessed a mints, operated as centres of local trade and had markets. It is usually possible to provide an earliest known date of operation for a borough or mint. Information regarding boroughs has been taken from M.W. Beresford and H.P.R. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs* and for Anglo-Saxon mints from C. Challis, *A New History of Royal Mint*. Evidence for Domesday boroughs and markets was taken from H.C. Derby, *Domesday England*, and for grants of markets and fairs during William I's reign D. Bates ed., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, The Acta of William I (1066–87)*. For Welsh information, I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* and R.A. Griffiths, *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* have been consulted. The published Pipe Rolls, which are an invaluable source of information for fines relating to grants of markets and fairs in the mid to late twelfth century, are also being checked.

The analysis of the numbers of prescriptive and granted markets and fairs and the respective survival rates of these into the late medieval period and beyond is one of the principal aims of the project. All markets and fairs are treated as prescriptive unless evidence of a grant is found. Every market and fair is given a code, based on whether it is prescriptive or granted. There is also a category for the small number of prescriptive markets or fairs that are known to have been formalised in a charter. It is, however, important to note that some markets or fairs which appear to have been established by a charter, were probably operating before the charter was granted.

Although the Introduction to the *Gazetteer* will not be written until late in 1999, an outline structure has been drawn up and ideas for the discussion and examples noted.

An extensive database has been set up using the Papyrus program to record books and articles relevant to the project. Another database of standard reference works which can be utilised in areas not covered by the *Victoria County History* has also been established.

*This 24-month project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (Ref No.: R000237395).*

iii ENGLISH MERCHANT CULTURE: THE IMPACT OF THE  
OVERSEAS TRADER IN STATE AND SOCIETY 1660–1720

On 30 September 1998 the project came to a close after three years of stimulating research into the political and social role of the English overseas trader. In the final year work principally centred on the examination of provincial merchants, and on the drafting of the book to be published on our findings.

The archives of York and Liverpool continued to supply excellent materials for the study of the Augustan merchant, and we were especially fortunate to be able to investigate themes reflecting developments in London, most notably mercantile settlement patterns, and the ways in which traders attempted to manipulate the political system to further their ends. Although dwarfed in scale by the capital, a declining York and a booming Liverpool demonstrated that provincial merchants could be just as responsive to national change as their metropolitan brethren, and indeed acted in tandem with London traders to achieve their objectives. Although restricted in timescale, this work suggested that much further research is needed on the development of provincial ‘political economy’, and on the connections between central and peripheral élites.

Table 1. Origins of Liverpool mercantile apprentices 1707–27

Origin	Number	Father’s status or occupation		
		Esq/Gent	Yeoman/Husbandman	Tradesman
Liverpool	6	0	0	5
Lancashire	32	5	8	7
Cheshire	22	3	3	4
Yorkshire	7	4	0	3
Rest of England	14	6	3	1
Wales	2	1	0	0
Scotland	2	0	0	0
Ireland	4	2	0	0
Colonies	2	0	0	1
Unknown	9	-	-	-
Total	100	21	14	22

Most of the year, however, has been dedicated to the writing up of the project’s results. In its final state, the book will consist of six chapters, broadly divided into two sections. The first section of three chapters will examine the merchant himself, outlining the distinctive character of his commercial society in terms of

## ENGLISH MERCHANT CULTURE

urban environment, life-cycle and association. Analysis of our sample of 850 London merchants will dominate each of these three chapters, but there will also be significant sections comparing metropolitan developments with the experience of some 300 York traders and 250 at Liverpool. These sections provide essential background studies for the second half of the book, which will consider the broad, 'public' impact of the merchant.

This structure is most deliberate, highlighting the overwhelming importance of family and profit to the individual, but in turn acknowledging the significance of social and political connections to the achievement of such personal ends. These links are the key to understanding the impact of the merchant in the wider environments of region and realm, and it can be shown that overseas traders were most sensitive to contemporary changes within the late Stuart state. Furthermore, the public profile of the merchant was itself changing, and examination of political institutions, media and events can illuminate many of the forces working to fashion the social and political character of a burgeoning imperial power.

A first draft of 95,000 words has been completed, and will hopefully go to press in 1999. In addition to the book, the databases produced by the project will remain available for public access at the CMH.

*This 36-month project was funded by the Leverhulme Trust.*

When the ‘Mortality in the Metropolis 1860–1920’ team began its work in the summer of 1995, its members were already aware of the probable ‘uniqueness’ of London’s demographic and epidemiological structures. But they were uncertain about how best to chart and explain exceptionally complex intraurban differentials in cause-specific death-rates. Three and a half years later, as chapters of the large-scale study which was described in last year’s *Annual Report* continue to be produced, there is a degree of confidence that a number of important issues relevant to that task have been clarified.

Firstly, building on H.J.Dyos’s seminal insights of the late 1950s and 1960s, we are now convinced that the capital during this period is best and most meaningfully depicted as a collection of highly individualistic townships rather than as a single, spatially-coordinated and integrated metropolitan centre. In terms of comparative urban history, it can only be hoped that this conceptualization will make it more likely that historians will begin to juxtapose epidemiological processes in ‘unfashionable’ places like Wandsworth, Hackney and Marylebone against similar experiences in Liverpool, Birmingham and Leeds. Thus far, however, the sheer scale of the capital — as well as its quite extraordinary degree of administrative complexity — seem to have militated against such work. The very terms ‘vestry’ and ‘metropolitan borough’ have, it would seem, dissuaded urban and medical historians from engaging with the grass-roots evolution of the different districts and regions of the capital.

Next, there is the issue of ‘municipalism’. As we noted in our contribution to last year’s *Report*, there can now be little doubt that, both in terms of the general death-rate as well as levels of mortality from specific conditions, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century London must be counted as one of the healthiest cities in Europe, if not the world. But this was emphatically not how large numbers of metropolitan and provincial public health reformers, appalled at the alleged corruption and torpidity of the metropolitan vestries between the 1870s and the 1890s, viewed things. Zealous advocates of the municipal gospel, they stridently contended that, only when local administration had been comprehensively reconstructed, as well as periodically investigated and disciplined by a centralized and modernizing city-wide authority, would the capital’s environmental and health performance undergo significant improvement.

The findings of the ‘Mortality’ project suggest that this barrage of reformist rhetoric probably had as much to do with the belated emergence of genuinely

ideological conflicts over the ‘future of the metropolis’ as with the quality of life experienced by the great majority of Londoners. Our detailed epidemiological data also lends support to a small but increasingly influential body of literature which may one day finally save the much-maligned (and indisputably corrupt) Metropolitan Board of Works from the ‘massive condescension of posterity.’ When this predominantly institutional mode of analysis is extended into the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, it appears to reinforce the revisionist view that the Progressive ambitions of the London County Council were only briefly and imperfectly realized. At the same time, the ‘backward’ metropolitan boroughs — ‘pseudo-municipalities that had not yet emerged from vestrydom’ — probably confronted public health problems as assiduously and effectively as their provincial counterparts. Savagely attacked by reforming centralizers, they nevertheless invested in broadly relevant infrastructure, presided over the growth of larger scientific and environmental bureaucracies and began to make inroads into the seemingly insoluble problem of overcrowding. We shall not be presenting the epidemiological status of the capital at the very end of our period in unrealistically Panglossian terms — the continued existence of quite exceptionally deprived ‘black spots’ in affluent districts in the years between Booth’s great surveys of the 1890s and the immediate aftermath of the First World War will not support such a conclusion. Nevertheless, the narrowing health divide between the richest and poorest areas casts doubt on the still widely-held view that, because they were not regularly audited by an effective city-wide body, the early twentieth-century metropolitan boroughs were in some sense less competent and less committed to disease prevention than the longer-established municipalities.

As noted elsewhere in this *Report* (pp. 67–76, below), the methodology employed by the team to describe and partially interpret the differing epidemiological experiences of the capital during the period under review has involved a rejection of the crude compass-point approach employed by many nineteenth-century contemporaries and twentieth-century historians. Rather, the index of the rate of growth of inhabited buildings has been used to create four spatial and environmental ‘sectors’ — the contracting core, stable core, inner suburbs and outer suburbs. This has prepared the way for detailed analysis of cause-specific mortality within each of the metropolitan registration districts, organized on a ‘life-cycle’ basis and covering conditions predominantly associated with infancy, childhood and adulthood.

Although this summary has emphasized the remarkable degree of epidemiological progress achieved in the capital from the late eighteenth century onwards, and



the light that this ‘anomaly’ may throw on seminal issues in comparative urban and medical history, the role of ‘epidemic crisis’ has not been ignored. Focusing on the final cholera epidemic of 1866, the large-scale outbreak of smallpox in 1871–2, and the terrible influenza pandemic in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, the team is drawing on data from a carefully selected ‘middle tier’ of districts in order to describe and interpret impact and response.

*This 46-month project is funded by the Wellcome Trust.*

Heather Creaton, the Centre's Deputy Director, is responsible for this aspect of its activities.

a) BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PRINTED WORKS ON LONDON HISTORY TO 1939: SUPPLEMENT

Entries have continued to be added to this database, which will eventually form a ten-year supplement to the published *Bibliography of Printed Works on London History to 1939* (LAPL, 1994), listing publications appearing from 1991–2000. Once again, Guildhall Library and the Bishopsgate Institute Library have generously supplied references for new London titles added to their own collections, and the total number of items has now reached 4,200. Much searching remains to be done.

b) SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF LONDON, 1939–45: A GUIDE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Much of Heather Creaton's time this year was taken up in completing the writing up and preparation of this guide for the printers, in consultation with Janet Foster, editor of the British Records Association's series 'Archives and the User'. Staff at the Imperial War Museum were kind enough to read the finished text, and made many useful suggestions and corrections. The camera-ready copy was prepared with efficiency and skill by Olwen Myhill, and the finished product contains thirty-nine illustrations of documents and other sources. The guide was published by the British Records Association in December 1998.

c) CHECKLIST OF UNPUBLISHED DIARIES ABOUT LONDON

The Centre's newest bibliographical project, started in the course of 1998, aims to list unpublished diaries containing substantial information about London life at any period. The intention is to provide social historians and others with a key to a vast range of material, often underexploited because so diverse and scattered. Diaries, as readers of Pepys and Parson Woodforde will know, can provide a rich blend of factual information and personal insights usually unobtainable elsewhere. Many London diaries have been published, and can be identified through useful bibliographies like William Matthews' *British Diaries* (1950), Patricia Havlice's *And So to Bed* (1987) or C.S. Godley's *Annotated Bibliography of Diaries Printed in English* (1997). However, hundreds more exist in record

MISS PRISM: ...You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

CECILY: I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, I should probably forget all about them.

MISS PRISM: Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

CECILY: Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened....

A satirical view of diary-keeping.  
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1899)

offices and libraries as unpublished manuscripts, carefully listed in the repository's catalogues, but often unnoticed by the London historian. We hope that a checklist drawing attention to their London content will lead to their increased use.

Questions of definition inevitable arise. What is a diary? A personal account of the writer's activities and interests, written up day by day, or very shortly after the events concerned. Is a journal different? William Matthews abandoned his attempts to distinguish between the two, and this compiler is happy to follow his example. What is 'London' for this purpose? The answer is what is now thought of as 'Greater London', thus admitting Middlesex and parts of Essex, Surrey, Kent and Hertfordshire which might have been quite countrified in the diarist's day. Must the writer be a Londoner? Not necessarily. The diary of an extended visit might contain very interesting material, though a few notes on a quick tour of the obvious tourist sights might not.

What about overseas visitors? Clearly their comments on London, as outsiders, could be of great value. In principle we are willing to include them, whether in English or other languages, but they may be harder to trace than British-held material and coverage will almost certainly be patchier. Suggestions for items to include in this category will be particularly welcome. What will not be included? Parliamentary diaries, technical work diaries, commonplace books, chronicles and travel narratives that are not day to day records will be excluded.

Matthews, and other listings of unpublished diaries such as J.S. Batts' *British Manuscript Diaries of the Nineteenth Century* (1976), have been trawled for London material, and the National Register of Archives' Diaries and Papers indexes are being thoroughly searched for references, which are then checked in their lists and with the holding repository. Brief articles and announcements in the newsletters of the London Topographical Society, Society of Archivists, Greater London Archives Network, London Archive Users' Forum and museum journals have produced helpful advice and suggestions from several readers. The database already includes nearly 600 items, and there will be many more to come. Heather Creaton would be grateful to hear of any items, especially those that might otherwise elude the net.

Are most of the diaries kept in London? The majority, so far, but it is already clear that plenty of London examples lie much further afield, for example at the Bodleian, the National Library of Scotland, in Wigan Archives Service's Edward Hall Collection and, notably, among the wartime Mass-Observation material at the University of Sussex. As mentioned earlier, relevant diaries also survive abroad.

The database, and the eventual publication, will be arranged in chronological order of the first diary entry date, and will give brief information about the writer, dates covered, subject matter and location of the manuscript. There will be indexes of writers, places and subject coverage when possible. The earliest entry on the database so far is for 1504, the latest 1962, and the writers include members of parliament, society ladies, artisans, actors, servants and schoolchildren. No doubt the field, and the dates, will widen still further as the project advances.

#### d) RESEARCH IN PROGRESS ON THE HISTORY OF LONDON

The listing of work in progress on any aspect of the history of the Greater London area now contains nearly two hundred entries and was put up on the Centre's web site in December 1998. We are anxious to encourage the submission of additional entries or corrections by email, or any other method, to make the list as full as possible.

### 3. TENTH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE PAPERS

#### EXPLORING THE METROPOLIS: NEW IDEAS ON LONDON HISTORY (15 October 1998)

Since September 1988, the Centre has explored many different themes in the history of London and other metropolises, some of them through major collective projects, some through individual research and writing, and some less formally. The Centre has opened up new ways of thinking about the metropolis, has developed new research methods, and has come up with many unexpected conclusions concerning the history of London. At the same time it has provided services for historians generally and has promoted wider debate.

In one day it was impossible to cover the full range of the Centre's activity. Instead, the conference focused on a few themes, each spanning several centuries, which have been characteristic of the Centre's attempt to understand the impact of London on the country at large, the essence of its creativity and commercial culture, and some of the problems of metropolitan life.

The majority of papers are reproduced, in the order in which they were given, in full below. Where this was not possible, a brief summary is given. Further details of the projects, with lists of publications, are available in previous *Annual Reports*.



Some former and present members of staff celebrate the Centre's tenth anniversary with the cake-cutting ritual!

## **Metropolitan history: identity and information**

### *Ten years of Metropolitan history*

*Derek Keene*

This conference celebrates ten years of the Centre for Metropolitan History. The idea of establishing the Centre within the Institute of Historical Research emerged in 1987, but work on our first research projects began almost exactly ten years ago in September 1988. Today's focus is on some of the themes and findings of our research, presented by those who have undertaken it. Some of the speakers are currently on the staff of the Centre. Others have moved on elsewhere, but continue to be associated with the Centre's activities. This highlights an important aspect of the Centre's work, with its emphasis on collective activity and the pooling of ideas and skills. Most advances in historical understanding are made in this way, but usually on an informal basis. In the case of Metropolitan History, the assembling of small teams to address specific historical themes has proved a most effective way forward, not least on account of the daunting bulk and complexity of the source material available for studying a metropolis like London, with its 2,000 years of history, over half of it covered by a continuous sequence of documentary records.

This is the most appropriate place, therefore, to acknowledge the enthusiasm, dedication, commitment and, above all, the intellectual input of those who have undertaken research at the CMH over the years. Their work has been undertaken in a context of financial uncertainty and sometimes uncomfortable physical conditions: I would like to thank them most warmly for it. We must also thank the University of London, the Institute of Historical Research, the Museum of London and our Patrons for institutional, moral, and financial support at the foundation of the Centre and throughout its existence. More recently, the University's School of Advanced Study has proved a most effective umbrella for this and other enterprises. The research itself has for the most part been funded by external institutions, of which the Economic and Social Research Council, the Leverhulme Trust, the Wellcome Trust, and the Renaissance Trust have been the largest contributors. To them and to the many other organisations and individuals who have supported the Centre's activities, we are extremely grateful. Special mention should also be made of the many scholars, from the University of London and elsewhere, who have contributed to the research itself by generously providing ideas and information or by acting as co-supervisors or advisors to projects.

My contribution to this opening session will sketch in some of the ideas which underlie the theme ‘metropolitan history’, and which will be elaborated in the later contributions on specific research projects. Heather Creaton will then say something about the bibliographical and information services which constitute another major element in our work.

What is a metropolis? My favourite definition is that of the *New English Dictionary*, which described it as a ‘pompous term for a capital city’. That is certainly how the word has been used to denote London from the late Middle Ages onwards. In the language of reputation and boosterism London has been successively the metropolis of England, Britain, the Empire and for a time in the mid nineteenth century (if only in the minds of Cobbett’s ‘silly coxcombs of the press’) the world. Increasingly, the word came to have a practical value for London by denoting the whole sprawling settlement, with its many administrative and jurisdictional units, and not just the City at the core. Moreover, by about 1800 the word ‘metropolitan’ could be used to denote those individuals who identified themselves by association with the culture of the capital. Pomposity and utility were both apparent in nineteenth-century uses of term. Thus we acquired a Metropolitan Police Force and a Metropolitan Board of Works, as well as a gas company and a railway bearing the name.

The author of the dictionary definition wrote soon after 1900, but was apparently unaware of the impact of the great Chicago Exposition of 1893 which celebrated the growth of America and the role of the city as an organising principle in its affairs. One outcome of this excitement seems to have been a new popular vision of the strength and dynamism of the big city which anticipated many of the ideas we associate with the word metropolis today, ideas shaped by the works of philosophers and visionaries such as Georg Simmel, Lewis Mumford and Fritz Lang, and by economic historians such as N.S.B. Gras. Such a metropolis always has very many inhabitants, although it is unwise to specify a threshold population. A key characteristic is the atmosphere of nervous excitement and exchange which provides a creative and liberating environment for both the individual and the group. At the same time the metropolis can oppress or grind down those sucked or driven into it. Such a metropolis need not be a capital city, for it derives its strength from internal forces, and from a relationship with other cities and with a wider territory which is quite distinct from its relationship to the state. Many capital cities today are quite unmetropolitan, while one of the most successful historical accounts of Chicago (capital of neither state nor federation) bears the powerful title *Nature’s Metropolis*. A young visitor to the 1893 exposition, who in later life was to invent the safety razor, was inspired by his visit to write a

futuristic novel in which he portrayed a world, not unlike our own, in which each continent (not each state) would be dominated by a single metropolis to which other cities were subordinate.

King Gillette's vision takes us back to the root meaning of the term metropolis in the Ancient World, as a mother city from which colonies, or daughter cities, were founded. This idea of a hierarchy of cities was adopted in the later administration of the Roman empire and so transferred to the Christian church, which serves as the immediate source for the notion of metropolis as capital. London was never a metropolis in that Christian sense, although its medieval citizens sometimes claimed that it had been. Increasingly, its economic strength, the dominant mass of its inhabitants, and the growing practice of visiting London made it the effective head of the realm, a status for which the term metropolis came to seem ever more appropriate. Our use of words, generating new meanings out of current experience and needs, and continually reabsorbing ideas from the past, has a life of its own despite normative ideals and programmes. Experience and knowledge of London has undoubtedly contributed much to the twentieth-century notion of the metropolis, although as that notion was being formed London was ceasing to be the dominant model.

Research at the Centre has addressed some key aspects of metropolitan history, dealing with London both for its intrinsic interest and as an example of a type of city which we recognise as the metropolis. We have mainly undertaken projects where focused, collective effort will lead to significant new understanding of metropolitan issues or open up subjects in a new way. Several projects have generated sets of information which have a lasting value for reference or further analysis. In the case of the interviews with the jobbers of the Stock Exchange, we set out to capture information on a vital aspect of city life and culture which would otherwise have been lost. We make no claims to have been exhaustive or even comprehensive — perhaps impossible ideals as far as London is concerned. Aspects of cultural history, for example, have not been prominent in our research programme, although many of them have been addressed in our seminars and conferences. Yet our investigations of the economy and society of London, ranging (so far) from the seventh to the twentieth century have done much to illuminate the basis of the wider culture of the metropolis. Themes such as London's impact on its agrarian hinterland, its market relations with the rest of the country, its role as a site of innovation and for the reception of new ideas, its social geography, its mercantile and political culture, and the highly localised concerns for health, welfare and sanitation in the Victorian city have proved to interact in remarkable and often unexpected ways, enhancing our vision of metropolitan life as a whole.



The findings discussed in the following papers have provided a new understanding of the centrality of London in English life, of its sophistication as a commercial and information exchange, of its political role within the state, and of its position within Europe as a whole during the medieval and early modern periods. The research is also casting new light on key moments of transition (real or imagined) in the life and development of London over the long run: from feudalism to capitalism (if such a transition took place at all) and from the medieval to the modern world; from a dependent backwater on the European periphery to a dynamic and innovative centre of manufactures which was to assume a dominant role in world trade and patterns of consumption; from a traditional urban fabric in which workplace and residence were intermixed to the monumental and depopulated business districts of the modern City; from an old regime of infectious and epidemic disease, to the pattern of mortality that we experience today. Even our record of the jobbers was precipitated by ‘Big Bang’ and by an awareness that long-established ways of life would rapidly disappear. In these and other projects we have developed concepts and methodologies, crossing disciplinary and chronological boundaries, in ways intended to promote new approaches to the histories of other metropolises too. In retrospect, it seems no coincidence that we have placed so much emphasis on dealing and on making things in London, for it was those activities which made London a metropolis, in the sense in which we now use the word, long before it became a capital.

***Signposts and milestones: ten years of bibliography and information work at the CMH***

*Heather Creaton*

From the earliest days of the CMH we have aimed, as our information leaflet states, ‘to provide a practical service for those interested in the history of London by bibliographical work, by organising raw data so that they are more readily usable, and by collecting and publishing news of research in progress’. Over the years we have done our best to honour this commitment in a variety of ways.

On the bibliographical front it seemed to us that an obvious gap needed to be filled. There was no full-scale general bibliography of London history, to provide a starting point for those beginning work on the subject and a reference tool for more experienced researchers. Accordingly, we started a database of references to secondary literature on the history of London, covering all periods from the Dark Ages to 1939. We were fortunate to get some funding from the ESRC for

research help from Tony Trowles, and from English Heritage for computer equipment. The work took several years, and was published by the Library Association in 1994 as the *Bibliography of Printed Works on London History to 1939*. The field, as we all know, is vast, and the bibliography inevitably a selective one, but with over 21,000 entries it provides a point of departure for research and has sold well and widely, with the Centre benefiting from the royalties. The cut-off date for new publications in the printed bibliography was the end of 1990. Since then we have been maintaining a database which will form a ten-year supplement, listing publications to the end of the year 2000. The method of publication for this supplement, whether in print, or electronic, has yet to be decided. It will be sizeable, for it already contains 4200 entries and there is much more work to be done to consolidate the coverage.

The historical period covered by the published bibliography ended in 1939. Much has happened to London since then, leaving decades of history not covered. We have moved the chronological goalposts a little further forward with my *Sources for the History of London, 1939–45: a guide and bibliography*, which is due out in December 1998 in the the British Records Association's 'Archives and the User' series. The bibliography section has 964 items, and the guide gives general guidance on, though not comprehensive listings of, original sources of all kinds for the wartime period. It deals with the surviving records of national and local government, of institutions and businesses and of personal experience, such as diaries, letters and memoirs. Together they can be used to shed light on most aspects of life in wartime London. First the guide looks at the evidence for the obvious changes to daily life in the city, such as Civil Defence provision, air raid shelters, firefighting and rescue work, evacuation, and the arrival of large numbers of refugees and troops. There follows a section about the attempts to continue with normal life and its routines, covering public opinion and morale, work, food and clothing, crime and policing, education, health care, religious observance and leisure activities. Postwar planning and Victory celebrations finish the sequence. There is an enormous amount of surviving material from the war period, some of it very little used as yet. I greatly enjoyed looking at examples in a variety of record offices and libraries. Among my personal favourites were the Sidney Bernstein papers in the Imperial War Museum's Department of Documents. They contain frank comments from cinema managers to the Ministry of Information on the state of public morale, and on reactions to government propagand films. Another favourite is the Ministry of Health file at the PRO documenting the tribulations of a mosquito expert as he tried to eradicate the pest from underground stations and tube shelters, hindered by bureaucracy at every turn.

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The bombed area around St Paul's was put to good use in 1943

The next project for the bibliographical and information section at the Centre is the compilation of a checklist of unpublished London diaries of all periods. Diaries can yield valuable insights into social history, some containing substantial and vivid information about London life. Many have already appeared in print, but hundreds more have not. We hope that the checklist, compiled from the holdings of record offices and libraries in London and far beyond, will provide historians with another useful reference work. The project is still at an early stage, but the database already contains nearly 500 items and there is still a great deal of searching to be done. This kind of work is not done by the Centre in isolation. I cannot stress sufficiently how dependent we are on the co-operation, assistance and advice so generously given by librarians, archivists and other

professional colleagues all over London and elsewhere. We like to think that our publications and databases provide them with useful help in return.

CMH research projects are written up in several ways. Books and articles based on their findings have been published by a variety of different publishers and journals. Some we have published ourselves, like our *Catalogue of Kentish Demesne Accounts up to 1350* (a spin-off from the ‘Feeding the City’ project); the handlist *London and Southwark inventories, 1316–1650*, and *Lists of Londoners*, a guide to unpublished lists of London inhabitants, produced jointly with the Federation of Family History Societies. Our *Annual Reports* and *Newsletters* carry regular updates about research work in progress and plans for future projects.

Our commitment to help historians through the organisation of raw data was mentioned earlier. Most of our projects generate databases of varying complexity, the result of much hard work gathering and entering information. Once the project is ended and the work written up, the raw data remains and is still potentially useful to others. We keep archive and working copies of this material, and ask the staff who compiled it to leave with us a simple guide to what is available and how to use it. This data is available to anyone who might need it, including our staff. Perry Gauci, for example, found the databases from the ‘London in the 1690s’ project invaluable for his CMH project on ‘English Merchant Culture, 1660–1720’. The data came from returns of the four shillings in the pound aid of 1693–4, and from the 1692 Poll Tax returns. Our ‘Feeding the City’ project produced a database of information taken from medieval manorial accounts; ‘Market networks c.1400’ analysed debt litigation material and ‘Metropolitan market networks’ is expanding that to the year 1600. ‘Mortality in the Metropolis’ has compiled a database of annual cause-specific mortality for each metropolitan registration district, 1860–1920. All this material is available not just to our own staff, of course, but to other scholars who might find them valuable in their own research.

We are glad to see visitors at the Centre. All we ask is that you make an appointment before calling, so we can be sure there is a desk and a machine free for you when you come in if you wish to use the databases, and someone on hand to help you use the software. ESRC-funded projects require us to place the resulting databases with the ESRC Data Archive, so some are also available through that facility.

The Centre continues to list current work in progress on the history of London at all periods, and from all approaches. Our listing ‘Research in Progress on the

History of London' has appeared at irregular intervals in the *London Journal* and is now available on our web site. We hope that many new entries will be emailed to us as a result. Anyone who has tried to maintain a list of current work will appreciate the problems of trying to keep it up to date. Researchers change their subject interests, finish a piece of work, move jobs, give up history altogether, or do not realise that our list exists. It is difficult to provide a full and accurate picture, but we try, and over the years have listed over 800 London research topics. Forms asking for details of any historical work under way relating to the Greater London area at any period are circulated at seminars, conferences, and relevant meetings, and we write to new postgraduate students every year. It is useful to hear about the research whether it is for a doctoral thesis, an academic book, local history article, or just an ongoing interest in some aspect of London history. It has proved its use in putting people in touch if they are working on similar themes, and for tracking down likely conference or seminar speakers.

Information is a vital part of everyone's work at the Centre, and we will all try to help if we can. If you would like to know more about a CMH project, have a specific query about some aspect of London history, or need advice or information, please let us know, by email, letter or telephone, and we will do our best to assist.

## **London and its territory: markets, supplies and economic integration, 1300–1600**

### ***Food, fuel and the agrarian hinterland in the fourteenth century: approaches and achievements of the Feeding the City projects 1988–94***

*Margaret Murphy*

‘Feeding the City’ began at the CMH in 1988 as a three year project, with the objective of studying the provisioning of London around the year 1300, when the city was at its medieval population peak, and the particular aim of investigating the impact of the capital on the agricultural and distributive systems of its rural hinterland. The work was subsequently extended for a further three years to allow the team to expand the investigation into the later fourteenth century and assess the effect of the Black Death. The team comprised Derek Keene, Bruce Campbell, Jim Galloway and Margaret Murphy and was therefore a mix of historians and historical geographers. The six years of work resulted in a book on London’s grain supply and several articles. The project team has received much feedback, both informally, in responses and comments at workshops and conferences presentations and in discussions with advisers and colleagues, and more formally, in book reviews and the lengthy reports of anonymous referees which the ESRC helpfully supplies to projects which have completed their end-of-award assessment procedure.

This paper focuses upon those aspects of the projects which have been identified not only by the project team but by these reviewers and referees as being interesting, innovative and adding substantially to our understanding of the impact of London on the country at large, the economic relationship between town and countryside in pre-industrial times, and the general economic history of the medieval period. Criticisms of aspects of the methodology and its application will also be aired along with some illustrations of the ways in which the research can be extended and given a wider applicability.

#### *Approaches*

From its very conception Feeding the City was intended to break new ground in the study of medieval economic history. One aspect of the project’s organisation singled out for mention by many has been the adoption of a regional approach. (The study area for both projects comprised London and the ten surrounding counties shown in Fig. 1). The projects have been credited with ‘breaking the mould’ in the analysis of certain aspects of medieval economic history which,

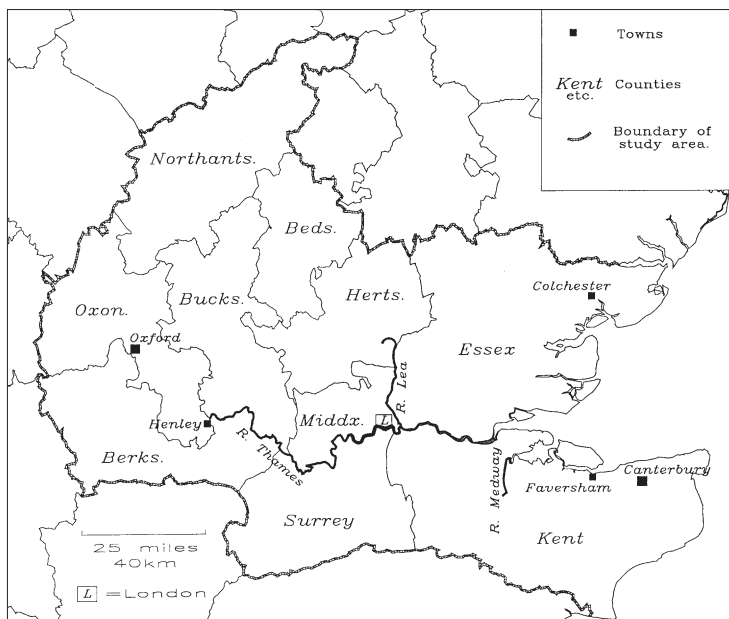


Fig. 1. The study area for the 'Feeding the City' projects

up until recently, had largely been concerned with in-depth studies of rural or urban communities in precise localities or with macro-studies of nation-state economic history. While the research was profitably informed by both types of study, the adoption of a regional approach, defining the metropolitan area and its substantial hinterland as a study region, allowed us to apply a range of systematic measures to an area which included localities of widely differing character. This enabled us to identify patterns not only in specialised agrarian production but also in the marketing of produce and in overall levels of commercialisation.

It was also intended from the start that 'Feeding the City' should undertake the first comprehensive, empirical test of the applicability of the theories of Johan Heinrich Von Thünen using medieval data. Von Thünen in the nineteenth century constructed an idealised model of the pattern of farming systems likely to be generated by a large central market. (A simplified version of the model is shown in Fig. 2.) The model predicts the emergence of a series of concentric zones characterised by different patterns and intensities of land use. Rather than imposing a strait-jacket on the interpretations of the data, the research team found that an awareness of the ways in which the spatial patterns of land use in

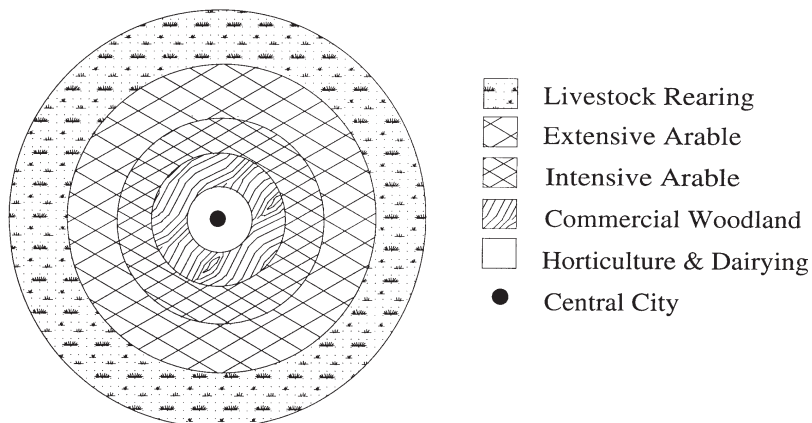


Fig. 2. A simplified version of Von Thünen's model

the London region could be explained in Von-Thünenian terms proved a useful and enlightening research tool. While the project was criticised in some quarters for adopting such a theoretical framework and while the significance or otherwise of the fit between theory and data was disputed, it was generally approved of by commentators on the project, both medievalists and modernists, historians and economic historians.

Some of the methodological approaches which became associated with the projects were not specifically envisaged in the original plan but rather evolved during the writing-up process as different strands of the research came together and the possibilities of fitting together a variety of statistical measures emerged. This is particularly true of the method which evolved of combining statistical information relating to agricultural production with data relating to human and animal consumption to produce estimates of London's aggregate demands for grain and firewood at different dates. These data concerned crop yields and allocations, seeding rates, calorific requirements, loss of calories during processing and population estimates. It led the project, particularly in the work on grain, into some controversial areas, such as estimating the overall population level in pre-Black Death England. Most importantly, however, it provided a statistical background (admittedly open to debate) for some of the team's most important findings relating to the supply of basic food and fuel to medieval London. Associated with this approach was work on transport costs where known per-mile costs such as that of transporting a quarter of wheat or 100 faggots by water or by land were used to formulate the city's theoretical supply zones for wheat and firewood at different dates.



A key feature of the research from the very earliest days was the use made of computers both in the collection of data and its analysis, mapping and presentation. While such a reliance on computers has now become commonplace in all areas of historical research, ten years ago it was regarded as a genuinely novel feature of the projects. The first Feeding the City project in particular was pioneering in bringing computers into areas from which they had largely been absent, and it has been gratifying that the databases which resulted from both projects have served as models for those undertaking similar work.

### *Significant findings*

In general, both the project team and outside commentators have been in broad agreement in identifying the most significant findings of the research. Feeding the City grew out of that strand of 1980s revisionist debate which argued that medieval agriculture was more productive and dynamic and towns and cities larger and more organised than had previously been thought. It has been gratifying therefore that the investigation has provided comprehensive proof of the ability of rural producers to meet specific urban requirements and also to adapt agricultural production to meet changing demands. For example, during the first stage of the research, while looking at choice of crop grown on a number of demesnes in the study region, it was found that a significant cluster of manors, close to London and strung out along the navigable river Thames devoted sizeable acreages, well above the regional averages, to the cultivation of rye and mixtures of wheat and rye known as maslin and mancorn. These grains were used to produce an inferior and cheaper type of bread which was in demand by poorer consumers, a great number of whom were concentrated in London in the early fourteenth century. An examination of cropping patterns in the later fourteenth century revealed that this specialism in cheaper bread grains had almost totally disappeared. What the demesne accounts for this period showed was a large expansion in the area given over to cultivation of barley and other brewing grains, a specialism which must surely have been in response to the rise in ale-consumption which is known to have accompanied the post Black Death rise in living standards.

The work on London's fuel supply identified a similar propensity for specialisation. It was found that manors close to London (in cost-distance terms) managed large areas of woodland and diverted considerable labour energy into producing different types of wood fuel to meet the specific demands of the metropolitan market. Wood cut on the demesne was air-dried and debarked and cut into various sizes appropriate for a number of different domestic and industrial uses. The manufacture of charcoal was also a major activity on many of these demesnes.

Such proof of the ability of medieval farmers to fashion and adapt production to meet specific demands has resulted in a reassessment and refinement of our understanding of the relationship between city and countryside in pre-industrial times. Feeding the City has attempted to shift the onus of explaining productivity growth and/or change in agriculture from the supply side, where attention is generally if not exclusively focused, to the demand side. The relevance of this shift in emphasis to the contemporary problems of improving productivity in parts of Eastern Europe has been noted by at least one commentator on the project.

Furthermore, in general terms it was found that cropping patterns in the London region did conform to the predictions of Von Thünen. The perishable products of market-gardening and dairying assumed importance on manors within a few miles of the city. Similarly, firewood and charcoal sales were significant components of manorial income close to London and in areas with ready access to cheap water transport. With grain crops there emerged a definite tendency for bulky, low value crops such as oats and rye to be grown close to the city, with wheat, whose high price increased the area over which it could be transported being more of a specialism on manors at a further remove. The fit between theory and historical evidence was by no means perfect — some areas close to the city did not emerge as being particularly market-orientated. Overall however, the fit was close enough to cause one referee to remark — ‘The predictions of Von Thünen’s model turned out to be surprisingly well substantiated. I am suspicious of any result that turns out so good’.

The role of London in promoting intensive forms of agriculture was more difficult to identify. While some areas of high grain yields and intensive practices were clearly linked to the metropolitan market, price analysis indicated that other pockets of intensive grain cultivation were by no means integrated. Much of Kent, the most impressive grain-producing area in the study region, seems not to have been tightly connected with the London market. Grain prices in parts of the county were often substantially higher than those prevailing in London. One rather unexpected conclusion of our study, therefore, was that areas of intensive production emerged not solely as a response to the London market but also, and sometimes more markedly, as a response to overseas demand. This was valuable in helping to place London and its region in a European context allowing us to see England’s capital in relation to a wider region of intensive production, commercial exchange and aggregated urban demand around the edges of the southern North Sea basin.

The findings of the project regarding the area needed to supply grain and fuel to London demonstrated that in all but crisis years the system worked. The study region had the capacity, without apparent difficulty, to satisfy the grain needs of the inhabitants of the countryside and of an urban system in which the chief city had a population of perhaps 80,000 or more. Indeed, parts of the region were able to conduct a substantial export trade. The study highlighted the importance of water transport and intermediate entrepôts — key market towns such as Henley-on-Thames, Kingston and Faversham — and demonstrated that areas as much as sixty miles distant from London could be involved in the capital's routine food and fuel supply if they were close to navigable water or a *strategically located* market centre. The production and distribution of essential food grains within the region was efficient enough not to place any significant constraint upon London's medieval growth. The work on the fuel supply did however indicate that *c.*1300 the limit of the region's capacity to supply the city with wood fuel had been reached. Evidence for spiralling fuel prices in the early decades of the century and an increase in the use of 'sea coal' from northern England suggests that a crisis point would have been reached had the city's population not started on a downward trend.

### *Criticisms*

The Feeding the City projects have been largely successful in meeting the objectives of the research team and reaction to the work has been enthusiastic and generally complimentary. There have, of course, been criticisms, some of which have been referred to above. This paper concludes with a brief discussion of two further questions which have been raised by commentators. The projects' choice of study area was from very early days the subject of debate and questioning at conferences and seminar presentations and later on in reviews and referees' reports. For some it was too small, and it was suggested that the area covered should have been set as widely as possible, preferably including all of south-east England from Hampshire in the west through Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire round to Cambridge and Norfolk in the east. For others it was too big and the decision to include 'peripheral' counties such as Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, rather than concentrating in greater detail on the Thames basin where it transpired the bulk of London's influence lay, was questioned.

The choice of geographical limits for a project of Feeding the City's type is always problematic as it does leave the team open to the charge of second-guessing the results. However, given the constraints of time and resources, limits have to be set and adhered to. One way of avoiding the problem of defining the London region *a priori* might have been to change the methodology and give

primacy to urban sources which would identify those areas most visited by London traders and from which food and fuel were known to have been brought into the city. The investigation of agrarian specialisation could then have been concentrated on these areas. However, it was felt that in many ways it was just as important to reconstruct the agrarian regimes in areas *not* normally within the pull of the metropolitan market. Perhaps, given more resources it would have been best to adopt the very large study area advocated by some. The end of the projects does not of course mean the end of the research and it is to be hoped that more regional studies will be undertaken whose results can complement those produced by Feeding the City. The issues of regional structures and linkages are taken further in the Centre's own 'Market Networks' projects.

A second fairly frequently voiced criticism of the projects was that the dependence on records of manorial demesnes for production and distribution of food and fuel products gave a one-sided impression of provisioning the capital. While the team was always aware of this discrepancy, the dependence was felt to be dictated by survival of source material, and the argument put forward was that in a particular region both demesne and peasant sectors would operate in concert. Therefore it was hoped that an analysis of demesne practices could be taken as broadly diagnostic of the rural economy as a whole. This contention was not universally accepted and it was perhaps too fragile to be pushed very far. The team may well have been overly pessimistic about the possibilities of studying medieval peasant agriculture and in retrospect perhaps more time should have been allocated to searching for sources which shed light on the practices of those people who, after all, cultivated up to two-thirds of the agricultural land. Fortunately this is one area where Feeding the City has stimulated others to undertake similar or complementary studies and at least one new study specifically on the topic of peasant agriculture is currently underway.

It is to be hoped that the organisation, methods and findings of the Feeding the City projects will continue to generate debate, and stimulate new research initiatives into the important and multi-faceted issue of the relationship between town and countryside in pre-industrial times.

***Market networks: London, hinterland trade, and the economy of England****Jim Galloway*

The Centre's researches into the operation of systems or networks of markets, carried on in the two projects 'Market networks in the London region c.1400' and 'Metropolitan market networks c.1300–1600', grew out of the entrails of the preceding 'Feeding the City' projects (see Margaret Murphy, above). Specifically, they arose from a desire to discover more about the organisation of the supply systems of medieval London, to locate London within the wider economy of medieval England, and to increase our understanding of the capital's interaction with the other members of England's urban system. The remit of this work has grown to include the issue of what medieval London *provided* to its hinterland and to more far-flung parts of the country, as well as what it obtained and consumed in the form of foodstuffs, fuels and building materials; in other words, to include the capital's distributive trade, as well as its provisioning systems.

Recently, the time-frame of the research has been expanded, in order to address the issue of long-term change in trade and credit networks, from the pre-Black Death period down to the period c.1600, by which date London had far outstripped its peak medieval population levels. This work is addressing the questions of how the rise and fall of national and metropolitan population levels and associated changes in living standards influenced the organisation of supply and distributive networks, and whether continuity or change is most characteristic of London's relations with the rest of England during a period sometimes seen as transitional between feudalism and capitalism. A key question concerns the degree to which integrated markets for staple commodities, notably grain, emerged during this period, and what role London may have played in their development. This is a vital issue for national as well as for metropolitan economic history, the extent and efficiency of food-stuff markets exerting a crucial influence on the ability of regions to specialise in both agrarian and industrial production. This research on the *longue durée* is in part a forwards- and backwards-extension of research strategies and methodologies developed during an intensive study of the period c.1400. That work, which has yielded new insights into medieval London's regional and national role, provides the material for the remainder of this paper.

As with the Feeding the City projects, a primary aim of the Centre's research into market networks has been to identify and exploit sources which permit the

reconstruction of regional (and to some extent national) patterns, transcending the case-study approach to individual towns, manors or other units. The principal sources drawn upon to reconstruct London's economic hinterland c.1400 have been court records, specifically the records of debt litigation which survive in abundance in local and national archives. Particularly voluminous and valuable are the records of the royal Court of Common Pleas, which heard debt pleas for sums of 40s and above, and which through their frequent identification of the residence and occupation of parties provide excellent material for quantitative analysis and mapping. In particular, the data makes it possible to reconstruct and map the economic hinterlands of London and many smaller towns at this period, and to identify patterns of inter-connection between members of the urban system.

The area which fed and fuelled medieval London, although very extensive compared to other English towns, was still largely confined to a group of surrounding counties. The principal exceptions to this generalisation were the regular coal supply from Tyneside, the crisis years supply of grain from the ports of Norfolk, Lincolnshire and occasionally further north, and the livestock trade, which was already reaching into the west midlands and perhaps beyond. What of the wider economic hinterland with which London interacted — the area to which it supplied imported goods and extended credit and from which it obtained manufactures and primary products for export as well as for consumption? Was this hinterland 'regional' or 'national' in its scope? Did London serve principally the south-east, or the whole of England? The Common Plea data has permitted an attempt to answer that question and, for the first time, to produce a soundly-based map of medieval London's economic sphere of influence. In Figure 1 the relative density of debt contacts between London plaintiffs and non-London defendants is plotted at a county level, adjusted for county population at the time of the 1377 poll-tax. This indicates an area of dense and moderately dense contacts extending west-east from Herefordshire to Suffolk, and south-north from Sussex to Rutland, with the greatest concentration of debtor residences in Middlesex, Surrey, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Berkshire. Contacts are much thinner in the north and south-west, although the distance-decay pattern is imperfect, with very low values encountered for the 'middle-distance' counties of Derbyshire and Shropshire. Although debtors pursued by London plaintiffs lived in every county of England, the character of interaction was clearly much more attenuated in the area to the north-west of the Humber-Severn line and in the south-west. Overall, it would be hard to argue that London's economic hinterland, although very extensive, was truly 'national' by 1400.

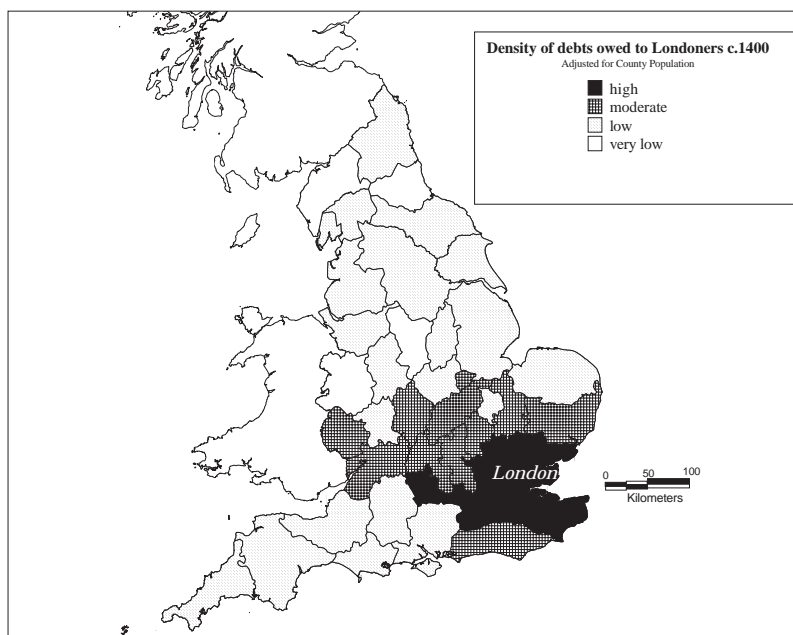


Fig. 1. London's economic hinterland c.1400

*Source:* sample of Common Pleas debt litigation

London's hinterland was, of course, much more than a Von Thünenesque plain over which London traders operated without let or competition. As well as contrasting natural environments it contained a complex hierarchy of settlements, ranging from isolated farmsteads and hamlets to important towns with international reputations for their industrial products and mercantile endeavour. The urban system served to channel metropolitan influence into the regions and to structure flows of trade and credit. Smaller towns had their own hinterlands with which they regularly traded and from which they drew much of their necessary supplies. Even in the case of the largest towns within 120 km of London — Colchester, Canterbury, Northampton, Oxford — these hinterlands were relatively restricted, however, with few contacts extending further than 50 km and most much less. In each of these cases, the strongest links evidenced in the Common Pleas data was with London, with grocers, mercers, vintners, fishmongers and members of other mercantile associations characteristically claiming debts from merchants, victuallers, innkeepers and retailers resident in the smaller towns. In this sense, London can be seen acting as a force for integration, linking up the limited hinterlands of smaller towns and providing a channel for inter-regional trade.

Table 1. Ranking of London Companies c.1400 — Qualitative v. Quantitative

Rank	Brewers' Co. list 1422	Common Pleas all three years (no. of occurrences)	Common Pleas 1384	Common Pleas 1403	Common Pleas 1424
1	Mercers	Mercers (425)	Mercers	Drapers	Mercers
2	Grocers	Drapers (342)	Drapers	Mercers	Drapers
3	Drapers	Grocers (203)	Skinners	Grocers	Grocers
4	Fishmongers	Skinners (166)	Tailors	Skinners	Skinners
5	Goldsmiths	Tailors (107)	Vintners	Fishmongers	Tailors
6	Vintners	Fishmonger (83)	Grocers	Tailors	Fishmongers
7	Skinners	Vintners (64)	Goldsmiths	Vintners	Stockfishmongers
8	Tailors	St'kfishmongers (52)	Armourers	St'kfishmongers	Founders
9	Saddlers	Saddlers (48)	Ironmongers	Saddlers	Saddlers
10	Ironmongers	Goldsmiths (47)	Fishmongers	Goldsmiths	Brewers

Urban trade hinterlands are, of course, built up from the activities of diverse individuals and groups. The trade of later medieval London was dominated by the leading city companies. The occurrence of the companies in the sample of common pleas litigation from c.1400 permits some quantification of their relative importance within domestic trade networks, something which is otherwise very hard to establish in comparison with the better-documented overseas trade. Table 1 shows the ten most frequently occurring companies in a database compiled from the Michaelmas term plea rolls for 1384, 1403 and 1424. It will be seen that, in terms of the number of debts to which they were party, the most active groups were the mercers and the drapers, with, some way behind, the grocers and the skinners. This can be compared with a qualitative source, a listing compiled by the brewers company in 1422, of 'all the crafts exercised in London from of old and still continuing...here set down in case it may in any wise profit the hall and Company of Brewers'. (The list is printed by G. Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (1938 edn), pp. 370–1.) One hundred and eleven crafts are listed and the order they are given may indicate a contemporary view of their relative importance, at least in the case of the principal companies. The first ten listed are shown in column 1 of Table 1, and it will be seen that there is a substantial measure of agreement with the ranking obtained from the Common Pleas sample. Both measures place the mercers first, and although there are some differences as to precise ranking, there is only one difference in the content of the 'top ten', the brewers' list including the ironmongers, while the debt evidence places the stockfishmongers (who the Brewers did not list separately) at eighth overall.

There were important variations between these companies in the conduct of their domestic trade, and in particular, in the degree to which they made use of



Table 2. Most Common Occupation/Status of Debtors to London Mercer, Draper and Grocer Plaintiffs c.1400

	<b>Mercer Plaintiff</b>	<b>Draper Plaintiff</b>	<b>Grocer Plaintiff</b>
1	Chapman (103)	Esquire (61)	Dyer (30)
2	Knight (37)	Knight (48)	Chapman (18)
3	Esquire (28)	Gentleman (26)	Spicer (11)
4	Gentleman (18)	Clerk (16)	Gentleman (8)
5=	Yeoman (7)	Draper (10)	Esquire (7)
5=	Husbandman (7)	Parson (10)	

*Source:* Common Pleas database

provincial merchants as middlemen. Some of these contrasts are illustrated in Table 2, where the most common occupation and status descriptions of debtors owing money to London mercer, draper and grocer plaintiffs are listed. It will be seen that the mercers conducted a substantial proportion of their trade with chapmen, small and middling provincial merchants who characteristically travelled to London to collect consignments of cloth and other goods from the mercers, which they then retailed in their home town or region. By contrast, the drapers seem to have dealt principally directly with aristocratic and gentle consumers, without the intervention of middlemen. A more diverse pattern is displayed in the debts claimed by grocers, many of which were owed by dyers, resident in important cloth-making towns such as Salisbury, who had no doubt been supplied with imported woad and other dye-stuffs, with smaller numbers owed by chapmen, provincial spicers and gentle consumers.

These contrasts are to some extent reflected in the geography of the different companies' credit networks. The mercers, with their emphasis on wholesale trade and upon dealings with provincial chapmen, had the most geographically extensive contacts (Fig. 2), dense in the counties around London, but extending strongly into the south-west and the eastern and north-eastern counties. A strong focus upon urban centres is also evident, with Bristol, Gloucester, Bridgwater, Reading, Northampton and Coventry prominent among them. The drapers hinterland was more restricted, perhaps reflecting physical constraints upon direct dealing and retailing. Some strings of contacts emerge, which appear to follow road networks. Different towns emerge as foci, including York, Salisbury, Norwich and Maidstone. The grocers' trade hinterland was, again, more restricted than that of the mercers (Fig. 3), with a strong concentration of debtor residences in Essex and the major cloth-making towns of Coventry and, above all, Salisbury, reflecting the supply of dye-stuffs. Maidstone again appears prominent, reflecting its pivotal role in the trade of Kent.

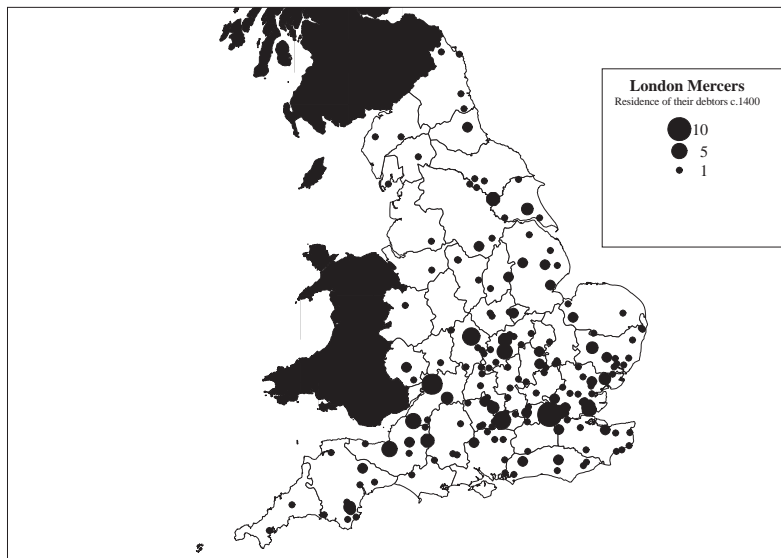


Fig. 2. Trade hinterland of London Mercers c.1400  
Source: sample of Common Pleas debt litigation

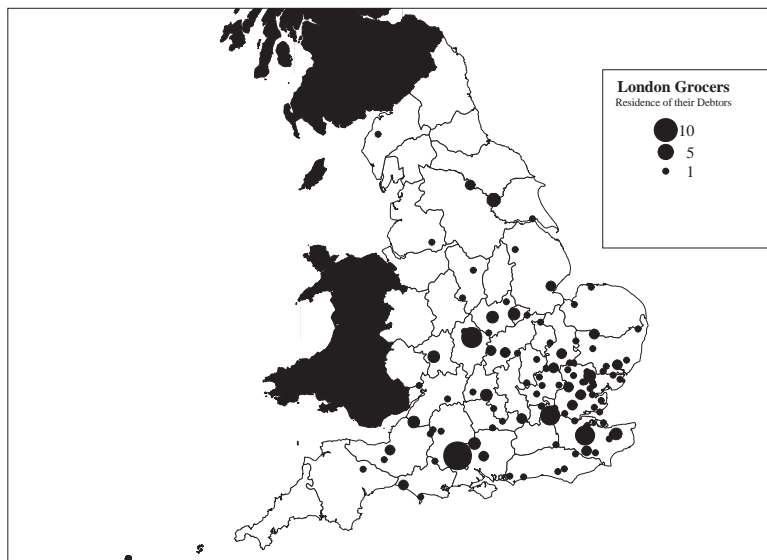


Fig. 3. Trade hinterland of London Grocers c.1400  
Source: sample of Common Pleas debt litigation

London's distributive trade, therefore, emerges as complex, multi-layered, utilising a variety of types of organisation, and spatially extensive. One of the major themes of later medieval English economic history is the economic difficulties experienced by many provincial towns and ports — an 'urban crisis' to some writers — and a concomitant rise in the relative wealth of the capital. More and more of England's trade was being channelled through London, as the county's exports became increasingly focused upon the Antwerp cloth market. By extending our analysis of debt litigation back to c.1300 and forward to c.1600, we hope to add to our understanding of these phenomena. It is clear that a large part of England's internal trade was already in the hands of Londoners by c.1400 and that they were supplying consumers and middlemen across an extensive part of the country. Were provincial towns declining (if they were) because Londoners were increasingly penetrating their hinterlands and stealing domestic as well as overseas trade from provincial merchants? If so, what was the chronology of this process? What was the role of London in the forging of geographically extensive markets for foodstuffs, and how did that process relate to the articulation of 'higher-order' trade networks? Through systematic analysis of broadly comparable sources across an extensive chronological span, we hope to get closer to understanding the dynamic role which London played, both as a consumer and as the heart of a complex commercialising economy.

### *Markets and Fairs in England and Wales*

#### *Samantha Letters*

This new project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, began in March 1998. A version of the conference paper is given above under project reports (see pp. 10–19).

**Innovation, mercantile culture and the environment: the City  
from dependency to Big Bang, 1500–1987**

*Innovation and the Skilled Workforce of London*

*Michael Berlin*

Amid the historical detritus contained in Edmund Howes's 1615 edition and continuation of John Stow's *Annales of England*, shoved in the traditional serial rendition of events, between an account of the appointment by King James I of an ambassador to the court of the Archbishop Ernest of Cologne, the execution of a counterfeiter of coins and a description of James's sport of baiting lions at the Tower of London, is contained a fascinating digression into what the chronicler described as 'the first knowledge, and coming of divers things in England...the invention of divers things in this latter age... with the great increase in general commerce and the unimaginable enlarging of London and the suburbs within the space of fifty years'. The chronicler then recorded, in copious detail, a long list of new technologies and inventions: moveable type, gunpowder, silk stockings, perfumed and embroidered gloves, coaches, starched ruffs, wines, musical instruments, textiles of various sorts (kerseys, taffetas and worsteds) and inventions for making them, either introduced from abroad or invented by native Englishmen. The catalogue is more than merely an example of the antiquaries' time-honoured love of lists. He described London as 'the best governed, the most richest and flourishing Cities in Europe, plentifully abounding in free trade and commerce with all nations.' In the chronicler's mind these new devices, products and fashions were part of the grand transformation in the material conditions in English society, and part and parcel of the growth of London as the capital of that society.

The Skilled Workforce Project was a three year research project, begun in January 1992 under the aegis of the 'Achievement Project' and funded by the Renaissance Trust, designed to help to reconstruct historically the sense of expansion and innovation born witness to in Howes's chronicle. The project's aim has been to account for the expansion in the range and quality of artisanal skills in London between the late fifteenth century and the late eighteenth century and to see what links could be established between the proliferation of skilled occupations and the development of new technology. The project formed one part of a research consortium whose collective goal has been to investigate the comparative basis of technological change across cultures and across historical periods to see whether it is possible to account for the marked propensity of certain places at particular

historical junctures to become sites for the propagation and diffusion of new forms of invention and innovation in technology, art and culture more generally. In the modern era the locus of innovation has been seen to shift from the mature economies of Europe and America to the emerging manufacturing in the ‘tiger’ economies of Asia, a process which has been marked by the rapid assimilation and creative adaptation of occidental technologies in wholly new cultural and social contexts. In early modern European history this process of spatial and temporal clustering of technological and cultural innovation is usually associated with the growth of the late medieval Italian city states, and the subsequent spread of the ideas and resources of the Renaissance city to northern European metropolises such as Paris, the cities of the Low Countries and London.

The project started with the premise that in the course of the early modern period London was transformed from being an important, if small, European capital city sited on the periphery of the main centres of trade, heavily dependent on the import of manufactured goods, into being the largest urban site in Christian Europe, the fourth largest city in the world, the centre of an expanding and aggressive overseas empire, and the major European hub for finance and commerce. This transition involved a major reorientation in European trade networks which increasingly favoured the nexus of cities and states of north west Europe with access to an arc of trade centring on the North Sea and the Atlantic.

During this period various factors were contributing to the growth of London as a metropolitan site. London attracted a multi-generational stream of provincial immigrants of all classes, drawn to the capital by the changing nature of the rural economy and by the attractions of urban life. Migration to the metropolis contributed to the ten-fold increase in London’s population between 1500 and 1750.

Underlying this tremendous growth was the extension of London’s importance as a financial centre, as dense networks of commerce, banking, insurance and credit arose in the square mile. London took on an importance in the English economy as a centre of commerce, trade and consumption that was perhaps unique in its history.

A less generally acknowledged aspect of metropolitan history is London’s importance as a manufacturing and marketing centre. By the beginning of the eighteenth century London was the largest manufacturing centre in Britain (perhaps in Europe), with a continental reputation for the making of a wide variety of goods, especially a range of high quality and intricate goods, including

clocks and watches, scientific instruments and navigational devices. In addition a whole new series of industries developed in the London region during this period which, while not necessarily surpassing the reputation of continental counterparts at least succeeded in satisfying domestic demand for similar goods in ceramics, glass, paper, furniture and silk. An expanding colonial market also provided a growing source of demand for such goods. In addition the metropolitan industrial landscape was transformed by the development of enterprises such as integrated breweries, distilleries and sugar refineries. Such enterprises varied in size but in many instances reached a scale of production which constituted major undertakings. The shipbuilding industry was another sector in which large scale production was increasing. As the period progressed London's significance as a manufacturing centre gave way to increasing regional diversification, with London acting as centre for the assembly, finishing and marketing of provincial industries. In the case of clockmaking the making of component parts in South-west Lancashire for the London market began early in the seventeenth century and in its wake various elements of London's manufacturing base, including textiles, glass and metal working were supplemented and supplanted by provincial manufacturing centres. Despite this shift to provincial manufactures London continued as the centre for precision engineering, as the skills of the metropolitan artisan were increasingly brought together in integrated workshops.

It was against this backdrop that the Skilled Workforce Project was set up as an historical research team consisting of Rob Iliffe, David Mitchell, and Michael Berlin, together with Derek Keene, Penny Gouk and David Ormrod and Lien Luu, a Ph.D. student associated with the project. The team embarked on an ambitious research exercise combining detailed examination of particular industries and craft sectors with delvings into the rich literature on technological innovation to be found in the historical sociology of work, industrial geography, economic history and the history of science. The early pathways of research were eclectic; we were actively encouraged to read outside the discipline of history. Articles from the *Connoisseur* were juxtaposed with Humphrey Jennings' *Pandemonium*. Research was interleaved with some fascinating attempts at interdisciplinary collaboration at specially arranged conferences. One such encounter included a seminar attended by the controversial geneticist Hans Eysenk at an hotel set in a sixteenth century manor house in Kent during which I remember him characteristically describing his critics at the conference, including myself, as part of 'the fashionable liberal élite'. Such meetings were by their nature of interest: meeting and engaging with such scholars as Mary Douglas, Alan MacFarlane, Bridget Hill and Joan Thirsk was exciting and rewarding. Such meetings gave us several insights into the nature of technological innovation.

Acting in collaboration with the Museum of London the team got the opportunity to learn from some of the world's acknowledged experts on material artefacts from the period.

What was learned about the growth of the skilled workforce and what insights might be drawn from our collective endeavours? We realised early on that our understanding of the nature of what constituted skill and innovation in the early modern period was very different from the usual models of technological change which were employed by historians of the first and second industrial revolutions.

Rob Iliffe's readings of the various studies of the sociology of skill and innovation drew the important insight that the concept of skill was cultural construct which is paradoxically rooted in material productive conditions and individual human capacities. To use a jargon phrase, which in this sense proved very useful as a way of thinking of a complex subject, as embedded in a specific social and topographical milieu.

It was from this perspective that some of our first work took direction. Careful attention was paid to the specific location of particular clusters of skills and innovations. We attempted to reconstruct cognitive maps of the networks of skilled artisans. Early on we came to realise that such mapping was providing a useful means of visualising the exercise of skills: groups of craftsmen, retailers, wholesalers and the social and familial networks which supported them constituted specific communities — 'communities of skill' — often occupying a specific neighbourhood or district (e.g. clock- and watch-making in Fleet Street and Clerkenwell, mathematical instrument makers near the precincts of the Tower). These groups shared more than mere physical proximity: skill and innovation were part of their collective local identities. The prevalence of sub-contracting of skilled labour, of pooled human resources amongst competing workshops within such neighbourhoods helped to explain their effectiveness as centres of innovation. Like Emilia-Romagna of the 1970s or the Veneto of the 1990s, favourite examples of modern industrial geographers of innovation through spatial clustering, London in the sixteenth century, with its myriad of small specialist workshops and neighbourhoods, was a place where skill and technology were shared amongst locally competing but internationally cooperating firms. It was this sense of shared pride of place which helped to give meaning to the notion of 'London work'. A related insight which we drew from this mapping was the correlation between the topographical setting of industrial and craft activity and the development of new technological practices.

In this environment, as we came to realise, technological change consisted of a ‘continuum of small improvements’, a multitude of small scale innovations, minute alterations in the way goods were designed, made and marketed. The incremental nature of innovations corresponds to the diverse and slowly changing systems of production which prevailed in London, conditions which entailed the perpetuation of traditional forms of working embodied in the guild milieu of independent handicrafts alongside the increasing use of out-work and workshop forms of production. As David Mitchell’s research into textiles demonstrated, these different forms of production co-existed in complex interdependent networks of sub-contracting, credit and co-operation between firms. According to him it was the creation of these networks, and the use of increasingly sophisticated accountancy procedures and means of controlling product quality and design which constituted one of the most significant innovations of the period.

Another insight which we gained from contrasting the development which we studied with the different accounts of the process of technological change in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was that the process of technological innovation was piecemeal, slow, but of great cumulative importance. The intensifying impact of the growing body of skilled practitioners came together in the later seventeenth century. This period in particular — the age of expert artisans such as John Dwight, George Ravenscroft and Thomas Tompion, and a time described by Defoe as one of a ‘wrecking of wits’ in pursuit of new inventions and projects — saw the perfection of skills by the London artisan. By this period the skills base of the metropolis could support the elaborate network of craftsmen who worked with natural philosophers such as Robert Hooke in his capacity as demonstrator of experiments to the Royal Society. Yet the attempted application of new techniques took place within the context of slowly changing patterns of work organisation in which the primacy of economically independent artisans, working in a domestic setting, only very gradually gave way to integrated workshop manufacture made up of an increasingly subdivided but interdependent workforce. Innovation did not consist of dramatic discoveries and subsequent rapid diffusion characteristic of the period of the industrial revolution but instead the process of change was made up of step-by-step alterations in techniques, design and marketing methods which in important ways perpetuated earlier forms of production. Rob Iliffe’s research into the networks of artisans working for and with Robert Hooke demonstrated this vividly as he reconstructed, using Hooke’s diaries, the ways in which natural philosophers attempted to forge links with an existing world of skilled master craftsmen. Though the Royal Society was singularly unsuccessful in its early attempts to transform radically the methods and working practices of the nation’s skilled artisans, men such as



Hooke were helping to create a new world in which both natural philosopher and innovative craftsmen could thrive. Crucially this new world was interstitial between the older centres of guild and civic authority and the newly emergent realms of natural philosophy and social power represented by the Royal Society. A new milieu of inventiveness was emerging at the end of the seventeenth century centring on the coffee house culture, so ably described by Larry Stewart, in which new inventions were marketed, potential commercial backers and patrons identified. This new milieu was pluralist rather than hierarchical and rigorously attuned to the needs of an aggressive and expanding overseas empire. Rob Iliffe appropriated concepts of Renaissance ‘self fashioning’, the creation of distinctive social roles and public personae so characteristic of the virtuosi of the period, to the so-called mathematical practitioners, men such as Hooke, who helped to mediate between the social worlds of potential patrons of new processes and the master craftsman.

These changes were often carried out by little-known or anonymous artisans. Documentary sources reveal little about the exercise of their skills. The seminars arranged by the Museum of London cast light on the world of secret experimentation, the use of new manufacturing techniques (such as the use of coal as fuel in glass and ceramics — a notable London innovation of this period). The examination of artefacts also helps the historian to trace the interchanges which could take place between different trades and industries; design processes often shared common elements in different mediums; the skills necessary for one trade might be re-applied to another with innovatory results: zinc/copper alloy was developed by Christopher Pinchbeck, who combined the skills of a clockmaker with that of a pastry cook. His innovation reflects the influence of both trades.

This emphasis on individuals exercising skills points to another feature of this period which the seminars highlighted: the growth of new skills and the refinement of traditional handicrafts in London were crucially influenced by developments elsewhere. New technologies, new skills and new methods of marketing came to England via London through the movement of skilled individuals — migrants, travellers and even industrial spies. Technologies and the skills which produced artefacts were transmitted through face-to-face contacts between individuals and groups. The period we are concerned with was marked by successive waves of religious refugees and economic migrants, primarily from the Low Countries and France. The migrant was a crucial agent of economic and social change, introducing a range of new manufacturing and entrepreneurial skills which influenced virtually every one of London’s trades and industries and applied arts. Lien Luu’s study of the impact of immigrants

from the Low Countries from the 1560s onwards helped to demonstrate the ways in which the migrant helped to create networks of credit and trade in which new industries could develop.

What emerged from our research was that the exercise of manipulative skills had a tacit, unspoken element. This feature of skill emerged particularly in our examination of the training for artisanal trades. Such training relied on a process of learning by doing, of active engagement in the act of making, which in a sense defies the historian's attempts at retrospective definitions. As a French observer of English (Sheffield) metallurgists' skills noted: 'A new man in the trade started to learn in earnest, the hard way, by doing, not talking'. This tacit element made it often difficult for the learned in society to attempt to apply formal theories to the skills of the artisan (as in the Royal Society attempts to apply natural philosophy manufactures) '...there is barely a common language between the workman and the savant; it is, for example, extremely difficult to determine in many cases what qualities a workman means when he says that iron has "body", is "sound", "strong", "tough", etc.; all of these, however, are expressions which have a very precise meaning'. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that written records are relatively silent on the attitudes of makers towards the objects of their creation.

In the course of the project we began to shed some basic assumptions which we had all shared about the attitudes of the members of the London livery companies towards technology and skill. Our firm assumptions about the inevitability of economic and social progress led us to assume that guilds were simply a vestige of an old order which was swept aside in the eighteenth and nineteenth by the inescapable forces of improvement. The standard view with which we began, was that guilds were synonymous with restrictive practices, urban privilege and a low technological base. Unable to adapt to new conditions and mentalities of the eighteenth century, guild structures became increasingly sclerotic, atrophied, and 'out of date'. The path to economic development lay elsewhere. Yet we soon began to be suspicious of retelling a story of decline in which the guilds take on the characteristics of organic bodies at the end of a life-cycle.

We looked afresh at the position of the guilds in the later period. Through the work of J.R. Kellet, and more recently Michael Walter, K.D.M. Snell, Ian Archer, Steve Rappaport and others, a more complex picture has emerged. Firstly, the completeness of guild control over production when the 'system' was at its height, during the high middle ages, has been seriously questioned. Following on from this has been a new awareness of the degree to which guilds reasserted control

in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, by extending the area in which they operated periodic searches and by campaigns to enlist all those practising the trades and crafts to enrol in the appropriate companies. At the same time new guilds were formed on the basis of new technologies and products, such as the spectacle-makers, clock- and watch-makers, gun-makers, tobacco pipe makers, frame-work knitters, tin-plate workers, and coach makers.

Recent research, particularly the work of Michael Walker, suggests that far from experiencing a slow process of decline, many of the guilds strove with differing measures of success to preserve the linkage to the craft which they nominally represented. Kellet and Snell have used apprenticeship records to show the connection between livery company membership and handicrafts being, if anything, reasserted in the mid to late eighteenth century. Apprenticeship numbers indeed increase in some artisanal companies. Kellet's work shows that the City of London went some way towards accommodating these attempts by means of a system of licensing unfree craftsmen.

When we looked at specific instances where new methods were introduced, we began to question the supposed antipathy of guilds towards new technology and its association with decline. Unwin cited the rejection of a Venetian inventor's proposal to teach members of the Clothworkers' Company the use of a new device for fulling broad cloth, the company rewarding him with 20s but demurring on account of the 'great decay unto the company' which such an innovation represented. Yet such instances of outright rejection are surprisingly few and far between in the seventeenth century. Indeed the incorporation of livery companies whose members practised what was, at the time, new technology, such as clock-making, suggested to us the ways in which such technologies could be fully integrated within the handicraft milieu. The antipathy of the Spectacle-makers Company towards John Marshall's proposals for a glass-grinding machine in 1670s fits in to the more traditional image of craft antipathy towards new inventions. Yet the company's rejection rested more on the supposed dangers posed by the grant of a patent to one individual rather than to the invention *per se*. Similarly the clockmakers objected to grants of patents to individuals which they perceived as representing the setting up of an unfair monopoly, while at the same time protesting their interest in seeing new inventions go forth. The Clockmakers' Company sought to work with the existing system of patents by advising on the technicalities of their implementation.

Instances of machine breaking, such as the widespread riots of London handloom weavers in May 1675 and by framework knitters in 1710 (the latter precipitating

the migration of the industry to the Midlands in the 1720s and 30s) were examined to see if these illuminated attitudes towards technological innovation. These instances came only after repeated attempts by handicraft members of those companies to persuade the governors of those companies to enforce existing company bye-laws limiting the numbers of machines being operated in one place rather than to new machinery as such. The form which these actions took, the deliberate public destruction of the offending machines in prominent places in the thoroughfares of the textile-working districts of the metropolis, often with a degree of wider participation, suggested that the participants were acting according to a certain set of perceived norms of behaviour, derived in part from corporate regulations designed to prevent fraud and poor workmanship, in particular the company rights of search. Thus it seemed that there existed within the guilds something of a Thompsonian ‘moral economy’ in relation to technological innovation, in which opposition was not directed against machinery as such but only insofar as its use violated this perceived set of norms. Following on from this we looked at changing attitudes towards this moral economy on the part of livery company courts of assistants and governors, the City corporation, and the law courts during the eighteenth century as a basis of an explanation for the abandonment of much of the regulatory mechanisms of control. What emerged from this research was the similarity between these apparent acts of resistance to the introduction of new technologies and later instances of industrial Luddism. Machine breaking was not merely a blindly conservative response to a new technology *per se* but a specifically targeted action directed at new devices which threatened to undermine the collective well-being of occupational communities.

Evidence we examined about the use of the search suggested that the chronology of the abandonment of guild regulation needs to be pushed beyond the period when it is conventionally stated that those usages were in decline, to the mid and late eighteenth century. Thus, far from experiencing a long drawn out decline the regulatory mechanisms of the companies seem in many instances to have been curtailed as a result of specific conjunctions of historical forces and circumstances. Organic models, whether based on the laws of supply and demand or the anonymous working out of social and economic systems, may not provide the answer.

*The City as Exchange: merchant culture 1660–1720**Perry Gauci*

As the recent excellent volume from Ann Saunders has shown, for the study of the merchant you have to begin at the Exchange, and it was a fascination with the mysteries of the transactions which took place there which aroused my interest in the impact of the overseas trader. In particular, as a political analyst, I was particularly struck by how contemporary accounts did not merely view the Exchange as a place of business, or simply one of economic exchange *per se*, but saw it as a political rendezvous. For instance, in the 1630s Daniel Lupton's account of the Exchange concluded that merchants were 'strange politicians, for they bring Turkey and Spain into London, and carry London thither'. Eighty years later Joseph Addison came to the heart of the City and expressed wonderment at the parliament of nations at work in the Exchange, and regarded them as 'representatives' of their respective trades. Such political terminology was intriguing, and, as I found out, extremely apt, since closer study of mercantile activity suggested that success in the extremely unstable world of international commerce was heavily dependent on each merchant's ability to construct reliable networks of influential contacts to help him overcome the inherent perils of his trade. Thus from basic commercial necessities the City evolved very sophisticated

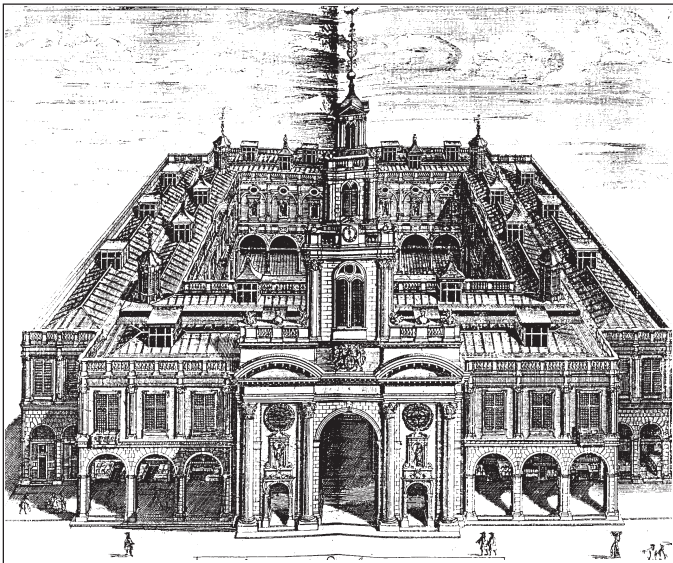


Fig. 1. The Royal Exchange

political mechanisms, which, although designed primarily for economic advantage, could have a much wider impact on City life. I thus turned to the City to see how the individualistic commercial functions of the overseas traders dovetailed with their need for broader associations to engage in a most perilous occupation. Concomitant with this pursuit of monetary gain, the search for personal advancement and status was inextricably tied to the metropolitan networks established by each individual in the course of City life. Although usually celebrated by outsiders as the epitome of monied wealth, the Exchange is actually a much better metaphor for the way in which the City provided the socio-political environment to advance both the individual and the profession. Twenty minutes is clearly inadequate to explore the personal and institutional interchanges of the metropolis, but, as a quintessential middleman, the merchant can highlight the singular role played by the City as a nucleus of order in a very uncertain commercial world.

Inspired by work of Gary De Krey and others, this project on mercantile 'culture' has thus undertaken analysis of the merchant way of life in order to understand the socio-economic roots of City politics, and, from a broader perspective, to see how urban associations worked in the early modern period. The merchant remains the archetype of the independent, generally prosperous individual, whose prominence within urban society has been widely recognized, even to the extent of being an important figure in the great upheavals of the Reformation and the Civil War. However, although independent, he had to interact with a broad spectrum of society if he wished to succeed professionally. The plan of the Exchange (Fig. 2) illuminates the broad structure of mercantile activity in a purely commercial sense, with the various spheres of international trade apportioned around the pillars of the main piazza. Most traders indeed concentrated on one commercial field, either in geographic or commodity terms, and this layout enabled prospective customers to find merchants very easily. Yet, it was not just a convenience for the City overseas traders. Note the central spaces left for the Blackwell Hall factors, who would interact with the provincial suppliers for the vital cloth export trade. Moreover, it is clear that the Exchange was a meeting-point for provincial merchants, with the Eastland walk used by Newcastle and York businessmen as their rendezvous in the capital. Even more illuminatingly, gentlemen such as the civil servant Samuel Pepys could be as interested in the ground-floor activity of the Exchange as in the shops above, and actually take pride that he was recognized by merchants there. Thus, the Exchange encapsulated the multi-layered social, commercial and political interchange which occurred within the City, and which was channelled and maintained by both formal and informal institutions. Olson's recent work on the

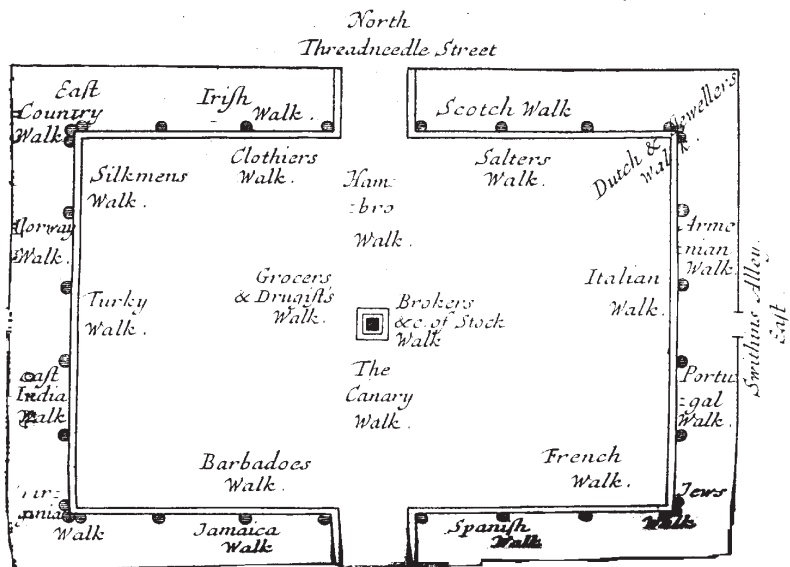


Fig. 2. Plan of the Royal Exchange showing the specialised 'walks' or meeting places.

role of coffee-houses as foci for mercantile interaction has demonstrated how transatlantic traders depended on loose forms of urban association, and even supporters of free trade agitation recognized the need to take advantage of existing forms of urban organization.

This idea of exchange thus prompted me to investigate the impact of overseas traders within the capital and further afield. As a priority, I have endeavoured to study the broad array of associations which a trader enjoyed, whether economic, religious, political or social, using a sample of 850 City merchants to gain an overall perspective of their activities. As busy men, merchants could not be too sparing with their time, and thus their commitment to particular offices or collective activities can reveal the significance which these individuals accorded to city and national institutions. Especial attention had to be paid to the importance of the life-cycle on mercantile engagement in collective activity, and it soon became clear that the spatial distribution of merchants within the capital was also most significant. These studies were also backed up with provincial comparisons in York and Liverpool, and by analysis of the interaction of the City with the provinces. Adopting a prosopographic approach throughout, I hoped that analysis of the role of commercial function would achieve greater insight into political processes than mere concentration on the more familiar criteria of wealth, status and party principle.

Amid the recording of thousands of contacts and connections, it was predictable that there would appear patterns of fascinating synthesis as well as mazes of baffling confusion. On the neat and tidy side, there were several recognizable communities of merchants within the City, whose close religious, ethnic, commercial and familial ties were reflected in a concentration of settlement in certain parts of the City. The Jews in particular were most introspective in appearance, but the Huguenot and Quaker merchants also established small cells with their co-religionists. However, with the passing of time even these discernible 'communities' could dissolve, and second-generation immigrants were much more widely scattered through the City. More generally, the overwhelming impression of mercantile distribution is of an immensely fragmented environment with few easy generalizations to make on the basis of background, commercial career or wealth. Merchants were drawn to the eastern half of the City by the Exchange, Customs House and the port of London, but it would be difficult to make a more particular judgement on the relative importance of the variety of influences working on mercantile residence. Awareness of the mobility of native traders within the capital, as their careers pitched and tossed with the economic tides, only further confused the City landscape.

However, these findings actually pinpoint the real value of the capital, in that its institutions provided a framework of order in an immensely fluid environment. The Exchange remains the exemplar of this desperate need for organization amid the threat of chaos, but non-commercial institutions were also vital for maintaining contacts and influence within the big city. In particular, parish and ward bodies brought the forbidding metropolitan mass down to a human scale, and even the greatest of merchants saw fit to spend time and effort in occupying these modest offices. Across these familiar boundaries, the still-vital livery companies provided a home-from-home for at least 40 per cent of the sample, and within several of these companies there was a most significant clustering of traders involved in the same sphere of international commerce. Rigid collectivization would have been resisted, but the merchant was willing and able to pick and choose his commitments, which would provide both valuable contacts and personal status. Thus, although it is impossible to construct the 'typical' career path of the overseas trader, recognition of such diversity should make us all aware of the significance of the allegiance of individuals to urban associations. Indeed, the distinctive way of life in the City is revealed by the monuments, bequests and even funeral processions of the merchant, all of which illustrate the centripetal force of metropolitan life.

For certain, during the Augustan age neither York or Liverpool could boast an Exchange of the grandeur or sophistication of the City's, reflecting a vast disparity



in the organization and extent of provincial trade. Nevertheless, although dwarfed in scale by the capital, analysis of the merchants of York and Liverpool also highlights the socio-political bases of mercantile association. A declining York economy revealed much stronger patterns of mercantile residence, with its thirty to forty merchants closely tied to a handful of parishes next to the river Ouse. The attachment of these traders to urban institutions was even more pronounced, with a much higher proportion willing to undertake civic office. The commitment of wealthier provincials to urban government is perhaps predictable, especially in a stagnating economy, but the example of Liverpool suggests that it could not be taken for granted. In the seventeenth century Liverpool was a fast-expanding port on the back of a burgeoning transatlantic trade, and benefited from a great influx of energetic and well-capitalized entrepreneurs. However, it took great efforts on the part of the corporation to ensure that all merchants would actively support its efforts to promote the general interests of the town, particularly in the 1680s. Having led a successful campaign to enforce local freedom requirements, it reaped the rewards for disciplining its mercantile body with the crucial Dock Act of 1709, which was facilitated by the political skills of local magnates in the capital. Liverpool's topography certainly suggests that its mercantile population needed and responded to such corporate leadership, with the residences of traders closely following the civic-led development of the port and town. Even in a dynamic economy, the merchants needed the supportive comforts of urban organization, and although less sophisticated than the capital, such associations were crucial nonetheless.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be learnt from this focus on urban association and exchange is that even rich and influential traders were very much rooted to their urban bases, heavily bound as they were to the centripetal influences of their homes, workplaces and playgrounds. Some individuals did yearn for the life-style of the country gentleman, but most had enjoyed success within urban associations, and their loyalties remained to urban forms of social, political and commercial exchange. As an illustration of this essential allegiance, it appears that perceptions of status were closely linked to the role of individuals as brokers between various forms of urban association. In a complex and impersonal society the man with many hats was a very useful citizen, and it is his utility, rather than mere wealth, which should be seen as cause for the general prominence of the overseas trader.

From my political perspective, it appears that much more work is needed on the workings of commercial associations within the City. In particular we need to know a great deal more about the importance of informal connections based on

tavern, coffee-house, pot club and livery company. Evidence is frustratingly thin in terms of surviving personal papers, but an imaginative use of institutional and legal records may tell us much more about the ways in which the treacherous world of City life was ordered, and how individuals were able to thrive in the big bad City. Further research into the interaction of provinces and metropolis will undoubtedly illuminate the importance of the commercial intermediary within the early modern state, and hopefully establish closer links between commercial interchange and socio-political developments. In these tasks, we could do no better than emulate the early modern merchant himself, who would always turn first to the Exchange as a source for information, opinion and debate.

*Spaces of business in the City of London in the nineteenth century*

Iain Black

Iain Black spoke on two related themes concerning the formation of specialized business districts in the City of London between 1780 and 1880. His first paper addressed the evolution of the textile marketing district in the area north of St Paul's and centred on Wood Street. The paper combined social, economic and architectural data to chart the shift of textile warehousing from the traditional practices of Blackwell Hall to the large-scale, independent operation of City warehouse companies and provincial manufacturers. His second paper explored the transformation of the built environment of the City's central financial district centred on the Bank of England. Specifically, it showed the ways in which the building of new palatial bank headquarters between the 1830s and the 1860s was, in part, shaped by a series of legal and institutional changes in the banking system of England and Wales.

*Iain made extensive use of slides to illustrate his papers.*

*Living memory: creating an historical source*

Bernard Attard

Jobbers traded in stocks and shares on the floor of the London Stock Exchange until they were made redundant by the introduction of electronic trading in 1986. The Centre's oral history of the jobbing system, which was recorded in 1989–91, was distinctive in several respects. Its funding was provided entirely by

business corporations and industry bodies. It was contemporary history. Above all, its principal objective was the creation of a historical source, using methods very different from those employed by other projects at the Centre, which was finally deposited at the British Library National Sound Archive. In some respects, of course, there were important similarities. It was concerned with distinctive aspects of metropolitan history, particularly the development and culture of markets; used new and imaginative methods to collect and present primary material; and drew on a range of expertise outside the Centre. My own use of the oral history as a research source has involved juxtaposing it with other ‘oral’ sources, e.g. minutes of evidence to the 1877–78 Royal Commission on the Stock Exchange, to explore the social anthropology of the market over a long period. Three important themes have emerged: the organization of space in the market, paralleling in important respects that in other City markets; the differentiation between, and specialization of, firms — an important theme in business history generally; and the impact of visibility and the closed nature of the trading community on the culture of exchange.

*During his talk Bernard played several illuminating and entertaining extracts from the recorded interviews.*

## **Metropolitan penalties: the plague of 1665, and new patterns of mortality, 1860–1920**

### *Revisiting the visitation: epidemics and urban society*

*Justin Champion*

This paper re-examined the findings of the project on ‘Epidemics and mortality in the pre-industrial city’, concentrating on London in 1665 as described more fully in Justin’s book *London’s Dreaded Visitation: The Social Geography of the Great Plague in 1665* (Historical Geography Research Series No. 31, 1995).

### *New patterns of mortality, 1860–1920*

*Graham Mooney*

#### *Introduction*

Sustained improvement in the health status of London can probably be dated from the 1760s and throughout the second half of the nineteenth century the British capital maintained a commanding position in the international and national mortality league.<sup>1</sup> This paper investigates why this was the case. Following a comparison of London’s mortality levels with other urban areas, internal variation of life expectancy within the capital is examined. A very complex picture of change during the second half of the nineteenth century is simplified by combining the districts in London into four sectors that are classified in order to reflect socio-environmental conditions. Three significant and inter-linked findings are reported: firstly, the declining level of mortality in early childhood in London up to 1900 was the most important factor in maintaining the capital’s high level of life expectancy; secondly, even those districts which registered the worst rates of mortality in the capital did not match the appalling rates observed in the provincial towns and cities; finally, it is shown that a set of outer suburban districts consistently out-performed all other groups of districts.

#### *National and international comparisons*

In terms of health status, London fared well in comparison with many other urban areas in this period. In 1872, London’s crude death rate (CDR) was 21.5 deaths per thousand living population. Paris and Brussels recorded 21.9 and 22.6 respectively while in central Europe, Vienna (31.8) and Berlin (32.3) displayed relatively high rates. Although Turin recorded a comparatively low

CDR of 26.9, Florence registered 34.8 and Rome 37.7 per thousand. On the other side of the Atlantic, New York returned a CDR of 34.5.<sup>2</sup> By 1900, many other large European and North American cities had attained rates which compared favourably with London's 16 per thousand.<sup>3</sup> Non-European centres such as Cairo, Alexandria, Calcutta and Bombay were characterised by CDRs that were well in excess of 30 per thousand. In the decade 1891–1900, London had an infant mortality rate (IMR) of 160 infant deaths per thousand live births, also placing it at the lower end of the European urban spectrum. Only towns and cities in Norway and Switzerland rank below the British capital, while cities in central European nations such as Austria and Germany registered IMRs well above 200 per thousand. Others in northern Europe in the Netherlands, Belgium and France also exceeded the rate registered in London.<sup>4</sup> Comparisons with other English cities can be made by using life tables, which have long been recognised as a more accurate way of expressing the level of mortality than CDRs. By the mid-nineteenth century a 'typical' Londoner could expect to survive for 38 years. This life expectancy at birth was four years longer than individuals residing in other English cities with populations exceeding 100,000. In 1901–10, the capital was recording a life expectancy at birth of 50, as opposed to a provincial figure of 44 years.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Variation of Life Expectation at Birth within the Metropolis*

Whether we compare London with other capital cities or with provincial urban centres in Britain, the key to understanding and interpretation rests with the scale of internal variation. Consistently favourable mortality rates across great swathes of London undoubtedly secured the capital's long-term advantage. It is apparent from Table 1 that with the exception of Bermondsey and London City, both of which recorded questionable values as a result of the existence within their boundaries of large public institutions, none of the capital's districts was characterised by a life expectation at birth comparable to those experienced in the least healthy provincial centres in the 1850s. Indeed, many ranked alongside the more salubrious cities of Bristol and Birmingham, which had life expectancies at birth of 39 and 37 respectively. However, London's mortality experience at this time was neither spatially uniform nor predictable and it certainly resists interpretation in terms of an over-simplified dichotomy between 'east' and 'west'. Among those districts where life expectation exceeded 40 years — Camberwell, Hampstead, Hackney and Wandsworth — none was situated in the relatively affluent West End. Although there were districts in the east that had appallingly high death rates — Stepney registered a life expectancy at birth of 34.20 years in the 1850s — this was little or no worse than the experience of Holborn immediately to the north-west of the City, or to that of a cluster of localities

TENTH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE PAPERS

Table 1. Life expectation at birth in London districts, 1851–60

Rank	District	Male	Female	All	Rank	District	Male	Female	All
19	Bermondsey*	27.37	33.62	30.18	18	London City*	30.14	35.21	32.58
6	Bethnal Green	38.32	40.36	39.34	12	Marylebone	34.65	38.20	36.50
4	Camberwell	38.98	42.47	40.83	10	Pancras	36.53	39.72	38.17
5	Greenwich	36.74	42.69	39.54	13	Poplar	34.56	38.19	36.29
2	Hackney	39.78	45.47	42.86	11	Shoreditch	36.19	38.66	37.44
1	Hampstead	42.59	46.84	45.05	16	Southwark	34.54	35.88	35.22
14	Holborn	34.57	37.06	35.82	17	Stepney	32.60	35.85	34.20
7	Islington	37.31	40.77	39.14	3	Wandsworth	39.00	43.95	41.55
9	Kensington	36.55	41.13	39.00	15	Westminster*	33.64	37.70	35.74
8	Lambeth	38.02	40.05	39.07		<b>London Total</b>	<b>34.97</b>	<b>38.75</b>	<b>36.88</b>

Table 2. Life expectation at birth in London districts, 1901–10

Rank	District	Male	Female	All	Rank	District	Male	Female	All
9	Bermondsey	47.28	51.56	49.35	19	London City*	14.38	22.31	17.61
16	Bethnal Green	44.18	48.70	46.39	2	Marylebone	51.78	56.14	54.08
8	Camberwell	47.37	52.47	49.92	12	Pancras	45.63	50.56	48.04
3	Greenwich	50.39	54.55	52.48	15	Poplar	44.68	48.86	46.68
4	Hackney	49.64	54.06	51.93	17	Shoreditch	44.73	48.05	46.36
6	Hampstead	47.44	53.40	50.81	14	Southwark*	46.05	49.00	47.50
7	Holborn	48.69	52.41	50.56	18	Stepney	41.98	46.09	43.93
5	Islington	49.22	53.68	51.48	1	Wandsworth	52.12	55.95	54.10
10	Kensington	46.26	51.98	49.26	13	Westminster*	43.75	51.74	47.63
11	Lambeth*	46.81	51.36	49.11		<b>London Total</b>	<b>46.97</b>	<b>51.80</b>	<b>49.40</b>

south of the river. Bermondsey's low value of 30.18 years was distorted by the presence of Guy's Hospital; but its neighbour, Southwark, a district that was free of large public institutions for most of the 1850s, also recorded the low figure of 35.22 years.<sup>6</sup> For the eighteenth century, Landers has identified the presence of a belt of districts—St Giles, Holborn, Cripplegate and Shoreditch—that had high levels of immigration and high, fluctuating death rates.<sup>7</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the range of districts cordoned by this belt appears to have expanded: Westminster, Holborn, London City, Stepney, Bermondsey and Southwark now comprised an urban environment at the core of the metropolis where levels of life expectancy rarely rose above 35 years (Shoreditch might plausibly be added to this list, since Table 1 undoubtedly overestimates its level of life expectation. It contained no major institutions and was thus a net 'exporter' of deaths to other districts).

Comparing the position in 1851–60 with that for 1901–10 (Table 2), the immediate impression is one of very considerable improvement: over a sixty-year period, an average of more than 12 years was added to the life expectancy

of the ‘typical’ infant born in the capital. But there continued to be substantial differentials between the most and least favoured districts. With a life expectancy at birth of 17.6 years, London City’s mortality was heavily skewed by rapidly increasing institutional provision for the sick and dying. Stepney’s value of just under 44 years may, however, be counted as a reliable figure. The same is true of Bethnal Green (46.39), Shoreditch (46.36) and Southwark (47.50), the least favoured district to the south of the river. At the opposite extreme, a significant number of districts had broken through the 50-year barrier, notably Marylebone in north London and Wandsworth to the south of the river.

In terms of rank order, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green became less healthy in relative terms, falling by six and ten places respectively, thereby joining Poplar and Stepney as the only districts with life expectancies at or below 46 years. These transitions are indicative of the changing geography of mortality in the capital, as high death rates came to be increasingly concentrated in the East End. Meanwhile, Marylebone and Bermondsey had each enhanced their relative position by ten places and Holborn by seven, emphasizing the contraction of the high-mortality core which we have already identified for the 1850s. It also throws the problems of the East End into even sharper relief. A final conclusion which is reinforced by Tables 1 and 2 is that no single district in the capital retained its relative position over the two decades.

This paper now pursues two lines of inquiry in connection with the issues raised above. Firstly, it is highly likely that improvements in some age groups—particularly between ages 1 and 4—had a much greater impact on global mortality than others. Secondly, the complex picture depicted in Tables 1 and 2 demands that the capital be spatially reformulated and reconceptualised so as to generate possible explanations for continuing inter-district differentials in life expectation at birth.

### *The Spatial Division of London*

In order to arrive at a spatial classification which more sensitively reflects prevalent socio-environmental conditions, we must abandon the dividing line of the river and acknowledge that geographically disparate places could display very similar urban characteristics. Our classificatory framework therefore plots inter-censal rates of housing growth against levels of population density. When this exercise is undertaken for each decade between 1851 and 1910, four groupings, or sectors, convincingly emerge (Figs. 1a and 1b). The ‘Contracting Core’ has metropolitan districts characterised by declining levels of population density and negative rates of housing growth. The ‘Stable Core’, comprises districts with population densities that remained relatively high—in the region

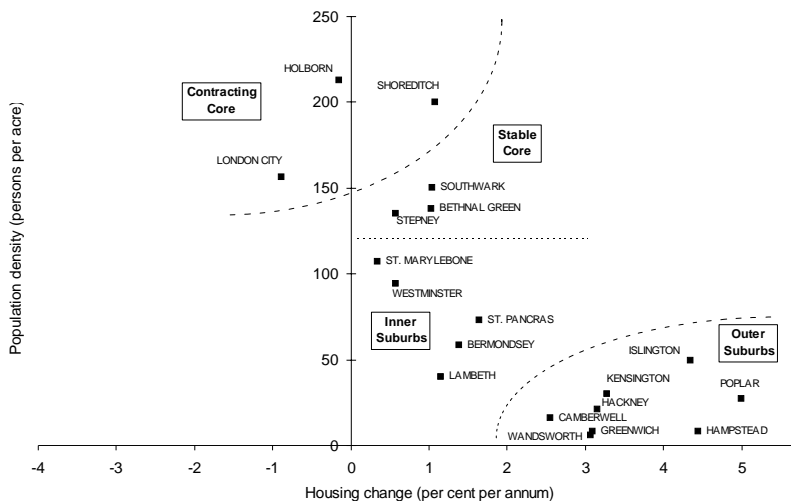


Fig. 1a. Population density (1861) v annual compound rate of housing change (1851–61): London districts

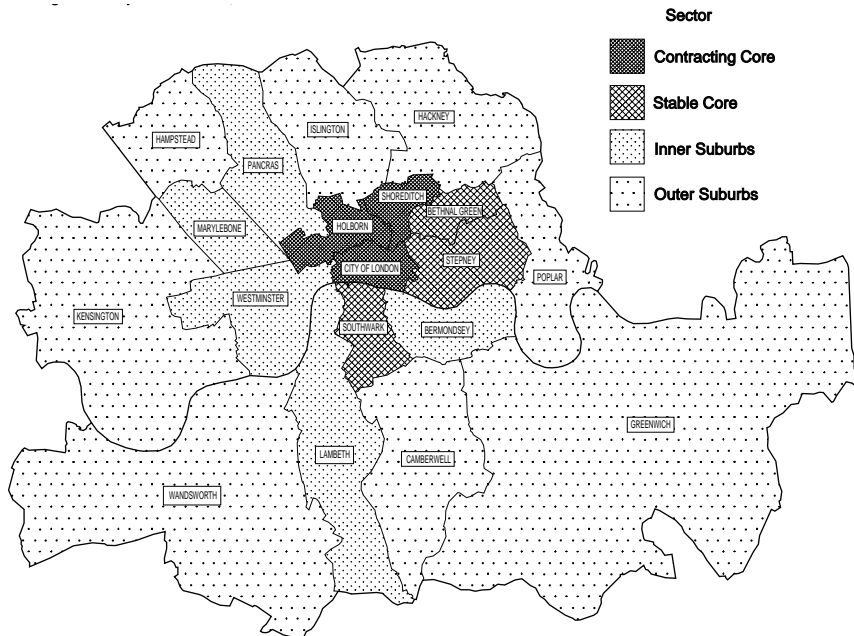


Fig. 1b. Metropolitan sectors, 1851–61



of 100 to 200 persons per acre — but which possessed either a contracting housing stock or one which failed to increase by more than one per cent a year. Districts of the ‘Inner Suburbs’ usually displayed an intermediate population density of between approximately 50 and 100 persons per acre and a rate of housing growth which was always positive during the second half of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century. In a final sector, the ‘Outer Suburbs’, districts sustained a positive rate of building growth which, in some cases, exceeded five per cent per annum. (It should be noted that some districts, for example Shoreditch, St Marylebone and Westminster in 1851-61, do not easily fit into a given sector).

*Sectoral Variations in Age-Specific Metropolitan Mortality*

*Life expectancy at birth*

The most arresting general aspect concerning trends in life expectancy at birth is that the four metropolitan sectors behaved in a similar manner to England and Wales, other large urban areas, and to London as a whole (Fig. 2). Very large differences existed in life expectancy at birth between the Contracting and Stable Cores and the ‘best’ sector, the Outer Suburbs. It should also be noted that such

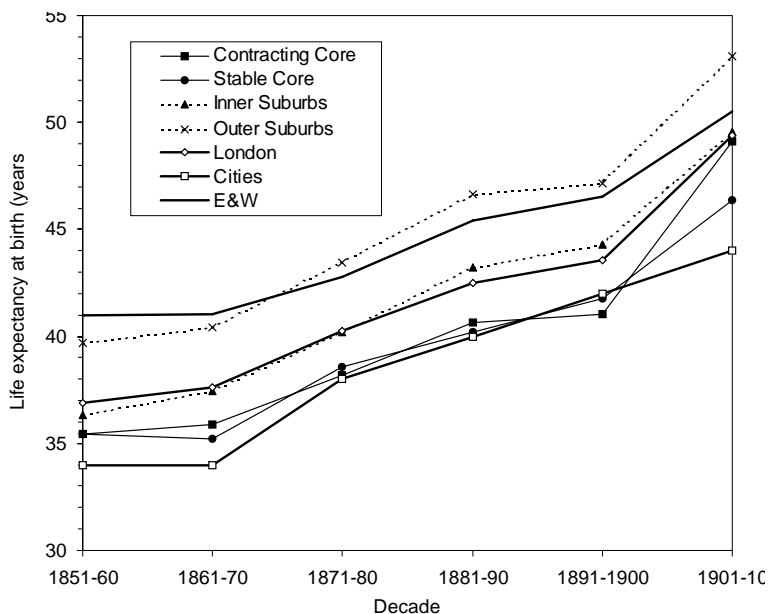


Fig. 2. Life expectancy at birth: London sectors, London, provincial cities and England and Wales, 1851-1910

discrepancies increased over time. Thus, during the 1850s, better-placed babies born in the Outer Suburbs might have expected to live a little more than four years longer than their counterparts in both the Contracting and the Stable Core. In 1901–10, the Outer Suburbs still constituted the healthiest sector in London; but those living in its component parts now had a life expectancy at birth of 53.10, a full 6.75 years longer than the inhabitants of the least healthy sector of that decade, the Stable Core. The accentuation of inequality between the ‘best’ and ‘worst’ districts during this 60-year period was, moreover, achieved during a period in which, on average, the passage of every five years witnessed the addition of one year to the ‘typical’ Londoner’s life expectation at birth.

### *Adult mortality*

With some significant exceptions, the general pattern and ordering of sectors along the vertical axis that was observed for life expectancy at birth is broadly replicated for adult mortality, measured by the expectation of life at age 20 (Fig. 3). Firstly, the comparative advantage of London’s Outer Suburbs in relation to England and Wales and the other metropolitan sectors becomes even more apparent from the 1880s onwards: in this sector, young adults may well have

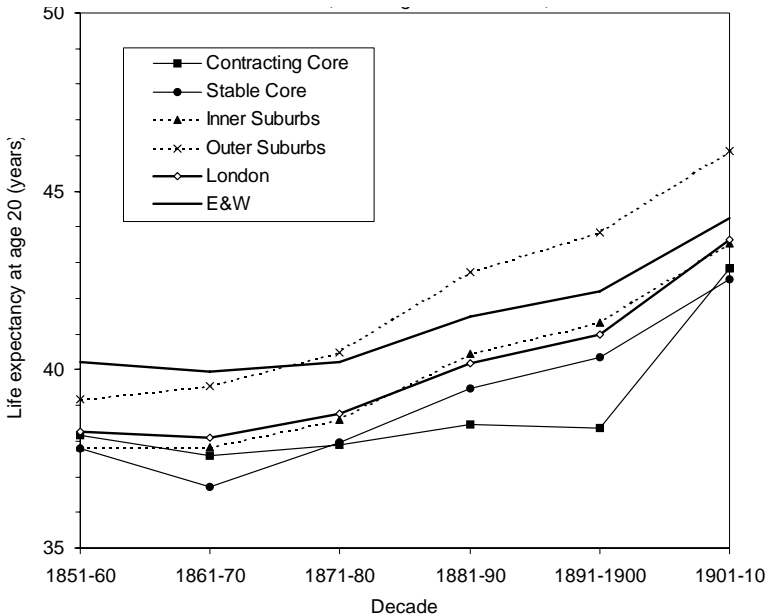


Fig. 3. Life expectancy at age 20: London sectors, London, and England and Wales, 1851–1910

been maximising on health advantages early in their lives. Secondly, in the Inner Suburbs adult health improved during the 1860s, and allowed it to draw away from both the Contracting and Stable Cores. Thirdly, the life chances of adults living in the Contracting Core levelled off. After experiencing a deterioration during the 1860s, 20 year-olds in both the Contracting and the Stable Cores could, by the 1870s, expect to live for 38 years. By the end of the century, the fortunes of the two sectors had diverged, with residents of the Stable Core adding almost two and a half years over the intervening period from 37.97 years in the 1870s to 40.36 in the 1890s. Inhabitants of the Contracting Core, on the other hand, gained no more than approximately six months from 37.91 to 38.37 years. However, as a result of a remarkable turnaround in the Contracting Core during the following decade, the two sectors returned to the position of close correspondence that had been evident in the mid-nineteenth century.

*Infant and Early Childhood Mortality*

Our major finding in relation to mortality early in life is that overall increases in life expectancy at birth across London between 1851 and 1900 were achieved

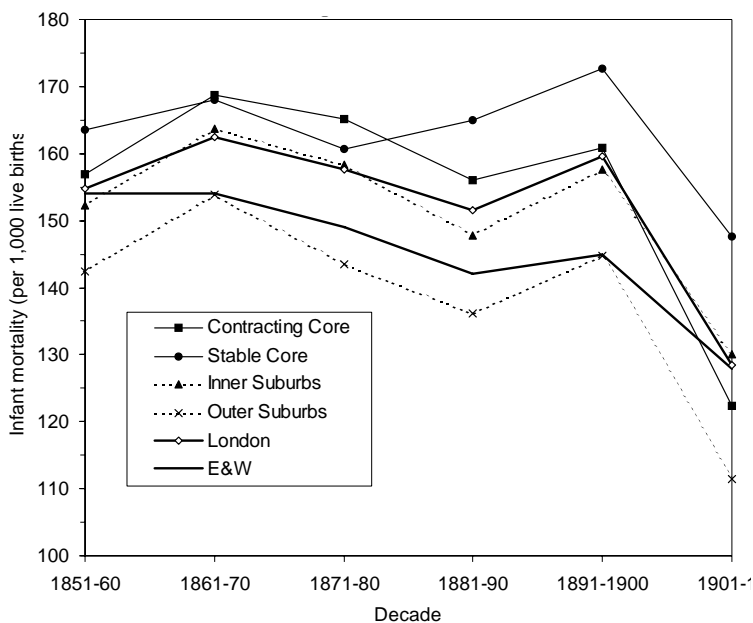


Fig. 4. Infant mortality: London sectors, London, and England and Wales, 1851-1910

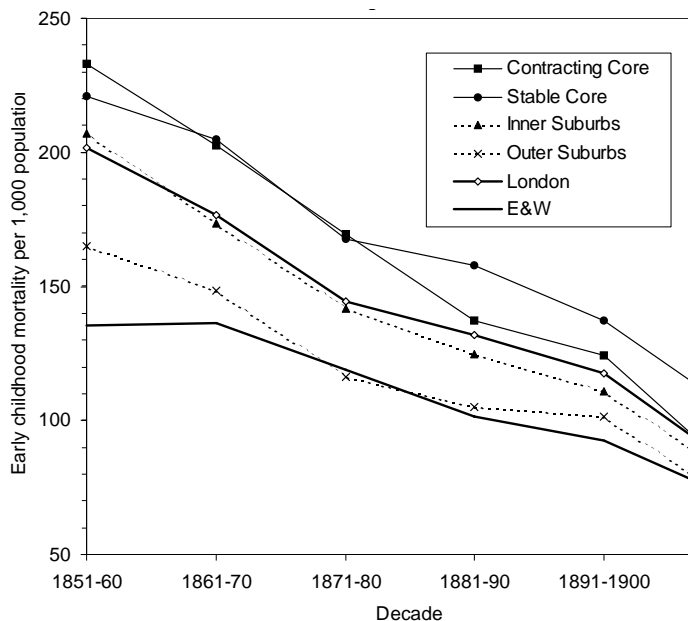


Fig. 5. Early childhood mortality: London sectors, London, and England and Wales, 1851–1910

without a substantial and uninterrupted reduction in infant mortality, which was higher in the 1890s in all sectors than it had been in the 1850s (Fig. 4). The driving-force of much of the improvement in overall life expectancy up to 1900 is probably related to declining levels of early childhood mortality rates (ECMR), that is, the probability of dying between ages 1 and 4. It is now well-known that ECMR and IMR displayed remarkably different trajectories during the second half of the nineteenth century. The continuing, though variable, importance of diarrhoeal/enteric diseases and respiratory complaints in urban areas ensured that the national level of IMR was sustained at about 150 per thousand until the turn of the turn of the twentieth century. By contrast, national rates of ECMR began a precipitous decline some time during the mid-1860s. In some districts, the decline may have started earlier. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the capital was just such a place (Fig. 5).

#### *Conclusion*

This comparison of life expectation at birth and age-specific mortality in each of our sectors has revealed sharp differences. For all measures of mortality, a sharp dividing line may be drawn between the outstandingly healthy Outer

Suburbs and the rest of London, and particularly the Contracting and Stable Cores. While the Suburban sectors maintained their relatively advantageous position during the 1860s and 1870s as a result of a reduction in ECMR which was more significant than a decline in IMR, the two Core sectors performed equally poorly. However, this tells only part of the story, since, as the nineteenth century wore on, dissimilarities emerged between these two latter sectors in relation to certain age groups. Thus, with higher levels of life expectancy at age 20 than any other sector during the 1880s and 1890s, the Contracting Core became a progressively more dangerous environment for adults. However, as we have already seen, there would be significant improvements in the 1900s. Meanwhile, during this same thirty-year period, the type of urban location to be found in the Stable Core appears to have been particularly hazardous both for infants and toddlers.

No one causal factor can be singled out to provide an explanation either of London's consistently impressive performance during the second half of the nineteenth century, or the variable behaviour of its component sectors. Rather, a range of interactive influences, exerting a more intensive impact in certain places and for certain age groups, was decisive. These processes will be discussed in greater detail in a monograph that is currently under preparation.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Landers, *Death in the Metropolis: studies in the demographic history of the metropolis* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), Table 5.6, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *35th Annual Report of the Registrar-General, 1872* (London: HMSO, 1874), lvi. The tables in previous years also show that London consistently registered lower CDRs than either Edinburgh, Glasgow and, to a lesser extent, Dublin.

<sup>3</sup> See G. Kearns, 'Zivilis or hygaeia: urban public health and the epidemiologic transition', in R. Lawton, *The rise and fall of great cities: aspects of urbanisation in the western world* (London: Belhaven, 1989), Table 7.1, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> These IMRs and the sources from which they are taken are given in N. Williams and G. Mooney, 'Infant mortality in "an age of great cities": London and the provincial cities compared, c. 1840–1914', *Continuity and Change*, IX (1994), 185–212, Tables 4 and 5. The reader should be aware that direct comparisons are problematic due to the variant definitions of an urban area. For Germany, see J. Vögele, 'Urban infant mortality in Imperial Germany', *Social History of Medicine*, VII (1994), 410–25.

<sup>5</sup> S. Szreter and G. Mooney, 'Urbanisation, mortality and the standard of living debate: new estimates of the expectation of life at birth in nineteenth-century British cities', *Economic History Review*, LI (1998), 84–112.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the thorny issue of deaths in hospitals, workhouses and other public institutions, see G. Mooney, A. Tanner and W. Luckin, 'Patient pathways: solving the problem of institutional deaths in later nineteenth-century London', *Social History of Medicine*, X (forthcoming, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Landers, *Death in the Metropolis*, chapter seven.

## APPENDICES

### I

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*Deputy Director (and Editor of Bibliography):* HEATHER CREATON, B.A., M.Phil. (London), A.L.A.

*Administrative and Research Assistant:* OLWEN R. MYHILL, B.A. (Birmingham), Dip. R.S.A.

Metropolitan Market Networks, c.1300–1600

*Researchers:* JAMES A. GALLOWAY, M.A., Ph.D. (Edinburgh); MARGARET MURPHY, B.A., Ph.D. (Trinity College, Dublin)

Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to AD1540 (from 1 March 1998)

*Researcher:* SAMANTHA LETTERS, B.A., Ph.D. (London)

English Merchant Culture: the Overseas Trader in State and Society 1660–1720 (to 30 September 1998)

*Researcher:* PEREGRINE GAUCI, B.A., M.Phil., D.Phil. (Oxford)

Mortality in the Metropolis, 1860–1920

*Team Leader:* WILLIAM E. LUCKIN, B.A. (Oxford), M.Sc. (London)

*Researchers:* GRAHAM P. MOONEY, B.A., Ph.D. (Liverpool); ANDREA I. TANNER, B.A. (Strathclyde), M.A. (Warwick), Ph.D. (London)

HEATHER CREATON runs a regular introductory course for new postgraduate students as well as doing her bibliographical and information work. She is Vice-Chairman of the British Records Association and helped to organise their 1997 and 1998 conferences on records for the history of childhood and for law and order, respectively. She is also Hon. Secretary of the London Record Society and serves on the Royal Society of Arts' History Panel. JIM GALLOWAY's main research interests lie within medieval historical geography and economic history, including migration, urban development and trade. His Ph.D. thesis examined the Colchester region 1310–1560. From 1988 to 1994 he was a researcher on the CMH 'Feeding the City' projects. PERRY GAUCI's current research interests are centred on the political development of the localities of early modern England. In October 1998 he took up a lectureship at Lincoln College, Oxford. DEREK KEENE has written extensively on the society, economy, topography and archaeology of medieval and



early modern towns, and especially on Winchester and London; he is a Royal Commissioner on the Historical Monuments of England and is a member of the International Commission for the History of Towns and of the Fabric Committee of St Paul's Cathedral. He is also a trustee of the *London Journal*. GRAHAM MOONEY is interested in the demographic history of London, but in particular the effects of public health intervention on mortality and illness. Following her work on the Feeding the City project, MARGARET MURPHY is engaged in research on urban provisioning and regional trade. She is also maintaining her interests in medieval Irish history through recent conference papers and teaching. Apart from grappling with the Centre's computers and administration, OLWEN MYHILL's main historical interest is the impact of religious nonconformity on rural society in the nineteenth century. ANDREA TANNER is Hon. Archivist at Fortnum & Mason and a part-time tutor at Birkbeck College Extra-Mural Department. She is a member of the Advisory Council on Public Records, Council of the British Records Association; Council of the Kensington & Chelsea Community History Group, and Regular Readers' Group at the Public Record Office and is Vice-President of the Friends of the Public Record Office.

#### IV

##### VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWS

- ANGEL ALLOZA, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid) 'Urbanization, social change and crime: a comparative view of Paris, Madrid, London and Amsterdam during the eighteenth century'
- MICHAEL T. DAVIS, B.A., Ph.D. (University of Queensland) 'History of the London Corresponding Society in the 1790s'
- WILLIAM E. LUCKIN, B.A., M.Sc. (Professor, Bolton Institute) 'Mortality in the Metropolis'
- GRAHAM I. TWIGG, B.Sc., Ph.D. 'Epidemics and the plague in London'

#### V

##### POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

- CRAIG A. BAILEY, B.A. (Connecticut), M.A. (Maynooth), 'The Irish middle classes in London, 1780-1840' (Ph.D.)
- PAULA MARBER, B.A. (Middlesex), 'The impact of office development in late Victorian London on the growing band of office workers' (M.Phil.)

## APPENDICES

STEPHEN G. PRIESTLEY, B.A. (Cambridge), 'Piety and charity in early medieval London: a study of the foundation and endowment of religious houses and hospitals in London and its environs c. 1100–1230' (Ph.D.)

## VI

### CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PAPERS

Heather Creaton:

'Signposts and milestones: ten years of bibliography and information work at the CMH', at the CMH conference, University of London, October 1998.

Jim Galloway:

'Metropolitan market networks 1300–1600: continuity or transformation?', Metropolitan History Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, February 1998;

'London and its economic hinterland in the later middle ages', at the CBA Mid-Anglia Conference on Medieval London, Museum of London, February 1998;

'Reconstructing London's hinterlands in the Middle Ages: the role of computer-assisted mapping', at the 'Reframing Metropolitan History: the impact of information technology' study day, IHR, June 1998;

'The trade in foodstuffs in town and country', at the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, July 1998;

'Market networks: London, hinterland trade, and the economy of England', at the CMH conference, University of London, October 1998;

'One economy or many? Markets, regions and the impact of London 1300–1600', Economic History Seminar, London School of Economics, November 1998.

Perry Gauci:

'The City as Exchange: merchant culture 1660–1720', at the CMH Conference, University of London, October 1998.

Derek Keene:

'Medieval London: a broad view', at the Standing Conference on London Archaeology, 'Twenty-five years of London Archaeology', December 1997;

'The Dublin City Franchise Roll', Mansion House, Dublin, 22 April 1998;

‘London’s fabric: growth, modernization and control, late Middle Ages to 18th century’, at conference on ‘Capital cities: London and Dublin’, Dublin 23 April 1998;

‘Feeding medieval cities’, Global History Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, February 1998;

‘Metropolitan systems before 1800: England and Japan compared’, World History seminar, University of Oxford, May 1998;

‘Surveys, censuses and metropolitan history: London 1600–1871’, Seminar on ‘Cadastrés et recensements dans les villes capitales (XVIIe–XXe siècle), École française de Rome, June 1998;

‘Issues of water in medieval London, to 1300’, International Conference on Urban History, Venice, September 1998;

‘Ten years of metropolitan history’, at the CMH conference, University of London, October 1998.

Samantha Letters:

‘Nicholas de Seagrave and the period of reform and rebellion, 1258–67’, at Reform and Rebellion conference, Cardiff, November 1997;

‘Markets and Fairs in England and Wales’, at the CMH Conference, University of London, October 1998.

Graham Mooney:

‘Redistributing deaths: the institutional mortality problem in Victorian London’, at the ‘Reframing Metropolitan History: the impact of information technology’ study day, IHR, June 1998;

‘Life expectancy and causes of death: London, 1860–1910’, at the British Society for Population Studies Annual Conference, Cambridge, September 1998;

‘New patterns of mortality, 1860–1920’, at the CMH Conference, October 1998;

‘Epidemiologists and disease surveillance in Britain, 1890–1920’, at the Wellcome Symposium on Biostatistics and Biomathematics, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London, October 1998.

Graham Mooney and Andrea Tanner:

‘Life and death in Laundryland: infant mortality and maternal employment, 1890–1914’, at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population, February 1998;

‘Infant mortality in Kensington in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’, Student seminar, Department of Social Statistics, University of Southampton, May 1998;

## APPENDICES

'Patterns of mortality in metropolitan hospitals, 1860–1885', at the Fourth International Conference on Urban History, Venice, September 1998.

Margaret Murphy:

'Food, fuel and the agrarian hinterland in the fourteenth century: approaches and achievements of the Feeding the City projects 1988–94', at the CMH Conference, October 1998.

Andrea Tanner:

'One In All In? The experience of family groups in workhouses 1834–1870, the case of the City of London', at Social History Society Annual Conference, University of Nottingham, January 1998;

'The middle classes know best — charity in Notting Dale', Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group, August 1998;

'Scarlatina and sewer smells, metropolitan public health records, 1855–1920', at London Archives Users Forum Annual Conference, Institute of Historical Research, November 1998.

## VII

### PUBLICATIONS

Angel ALLOZA, *El Impacto de la Corte en Castilla. Madrid y su territorio en la época Moderna* (Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1998)

Martha CARLIN, *London and Southwark Inventories 1316–1650: A handlist of Extents for Debts* (CMH/IHR, 1997)

Heather CREATON, *Sources for the History of London, 1939–45: a Guide and Bibliography*. (Archives and the User series, 9. British Records Association, 1998).

Heather CREATON, 'Sources for London History: an Introductory Guide', P. Garside (ed), *Capital Histories: a Bibliographical Study of London* (Aldershot, 1998), pp.1–4.

Heather CREATON, 'Checklist of unpublished London diaries', *London Topographical Society Newsletter*, No. 47 (1998) p.8.

James A. GALLOWAY, 'Driven by Drink? Ale consumption and the agrarian economy of the London Region, c.1300–1400', in M. Carlin and J. Rosenthal (eds.), *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe* (Hambleton, 1998), pp. 87–100.

Perry GAUCI, "'For want of smooth language": Parliament as a point of contact in the Augustan Age', *Parliamentary History*, XVII (1998), 12–22.

Derek KEENE, 'Guilds in English towns, A.D. 1000–1500', in B.H. Ranson (ed.), *Guild-hall and Government: an Exploration of Power, Control and Resistance in Britain and China* vol. II, *Power, Resistance and Authorities: Aspects of Guild Organisation in England* (Hong Kong, David C. Lam Institute for East-West Studies, Occasional Paper, 1997), pp. 28–45.

Derek KEENE, 'Reconstructing medieval London', *Comparative Urban History Review*, XVI no. 2 (Tokyo, 1997), 12–15.

Derek KEENE, 'Introduction' in M.V. Roberts (ed.), *Archives and the Metropolis* (Papers delivered at the 'Archives and Metropolis' Conference 11–13 July 1996) (Guildhall Library Publications in association with CMH, 1998) pp. 1–3.

Derek KEENE, 'Hors d'oeuvres: archaeology and the history of English towns', *Journal of Urban History*, XXIV (1998), 743–754.

Derek KEENE, 'Ein Haus in London: Von der Guildhall zum Stalhof' and 'Die deutsche Guildhall und ihre Umgebung' in J. Bracker, V. Henn and R. Postel ed., *Die Hanse: Lebenswirklichkeit und Mythos* (Lübeck, 1998), pp. 57–62, 201–10.

Derek KEENE, 'London in the early Middle Ages, 600–1300', in P.L. Garside (ed.), *Capital Histories: a bibliographical study of London* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 13–26.

Graham MOONEY (with Simon Szreter), 'Urbanization, mortality, and the standard of living debate: new estimates of the expectation of life at birth in nineteenth-century British cities', *Economic History Review*, LI (1998), 84–112.

Margaret MURPHY, 'Feeding medieval cities: some historical approaches', in M. Carlin and J. Rosenthal (eds.), *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe* (Hambleton, 1998), pp. 117–131.

## APPENDICES

Andrea TANNER, 'The model of a metropolitan Medical Officer of Health. Thomas Orme Dudfield of Kensington', *Journal of Medical Biography*, VI (1998), 79–85.

Andrea TANNER, 'A troublesome priest. A Victorian Workhouse Chaplain in the City of London', *London Journal*, XXIII (1998), 15–31.

## VIII

### SEMINAR ON METROPOLITAN HISTORY

October 1997–March 1998

(Wednesdays, fortnightly, 5.30 pm, at the Institute of Historical Research)

#### *Merchants, markets and city spaces*

'London and the rise of New York city, 1756–1860', Clifton Hood (Hobart and William Smith Colleges)

'Property versus commerce: conflicting interests in the mid eighteenth-century port of London', Henry Roseveare (King's College London)

'The merchant, the City and the Nation: Reputation and the Royal Exchange, 1660–1720', Natasha Glaisyer (Darwin College, Cambridge)

'"Commons stealers", "land grabbers" and "Jerry builders": space, popular radicalism and the politics of public access in London, 1848–1880', Antony Taylor (Manchester/Warwick)

'Symbolic order and the urban pastoral: the creation of Frederic Law Olmsted's Central Park', Matthew Gandy (University College London)

'Urbanization, social change and crime: a comparative view of Paris, Madrid, London and Amsterdam in the eighteenth century', Angel Alloza (CMH/Autonomous University of Madrid)

'The market systems of London's hinterland, 1300–1600: continuity or transformation?', Jim Galloway (CMH)

'The rise and fall of London's retail markets, 1660–1837', Colin Smith (University College London)

'The urban periphery, myth and reality: Milan, 1955–95', John Foot (University College London)

'The Grecian Coffee House and political debate in London, 1688–1714', Jonathan Harris (University College London)

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October 1998–December 1998

*Commercial and imperial metropolises*

- ‘Florence: the growth of a metropolis, 1200–1300’, Bill Day (London School of Economics)
- ‘John Summerson as an historian of London’, Michela Rosso (Turin)
- ‘The development of a commercial metropolis: trade and banks in Shanghai, 1870–1914, Shizuya Nishimura (Hosei University)
- ‘Fountainhead of consumerism: wholesale and retail distribution in London in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’, David Barnett (University of Nottingham)
- ‘Harvey Nichols and Harrods: two shopping cultures’, Alan Cox (Survey of London)

**IX**

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Projects:       The Economic and Social Research Council  
                  The Leverhulme Trust  
                  The Wellcome Trust

The CMH Accounts for the year 1 August 1997–31 July 1998 are published as part of the Accounts of the Institute of Historical Research in the Institute’s *Annual Report*.

## CENTRE FOR METROPOLITAN HISTORY

Since Roman times London has been one of the leading European cities. For the last three hundred years it has been a metropolis on a world scale. Its history and development as a great centre of population, trade, finance, society, and political power are recorded in a rich store of documentary, graphic, and material remains. This growing body of evidence is unparalleled for any other city. A long and vigorous tradition of study has illuminated many aspects of London's past, providing a firm foundation for advancing understanding in the future. London is a laboratory of unique importance for the study of urban affairs. It offers the opportunity of setting our knowledge and experience of metropolitan life today in the context of two thousand years of continuous development.

Established in 1987, in collaboration with the Museum of London and other organisations, the Centre fulfils a long standing need in London. It promotes the study and wide appreciation of London's character and development from its beginnings to the present day, and is concerned to set the history of London in the wider context provided by knowledge of other metropolises. It:

1. Provides a forum for the interchange of ideas on metropolitan history through seminars, conferences and other meetings;
2. Undertakes original research into the society, economy, culture and fabric of London, with regard to its role both within the British Isles and the world at large;
3. Provides a practical service for those interested in the history of London by bibliographical work, by organising raw data so that they are more readily usable, and by collecting and publishing news of research in progress;
4. Promotes research into the history of other metropolitan centres by inviting scholars from other parts of the world to take part in its activities, and by undertaking projects which compare London with other centres.

The Centre for Metropolitan History is part of the Institute of Historical Research